

Making it

The design industry thrives on creativity and the generation of great ideas. But great ideas are only half of the design process. What matters more than anything is achieving the perfect balance between form (how something looks) and functionality (how it works), and for that the industry needs expert partners who can convert ideas into reality. In this issue of GF, we dip into the world of retail, fashion, film and television on a visit to Inplas Fabrication in the UK to find out about some of the exciting design concepts that they have made real through their intimate knowledge of fabricating Perspex®.



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Inplas was established in 1995 by Trevor Smith, who worked previously for Amari, one of the UK's leading plastics distribution companies. It was at Amari, that Trevor met and worked for Keith Piggott, now Managing Director of Perspex Distribution Ltd (PDL), and where his love of Perspex and the creative industry first began. Now, after 28 years gathering knowledge and experience and 14 years spent driving Inplas on its journey of year-on-year growth to become one of the UK's leading fabricators, Trevor has lots of great stories to tell about taking his customers' concepts and making them real.

Trevor is one of PDL's longest-standing and most important customers. He told us: "I'm very proud of where we have got to. Sustaining growth, while retaining the very highest standard of delivery is always a challenge, but I'm lucky to be surrounded by some fantastic people. Our small team of eight is made up of highly skilled craftsmen and individuals who care passionately about providing the best possible solutions to our customers. I'd say that enthusiasm, technical know-how and a deep understanding of our materials and their fit within the design process is what defines us and makes us special. And if we can keep winning work within the broad spectrum of industries to which our expertise and being a Perspex approved fabricator allows us access, then our future is bound to be exciting!"

A brief visit to the Inplas website gives an instant view of the company's reach in terms of different projects that it has worked on. From architectural features, contemporary furniture and accessories to

point of sale equipment, TV studio sets and props for the film industry Inplas Fabrication has earned its place as a leader within the world of acrylics. Trevor continued: "Every single project that we handle requires us to get under the skin of our customer's brief so that we can challenge any potential issues before we get to the fabrication stage. And we need good tools to allow us to do this.

"We are continuing to invest in state-of-the-art technology and have just installed a MULTICAM 2000 series 3000 x 2000 CNC laser system, the very first of its kind in the UK. It allows us to cut, engrave and etch all kinds of large size materials. And I am waiting for the delivery of SolidWorks 3D design software, which will enable us to create spectacular 3D images of our clients' design specifications. Being able to visualize an end product in such an accurate way is the closest we can get to making something real before we start work!"

We talked about connections with fashion, retail, film and TV, so where has Inplas Fabrications' work ended up? Following is a brief tour of the world they have helped create through their skills with Perspex.

In Film: 'glass' elevators used in the blockbuster movie *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, featuring Johnny Depp were made using 25mm, 30mm and 40mm clear Perspex. The elevators were given a stunning finish using a brand new bonding technique to ensure perfect joint clarity. Work on *Thunderbirds The Movie*, involved moulding the three-piece roof for Lady Penelope's pink limousine, along with many other items for the sets. Inplas has also provided

real

Image (1-3) Intricate patterns inspired by nature were cut into Clear Perspex to create a stunning backdrop for this advertising campaign for Boodles, a high-end group of jewellers.
 (4) Inplas created this studio set for Inside Sport programme. (5-6) Another iconic TV studio for one of the UK's longest running football programmes, Match of the Day.



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commissions for James Bond movies; Die Another Day and Casino Royale, the Harry Potter films, Flight 93, Children of Men, Breaking & Entering and The Golden Compass. And there are lots more blockbusters in the pipeline; the New Gulliver's Travels starring Jack Black, Clash of the Titans, Sherlock Holmes and The Prince of Persia.

On TV: the 2008 Wimbledon studio, Match of the Day studio (the UK's longest running football show), The National Lottery show equipment, as well as work on project for Eastenders (weekly soap, launched in 1985) and regular entertainment features such as The Graham Norton Show and The Paul O'Grady Show.

In Retail: from in-store fashion props for fashion brand, Uniqlo (featured in the last issue of GF), to specific merchandising campaigns for up-market jewellers, such as Boodles, to point of sale solutions for world famous shops such as Harvey Nichols and Harrods.

And where does PDL fit into this exciting business of making things real? Trevor concluded: "I have real admiration for the company. They have a fantastic range of products, great stock levels and a constant flow of new ideas, which I can use to inspire my customers. Nothing is ever too much trouble and their excellent delivery record and all round reliability means that I can have the products here when I need them. Ideal partners who are head and shoulders above the rest."