

# STYLECOMPASS




Photo by Giampietro Favero

## MARK ZEFF

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## STYLECOMPASS

by Susanna Salvi



Library in Zeff Apartment, Upper West Side. Photo by Eric Laignel

"I can design anything," says Mark Zeff who is as deft at creating logos as he is luxury yachts. "I use the connection between the client and myself as a blueprint for where the project will go. It's all about our interaction." Whether he's helping shape a luxury spa with distinct architecture or designing and packaging – or reinventing a hotel from pool to penthouse, Zeff always believes in "letting natural fusion guide the way."

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**H**aving grown up in South Africa, Zeff always wanted to be a car designer. However, instead of accepting admission to the Pasadena Institute, he chose to pursue a B.A. in environmental design at the Chelsea Design School in London. Upon graduating, Zeff went to Australia for work. After spending a short amount of time there, Zeff packed a suitcase and moved to New York for good. He worked at the Walker Group and after several years was hired by friends to re-do their fashion showroom. "That's what got me going," says Zeff who went on to open his own residential firm 25 years ago in NYC.



Entry Hallway in upper East Side Apartment. Photo by Eric Laignel



"Zeffdesign" has since grown to nearly 40 employees, with the talent and technology ready to aptly handle an international mix of projects: hotels, restaurants, residential, environmental design or master planning. The cross-over from residential to commercial first began in 2004 when Zeff was tapped to outfit the Dream Hotel in New York City. Two years later the Hotel Night followed. "It was the first time a client gave me carte blanche in terms of style and character," says Zeff of the sexy black and white oasis he fashioned amidst the technicolor chaos of nearby Times Square.



Night "Night Family" at Night Hotel, Manhattan. Faubel Christensen for Picture Farm Productions



Exterior of Night Hotel, Manhattan. Photo by Eric Laignel

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**F**ollowing that, Zeff went on to oversee a 15 million dollar transformation of Los Angeles' Art Deco landmark, The Hollywood Athletic Club into "Social Hollywood" – a stunningly glamorous lounge, club, and event complex which secured his role not just as a design force but one of branding as well. "It was a treat to collaborate with restaurateur Jeffrey Chodorow," says Zeff. We went on buying trips to Morocco and, with our purchases, helped turn this former playground of the stars into a modern-day Casablanca." "Social Miami" followed, with zeffdesign mixing creamy white leather seating areas with extensively vibrant contemporary art and video installations. "This is one cohesive indoor and outdoor lounge area," Zeff says. "It feels like modern day café society."



Mark Zeff. Photo by James Webber

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Lobby Lounge in Regal Hotel, Manhattan. Photo by Eric Laignel

