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At Sotheby's New York this November, the world will get a unique tutorial from two masters of design. Collaborating for the first time, Apple's Jonathan Ive and his chum, the equally acclaimed Marc Newson, have selected or made more than 40 objects for an auction to benefit Bono's Product (Red) anti-H.I.V. campaign. Meeting with Ive and Newson, PAUL GOLDBERGER explores the shared obsession and philosophy behind everything from iPhones to jumbo-jet interiors

**APPLE SCRUFFS**  
Marc Newson and Jonathan Ive, photographed on Apple's campus, in Cupertino, California. No corporate secrets were harmed in the making of this picture.

# DESIGNING MEN

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PHOTOGRAPH BY ANNIE LEIBOVITZ

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**T**he Royal Suite at Claridge's in London is not where you would expect to be meeting with Jonathan Ive, the man who designed the iPod, the iPhone, the MacBook Air, and just about everything else that has made Apple the temple of holy minimalism, or with Marc Newson, the industrial designer whose airplane interiors, chairs, watches, jewelry, and clothing have made him, along with Ive, among the most influential modern designers in the world. The Royal Suite is the opposite of sleek. The walls are not white, the carpets are not gray, the furniture is not by Mies van der Rohe. Never mind Ive's aesthetic, or Newson's. In the stiff formality of this sprawling, ornate suite there's barely a hint even of the Art Deco that brings many of the other rooms at Claridge's out of the 19th century. The suite's deep-blue dining room, which seats 10, looks as if it had been conceived as a place to sign a treaty.

Ive, Apple's chief of design, had come

punctuated charity set up by Bono and Bobby Shriver in 2006 to support international efforts to fight the H.I.V. epidemic in Africa. Two one-of-a-kind pieces—a metal desk and a special Leica camera—were designed by Ive and Newson in collaboration, specially for the auction. Several others, like a customized Steinway grand piano and a Georg Jensen silver pitcher, are variations on existing objects that Ive and Newson both liked and got the manufacturers to agree to tweak for the sale, generally by adding something red. (The Steinway appears to be entirely white, but when you lift its lid, the underside turns out to be painted an intense, brilliant red, while the pitcher has a red enameled interior.) A few other items, such as a circa-1990 Russian cosmonaut's space suit and a sketch for one of Elvis Presley's stage costumes from 1970, are objects Ive and Newson found and decided that they liked well enough to include in the auction as is.

We were meeting in the Royal Suite partly because Ive was staying in a more conventional room down the hall, but just as much, I suspect, because that is how Apple does things: elaborately and curiously. Ive rarely appears in public or gives interviews—even in Apple's famous product launches, he usually shows up on a video—and his company design studio in Cupertino is harder to get into than the Pentagon. We've had conversations about his work over the last several years that have never led to a full-fledged interview because Apple's P.R. executives have never given him the O.K. to speak to me on the record, or to let me into the studio. With the (Red) auction approaching, however, Apple softened its hard-line stance, at least somewhat. Our first meeting to talk about the (Red) project had been set for the Apple headquarters in Cupertino, where Newson had gone for several days'

was caught in some trivial game of espionage instantly evaporated. Both men are as relaxed as their Apple-chosen settings are formal. In San Francisco, Ive, who is 46, was wearing a T-shirt and white jeans; Newson, 50, was in red sneakers and a pair of casual striped pants that looked like mattress ticking. (At Claridge's, Ive would wear shorts.) They both love to talk, frequently finish each other's sentences, and seem to exist in a state of cordial détente with their more formal corporate handlers. There were some sodas and a bottle of Veuve Clicquot on a sideboard. Ive opened the champagne, poured three glasses, and started to tell me why, after more than a decade as the head of design for the most obsessively design-oriented consumer-products company in the world, he was having a good time working with Newson.

**I**t wasn't, he explained, because the one-off project gave him an escape from the rigorous design culture of Apple, where every detail is the subject of intense obsession—inside and outside the company. That culture may have been inspired by Ive's friend and patron, the late Steve Jobs, but at this point Apple's image is as much Ive's as anyone's, and he has no desire to toss it aside. While Newson's work is a bit different from Ive's cool minimalism—he is a wide-ranging designer with a love of color and of sensual curves whose works are often marked by a futuristic, vaguely Jetson-like flair—the two men share a fundamentally similar philosophy of design. They both believe that design involves much more than surface appearance, they are both obsessive about details, and neither is fond of compromise. For the (Red) auction, Ive and Newson looked for pieces of design that they felt represented the same determined attitude they brought to their own work.

