



"I'm only as good as my last piece of work. Without a client you have nothing."



Gary Bennett & David Paris

Originally united in their passion for surfing and carpentry, Gary Bennet and David Paris need no introduction as the owners and partners of Jahroc Furniture.

The two men share the ideal collaboration, with Gary at the helm of designing and crafting furniture while also responsible for exhibitions and commissions; and David managing the production side of the business, sourcing materials, and polishing furniture in their rammed limestone Kilcarnup workshop. Together, their wives Lara Bennett and Joanne Paris (also Gary's sister) co-manage the gallery. Much like the joins and grooves of their custom-made furniture, Jahroc is a well-oiled creative machine.

After working together for the past 30 years, Gary and David have much to be proud of - initially for the ground-breaking (in Western Australia at least) initiative which saw the conversion of York's Old Flour Mill in 1993. By transforming the historic and derelict four-storey building into a unique workspace and gallery, they revitalised the small Wheatbelt town; weekenders flocked to the iconic building, particularly during the annual jazz festival when the town swells to the thousands.

As successful as the York premises were, the surf beckoned and by 2002 they had established an outlet in Margaret River. Much restoration later - including the addition of a contemporary central pavilion - they had managed to achieve an enviable blend of work and wonderful lifestyle.

"I love my studio under my home in Gnarabup, where I do most of my designing while keeping a watchful eye on the surf out the front," Gary says.

Contemporary in design and predominantly working with native timbers, as well as stone and steel, the timber the two men collect is one of their greatest inspirations.

"I find each piece has its own unique spirit I like to work with and honour," Gary declares. "The powerful energy that exists in our region is unique. The colours and light are vivid here,



and the forests, ocean and rock formations are a constant inspiration."

Impressively self-taught, Gary admits his earlier pieces were rudimentary. Working with whatever he could lay his hands on, he often repurposed timber from old houses and stone collected in Toodyay.

"We've taken many turns and twists design wise over the years," he says.

The pair are now blessed to work with fine materials such as Marri, Blackbutt, Jarrah and Sheoak, with the wood making a statement about their evolution.

Currently working on a Karri Burl coffee table, Gary has recently been inspired to craft timber in its most natural form: "I have always done it to a degree but lately I've been lucky enough to be able to let myself go and really let the timber do

the talking."

Knowing where to find their exquisite timbers is also part of the journey, as they opt for salvaged pieces rather than tampering with the magnificent tree-scape.

Having collected more than 50 industry awards for their handcrafted furniture, it's looking highly likely the pair will fulfil their dream of continuing an existence abundant with creativity, surfing, yoga, family and friends. A one-off Jahroc design isn't simply a piece of furniture, it's the reincarnation of a slice of the South West adorning homes and businesses all over the globe.

Jahroc Galleries supports dozens of local artists with exhibitions featuring the art of jewellers, painters, glass blowers, ceramicists, sculptors, wood-turners and photographers. Visit www.jahroc.com.au