

Ruediger Benedikt 24K Plus

By Maralyn D. Hill



Ruediger
Benedikt



Discovering the talent of Ruediger Benedikt was quite exciting, but learning about the man behind the exquisite skill more so. Ruediger Benedikt, the man and the company, share the same name, as they are indeed one. His desire is to provide opulent tables with his designs and unique objects, whether to serve chilled champagne or caviar.

Ruediger does not hesitate to say, "The design in general has always been part of my life. Since childhood, I have dedicated myself to draw and create useful objects. My first commissions have been interior design projects in luxury homes. Moving on to designing tableware has just been a very natural evolution, as many of my clients asked me to design for them smaller exclusive items like all kinds of home ware, exclusively done for them; objects like bone china or gold plated flatware. These were important projects for home and yachts, an apprenticeship, which gave me the opportunity to step into the most luxurious homes of the world. Designing beautiful items for the table is just one more step to create timeless objects, which will most

likely be inherited from parents to children. To maintain the exclusivity of our items, we very often create limited editions, to make the table look even more beautiful. I truly wish that my clients enjoy these unique pieces as much as I did designing them."

Benedikt comes from a small village in the south of Germany. But early in his life, he knew he wanted more than owning a German car, home and having a good pension plan. His passion for art, creativity, and design led him in a different direction. After exploring some of the world, studying painters, architects, sculptors and major museums, he wanted more. He returned to get his Bachelor of Arts degree. "Art history and philosophy are cultural elements which make you understand where we come from, but not where we are heading to. But at least reading the Greek philosophers, Roman history, the European wars, opens your mind to understand the variety of cultural elements and ways of seeing the world. Having settled down finally in Barcelona, at the Mediterranean Coast, this is the ideal place for me to create the most stunning pieces

of items to serve the table."

So intrigued with Benedikt's background, I wanted to learn more and dig below the surface.

MDH: At what age did you start traveling, designing and going beyond the designs you were brought up selling?

RB: I was about 21; at this point, I just felt I needed to discover what to do with my life, even though I knew from a very early age that art and design would be the motor of my life.

MDH: Do you remember your first customer?

RB: Yes, very well, it was in Florida; first, I redesigned his whole home and afterwards, we refitted the yacht. It was a huge challenge, being my first commission, but it turned out to be a big success. Everything went well, those were happy clients who recommended me to other clients.

MDH: Did you have to find investors to back your ideas, or did your satisfied customers give you the ability to grow your business?

RB: My customers recommended me



Caviar Presenters

Well, I believe my first order from an Arab client, he asked me to design a range of caviar presentoirs inspired by equestrian motives. But designing and creating items really comes very natural to me. Also I am quite critical with everything I get in touch with, so it is a bit difficult really to get me excited. I very much appreciate work being done perfectly. I love the attention I get from the press; this is always a wonderful moment when somebody shows interest in what I am doing. I love to see well-used talent; it is always wonderful to see work from other artists which transmits real love to what they are doing.

MDH: I know your clients have been mostly European and Arabs, what has encouraged you to venture to the United States?

RB: I feel very connected to the United States, but because of the work I got from the Arab countries, I have not paid attention to what this country would have deserved. A distribution contract has just been signed with a luxury tableware distributor, who I am proud to announce is Mr. Bruce Petricca from Distinctive Designs in Delray Beach, Florida. Maybe it has taken a long time to find the right person, but the election could not have been better. His profound knowledge of the American market and his life and

work experience in Europe make him the perfect partner; he understands my work without having to ask anything. It is more a soul connection, which is based on my work. His effort and knowledge have been a milestone in my career. Within a very short time, my pieces will be exposed in the major luxury stores throughout the country. He really makes me feel as if the least important part of this project is me, there are so many people involved who have brought this project to life. So really, I am just one more colleague. Even though I get all the media attention, it would be unfair to say that it has been all my merit. This is like a big family, but without any doubt, Mr. Bruce Petricca from Distinctive Designs has brought this project to a totally different level.

MDH: Besides the beautiful pieces that are shown on your website, I realize you focus a great deal on customized work. Could you give our readers some ideas of one-of-a-kind pieces you have been commissioned to do or can envision?

RB: This is really what I most like, to do one-of-a-kind pieces. As everybody has a different vision of beauty and art, it is a wonderful moment when you feel the connection with a customer who understands my work and I

to new customers, even though it would have been easier to find somebody to invest in my company. It all grew slowly but steadily, so there was never any risk of losing control of what I was doing.

MDH: Given the exquisite and expensive material, twenty-four karat gold that you work with, how challenging was it and is it to get the quality gold you need?

RB: I am working with very efficient people, everybody is really helpful in all terms. After looking for a very long time for somebody capable of finishing off a product I had in mind, I found somebody. It is just a question of hanging in there and not giving up, really failing has never been an option, so at the end it was all worth the while.

MDH: Twenty-four karat is soft; does another metal have to be used with the gold in order to keep it hard enough to hold up to wear?

RB: Yes, the base from all the items is bronze, sometimes it might be brass, so before we add on a coat of 24-karat gold, first, we put on a coat of copper, which helps to make the product look perfect once it is polished. So in the end, not that

much 24-karat gold is needed. Also, as the production is very time consuming, using a mix of copper and gold is slightly cheaper; but if a customer insists on using only 24-karat gold, it can be done.

MDH: Can you share some of your most exciting projects?

