Together Journal

CREATIVE LIVES

Liam Bowden & Steve Boyd, **Deadly Ponies**



This power pair got together in 2009, just three days after Steve moved to Auckland from Wellington. A decade later, they're partners in life and in business, running the leather accessories brand Liam founded in 2005.

TJ: You met online and hit it off on your first decided to make a go of it. When I came on board, date - when did you decide you wanted to work together too?

Liam: My strengths are more creative and less organisational and operational, so it really just started with Steve helping when I was in need and grew from there. He has a marketing and PR background, so his skills translated pretty naturally into the business.

Steve: I come from an artistic family and have always been interested in the arts, but I went in a totally different direction. When Liam and I met, I was working in politics and we probably couldn't have come from two more separate worlds. It wasn't until about six years ago, when I ended up resigning from my other projects, that we finally

I was more like an ops manager, but as we've expanded I've taken on the role of CEO and ended up in a bit of a jack-of-all-trades position where I try to keep everything moving along smoothly.

TJ: What's the best thing about it?

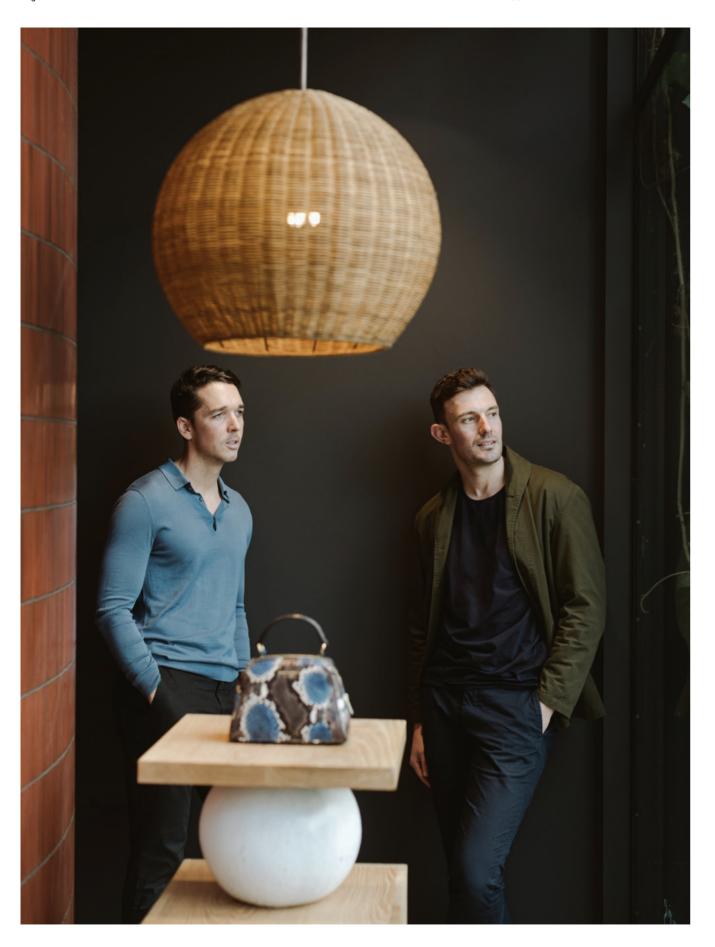
Steve: Just being in it together, really. We're very in sync, which makes sharing the journey fun. I often think that it wouldn't really matter what we were doing — if we weren't making bags, I'm sure we'd be creating something.

Liam: It's getting easier and easier. It was quite hard maybe three or four years ago when we were sometimes getting in each other's way in terms of our roles. But as Deadly Ponies has grown, our

departments have grown, so now there's a clear division around what's an operational department and what's more of a creative one. It's also about the trust we have. Especially at the beginning, it was amazing to have someone on the financial side who I could trust completely.

TJ: You've just launched an internationally focused range, D LY P, stocked locally and at Boutique 1, Moda Operandi, Shopbop and

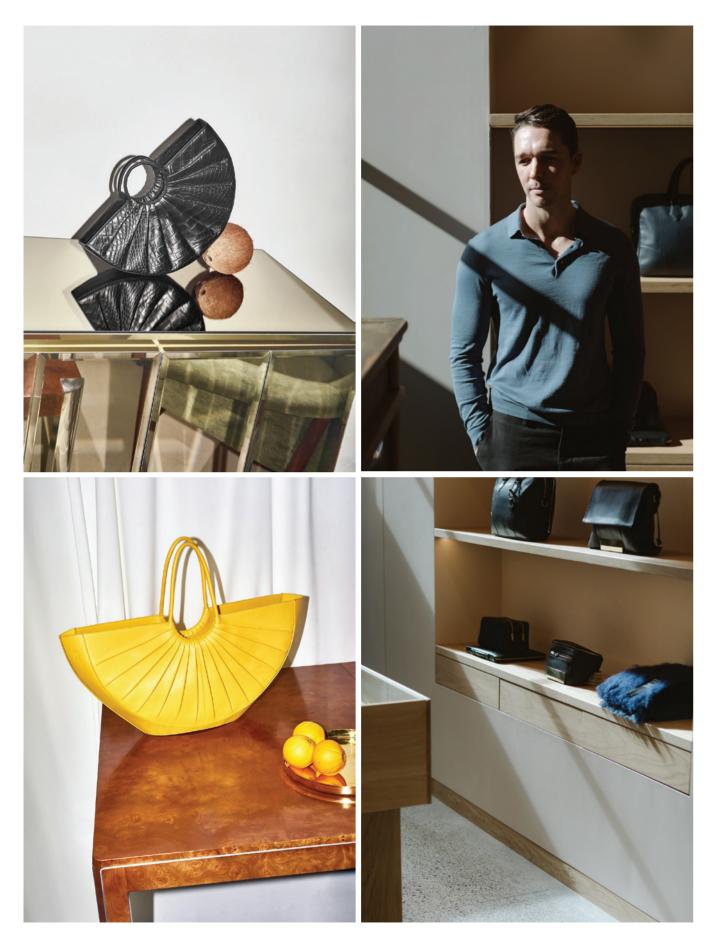
Liam: It was very much a creative collaboration. We both sat down and pulled apart everything we do and stand for and were like, "Okay, using these ethoses and these elements, how can we challenge ourselves and create something different?"



