

Martin Kemp on Interiors, Luxury, and Designing Private Jets

By Sophie Killip

If there's something that the world's finest interiors, yachts and private jets have in common, it could be that Martin Kemp designed them. His company, Martin Kemp Design (MKD), is known as a "luxury service brand attracting individuals accustomed to luxury service, or seeking an aspirational lifestyle," and prides itself on not having a fixed 'style.' Instead, MKD embraces the styles that their clients prefer, offering bespoke solutions to the most intricate projects — be they on land, sea, or air.



Focusing largely on super-prime residential projects, MKD have also ventured into restaurant design and high-end retail, working on projects such as Clarges Mayfair (a super-prime residential-led development) and 77 Mayfair (a collection of seven luxury residences) in London. With such elite clientele, it's worth asking how MKD find new patrons; "I'm pleased to say it's usually through word of mouth, or recommendation," Martin Kemp tells *Elite Traveler*.

Often, clients are so delighted by the finished project that they return to Martin Kemp for their next project. "Currently, we have three clients for whom we are designing two different homes," Martin reveals. "In the past we have delivered five projects for one client, including formal and leisure homes in different countries, jets and a yacht."



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Both the aviation and marine industries are notoriously complicated when it comes to creating lavish designs. With weight restrictions and safety aspects to keep in mind, MKD have found some ingenious ways to ensure their projects consider these fundamentals, but still deliver sophisticated, beautiful finishes. "Techniques today allow us to add veneers of stone to honeycomb backings, which bring the luxury of marble for example, but with the minimal weight of aluminium," explains Martin. "Carbon fibre has enormous strength but again the mere weight of paper."

As jets have to meet aviation safety standards, Martin admits that it "can restrict the variety of materials we utilise. However, this doesn't tend to hinder our delivery of an elegant cabin for owners." Both yachts and jets can also be influenced by speed and ergonomics, so there can be "no sharp edges or corners to fall into if a plane turns suddenly or a yacht leans. Equally, escape routes and hatches can often be found in the back of wardrobes or behind headboards for safety without detracting from design."