"We are both fanatical in terms of care

## "VERY FEW PEOPLE HAVE THE

from the company's headquarters in Cupertino, in Silicon Valley, to meet with Newson, his close friend, who lives in London and runs his own independent design firm, Marc Newson Ltd., to put the finishing touches on the first project they have ever collaborated on. In an effort that is part connoisseurship, part creativity, and part curatorship, the two designers have assembled a group of more than 40 objects that will be auctioned at Sotheby's in New York on November 23 to benefit Product (Red), the eccentrically

work with Ive. But three hours before the meeting was scheduled to start, I received a text message telling me to go instead to San Francisco, some 50 miles to the north, and wait for further instructions in the lobby of the Mandarin Oriental Hotel. After a 45-minute wait, one of Apple's press-relations people appeared and escorted me to another treaty-signing-worthy suite, this one on the 38th floor.

After a few minutes at the Mandarin, Ive and Newson appeared, and the sense that I

and attention to things people don't see immediately," Ive said. "It's like finishing the back of a drawer. Nobody's going to see it, but you do it anyway. Products are a form of communication—they demonstrate your value system, what you care about."

"You discover that very few people have the level of perfection we do. It is actually very sick," Newson said. "It is neurotic."

Later, waving his hand around the Claridge's suite, Ive said, "All of us in this room see the same things, the same objects,

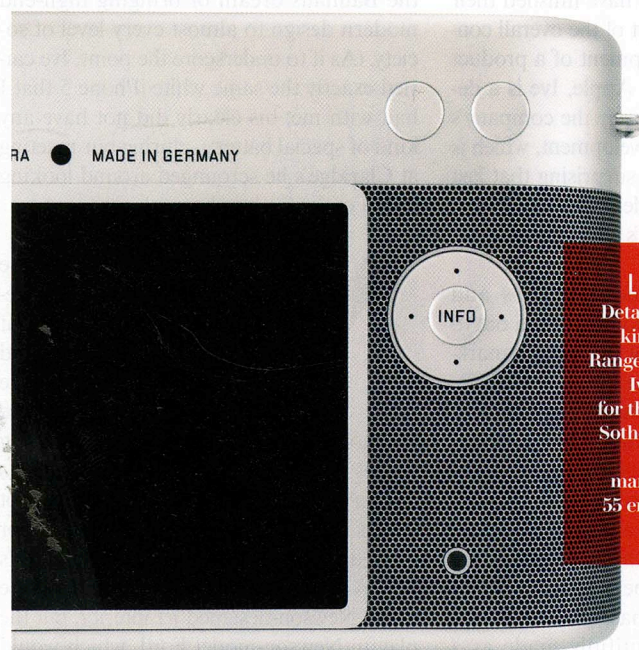
but Marc and I see what's behind them."

"We are both obsessed with the way things are made," Newson said. "The Georg Jensen pitcher—I'm not even sure I love the way it looks, but I love how it is made starting with a sheet of silver."

"We seldom talk about shapes," Ive said, referring to his conversations with Newson. "We talk about process and materials and how they work."

"It's not about form, really—it's about a lot of other things," Newson said. Both designers are fascinated by materials; they understand that the properties of a material affect the way an object is made, and that the way it is made ought to have some connection to the way it looks. Theirs is a physical world, and for all that their shared sensibility might seem to be at the cutting edge, it is really a different thing entirely from the avant-garde in design today, which is the realm of the 3-D printer, where digital technology creates an object at the push of a button, craftsmanship is irrelevant, and the virtual object on the computer screen can be more alluring than the real thing.

Ive is the son of an English silversmith, and Newson, who grew up in Australia, studied jewelry design and sculpture; both were raised to value craft above all. It's ironic that Ive, who has had such a big hand in the rise of digital technology, is made so unhappy, even angry, by the way that technology has led to a greater distance between designers and hands-on, material-shaping skills. "We are in an unusual time in which objects are designed graphically, on a computer," Ive said. "Now we have people graduating from college who don't know how to make something themselves. It's only then that you understand the characteristics of a material and how you honor that in the shaping. Until you've actually pushed metal around and done it yourself, you don't understand."



#### LEICA VIRGIN

Details of the one-of-a-kind Leica Digital Rangefinder, designed by Ive and Newson for the (Red) auction at Sotheby's in New York. Tooling and manufacturing took 55 engineers a total of 2,149 hours.

