

FX 279

CHRISTOPHER JENNER: PROFILE VOTE FOR DESIGN FLOORING FOCUS PICK OF EUROLUCE

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WELL SPACED

*Restaurant MEATLiquor,
by Shed*





DESIGNER FILE

Co-founder of interior design and architecture practice Shed, **Nick Stringer** shares his top 10 design tips with Pamela Buxton



1 Be inspired.

London sparked my interest in design. I'm a native of Sheffield but used to spend school holidays with my uncle, who'd earned enough as a session

musician to buy a flat in the Barbican. He was also an architectural draughtsman and used to take me on tours of London and show me all the new buildings and what he'd been working on, and visit the Design Museum that had just opened. It was all quite different to Sheffield in the Eighties. It was a real stimulus that helped me decide to follow my artistic leanings, although I started to become more interested in interior architecture and design rather than the architecture itself. Staying at the Barbican was in itself amazing, and I really value that whole experience.

2 Learn from your mistakes. As a 23-year-old I went to work in Hong Kong and, through a friend of a friend of a friend, ended up working for Prada as director of construction, building stores for the company all over from Japan to Australia. It was very stressful and of course I made the odd mistake, but generally things worked out well. It was great to have that exposure to that sort of brand and the quality it required. I learned what it took to build a brand from the inside. And when we set up Shed, that track record was very useful when talking to retail clients, and being able to prove that we knew how to do the nitty-gritty >

Left Interior of restaurant MEATLiquor, in London. Shed is now working on the brand's 12th restaurant

stuff, such as what it took to get a road closure in Hong Kong, and how to work in all sorts of places, such as a Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

3 You don't go into design to make a fortune. There are definitely easier ways of making a living! But this way I'm more than happy to get up for work in the morning.

4 Work for yourself. It's not for everyone but if you're able to do it, your future is in your hands.

5 Challenge yourself. Our work was initially in retail and we needed to challenge ourselves to look for different types of work. We never wanted to be pigeonholed – we're good enough to work across different sectors – so sometimes you have to go looking, and at one point we decided we needed to find a food and beverage client. We started working with MEAT Liquor, which we've now done six or seven projects for. We also try to make sure we do a residential project each year.

6 Trust your own skills and ability. Design is so accessible these days – everyone's a designer. Clients have become more opinionated through exposure to design through the high street, television, cinema, even music videos. But you need to trust your own ability to produce something good.

7 Relevance. We think about this a lot at Shed. The design has to be relevant for the person using the brand. You're designing for them, not the individual client who represents the brand. That's one of the trickiest things to get right.

8 Put your personal taste and style to one side. I used to be more interested in a particular design style. Now I'm less bothered about aesthetic. If you come up with something that get a positive response from a customer/user and client, then that's great. If it works, you've done your job. And there is a satisfaction in that. We never design things for ourselves.

9 Hire people who are prepared to learn their craft. Some graduates have little appetite for doing their apprenticeship and learning their craft. We're not interested in hiring people who don't want to get their hands dirty and learn from the bottom up. At Shed, we give our designers opportunities and get a real kick out of seeing them develop client relationships and getting more rounded. We like to think we don't have an egotistic approach.

10 I hate pop-ups. The pop-up is one of my pet hates. The concept is a cliché. One client with a tiny budget even asked us to do a permanent one once. **FX**

Nick Stringer co-founded interior design and architecture studio Shed with Matt Smith in 2000. Shed works across residential and commercial markets, specialising in branded interior design. Clients include the restaurants MEATLiquor, Zelmans, Cha Chaan Teng, Oree and Hotbox, tailors Turnbull & Asser and Spencer Hart, as well as Level Shoes, William & Son, The Office Group, Kudos, and The AA



Left Level Shoe District, a whole area in the Dubai Mall dedicated to shoe retailing

Below left Cha Chaan Teng, created by Shed for Splendid Restaurants in the basement of the Club Quarters Hotel, Holborn, London

Bottom Offices and facilities for start-ups, created in the City of London as Angel Square, for The Office Group

