



*Left: Table for Two creators, from left to right: David White who constructed the piece; Lynda Simmons of Neil Simmons Architects and David Howell of Lane Priest Interiors. Below: The table rests on a steel girder with chairs made by Gary Hunt. Below left: Close up detail of the design shows drawers which slide back into the underbelly.*

Straddling a five metre curved steel girder, "Table for Two", constructed by David White, is based on the concept of making an offering of a precious gift. Rich with symbolism (conflict, nautical elements, Pacifica), the design explores a variety of concepts which place it in a strong New Zealand context.

Its designers — David Howell of Lane Priest Interiors and Lynda Simmons of Neil Simmons Architects wanted to accentuate the more decorative quality of Melteca. Says Simmons: "We designed this piece especially for the competition so we wanted to be able to use Melteca in ways not used



before. We wanted to treat it like a precious metal."

David Howell adds that Melteca is already well recognised for its more common, functional uses. "For example, because it's easy to clean it's well-suited to kitchen cabinetry and shelves. But in this case it's how you interpret the product, not its intrinsic value which is important."

He explains that the table is

mounted on the steel to represent the precious item being raised up and placed carefully on a pedestal.

Melteca has been treated as an inlay in solid oak, in an unusual chessboard design using black velvet, silver grey, white and blue Melteca. A white and blue Pacific motif breaks the formality of the chessboard design and serves to "anchor" the table.

The form is about the confrontational aspect of two people coming together at a dining table, sitting at opposing sides, on either side of the steel. The board game where two people are diametrically opposed, emphasises the concept of conflict. It is an idea which the designers feel is highly appropriate for a dining table, where people meet out of

necessity, but use the opportunity to discuss, debate and argue.

The underbelly of the table is elegantly curved like that of a boat and the ends are rounded similar to the shapes associated with a Viking ship. The table is bent through its radius by a series of saw cuts. Hidden end drawers have Melteca chassis.

Intended as a one-off piece, it was designed to fit into large spaces such as Simmons' lounge. "A lot of our friends live in studio spaces, so it could be set up in spaces like that."

Cabinetmaker David White says the design represented a challenge for him as the inlay had to be right first time. "Because it is already the finished product you are working with (as opposed to some-

thing that can be sanded back), it has low tolerances which makes construction difficult. But, the end result demonstrates that it can be done. Melteca is more versatile than people realise."

All the inlay pieces had to be created first before piecing them into the body of the table. White says it was a complex job because of the number of pieces involved.

Although "Table for Two" is unusual, the designers assure the task of creating it was no different from any other they are confronted with during the course of their work. "You normally have clients who require solutions to fulfil their needs. In this case the client was Melteca and we used the product in the way we wanted it used." ■