## LEVEL OF PERFECTION WE DO. IT IS ACTUALLY VERY SICK."

Part of what makes so many of the Apple products that bear Ive's imprint so extraordinary is how neatly their minimalism seems to reflect the invisible magic of the silicon chips within and how far they are from the kinds of things that you associate with the word "machine"—how resolutely un-mechanical they are, in other words. They aren't crafted objects in an artisanal sense. But while an iPhone seems so right and natural as an ex-

pression of the Digital Age, it is also a thing you want to touch, and to hold. The MacBook Air is beautiful to look at, but it makes you want to touch its keys. Ive's designs aren't just lovely in an abstract way, as if they were pieces of minimalist sculpture. They are real objects in the real world, to be touched and held and used and not just looked at. While they have none of the moving parts we associate with machines, they were designed by someone who knew and understood how things were before computers, and who does

not want to throw away everything about the world of real objects, even as he works to develop an aesthetic that reflects a digital age.

Steve Jobs did not bring Ive to Apple. The designer joined the company in 1992, after its consulting contract with his London design studio, Tangerine, turned into the offer of a full-time position. Jobs was not even there; he had been dismissed seven years earlier, and it would be another five years before he returned, a period during which Ive, frustrated at what he perceived as a diminishing respect for

design at the company, came close to resigning and returning to England. When Jobs came back to the company, in 1997, determined to bring his own austere, elegant aesthetic to its products, he found in Ive a sympathetic, willing, and talented partner, and the two became close friends.

In some ways they were an odd pair. Ive has a gentle, easygoing manner, and his intensity is leavened by warmth. No one ever described Jobs as easygoing. But the two shared an obsession with the details of consumer products, and like Ive—and Newson as well—Jobs thought that almost everything that was on the market was terrible. With Jobs's support, Ive built the Apple design studio into what it is: in effect, a research laboratory where aesthetics and functionality are given equal weight. The fallacy of most companies producing industrial or consumer products, Ive has said, is that they think of design as a frill you add on at the end, after the engineers have finished their work, rather than as part of the overall concept guiding the development of a product from the beginning. At Apple, Ive is a designer who is also effectively the company's head of research and development, which is why it was perhaps not surprising that last fall he was given the added responsibility of overseeing the company's software design.

**T**he partnership Jobs and Ive developed turned out to be one of the most remarkable, not to say prolific, relationships in the history of product design. Jobs wanted Apple's products not to work like anyone else's and not to look like anyone else's, and he and Ive agreed on almost everything, including the far-fetched notion that it ought to be possible to create a product for the mass market that is as elegant and as beautifully made as a

managed to manufacture an object designed to his demanding specifications that could still be affordable by the mass market.

The democratization of high modern design was a dream that began with the early modernists in Europe nearly a century ago, and for a long time it was mostly an illusion. The Bauhaus designers in Germany in the 1920s, for example, espoused theories about modern design as a popular movement, but they produced mainly expensive, handcrafted objects. The rare Bauhaus designs that have become common, like Marcel Breuer's Cesca dining chair of cane and tubular steel, are generally compromised versions, cheap copies that are easier to manufacture than the more complex originals. Jonathan Ive's designs for Apple are different: the mass-market version is the pure version, done without compromise. Ive, who was knighted last year, is one of the first designers to have actually achieved the Bauhaus dream of bringing high-end modern design to almost every level of society. (As if to underscore the point, Ive carried exactly the same white iPhone 5 that I had with me; his clearly did not have any kind of special battery—during our meeting at Claridge's he scrounged around looking for an outlet for his charger.)

**N**ewson hasn't had quite the same impact as Ive—no designer in our time has—but the breadth of his work and his determination to see design as a part of culture and not just as the making of eye-catching shapes have given him a reputation nearly as large. And Ive has never designed a concept car, as Newson did for Ford, or the interior of an airplane, as Newson did for Qantas's new A380 superjumbo jets. You can ride in the Newson-designed jet interior, but the playful Newson-model Ford, which would

green," and a yellow 1969 Lamborghini.

