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THEON DESIGN AND BRINKWORTH ASK A SIMPLE QUESTION: WHAT SHOULD WE PRESERVE?

- A founder-to-founder conversation exploring heritage, restraint and why analogue experiences continue to resonate in a digital age
- Theon Design founder Adam Hawley and Brinkworth founder Adam Brinkworth discuss the growing appeal of analogue luxury in an increasingly digital world
- Conversation explores the parallels between architecture, design and the reimagining of cultural icons
- Founders share a philosophy centred on preservation, restraint and thoughtful evolution
- Discussion examines why authenticity, tactility and longevity are becoming defining qualities of modern luxury
- Hosted by journalist Gary Inman at Brinkworth's East London headquarters

[Hi-res images](#)

<https://theondesign.com>

Why are some of the world's most discerning consumers increasingly drawn to analogue experiences in a digital world?

That question formed the basis of a recent conversation between Adam Hawley, founder of Theon Design, and Adam Brinkworth, founder of internationally renowned design practice Brinkworth, hosted by journalist Gary Inman.

Held at Brinkworth's East London headquarters and the surrounding streets that have long served as a centre for creative culture, the discussion explored a broader phenomenon shaping contemporary luxury: the growing desire for objects that feel authentic, tactile and enduring.

While the conversation centred around a reimagined air-cooled Porsche 911, the themes extended far beyond the automotive world. Architecture, interiors, furniture, watches and fashion all face the same challenge: understanding what gives an object its lasting value, and how to evolve it without losing its identity.

A meeting of creative minds

For more than three decades, Brinkworth has created some of the world's most influential retail, hospitality and cultural spaces. Theon Design, meanwhile, has built a reputation for creating highly bespoke commissions based on the Porsche 911 (1964), each tailored to the individual preferences of its owner.

Despite operating in different industries, both founders discovered striking similarities in their respective approaches.

"Creatively, we're often working with historic structures," explained Adam Brinkworth. "The first thing we ask is what's good about this building? What should be preserved? What still has value? Then we think about how to make it useful and relevant for today. It occurs to me that's very similar to what Theon does.

"I like that Theon utilises contemporary materials because that's the most functional. And sometimes the contrast between two languages, modern and historic, can be complementary and aesthetically beautiful."

That balance between preservation and evolution sits at the heart of Theon's philosophy.

"Our identity is based around subtlety," said Adam Hawley. "The classic Porsche shape is already a subtle thing. I don't see the point in trying to reinvent it. The challenge is understanding what made it great in the first place and then refining every single aspect without losing its character."

The rise of the analogue luxury object

The discussion also explored why carefully reimagined classics continue to resonate with modern audiences, particularly as products and experiences become increasingly digital.

For both founders, the answer lies not in nostalgia, but in emotional connection.

"There's nothing wrong with enjoying something for what it was," Brinkworth explained. "But the interesting question is asking what would work now, and what might work in the future. Then adapting accordingly."

Hawley believes this growing demand reflects a broader cultural shift.

"The more we move into a digital era, the greater the appetite becomes for analogue experiences," he said. "People increasingly value things they can touch, hear and

engage with. The appeal isn't about recreating the past. It's about taking something fundamentally great and making it relevant for today."

The conversation positions reimagined classics as part of a wider movement across luxury sectors, where consumers are increasingly seeking craftsmanship, permanence and individuality over novelty and disposability.

The art of restraint

The discussion also touched on an increasingly relevant topic within contemporary design: restraint.

As luxury markets become more saturated and visual culture more crowded, both founders argued that standing out does not necessarily require being louder.

"Sometimes the best way to stand out is by being quieter," said Brinkworth. "If everybody is shouting, contrast can come from restraint. Sometimes maximalism is the right approach, and we enjoy designing things that are over the top, but we also like being super restrained."

This philosophy is reflected in both businesses' work.

Rather than pursuing constant reinvention, both Brinkworth and Theon advocate for thoughtful refinement — removing unnecessary complexity while preserving the qualities that give an object meaning and longevity.

Personalisation beyond aesthetics

The conversation also highlighted the growing importance of personalisation within luxury.

For Theon, bespoke design extends far beyond colours, materials or visual specification. Every commission is shaped through an extensive dialogue between client and studio, resulting in a highly individual interpretation of the air-cooled 911.

Each commission is the culmination of approximately 6,000 hours of design, engineering and craftsmanship. Beyond the visual design, engine response, suspension behaviour, steering feel and overall vehicle character are calibrated around the preferences of the individual owner.

"We even tune the way the engine behaves to suit the client," Hawley explained. "The suspension might be configured more for touring or more for sporting use. Two clients can specify the same engine and gearbox, but the finished cars can still feel

completely different. When a journalist drives one of our cars, they're not really driving a Theon. They're driving its owner's interpretation of what the ideal air-cooled 911 should be."

Brinkworth added: "I've owned a fast Porsche. I invested a lot trying to create one that could be both a road car and a race car, and it ended up being neither. When talking about the experience, it's not about out-and-out speed. It's not the numbers. It's how something feels."

Preserving what matters

For both founders, the conversation ultimately centred on a simple idea: the enduring appeal of thoughtful design.

Whether creating a building, a retail space or a reimagined sports car, the objective remains remarkably similar.

Understand what matters. Respect it. Then improve it.

About Theon Design

Theon Design, founded by Adam Hawley and Lucinda Argy, specialises in delivering bespoke commissions based on the Porsche 911 (964). Hawley, a car designer who has worked for numerous OEMs globally, and Argy, a marketing and business development specialist, started the business in 2016. Operating from a state-of-the-art facility in Deddington, Oxfordshire – nestled in the heart of the UK's 'Motorsport Valley' – Theon Design's expert in-house team builds bespoke commissions for a global clientele, leveraging cutting edge technologies and premium suppliers.

Theon comprises experts in automotive design, engineering, engine and chassis development, along with trim and vehicle manufacturing. It is driven by a desire to build the perfect air-cooled Porsche 911, one that combines the aesthetics and analogue driver involvement of a classic with modern comfort, driveability and performance.

Over the last two years, Theon Design has significantly expanded its production capabilities with the opening of a new, purpose-built facility, and a series of expert new staff joining the team. Theon Design's expansion is driven by surging international demand for its bespoke, expertly developed, design-led Porsche 911 (964) based commissions, which are offered for sale in every major global territory.

The price of a Theon commission does not include the donor car (which is either supplied by the customer, or Theon can assist with sourcing a vehicle if required) and local taxes. The company also offers full Porsche restorations.

Theon Design is fully respectful of Porsche's engineering ethos and model heritage. Out of respect for Porsche, and to respect Porsche's trademark rights, Theon Design cars should never under any circumstances be referred to or described as a "Theon", "Theon 911", "Theon Porsche 911" or a "Porsche Theon 911," or in any other manner that suggests that it is anything but a Porsche® 911®."

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