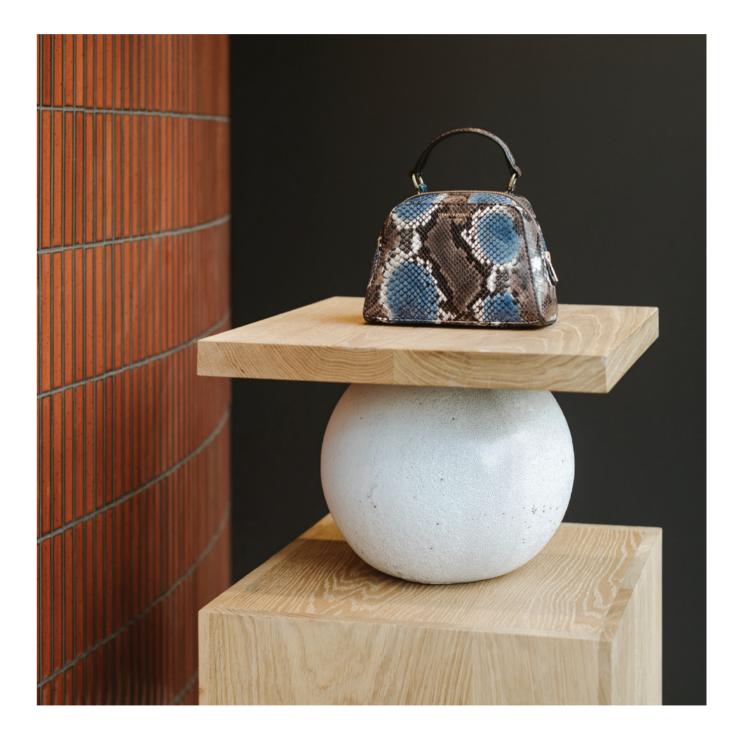
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TJ: Ideal for weddings...

for that very special occasion. Our Pleated Bender, environment if you weren't good at it. for example, would be a pretty special day-before or wedding day bag, and some of the small clutches TJ: As well as launching D LY P and opening are perfect for bridal parties.

TJ: Do you talk shop at home?

Steve: It definitely creeps in, but we've trained ourselves over the years to understand what our language is. We have quite a different work language to our homelife language, and sometimes pre-empt conversations by saying, "I'm talking about this as your partner". It's a different mindset. Sometimes you don't want an

TJ: What's the 'glue' that makes you stick? Liam: The idea of not being able to spend all day

together feels sad and not as fun, so it's just that enjoyment of being around each other. Even

Steve: I think we're very good communicators. from expressing it and knowing how to talk about it. I think that's our strength and we're lucky we Steve: They're very much signature pieces designed have that because I don't think you'd cope in this

a new store in Auckland's Britomart, you've been planning your upcoming wedding in Queenstown. How's that going?

Liam: Good! Working together in this business means organising an event is very easy for us now, so in that respect it's made the wedding planning kind of too easy, and now we're trying to become more involved and engaged with it so we can experience and enjoy it.

Steve: Because we haven't been that focused answer, you just want to complain about something! on it, you don't get that excitement and buildup. Now that the Britomart store is open, we've refocused our attention on the wedding so we

TJ: What are you most proud of?

Steve: We're really proud of where we've got to. It's a pretty special partnership and a rewarding business. But I think the most enjoyable thing has been the people who've worked with us. You when's a good time to hang out, and that comes remember the fun times with them more than anything else.

> Liam: I think it definitely adds to it. Our staff refer to it as a family mentality and I think they sometimes play us off like mother and father. They ask one of us a question, then ask the other one until they get the answer they want!

TJ: When you started creating wallets in your garage, you probably couldn't have predicted this is where you'd be now.

Liam: It was a hobby for a long time, but I always had the drive to launch my own business and make decisions based on creativity rather than the bottom line. So it's great, 10-plus years on, to still be able to make those kinds of decisions and create something that's interesting and fun.

TJ: And with your beautiful man by your side. Liam: Exactly - tick, tick, tick!







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