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DEREK FROST

Pair of sideboards made in amboyna and five different veneers: purple heart, grey and blue stained sycamore, satin wood and ebony. The cabinet maker is Peter Milne, Tim Deans did the marquetry, Sebastian Wakefield the gilding and Gordon Burnett the metal work. Their cyphers, together with Derek Frost's, are stamped on the pieces, telling the story of its makers for posterity.

Flowers in both pictures from Caroline Dickenson, Grosvenor House, 35 Park Street, W1 (499 3241)



Derek Frost (above), who worked with Mary Fox Linton, set up his own interior design company two years ago. Since then he has gathered praise from all quarters (including *The Magazine*, last April), as well as an impressive *câche* of clients. Amongst the latter are Edward Heath, who invited Derek to decorate his exquisite period house near Salisbury Cathedral.

Designing furniture is Derek's ruling passion. 'My main ambition is to have a piece in the V&A,' he says, and he believes his pieces have the character to stand up against fine antiques. Derek has established a network of designer/craftsmen who gild, carve, do metalwork, lacquer and marquetry with the skill and vocational ardour of artisans of the past. He has encouraged his clients to commission special pieces and, in response, they have opted for bold and adventurous designs.

'I think it was very brave of Lord Charles Cecil to commission these two sideboards as his home is filled with the finest traditional things. He was looking for a contemporary designer

almost as an intellectual exercise and, surprisingly, he picked the most modern and daring ideas I showed him.'

Ted Heath displayed a similar boldness when Derek suggested a move away from his conventional antique dining room chairs to a more dashing set of 'racing' chairs. These have upholstered seats and backs and legs which resemble the front and back legs of a horse. 'They are not made from anatomical studies,' says Derek, 'but are stylised, created from my imagination. I added a sort of coquettishness by setting a scarlet stripe of PVC in the mahogany, rather like a cross between a tart's stocking and a pair of military trousers.'

Derek believes that design has not been as good since the Thirties. 'I never felt that much of consequence came out of the Forties, Fifties or Sixties. But I am a fervent admirer of Ruhlmann. Everything he made was so refined.'

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