

The lighter and darker sides of pop: Asia's fashionable playground

# the yak

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GIANPAOLO Nogara and Lucio Brissolèse know a thing or two about icons.

The team behind Warisan Living has collaborated with some of the most iconic names in the design business.

Philippe Starck? The Delano Hotel in Miami, which is said to have changed South Beach forever.

Then there is Italy's star architect and designer Antonio Citterio with whom the duo collaborated to make magnificent interiors for the Bulgari Hotel, Bali that is a chic centre for the uber-rich jet-set.

Four Seasons, Grand Hyatt, Ritz Carlton, and St Regis... the list goes on and on.

They are part of the posse of exclusive hotels where Warisan furnishing and accessories can be found.

Artists are supported – including the sensational Dutch painter Nico Vrielink – and local talents are nurtured.

Warisan is more than a brand; it is a symbol of Bali at its best and shadows its progression from a remote surfing location to a luxurious holiday hotspot.

With its foundation in buying and selling original Indonesian antiques and exporting ethnic art, Warisan has evolved, developed, expanded and created a highly recognised marque.

A few years ago the two founders thought to change that well-known logo but rejected the notion.

"The word is scribed in a beautiful curve which reflects our dedication to hand crafted and artisanal works. No printed typeface can produce such a logo. It is 25 years old and well known," Gianpaolo says.

It is recognised in more places than the island. A virtual household name in Genoa, Italy, Warisan has established studios and galleries in Los Angeles, Cape Town, Korea and India.

While Warisan may be as old as the first expats and appears to be a comfortable and much loved Balinese brand, it is becoming an international 'indie' furniture outfit loved by millions.

"We have become very well known in South-East Asia since the 2009 crash of the financial markets in the United States. That time caused a rethink for us since our best clients had been in the United States and they where no longer able to commit," Gianpaolo says.

In fact, long-time clients and new projects evaporated as the hotel industry in the USA shrank. Warisan turned its eagle eye for detail to home and the greater Asian market.

Now the outfit has been decorating a privately owned mansion in Mumbai, homes of the elite in Jakarta and a whole range of hotels across the region.

"Once the local market only looked for price

point. Now Indonesians, Indians and Koreans are focussing on quality and sophistication and we are able to provide that for their private residences and apartments that they develop," Gianpaolo says.

Warisan does more than produce thousands of Warisan bedside tables for five-star hotels at will. They share the love and not just into the homes and hotels of the rich and rarefied. As part of the 25th birthday of the furniture manufacturer and purveyor of gorgeous items the group has deepened its nurturing sole and is seeking Indonesia's next generation of talent.

With *Indonesia Design* magazine, Warisan has launched the Young Designer Award competition with an objective to recognise, foster and promote emerging designer talent from across the nation's six universities and design colleges.

"We hope to give the winners an opportunity to develop their talents, particularly in wood design," Gianpaolo says.

Warisan has long been spreading its design expertise among upcoming individuals across the world. They have had people from Spain, Holland, Italy and the UK pass through their workshops taking with them new and specialised skills.

"We are careful to keep our philosophy of using only sustainable woods at a time when China is mass producing furniture very cheaply. We have no plans to try to compete with this. We will continue to maintain our excellent quality and take on new talent from near and far," Gianpaolo says. "That is part of the Warisan brand"

For long years the Jalan Raya Kerobokan gallery has sat on top of the "must-do" list of vacationing design junkies as well as a frequently flyer on the best design and shopping blogs. It relentlessly promotes handcrafted Indonesian and Balinese furniture and modern design. Trade shows from Las Vegas to Nashville to Casablanca and Istanbul have had a slice of the high-end outfit.

Word has spread by traveller talk, traditional advertising and, soon, digital media will have its piece of Warisan.

"We are rethinking our marketing strategy and working on a new website and we will engage in all forms of digital media promoting for our brand through various platforms," says marketing manager Arnaud Guillemot.

"In the next five years we can expect to see the brand gaining a high profile in the European market for exclusive furniture."

"We aim to have a strong presence in high end retail in the UK and secure a strong European position in hotel project work," Lucio Brissolèse says.

However, he assures *The Yak* that the Bali

showroom will remain Warisan's premier studio.

"Everybody that comes to Bali visits us and we do not plan for that to ever change," he says.

The two entrepreneurs, who both arrived in Bali by boat, have a secret project: the Warisan brand is going to sea.

"It is about time that Indonesia has its own domestic boat building operation. Being the world's largest archipelago with 17,000 islands – many of which remain hardly explored – we are perfectly placed to create a bespoke business building boats," Lucio says.

Gianpaolo and Lucio expect to start out making 8-10 metre motorboats then move onto the production of small to mid-sized yachts made of wood with beautiful interiors. These are the types of exquisite vessels owned by five and six-star hotels. Equivalent to the leisure barges of days past.


"We are both old sailors so it is a return to our passion. We already have a lovely solid teak boat that we take clients on from Bali to Java just to avoid the ferry ride. Many of them have asked if we would make something similar for them. The market is ready," Gianpaolo says.

It would also put an interesting high quality player into a market sector that is sadly lacking a shipwright with great élan. It would also allow salty sea dogs to avoid paying the enormous luxury tax that is slammed onto any boat bought offshore.

It is certainly a return to roots for these two Warisan warriors given that both arrived on the island by sea – Lucio as the skipper of a 50-foot schooner that departed from Antibes. Since the business's 1989 inception, together they have sailed many seas – marine, professional and personal – for more than 25 years.

This may well be the professional swansong for these two long time trouper that seem to have had so many fingers in pies that include antiques, art, lighting, jewellery, accent accessories and beautiful furniture and even food through its eponymous restaurant.

"In five years time I expect to retire at my venerable age. Let the next generation come and take over," Lucio says.

What exactly could this lucky next generation be expected to embrace? An operation that knows how to birth an outstanding brand that by all appearances almost gives more than it takes in a range of realms. 

[www.warisan.com](http://www.warisan.com)