

# EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

WITH **PIET BOON**



Here's one of Piet Boon's most important projects.

**W**hen asked what a designer needs to be successful in New York City, where competition can be a little wild, he had a simple yet strong answer: "I think you need to think outside the box and when you come to New York, or anywhere in the US for that matter, do not let your designs be led by building codes or restrictions". Responsible for creating a unique and contemporary architecture and interior design style, the award-winning designer Piet Boon is renowned worldwide for his exceptional craftsmanship, quality, and vision as well. Boon, a creator of masterpieces, began his career as a building contractor – which clearly brings an advantageous insight to the design and accomplishment of every project signed by him. From the Netherlands, his status as a successful architect in NYC is on the rise. After reading this exclusive interview, everyone will most likely come to the same conclusion: the final result of each remarkable work created by Piet Boon is indeed a perfect match between functionality and timeless design.



Piet Boon



Most residents of this apartment have custom-fit furniture wearing in the dining area.



Many of Piet's apartments also have oversized box windows, which act like oversized bay windows.

"I draw my inspiration from my talented team, travels, the people I meet, the food I eat, the things I see, the different cultures I'm fortunate enough to encounter, and even the work of others."

**Coveted**—Although you got started your career as a builder, now you work as a designer.

**Why did you make that change?**

**Piet Boon**—I started my career in construction, realizing the designs of others and I was often frustrated with what designers came up with. Too many times I found myself realizing beautiful designs that although they were beautifully designed they just didn't work, or the other way around. Call me stubborn, but I didn't agree and believed that I could do a better job in finding the perfect balance between functionality, aesthetics, and individuality. I knew that if I wanted to realize this vision, I had to take full ownership of a design concept. And that's how Studio Piet Boon came to life over thirty years ago.

**CE**—At this moment, you are involved in projects worldwide. Do you have a favorite project or a favorite story about one of your projects?

**PB**—Because we are fortunate to work with different types of clients all over the world, all of our projects are unique in their own way and so it would be impossible to pick one specific project as a favorite. Having that said there are also many stories to tell, like our first big project in New York for instance: a real adventure, a 700m<sup>2</sup> apartment, an entire floor on Fifth Avenue. The client was (and still is) a very successful entrepreneur. We had very limited time to get the job done in order not to disturb the owners too much. This meant that at a certain point we had over 100 people working around the clock to realize the project in time. Can you imagine what that looked like? It still makes me laugh when I think of it.

**CE**—The results around your projects are remarkable. Possibly, they are result of a perfect chemistry between you and your clients. So, when the chemistry really works, it is possible to predict what happens next?

**PB**—First of all, thank you! I think this kind of chemistry can be attributed to our motivation to truly understand the needs of our clients and embrace their values and way of life. The most important thing in achieving this understanding is being able to really listen. Over the years we have developed a strong set of antennas that help us gain insights that allow us to shape the individual identity of each project which is crucial for the creation of a unique, customized sense of space – be it a home, a hotel, an office, etc. Does that mean that we are able to predict what happens next? No. And that's why I feel I have the best job in the world!

**CE-How would you describe your style? Do you have any kind of "signature" able to identify your projects?**

**PB-**Our signature is clearly recognized by the use of strong (right) lines, a subdued color palette together with rich and natural materials that age beautifully, symmetry and optimal use of space, the use of natural light, and attention to extraordinary detailing. The perfect synergy between the different divisions within our studio creates the harmony between exterior, interior, and styling our projects are internationally known for.

**CE-What does a designer need to be successful in New York City, where competition could be a little wild?**

**PB-**I think you need to think outside the box and when you come to New York, or anywhere in the US for that matter, do not let your designs be led by building codes or restrictions. That's one of the reasons I think people like our work so much, we aren't too familiar with codes and/or restrictions and because of that our designs automatically push boundaries and exceed expectations. Together with the builder we find ways to make our ideas work, making the impossible possible.

**CE-All artists need some inspiration to do well their work and architects are artists too. So, what really inspires you?**

**PB-**More or less, everything actually, as I strongly believe that inspiration is everywhere. I draw my inspiration from my talented team, travels, the people I meet, the food I eat, the things I see, the different cultures I'm fortunate enough to encounter, and even the work of others. I find it fascinating to see the creative and clever solutions they come up with.

**CE-Maybe "Huys" be one of the most important work made by you and your team. Did you feel a real need to embed yourself in the New York's culture to find the right design for this project?**

**PB-**Huys was definitely a milestone when it comes to our work in New York, since Huys we were able to add two other major residential development projects to our portfolio: Coosten in Williamsburg and 101 WALL on Wall Street. For Huys, like with every other project, we studied amongst others the local vernacular, history, and the way people lived in it. By doing so we were able to really integrate our design. New York of course is such a great city. Its rich (Dutch) history and cultural influences make it the energetic city that it is.



Entrance hall of the outdoor restaurant Huys.



Huys one of Pet Baren most important projects.

**CE- Was there anything about New York City that made you approach this project differently than others?**

**PB-**Every project is different because of many different factors that we have to take into account, though the approach is in principal always the same.

**CE-If you had to pick one famous building around the world that you wish it had been created by you, which would it be? Why?**

**PB-**There are two notoriously famous buildings across from the famous Rijks museum in Amsterdam. These office buildings, also known as the salt and pepper buildings, I believe should have mirrored the magnificence of the Rijks. Now you have these two out of architectural character buildings dating from the 70's instead. If we were given the chance to design those buildings back then, I would have thought of something different. I know we would have come up with something that would look spectacular, blend well with the local architecture, and add to the beauty of the Rijks museum.

**CE-Where else, besides New York, can we expect to see your work soon?**

**PB-**At the moment there are a lot of projects in full swing all over the world. For example, in Antigua we are currently working on developing a high-end eco-friendly retreat. Our studio is responsible for the aesthetic design of Antigua's best-kept secret: Pears Point - a verdant 141-acre peninsula with seven pristine white-sand beaches and spectacular views across the Caribbean Sea. Pears Point will be home to 68 luxury private beach and hillside residences, and a five-star hotel with state-of-the-art facilities. We are also working on a big residential project in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia, Willowsford Virginia (US) and another one in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Next to the residential, hospitality, and corporate developments we are also humbled to be trusted with the design of various private homes.