

New Car Launches And Car Mapping



A Conversation With Allan Carter

With Tim Bennett Of ArgonTV

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The following is a transcript of an interview between Tim Bennett ([ArgonTV](#)) and Allan Carter ([South East Design](#))

The real beauty of Allan's New Car Launches can be seen in this incredible video:



[Watch the video above to find out...](#)

If you prefer to read, scroll down to get the (slightly edited) transcript of the video.

Tools Featured In This Video...

- 1 - ArgonTV: [here](#)
- 2 - Allan's website: www.southeastlaserdesign.com
- 3 - Allan's email: [s.ed \(at\) live.co.uk](mailto:s.ed@live.co.uk)

New Car Launch And Car Mapping

Tim Bennett: New car launches are very often the first time a prospective buyer will ever get to see the new jewels that the automobile companies are rolling out and it needs to be put into the hands of an expert.

We have such an expert with us today and we're going to be talking about new car launches, car mapping and also just generally laser artistry and projections with a very cool guy that I met recently Mr Allan Carter from South East Design based in UK.

But before we get to meet Allan officially, first, I just want to share a little message from my very handsome assistant.

"So welcome to ArgonTV.

I'm really happy to have you here.

Thank you for being here so much and just to give you a little bit of history about ArgonTV.

The reason I started it, was to help promote you and tell your stories, during this terrible time that we're all going through in the events industry.

So many of our companies and so many of our friends in the industry are having a terrible time with no work, so I thought I'd put ArgonTV together, so that I can help promote you and share your stories.

So if you are involved in events in any way, you're a Director, you're

a Producer, you're a Lighting Designer, you're an Artist, you're a Dancer, you're a Choreographer, you're a Lighting Man, it doesn't matter what you do, even if you're crew pushing boxes, if you have a story, that you want to share with us and the industry, get in touch with me, there is an email address just here right now. ([tim \(at\) argonanimation.com](mailto:tim@argonanimation.com))

You can contact me and then we will talk and share your story because I am, the master storyteller and I am here to share your story and inspire not only you and promote you, but also to inspire everyone within the industry and we're going to use [ArgonTV](#) as a platform to do that.

So if you want to stay in touch with us don't forget, if you're on [YouTube click the subscribe button and the bell](#), so that you get notification every time I make a new video and if you're on my website please don't forget to leave a comment.

I absolutely love your comments and your thumbs up and everything like that, because I'm an Artist just like you, I love applause too.

So welcome to ArgonTV I'm very happy to have you here.

Thanks for being part of the journey and now, let's get back to Allan, where we're gonna be talking about new car launches and car mapping."

So thank you, that was my awesome assistant and now we're going to get back to Allan.

Let me introduce everyone to Allan.

Allan welcome to ArgonTV

It's great to have you here.

Allan Carter: Thank you very much.

Thank you for the opportunity.

Tim Bennett: It's cool and I've been looking at some of your work recently on your Facebook profile and I got to say, some of your work is really really amazing.

So I thought what we could do first, to start off the evening, if maybe you could tell us a little bit about your company, South East Design.

And just share you know, how it all started and what you're doing.

Allan Carter: Well it first started about 30 years ago.

When I had the opportunity to bid for a car launch, by Jaguar and unfortunately, because I was a young newbie to the game, they weren't too sure about hiring me, but as it was they invited me to go along and watch it.



But then two days beforehand, the company that they hired to do the job, came up with a problem that they couldn't supply loads of tv screens for the whole of the area, this car launch was going to be in, so cheekily asked me whilst I was driving up there to watch the show, if I could actually bring some TV's.

So I took the TV's, set them all up for them, watched the show.

The guy came up to me afterwards and said, "*what do you think?*"

And I said, "*can I be honest?*" He said "yeah"

I said, "*I didn't like it.*"

I said, that it was cold, it didn't have no feel to it whatsoever.

So then XK8 came out, and they asked me if I could launch the XK8.

Which is what I did, and that was using lasers, scanners, moving heads and all that sort of thing.

So it was a, big job that one.

So I was glad just by watching one and showing that I could actually supply everything that I said I could, unlike the other people, that's how I first started.



