

DESIGN

PIECES DE RESISTANCE

London-based interior designer Derek Frost is also an internationally acclaimed furniture designer who was responsible for the interior of a hotel at Pigg's Peak in Swaziland; sadly almost destroyed in a recent fire. Frost's work was seen in Habitat issue 73 (April 1986) when a ten page feature was included on a Nash house in Regent's Park which Frost completed for a young South African businessman with international connections.



Racing Chair: Carved from mahogany and incorporating an inset gilded 'stocking' seam on the legs and knees, this chair has an upholstered padded seat and back and is finished with a line of contrast piping secured with gun metal nails. Overall size: 51 cm wide x 48 cm deep x 115 cm (floor to top)

Frost specialises in custom-made pieces which are almost artforms *per se*. The abovementioned article featured a console table and matching mirror, created in marquetry in a variety of English woods, and a server made from polished aluminium and perspex. Since then, Frost has expanded his specialist, hand-crafted furniture making operation and recently held an exhibition at Leighton House Museum in London. His latest

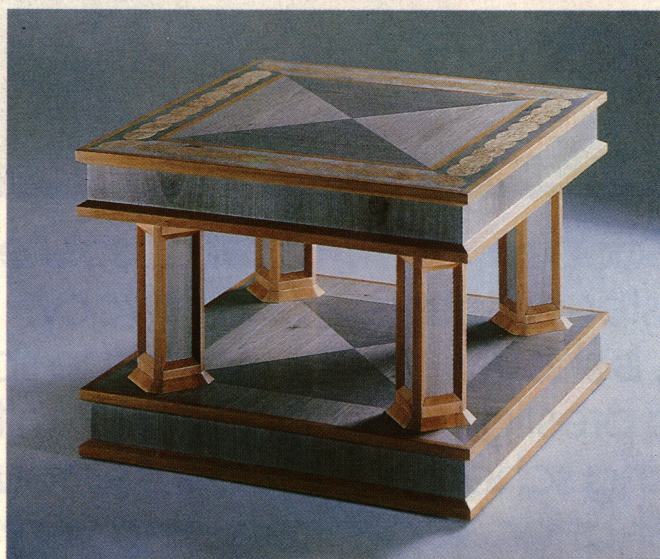
works include materials such as Mother of Pearl, silver-leaf gilding, lacquer, exotic wood veneers and custom metal work. All pieces are stamped and dated by the designer.

Derek Frost worked with David Hicks and Mary Fox-Linton before setting up his own design company almost three years ago. Since then he has gathered praise from many quarters of the UK press and has put together an impressive client list. Amongst▷

continued on page 37



Dancing Desk 1: Constructed in medium density fibre board with all surfaces clad in colorcore laminate. Overall size: 150 cm wide x 75 cm deep x 75 cm high. Collection: Mr Diarmid Ogilvy



Column End Table: Stylised column table – one of a pair constructed of medium density fibreboard and cherry hardwood. Marquetry in grey stained cherry and satinwood with inlaid ovals of massar birch. Overall size: 90 cm wide x 90 cm deep x 65 cm high. Private Collection

the latter are ex-British Prime Minister Edward Heath who invited Frost to design his exquisite period house near Salisbury Cathedral in Wiltshire.

But furniture design has now become Frost's ruling passion. He says: 'My major ambition is to have a piece in the Victoria and Albert Museum.' He believes his pieces have the character to stand up against fine antiques and has established a network of designer/craftsmen who carry out their work with the

skill and vocational ardour of artisans from past design eras.

Derek Frost encourages his clients to commission custom-made pieces and in response, many have opted for bold and adventurous designs. He feels that furniture design in the UK has not been as good since the Thirties and says: 'I never felt that much of consequence came out of the Forties, Fifties and Sixties.'

To describe Frost's look is difficult. He has moved >

continued on page 98

continued from page 37

Chest on Stand: Lacquered chest on gilded base. Bi-folding pair front opening doors. Finished in Chinese red lacquer overlaid with a waved form. Silver plated brass hinges and handles with recessed aluminium leaf distressed details. The interior is finished with mirror and glass shelves and designed for use as a bar. Base in MDF carcass, with distressed aluminium leaf finish. Overall size: 120 cm wide x 40 cm deep x 180 cm high



Dressing Table and Dressing Table Mirror: Dressing table with three opening drawers and two opening doors. Interiors lined in grey stained sycamore veneer. Exterior clad in mother of pearl squares framed by distressed white gold water gilding on a black bole. Top finished in a similar distressed gilding but on a red bole, enclosed by a mother of pearl frame. Handles are glass with a silver finish applied to the etched edge. Overall size: 150 cm wide x 73,75 cm deep x 73,75 cm high. The five sided bevelled mirror and frame were designed to accompany the dressing table and are one of identical finish. The mirror is supported by two legs of clear perspex. Private Collection

on from modern abstractions to a contemporary style that appears, conversely, to appeal as much to traditionalists as to those of more modern tastes. Although firmly rooted in the 1980's Frost likes to think that his standards owe more to the ideals of eighteenth century workmanship than to twentieth century mass production.

The exhibition at Leighton House was one of this summer's design events in London and the pieces illustrated here drew much attention. Frost says that his work attracts a very particular type of person,

both from the fields of potential collectors and artistic appreciators. The show drew a number of new commissions and some additional design work; one project for a couple the wife of whom is South African.

Says the designer: 'I intend to continue to extend the sculptural nature of my work. The whole subject of contemporary design in Britain seems to be exciting an ever-increasing following. This is great for all concerned although the result is that the cost of pieces such as mine is jumping quite dramatically. However, clients seem increasingly bullish.' □