

**Luxury Property Industry Leaders
In Conversation with Richard Angel and Ed O'Donnell (Angel O'Donnell)**

**Priya Rawal, Founder and CEO of The Luxury Property Forum sits down
with Industry Leader:**

Richard Angel and Ed O'Donnell, Founders of Angel O'Donnell



Richard Angel and Ed O'Donnell (Photographer: Taran Wilkhu)

Richard, Ed it is such a pleasure to sit down with you both today. We absolutely love having you as a member of The Luxury Property Forum. Richard, could you start by telling us a little more about Angel O'Donnell?

Richard: Angel O'Donnell is an award-winning interior design studio led by me, Richard Angel, and my business partner, Ed O'Donnell. We launched in 2018, and since then we've been flat out creating interiors for all sorts of projects – large, mixed-use amenity spaces, luxury show apartments, and private homes both here and abroad.

And Ed, what inspired you to start the company?

Ed: We were working at the same interior design firm. I was a Creative Team Head and Richard was the Managing Director. We'd become frustrated with how process-driven the place was. New ideas didn't fit the mould. And there was a very discernible house style that wouldn't evolve, even though it needed to. So, we put our heads together and realised that if we were going to affect any kind of change, we needed to break free and start our own business.

Richard: We wanted to pioneer a new kind of interior design studio, one that would provide clients with a fully tailored service, incorporating their individual personalities, aesthetic tastes, and practical requirements. No one-size-fits-all process. No cookie-cutter style. Just beautiful, bespoke designs impeccably delivered.



Everything from velvet sofas to a bronze-clad fireplace was designed inhouse during lockdown (Photographer: Taran Wilkhu)

I think that is something that really rings true every one of your projects is distinctly different! What would you say sets you both and Angel O'Donnell as an industry leader apart from others in the luxury property sector?

Ed: We don't have a signature style, which is a novelty in our industry. Most interior designers get typecast as Masters of Beige or Grande Dames of English Country. But Richard and I didn't want to be known for a singular style that we would have to adapt over and over. If a client wants minimalist, we'll give them minimalist. If they want boutique hotel, that's what we'll deliver. We design solely with our clients in mind.

It's a great ethos and a rare one in this industry. Richard what would be a typical working day in your life?

Richard: While Ed and his team are designing, I'm actively growing the business and overseeing the day-to-day running of the company. Recently, this has meant filling several key positions, including a Senior Designer, an Executive Assistant, a Project & Procurement Manager, a Director of Sales, and a new Finance Director. So now I spend a lot of time monitoring our progress against our financial forecasts to ensure we're operating as cost-effectively as possible. Sometimes this means turning down projects I feel aren't commercially viable for us, which is a good position to be in. On top of that, I've been busy developing a new website with our Brand Director, as well as implementing a new CRM system to engage both our existing and prospective clients. There's never a quiet moment.

I can imagine. And Ed coming to you, what are some of the greatest challenges you have faced in your business so far?

Ed: The start of the pandemic was unnerving. Projects got shelved, factories shut down, shipments got suspended, and the office we were renting closed indefinitely. To keep things on an even keel, we pitched for and won a large penthouse on the Albert Embankment. We decided to design most of the furniture inhouse and have it made by local artisans. That way, we could circumvent the factory chaos, create a bespoke look, and deliver it on time. It turned out to be one of our most successful projects – and proved that Richard and I could stay positive, solve problems, and produce something unique even during a time of crazy uncertainty.

That is an amazing story – what a success! Richard, what would you say are some of the highlights you have experienced since starting Angel O'Donnell?

Richard: We've won a lot of trophies – more than we could have imagined. It feels good to get favourable nods from your peers and role models. The SBID Awards are especially fun as they always pull in a stellar judging panel. When they like your work, it's seriously validating. Also, this year, we became one of The Spear's 500 Top Recommended service providers, which is a fine endorsement.

Another crowning moment is The OWO. To be asked to interior design one of the first Raffles-branded residences inside this magnificent building was a huge honour. We wouldn't have been considered a year ago, so it sets a new standard for us.



Angel O'Donnell's latest designs for the world's first Raffles-branded residence (Photographer: Taran Wilkhu)

It is an iconic development and such a great one to be a part of. So Ed, who inspires you?

Ed: William McIntosh. In my eyes, he's the most adept and accomplished interior designer there is. Every one of his projects looks completely different from the last. Whether he's channelling Baroque, mid-century or Parisian, or mixing fluid forms with sharply delineated shapes, or bright colours with warm neutrals, his designs always fizz with originality.

I'm also inspired by people who are in the vanguard of future crafts. Jan Hendzel, for instance, has raised the bar with what can be achieved using reclaimed materials. So, too, has Dirk van der Kooij with his much-celebrated Meltingpot tables.

Craftmanship is so important in our industry and I can imagine brings so much inspiration. For those looking to become an industry leader in luxury property, what would be your advice to them?

Richard: Keep learning, keep aspiring, and keep focussed. It's all too easy to get buffeted between conflicting opinions and lose sight of your end goal. So create a clear path of action. Think about your business, why it exists, and what sets it apart. Think about your market and who you want to appeal to. Then develop a strategy that will support your objectives and get your message out there. This isn't something you do once, set in stone and forget about. You can only progress if you continue to advance your goals and evolve your methods for achieving them.

Ed: From a design perspective, you'll go far if you dance to the beat of your own drum. Don't be swayed by fads. Instead, have confidence in your aesthetic and stand by your design choices. Your opinion and expertise matter. It's what you're being paid for, after all.



Colour, comfort and craftsmanship were the inspiration behind The OWO's principal bedroom

Excellent advice from the both of you! Wand in an ideal world, what does the future hold for you and Angel O'Donnell?

Richard: The real world is looking pretty ideal at the moment. We've already secured a private client in The OWO, following the success of our show apartment. We're interior designing three duplex penthouses in St John's Wood, two 18th-floor riverside apartments in The Corniche, and a Cubist-inspired villa in Paros, Greece. Plus, we're in detailed negotiations to secure our first central London development project. If we can maintain this trajectory without compromising on creativity and quality, we'll be doing right by our clients.

Ed: Definitely. We're building a strong brand known for its versatile creative output. The work we do is varied and keeps people guessing – so I'd like us to aspire to ever bigger projects that continue to push our designs and impress our clients. And if someone wants to employ us in the future to interior design a boutique hotel, that would be awesome.

I am sure it is just on the horizon! And finally, what does "luxury" mean to you?

Richard: For me, luxury is being able to fully relax on holiday, with the sun on my face and a glass of wine in my hand, knowing that the brilliant team we have back home has everything under control.

Ed: I second that. Travel is the luxury, real-life version of looking online for creative inspiration. And it's made all the sweeter knowing that you can unwind while your team holds the fort.



A grand entrance befitting The OWO's cultural pedigree and exclusive Whitehall location (Photographer: Taran Wilkhu)

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<https://angelodonnell.com>

2nd Floor, 180 Strand,

London, WC2R 1EA

+44(0) 20 3488 3797