Tim Bennett: Wow, that is absolutely fantastic, in fact you're the second person I've spoken to recently, who has started their industry career, based on somebody else's failure.

Well, I wouldn't say failure, but their non-performance of perfection.

So it really highlights how we have to be, really on our toes.

Now I'm guessing, as you said you've been in the industry for 30 years, and I'm sure you're you know an awesome expert in the laser industry now, but I'm sure that being an expert, hasn't always been that way for you.

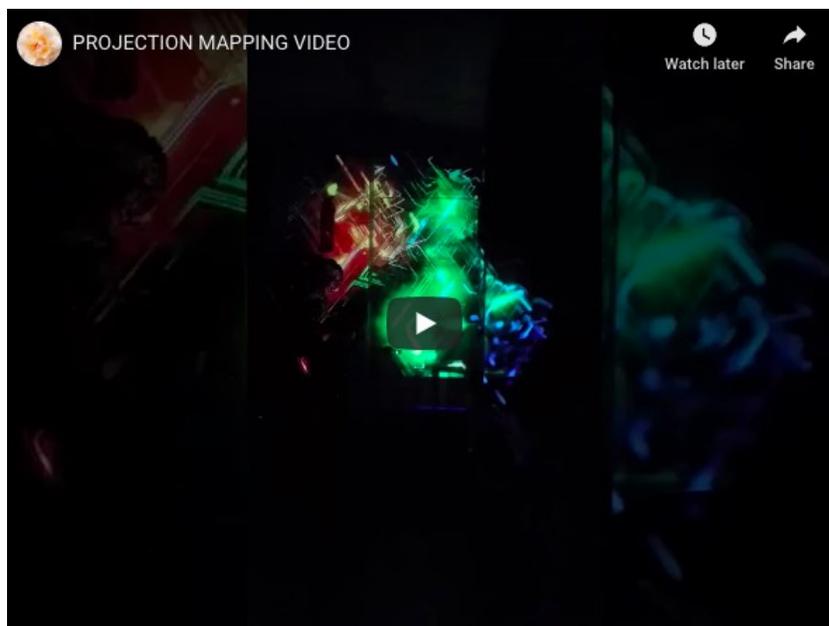
How was it?

How did you get an interest in lasers, and how did you actually move into the whole industry, in the first place?

Allan Carter: Well, I started off, like as basically, a bit of a Lighting Designer for Clubs, and things like that, but never really got a chance to go into the big field for myself, until a few years later, and it was just watching what was going on around at the time.

A lot of the stuff like I said, felt cold, there was no feel to it, and I thought well, I can do this.

So that's how, I started off doing it.



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But it hasn't been easy to begin with, because obviously back then, even like it is now, there's still a lot of big... miles bigger boys than me out there, that you still have to fight against, but the thing that I have, that's in my favor is that, I can visualize in my head, what it's going to look like, before I even started, and since the Jaguar Launch are the ones that I've done.

The thing that people have been amazed or shocked to however you want to put it.

Is that, I'm 90% of the time, I'm not in the room, that the car is in.

I'm locked away somewhere else.

Because I can see it in my head with the music, I don't need to be there, and every launch, people have come up and said, where's the guy that's done it?

And they say always in a room down here, and they go well, how the hell does he know what's going on?

That's because, I can see it in my mind.

I don't need to see it.

Tim Bennett: Well that's very interesting, indeed.

That's kind of a cool skill.

I think, that comes with experience.

To be able to see something, that vividly.

Allan Carter: I've always been Artistic.

I've always been able to do that.

I can, whatever music I listen to, like this music with we're doing now.

We're actually making our own music now, so I'm creating my own music, which I can then, create the shows to go with.

One, obviously, it's in my favor, because it shows my other skill in music creation, plus it also means that, things like YouTube and Facebook that like, knocking and muting your videos, I can get around that, because the music is my own.

But I've always, even from a really young age, when I played with just projectors before I even had my first laser.

I used to play with projectors a lot.

Taking them apart, adjusting the focal lengths inside, putting slides in. In fact, one of the first shows I'd done, people thought I had a real laser, but I didn't.

I had six projectors.

