

Best of British

Real patience goes into the globe-making process perfected by Peter Bellerby

Peter Bellerby first decided to make globes when he was looking for an 80th-birthday present for his father. 'Twenty years of buying useless things made me feel guilty, so I wanted to find something decent,' he says.

He struck upon the idea of buying a globe but found that there were only two options – antique globes, which sell for tens of thousands of pounds, or brightly coloured school ones. Neither appealed, so he set out to build a globe himself.

'I thought it would take a few months and a few thousand pounds,' says Bellerby. In fact it took more than 100 attempts and almost two years. 'There's no book on globe-making, so it came down to trial and error,' he adds.

But he became so fascinated by the process that, in 2008, he sold his house and Aston Martin and ploughed £200,000 into setting up his own globe-making business, Bellerby & Co.

Bellerby, 52, who previously helped start Bloomsbury Bowling, a lucrative tenpin-bowling business in central London, has since perfected his art. His globes have appeared in films and TV programmes, including *The Apprentice* and *Midsomer Murders*, and are stocked by David Linley.

Surprisingly, Bellerby has no competitors in the quality bespoke globe-making market,

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Peter Bellerby, with some of the tools of his trade.

Interview by Saphora Smith.
Photographs by Andy Donohoe



largely because the process is so complex. Once a week, he and his team of 14 do yoga to gain greater control of their limbs and breathing. 'It's important to be able to move slowly, because when you're applying wet paper, all it wants to do is rip,' he explains.

To create traditional globes, they mix plaster of Paris and water, then place it in a half-sphere-shaped mould. This is left overnight, then two half-spheres are joined using specialist glue, with sealed weights inside to ensure that the globe balances.

Bellerby's in-house cartographer uses a computer program to print an up-to-date map on paper, adding towns, villages or travel routes at the request of the customer. Next, the oceans and continents are hand-coloured, and the map is applied to the sphere. To ensure the lines match up, the maps for the biggest globes are cut into triangular strips, each applied separately. Finally, the globe is fixed to a stand, made from either wood or metal.

'It takes between nine months and a year to learn to make a globe. You have to be incredibly patient,' explains Bellerby. 'When we finish one, everyone just stands there and stares at it.' bellerbyandco.com

