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The best designers of the red dot design award 2007 in interview: Wouter van Marle and Ack Lin



Wouter van Marle

The design of the ToughDrive Pro is an innovative development that makes the reality of portable storage media a little less complicated. For this outstanding design achievement, the panel of experts awarded Wouter van Marle and Ack Lin red dot: best of the best title. We spoke to the designers about the plan behind this product and about the meaning of the red dot: best of the best title for them.

What inspired you to create this particular product and what was the intention behind it?

Worry free, data mobility. Freecom who develops external devices already for more than 15 years recognized that people are traveling more and more. As a result more damaged, defective hard drives were received in the technical support centers. Actually the idea of making a real tough drive was born in one of these centers. Together with our marketing department, we defined that a fall from at least 2 meters would not break the enclosure but more important would not effect the data on the drive itself.

What does being awarded with the "red dot: best of the best" mean to you?

A big smile and the motivation to continue to pursue outstanding product design.

What particular challenges do you think designers have to face these days?

Designing the user experience rather than the physical product.

As a designer, what would you still like to accomplish in the future?

Currently I am involved more in sales and



Ack Lin



marketing and for the moment not in new product development.

What do you think is the economic significance of design?

I believe the economic significance of industrial design in the proper sense can be great. Innovations become commodities in ever shorter time frames. Those who understand to include human factors besides just the aesthetics into designing the user experience, will be the ones to stand out of the crowd.

Freecom ToughDrive Pro mobile hard drive

In order to make them resistant to shock and vibration, a double anti-shock mechanism has been developed for the hard drive: it is encased in a silicone shock-protector and further protected by an integrated spring suspension system. In addition, the highly compact design of the housing consists of hardened plastic that is covered with yet another layer of silicone. Thus well protected, the hard drive can withstand any potential damage that could occur during transportation – even a fall from a height of two metres. The rounded-off edges and the silicone cover of the housing lend it a friendly form that also communicates the solidity of this hard drive. An integrated USB cable with LED has been consistently integrated into the body, with its appealing round and soft shape. A user-friendly aspect of the design is that the hard drive is powered entirely via the USB bus, rendering a separate power supply unnecessary.

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