



FRANK BAUER

HOT DESIGNER Light fantastic

Hector Serrano's trajectory to fame as London's most talked about young furniture designer has been steep. He arrived from Valencia a year ago to study at the RCA; by the time of his graduation show this summer he had already had one of his designs – the 'Supa Patata' lamp – picked up by off-beat Dutch design house Droog, attracted international attention at April's Milan Furniture Fair, and most recently won the £15,000 top prize in July's Peugeot Design Awards. 'This year has been a real challenge for me,' he says. 'When I came to London, I was beginning from zero. I'd been studying five years in Spain. I had people I knew, people who knew my work. Then I came here and had to start again.'

Leaving Spain has also given him the chance to pursue his own projects and work in a more experimental way, garnering inspiration from everyday objects he finds around him. The 'Supa Patata' light, a coloured latex balloon filled with salt, was inspired by some flour-filled dolls Serrano bought from a street stall selling children's toys. His 'Top Secret' light is a big ball of shredded clear plastic strips, some bearing official-looking messages, held together in a net similar to those used to hold fruit. And the 'Siesta' water bottle, developed in collaboration with two other students and the design of which Serrano says he is most proud, combines the familiar ridges of a plastic water bottle with traditional craftsmanship. Hand-made from Alicante clay, the porous vessels 'sweat' water keeping the contents cool, and are deceptively lightweight.

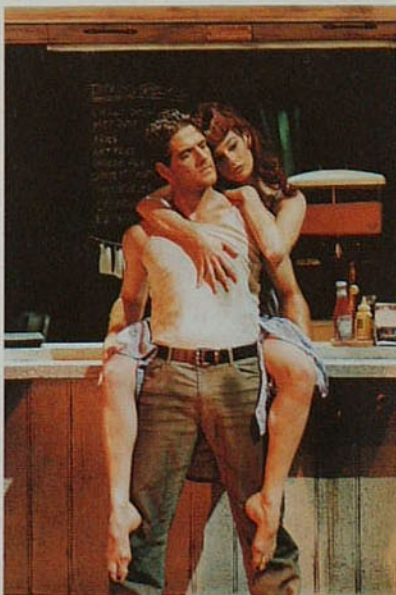
Despite Serrano's earnest manner, his work has a distinct playfulness and sense of fun. In this sense it has the same spirit as London's other famous Spanish design trio, El Ultimo Grito, who

brought us the 'Mind the Gap' coffee table-cum-magazine rack and the 'What Goes Down Must Come Up' laundry basket, also nominated in this year's Peugeot awards. Serrano was taught by Roberto Feo of El Ultimo Grito in Valencia so it was a particularly ironic twist when he walked away with the top prize.

Rather than returning to the sun and beaches of Valencia, Serrano will be staying in London where

he feels there are more opportunities for young designers. 'Here young people are the people everyone's looking at. In Spain you have to be working for 15 years to get credibility.' Despite his economic windfall, for the foreseeable future Serrano will operate from his north London flat, which he shares with four other people. And his next project? 'Surviving the next year.'

Jessica Cargill Thompson



HOT DANCE Cutting edge

Matthew Bourne is nothing if not energetic. Not only does his company, Adventures in Motion Pictures, have a new show rolling into the Old Vic next month, it has formed an alliance with the theatre which is scheduled to come into place in 2002, when the Old Vic will become AMP's London home.

During AMP's initial four-year residency, the Old Vic and Bourne's company will jointly produce six new shows. One of the first will be a musical version of Tim Burton's 'Edward Scissorhands'.

But first the focus is on 'The Car Man', which is subtitled 'An Auto-Erotic Thriller'. The first name neatly refers to the score, Bizet's 'Carmen' (though in a non-vocal adaptation which ignores the opera's plot). The second pun clues us in to the world of film noir, particularly 'The Postman Always Rings Twice', and all those steamily repressed backwaters so beloved of Tennessee Williams. Here, a frustrated sexpot with a dud of a husband falls for a hunky drifter with predictable results – and a lot of unexpected twists. *Allen Robertson*

BILL COOPER