

MEET THE MAKER

Interview Catherine Coyle

Chris Turner cabinetmaker



Chris Turner in his Glasgow workshop. Many of the pieces in his signature range feature geometric marquetry [below]. He also takes on bespoke commissions



You have to love what you do in life. I saw this in my own family, growing up in Northern Ireland. My dad made aeroplanes and my mum was a seamstress, **and their skills and passions surrounded us**, from detailed drawings of planes to colourful fabrics and patterns. My Uncle John learned his cabinetmaking skills at Hanna & Browne in Belfast, and **I grew up hearing his tales of travelling across the globe, working with interesting and exotic woods in Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea.** He passed away a couple of years ago but **I keep the furniture book he gave me in my workshop office** – it still inspires me. After studying furniture construction at college in Glasgow, I worked for an antiques ►



A Chris Turner design is as much a work of art as it is a practical, usable piece of furniture. The Cubist Credenza [left and below] is a good example of this, with its blend of traditional cabinet-making skills and marquetry techniques. Each one is unique, thanks to the 630 handcut elements that go into the design. Dovetails [above] are made with incredible attention to detail

company, restoring pianos. I then worked for a local cabinetmaker and some of Scotland's well-known furniture-makers, before setting up my own firm, Turner Furniture, in 2003. **I work a lot with hardwoods but also love working with veneer.** Unlike solid timber, marquetry can be used to depict patterns and pictures. It's a technique I use a lot in my designs. **The natural beauty of the outdoors has a big impact on me.** That includes the trees themselves – their patterns and shapes are reflected in my furniture. I love the German architect, painter and designer Richard Riemerschmid (1868-1957): the **abstract triangular forms** of his furniture have fascinated me for years, ever since I made a reproduction of one of his tables for a college project. It inspired my recently completed Uisge Beatha Whisky Chair. **I also like artists who are pushing boundaries** and trying to do something different, such as Kevin Stamper and Christine Meyer-Eaglestone. The best part of my job is **seeing the smile on someone's face** when they are delighted with their furniture. **There's a real feeling of pride at that moment** when something you've made has such a positive effect on someone's life. ■

“THE NATURAL BEAUTY OF THE OUTDOORS HAS A BIG IMPACT ON ME. THE PATTERNS AND SHAPES ARE REFLECTED IN MY FURNITURE”

