



## » INTERVIEW

# Pinel & Pinel

BY SANDRA ISKANDER

Fred Pinel, at the age of 32, decided to step down from the sales race and follow his dream. Creating beautifully tailor-made luxury trunks, travel goods and accessories, the humble designer and his team design and produce the personalised pieces in the Pinel & Pinel atelier, found in the 18th arrondissement of Paris. His designs define structure and epitomise luxury, with each piece crafted with impeccable precision. Where sat with the passionate name behind the brand to find out how a salesperson becomes one of the most sought-after names in the world of luxury in only 8 years.

### How did you get into the luxury trunk designing business?

After years being a salesperson I decided I wanted to do something that didn't make me feel I was going to work. I wanted to do something with passion so I slowly started making trunks, starting first with an old suitcase that I completely restored.

### How long does it take to make a trunk?

The Numero O trunk for example takes over 400 hours of work, but for a trunk that retails at 40,000 euros it is only expected that long hours go into making it, for that price clients expect quality.

### Do you only travel with Pinel trunks?

No, only a small travel bag, a Pinel though.

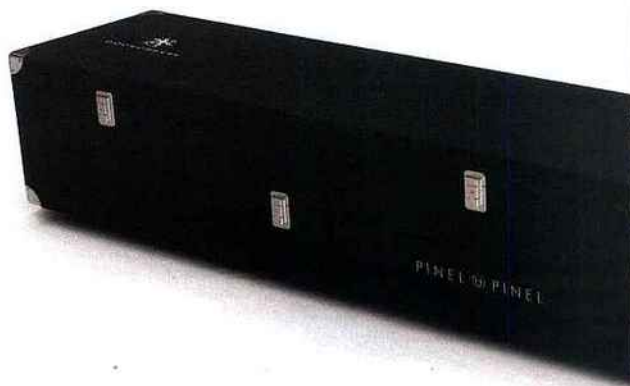
### Who are your clients?

People who love beautiful

things. People who have possibly purchased a lot of things before just for the brand name and now they want to spoil themselves with something of beauty and quality and not just necessarily a brand. I love seeing my clients appreciate beautiful things. Someone like Ronaldo [football player] who came in and saw a special trunk for a foldable bike and was like a kid in a toy store brings a smile to my face. I want people to dream, to have something not everyone else has.

You have worked with some of the most luxurious brands in the world, including Lacroix and Paco Rabanne. Do you enjoy collaborating with big fashion houses? What is the attraction of doing so and are there any downsides of doing that?

My first collaboration was with Bang & Olufsen, and with any such



collaboration I need to really know what the client wants, I need them to confide in me, I need to know what they love, hate, appreciate, to get into their psyche and produce exactly what they want.

**Who is your favourite designer, both fashion and décor?**

Design-wise it's easy, Starck. He has an incredible style. What he did with Baccarat... he is daring with his designs. Of course there are so many other designers I admire, Jean Prouvé, Charlotte Perriand... Fashion-wise, John Galiano is one of the best designers ever. Lagerfeld is incredible. Gaultier's sublime, what he does is extraordinary. Alber Elbaz's work at Lanvin is amazing. Yves Saint Laurent, what he did was sublime with women's pants. Tom Ford of course, Marc Jacobs is superb as well. They all create emotions.

**What is your favourite restaurant in Paris?**

I love Japanese cuisine and one of my favourite Japanese restaurants is Guilo Guilo (8 rue Garreau, 18th, 01 42 54 23 92). Le Meurice Restaurant, Yannick Alleno's dishes are amazing and I just love Jean-François Rouquette's restaurant at the Park Hyatt. Jean-François Piège's new restaurant Thoumieux, and of course the classics including l'Arpège and Apicius. And for the best pizza, Papparazzi around the Place Edouard VII, the pizzas are huge, serving each one on two plates!

**Favourite bar? And what is your favourite drink?**

The Park Hyatt and the Plaza

Athénée bar. I enjoy a good mojito, a nice glass of red wine and Krug Champagne.

**Favourite shopping area?**

Flea markets. I love old jeans so I head to the flea markets to find them. Le Marais, around the Madeleine where you find all the department stores. I also really like Paul Smith, I buy his stuff even if they don't fit me, I just love his things and I have to have them!

**What is your favourite accessory?**

I'm a shoe fetishist, so shoes. I love shoes. If I were a woman I would have so many shoes and bags.

**Describe your perfect day in Paris...**

With my two girls doing whatever they want to do.

**When you have some free time what do you enjoy doing?**

Nothing!

**What can you not live without?**

The love of my two daughters. When they run into my arms when I get home from work and say I love you papa. The love of your own children takes away any problems you may have, all the stress of the world. So I cannot live without their love now that I know it, I think once you know that feeling, that kind of love, you cannot live without it. My friends as well, I cannot live without them.

**If you had to choose only one street in Paris to spend an entire day, which one would it be?**

Rue du Paradis, it is the most beautiful name for a street. I spend a lot of time on rue Faubourg Saint-Honoré and rue Saint-Honoré



because I love shopping and I love the boutiques there.

**What is your favourite colour?**

I like prune, pistachio, red.

**What is your favourite dessert?**

I don't like dessert actually but when I do have something sweet I prefer something simple and traditional like rice pudding.

**What is the most romantic place in Paris?**

Pont Marie with the relaxing water beneath. Place des Vosges is beautiful but not necessarily romantic. Romanticism for me is more a moment as opposed to a place, so it could be anywhere.

**Musée du Louvre or Musée d'Orsay?**

Musée du Louvre.

**Place Vendôme or Place de la Concorde?**

That's difficult to answer, as I don't like either because of the cliché they represent. I prefer Place des Vosges.

**Champagne or coffee?**

Champagne.

**Late nights or early days?**

Late nights. I work better at night.

**What's next for Pinel & Pinel?**

I will be designing shoes, scarves and a perfume with a young nose, a young lady who has just graduated.

**Pinel & Pinel Showroom**

5 rue Cyrano de Bergerac (18th),  
01 45 23 11 14.

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

