



## COOL Britannia

*Serena Templeton caught up with dynamic entrepreneur and CEO of WI International Paul Wise, for an insight into what it takes to become one of the world's fastest growing, luxury furniture brands*

Created from the perfect storm of market forces and challenging global events, for WI international founder Paul Wise, the fast-track rise to becoming a leading luxury furniture brand in just seven years, still seems somewhat surreal. "In all honesty, I didn't just wake up one day thinking I want to start a furniture design and manufacturing company," he reflects.

Back in 2017, Paul's ROI consultancy was working with a client based in Turkey who found themselves in a dilemma due to the local political situation. Thinking on his feet, he stepped

in with a solution that resulted in WI International working on its first ever commission - the Nobu Hotel Shoreditch.

Due to the successful delivery of the project, word spread across the hospitality sector and Paul found himself inundated with new client enquires. It was at this point, he started Hospitality Projects which has now become one of the leading providers in the hotel industry, designing and manufacturing luxury, bespoke furniture for some of the world's most prestigious brands including Mandarin Oriental, The Dorchester, Soho House, and Nobu. All

products are designed and manufactured in the UK and then shipped worldwide.

As Paul proudly states: "It's been great to discover the talent we have in the UK not only in design but also in craftsmanship."

In 2019, Paul and the team took on their first Stateside luxury private residential project in New York. The group was asked to design and manufacture bespoke furniture and joinery working alongside leading interior designer Robert Couturier at the prestigious 432 Park Avenue.

"This was quite a seminal moment in terms of company growth," adds Paul. "It was our first foray into the luxury residences sector bridging real estate and hospitality."

Fast forward to today and reflecting on future plans, he adds: "I'm looking forward to the next chapter with the introduction of our first standard product line brand 'BANCCI'. This is something we've been working on for the past couple of years. It's all about simplified luxury, using natural materials and textures with shapes that adapt organically to the environment and surroundings, transitioning and flowing through indoor and outdoor spaces to create harmony and purpose. During the development stage of the product lines, we were fortunate enough to work with Studio Indigo on the Mandarin Oriental Residences Hanover Square. They liked the product range so much, they're incorporating additional furniture from the BANCCI collection for their hotel apartments offering."

Confident the company brand and its products will one day sit alongside the likes of Giorgetti, Vladimir Kagan and Charles and Ray Eames, and be talked about for generations to come, he concludes: "As a bespoke design and manufacturing company, our entire focus is on making clients' dreams come true. How many people can say they get to do that?"

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