



It's not easy being green...or is it?

Seems as if everyone is “going green” these days. Newsweek Magazine publishing articles like “Why Environmentalism Is Hot,” major morning news shows like *Good Morning America* showing tips on how to apply green practices to your own life. Words and phrases like “sustainable development” are suddenly on everyone’s lips. What is “sustainable development?” Simply put, it’s the ability to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The masses are catching up to forward thinkers and the “green” craze is finally here. The question is: how do we make it last? loll DESIGNS and others that have also worked for years towards realizing a greener tomorrow understand how Kermit the frog felt when he sang, “It’s not easy being green,” but loll DESIGNS believes it CAN be. Who said being environmentally active required...well, being active? Not loll DESIGNS.

All-weather outdoor lounge furniture for the modern lollygagger, loll DESIGNS sustainable furniture is fashioned from 100% recycled material: superior grade recycled high-density polyethylene and Richlite, a unique environmentally friendly natural wood fiber laminate. High quality stainless steel hardware holds it all together. loll DESIGNS marries resource conservation with design aesthetic, creating something wonderful – sustainable beauty!

Our Mission

loll DESIGNS pledges to help keep our planet healthy and create quality furniture to positively enhance our customers’ lives. loll DESIGNS all-weather outdoor lounge furniture for the modern lollygagger is contemporary, durable, and manufactured from 100% recycled material in an eco-friendly manner.

loll DESIGNS identifies with and takes responsibility for all of the effects and externalities of our business. We are committed to efficient production of sustainable furniture and participating in socially conscious programs.

Though loll DESIGNS takes our business and our effect on the world seriously, we do not take ourselves too seriously - laughter is a key part of our process and the happiness of our employees. loll DESIGNS holds strong to the belief that our employees are not disposable worker-bees; each person is essential in our collective. We strive to enhance employees’ lives as much as our customers’, share the benefits of our business and provide for the needs of everyone involved in making loll DESIGNS work.

loll DESIGNS believes that, contrary to the hard angles of the indoors, the design of an outdoor living space has no restrictions. loll DESIGNS is committed to creating beautiful furniture to compliment the outdoor world of your creation. Every loll DESIGNS piece is constructed with comfort and longevity in mind, and heavily tested by humans.

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Our mission: to be the best outdoor furniture company for the modern lollygagger. High in design, yet low in cost and impact to the environment.

About Us

Founders Greg Benson, Dave Benson (yes, they're brothers!) and Tony Ciardelli's history dates back to 1997 and the creation of TrueRide, a design and build contractor specializing in custom municipal skateparks. Born out of the trio traveling around the country, building half-pipe ramps at concerts and other events with skating exhibitions, they found their niche and a sense of permanence and achievement building more than 350 parks in North America over the past 10 years, and improving life for skaters in each community they worked in. Furthering their beliefs of environmental responsibility, Epicurean Cutting Surfaces was born when they began reusing skating surfaces from skatepark materials. Continuing to search for recycling solutions for excess materials, loll DESIGNS came into existence.

The first incarnation of loll DESIGNS furniture was developed in 2004 from Richlite, the dense material made from FSC paper and phenolic resins, then evolving into Polyethylene, a durable material heavily used in consumer products (over 60 million tons are produced worldwide every year). Eventually sourcing post-consumer material for their polyethylene, loll DESIGNS found a way to make environmentally sustainable furniture.

After two years in development to achieve loll's design aesthetic (including the perfect texture), loll DESIGNS unveiled their version of the 100-year-old Adirondack deck chair during Thanksgiving, 2006 and has since developed a full range of outdoor furniture made from 100% recycled materials. loll offers several colors for their eight versions of the Adirondack chair, as well as picnic tables, benches, stools, and ottomans.

Most outdoor furniture is bulky, uncomfortable, and has to be treated every season. loll DESIGNS strives for a higher standard, both for themselves and for the consumers they feel a responsibility to. With a connection to clean, post-modern design, loll's spin on the Adirondack features a curved back and seat designed to fit the body and provide the utmost in comfort for those who don't take well to straight backs and flat seats. All loll pieces are designed with clean, ergonomic lines and (unlike wood outdoor furniture) requires zero maintenance. loll DESIGNS believes that time should be spent enjoying your furniture, not moving it indoors or refinishing it.

loll DESIGNS commitment to the environment extends beyond their unique manufacturing practices. The company is a member of both Coop America, a not-for-profit membership organization focused on creating a socially just and environmentally sustainable society, and One Percent For the Planet, an alliance of companies that recognize the true cost of doing business and donate 1% of their sales to environmental organizations worldwide.

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Lest one is under the mistaken impression that loll's serious belief in supporting environmental practices extends to a serious work environment, just visit their offices, where you'll find casually dressed happy employees circled around one of the latest outdoor pieces and discussing it's comfort and design. Making European coffee, petting an employees dog, and going for a run or hike in the woods at lunch help to keep the atmosphere friendly and laid back. loll's office is a modern, open and naturally lit space where employees can all see each other and communicate with their voice, instead of the phone or email.

loll DESIGNS, Epicurean Cutting Surfaces and TrueRide are housed under one roof in Duluth, Minnesota at Hawks Boots Manufacturing Facility, a refurbished brown-field industrial site that has been cleaned and modernized for enhanced productivity and employee wellbeing. loll DESIGNS is a collective group where each individual employee has a voice and design concepts are a democratic effort. Say the partners, "We're a team – can one person really take credit when a whole hockey team wins a game? loll DESIGNS IS the designer."

loll DESIGNS has swiftly built upon their well-deserved reputation as a revolutionary in responsible manufacturing. They are not far off from realizing their goal: to become the best outdoor furniture company for the modern lollygagger that's high in design, and low in cost and impact to the environment.

