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What's The Point?

In addition to being perhaps the sexiest and most dangerous chunk of aluminum the world has ever known, it's the sharp custom trophy of EXHIBITOR Magazine's Exhibit Design Awards. But make no mistake, as the symbol of international exhibit-design excellence, The Point is no ordinary trophy picked from the pages of an awards catalog. Similar to the HPs and Geek Squads of this world, The Point has a legacy all its own.

EXHIBITOR commissioned this one-of-a-kind trophy design in March 2006. Then, with a small-scale model of The Point in hand, EXHIBITOR staff set out to find a turnkey trophy supplier to create this stunning yet somewhat dangerous prize. We soon abandoned the search, however, as nary a single trophy supplier out of the roughly 25 companies we contacted could fabricate the 10-by-4-inch, angled, aluminum award.

Momentarily deterred but not defeated, we widened our search to include metal-fabrication, aluminum-casting, and molding companies. And that's when things got interesting. After visiting countless firms — and meeting more than our fair share of "interesting" characters and grease-soaked metal-shop dogs — we made a fateful phone call to Richard McGill Sr. of McGill's Propeller & Welding Inc., who not only plotted our course toward success and schooled us on everything we needed to know about metal fabrication (and plenty of stuff we didn't), but who eventually completed the second step in what would turn out to be a four-step fabrication process.

In the first step of the process, the folks at Campbell Grinding in Lewisville, TX, used a lathe to create the rough form. Second, EXHIBITOR staff then picked up the trophies from Campbell and deposited them at McGill's Propeller & Welding, where they were polished to a brilliant shine. Third, staff transported the shiny beauties to Carlisle's Engraving Co., also of Lewisville, where they were engraved using a sandblasting technique. Finally, a staffer

transported them to her home where she meticulously applied cork to the bottom of each one and then took them to a local shipping firm for transport to our winners all around the world.

And so it went... grind, polish, engrave, apply... grind, polish, engrave, apply... from 2006 through 2011. However, near the end of 2011, we received a sales call from Society Awards, a New York-based designer and manufacturer of high-end, custom awards and recognition products. In fact, Society Awards is the proud makers of trophies for the Emmys, Golden Globes, MTV VMAs, MTV Movie Awards, the Dancing With the Stars Mirror Ball Trophy, etc.

The firm had heard of our program and thought it might be able to shorten our four-step process into a single step. After running around Dallas with hundreds of pounds worth of trophies in our car trunks for the last six years, and applying more cork than a winery, our staff — and our company — was ready for a change.

Thus, as of 2012, Society Awards became The Point's sole designer/manufacturer. Immediately, the firm slightly redesigned the trophy, giving it one flat side. Doing so allowed the firm to laser engrave the trophy (as opposed to sandblasting it) and made construction of the form much easier. In addition, it added a small black base, thereby eliminating the need for cork. And thus, we bring you The Point. Born of propeller polishers, metal-shop dogs, and metal-fab firms, EXHIBITOR Magazine's Exhibit Design Awards trophy now rubs shoulders with the Emmys and Golden Globes.

