

BELOW Kelly Hoppen for Sonder Living Art dining chair £1,137 each, Band sideboard £2,543 and Neon Lily art £220. **RIGHT** Morrison ottoman £764, Morgan console table £2,645, Gray table lamp £865 and Crystal Disk artwork £285. **BELOW RIGHT** Vinci armchair £3,237, Besse sideboard £1,626, Brando large light pendants £569 each, Brando small light pendants £420 each, Gray pedestal table £1,476, Westley chair £1,729 and Ben v Omm rug £1,118



COOL COLLECTIVE

A roster of big names and a forward-thinking approach are the hallmarks of contemporary interiors brand Sonder Living

BY EMMA J PAGE

Imagine a concept brand whose furniture, accessories, lighting and artwork tell their own stories while still forming part of a cohesive whole. That's the vision for Sonder Living, a Hong Kong-based collective dedicated to creating heritage-inspired pieces that make a modern statement.

With a Los Angeles flagship launched in 2016, three additional Stateside stores and several outlets in Asia, the brand arrives on UK shores this autumn armed with a host

of upscale designs. The hottest names in the interiors world, including Kelly Hoppen and Andrew Martin, have created exclusive collections for the label, whose team of artisans bring each design to life in-house.

Originality, provenance and craftsmanship are Sonder Living's founding principles, and every item – from richly upholstered ottomans to mid-century-inspired sideboards – embraces that ethos. Here, Tracey Boyd and Thomas Bina talk about their creations for the marque. ▶



TRACEY BOYD

The London-based designer cut her teeth as an illustrator in the 1980s, before moving into fashion as a buyer and launching her eponymous award-winning label in 1996. In 2010, Boyd combined her loves of design, travel and fashion with the creation of eclectic concept store Aesthazaar. She talks about her collection for Sonder Living.

"I like my designs to be optimistic."

Boyd says. Graceful lines, pops of colour and a hint of glamour are all trademarks, although the eclectic designer resists being pigeonholed. She prefers to try something new at every opportunity.

Her collection of lemon-yellow velvet dining chairs for Sonder Living is a case in point. "What I like about this collaboration is that it allows me to pull together a whole look at once," she says. "So I've been able to create a Boyd dining room that I'm sure will speak to people in different ways."

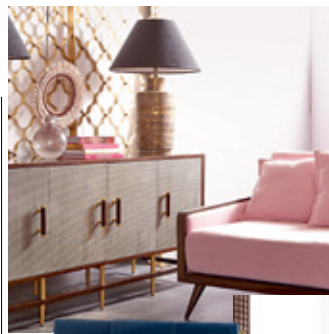
One of Boyd's favourites is the B sofa in blue velvet, with its curvaceous brass sides, "because the fabric gives it depth, but it remains a visually light piece". Balance and symmetry are also key themes: "An 'over-the-top' element, like elaborate marquetry, needs to be balanced with a simple shape," she says. "It's like creating the right frame for a painting." Thanks to Boyd's background in fashion, pattern often makes a witty and unexpected appearance, such as in the Herrington Credenza – a sideboard that features printed door fronts inspired by the fabric of a classic men's suit. "My designs are unpredictable, but there's an essence of me in all of them."



THOMAS BINA

Once a law student, Thomas Bina learned his craft on the hoof during his subsequent travels around the world. He launched his first company in 2003, pioneering the sustainable-furniture movement with a capsule collection of reclaimed pieces, and his own design studio in 2009. Now Bina works with wood, stone, steel and concrete to produce restored elements, often with a mid-century flourish.

A globe-trotting nature and a fascination with exotic materials are behind each of Bina's distinctive designs. He pioneered



CLOCKWISE, FROM LEFT Tracey Boyd for Sonder Living Herrington Credenza £2,543 and Fez lamp £58 each, Thomas Bina for Sonder Living Caribou Media console table £2,440, Caribou bed £2,440, Caribou nightstands £1,220 each and Charles desk £2,543, Tracey Boyd for Sonder Living B sofa £3,201

"I don't like playing it safe... I love to create pieces that showcase their soul"

— THOMAS BINA

sustainable living long before upcycling was in vogue and, nearly three decades later, he continues to combine raw beauty with precision craftsmanship.

The self-taught designer, who has worked up stints in Indonesia, Brazil, Mexico and Vietnam, says his addiction to adventure helped hone his eye for design. "I love to create pieces that showcase their soul," he says. "Brazilian peroba, for example, is a beautiful hardwood that looks like elephant skin. It doesn't need heavy veneers or a paint finish; it functions best in its purest form."

This exotic wood found its way into several of Bina's creations for Sonder Living, including sideboards, beds and cabinets, following his prolonged sojourn in Rio de Janeiro. "The wood itself was a huge inspiration," he reflects, "but Brazilian architects such as Oscar Niemeyer and Carlos Matta had just as much of an impact."

Bina's ability to mould discarded, salvaged or exotic materials into items characterised by a clean, simple finish is what keeps him engaged. However humble or utilitarian,

very little escapes his gaze. Worn canvas discarded from transport trucks in Brazil has been stonewashed and reimaged in a collection of tactile upholstered dining chairs, while military tents are artfully reworked into subtle sofa motifs. Unexpected contrast is the hallmark of these designs, be it the juxtaposition of a knotty wood encaused in a lacquer surround or the softening properties of reclaimed French oak against concrete.

"I don't like playing it safe. I shed my skin constantly," says Bina. "When I'm travelling, I make notes and take photos of the buildings and places that inspire me. Later, I'll refer back to them during a quiet moment and the designs will come quite naturally. But it's an evolution – these days I enjoy collaborations and I try to switch it up by playing with scale, proportion and opposing materials." ■

Emma J Page is a contributing editor at Homes & Gardens

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