

# POOL

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*Creative*  
INDIA

**Jay Dutta pg 30** | *Photographed by Rahul Dubey*

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# WOOD THAT SPEAKS



*Aarti Aggarwal balances her Indian sensibilities with a Western education to create bespoke furniture that tells intriguing stories*



*Lilypond Sideboard | Signature Collection*

*Straight line sturdy piece crafted with a symmetrical wood- on- wood inlay work in front. Fine highlights in the copper inlay further accentuate the design and emphasis the details. It also adds a stylish touch to this sideboard.*



**What does design mean to you?**

**AA:** Design, for me, is a way of life; you don't choose to design, it just needs to be done. It simplifies rather than complicates, it enhances practicality and beautifies at the same time. Design makes things just right.

**When did your fascination with furniture design begin?**

**AA:** Building furniture was my father's hobby. We always had a carpenter in the backyard, so in a way I was introduced to this craft really early in life. The thrill of seeing a log change shape motivated me, and I went on to study Domestic Design from University of Arts, London; and specialized in Chair Design from Danish Skole of Design, Copenhagen.

## FURNITURE DESIGN

### How did 'Knock on Wood' come about?

**AA:** I set up 'House of Design' in the year 2000 in my parents' garage, with some essential tools and two workmen who were as enthusiastic about the idea as I was. Together we designed, drew, cut, sawed and chiseled our way to create a design company which is based out of New Delhi and Chandigarh. Over the last 14 years, our small 'idea' has grown into a state-of-the-art furniture design and manufacturing unit, spread over a few thousand square feet. In 2008 we branched into a special line of customized and bespoke hardwood furniture called Knock on Wood (KNW). We have grown into a boutique design house that has created its own mark in the custom made quality furniture space in India. As Principal Designer and Founder, I lead the creative design team.

### What is the KNW design philosophy?

**AA:** 'To enhance life and spirit through timeless, responsible design... total design.'

We believe in the best environmental and work practices and our designs

reflect that. We draw our inspiration from the world around but are sensitive to the wishes and lifestyle of those who we design for. At KNW we are crafting stories with furniture.

### What is the KNW style of working?

**AA:** Our work at the studio and the workshop is closely linked. We consider ourselves extremely fortunate to work with such a vast and beautiful range of woods. We let the product design dictate the kind of wood we use.

The design team meets clients at the studio where the process of ideation starts. This takes a concrete shape after sampling and inputs from our artisans. The workshop is located on the JCBL (our parent company) campus in Lalru, which is at a distance of 25 km from Chandigarh. Our team consists of 40-45 artisans.

### What inspires you?

**AA:** I am very Indian in my outlook and sensibility. Being in London taught me the wholesomeness of design, how there were no rights or wrongs; it's need and

### *Three Wise Men | Forest Collection*

*Raw and seasoned logs have been transformed into beautiful side tables. The wood is treated in a way that its natural grain is highlighted to perfection. The diagonal cut adds to the grain lines.*



**Storyteller (The Bookcase) | Canvas of Life**

*The doors have been painstakingly created by joining small pieces of turned wood. The brass body and the specially created 'distressed' red surface on the inside add to the charisma of the charming façade.*





**Induction Trolley | Hospitality Collection**

*These induction trolleys are ideal for gourmet buffets and stylish events. These are designed with cooking counters, built-in storage for utensils and other essentials. The top extends into a serving counter.*

wants that should dictate design and be the judge of correctness of a product. The international experience widened my horizons. Denmark taught me about the beauty of subtlety. ‘God lies in the details’ is an expression that I learnt at the Danish Skole of Design.

**What are the challenges in your line of work?**

**AA:** All fields come with their set of challenges. Establishing myself as a designer, dealing with carpenters and clients, the list is endless. The key to facing all challenges has been patience. I believe in planning and proper management of time to avoid any problems in my area of work.

**What are your current projects?**

**AA:** The idea of an accent furniture piece actually being a multifunctional addition to the room greatly appeals to me. With this in mind I have launched a new collection called ‘Yours Truly’, which comprises of the Solemate, Butler, Mistress and PA. It is a set of cabinets that attends to a multitude of individual requirements. I hope to add more products to this range in the coming future.

**How has the KNW experience been so far?**

**AA:** The journey since we began has been full of ups and downs but never boring. I know after years of working that this is

where we were meant to be. I believe in working with my clients from the beginning to understand their unique requirements and ensuring that not only their furniture, but their experience with KNW is truly bespoke.

The biggest accomplishment for any designer is the trust that the clients place in them. We may have grown in scale but we remain a 'people's company' at heart - a team that is committed to quality and responsible design. You may find our designs classic or contemporary, sometimes bold, sometimes eccentric, sometimes daring, but always, always genuine and honest. At least that is my hope...Knock on Wood!

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### ***PA (Home Office) | Yours Truly***

*The multifunctional cabinet comes with ample storage and lets its owner add a personal touch while decorating, so as to make it more bespoke, comfortable, relaxing and yet, productive. Its bold color scheme and ombre finish provides a visual pleasure. A knob on one side of the PA holds a flat piece of wood that opens up to form a chair.*

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## FINALISTS 2016

Congratulations. Of the 156 Design studios that were competing in 15 Tracks, following few made it to the Jury round. These studios met the standards set for Work, People and Financial organisation. They take their work seriously and their clients are proud to work with them. They stand tall for being professional and Transparent.

### INDIA'S BEST GRAPHIC DESIGN STUDIO

**Aalba Brand Strategy & Design**  
**Lopez Design**  
**Tata Elxsi**

### INDIA'S BEST INDUSTRIAL DESIGN STUDIO

**Universal Designation Lab**  
**Tata Elxsi**  
**Desmania Design**

### INDIA'S BEST BRAND DESIGN STUDIO

**The Neon Project**  
**Umbrella Design**  
**Lopez Design**

### INDIA'S BEST DIGITAL DESIGN STUDIO

**Think Design Collaborative**  
**Lollypop, UI-UX Studio**  
**Fractal Ink Design Studio**

### INDIA'S BEST YOUNG DESIGN STUDIO

**Project 810**  
**Kosh**  
**Studio Wood**

### INDIA'S BEST IN-HOUSE DESIGN STUDIO

**Ashokkeyland Styling Studio**  
**Godrej Consumers Product**  
**Tata Motors Design**

### INDIA'S BEST ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN STUDIO

**Archohm Studio**  
**Morphogenesis**

### INDIA'S BEST SPATIAL DESIGN STUDIO

**Tata Elxsi**  
**Mu design**

### INDIA'S BEST PACKAGING DESIGN STUDIO

**Tata Elxsi**  
**Wow Design**

### INDIA'S BEST FURNITURE DESIGN STUDIO

**Ayush Kasiwal Design**  
**Sarthak Sahil Design**

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