Which are created to look like a laser effect, because they wanted me to put a laser around a donkey, on a stage.

Well you couldn't fire a real laser at a donkey, because it would probably do a runner.

So I just created this projector to create a laser tunnel effect, that they walked the donkey out of.

And it just started from there.

So I've always integrated projectors and lasers together.

Tim Bennett: That's brilliant.

And again, going back to your 30 years in history.

I'm guessing you remember very clearly, the half a ton of equipment with water chillers that we used to use just to get one single beam out.

Allan Carter: Yup, taking fridge units around.

Tim Bennett: And in those days, we had to be, you know a client couldn't afford 20 lasers.

Maybe we have one, maybe two lasers.

And I was actually talking to [Tim Walsh about this from Laser Spectacles.](#)

And he was saying, how in those days, we had to be very creative, very artistic, because we literally had one or two beams.

And you know nowadays, you can get, I think the world record is 300 lasers in a venue or something.

You know I'm not knocking any of the new guys at all, because they do some brilliant work.

But it's kind of relatively easy, compared to what we used to go through with two laser beams to make a show look good, when you've got 10 lasers stuck in it.

Allan Carter: That's right.

Tim Bennett: But it's very interesting, you're talking about your music as well.

And is this a service, that you also provide for other people.

Can someone call you up and say can you write some music for me?

Allan Carter: Yes.

We're just starting to do that now.

We've just created our first album.

We're just doing the over for it now, and that's a collaboration of electronic music with orchestral.

So it's a mixture blend of two together, so it's quite good for laser shows.

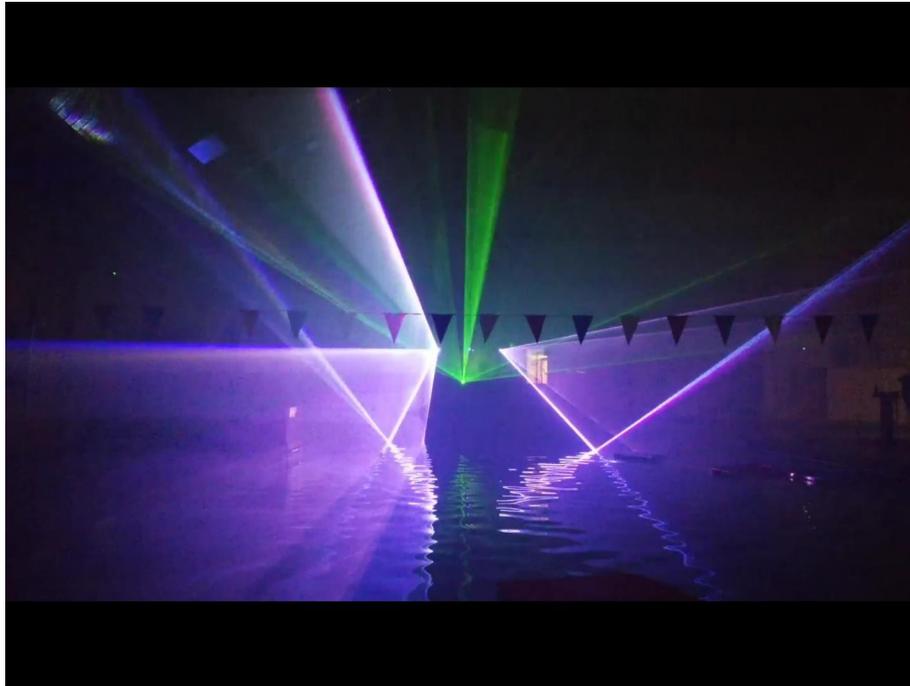
Tim Bennett: Brilliant.

Allan Carter: But that's what we're putting together.

I do remember, the early days of lasers, that's why we used a lot of dicrylic mirrors, bounce beams around and of course as you well know depending on the angles, depending on what colour comes off the other end.

Tim Bennett: Absolutely!

Allan Carter: As we did, so lots of dark acrylic mirrors in the old days.



And talking the colour I see you've got some really nice little colours going on in the background behind you.

Yep that's the little [Lasercube](#).

Tim Bennett: Excellent!

