



C Z O N E

"THERE'S
PASSION
IN THESE
FRAMES"

A heart to heart with
C-ZONE's designer
and co-owner
Rob Maas





From the very first collection back in 2010, C-ZONE has been making its mark on the international eyewear market. Be it playful and fun, dead cool or of an ingenious minimalistic simplicity, C-ZONE's designs stand out in both creativity and wearability. The dutch company is clearly on to something, having a knack for spotting new trends and surprising angles to translate their ideas into an original and highly convincing catalogue. Time for a heart to heart with the main man behind the collection, designer and co-owner Rob Maas.

What is the secret of your colours?

Of course, we look at the colour combinations you see on the catwalks in Milan and other fashion capitals in the world. But colourwise, glasses do not follow fashion trends that closely. I find it more important that colours of the frame combine well with the complexion of the skin.

We work with pantone colours. These are beautifully translated into colours suitable for stainless steel by the Swiss paint wizards of Berlac. Berlac is also the company that provides the paint for cars like BMW and Mercedes. Still, you can put the most special paint on a frame, but that does not say anything about the quality. Therefore, the people of Berlac yearly visit our factories to train the people how to apply the Berlac paint on the metal frames.

We also need to talk about your 'crystal spark'

Absolutely. This is a funny story. It shows how a mistake can turn into a new innovative concept. Everybody in the industry is familiar with epoxy. I had the idea to work with epoxy, but not in the traditional bright colours. I wanted to try to create epoxy in more dreamy, water paint colours, that blend well together if you mix

them. So, we added water to the epoxy. The end result was very different from what we hoped for. During the baking process, the epoxy liquid started to crack. But you know what...I loved the broken ice effect. It gave such a special effect, also because of the cracks showed a little spark.

Can you say something about future optical trends?

In recent years, I noticed that besides the fashionable aspects of a frame, the C for Comfort is getting more and more important. Customers are very sensitive — and I very much support this — to themes as light-weightness. Also, something as tiny as a pair of nose pads play a more and more significant role in the decision making process of buying a frame. This trend has had a huge impact on our collection: all our frames have ecoflex supersoft nose pads these days and many temples of our frames are thinner, and thus weigh less — than ever before. For some of our models we have used German stainless steel. This metal is a bit thinner than the regular stainless steel and almost feels like titanium. We especially enjoy using German stainless steel for our men styles with eye size 58 and 59. With the regular stainless steel, frames in these sizes would become far too heavy.

"WE MAKE IT ALL VERY PERSONAL"



And when you talk comfortability, a good hinge system for temples is a continuously intriguing trigger. The idea of having a hinge system that's screwless is very appealing. Over the last two years, we've worked on this. And now, we finally got the quality we strived for and the first models are introduced in the collection. It is interesting to see that a new innovative, comfortable concept is an instant success. In the meantime, we are working on the next generation...it is so much fun working on something new.

There are so many optical companies out there. Why should people work with C-ZONE?

What we hear from our current customers is that we stand out, because we make it all very personal. But you know what, C-ZONE is not our work, it's our passion. We listen to our customers and we do not treat them as a number. We are known for our flexibility and we will always try to help people no matter the request they have. I think our order process is unique. Orders received are shipped out the same day. And in the case of back orders, our customers can expect the frame concerned in a period of max 2 weeks.

And now, C-ZONE is a worldwide company

This is the case indeed. We sell from Alaska to Australia. And from the most Northern parts of Scandinavia all the way to South Africa. That international flavor makes this work very special. We have always been successful in France; the French love our colourful frames with that special little twist. But it is so exciting to see that now there is also this enormous appreciation for the collection in the US and even China. But this has never been a goal. Jeroen — co-owner — and I are so fortunate to have the freedom to start working with a distributor. For us, it is more important that the new business partner suits us. This way, we have a natural growth. We do not feel any pressure, but it is fun to welcome a new 'family member'.

Some famous last words?

Come on, I'm not almost dead yet. But I think I understand what you mean. My goal in life is to be happy. My work and my private life should be in balance. As happiness is a state of mind, it is easy for me to check whether I have managed to do so. And if not, I can start working on it right away. But do not worry, C-ZONE makes me a very happy man.