



Mesa Hotel, the hospitality range

Mesa Urban



Meet the designer

Designer Nick Holland was brought on board by Mesa Ceramics as creative director to conceive four new collections – he tells us more about the process.

Nick, you were tasked with designing these new ranges, and in essence, taking Mesa in a new direction entirely – was this a daunting challenge or something you had done before?

It was certainly a challenge for me – but it was also a great privilege. I have had the full support and encouragement of CEO Francisco Braga and this enthusiasm has permeated throughout the whole team at the factory. We have achieved extraordinary things in a very short time frame. This rarely happens in a manufacturing business and is a tribute to all concerned. In fact, more challenging than designing the new ranges has been the work done within the factory, masterminded by Francisco Braga in a very short timescale, to innovate and improve all the production systems, logistics and build the team. A remarkable achievement.

Does each collection represent something different, or can we expect an overarching theme?

Each collection has its own different and distinctive character. Different ranges will appeal to different markets and buyers and this is intentional. The themes range from artisanal inspiration to a more contemporary urban style. One thing they all have in common is that they draw on the strengths and skills of the factory, particularly with the beautiful reactive stoneware glazes and colours.

Who were you designing for when creating the product range?

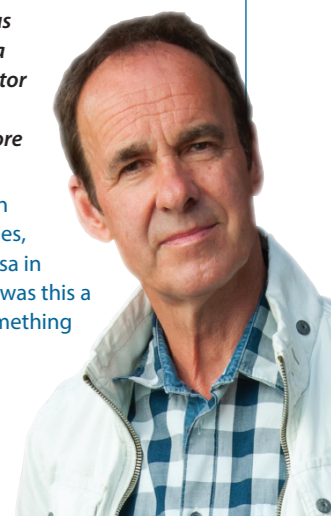
Each range is different and directed towards different customer profiles. My experience in international tableware markets was invaluable when formulating the concepts and creating the designs.

What were the stress points throughout the process – because it really is a huge undertaking.

Working as an external creative director, but very much part of the team, I felt a big responsibility as the company was relying on me to create the right design programme. As well as conceiving and designing the products I have been able to contribute ideas for marketing, to help reinforce the new direction of the business. The main stress point for me was working intensively to complete all the design work in such a short timescale. After that the whole Mesa team got right behind the project with enthusiasm and commitment to make it all happen.

Ambiente will see the official unveiling of your hard work – how do you see people reacting?

You never know, but I am very pleased with what we have achieved, and I hope people like what they see. I think it will really surprise many people how much the company and its products have moved on.



Nick Holland

A new era

Mesa Ceramics is entering 2020 with an abundance to talk about – a new factory, new management team and a new collection to be launched at Ambiente – company CEO Francisco Braga tells Tableware International more about Mesa's blossoming after a period of change

If, as they say, a change is as good as a rest, Mesa Ceramics will be fresh-faced at Ambiente.

A restructure at the company has seen a new management team fronted by CEO Francisco Braga – formerly of Vista Alegre – come on board.

The past six months has brought extraordinary changes to the company. A new management team, a new commercial and marketing team, an upgraded factory – think better capacity, flexibility and innovation after an investment in rollers, ram press and spray glazing – all designed to increase efficiency.

Ambiente hosts the unveiling of four new collections designed by Nick Holland who was brought in by

Francisco to pack a punch with the company's first launches.

The team at Mesa won't lie – this period of change has undoubtedly been a challenge for them – but what they have achieved since June 2019 when Francisco came on board, is quite simply remarkable, particularly in an industry not entirely renowned for its fast pace.

Building the factory and increasing their flexibility in catering for both the consumer and hospitality markets, has been the "most challenging and significant step in our journey", says Francisco. However, it has meant that Mesa Ceramics can meet their clients' demands for private label, cost-sensitive orders to the mass market, as well as the demands of HoReCa customers looking for product differentiation.

Part of the Mesa Ceramics overhaul has been bringing Nick Holland on board as freelance designer for the launch collections – he and Francisco worked together during their days at Vista Alegre and Francisco knew they operated effectively together.

"We were colleagues at Vista Alegre during a strong strategy of internationalisation for the company. Since we had to enter very distinct markets and distribution channels, we had to rapidly augment our design and new product development competencies. Nick becoming a freelancer with a lot of experience has presented as a huge opportunity for Mesa Ceramics."

Francisco explains that the company tasked Nick with "designing collections that showed our product development competences and technological innovation, especially our digital printing and reactive glazing. We wanted to follow the latest market trends in tableware to be able to develop collections that are trendy, modern and suitable for young consumers."

And that they have, four new collections will be presented at Ambiente – Mesa Uno, Mesa Urban, Mesa Rondo and Mesa Natura – and

already, retailers are reacting positively.

"Some of the top European and American retailers who we have shown our new collection to were really open and thrilled about it, the feedback was nothing but positive," says Francisco. "I firmly believe that the Mesa Ceramics collection will be very successful and commercial, and that is the right way to go."

Following the initial four-collection launch at Ambiente, the ranges will be extended.

"After Ambiente we aim to develop new pieces, decorations and colours for the existing collections, reinforcing the design commitment associated with reactive glazing and digital printing," Francisco adds.

His vision for the company is

clear, Francisco describes Mesa Ceramics as one of the most competent tableware companies in all of Europe.

"Our management board and teams have knowledge and experience in the largest ceramic manufacturers in Portugal, so we are confident in the future of the company. We also want to be recognised by the efforts we make on a daily basis to protect the environment by creating a sustainable factory."

It is this drive and ambition, coupled with hugely exciting new ranges, that makes Mesa Ceramics a must-visit at Ambiente – see them in Hall 6.2, Stand C97.

www.mesa-ceramics.com

The new collections

Mesa Urban – a contemporary tableware design of pure forms with semi-matt and gloss glaze combinations. Beautiful and functional stacking pieces with generous sizes. A modern classic design in urban style.

Mesa Uno – a modern stoneware design with cosy rounded shapes and a full range of items for casual dining. Iconic pieces with rustic reactive glazes in harmonising natural tones. Uno brings a touch of nature and warmth to the table.

Mesa Natura – an artisan-inspired set for all occasions with chunky bowls and dishes with unique shapes complemented by fabulous reactive glazes. Natural earth colours and textures and generous size pieces for oriental and creative cuisine or everyday use. Natura by name, inspired by nature.

Mesa Rondo – a sophisticated set with generous size plates, bowls and mugs, all with beautiful reactive glazes. The transition step on each piece makes a nice detail where the glaze falls. An elegant set for everyday and special occasions.

Mesa Uno



Mesa Natura



Mesa Rondo

Did you know?

Francisco Braga came on board at Mesa Ceramics with a new management team in June 2019.

Since then, he and his team, have been working tirelessly to oversee the rejuvenation of Mesa Ceramics, including a new factory with greater production capabilities and new collections.