



INSIDE LINE

Fameed Khalique sits down with our man Rob Whitson to talk interiors, embroidery, and that funny feeling in his stomach...

You don't expect a former cab driver who, but for poor eyesight would be a pilot, to be running an award-winning interior supplies business, specialising in unique surface materials. However that's not the only thing that sets Fameed Khalique apart from others in the crowded, competitive interiors market.

Describing his business, Fameed grins: "The glib answer I give is: I'm the guy who makes interior designers and architects look good to their clients." This is a somewhat of an understatement.

He's speaking from his Clerkenwell flat, now both office and showroom. It's an Aladdin's cave of fabric, stone, leather and tile samples covering almost every surface from floor to ceiling.

Explaining what makes him different from numerous other interior surface supply companies in both the UK and around the world: "You wouldn't come to me for plain marble. There are plenty who do plain marble. You wouldn't come to me for regular fabrics. Thousands do regular fabrics. You'd come to me for three-dimensional laser cut marble, which nobody else does, or fabric which is done with heat reactive ink. Stuff nobody else does."

With 35 collections from around the world, he's sourced the materials himself ensuring they're the best of everything: Chinese silks and wallpapers, European leathers all exquisite, all unique. He's now acquired so many products and such a world-class reputation he tends not to look anymore. Instead, clients approach him. And what a client list.

It includes: Princess Yachts, Candy & Candy, Harrods Design Studio, Colefax & Fowler, Nicholas Haslam Design and David Collins - any one of whom would open doors in the world of top end interior design.

This was recognized recently by industry bible design *et al* magazine. This is no mere World of Interiors, however. The average price of the homes featured within, are £15.1 million.

At their prestigious and coveted International Design & Architecture Awards, Fameed was nominated in several categories, two of which he walked away with as winner.

Paying tribute to his eponymous company, the magazine's publisher, Joanne



Fameed makes his living by "making interior designers look good"



Three-dimensional laser-cut marble - Fameed's signature style



Fameed's clients include Princess Yachts and Harrods' Design Studio



"You wouldn't come to me for regular fabrics." Stuff like this, however...

Beedles, said: "More than 31,000 *design et al* readers and industry professionals voted this year, for The International Design & Architecture Awards, over a four week period. The standard of projects was incredible, however Fameed Khalique was a very worthy winner of the Fabric and Wallcovering awards.

"His projects were nothing short of inspirational and competed on a world stage against some of the leading names in product design. On behalf of everyone at *design et al* I would like to offer our sincere congratulations, we look forward to featuring the products in forthcoming issues of *design et al Magazine*."

Amazingly, Fameed's business only established itself six years ago. He was initially the sole person involved after he finished working for his brother's leather business.

Lacking even a business plan, and unsure what it was he wanted to do, by his own admission this initially involved knocking on a lot of doors with a suitcase. But he both knew the interiors industry and, more importantly, liked it. He

found one collection, then another and, getting to the fifth, the idea hit him: he wanted to be the go-to guy for core materials in interior surface goods.

Interestingly he is only an expert in some of the myriad of products he supplies, admitting himself: "I didn't know about wallpaper, silk or marble and didn't know if they were really any good. But I do know what I like. I get this funny feeling in my stomach that tells me."

Fameed has now launched his own embroidery collection. This took over a year and moved his business from suppliers to designers - despite the fact he can neither "draw nor design to save his life." The company always acted as curators for the leather goods and surfaces made from semi-precious stones including: amethyst, lapis lazuli, obsidian and mother of pearl, which were marketed under his own name.


Now he's collaborating with the likes of Wedgewood and this month launched a unique upholstery collection, cleverly copying their pattern on furniture coverings, receiving amazing reviews. More the ideas man, he acts as creative director producing the brief for those with these particular talents to do what they do best.

Despite all the success he still seems unable to rest on his laurels. Next year his company hopes to open an office in New York and, in the long term, China.

So what's currently hot in the world of interior design?

"Individuality. I think people want to mix things a lot more. You don't want to go into a contemporary apartment that just looks like a morgue: it's all white with clean lines and only minimal furniture," he proclaims.

"It's a bit like fashion where people are starting to mix styles and eras and periods. You get an eclectic look. Very luxury but by luxury I don't mean expensive. People are starting to spend money on quality. People like unique things... Heritage. People love a story: the person who makes it or the technique."

So there you have it - and from someone who clearly knows his stuff. 

“ I’M THE GUY WHO
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