

Fresh-minted timeless classics

A love of timber and a few four-legged-friends inspire this furniture venture, as SOPHIE AUBREY reports

FOR many, animals are like family. But for David and Tamara Gorrie, man's best friend is in the spice and soul of their craft.

The Cape Otway couple left their corporate careers in Melbourne for a sea-change five years ago.

"We were very keen to move to this beautiful part of Victoria where we could allow our creativity to express itself," Tamara says. "It gave us the headspace to begin a business."

Their three-year-old Brown Dog Furniture Company has since been turning heads across the region, and not just the dog-lovers.

Many people have been drawn in by the promise of unique furnishings custom-made with stunning timber atop curved, painted steel legs.

Tamara and David tailor the pieces to each client's needs, depending on what timber, tone, leg finish, design and size they're chasing.

Within six weeks, it's built, buffed and ready for its new home.

"It's all designed by us and as a result they're beautiful solid pieces that will last a lifetime," Tamara says.

The three-legged side table is their most popular.

"It's a signature piece for us. It really strikes people as different and we've carried its style into many of our other pieces," Tamara says.

All furnishings are designed in their home studio surrounded by inspiring views of the surf, the bush and the mountains.

David grew up just outside Hamilton and spent many hours exploring timbers and meddling with steel.

He always knew he wanted to turn his hobby into his trade some day, and admits Brown Dog is the natural result of that early desire.

"(It's) the realisation of a long-held passion for furniture design that has seen me, over the years, create many pieces for family and friends," he says.

Tamara says her husband relishes crafting furniture people will cherish.

"A beautiful piece of furniture really lifts you and to be able to bring that to people's lives brings David enormous enjoyment."

In line with their eco philosophy, they only use sustainable and reclaimed timbers. Hot right now is their stock of 300-year-old French oak reclaimed from old wine vats, uniquely splashed with tones of chocolate, burgundy and honey.

Messmate and Blackbutt timber are also popular, which they have recently sourced from old stables and butter factories.

One thing is clear, Brown Dog has been welcomed with open arms by the Great Ocean Road locals.

Even the couple's two children, Grace, 9, and Callum, 8, are reaping the benefits of country living.

"To see their parents working in their own business, doing something they adore and are really passionate about sends a strong message," Tamara says.

"Hopefully it says to them the sky is the limit."



Above: David and Tamara Gorrie; From left: Sabine W dining table and bench seat in American oak and wine vat French oak; triplet coffee table in reclaimed blackwood; and Addis console table.