



Designer: Louise Jones



Designer: Todhunter Earle



Designer: Todhunter Earle



Designer: Studio Indigo

Kaizen Furniture Makers

ANTONIUS WUBBEN

My business partner Bill Schilling and I have been passionately designing, manufacturing and installing bespoke luxury interiors in London and internationally for twenty-five years – although we prefer to call ourselves *furniture engineers*. We cater to a niche in the market where there is a demand for designs that stand out for their complexity and uniqueness, which allows us to create absolute exclusivity for our clients. In our view, this represents luxury in the truest sense of the word.

Our name embodies our ethos. (Kaizen means ‘continuous improvement’ in Japanese business philosophy.) We apply this by combining traditional craftsmanship with ever forward-thinking design. Our mission to produce the very finest bespoke joinery is demonstrated at every stage, from choosing the best available materials to using the most advanced design technologies, as well as leading manufacturing techniques and methods of installation.

“For us the pleasure is in the detail, and our typical client will also share our forensic eye.”

As fellow furniture designers, Bill and I joined forces to form Kaizen in 1995. We’ve now attracted a team of 40 talented individuals whom we’re truly proud of. I have always admired those who want to break boundaries by following their design instincts - I grew up in the Netherlands, and Gerrit Rietveld, founder of the ‘De Stijl’ movement, along with the likes of Piet Mondrian, inspired and excited me, in part leading me into furniture design. Striving to be the best in one’s field has always motivated me, and it’s a quality that Bill and I and the team all share.

As Kaizen grew, we narrowed our focus almost solely on the super prime residential market, creating commissions for private clients and working alongside some of the most revered interior designers and architects in the global industry. For us the pleasure is in the detail, and our typical client will also share our forensic eye. We consider every element in the design and manufacturing process, ensuring that each aspect comes together seamlessly to achieve a flawless finish - not just the timber elements, but also the fine metalwork, glass and stone, and anything else that could be part of the design.

We’ve seen many design trends come and go, but find that our clients often prefer to think outside the box, particularly where bespoke finishes are concerned. This means we are constantly experimenting and need to be flexible, so we do not have a signature style. We can turn our hand to almost anything - we’ve completed projects that are contemporary, pared down and minimalist, and others that are extremely decorative with detailed marquetry and carvings. One of the most fantastic projects we completed involved two wardrobes in rosewood, where a French artist hand painted horses on to the door panels in the style of George Stubbs. It was beautifully ornate, a real masterpiece in fine furniture making.

There are certainly some finishes and design details we are seeing a strong preference for at the moment, such as straw marquetry, hand-dyed veneers, and the return of brass and bronze integrated fittings. There is a continuous demand for unusual materials; recently we’ve worked with abalone shell, amethyst, rose quartz, pyrite and onyx, as well as an evolving range of marvellous in-house applied liquid metals.

Looking ahead, we expect a return of natural materials and honest finishes which reiterate the inherent qualities of the timber. With new technologies on the horizon and the bright young designers we are seeing come through the door, the future of furniture design is exciting. Though it is just as wonderful, and of course essential, that traditional craftsmanship techniques remain very much alive.