

Interview

Marcel Wolterinck

'I decided that I was going to be a florist when I was six,' Marcel Wolterinck declares. The Dutch designer clearly didn't waver, and when he left school the profession was still uppermost in his mind. 'My teachers later told me that they'd never had a student who knew what he wanted from such a young age.'

By Jonathan Bell



Marcel Wolterinck
Interior designer

Now presiding over an empire that covers every facet of domestic design, Wolterinck explains that he grew up surrounded by gardens, with parents and a grandmother who were keen horticulturalists. On leaving school he followed his dream and went straight into garden design, ultimately setting up a business for well-heeled clients in the eastern part of Holland. At the age of 26, the designer's first flower shop opened

just south of Amsterdam; it led to a new world of design. For a start, there were the international commissions, such as the spectacular floral displays for the Dutch Embassy in Washington, as well as lecturing in Tokyo and design projects that constantly grew in scale, from terraces to whole gardens. 'I focused on styling and design right from the start,' Wolterinck explains,

and he soon had a sizeable canvas with which to play with.

'When I was 28 or 29, I bought a property with a 4,000m² garden,' he explains, 'it needed to be completely redesigned, inside and out.' The resulting project took three years and involved completely refitting and furnishing the house, as well as landscaping its



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Photography by Peter Baas



surroundings. 'At the end, I held a huge event and invited all my clients and contacts,' the designer recalls. It was a wise move as the commissions started flowing his way. Within a few years he was being asked to design houses from scratch. A new store and studio in Laren acts as the firm's creative base, with a showroom, art everywhere and a garden. Here you can buy self-designed homewares, indoor and outdoor furniture and lighting. If not designed in-house, Wolterinck has established a network of high-end collaborators and suppliers, including Maretti Lighting, Nilson Beds, Promemoria and Henge.

The Wolterinck design agency is now 25 strong and includes garden architects, interior designers, architects and product designers. As a result, Wolterinck is proud to offer a completely turnkey service, capable of overseeing every last detail from structure to soft furnishings. All

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projects follow Marcel Wolterinck's design philosophy. 'Everything should be simple and straight,' he stresses, 'whether it's furniture or lighting or anything else.'

I like clean, uncomplicated straight lines.' His extensive experience of floral design helped shape his approach. 'If you are working with flowers you are creating just like a painter makes a painting – it is all about contrast, colour, combinations, etc.,' he says, 'I just do the same but on a much bigger scale – with a building.' Wolterinck also stresses the importance of texture in his work. 'I love natural materials, not synthetic products,' he says, 'if I use wood it is not polished or shiny, but very naturally finished.' Finally, there is the importance of art. 'I like to bring a piece of modern art to set along-

side these materials,' the designer explains, 'with art, I tend to follow my heart and choose only pieces that I might be interested in myself.'

Wolterinck's work on the Heesen Yachts 'My Loyalty' encapsulates all these approaches. 'My Loyalty' was launched in 2016. The owner was already a Wolterinck client, and their discussions turned from houses to yachts. As the 49.8m boat was already under construction, Wolterinck's studio inherited a couple of fixed elements ('the location of the galley and bathrooms') but everything else had to be designed. 'I loved it,' the designer enthuses, 'it was a different world. To start with, it was very complicated but the shipyard was very open with their knowledge and formed

a great team with the constructor.'

'My Loyalty's interior is a calming confection of warmth and texture. 'We worked with our favourite materials – wood, suede, leather – and found these work really well on a yacht. It's a very warm, natural feeling, as opposed to the polished and shiny feeling of many boats.' Wolterinck's own favourite element is the staircase. 'I love the details, with simple but beautiful lines in bronze and bleached Wenge wood,' he says. And is there space for flowers? 'Yes of course. There are places for flowers everywhere. And art. It is a floating gallery!' As an example of a total work of art created by an all-embracing ethos, 'My Loyalty' is hard to beat.

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