

Fridgecouch



by Butch
McCarthy

“It’s kind of like losing a child”, he said.

Adrian Johnson had just shipped his “baby” off to Vancouver, British Columbia.

His baby was the Fridgecouch 325e Frost-Clear, a veritable work of art designed by A.J. and fashioned from items gleaned from a junkyard in Freetown: A cherry-red leather back seat from a BMW 325e, and a 1980 Gibson Frost Clear Deluxe Refrigerator in Avocado Green.



Adrian in the beginning stages of Fridgecouch creation.

Adrian Johnson is a Canadian artist and design professional with a unique background in professional sports and design. He

holds an Associates Degree in Computer Integrated Design from the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, Calgary Canada, which he earned shortly after completing a ten-year career in alpine snowboard racing, where he represented Canada on the National Team for five years. He now makes his home in Massachusetts, splitting his time working between Martha's Vineyard and New Bedford as a design associate with Sullivan O'Connor Architects.

Fridgecouch began as an attempt to assemble some affordable outdoor seating for his wedding. Adrian noticed that all the high-end cars in the junkyard, the BMW and Mercedes Benz wrecks, all had near pristine back seats. Who sits in the backseat anymore? He grabbed some of this seating and then tried to figure out how to frame the seat. What could he use? How about a refrigerator? Would that work? The fridge was the ticket and amazingly, after a few attempts, he found one that was a perfect fit for the seats.

What started as a whim became a project that Adrian really got into. He used spare parts from the fridge, like the freezer door, to make a shelf on the right side. He then added a wooden shelf on the left. Little details, like the BWM "325e" lettering on the back, rounded out the couch and made it perfect. He finished in time for the wedding, and the first Fridgecouch ever was born. Needless to say, it was a big hit.

His office/workshop is located in downtown New Bedford, above No Problemo. Despite the wonderful aromas distracting me from below, I managed to talk to him about the process he uses for making these beauties, as well as how much time is involved with each.

"That first one I figured took about 40-50 hours, just to build it. I couldn't tell you how much time I spent thinking about it and designing it."

Each Fridgecouch he builds is a unique item, which makes them numbered, single-issue designs. If you like a current design you can commission a similar Fridgecouch to be made, and one-off commissions start at \$3,500. Pricing can be viewed here. Eventually, A.J. wants to streamline the operation with techniques that will cut down on the man-hours involved.



You really have to see a Fridgecouch to believe it. As we spoke, I was seated on the Fridgecouch 735i Dual-Temp, which is an Art-Deco wonder: a navy blue seat sunk into an electric orange Admiral Dual-Temp Fridge and pecan oak shelves trimmed with aluminum strips. Besides it being a work of art, these couches are very comfortable to sit on. There was also a coffee table in front of me, made from a refrigerator door mounted on a washing machine drum.

“Where do you see yourself in a year?” I asked him.

“A year from now I’d like to be in a place where Fridgecouch would be my job. I’d like to make recycled furniture and have enough sales to do it full-time. I’m excited about this, and things have been going well thus far, so if I could keep selling my pieces, I could justify doing this more. That is my dream.”

“Three years and three Fridgecouch designs since I started, I still find myself completely absorbed in the energy that people bring me when they experience something new and unexpected. Life is a funny thing. You just never know where it will take you, or what you will find. Fridgecouch has become a purpose for me, a chance to bring recycling to people in a way they never imagined. But it’s only the beginning:

Design never stops, and where there's a will, there is always a way."

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