

# idFX

INSPIRATION FOR INTERIOR DESIGN PROFESSIONALS

## THE HARD STUFF: kitchen and bathroom special

THE ART OF ÉGLOMISÉ  
JAUME TRESSERRA  
TRENDS FOR TILES  
DESIGN INTERIORS PREVIEW



771462061007

A black and white portrait of Jaume Tresserra, a middle-aged man with dark hair, wearing a white dress shirt and a light-colored tie. He is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. The background is dark and out of focus. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting his face and the texture of his clothing.

## Profile: Jaume Tresserra

One of the Continent's top designers shares his thoughts on glamour, functionalism, the future of the industry in his native country, and why he likes working with interior designers. Just remember, don't call him Spanish...

WORDS BY GARRY MASON

RIGHT FROM TOP, DETAIL OF THE INTERIOR OF THE ZIPPER CABINET; THE NEW YORK CHAIR; THE EXTERIOR OF THE ZIPPER CABINET; THE SAMURAI CABINET

If nothing else, Jaume Tresserra's scene-stealing furniture can come in handy – whether it just be for somewhere for the Caped Crusader to pen missives or to provide a stylish perch for Juliette Binoche's bottom while Jeremy Irons makes theatrically passionate love to her.

But, Tresserra's achingly beautiful pieces are more than that, of course. Not only have artistic directors employed their architectural presence for several blockbuster films, everything from *Batman* to *Damage*, they also take their place in the pantheon of design in museum collections across the globe.

Now, fresh from the triumphal tribute to his work at the Valencia Furniture Fair – a retrospective of the greatest pieces from his 70-plus-strong collection – he is working on new designs for Milan 2004. He is also managing to squeeze in an exciting collaboration with Japanese architect Arata Isozaki for the new Royal Palace of the Emir of Qatar.

'Valencia was a marvellous honour,' says Tresserra, now 60. 'In a way, it closed a circle, since we presented the first-ever showing of our collection there in 1987.' That year, he won the prize for Best Modern Furniture Design. 'It seems that Valencia and I share a chemistry. Fate unites us,' he muses.

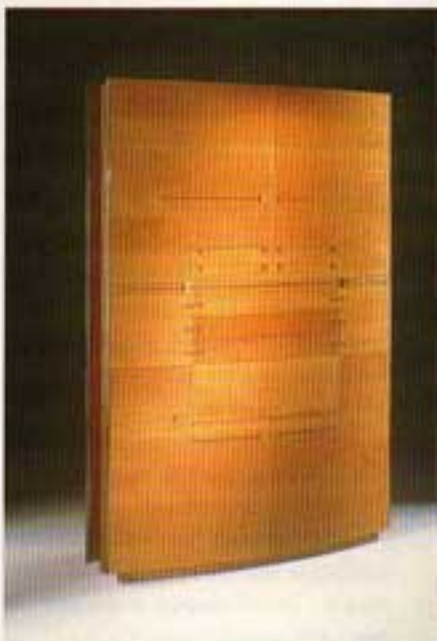
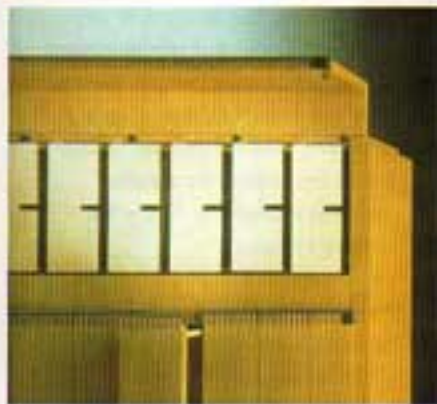
However, Tresserra has achieved a higher profile internationally than in his native country, which might be a reason, or a result of, why he refuses to be seen as a 'Spanish' designer. 'I would like to think that my designs do not belong to any geographic place. Over and above the clichés granted by our country of origin, the best thing is to be

accepted by the whole world and become universal in aim. Besides, while I don't want to turn this into a political diatribe, if anything, the design is mainly focused on Catalonia.'

Yet, despite his protestations, his success abroad has done much for the image of the industry in a country that has become sidelined in the design world. 'Spanish design is coming up and is making an increasingly big impact of the market. However, it still lacks the industrial and technological support necessary for it to blossom. The future is promising, and while Italy remains the leader, we are in a position to give a more balanced fight than before.'

While Tresserra's designs are firmly rooted in the contemporary world, they evoke a timelessness and nostalgia. As a child, Tresserra was bombarded with images of the golden age of Hollywood, as his father staged impromptu cinematic performances in the family's DIY cinema, rigged up in the front room of their home, screening big-budget musicals and Marx Brothers classics. And taking a look at Tresserra's choice of the sensuous raw materials, they hark back to a glamorous Neverland – the blond woods (his favourite is white walnut treated with natural varnishes), the clean steel fittings, the creamy leathers, the ecru cotton and the acid-etched glass.

