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## DESIGN FOR LIFE

Martin Kemp Design

"We'd like to be seen as purveyors of a new British interior design – denizens of ultimate style and chic," says Martin Kemp, founder of London-based Martin Kemp Design (MKD). "We'd like to become the first British company to court such a same cachet."

His eponymous company is only six years old, but Kemp is already close to fulfilling that dream, with the world's elite calling on his services. They include Kylie Minogue, for whom MKD recently designed an apartment. "Kylie explained: 'You've done such lovely things for me, I'm happy to do the same for you!'" he says. "But, usually, we are immensely discrete about our celebrity clients."

These include a famous fashion icon who was impressed by a private jet that MKD had designed and refitted. "He said it was the only plane on which he's travelled that suits him and his style," says Kemp. "We thought this was immensely kind and flattering." The plane – designed for a client with a meticulous eye for detail, with a tailored colour-scheme of taupes and greys – has, remarkably, since been sold at a profit.

Kemp started his company in February 2012, after working for various design studios in both the UK and the US. Born in Wales, he showed artistic ability at an early age and studied three-dimensional design at the Cardiff School of Art & Design, before moving to London to work in retail design and then relocating to Los Angeles, where he designed celebrity homes. After his return to London, he saw a gap in the market for a high-end interior design company. "There were many interior decorators, but very few super-prime residential interior designers," he says.

More than just an interior design company, however, MKD now brands itself as a "lifestyle service", producing creative solutions for interiors, architecture, yachts, cars,

furniture and products. Focus is largely on the super-prime residential market, but also embraces high-end retail, office and restaurant design.

"We can cover almost everything, from the architecture right through to putting the bed linen on the beds," explains Kemp. "We source artwork – from Renoirs to high-street prints – and classic motor cars, and we even suggest holiday destinations to our clients. They like to be discerning. They like to be different. That's why building a relationship is so important, and why projects can take three years or more. We travel with our clients, go out to dinner and occasionally on holiday with them. We are invited to spend time together understanding how they live and what they like." The company undertakes projects right around the world, from London to Monaco, Courchevel to Beijing, New York to Mumbai. Clients tend to be entrepreneurs, global business owners and celebrities. Recommendations come by word of mouth and through very discreet networking opportunities.

MKD's designs are always bespoke, and range from understated country elegance to dynamic city chic. The studio uses the best-quality materials and employs top craftsmen, both locally and internationally, to create "heritage designs" that will endure. Future plans include the launch of an MKD product range, comprising homewares such as candles, soap pumps and tissue boxes.

"When we accessorise our clients' homes we find that there's a gap in the market for high-designed pieces that match the interiors we create, so we've decided to supply our own." And, for Kemp, MKD is an inherently British company. "We're not about bulldogs, Winston Churchill or Union Flags. We are reinventing the British design vernacular."

[www.martinkempdesign.com](http://www.martinkempdesign.com)