Allan Carter: It's the world's smallest laser.

Tim Bennett: Yeah and I've heard some really good things about [Lasercube](#) and you were telling me before we started this interview, that you're using this with a charity as well, is that right?

Allan Carter: Thats right yeah!

We've got a charity called Rose Charity, which we supply baby clothes to children that are either really sick or who unfortunately are passing away.

This was obviously because we lost our daughter, not so long ago at Christmas, and we thought at the time we wanted to put her in something pretty, but there was nothing around.

So what we've done now is we collect clothes, new clothes, and that from people, from donations and we take them up to London.

And anybody who's got that horrifying period of time, you know, near the end of their child's life, that they can actually pick something nice.

The idea of the Lasercube is for the children that are sick, we can take the cube up there with a tablet.

And because you can draw with the Lasercube on your phone or on a tablet or even on a computer.

What you draw, is done live by the cube at the same time, so they can see their drawing coming to light on a wall.

And it just gives the children something to look at, instead of lying in bed and or in a room not doing anything.

Tim Bennett: Fantastic!

And you know, I mean first of all, I'm sure everyone here will join me in in saying we're sorry to hear about your loss, but how beautiful it is to be able to turn that, into something so generous and so caring for other people.

So you know our hearts with you and if you know if the community can support you in any way I'm sure we'll all get together and help you as much as you possibly can.

Allan Carter: Thank you!

Tim Bennett: But I've heard, some really great things about the [Lasercube](#).

And although we're not here to talk about that directly, it's great to see it in the background behind you.

Allan Carter: Yes, I've been playing with it a lot.

The software sometimes can be a little bit glitchy.

That's its only downside I would say.

But generally once you get it running it's, it's very very good. It's very bright, considering this is the 1 watt one behind me.

They do a 2 watt one now and it's midday nearly enough.

Then behind the cube, the doors open, so there's bright light shining through.

And you can still see it on.

But then, the screen behind isn't really the proper laser screen anyway.

So it's managing to get through that okay.

Tim Bennett: Fantastic.

Well it's nice to get the introduction to you and your company.

And in a moment we're going to be talking about new car launches.

And we're also going to be talking about your artistic work.

I'm here with Allan Carter from South East Design based in the UK and we'll be back, in just a moment.

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Tim Bennett: So welcome back to ArgonTV.

I am very happy to be here today with Mr. Allan Carter from South East Design based in the UK.

And we are here talking about new car launches and car mapping and just generally laser artistic work.

So, why don't you share with us right now, what it is you've been doing, with the car launches, and all the artistic work.

Allan Carter: Right!

Well obviously, generally, first of all, we get shown the car that we're going to be using.

Sometimes it can be in secret, strangely enough.

When Vauxhall brought the Vector out, we was only allowed to see the car under a cover, which was brought down by a low loader.

They took it into a room under cover, they then showed us the car, and most of you know, after seeing the Vectra, probably the same to me, you thought oh it's an Astra and a Cavalier joined together.

So my, when they told me before they unveiled it that they'd spent one million pounds per inch on the car, I thought, where?

But anyway, so we first of all, we're given the car.

We've shown the venue where it's going to be.

Sometimes, the client will ask for the vehicle to be driven in.

That gives us a few little headaches, but not too many because obviously we've managed to get around that now.

And but in other occasions, they're put on ramps or they're just left standing in a showroom somewhere and then we just have to put the equipment above, above the car.

Where it's driven in, normally we use blocks on the floor, and so that the driver knows exactly when to stop.

Because obviously the lights are all pre-programmed for that precise area.

And in the case of Jaguars, they like their cars to sound really meaty through the P.A system, so we attach a microphone to the exhaust, so you can hear the revving of the V8 or whatever it is.



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And on one occasion, they wanted the under the car strobing, so we attached a strobe unit to the bottom of the car, so that as it drove out of a laser tunnel, under the car was flashing, and you could hear the roar of the engine as it came in onto the blocks.

After that, the client then tells us what they would like to see, which sometimes they have imaginations even greater than mine that are totally impossible.

So then you tell them what is possible, and what isn't.

We then take photographs of the car, take them away, study it.

