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Left: With Alloy, Jonathon Warner has found the perfect expression of his passion for good functional design.

# metal as anything

From canisters to cufflinks – this Perthsider has created an upmarket range of metalwares that's set to shine, both here and overseas. By Chris Pearson

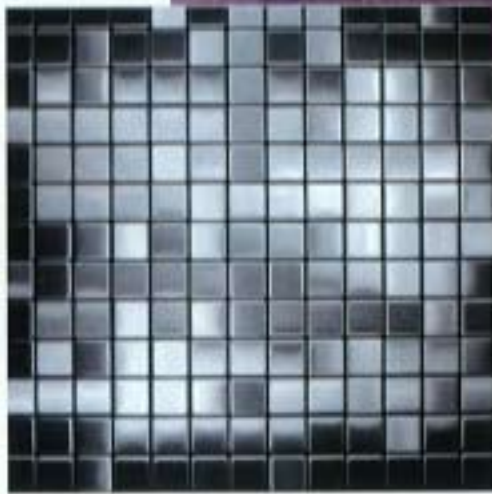
"Alloy: a substance composed of two or more metals which have been intimately mixed by fusion." *The Macquarie Dictionary.*

What better name for a range of chic metal homewares and personal accessories? Under the Alloy brand, Perth-based designer Jonathon Warner has produced everything from napkin rings, candleholders, canisters, cufflinks, dishes and plates to shot glasses in low-sheen metal, using state-of-the-art lathe technology. In this case, the elements that are "intimately" melded are titanium, 18/10 stainless steel and polished acrylic. Warner adds inspiration, creativity and design know-how to the magical formula.

The results of this modern-day alchemy are deceptively simple pieces, unadorned, with no awkward angles, showing an obvious debt to industry and agriculture, both in their aesthetic and in their sheer practicality.

As Warner explains, the Alloy range embodies "the fusion of form and function in innovative, minimal and modern design."

For example, the form of a farm rainwater tank was the starting point for a set of canisters in graduating sizes. Warner derived the inspiration for these when he was studying for a Bachelor of Business degree in Agriculture.



Far left and above: The flat dishes have many applications – use them as containers or simply for decoration. Left: Worner's new range of stainless-steel mosaics, which features in an exclusive New York hotel.

Unleash the lustre – sensuous, contemporary forms, fashioned from metal, are fused with sheer functionality in these highly desirable designer objects

So how did this Perth boy become involved in designing objects that grace the tables of Australia and now even the world?

From a young age, Worner had a passion for design and architecture. And, periodically, he worked at his father's company, Pressform Engineering in Perth, which produces components for the mining, energy and building sectors.

Lying in bed on February 17, 1998, as Worner tells it, he had a vision. He asked himself, why not use the connection with Pressform to realise his passion for design? So the elegant Alloy range had its genesis in the unglamorous bump and grind of heavy industry. And why, he asked himself, is stylish metalware imported from Denmark, Italy and Germany and not made here? Little wonder the crisp parallel lines, matt finish and clean geometry are more than a passing reference to the likes of Steltonware.

A stunning newcomer is a range of mosaic stainless-steel tiles, which has surfaced in a yet-to-be-named Ian Schrage-

designed hotel in New York. There you will find them hugging the walls and floors in the bathrooms. Worner drew his inspiration from the Adelphi Hotel in Melbourne, where aluminium plates cover the external walls. From aluminium to stainless steel was no quantum leap, so he set about creating the slinky tiles that later seduced the high-profile Schrage.

The tile range is made by a process likened to a prized family recipe, but, like the creator of those legendary 11 secret herbs and spices, Worner is tight-lipped about the method and ingredients. Schrage glimpsed them on Alloy's web site, and the rest, as they say ...

Now Worner has opened an office in Sydney, dividing his time between the western and eastern seaboard. Overseas trips, too, are totting up the frequent-flyer points, because, as well as the US, he exports to the UK, Europe and Asia. Expect to see a lot more of Alloy when Worner shows his metal to the world.

*Alloy: all enquiries, (08) 9279 8855.*