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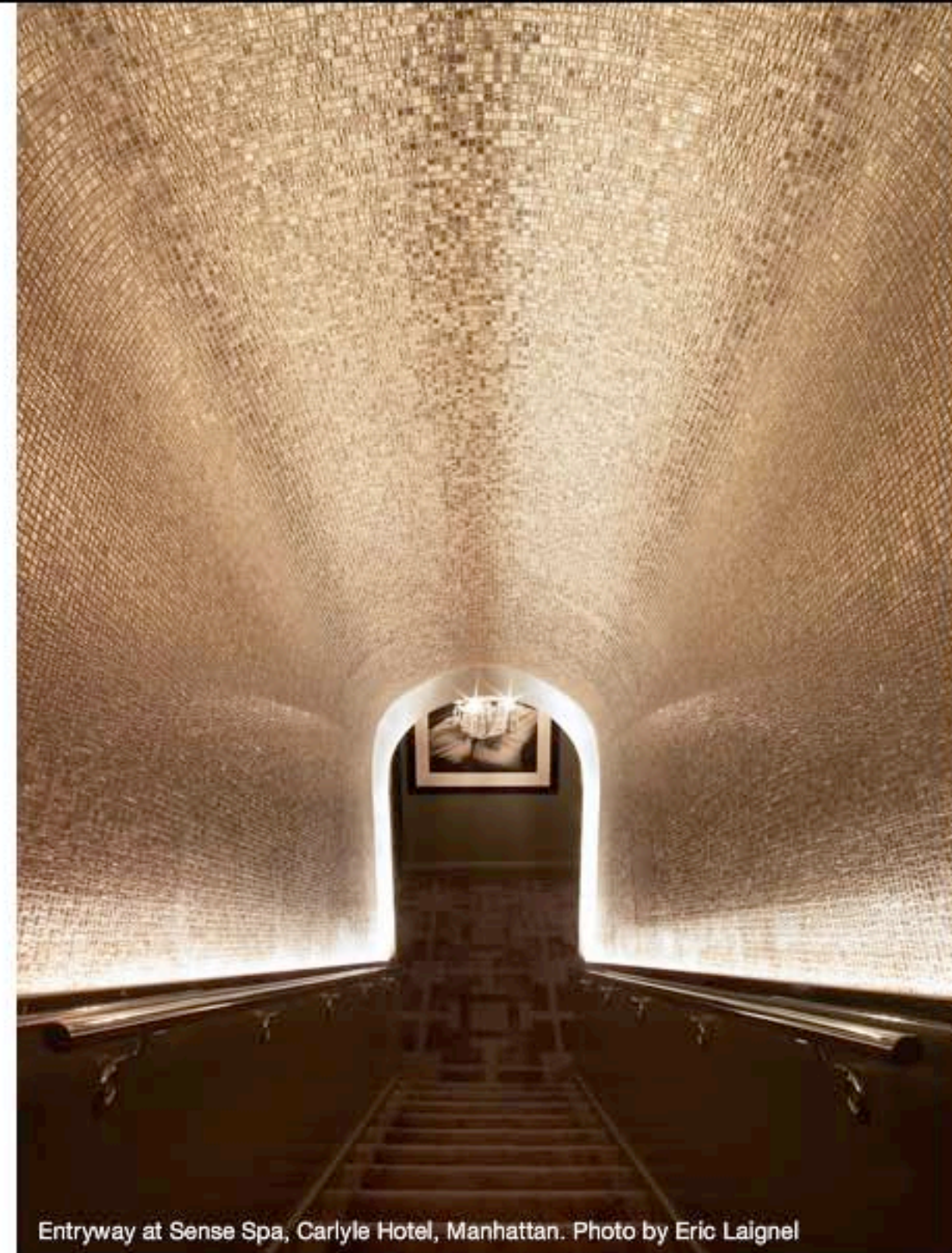
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**A**nd while zeffdesign has helped open a flurry of delectably designed eateries from San Francisco to New York, perhaps the pinnacle of its current efforts to fuse form and function is with its current massive redesign and expansion of the Hard Rock Hotel in Las Vegas. With 2.5 million-square-feet to re-think from poker rooms to penthouse suites, Zeff's goal is simply "to make it the sexiest hotel in all of Las Vegas."

But, Zeff's extensive outreach isn't merely limited to places to eat, sleep and be merry. He has also helped launch and brand products with a scope that's all-encompassing, from men's skin care store Molton Brown in London ("The best project perk was staying at Claridge's," he says), to Cape Furniture ("It's got outdoor furniture that works just as well inside"), to his own line, Zeff Garden ("I am a passionate gardener and this collection has everything from perfect-fitting gardening gloves to beautiful tools.").



Entryway at Sense Spa, Carlyle Hotel, Manhattan. Photo by Eric Laignel



Main Bar at Social Hollywood, photograph by Eric Laignel

A way from land, Zeff's vision equally flourishes on water with the completion of several "Super Yacht" projects, Fathom being the first of five boutique-to-sea ventures commission by Vikram Chatwell Hotels. "The detailing on this bespoke forty-five-meter vessel rivals that of a private residence," he says.

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Interior Lounge of Fathom Super Yacht, Photo by Eric Laignel

Currently, zeffdesign is working on a range of hotel projects from renovations to new developments including the restaurant and bar at The Lowell Hotel.

On his precious time off, you can find him sport fishing for tuna off the coast of Montauk where he has a home or scuba diving in the Seychelles. No matter the medium or the country, Zeff's motto remains: "Adapt. Protect. Flourish."



