

EXACTING EXERCISE

A one-off foray into furniture design by interior designers Marsh Freedman Associates has resulted in three impeccably crafted bedroom pieces.

Interior designer George Freedman casually tosses an envelope of photographs across his paper-laden marble-topped Knoll table. "Well, here's some Post-Modern for you," he says, taking out several rough photographs of some spectacular, superbly detailed furniture. It seems Freedman, of Marsh Freedman Associates, Sydney, could not find the furniture he wanted for a specific project, so he decided to have it made. A seemingly simple solution, until you learn that Marsh Freedman Associates is not a run-of-the-mill designing team. The company has never heard the word compromise, and its hallmarks are precise craftsmanship, perfection and attention to detail. Untold energy and effort went into three seemingly simple pieces of bedroom furniture — a chest of drawers and two bedside tables.

Fortunately, the clients assumed a patron pose, waiting a year until the project was completed. Freedman is quick to point out that this was an exercise in design, not a business deal, and the end result is three pieces of contemporary furniture worthy of a museum setting, and with a price-tag to match.

Cabinet-maker Colin Coates, of Sikman and Coates, Sydney, was delighted with the project. He is used to doing fine work, but cites the exercise as one of the highlights of a thirty-four-year career. "It's nice to see this type of work coming back," he says. George Freedman's starting point was the materials — the finest birds-eye maple veneer, precious Macassar ebony and handsome grey-green Vert Boper Italian marble. His inspiration was Biedermeier, with a little Egyptian and Greek thrown in. "It was a nice game," Freedman says. Part of the game resulted from a deep drawer at the bottom of the chest of drawers, which initiated the thought: "Let's pretend this is the stone façade of a skyscraper, a pre-1940 New York building. We'll start at street level and move up." Freedman would love to turn this one-off exercise into a range of furniture, although he realises it would be an expensive operation. What a design coup for Australia if his dreams come true.

Claudia Thomas



Above: Marsh Freedman Associates' perfectly proportioned chest of drawers and one of the bedside tables.
Below: views of the towering chest of drawers, which is made of fine birds-eye maple veneer with an Italian marble top. Macassar ebony, on the handles and corners, adds a surprise, ornamental effect.

