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Brad Ascalon has had a productive year. In April, the 36-year-old industrial designer launched a glass-and-brass table lamp for Gaia&Gino; in May, it was both the Peasant table, for the nascent New York label Juniper, and the oak veneer and powder-coated steel Darwin table, Ascalon's first self-produced piece. In June, at NeoCon, he previewed his new Nestle contract seating collection—done in conjunction with Stylex—which will be available in 2014. And this October, with San Francisco gallery NWBLK, the New York-based designer debuts Rely—a trio of single-legged oculi that overlap to form a three-legged end table.

Brad Ascalon

As commissions for new furniture and lighting roll in, third-generation designer Brad Ascalon carries on the family tradition.

Photographs by Andrew Hetherington



Rely, it turns out, was the product of disarray: It came to Ascalon one night while he was tidying disheveled stacks of playing cards and poker chips after a game. "I wanted to translate that visual into a functional object in which each component had to rely on the others for structural integrity," he explains. "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts."

The same could be said for the busy designer's oeuvre. From the Upper East Side studio and home that he shares with his wife, Amy, and their Yorkie mix, Charlie Parker, Ascalon shows no sign of slowing. His recent works include furniture, product, packaging, and environmental design, for the likes of Ligne Roset (the Lovey table, perched like a tambourine atop a hi-hat stand) and Bernhardt Design (the boxy Pillar chair).

Ascalon earned his master's degree in industrial design from Brooklyn's Pratt Institute in 2005 and founded his studio in early 2006. Between the two events, *Wallpaper* named him one of the world's "Ten Most Wanted" emerging designers, despite the fact that he didn't have anything in production. "I was interning for Karim Rashid at the time," Ascalon says, "and that really boosted things, gave me a little clout. I've been working hard ever since to keep that snowballing."

Though a long career in design can be elusive, Ascalon's work ethic,

David Ascalon's circa-1998 sculpture *Resolve* (bottom) and Maurice Ascalon's tabletop designs (right) help inspire Brad's work, like his glass-and-steel Rely table for NWBLK (above).

and his pedigree, have him poised to achieve it. Though he tried to escape the family legacy with a stint in the music industry, Ascalon is a third-generation creator. He absorbed crafts skills—metal sculpture, welding and brazing, stained glass, mosaic—and a love for the warmth of traditional materials from his artistic father and grandfather. "This is why I rarely work with plastics or 'new' materials; there is still so much to say and do with the old ones," he says. Ascalon is no stranger to experimentation, though, developing techniques like water jet-cut stained glass and shattered mosaics.

Where he may have achieved his greatest balance of form and function is in the Carrara marble menorah he designed for Design Within Reach in 2011. It harks back to the Jewish-themed work of his grandfather and father in an austere, minimalist way that offers a modernist's take on age-old tradition. But unlike the somewhat more decorative Judaica of his forefathers, Ascalon has found a clean design language for his menorah. "I've always tried to break out of my predecessors' notions of what's possible."

—Shonquis Moreno

Family Business

Brad Ascalon's grandfather Maurice was born in 1913 into a Hasidic Hungarian shtetl as Moshe Klein. The designer, sculptor, and master silversmith studied art in Brussels and Milan and, in 1934, moved to British Palestine, where he set up the company Pal-Bell to manufacture decorative art and liturgical objects. His copper relief *The Scholar, the Laborer, and the Toiler of the Soil* clad the Jewish Palestine Pavilion at the 1939 New York World's Fair. In 1956, with his 12-year-old son, David (Brad's father), in tow, the family immigrated to America, eventually landing in Philadelphia. David, who focuses on large-scale sculpture and stained glass, now runs Ascalon Studios, which he founded with Maurice in 1977. Brad occasionally makes the drive to southern New Jersey to log a few hours in his dad's workshop.



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See more of the Ascalon family's generations of design.