trending now

Christopher Sandomenico understands the business of furniture design, yet he is keenly mindful of the beauty of furniture. "Upholstery is very sculptural, especially chairs," he explains. For the last 11 years, he has proven the point as a designer for Schnadig and its Caracole brand. In 2013, he earned his first Pinnacle Award from the American Society of Furniture Designers (ASFD) for an icon-in-the-making chair named Black Beauty. What was it like to be named a Pinnacle Award winner?

"It made me think of all the years it took to arrive at that point. Ironically, the last time I was at an ASFD dinner was when I was a student. Then, 10 years later [in 2013], I received an award in the very same room. It's like coming full circle, and it made me look back … my initial perception was the designer has creative license to design whatever is current or on-trend. Instead, your customers dictate the direction of style.

I was able to learn from my mistakes, apply the knowledge gained and continually challenge myself to do better. Black Beauty is an example of just that … understanding scale and proportions, and how the design elements relate. Equally important is to understand what the factories can do and knowing what materials can be sourced.

Trends change so quickly that the need for 'the next best thing' and 'at a cheaper price' are so incredibly difficult for any designer to embrace. We like to make great, long-lasting product. I wish more people would appreciate quality and not focus on price. The 'hand me down' concept no longer exists. Ask any kid today if they want their parents' furniture and they would quickly answer, 'No!'"

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Black Beauty (top right) by Christopher Sandomenico earned the ASFD 2013 Pinnacle Award for Stationary Upholstery. It's All Greek to Me (above left) recasts the Klismos chair and the OuiOui sofa is one of Caracole's best-selling frames. www.caracole.com

a thing of beauty

A sculptural, enticing chair named Black Beauty earned Christopher Sandomenico his first Pinnacle Award.