Decks of Fathom Super Yacht, Photo by Eric Laignel



# WHAT DIRECTION YOUR STYLE COMPASS POINT TO?

**FASHION:** Classic with a modern twist

**FABRICS:** My favorites are vintage leather and Venetian-style velvet.

**COLOR:** Charcoal gray, black and white



**ENTERTAINING:** Casual outdoor lunches with family and friends. Any food cooked over an open fire – I'm famous for my South African Barbeque

**TRAVEL:** I like to completely get away from work life in New York. My favorite escape is to Africa.

**ART OR DESIGN:** I prefer very classic art inside extremely modern interiors.



## GARDENING OR FLORAL:

All green gardens, using texture rather than color.

## HOW GREEN ARE YOU?

75/25

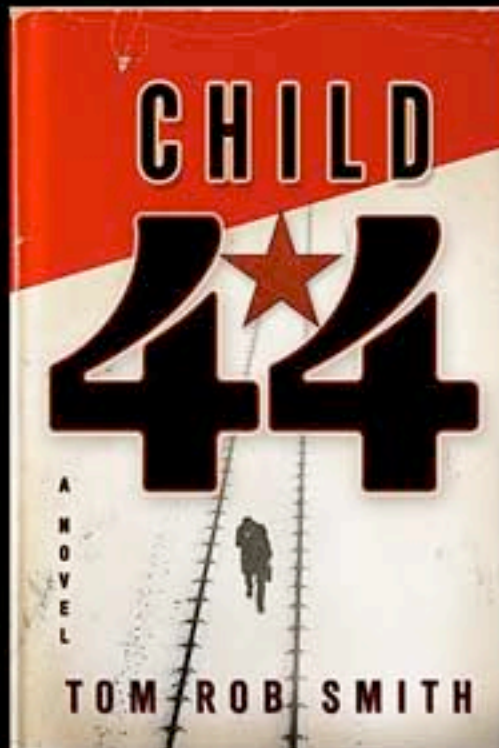


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#### BOOK:

*Child 44* by Tom Rob Smith

#### MUSEUM:

Sir John Soane's Museum, London, England

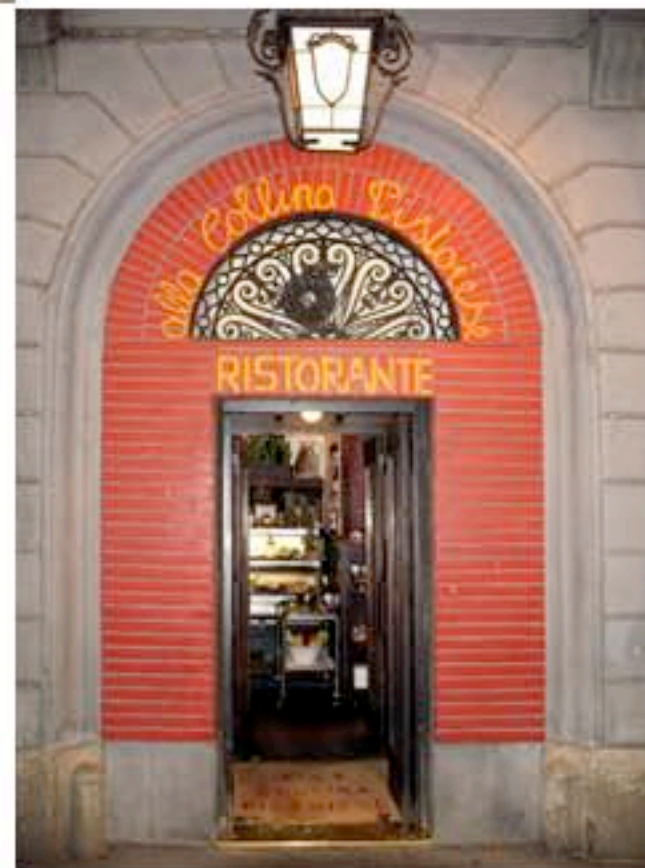


#### RESTAURANT:

Alla Collina Pistoiese is my current favorite.

#### HOTEL:

Jack's Camp Botswana



#### GIFT:

Day of pampering at Sense Spa at The Carlyle

#### MUSIC CD:

Anything by Nina Simone.



