

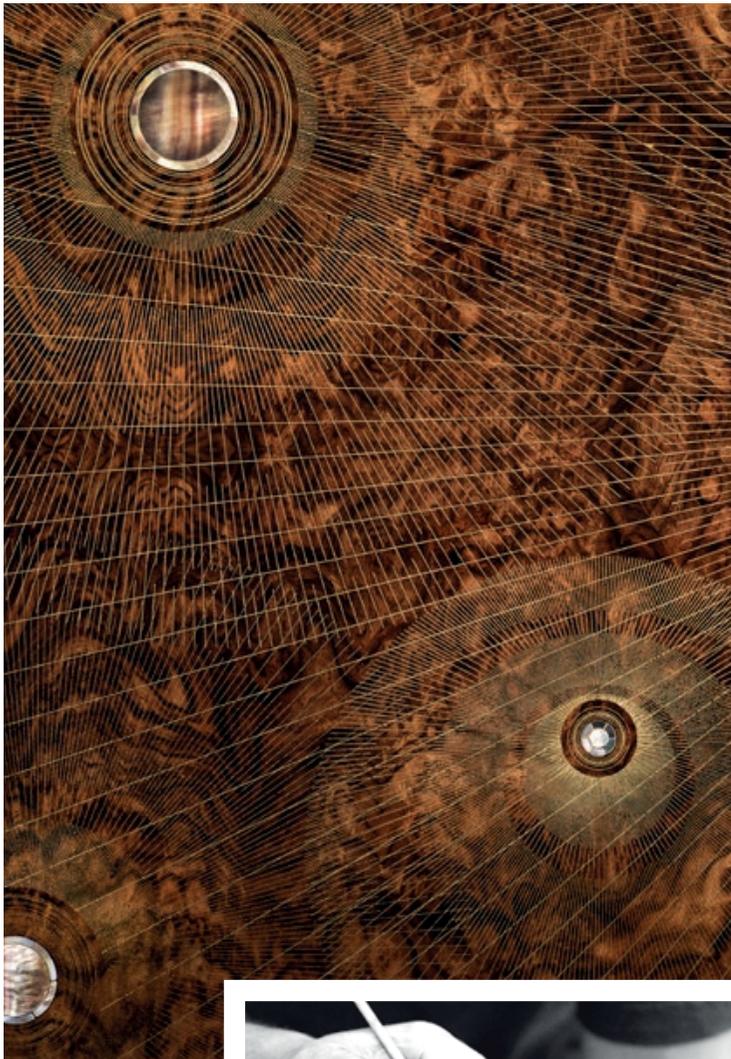
SILVERLINING:
TRENDING
TOMORROW'S
ANTIQUES





THIRTY YEARS IN THE MAKING, THIS VISIONARY COMPANY IS DIVERSIFYING BY REINVENTING THE MEANING OF BESPOKE CRAFTSMANSHIP FOR THE 21ST CENTURY.

BY AMANDA MCCRACKEN.



When I meet Mark Boddington and Jason Chadda in London they exude a debonair charm and I can see why they have been so successful in face-to-face business. They are refreshingly passionate about what they are doing, they have the expertise, the drive, and believe wholeheartedly in the backbone of the company - a team of highly skilled individuals who are taking Silverlining to the next level, creating excellence and diversity for the 21st century.

The company was conceived on 4 September 1985, and celebrates its 30th anniversary this year. Owner, Mark Boddington's heart was not in joining the family business, instead he embraced his creative skills by studying furniture making under designer John Makepeace before starting up Silverlining. "I was slightly naive

in going self-employed aged 21, I just wanted to have my own workshops, however I think if you work hard enough you make your own luck. My initial piece of luck was having our first premises on the Grosvenor Estate owned by the Duke and Duchess of Westminster, helped also by 13 months of orders from my graduation show."

» Breaking into the superyacht industry was no easy feat, but Silverlining has now notched up work on 79 superyachts including several yachts represented by Burgess. «



Whether you believe in luck or you make your own luck, Mark was later asked by Her Grace the Duchess of Westminster to assist in the remodelling of their house, a break that led to work for other families from the British aristocracy, including the Gettys and Rothschilds.

"When I started we had only one machine, a saw and a chisel in our hands, now we have lasers. I remember a friend who was ahead of his time persuading me to get a computer and I thought he was absolutely mad. The whole world has changed, the world is now a very small place due to the digital revolution and exchange of information happens at lightning speed."

Breaking into the superyacht industry was no easy feat, but Mark remembers very well the first time this happened. "It was in 1994 when designer Matthew Chatt-Collins, at Andrew Winch Designs, phoned up and said we are in a bit of pickle here, we need a decent furniture maker to do a royal yacht - motor yacht Claire which belonged to Prince Jefri." Incredibly, Silverlining has now notched up work on 79 superyachts including several yachts represented by Burgess: Hemisphere, Mondango 3, Baton Rouge and 78 pieces for Amaryllis. Top of the list comes Palladium for which 96 pieces were crafted.

Silverlining is now entering a new era of creativity using laser and resin technologies to etch and add texture. "We are taking ordinary materials and turning them into luxury items. For example, we took a piece of ordinary plywood which we cut with a laser, it looks like velvet, it's a renewable source. When I started, everything tended to have silver and Macassar ebony as the materials. We are becoming totally opposite now." In fact it goes further, the ethos is to create luxury materials that do not erode rain forests, are organic and sustainable. In turn this has led to adopting natural substances with protective qualities such as lemon oil and the use of cod oil on leathers, both of which are organic and non-toxic.

