



STYLE

David Moritz

The CEO and founder of Society Awards designs custom, limited-edition statuettes for celebrities and executives around the world

BY TAYLOR BOWLER

DAVID MORITZ doesn't just have an eye for style—he radiates it. His south Charlotte home brims with midcentury furniture, statement lighting, and color-field paintings. Hanging lanterns dot the wooded driveway, and a green McLaren Spider convertible occupies his garage. In the walnut-paneled library, you'll find wall-to-wall bookshelves, a balloon rabbit sculpture by Jeff Koons, and a fireplace mantel that displays a collection of sleek award statues made of bronze, marble, and crystal.

Moritz and his wife, Charlotte, greet me in the grand foyer. He wears his typical work-from-home attire: designer jeans,

a button-down shirt, a deep burgundy sport coat, and black sneakers that make the whole ensemble look effortless. He shows me into the library, where a charcuterie board sits on the coffee table, and offers me a glass of Champagne. It's noon on a Wednesday, but sipping bubbly from a red Baccarat Champagne flute in this stylish setting feels like the right thing to do.

The awards on the mantel, and others throughout the home, are his—but not because he won them. He designed them. In 2007, Moritz, 41, founded Society Awards, which manufactures custom statuettes and recognition products for

"Design is like a muscle you have to train, like working out at the gym," Moritz says. "You have to have varied experiences and keep exposing yourself to new ideas and different disciplines."

televised awards shows like the Emmys and Golden Globes as well as a roster of Fortune 500 companies.

Moritz worked hard to get here, and he's had a lot of fun along the way. He earned a law degree from Cardozo School of Law in 2006, but he says he always felt drawn to a career in design. And he loves it all: fashion, fine art, interiors, and architecture. "I think being in New York makes everyone a little entrepreneurial," he says. "In college, a friend and I created a bar and lounge ourselves. It was Coyote Ugly-meets-cocktail lounge. We called it Society Bar. I knew I wanted to create a luxury brand, and I wanted to create a category that didn't exist."

Most of us have seen golden statuettes on awards shows or in offices, but until Moritz came along, no one design brand dominated the market. "It was a hodgepodge of garage shops that cobbled their way through as best they could," he says. "This was a niche I could fill. We could be the go-to name for luxury awards and trophies."

Designing the awards came easily, but Moritz had to learn engineering, manufacturing, accounting, and how to give "3D, Pixar-level" presentations to potential clients. "This didn't happen overnight," he says. "I had to become the greatest salesman ever. I went after everyone at the same time, but it was basically MTV and Golden Globes that said yes."

That exposure led to contracts with awards shows like the Grammys, VMAs, and MTV Movie Awards. It also meant Moritz got frequent invitations to the events. "At the MTV Movie Awards, Kristen Stewart picked up her award, and it was heavier than she thought, and she literally dropped in on the stage," he laughs. "I was sitting in the audience thinking, *How are we going to spin this?* But it didn't shatter, and she picked it up all in one piece. That's why we over-engineer everything."

RUSTY WILLIAMS; GROOMING: ARIEL LEWIS OF ALIST EXPERIENCES



RUSTY WILLIAMS; COURTESY CAROLINE LAWSON; SOCIETY AWARDS (2)

In early 2020, after two decades in New York and countless red-carpet events under his Dolce & Gabbana belts, Moritz decided to move his operation to Charlotte and open an office in Atherton Mill. He says his first visit to Sycamore Brewing sold him on Charlotte, but he also wanted a more suburban place to raise his daughters, now 5 and 8. "I still work seven days a week," he says, "but now I have more flexibility to do personal things."



Today, Society Awards makes more high-quality awards and trophies than any brand in history. The company has two factories in China and a warehouse and factory in Oklahoma. Moritz employs a team of 55, including his executives, designers, and sales staff at Atherton Mill. As of December, he was on track to complete renovations this spring on the Atherton Mill space, which is open by appointment only. He was involved in the entire design process (naturally), and made sure to display awards in the windows, "like a public art display for patrons of Atherton Mill."

"These statuettes have a midcentury aesthetic that's sleek, svelte, and sexy," Moritz says. "They all fit as home decor in their own right." Award samples include (left to right) the Baccarat Cylinder, the Kehinde Wiley MTV Moon Person, and the Society Star in bronze patina.

Whether he's designing trophies for Lizzo, an executive at Chick-fil-A, or the Craft Beer Marketing Awards, aka the "Crushies," Moritz knows each one represents a milestone in someone's life. "When you receive this award, it means you've achieved something, and you'll keep it forever," he says. "It's not a throw-away item. It's part of your legacy."

And with that, he tops off our Champagne flutes and raises his glass. Because moments like these also call for a celebration. 🍾

TAYLOR BOWLER is the lifestyle editor.