RB: Every project which a client commissions to me is exciting, because it allows me to do what I like most. I am currently working on a very luxury rococo-inspired restaurant in the United Emirates; it is supposed to be a luxury caviar gourmet lounge. The idea is to give an Arab royal family space to entertain their friends and guests. So being inspired by a European art movement, I feel very comfortable by developing the project. Also, this is a chance not only to design tableware, but to create a luxury restaurant, which is something I have not done before. So I am really grateful for the trust the client puts into my work.

MDH: What has been your most "wow" or "out of this world" moment?

RB: The Americans getting excited about my work! LOL!



Double horse caviar presentoirs

Coffee & Tea Service



understand what he is looking for. Currently, I am working on a series of caviar presentoirs inspired by the Roman Empire. It seemed impossible to unite this historical moment into a fountain to serve caviar, but

somehow I made it possible.

I also plan to do a one-off series inspired by Hollywood and the late artists, as well as a tableware series inspired by the Russian ballet. Really,

Server ware



CUCHARA LATERAL
CUCHARA I

28 cm
11 inches

when you feel creativity and the urge of designing something new, there is no limit to imagination, and suddenly, the way of getting the designs into shape just unfolds in front of your eyes. The Hollywood-inspired series will only be available in the United States, another project which has been made possible due to the help of Distinctive Designs. Their team is capable of bringing my artwork to the right customers, so my gratitude cannot be sufficiently expressed.

MDH: When looking at your sketches, do you do each piece from all angles before production?

RB: Yes, the sculptor needs to know exactly what he has to get into shape. Also, when a new client commissions a piece of art, I give him the exact details and description, even though sometimes changes are being made while developing the wax model. I normally work very close with clients, it makes my work much easier and also the client then is able to appreciate all the steps necessary to create the final piece of art. It is really teamwork, nothing could have been realized without so many people helping me and believing in my dreams as strongly as I do.

MDH: Can you tell us a little about your interior design tie-in as well as your linen napkins?

RB: I love to create spaces where people feel comfortable. It is not me designing what I like; it is more giving the clients what they need. It is just the fact that clients normally feel a bit overwhelmed when it comes to decorating their own homes. So I just channel what they are looking for. But my taste is very classic; I like very well worked and very thought about pieces, I never buy anything without feeling that there is a reason to the design, the color and the form. When taking on a new interior design project, I normally spend many hours within the home, even though it might be totally empty. You then feel after a little while what the clients and the space need to be the perfect harmonious place. My work is very much soul-connected, it sometimes feels as if it was a romantic dance between the clients and myself, sometimes you lead the way, sometimes the clients. Through the years, I have developed a very strong bond to my work and my clients, and at the end of the project anybody can tell if there has been real love with the project involved.

MDH: Can you provide the name of

some of the European and Arab nobles? I am sure you can't in some cases, but can in others?

RB: I had members of the Arab royal family and also some European well known clients, but unfortunately, they very much love my discretion. So it would just be like making public an affair I might have had, but then again, we are all just human beings. It really is not important for me how well known my clients might be, I treat everybody with the same respect. It still surprises me that people can get so excited about what I am doing, I guess I am just used to creating these pieces and it has become a habit.

MDH: Do you have a family?

RB: Really me, coworkers and my clients have turned into a big family. I am a bit living in my own world; difficult to find somebody who understands my way of being, but not having my own family really has been a very conscious choice I made many years ago. Maybe sacrificing this part of my social life has helped other people to live in wonderful homes now, which I am very happy about. My life might not seem perfect, but really I lack very few



Falcon Dish Complete

things. It is just in my nature to be very positive and grateful about everything I have.

MDH: Do you get lost in your design work when you are inspired? What pulls you away?

RB: Very much so, time flies when you're having fun! I get pulled away by any artistic movement I like, Baroque is a total inspiration for me. Also, the Roman Empire and all the suffering and the will to conquer the world inspire me. It is really difficult to imagine how people could only focus on surviving each day of their lives. In those years, life was more about getting by each day. Also, a good book pulls me away, but really I am not into novels, like more the real history stuff. The American history is something I really like. I feel it is important to know as much as possible, it helps to have a better vision of the world right now.

MDH: What are your hobbies?

RB: I really like reading a good book, I love to spend time with my friends. When I spend time with them, I get totally disconnected from my own work. It is interesting how different peoples' lives are, but still, I would not want to swap with anybody. Also, riding on my bike is wonderful, but then again, everything I see passing by makes me think what might have been done differently. Maybe the design of a house, maybe the benches of the street, maybe the way trees are being planted in a park, it all ends up again related to work.



Falcon sketches

It's difficult to place a value on art and Ruediger's work is art. But in order to give you an idea of the quality of the material he uses and his skill as an artist and craftsmanship, the Caviar presentoirs start around \$17,500. Those on trays run \$22,000 to \$34,000 and up. These are truly art at its finest.

Thank you, Ruediger, for sharing such an in-depth interview and your time. I am partial to your serving pieces, as I feel they are some of the most beautiful I've seen. If I had to pick one, it would be between tongs and the cake server, but they are all beautiful. Luxe Beat Magazine wishes you much success, and we know with your American distribution representation, we will be seeing and hearing more about your work in North America. To discover more about Ruediger Benedikt visit his website: www.ruedigerbenedikt.com. He is located in Barcelona, Spain.