

Elegance with Edge

By Christine Aebischer

Christopher Guy's furnishings combine timeless style with unexpected and distinctive designs, making them sought after by the world's finest residences, hotels and resorts.



The Givenchy boudoir chair, featuring Guy's signature Chris-X legs.



The Lexa chair, carved from solid mahogany.

Looking at Christopher Guy's collections, you're immediately drawn to how beautiful each piece is, so much so that you would assume the hand-carved tables and delicate chairs are items meant to be seen, but not used. However, that is not Guy's philosophy. While creating beautiful pieces is his top priority, he does not allow function to be sacrificed in the process.

"Furniture is a form of art," shares Guy. "It is something functional, but it is also art. A chair has to be both beautiful and comfortable." He describes the two ends of the design spectrum in terms of footwear: the beautiful but uncomfortable high heel and the practical but unattractive sneaker. "My designs are certainly not sneakers, but they are not impractical," he says. It is this balance that makes Guy's designs so in demand, from the Four Seasons and Ritz-Carlton to Saks Fifth Avenue and Harrods to the sets of "James Bond" and "The Devil Wears Prada."

Words like "elegant," "chic" and "sensual" wouldn't normally be associated with furniture,

but somehow they fit when describing Guy's designs, which fuse classicism and modernism. Curves abound in his collection, from the back of a chair to the legs of a vanity. He describes his own style as early James Bond — classic and elegant, but with a twist. "It's elegance with edge, a bit of naughtiness without being wild," he says.

Born in England and raised in France and Spain, Guy discovered his love of design and appreciation for beauty and glamour at an early age while in the south of France. Today, he splits his time between Singapore, Europe and Los Angeles, and continues to be inspired by his international travels. "I find inspiration in everything I look at," he shares. "Being able to visit different places and walk down the street is all I need to be inspired."

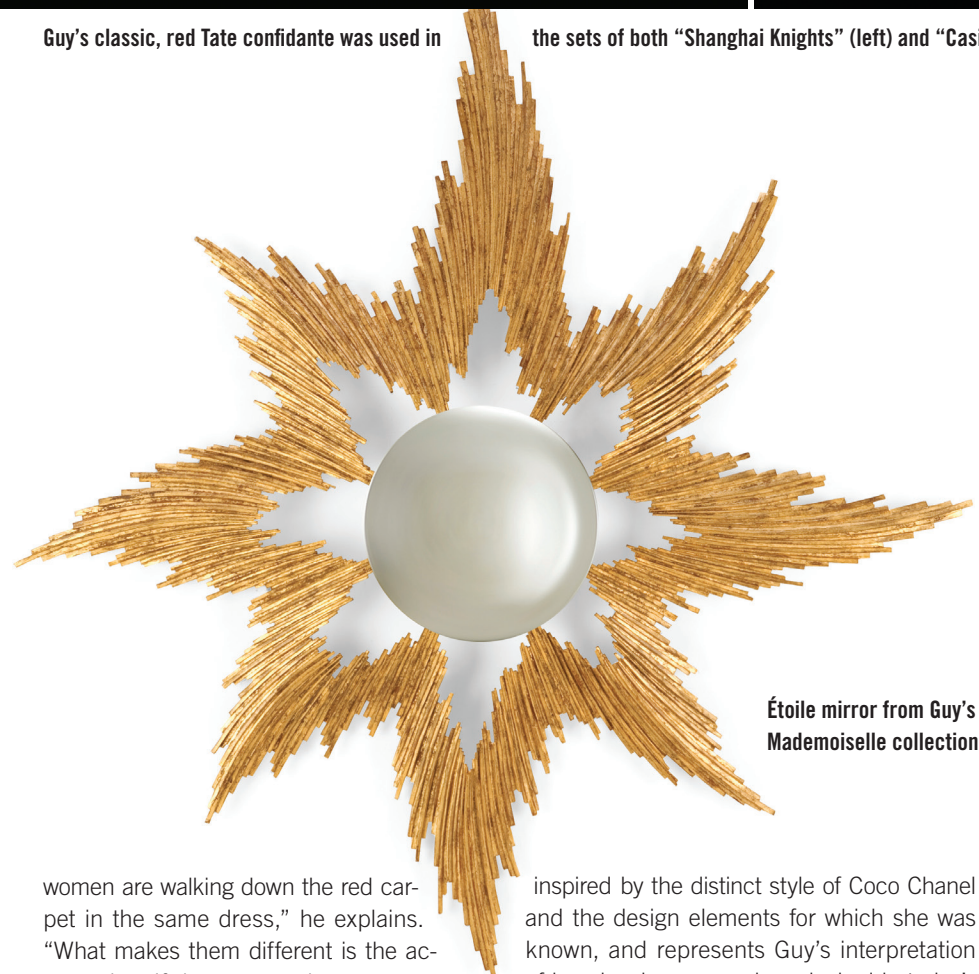
Guy began his career designing mirrors and has since expanded into lifestyle collections, designing everything from furniture to décor items and even artwork. Mirrors are still one of his favorite items to design, while dining tables are one of his least favorite — "maybe because they're too functional," he admits — but the artwork, while not what he is most known for, plays an equally important role in his collections. "It's Oscar night and two





Guy's classic, red Tate confidante was used in

the sets of both "Shanghai Knights" (left) and "Casino Royale" (right).



Étoile mirror from Guy's Mademoiselle collection.

women are walking down the red carpet in the same dress," he explains. "What makes them different is the accessories. If the accessories are wrong, the most beautiful dress would be wrong."

While creating an entire collection poses its share of challenges, Guy is a big-picture thinker. He doesn't just see a chaise or a cabinet, but rather he envisions how all of the pieces will come together. "Today, every piece has to be eclectic; you have to know how to put something together that looks like a collection, but each piece has to look different from one another," he explains. "My job is to bring pieces of furniture to give designers to help them in their efforts to put a room together, and even though we present them with everything, they buy selected work," meaning each piece must be able to stand alone, but also complement the other pieces in the set.

His current collection, Mademoiselle, is

inspired by the distinct style of Coco Chanel and the design elements for which she was known, and represents Guy's interpretation of how her home may have looked in today's world. Not many designers would try to incorporate the world of high fashion into furniture design, but to Guy it makes perfect sense; both embody beauty, style and sophistication. "Chanel had elements that were the foundation of her brand, and we have our own design elements," he says.

One of his most recognizable elements is the Chris-X (pronounced Chris-cross) chair leg. Rather than four straight legs, the back legs cross over one another to create a more elegant aesthetic. "Most chairs you look at from the front, but a dining chair you look at from behind when it's pushed under the table, and I wanted to make a chair that was strong and stable (as well as elegant)," describes Guy.



The La Flamme headboard features a flame-inspired volcanic rock effect.

And just as the fashion industry is dictated by ever-changing trends, Guy's designs are also driven by the need to stay ahead of the market trends. "We manufacture to what the market needs or is looking for," he explains. "We have to figure out where the market trend is, and my challenge is to deliver to such a market. But it's a danger to get too far ahead. We design ahead of the market knowing trends will change, but without getting too far ahead."

To keep his designs fresh, Guy only keeps a particular style for a limited time and then starts over with something new. However, the hallmarks of his brand remain. In the future, Guy says, he would like to work on a James Bond film again from beginning to end, but only if it was made in the same fashion as the earlier films. "They had all the elements I admired. An Aston Martin is elegant. Is a Lamborghini elegant? No, it's fast and cutting edge, but it's not elegant."



Pierced wall art hand-carved from engineered wood, known as Tordu, adorns the wall at the Wynn Hotel.