
 Piet Boon

“
*I’VE BEEN YEARNING
 TO BUILD THINGS
 FOR AS LONG
 AS I CAN REMEMBER*
 ”

From luxury condos in New York to the high-end Rosewood Amsterdam hotel, Dutch designer Piet Boon (65) has made his mark worldwide with his signature style of simplicity and functionality. He’s now celebrating 40 years in business. Text Marieke Verhoeven Photography Brenda van Leeuwen

Congratulations on Studio Piet Boon’s 40th anniversary. How do you reflect on 40 years of design?

Thank you, it’s been quite a journey. To celebrate, we’re working on a coffee-table book, an overview of the work we’ve done over the past 40 years. Studio Piet Boon now has 70 employees, and I could never have imagined this sort of growth when I first started the company in 1983. Looking back, I’m happy to see that our projects and products have proven to be durable and relevant. One of our first large-scale projects abroad, a modern luxury apartment on New York’s 5th Avenue that we completely renovated in 2006, still retains its contemporary look today. The same goes for my own home, which I built and decorated 25 years ago. From the start, we focused on simple,

classy and timeless designs; a style I like to describe as ‘barefoot chic’.

What sparked your interest in design in the first place? I’ve been yearning to build things for as long as I can remember. As a child, I was always playing with Meccano, LEGO’s predecessor, and I was often creating imaginary spaces and products in my mind. As a teenager, I decided that I wanted to become a builder/constructor because I liked working with my hands. However, pursuing a creative career wasn’t encouraged in our family, so, for a long time, I didn’t think that becoming a designer was a serious option.

When did that change? Soon after starting my own construction company,

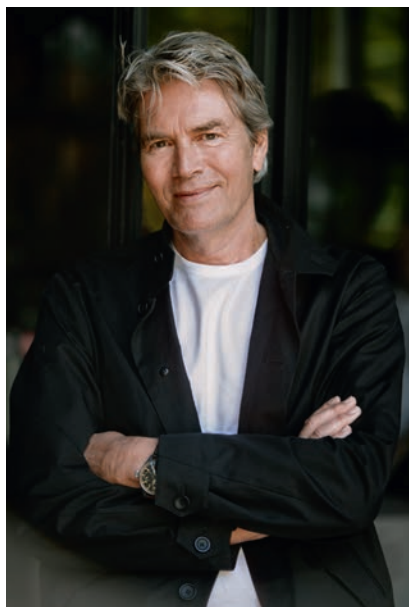
I realised that I could do a better job than many of the architects and designers I was working with, because their plans often ignored practical implications. And I realised that I was pretty good at creating my own vision for interior-design products. So, when I opened my business together with my ex-wife Karin – who still plays a big role in Studio Piet Boon – we initially did conversions and renovations, designs for kitchens and bathrooms and made-to-measure furniture. Over the years, this expanded into full interior- and exterior-design projects for both private and corporate clients. Now, we offer full-service design solutions for various clients, from private homeowners to hotels and corporate partners. We also work with brands on customised projects and products, »



ranging from a one-of-a-kind design for the F1 Dutch Grand Prix trophy to special configurations and interior design for car company Land Rover. While we mostly work for high-end brands, I like the idea of our products being accessible for everyone. That's why we've started designing products with Serax, a homeware brand. Our product range includes glassware, vases and tableware. We collaborate with over 20 different partners, offering a diverse selection of products such as furniture, lighting, flooring, bathrooms and kitchens.

What's the secret of your success?

One thing I've consistently done is say 'no' to projects I don't believe in. Even if these offers are potentially lucrative, I only want to work for clients with whom I feel a connection. For the longest time, my late friend and fellow Dutch designer Jan des Bouvrie used to ask me jokingly: "So, when are you finally going to make some money?" Well, it took me about 25 years, but it was worth the wait. My path eventually led to collaborations with top brands, such as the hotel chain Rosewood Hotels, the esteemed Italian



brand Salvatori, who opened their Dutch flagship store with us, and luxury car brand Porsche, with whom we designed the Porsche 911 Targa 4S Exclusive Alex Edition, a tribute to the legendary Dutch police car model.

Where do you get your inspiration from?

I travel often and love staying in nicely designed hotels with a personal touch. They don't need to be luxurious; we always stay at the same tiny boutique hotel in Milan during the design fair, and I love it. Japan is one of my favourite destinations; the food is incredible, and the level of design and service are simply unmatched. I also look at other industries such as fashion, music and film, for inspiration.

How is sustainability viewed at Studio Piet Boon?

I dare say that I was a pioneer when I decided to install natural gas when I built my own home. Nobody was doing that yet around the turn of the century. It cost me a lot of money, but it's saving me plenty now. This attitude is mirrored at my company: longevity is one of our core values. The long-term investment is what sustainability is all about. All our products are solid and made to last; I think there's beauty in having furniture that looks like it's been used. Our clients are not people who like flashy interiors, they prefer our simple and robust designs. At the same time, it's not cheap because high-quality materials are simply more expensive. Still, I can't claim that we work 100% sustainably as there are steps in our production process that aren't sustainable, such as the transportation of our products.

What can we expect from the

Rosewood Amsterdam hotel? We've been working with the hotel group on other projects, such as a resort on the Japanese island of Miyakojima and Rosewood Residences Hillsboro Beach,

“
**THE LONG-TERM
INVESTMENT
IS WHAT
SUSTAINABILITY
IS ALL ABOUT**
”

Miami, a project consisting of 92 waterfront homes and villas. But it was a dream come true to create something in Amsterdam, especially in the iconic former Palace of Justice building on the Prinsengracht. To make sure that it has a unique Amsterdam feel, both on the outside and the inside, we've hired the Amsterdam-based creative agency ...,staat to curate all the art around the hotel, mostly works by local artists. We also want the uniforms to be designed by a local brand. The opening is now planned for 2024. But you never know what construction surprises you'll run into in a historic city such as Amsterdam. For me, that's also part of the challenge and the fun. «

DE TROPEN CAFÉ EN RESTAURANT			
Bar 3	17/05/2023 13:17		
#0	218148123		
Staff			
#	Naam	Prijs	
2	Cappuccino	7,50	
	* Havermelk	1,00	
2	Croissant los	6,00	
1	Thee	3,25	
Totaal		€ 17,75	
	Netto	16,28	BTW
9,00%			1,47
BTW totaal:		16,28	1,47
			17,75