

### Rotational mould tools from Midas help Shnug sit pretty

Midas Pattern Company has manufactured the rotational mould tooling for an award-winning seat designed by Hong Kong based Shnug Ltd. Winner of a 2016 Red Dot Design Award, among the main challenges associated with creating 'the Shnug' was the generation of complex aluminium clam-type tooling with a carefully crafted split line.

Shnug Ltd creates and produces innovative social seating for commercial, private and public spaces. Around three years ago the designer and founder of the business, Adrian Halkes, was in discussions with a client who was looking to remodel a club venue. In particular, the pair talked about the seating behaviour of club visitors in social situations, with 'perching' on items of furniture and non-furniture a specifically identifiable trend.



“It occurred to me that to the best of my knowledge no one had designed a chair for use in social venues that could accommodate two people; one where the second person could sit alongside the main occupier,” says Mr Halkes. “In effect, the chair I had in my mind had only one arm, which was load bearing for someone to sit on while someone else is sat in the main body of the chair.”

The result of Mr Halkes' thinking was the Shnug – social seating for two with added space utility via an innovative form. In short, its asymmetrical shape offers seating for a second person, or serves as a tray for personal items.

“We initially considered wood covered with leather but it was too heavy and expensive, so after researching a number of alternative manufacturing processes we settled on rotational moulding, which is highly suitable for larger mouldings,” says Mr Halkes. “With the design concept finalised we progressed to CAD models and first prototypes, working closely with Midas for the mould tools.”

Midas manufactures both cast and CNC machined aluminium rotational mould tools in-house, specialising in complex multi-part tools, and the team’s experience was called to the fore on the Shnug project.

“On most rotational moulds the joint line appears on the top, or where the user’s hands mainly interact with the product,” explains Mr Halkes. “However, I refused to accept that and worked with Midas to develop an alternative solution. I set about introducing a flow line midway between the bottom and top of the chair that would both serve as an attractive design feature and a way for Midas to mask the joint line. This proved to be one of the most challenging aspects of the project but we had a fantastic response from Midas on this and throughout the project.”

Rotational moulded from polyethylene, the entirely hollow Shnug is recyclable after many years of use, while its robust surface withstands the considerable stress of commercial use both indoors and out. Bars, lounges, clubs, cafes and poolside venues are all target markets for this striking furniture item. A further attraction of the design is its small footprint, which makes it particularly applicable to venues where space is an issue, while also aiding evacuation in the event of fire. It can be ordered in a range of six standard colours, or for bespoke projects, any colour in which commercial polyethylene is available. An accompanying ‘Shnuglet’, which serves as an ottoman, table or stool is also available (tooling again made by Midas), while future plans include upholstering the chair in leather.

Not content with simply reinventing the social chair market, Mr Halkes decided to enter his design in the prestigious Red Dot Design Awards 2016 and, to his delight, it won. A statement from the Red Dot jury reads: “Thanks to its trendy colour and curved design, this multipurpose chair achieves a high level of attention.”

According to the Urban Dictionary, ‘shnug’ is defined as a very affection type of hug. A fitting description for an exceedingly comfortable and eye-catching furniture item.