'My philosophy is provide a functional base and add plenty of aesthetics,' he says. Pure functionalists leave Tresserra cold. 'There are lots of designers much more skilled than me who can fulfil the formal needs. I do not think that "less is more" is always true. Often, less is simply less, as indeed more



## PROFILE

can be more. The aesthetic is very important to me, and glamour is just one aspect of my approach. We are living in a hedonistic age – beyond complying with the primary functions. People are looking for personal pleasures in anything. This is the territory I move in.'

He declares himself an 'eternal admirer of Philippe Starck because all his designs are recreating nostalgia'. Tresserra obviously enjoys the humanistic qualities of living. When asked what are his hobbies, he answers 'life'. It is this simple pleasure that saturates his design.

As a young man, Tresserra gave up his law studies and, giving in to his obvious artistic temperament, enrolled in the Barcelona's Escuela Massana. He was attracted to jewellery design, but the rigid training wasn't to his liking and he once again abandoned his classes, escaping to Ibiza, where he designed, produced and sold enamels. He returned to Barcelona, and after working as an illustrator and advertising creative, took up interior design, which he practiced for 20 years. His graduation to furniture design was a response to his problem in finding furniture to suit the needs of his projects.

His informal education has led to an intuitive and fluid approach to his work – and one that borders on the artistically schizophrenic: 'There is no method. I speak aloud about the furniture piece that I would design, and, meanwhile, I listen to myself describing the piece, that just a while ago did not even exist in my mind.'

His favourite 'conversation' was over Samuro – an Oriental-inspired cabinet. 'I designed it to be the centrepiece for the collection without any commercial motivation, and the result is an emblematic piece that is, ironically, the best-seller in the Tresserra Collection. That is a real pleasure to my soul – and also my sales department!'

Samuro displays Tresserra's child-like, cubby-hole fixation. In most of his work there is a preponderance of drawers, doors and compartments. It is the

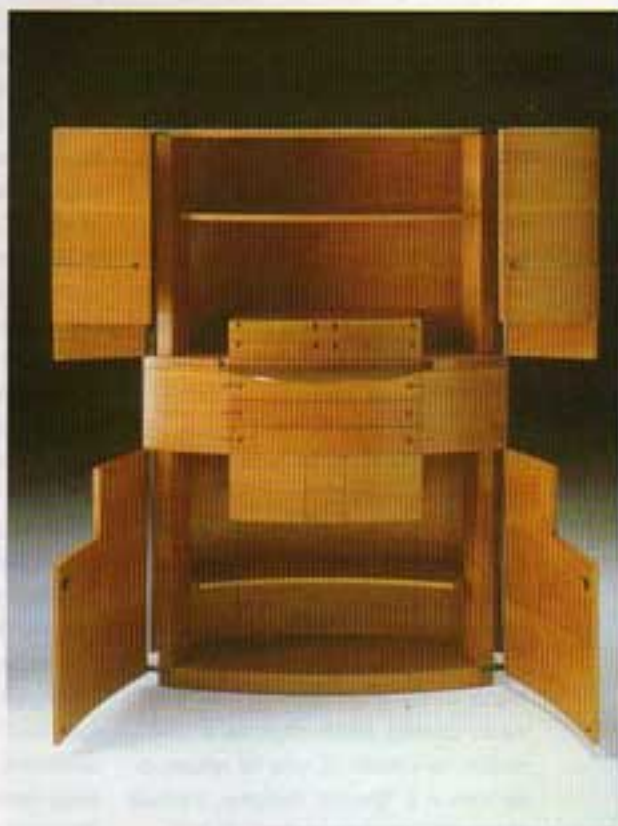


secret, private world of the individual that he explores, hidden behind enveloping covers, endowing the work with mystery.

Tresserra's grounding in interior design makes him enthusiastic to work with designers today. 'It is an indispensable collaboration, enriching from a creative point of view. I sincerely hope that there will be a day when all the furniture designers, interior designers and architects will be open to this kind of professional relationship, without any massive egos or sense of hierarchical disqualification,' he says.

For now, though, thoughts are on Milan. He is bringing out a collection of accessories, including vases, ashtrays and candelabra, to complement the furniture, and also a few new larger pieces. 'I can't say too much at present since secrecy is vital... actually it's mainly because not even I know exactly what I'm doing!' It might just be time to strike up one of those conversations, Jaume **idFX**

Jaume Tresserra ++ 34 932004922



TOP, JAUME TRISSERRA AT WORK ON THE NEW YORK CHAIR. ABOVE, THE SAMURO OPEN TO SHOW THE MULTITUDE OF CUPBOARDS AND DRAWERS INSIDE