

Hutchfield Furniture Ltd./Manchester Airport

Durable and Stylish Curvilinear Airport Benches Made with KYDEX® T Thermoplastic Alloy

The Company

Since its founding in 1991, Hutchfield Furniture has been exercising creativity and style in the design and manufacture of bespoke furniture. Based in Chatham, England, the company has clientele that run the gamut from small businesses seeking a special piece of furniture, to financial institutions and royal households.

The Challenge

England's Manchester Airport is a global gateway, with more than 100 airlines offering direct flights to 200-plus destinations worldwide and serving more than 20 million passengers a year. Over the last few years, this busy airport has rolled out a revitalisation program that includes upgrades to its passenger facilities.

When the time came to revamp the departure concourse, award-winning public artist and sculptor Mel Chantry was called in to help create a more open and inviting space. The challenge was that during peak travel times, passenger demand for seating made for a crowded environment, and rows of beam-based seating was not very user-friendly or accommodating. In addition, people had a tendency to leave an empty seat between themselves and other passengers — resulting in wasted space, with seats left vacant while other passengers remained standing.



To make the best possible use of the space, Chantry sketched his idea for a series of curvilinear benches that would snake through the concourse, providing visual interest as well as comfort and flexibility for passengers. To make Chantry's idea come to life, Manchester Airport turned to Hutchfield Furniture — a company whose design, manufacturing, and specialist veneering operations produce work that is custom tailored to the needs of its clients.

The Solution

Hutchfield Furniture presented Manchester Airport with several options for the sheet material to clad the main body of the benches, including high-pressure laminates (HPL) and solid surfacing materials. However, in the end, the winner was KYDEX® T thermoplastic alloy, a product that Hutchfield had used to success in a previous, similar project.

"In addition to being less brittle and more impact resistant, KYDEX® T sheet can be machined to create soft edges and has a warmer feel than other materials —making it the perfect choice for this application," according to Richard Hutchfield, Managing Director of Hutchfield Furniture.

With the desired KYDEX® sheet product identified, the company then turned to Robert Horne Group (www.roberthorne.co.uk), the UK's leading distributor of paper, board, and plastics, for technical support and material supply. Robert Horne's dedicated KYDEX® sheet specialists ensured that the product arrived on schedule and within budget for Hutchfield Furniture.



KYDEX, LLC

ISO 9001 and 14001 Certified

Customer Service

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Distinct Advantages

Manufactured by KYDEX, LLC, in its ISO 9001:2000 and ISO 14001:2004 certified facilities in the United States, KYDEX® sheet is available in specialised grades to meet specific requirements for a wide range of demanding uses. Manchester Airport chose high-impact KYDEX® T sheet based on a number of critical factors:

- KYDEX® T sheet provides significantly higher impact strength and extensibility than competitive products, allowing it to be formed and applied in three-dimensional applications without the cracking and chipping associated with other materials.
- High-impact KYDEX® T is also among the most rigid thermoforming materials, with a modulus of elasticity of 2,480 MPa (360,000 psi).
- KYDEX® T meets regulatory requirements for fire retardancy and low smoke, satisfying compliance standards around the world.
- KYDEX® T sheet can be extruded through a variety of methods and in different thicknesses to meet specific product needs, allowing for ergonomic design with no sacrifice to the strength of the end product.
- Unique in the industry, KYDEX® sheet products come in a wide array of colours, both custom and standard. The curvilinear benches were made using a standard available colour that was a near-perfect match for Manchester Airport's corporate blue.
- KYDEX® T is also available in choice of patterns and textures. For Manchester Airport, the surfaces made with KYDEX® T have a haircell texture — a trait that the other materials lacked — producing the right amount of friction so the benches are not too slippery but are still easily cleaned.
- In addition, all KYDEX® sheet products are 100% recyclable and produced with a regard for safety, health, and environmental protection.

The Results

The right combination of material and design has resulted in a crowd-pleasing and smart use of the available space at Manchester Airport. "We were able to realise multipurpose seating that is visually captivating and attractive to both business travelers and leisure passengers," says Richard Hutchfield. "Businesspeople can work on their laptops and paperwork comfortably, while families can spread out all of the paraphernalia that comes with traveling with children, who play on the benches."

With another job well done using KYDEX® sheet, Hutchfield looks forward to increased consideration of the product in future projects. "I think more and more, architects and specifiers will recognise the advantages that KYDEX® sheet has over conventional laminates and ask for it by name."

For more information on KYDEX® T or the application developed for Manchester Airport, please contact Ronn Cort, International Business Manager, at +1.570.387.6997 x584 or by email at cort.ronn@kydex.com.



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