


The Edinburgh Reporter Advent Calendar – Gifts for the home – Ecool Designs Ltd



[Ecool](#) have loads of original and inventive gift ideas for you this Christmas.

Ecooldesigns, set up in 2009 by Esmond Toney, a Londoner who moved to Edinburgh 12 years ago, has just secured exclusive rights to manufacture and sell a stylish wooden chair made from recycled Californian wine barrels.

Other products from the firm's in-house **Cool Fire** range of ornamental home accessories – many designed by Esmond himself – including “wow factor” tealight holders, vases and incense holders, will now be manufactured in India from recycled materials including aircraft aluminium. Based on this new Indian deal, Ecooldesigns can also offer a design and manufacturing service to other companies.

 *“Throw” a Cool Fire Surprise with gleaming tealight dice!*

Idea for use throughout the winter months when candlelight really comes into its own, these sophisticated, gleaming dice tealight holders are handmade from recycled aircraft aluminium and are guaranteed to impress with their clean lines and stylish design features. Available in a regular size or a new baby dice version (holding 1 tealight or incense stick), each of the six sides of the regular version can be filled with tealights so you can choose which number you wish to light – from a subtle effect with maybe only two or three scented tealights to the full six tealights for a striking centrepiece with the WOW factor. Or how about the champagne flutes which carefully cradle a tealight – available in sets

*of two they would not look
out of place at the most prestigious of parties.*

The perfect fusion of cool ice and hot fire, these products really come alive when the lights are down but are glossy enough to catch the eye at any time of the day.

Available from Ecooldesigns – www.ecooldesigns.com, regular size Dice £125, Baby Dice £19.95, Flutes £35 for set of two.

DOWN TO THE WIRE



Whether it's in a myriad of bright swirling colours or striking black and white, you will never tire of looking at the mesmerizing designs displayed in these highly functional and hard wearing wire baskets, hand woven in South Africa by Zulu tribespeople. Created from custom manufactured eco friendly lead-free wire, these baskets come in a variety of sizes and are ideal for storing fruit, bread or other foodstuffs – or simply to admire for their beauty. Prices from £50-£79.



INCENSED BY THE AROMA! – Perfectly curved and balanced.. holding the incense stick as if entranced at its tip, this sleek incense holder takes from Ecooldesigns.com takes the burning of incense in your home to a whole new dimension! Hand finished from recycled sandcast aluminium, the holder is an elegant piece of design in its own right as well as a safe and functional way to experience aroma in your home. Priced at £25.00 from Ecooldesigns, a company committed to combining good looks with eco friendly materials.

Ecooldesign products, many of which are also meticulously handmade, are currently sold online at www.ecooldesigns.com. With the joint venture with the Indian manufacturers in the

bag, Esmond plans to debut one new product a month which will be added to the Ecooldesigns range. Currently, Ecooldesigns products including the signature Cool Fire Dice, are on sale at a number of leading retailers around Scotland.

“We have many exciting new products coming soon,” said Esmond. “With our new manufacturing arm in India well established – **EcoIIndia** -we are now in a position to add considerably to our range as well as offer a quality manufacturing service to other firms. The chair made from the recycled California wine barrels was a great find and is representative of the type of stylish but highly functional products we bring to market.”

“As a relative ‘fledging’ company which is growing fast, the new manufacturing deal will enable us to have enough stock to sell. We can concentrate on designing and bringing out new products and growing our market share,” said Esmond.

Ecooldesigns will also be importing a colourful range of hard wearing baskets made from eco friendly lead free wire. In supporting these products, which can be purchased from [his website](#), the businessman is maintaining a thriving cottage industry in South Africa which employs over 800 weavers:-

“The Zulu people have a strong tradition of weaving. Men on nightshift wove baskets from discarded telephone wire to help pass the time. This soon became a full time job when the beauty and functionality of the baskets was discovered. As it is mainly the men that carry out the weaving – using traditional patterns passed down through the generations – the industry now enables them to remain living in rural locations without having to seek work in the cities. In the past this effectively broke up the family unit and so I am extremely keen to support them.”

“Telephone wire is no longer used as we have sourced a special lead free alternative. It is surprising how strong and durable the baskets are,” he said. “They are not only colourful and attractive to look at, they have so many uses. I could not

wait to add them to my lines. As long as a product has a sound ecological background and is aesthetically pleasing as well as practical it has a home with me at Ecooldesigns.”

✘ “I am starting with three different sized baskets and hope to add more to the range later,” said Esmond.

Another new product currently in the pipeline is an aluminium table in the shape of a screw with a clear acrylic insert which lights up. “The light is right at the spot where the screwdriver would go in to turn the screw, that is the sort of quirky detail that really appeals to me.”

Esmond admits he is never short of ideas for new products. Despite having no real product design background he has a designer’s eye and has always had a passion for home decor.

“My background was in sales and I also ran a small record label in Edinburgh for a while,” he said. “Design was something I admired from afar. I had my own ideas for lots of products but wasn’t quite sure what to do about it.


A stint in the John Lewis furniture department again in the Capital changed all that.

“I really enjoyed my time at John Lewis and was surrounded by cool designs and pieces from many of the designers I had admired over the years. It was also a thrill to see new stock from emerging new designers come in,” said Esmond.

“I was also introduced to the concept of furniture and accessories being made from recycled materials as the “green revolution” took hold and customers began to question where items came from and what they were constructed from.”

“I had already had the idea for a company called Ecooldesigns – I was playing about with the word Ecological and added an O. I knew I wanted my products to have a cool look but to be made from reclaimed and recycled materials; have a real attention

to detail and to be sold at a reasonable price.”

Esmond teamed up with manufacturer Rizwan Shakil who he  describes as “simply brilliant”. He produced a mould for the dice and when the finished product emerged, a shiny super tactile dice made from recycled sandblast aluminium with six sides to choose from for placing small tealights, Esmond was in shock as to just how good it looked. The reaction from friends and family was similarly positive. “It’s the type of product you see and you want it,” he says.

Things really took off from there with Esmond meeting a number of influential business people through the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, one of whom – Chris Walters of Anderson Strathern – was really impressed with his business model.

Said Chris: “When I first saw Esmond’s products I could see that they had been manufactured to a high standard and the designs were really interesting. I was impressed with the ease in which Ecooldesigns had managed to outsource the production of their products to India, substantially reducing their cost base, but maintaining a high standard of quality in the end product. This is a great example of a small company using outsourcing as a method of reducing costs in order to create a competitive advantage.”

Esmond then hit upon the ideal of introducing speaker technology into the products, namely the Cool Fire Dice.

“This would make the product even more flexible, widening out its appeal from merely decorative. I could see the Cool Fire Dice working really well in the garden for example,” he said.

Other plans for [Ecooldesigns](#) include working in partnership with Edinburgh School of Art to bring other new products to the market. The students will help design new products which will be sold on the website and they will receive a percentage on each piece sold.

Said Esmond: "I don't think I will ever run out of ideas and I do sometimes feel a bit jealous when I see someone had brought something out that I too had thought of but now I am confident enough in my own abilities and my own business to know that we will hopefully be making more and more people sit up and take notice in the coming months."

"This years' Christmas market will be a test for us and I am confident of surprising even more consumers with our "Cool" designs!"

Ecool Designs Tel **0131 669 3167** or **07534 427000** or hello@ecooldesigns.com



