

styleCENTURY

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London's bespoke furniture designers



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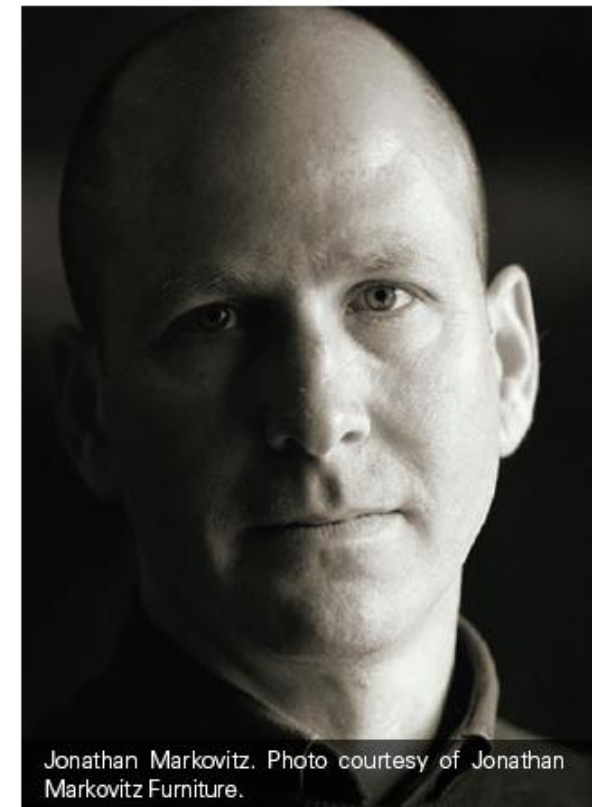
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JONATHAN MARKOVITZ FURNITURE

A bespoke designer must be naturally intuitive to have a fruitful relationship with his client. Jonathan Markovitz of the Yew Tree Workshops in South West Oxfordshire, England, is just that.

“I need to feel personally connected to my clients. People can easily buy anonymous manufactured furniture from a store, but there is no direct personal connection, as there is in the bespoke process,” he said. “I sensitively and creatively try to respond to who the client is,” added Markovitz, “... and they can give me lots of clues.”

At the initial meeting Markovitz determines the basics: what types of wood the client likes, if they want a dark or light toned timber, if they tend to simple or busy patterns, and of course functional details like how many drawers are needed.



Jonathan Markovitz. Photo courtesy of Jonathan Markovitz Furniture.



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"Later I find myself back in my design studio sketching out ideas. This could go on for a period of weeks until I've got it just right. In the back of my mind I'm connecting with the person, the couple, the family," said Markovitz. "It's not a portrait as such, but by creatively reflecting their own selves, the resulting designs are both unique and meet excitement and approval."

Markovitz said he always tries to design from the client's point of view, if the client was able to design and make the piece himself.

"There really are three great moments for me," he noted. "The first is I've got an idea that works and I've drawn it out. The second is when I present those ideas and the client likes it and we proceed with the commission. The third is when the actual furniture is done and delivered and they are delighted with it."

English walnut with a burr walnut veneered top lends a richness to Markovitz's delightfully arc-legged dressing suite. Photo courtesy of Jonathan Markovitz Furniture.

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As a designer Markovitz draws much of his inspiration from the rolling English countryside in which he is located. His pieces have, as in nature, no truly straight lines. Instead, the subtle living lines that one would find in the slight curve of a tree trunk or the bend of a stream give even his simplest table a sense of life.

While most of his pieces are created for private individuals, interior designers and architects in Great Britain, he is gradually beginning to design and ship work abroad. His furniture is handcrafted from temperate climate hardwoods – usually English or French oak, English walnut, maple, sycamore and English cherry.

“It is important for me to avoid exotic timbers and endangered species,” he noted.

To meet demand for his bespoke pieces, which can take up to six to nine months to complete, Markovitz works closely with one trusted English furniture



Burr and laminated oak, edged in ebony, creates the sculptural design of this desk made for the bay window of a Jonathan Markovitz client. Photo courtesy of Jonathan Markovitz Furniture.

First came the Lovelock walnut sideboard, made for a rectory in Hampshire and inspired by the curve and flow of the surrounding landscape. (Photo courtesy of Jonathan Markovitz Furniture.)



maker who makes many of the designs according to Markovitz's exacting standards. They work so well together that often just an e-mailed design and a few words by telephone are enough to render the right results.

"I keep myself free to make the smaller one-off pieces and my newer more sculptural pieces," said Markovitz. "If it is the first of new concept, I want to be the one on the tools – judging the line with my eyes and my hands."

As an additional component to his work Markovitz also teaches. He accepts one to four students for his intensive yearlong, five-day a week program.

"I accept students who are serious and honest about his learning this demanding craft," said Markovitz. "It could be a 25-year-old bloke looking for an enduring way of life, or a 50-year old retired person who really wants to learn the skills. I've trained women as well as men," he added.

As a person who came to furniture making in his early 30s after fine arts training at Goldsmith College, London, he recognizes the importance of making the right choices and getting the right training.

"It's not the road to riches, but it's immensely rewarding both creatively and spiritually," he noted. 

To view Jonathan Markovitz's gallery or e-mail an enquiry, visit www.markovitz.com.