

TIME

Style&Design



The Creative Edge

How Luxury Influences
the Mass Market

Who's Who

The New Contemporaries

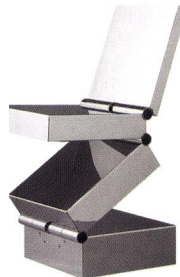
Cutting-edge design.
 Uncommon influence.
 Unconventional vision.
 From art to architecture,
 they're shaping the future

THE INNOVATOR

Ron Arad

54, London

Below: *Box in Four Movements*, 1994, and *Sit*, 1992, both part of an Arad retrospective in New York City next month



CLAIM TO FAME: Ron Arad straddles the boundaries between art, design and architecture. A native of Israel, he moved to London in 1973 to study architecture. But, he says, "I found myself sucked into the design world." Today Arad is one of the few designers whose products acquire nearly instant classic status.

BIG BREAK: His Rover chair became an icon of 1980s design. "After a year where no one was interested in it, it became the must-have piece of furniture," he recalls. It was only the beginning. He designed a stereo made of concrete. And his undulating Bookworm bookshelf for Kartell was among the best-selling products of the late 1990s. Originally it was conceived as a tempered-steel studio piece, but Arad translated it into colorful flexible plastic for the home market. "As we speak, there is a machine extruding plastic for it 24 hours a day," he notes.

DESIGN TOUCHSTONES: "When you are in the process of designing, you have to take one route, knowing there are other varied routes to take," says Arad. "So you save them for next time." One route he's taking now is creating a furniture line for Corian made from blown aluminum. As part of a New York City retrospective opening in May, he will embed solid surfaces with fiber optics, "so that an innocent white wall can show low-resolution films." —By Lisa McLaughlin