Maybe we can do some pre-programming at home, but generally most of the work's done the day before a car launch.

We go up, set everything up, and then we, if it's a projection mapping job, we then draw around the car itself, and do certain visual effects.

If it's being driven in, we can still do the same thing, but we tend to use other lighting, with the lasers, with one of the Jaguar car launches, the whole showroom was in darkness and we just highlighted a wing mirror, the Jaguar logo at the front.

We just highlighted key elements of the car, and then each light would come on and slowly if you just imagine it like a jigsaw puzzle, the car puts itself together in front of you.

So then you see the whole car at the end of it.

So that's how we go about, using sort of traditional lighting with lasers.

But obviously with the lasers, we can quite often they'll also want something outside on their building, to draw people's attention to where they are.

But as for the cars, that's the bit I enjoy the most, is obviously.

Tim Bennett: Yes!

And I guess the procedure is a little bit different to like, when you're doing water screen projects or when you're doing building mapping.

What's nice about you know, a static project like a building, is you can actually go down and take registration points and then reproduce it back in the studio.

That sounds like you don't quite do the same procedure with the car.

Is it actually possible to do that?

You take like, a life-size photo.

Allan Carter: You can't do it that way.

Yeah!

You obviously, you've got to get the view, the perspective point correct.

Like the laser would have to be in exactly the same place, that you take your measurements from to the car.

But because nowadays, as you probably know it's a lot easier now to draw with lasers, especially with things like what's behind (Lasercube).

We go up there the day before.

The cars put in situ, and then we literally spend the day drawing around the car, running through certain effects that we want to use with it.

And if need be, we have to be up there two days before and then it's two days beforehand.

It just depends on how big the job is.

Because some of them is not just lasers.

One job we... for some strange reason they seem to think, I can organize everything.

And I had to supply staging, blackout, screening, because the car launch was going to be done during midday, seating for 200 people.

So some jobs can turn out a lot bigger than you first start off.

They phone you up for a laser, and unfortunately, with me I'm a bit too helpful.

And I say yeah, we can help you out.

And I end up with everything.

And then obviously, then have to choose your music, to go with it.

Tim Bennett: Yeah!

That has its blessings, and its downfalls when you're generous like that as well.

I mean, it's great to help the clients.

And you know, you get known for being the guy who can provide everything.

But it can also kill you as well.

Allan Carter: That one definitely did.

Tim Bennett: Interesting.

And it sounds like, you've done quite a lot of car launches.

Is that something that you really specialize in?

Allan Carter: We have done quite a few.

I mean it's not totally what we specialize in, but I do, do enjoy doing that sort of thing.

The other things we've done is, we've done a few late night shopping outdoor events, with stages built for us.

We go along with some laser units and lighting, we put on a show. One particular show we built a 13-foot man, which strapped to your back.



And initially we was going to put lasers in his eyes, but we never got that far.

But we built this 13-foot man that straps to your body, and as you move the man dances.

So that's how that one works, so we're quite a creative bunch of people.

We make, we tend to make things as well that can go along with a show.

But like I said, for that one we had a big outdoor event and this 13-foot.

Well he started off at 15 foot, but I couldn't pick him up so, we had to knock a few feet off him.

Tim Bennett: And how are you coping with what's happening in the world right now?

I mean most people are suffering, some kind of either lock down, or just not allowed to do any events.

How's that affecting you right now?

Allan Carter: It's affecting us a lot at the moment, because some of the venues we do work in, we've already had an email last week, saying that they're not opening until April next year.

So it has been a bit of a killer.

Which is why, I'm trying to be more creative with doing work outside, with cubes, and other things just to show people what we can do.

So that when things finally do open up, they can think, oh well, I remember seeing a video of someone doing that.

Oh I'll give him a call, but it has been hard, which is but I've steered that time to creating more music.



Which is why the albums appeared.

The album wouldn't have been finished, if it weren't for lockdown admittedly.

So I've just been creating music now, and that's the only way I've managed to keep myself going.

And obviously having two children helps.

Tim Bennett: Yeah, but they keep me busy just by themselves.