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Greg Benson
CEO, Co-founder

Greg Benson's goal: to make outdoor furniture that is high in design and low in cost and impact to the environment. "I want loll DESIGNS to be a unique outdoor furniture brand that represents how business can be fun and good," says Benson. "My desire is to have a product with global distribution, appeal, and respect. Outdoor furniture is 'it' for me right now."

Benson's simple, environmental approach to business has served him well so far. Benson also owns TrueRide Inc., a design and build contractor specializing in custom municipal skateparks, as well as Epicurean Cutting Surfaces, a manufacturing company that utilizes and recycles the scraps of materials from TrueRide's skateparks into quality cutting boards that now sell everywhere from Sur Le Table to Crate & Barrel and specialty gourmet retailers internationally.

"I've literally climbed a few mountains and sailed a few seas," jokes Benson. It was this adventurous, exploratory aspect of his personality that resolved Benson to never join the corporate world. "I saw that stale style of business and knew I wanted something different," he says simply. Studying Literature and Geography at "three different University of Minnesota campuses," with aspirations to become an environmental writer, helped solidify his strong beliefs that a business should be responsible not only to its customers, but also to its employees and the planet at large.

Passionate about design, the environment, and sports like trail running and sailing, with a strong entrepreneurial spirit, Benson, along with his brother Dave and pro in-line skater Tony Ciardelli, started TrueRide in 1997. TrueRide, Epicurean Cutting Surfaces and loll DESIGNS are housed under one roof at Hawks Boots Manufacturing Facility in Duluth, Minnesota - not far from where Benson was born in St. Paul in 1963.

"I've worked hard to build a company that creates high quality products and treats clients and employees with respect," says Benson, who in his free time, experiences the joys and tribulations of raising three children with his wife of seven years. Music and literature also play a part in shaping Benson's holistic perspective on business and the planet. His favorite book is Henry David Thoreau's Walden, and he "can listen to Bob Dylan all the time".

"My friends say I don't have a kill switch. My wife says I have an adventure gene." Benson explains. What is his new adventure? loll DESIGNS!



Dave Benson
CFO, Co-founder

Dave Benson believes “if it’s not right, it’s wrong.” A head-scratching statement at first, but the philosophy begins to take shape when put in the context of Benson’s “doing what is right throughout” business ethos.

“We create a good, quality product and we stand behind it,” says Benson of his latest business venture, the environmentally conscious all-weather outdoor furniture company loll DESIGNS. And when it comes to the business itself, “I treat people the way I’d want to be treated.”

Born in St Paul, Minnesota in 1967, four years after his brother and business partner Greg, Benson found inspiration through music and bands like The Clash, REM, The Replacements, and Willie Nelson – artists who sang of “doing what was right” and struggling for individuality. Benson knew he never wanted to work in the corporate world, that he wanted to take a simple idea and make something huge out of it. He found kindred spirits in his brother Greg and friend Tony Ciardelli. Studying community health education at the University of Minnesota, Duluth, sparked an interest in responsible management of the environment and Benson joined Greg and Tony in building traveling half-pipe ramps that eventually turned into their TrueRide venture. Today, Benson lives in the woods near Duluth, Minnesota with his wife, son, and two dogs.

“Entrepreneurship came from a desire to work for myself, and I’m proud of what Greg, Tony and I have accomplished with our companies over the past ten years,” says Benson. Indeed, over the years TrueRide and Epicurean Cutting Surfaces, along with loll DESIGNS, have given back not only to the planet through their recycling practices, but to the community as well.

“I’m also proud of our ability to employ and offer a number of jobs in Duluth, where solid employment is hard to come by,” Benson states, practicing the “doing what is right” ethos to the fullest.

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Tony Ciardelli
CEO, Co-founder

“My big break came when my ideas and vision were not taken seriously by my employers,” says Tony Ciardelli, 1/3 of the trio that forms TrueRide, Epicurean Cutting Surfaces, and loll DESIGNS. Along with business partners Greg and Dave Benson, Ciardelli slaved away building half-pipe ramps to be used by skaters at traveling events for many years, before realizing his own vision to start his own company. “I really enjoy inventing and designing new products that fill certain unique niches,” states Ciardelli. With TrueRide, Epicurean, and loll DESIGNS, he has certainly found his niche.

Born in 1972 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Tony Ciardelli was the youngest of eleven children. Sometimes it’s difficult to stand out in large families, but Tony’s self-proclaimed “outside the box and out of left field” thinking insured that he would never become a lifer in the corporate world. Funny, feisty, and free-spirited, Ciardelli relished the outdoors and being physically active. His initial career as a pro in-line skater who traveled the world for exhibitions evolved into a job building skate ramps and setting them up for street courses at competitions and half-pipes at outdoor events. Although he and the Benson brothers all grew up in the same small Minnesota town, they never met until they had all ventured out on their own. Tony first met Greg in 1991 through his sister, eventually leading to a partnership formed in 1995, when they brought in Greg’s brother Dave to help build skate ramps.

Tony shared a concern for the environment with the brothers Benson, and all their businesses are formed out of their combined expertise and desire to give back to the community and to the planet as a whole. Today, Ciardelli lives in Duluth today with his wife, baby daughter, and two large dogs.

“I’m passionate about making quality products that are designed well and that people actually use!” Says Ciardelli. His passion also extends to his employees: “I get the most satisfaction watching employees progress, whether it’s with our company or if they use us as a stepping stone to get further in life.” Remembering the days when his employers wouldn’t take his ideas seriously, Ciardelli is a champion of the democratic workplace, where every employee has a voice.