

## The Family Way:

Having followed in the footsteps of his furniture designer father, Christchurch's Cameron Foggo is embarking on a solo project.



THERE'S A CERTAIN MALL in a certain gentrified area of Christchurch – Merivale Mall, Merivale – which is home to a certain type of Christchurchian. Any former or present private schoolkid worth their salt spent their formative years hanging out here, eating sushi and slurping frozen yoghurts after school, and in their earlier years, if they were a true Merivalian, would have been dragged here with their mothers to stock up on organic chickens from the supermarket and expensive starter bras from Quinns.

Such trips would almost certainly have entailed a particular Christchurch ritual that all genuinely spoilt Cantabrians could relate to – a visit to Belle. The first store for local couple Marj and Collin Foggo, Belle started out stocking the imported upholstery fabrics and chi-chi knick-knacks that filled the homes of the wealthy locals in the early 1980s. In the '80s and '90s, that meant faux-aged bronze cherubs and Italian lamps, over-plump cushions and myriad throw rugs to keep the ubiquitous Labrador hairs off their owners' expensive sofas. But Belle has blossomed and grown up over the years, and at the same time the owners' son, Cameron Foggo, has grown with it.

A graduate of graphic design and illustration from Auckland's School of Art and Wellington Design School, young Foggo started out modelling his father's furniture designs for manufacture. Gradually moving from straight-up following his dad's designs, to tweaking and interpreting them with his own twists, to designing pieces himself from scratch, Foggo's career has followed the classic path of apprentice-to-designer that is more often seen in traditional Italian craftsman families. The boy learned a trade from his father, honed it with formal education, and developed into a designer of his own right with time and experience.



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The Foggo empire (for in New Zealand, the family’s business is truly that) now includes Corso de Fiore, an interiors store importing the most exquisite furniture and design items from all over the world, and many from New Zealand; Soloproject.co.nz, an online store stocking seriously bold and contemporary pieces from around the globe, including Cameron’s own work; and Nonn, Cameron’s website featuring his own designs and art.

Cameron’s sense of style has most certainly been influenced by his father’s – this is a man who can arrange a bookshelf to make it look like a work of art – and his background as an artist, and is noticeable for its clean lines and minimalist but soft finishes. Devoid of too-hard edges or scratchy surfaces, his furniture is modern but undeniably follows the traditional rules of European workmanship. A leather armchair has a metal frame and flat leather surfaces, but the leather is soft, stitched in panels, and has the perfect amount of give. Hard pieces in wood and metal belie their make-up with arching lines and graceful curves, rendering a solid hunk of matter into a usable and touchable work of art.

Currently on a later-life OE, (Cameron is 36), he has landed in London to experience the best of Europe’s design. A recent trip to the Milan design fair has filled him with inspiration and a renewed love of Kiwiana, and trawling Portobello market and the over-priced antique-slash-vintage-slash-cheap-painted-chairs stores of Golborne Road has renewed his appreciation for super high-quality work. The pieces in his head, ripe for rendering real, are soon to become reality, just as soon as he’s ready to throw himself back into production. Thanks to his parents’ expansion of the business, and the internet, Christchurch – and the world – has a treat in store. **AD**

[www.soloproject.co.nz](http://www.soloproject.co.nz)

**OPPOSITE,**  
**CLOCKWISE FROM**  
**TOP LEFT: So**  
**Long Credenza,**  
**Kayo bowls, Boffa**  
**Sofa. THIS PAGE,**  
**CLOCKWISE FROM**  
**TOP LEFT: Lulu**  
**Table, Cameron**  
**Foggo, NW Chairs,**  
**Kenzo Table.**