

# Staircase to innovation and economic recovery



Paul Revill, MD of Volarus, with Steve Grice, of Black Country Reinvestment Society, and the steel bamboo-look Arcana range with sandblasted glass

**ANNIE GREGORY**  
Business Staff

A staircase-maker has diversified into bespoke steel balustrades, handrails and lighting to beat the effects of the economic downturn.

Brownhills-based Lichfield Staircase Manufacturing (LSM) managing director Paul Revill established Volarus to target the high-end interiors markets.

Mr Revill said the new company would complement its existing business of making architectural staircases, and said its knowledge of the vagaries of the manufacturing sector would help.

Mr Revill said: "We came up with the idea of bespoke staircases to fit different styles of interiors when we realised that most modern staircases offer little choice in design.

"We felt that there was enormous scope for a stylish, decorative range of staircases that could be tailored to the client's exact requirement for the corporate and leisure sectors or even the client's own home."

Mr Revill said LSM had taken a Gov-

ernment message to innovate to beat the effects of the economic downturn to heart by setting up the new operation.

He said the company is no stranger to the vagaries of the manufacturing sector, as Mr Revill set up a fabrications business as a sole trader in 1989 and decided to diversify when that side of the business began to show signs of slowing

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and moved into products for architectural construction.

Volarus has produced four new patented designs, including Arcana, which imitates bamboo, Kyphi, with a zigzag patterned finish, and Zuber and Kahana, which both introduce curved shaped stanchions. All the designs can be supplied with a variety of finishes and textures to suit architectural schemes.

Mr Revill added: "The basis of each design is steel tube, so it's perfect for many applications including walkways, conservatories and even bed frames and furniture for a completely themed look.

"We can make any shape staircase to any specification and we are very keen to work with architects and interior designers for both large contract and domestic applications.

"The steel finish can be retained for a contemporary look, or we can offer a tough powder coated finish in any colour to match any interior or exterior.

"We work with some of the UK's finest glass artists to create unique plate glass infills for staircases and walkways.

"The example of Tutankhamen's mask is sandblasted entirely by hand and took nearly forty hours to complete.

"The glass infills can be customised by sandblasting, laminating or acid etching, onto clear or coloured safety glass, which can then be shaped, decorated and even personalised to any requirement.

"This is perfect for bespoke applications, for corporate branding and also for the personal touches that make a

house a home – there is really no limit."

The Volarus range also includes a range of solar powered lights, including a multi coloured effect, for outdoor use together with wall sconces for both indoor and outdoor to create a particular mood.

The company has received financial assistance from Manufacturing Advisory Service – West Midlands, the University of Wolverhampton's Rapid Prototyping department, and loan fund company Black Country Reinvestment Society.

Mr Revill concluded: "We realised that we had to remain competitive to survive this recession, and we think our range is a great example of how creative thinking matched with years of experience in manufacturing can produce a multi-use product of the highest quality – one that is adaptable, gorgeous to look at and does the job in a unique way."

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