



OZ LANCASTER



## Furniture Design

By **Oz Lancaster**

Design Director and Founder, **OS Designs**

OS Designs Ltd is an innovative international interior architecture and design firm. Based in London, OS Designs carefully manages each project from beginning to end, offering a complete design service and project management throughout. Oz Lancaster is the Design Director and Founder of the studio. With a Masters Degree in Furniture Design, Oz identifies and sets new trends in interior design; and together with an experienced team of designers she provides beautifully unique and functional designs for each individual client. OS Designs places great emphasis on maintaining strong client relations, tailoring each project to the specific needs and vision of the individual, creating globally acclaimed, exceptional, elegant interiors for both private and commercial clients. Oz herself has an in-depth understanding of global cultures and trends due to growing up in Cyprus and continuing her studies in the UK. She has successfully worked on the most exclusive developments not only in London but also across the continent and in the Middle East. Here she shares her unique experience of furniture design.

The start of a project is such an important time to make the bond between client and designer; understanding the clients taste and lifestyle and recognising what they require from a designer is the initial brief. Whether it's a new kitchen, complete new layout or a piece of bespoke joinery, understanding and reflecting their taste in the design will ensure a successful outcome. I usually begin by asking what kind of interiors they like, whether they would like traditional, more contemporary or a mix, what kind of materials they would like to see, more wood or marble or combination of various materials. It's important to set the tone, finding the design language together and it's important to



*Above: Hyde Park Gardens Penthouse project*





*Above: Weston Homes platinum Penthouse, Master Bedroom*

execute the design in the most communicative way as all of our clients want to be involved in this journey.

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At the top of the list for most common requests is the desire for everything to be bespoke, from

the headboards to the kitchen. Most of our clients don’t want to see their interior looking like a branded showroom. Another request is the practicality of the design, particularly with bespoke items where the clients would like to keep the item for many years so the material selection is important. It should be durable as well as practical, unless the piece is for a specific, visual only effect. Something I like to do at the beginning is to sit down and have a coffee with them in their home, so I see how they live, their lifestyle and family traditions. Most of our clients share with me the photos that they have been

keeping or show me the pieces that they like currently, which sets the tone of the project. Communication is the key for me and I always work with my clients very closely, I try to be in their headspace so that I only suggest the right designs, forms and materials for them. I will often text a photo of a furniture that I have seen or the material that I have just walked pass, we are always in communication. It’s very important for a designer to understand what the client doesn’t want so that you can eliminate and select accordingly. As design studio that creates our own furniture pieces, we are





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constantly searching for new materials and working them with our designs, which are often very challenging. The joiner who can create the most stunning dining table from ebony is not necessarily the right joiner if you want to add a resin mix or glass perhaps marble or metal inlays. Understanding skillsets and how to achieve the best results is really vital in this role where the client is putting so much faith in us as designers, to deliver a home that they will love.

If I could offer advice on utilising your budget in projects it would be to think carefully about where to spend your money. Furniture is a huge part of the interior and, if made beautifully, can stand the test of time. It can be tempting to choose cheaper items that are available more quickly than bespoke made, but will not necessarily last as long.

For inspiration, I take much of it from the photo libraries that I created over the years, from the materials I play with, from fashion I covet and sometimes even from a well-designed café that I like to visit. Inspirations are all around us, it can be your mum's kitchen or the most famous catwalks. Observing them is a skill in itself.

My advice to homeowners on furniture and sourcing it for your home would be this - live with the furniture, don't live for protecting the furniture. Red wine spills will happen, mess is inevitable, but making that piece the part of your life is priceless.

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*Above: Weston Homes Platinum Penthouse, guest bedroom*