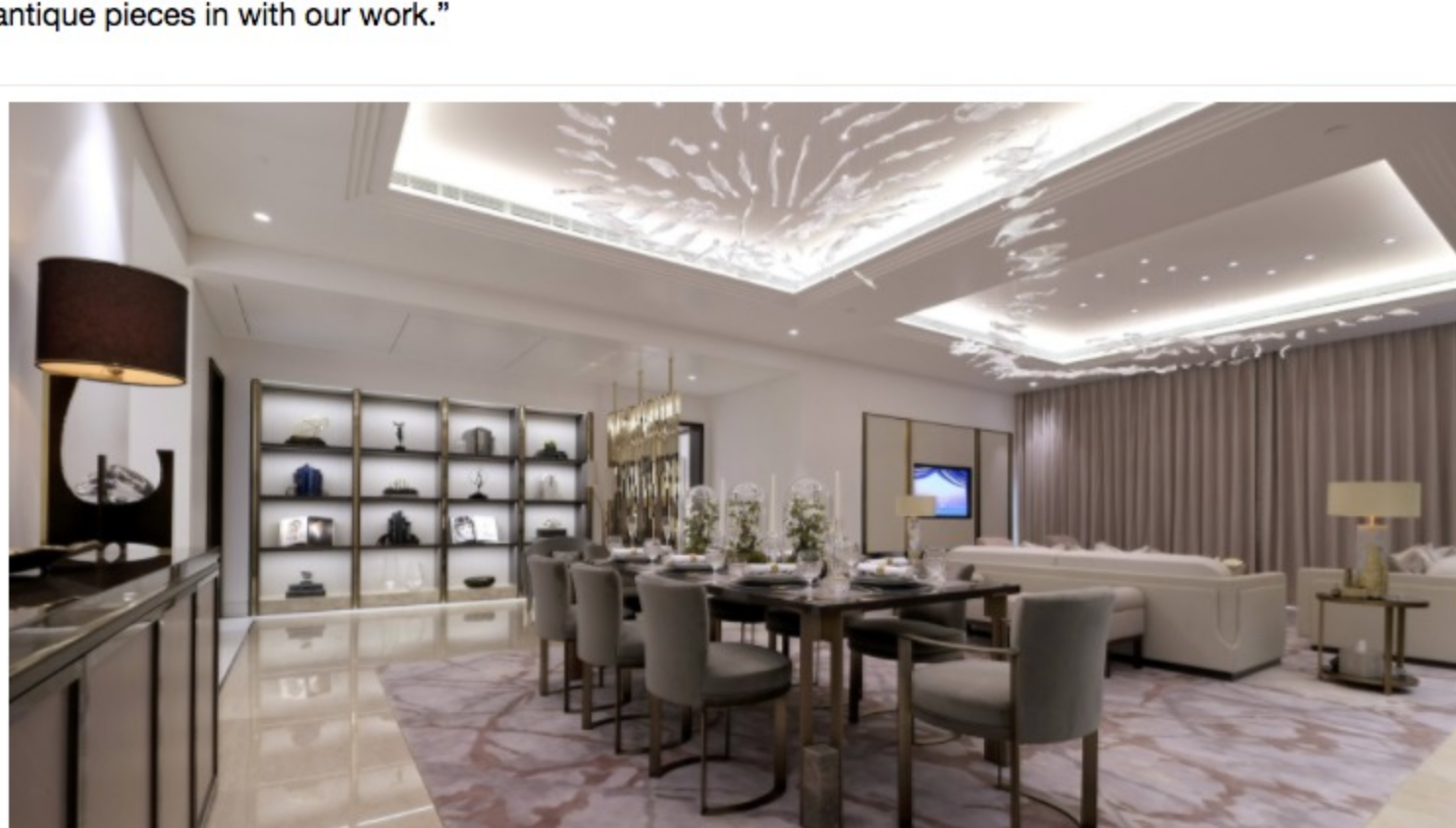
These seem to be quite specific, complex additions to make within the design — but Martin merely shrugs. "[They] are not difficult aspects to introduce," he says, "providing we consider everything early on. Generally, both the aviation and marine industries are fluid and open to be challenged and thus don't impede upon good design, providing basic rules are observed initially."

Using a diverse range of styling, it is no wonder that MKD are able to create stunning interiors; discussing one of his private jet projects, a Challenger 604, Martin seems pleased with the outcome. "Private Jets can be an intoxicating blend of technology and creativity," he explains. "Throw in a client's personal taste and the solution becomes harder to resolve, [but] we delivered a timeless, chic cabin."



"We used materials [such as leather and suede] in a tonal, elegant way. They complimented each other and contrasted nicely with the stained timbers, and the handmade loose cushions and throws," continues Martin, before divulging a further highlight: "The plane was later sold at a profit to a buyer who referred to it as 'the best jet in the air'."

One of the reasons for MKD's success is its use of bespoke pieces for each project, guaranteeing each client has a unique result. "The majority of our work is bespoke — probably close to 90 percent, largely because our clients demand this. They invest a lot in being original and having unique designs. We have, of course, a few favourite brands we like to mix in, plus I have a fondness for combining vintage and antique pieces in with our work."



Martin founded MKD only a short six years ago — though it may seem a young company, MKD is only moving from strength to strength. Based in London, the team is now 18 strong — but what makes them so well placed for the luxury market? "My team has an innate understanding of luxury, detail and expectation," says Martin. "My personal life in Los Angeles has also helped; I've been exposed to the lives of celebrities and developed discreet homes for them which naturally encompass high levels of detail and finish."

With future projects including one of the most spectacular chalets in The Alps, as well as an expansive subterranean home for a client in China and further private jet requests, Martin Kemp is a force to be reckoned with. With the interview at an end, there is one last question *Elite Traveler* has for the design legend: what advice would you give to those wishing to spend on creating their own beautiful interior?

"Choose the right designer to work with," Martin stresses, "as this becomes a relationship in which the designer knows every detail of your preferences at home."

martinkempdesign.com