Newson possesses another distinction that Ive does not, which is that one of his pieces of furniture, a voluptuous, aluminum-clad chaise he calls the Lockheed Lounge—made in 1986 in an edition of 10—sold at auction in 2009 for \$1.6 million, the record for a piece of furniture by a living designer. In 2007 the art dealer Larry Gagosian, perhaps sensing that Newson's work was increasingly being viewed as collectible, gave Newson a one-man show at the Gagosian Gallery in New York, and in 2012, Taschen cemented his reputation as a chic international designer by publishing a massive, coffee-table-size monograph of his work that sells for \$1,000.

Newson's career trajectory has given him a kind of freedom that Ive, for all the staggering impact of his work, cannot have at Apple, where most of the responsibility for maintaining the company's design culture has fallen on his shoulders in the post-Jobs era. Whether Ive chooses to stay at Apple for the rest of his career or to move on, he will inevitably end up with much of the credit—or much of the blame—for whatever happens to Apple over the next few years.

Newson and Ive met in Japan in the late 90s; neither of them can recall the exact circumstances, but they have been close friends ever since, despite living on different continents and working in very different milieus. Thanks to a shared love of cars, the two men and their families always spend the middle of July together at Britain's Goodwood Festival of Speed—a huge annual showcase for antique and collectible cars held at an estate in West Sussex, 60 miles south of London—looking at vintage Porsches, new Formula One racecars, and everything in between.

In 2007, at Larry Gagosian's town house, following the opening of the Newson show, Bono spoke to Newson about the possibility of doing something for Product (Red).

## “I FOUND IT ODD TO PUT THIS AMOUNT OF ENER

perfectly wrought, one-of-a-kind object.

“The most important thing is that you actually care, that you do something to the very best of your ability,” Ive told me. “We can't explain it in a fiscal sense, but the care that goes into the iPhone is equivalent to what goes into watches and other things that are significantly more expensive. I love the idea that the phone will be so broadly accessible.” What excites Ive most about the iPhone, in other words, isn't just its elegance as an object; it's the fact that he and Jobs

have had revolving seats, a dashboard that rose and lowered, and a trunk that slid out like a drawer, never went beyond the concept stage. It was named the 021C after the Pantone number for the orange tone that is one of the designer's favorite colors. He was especially sorry that Ford didn't ask him to turn the design into something that could have been brought to market, since cars are a particular passion of his. He owns, among others, a 1950s Ferrari, a 1959 Aston Martin that he has described as “a weird celadon

Bono has also known Ive for years. They met through Steve Jobs, whom Bono had approached back in 2004 when the iPod was new, offering his band, U2, for an iPod commercial. Part of the deal included a special-edition iPod that Bono had requested, manufactured in black with a red dial. (At the time, iPods came only in white.) When the deal seemed like it might founder, Ive was dispatched in person to take the prototype black-red iPod to Bono at his home in Dublin. The two men went drink-

ing in a pub and sorted out the remaining issues in the deal. "Jony makes some of his greatest decisions while having a drink," Bono said to me over the phone, speaking from his home in France.

Two years later, Bono persuaded Jobs to authorize a red iPod to be sold to raise money for his Product (Red) campaign. Then, in 2008, after the extraordinary success of an art auction Damien Hirst organized for Product (Red)—it raised \$42.5 million—Bono decided that the time had come to do a design auction, and that he should push both Ive and Newson to play the role of impresario that Hirst had performed for the art auction. By then Bono had come to know both men well. He admired them, he told me, not only for their talent and commitment but also for their unaffected manner. "They could be just two guys sitting at a bar," he said, "and they look ordinary, and then you listen to them and you see that they're measuring the glasses and talking about the circumference. I really enjoy them both."

Agreeing to do the auction for Bono was one thing; pulling it together was another. "Jony and I struggled for a while," Newson said, since, while they liked Bono and they liked the idea of working together, at first they had absolutely no idea of what they wanted to do or how to go about it. They

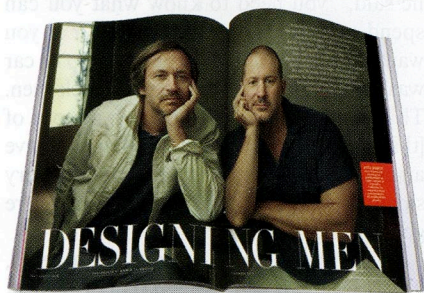
## GY INTO ONE THING."

knew that they didn't want to assemble a collection of classic modern-design objects of the sort you would find in a museum. There had to be an element of surprise, some odd juxtapositions, and plenty of things that no one would have expected two famous designers to choose. And there had to be at least some likelihood that the vast majority of the objects would sell at high prices. Unlike art, Newson said, "design is not inherently valuable. How would we generate revenue?" In the end, he said, "we