But I mean, this is why ArgonTV started as well, because I had all this down time and like you, we won't we do it, probably won't be doing any events, where I am in Asia, until at least the middle of 2021.

So you know, we have all been talking about for the last, I don't know how

many years, telling people how creative we are.

Well, now we need to be creative, and really get our fingers out.

And I think it's excellent, that so many people are starting to take stock of where we are.

And say look, we have to do something.

And we need to move into new fields.

And you know, you're doing music.

And we need to, we can do outdoor advertising, and we can do this, we do all sorts of stuff.

It's very important, that we don't all just sit around, and let our industry die.

That we all come together, and find a way of you know, working together and pushing it forward.

And so it's great to see that, you're you know, finally got time to do something else.

Allan Carter: Well yeah.

I mean, what we're going to try doing is, obviously the good thing about the little thing, behind us (the Lasercube) is, it's battery powered.

So I can take that anywhere I want.

Laptops battery powered, so I can use that.

Camera's battery powered, so I don't need to really worry about any power whatsoever.

Which is why, we want to try and do some things locally, on old buildings and that, and then share them online.

Tim Bennett: Absolutely brilliant.

I guess you, so that means, you have some freedom of movement there.

Right now, where I am, we're in our second lockdown.

And it's extremely difficult to move around and go out.

So you know, we don't have that blessing at the moment.

Allan Carter: Now I just say, I mean there is obviously certain cities and that, they are starting to lock down certain areas up north, in the UK again.

I think they said, they are numbers going up to one again now.

So it is a bit of a worrying time, as to where it's gonna, is going to head.

The joy about obviously, living right smack bang on a thousand acre nature

reserve is that, there's hardly anybody here.

So I have that freedom.

During the lockdown period, it was absolutely brilliant.

Because we had no people here whatsoever.

So we had the freedom of the whole place to ourselves.

But unfortunately, as soon as the sun came out and they said, you can go anywhere you want.

There's been thousands of people down here, and just a couple of miles along from us, we've got a famous beach called Camber Sands.

And on one weekend, they had 42,000 people there over the weekend.

So it's been a bit crazy.

Tim Bennett: Yes indeed.

There's no accounting for human sensibility, sometimes.

Anyway, so anything else you want to show us with with what you're doing or you want to share with us?

Allan Carter: Well obviously, I'll send you the videos anyway.

But obviously, it's just, this has obviously been a good time for all of us to join you, and try and I said advertise and push our industry, especially now.

And even after all this is over, whatever normality will end up being, is that I think as an industry, we should stick together and help each other.

Unlike a lot of other industries, people aren't, don't like to help people.

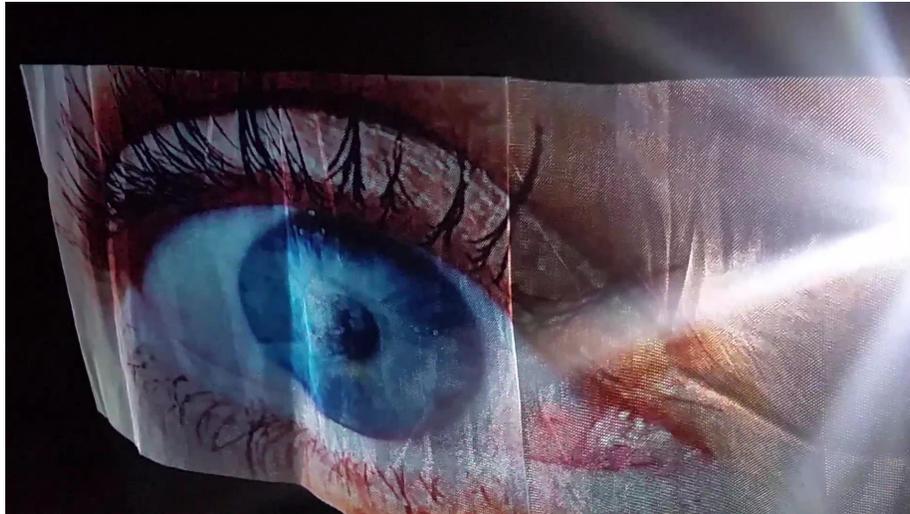
Because it's like, oh I don't want to help him, because he might be better than me, and this sort of thing.