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**MARK ZEFF'S**  
from  
**QUICK PICKS** *Istdibs*

Stilnovo Chandelier from Pascal Boyer Gallery

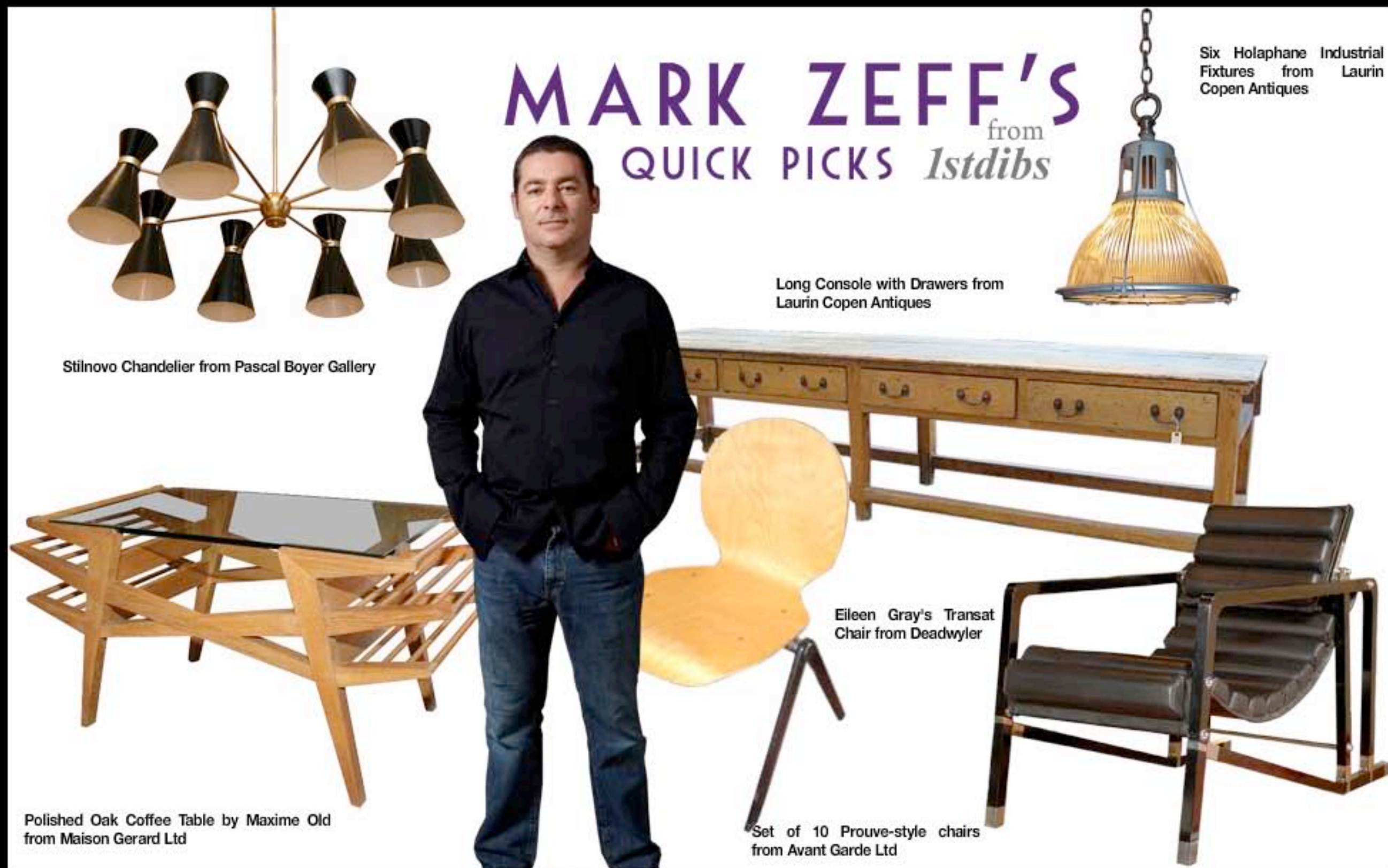
Long Console with Drawers from Laurin Copen Antiques

Six Holaphane Industrial Fixtures from Laurin Copen Antiques

Polished Oak Coffee Table by Maxime Old from Maison Gerard Ltd

Eileen Gray's Transat Chair from Deadwyler

Set of 10 Prouve-style chairs from Avant Garde Ltd



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