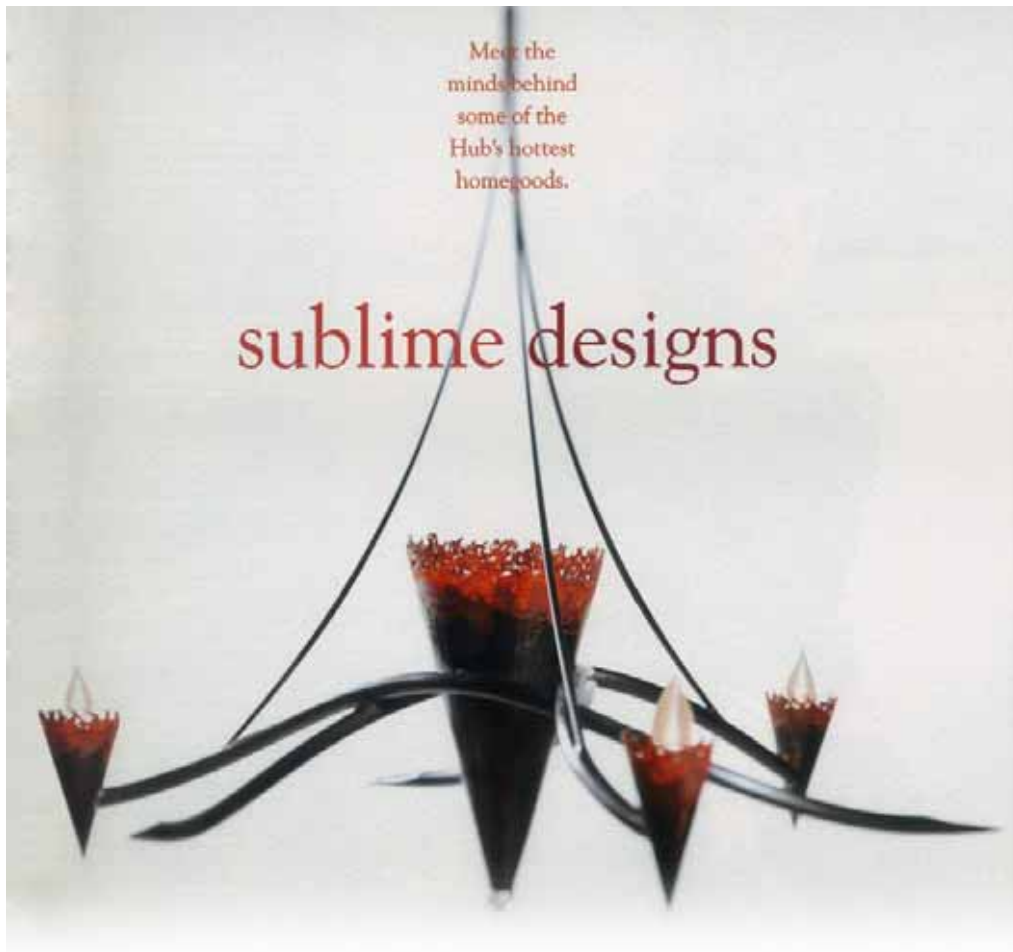


THE IMPROPER BOSTONIAN



BY REGINA COLE PHOTOGRAPHS BY TONY SCARPETTA

If Boston's interior-design world has a reputation for anything, it's for quality and a refined aesthetic. That results in a better-than-average selection of home-furnishing products in retail stores, in to-the-trade showrooms and in creators' workshops and studios. And as good as interior design is here in Beantown, it's getting better all the time. We're in a creative boom: All around us are interesting new functional and beautiful products.

We've chosen a few of the best of the new and ferreted out the creative talents behind them. Some are long established in their fields; others are bold

newcomers who are striking out in unexpected directions. Some sell their products in familiar Boston retail outlets or in shops of their own, while others sell directly out of their studios. All of their products can be found on Web sites.

There are new spins on classic motifs, time-honored objects in unexpected materials, and some redefinitions of long-standing traditions. What these five designers have in common is a whole lot of talent, a lively sensibility, a fresh way of looking at the most familiar objects and a willingness to make the useful whimsical or the beautiful functional. Above all, their products are surpassingly stylish.

LIGHTING BY DAVID TONNESEN

David Tonnesen, the artist responsible for Legal Sea Foods' monumental waterfront fish sculpture, has an artisanal background. "I was a jewelry designer who wanted to work with bigger things," he says. His first foray into metal work on a large scale resulted in a lighting fixture for a Brookline restaurant. It was a hit, and more restaurants and clubs sought him out for his original illuminated metalwork.

"After a while, patrons who noticed and liked the lighting began to ask about me, and now about

50 percent of my work is in residential interiors."

David makes the sconces, chandeliers and standing lamps in his Somerville studio. He likes to work in mild steel which, when blackened, resembles wrought iron. Stainless steel produces a more contemporary look, and sometimes he adds decorative heft with bronze accents.

"I like to have a foot in the present and one in the future," he says. "But no matter what the style, my lighting casts interesting shadows on the ceiling and walls. I like asymmetric things that look

different from every angle."

After making site visits during the design stage, David lets clients visit his studio to see their fixtures taking shape. He is also on-site for the installation of finished pieces. Prices start at \$500, and pieces take from two weeks to two months to complete.

David Tonnesen's studio is Studio C 113, in the Brickbottom Artist's Building, 1 Fitchburg Street, Somerville, Mass. 617-666-9883, www.davidtonnesen.com