A stunning new collection, Creativity meets Craftsmanship, was introduced at the 2015 Monaco Yacht Show, where methods for creating multi-faceted, 3D works of art are applied to amazing effect. Mark explains how such a piece might be created: "Laser and hand skills are used to sculpture the most incredible textural pieces. If your architect or designer is inspired by a concept and we receive a brief, probably without any drawings, we can create visuals to show what's possible, or what's impossible. What we have discovered is that people are inspired by innovation. It's a bit like the F1 industry, clients push the boundaries in speed and they want to be the fastest, just like they want a yacht that is different to everyone else's. Because they are pioneers in their own fields they are motivated to be the first to do something, and they are very open to allowing the experts they work with to create that, so we are really privileged."



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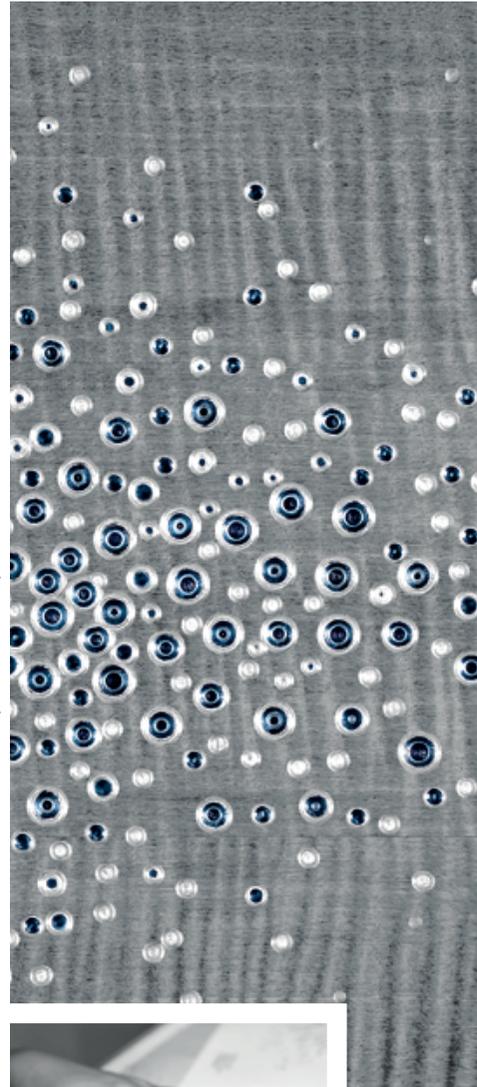
Mark believes that the emotion has been taken out of business by the internet and he strongly advocates face-to-face meetings, travelling anywhere in the world to meet a potential client, but there is a catch. "We aim to work with people who understand what we are trying to achieve and we want them to see their dreams become a reality. Luxury is now about integrity, where the materials come from, understanding the skills needed, supporting young people in apprenticeships. It's about having a lasting legacy, not just a 'can I have it tomorrow' culture, therefore be prepared to wait for something that is incredible." So the message is: if you want something quickly don't bother to apply.

When dealing with Silverlining be prepared for a rather unusual client approach, you will have to do some work! "All our clients visit and we give them an apron. It isn't just about price. It's about the journey of commissioning. We want clients to understand that hands and minds are used, to see incredible sketches, to see their concepts develop, to hold the materials themselves and to experience craftsmanship first hand. They love it," explains Mark.

There is however a very practical side to all this. "Although everything we make is beautiful, it needs to work and it still needs to be working in 10 to 100 years' time. One of our yacht clients referred to our pieces as the antiques of tomorrow," says Jason.

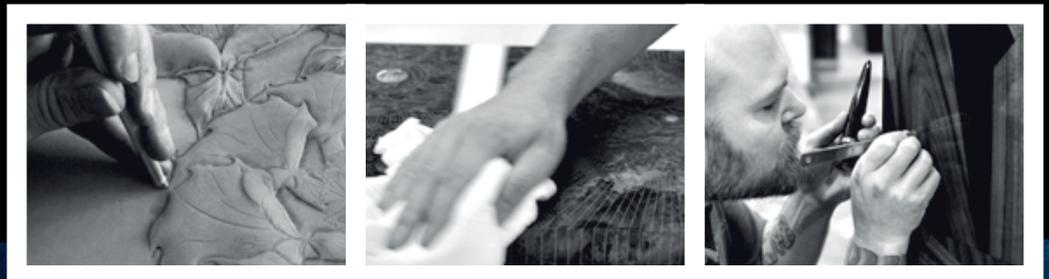
It is clear that these gentlemen are passionate about values, innovation and excellence and that is what everyone in the company signs up for. "What I would like to do is redefine what constitutes 21st century craftsmanship. Of most importance is using the very best of the day: the best knowledge, the best materials, the best skills – and the best minds, both creatively and from a manufacturing point of view. Materials science has developed beyond measure, and we now have Kevlar and carbon fibre. We are making a nine metre table in one piece in the workshop at the moment and the only way we could have done that previously is with a modern F1 material. We use less timber now, it might be on the outside but the core is honeycomb and we use Nomex," says Mark.

In terms of the growth of the business they envisage the facility in Wrexham, North Wales, going from 58 to 80 people over the next five years to keep pace with orders, and with the value and scale of the projects getting bigger that is imperative. With a strong order book that has clients from Europe, the USA, the Middle East and Asia, Silverlining is certainly creating the legacy for the antiques of tomorrow.





» Some of my team have worked with me for 28 years. It's all about creating a centre of excellence where everyone can learn and with that expertise comes the artistry and the creativity to accomplish more and more unique projects. «



» I am very proud that we are keeping these craftsmanship skills alive. And when I say skills, I mean at the most incredible level, not just cutting dovetails. We have some exceptional skills, which we must nurture and impart to the next generation. «

