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FRIDAY FIVE WITH SEBASTIAN CONRAN

Posted by Caroline Williamson (<http://design-milk.com/author/caroline/>) on 01.03.14 in [Home Furnishings](http://design-milk.com/category/home-furnishings/) (<http://design-milk.com/category/home-furnishings/>), [News + Events](http://design-milk.com/category/news-events/) (<http://design-milk.com/category/news-events/>)



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Growing up a Conran might have scared most people out of the design arena, but not [Sebastian Conran](http://sebastianconran.com/home) (<http://sebastianconran.com/home>). The eldest son of Sir Terence Conran has been blazing his own trails and forging a name for himself by working with names like Boots, British Airways, Lancôme, Nissan, and [Virgin Atlantic](http://virgin-atlantic.com) (<http://virgin-atlantic.com>), just to name a few. The British designer, who loves to cook, is launching a new line of kitchen goods and housewares called [Universal Expert](http://www.universalexpert.co.uk) (<http://www.universalexpert.co.uk>) at [Home 2014](http://www.home-london.net) (<http://www.home-london.net>) in London from January 12-14th. Want to see what this hands-on, born-to-design designer finds inspirational? Take a look...



[\(http://design-milk.com/friday-five-sebastian-conran/f5-sebastian-conran-1-moulton-bicycle/\)](http://design-milk.com/friday-five-sebastian-conran/f5-sebastian-conran-1-moulton-bicycle/)

1. [Moulton Bicycle Mk3 F Frame \(http://www.moultonbicycles.co.uk/heritage.html\)](http://www.moultonbicycles.co.uk/heritage.html)

Since childhood I have wanted to be an inventor. I first became aware of Alex Moulton when he launched his Mk 1 F frame bicycle when I was about seven. He had in effect reinvented the wheel with the bike's counterintuitive 16" wheels and rubber compression suspension. I met him for the first time about twenty years later at the launch of the Ford Sierra at the Boilerhouse at the V&A. We became good friends and he was a real inspiration to me by describing complex engineering principles in simple language. Over the years I have acquired nine of his revolutionary bicycles, two he gave me, eight I still use. Sadly he died a year ago, a few weeks after the celebration of fifty years since the launch of his first bicycle.



[\(http://design-milk.com/friday-five-sebastian-conran/f5-sebastian-conran-2-leatherman-wave/\)](http://design-milk.com/friday-five-sebastian-conran/f5-sebastian-conran-2-leatherman-wave/)

2. Leatherman Wave (<http://www.leatherman.com/10.html#start=30>)

I take great satisfaction at being able to fix, rather than bin (trash), broken things myself; and 'Daddy fix it' was a constant refrain from my children. With skill, the multi tool invented by Tim Leatherman can achieve quite a bit whether I am in the Belizian jungle or by the side of the M40 with a broken Ducati 350 in the freezing rain. Sadly I cannot take it in my hand-luggage on a plane any longer as it has been proved to have a sinister versatility too. Maybe Tim should invent one without harmful blades?



[\(http://design-milk.com/friday-five-sebastian-conran/f5-sebastian-conran-3-pentel-pencil/\)](http://design-milk.com/friday-five-sebastian-conran/f5-sebastian-conran-3-pentel-pencil/)

3. Pentel Graphgear 1000 0.9mm clutch Pencil (<http://www.pentel.com/store/graphgear-1000>)

When I first came across this clutch pencil I was struck by its ugliness and expense, but it had a delightful weight and reassuring rifle-bolt click to its mechanism. This satisfying action and the fact that the clip opened wide manually like a clothes-peg, so it could be used on thick leather jacket pockets, intrigued me and I bought my first of many. It seems to be the weapon of choice in our product design studio now, often used with blue leads

to sketch out functional aspects of our designs before we start on the computer and become slaves to the algorithm. Although its appearance is somewhat 'joli laid' I wish Pentel would ask me to redesign it.



[\(http://design-milk.com/friday-five-sebastian-conran/f5-sebastian-conran-4-moleskine-a5-notebook/\)](http://design-milk.com/friday-five-sebastian-conran/f5-sebastian-conran-4-moleskine-a5-notebook/)

4. [Moleskine A5 notebook \(http://www.greatart.co.uk/Papers/For-dry-techniques/Drawing-and-sketching-albums-and-pads/Moleskine-Reporter-Notebooks.html?force_sid=k9rqpnad09q7hujgh6vif1eu52\)](http://www.greatart.co.uk/Papers/For-dry-techniques/Drawing-and-sketching-albums-and-pads/Moleskine-Reporter-Notebooks.html?force_sid=k9rqpnad09q7hujgh6vif1eu52)

Although my Apple iPad Air is an incredibly beautiful and versatile tool, it has yet to displace my pocket sketchbook where I keep notes, sketches, and thoughts. Looking back through old notebooks is a great pleasure and jogs the memory wonderfully. Sketching and writing are satisfying visceral pleasures, combined with the tactile quality of the pages and the pleasing leatherette cover, which makes the Moleskine strangely alluring together with its inner pocket for receipts and name cards and the rather Edwardian knicker elastic closure. Technology may have become digital, but humans will always be analogue.



[\(http://design-milk.com/friday-five-sebastian-conran/f5-sebastian-conran-5-commonwealth_institute/\)](http://design-milk.com/friday-five-sebastian-conran/f5-sebastian-conran-5-commonwealth_institute/)

Photo by Luke Hayes

5. [New Design Museum \(http://designmuseum.org\)](http://designmuseum.org)

The Commonwealth Institute in Holland Park was designed in the late 1950s and built and opened in the early 1960s as an exhibition of Britain’s past stature on the world stage. This building, with its iconic double parabola roof sheathed in copper, is now being repurposed as the New Design Museum. It will be a showcase of the future as well as the past explaining inspiring design in its fullest sense as a process that transforms technology into culture, from high fashion shoes to high performance racing cars, and all that sensible stuff in between.

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