

## INNOVATORS

# Building a better doorknob

**W**HETHER it's a car interior, a bed and side table or a door handle, Shareen Joel says her approach to the design is essentially the same. "It's all about making it functional, making it affordably accessible (and) making it feasible to produce," says the 36-year-old Melbourne-based designer.

Ms Joel, who works out of a studio in Prahran, has recently designed a new range of door handles for Assa Abloy's Lockwood brand.

"There was definitely a need for a door lever that was contemporary that could work with the architectural styles that were coming out in Australia," she says.

Ms Joel graduated from RMIT in 1990 with a degree in industrial design and worked with Ford in Australia, Britain and the US until the late 1990s; she was involved in designing the interior of the Ka and other vehicles.

She has since worked on a range of projects such as art deco

house interiors, furniture for Country Road, and she designed a free-standing washbasin for Reecedesign and the soon-to-be-released Aquileart Shareen Joel Collection of door levers.

Available in powder-coated or timber finishes, the levers come in two basic designs: the Strato, a curved lever with an outer face made of a single material; and the Integri, with an outer face of two different materials, such as stainless steel and timber.

"That was one of the best things about the automotive

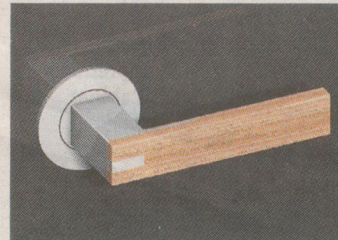
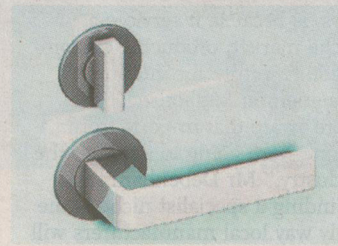
industry," she says. "I learnt about mixing materials and how things have to work together in an interior. So when it came to doing the levers for Lockwood, I was very conscious of bringing together multiple materials and making them look contemporary."

Now working on a children's furniture range for a large retailer, Ms Joel believes the trend for chrome and stainless steel is fading and people now want "a bit more colour and a bit more texture and a bit more emotional feel".

"By powder-coating or by using timber and being able to stain materials, it's more of a tactile experience," she says.

Lockwood's Aquileart range will be released early next year.

DAVID ADAMS



Shareen Joel and two of her lever designs, Strato (top) and Integri.

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