CONTINUED ON PAGE 211

STYLED BY DEBORAH AISHANI; HAIR PRODUCTS BY WELLA PROFESSIONALS; MAKEUP PRODUCTS BY DIOR; HAIR BY SASCHA BREUER; MAKEUP BY SHANE FAUST; MANICURE BY ENI KUDO; PRODUCED ON LOCATION BY JOHN SCHOENFELD; FOR DETAILS, GO TO VFCOM/CREDITS

## Ive and Newson



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 197 decided just to put together things that we love.”

That turned out to be easier said than done. The process took more than a year and a half, in part because Ive and Newson spent months thinking about what they

wanted to include, more months tracking down obscure objects, and more months contacting manufacturers and visiting their factories in the hope of persuading them to allow the designers to create a one-off variation on a classic product. And then there was the time it took to have the special versions made. You can't hurry the making of a Steinway piano, or an Hermès saddle (there is a red leather saddle in the auction), or a Castiglioni Arco lamp, its huge metal arc leaping out of a red marble base instead of the usual white.

“Craft is such an important part of what we do,” Newson said. “As designers it's incredibly important to understand how many good things have been designed, or have evolved, in ways that couldn't be improved. These are bizarrely bespoke objects that have a very specific purpose.”

Ive and Newson both visited the Steinway factory in Queens and came away in wonderment at how Steinway continues to manufacture pianos largely by hand. “We spent a lot of time trying to learn about pianos,” Ive said. “We didn't want to arbitrarily apply red. But we thought [the red interior] was a way to emphasize the different nature of the piano when the top is closed and when it is open. It goes from being furniture to making intense sound.”

Then there are the auction's found objects, like an actual window manufactured by Corning for the space shuttle, a thick, beautifully crafted piece of glass; or the Russian cosmonaut's suit, which was owned by England's éminence grise of modern design, Terence Conran, who agreed to Ive and Newson's request that he donate to the auction. Another found object fit in because it already came

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## Ive and Newson

only in red: one of Ettore Sottsass's exuberant “Valentine” typewriters from 1969, made by Olivetti, still in its original packaging, perhaps the only portable typewriter ever to have achieved the status of being a cult design object—the iMac of its time, you might say.

Ive and Newson had originally thought they would design several things from scratch for the auction. In the end, they had time for only two. The desk, which was produced by Neal Feay Studio, calls to mind the latest model of the desktop iMac computer, its aesthetic of super-thin edges scaled up to furniture size. The top, which has an edge that seems to gently flow into nothingness, is supported on a pair of equally thin aluminum slabs. The entire object seems almost ethereal, an assemblage of three thin metal planes.

The camera is based on the Leica Digital Rangefinder and was manufactured by that company as a custom item. The overall shape is similar to a conventional camera's, but the finished object looks altogether different. It is made of brushed aluminum, and

the controls are sleek and understated, as on Ive's products for Apple. It does everything the regular Leica does, with the same lenses and the same functions, but the controls no longer seem intrusive, like silver barnacles on a black metal beast. Instead, every button and every lever is a tiny sensual moment, subsumed into the overall form of the camera. Never a thing of beauty, the Leica has become one by being boiled down to its essence.

“I found it a very odd and unusual thing to put this amount of love and energy into one thing, where you are only going to make one,” Ive said. “But isn't it beautiful?” The camera's dollar worth is hard to estimate, since it is an art piece as much as a functioning object, but the value of the time Ive, Newson, and Leica's own engineers put into it probably totals well into six figures, and possibly seven. The process of designing and making the camera took more than nine months, and involved 947 different prototype parts and 561 different models before the design was completed. According to Apple, 55 engineers assisted at some part in the process, spending a collective total of 2,149

hours on the project. Final assembly of the actual camera took one engineer 50 hours, the equivalent of more than six workdays, all of which makes Ive's comment to me that he thought the Leica might bring \$6 million seem not so far-fetched.

No one knows at this point who in the crowd at Sotheby's is going to spring for that kind of money for a single camera, but Bono is willing to guess. His prediction is that it will not be a famous photographer or an art collector or a random billionaire. “Jony and Marc are so excited about this,” Bono said to me, “that I think what will really happen is that they are going to outbid each other to see who gets the Leica.” □