To me, if everybody helps each other, because no one knows everything about this game.

If anybody turns around and says, they know everything about lasers, then they're lying.

Because you learn everything, every day.

So to me, helping each other out, get through this, we should come out the other end with a bit of luck.



Tim Bennett: Yes indeed.

And it's one of the things, that I've always loved about this industry.

When I first started in 89, I absolutely knew nothing.

You know, I fell into it, I was given an opportunity and I took it.

And I had zero knowledge of the industry, and people were very patient with me, and loved me and helped me along the way.

And it's been like that ever since.

I've always found this one of those industries, where we've all helped and supported each other, swap ideas, swap equipment.

And just you know, now we need that more than ever.

And I think, that's just such a blessing in an industry.

But I think, that's why we do what we do.

Because we like making people happy, and helping out where we need to help out.

So brilliant Allan.

Thank you very much for sharing your talent with us.

We're going to take a short break.

I'll be back in just a moment.

I'm talking with Allan Carter from South East Design about new car launches, car mapping, and just general laser artistry.

So we'll be back in just a moment.

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Tim Bennett: So welcome back to ArgonTV.

This is Tim Bennett.

I am joined by the one and only Allan Carter from South East Design.

We have been talking about new car launches, car mapping, and laser artistry in general.

And Allan has been sharing his talent with us.

Allan, if people want to get in touch with you, what's the best way they can do that?

Allan Carter: Best way is email.

Which is: [s.ed \(at\) live.co.uk](mailto:s.ed@live.co.uk)

Obviously our website is, www.southeastlaserdesign.com so there's some videos and things like that up there that shows you the sort of thing we do.

So they're the two best ways to get in contact with us.

Tim Bennett: Okay fantastic.

And I will put links to all of the, or both of those links in the description beneath this video.

So just go down and click on those.

And while you're there, while you're looking at Allan's links, please click on the subscribe button, so that we can keep in touch with you and you get notification of all of the videos, that we're doing here at ArgonTV.

And please leave a comment.

You know, we're artists.

Allan and I are artists.

And we love to be applauded.

And one of the ways you can applaud us, is by commenting on the video, and saying how much you enjoyed it.

So brilliant.

I really thank you for spending your time with us today.

But before we go, one thing I like to ask all of the people who come on ArgonTV, because every single one of them has a success in their own way.

What is Allan's secret to success?

Allan Carter: The fact that, well obviously, I enjoy making people happy with what I do.

That's a real good push.

The ability that I have, I think, as a person, to be able to see things with my mind, and that of what it's going to look what I hope the outcome, what it's going to look like.

So basically, just being the fact, that I'm extremely creative.

And that's what people like about what I do.

Because I just try to change things and make things a lot different to what you generally see.

And once they've seen it, then the word gets around.

Tim Bennett: So brilliant.

Allan Carter: But that's how it's all started.

Tim Bennett: So make people happy and be creative.

Fantastic.

Well, thank you Allan for being here with us so much.

It's been really nice talking to you.

And I'm kind of jealous that you live on this nature reserve.

I wish, I did.

Although I'm in a beautiful part of the world.

Allan Carter: I'll take some.

Tim Bennett: Yes please.

Allan Carter: I'll take some photos of the reserve and send them to you.

Tim Bennett: Yes, yes please, do that.

Allan Carter: I've got loads of them.

Tim Bennett: And then, I'll embed those in the video, so that people can see them as well.

So we can see where you all are.

So thank you very much, for being here tonight Allan.

I really appreciate you, taking the time, sharing your talent and just inspiring people in the industry with your creativity.

Allan Carter: Thank you very much and thank you for the opportunity.

Tim Bennett: Great.

So thank you everybody, I'm happy to have another episode of [ArgonTV](#) with you.

As I say, don't forget to just subscribe and hit the bell.

And please leave a message for Allan and myself, we'd love to hear from you.

And if you have any questions for Allan, you know, let's get in touch, and we'll get back to you as soon as possible.

So thanks very much, we'll see you very soon, in another edition of ArgonTV.

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