

City in Numbers ¹²⁵₃

£56m

The cost Rolls-Royce attributes to the failure of one of its Trent 900 engines on an Airbus A380 flying from Singapore to Australia in November 2010

56

The number of people currently studying Aramaic, the ancient language spoken by Jesus, at Oxford University

56%

The percentage of asbos breached more than once since they were introduced in 1999

56,000

The number of Barclays staff located in the UK. The bank has around 147,000 employees globally

\$56bn

The Pentagon's budget for secret military projects. Codenames include 'Javelin', 'Cobra Judy' and 'Tractor Eggs'

ESCAPE ARTIST



Lisa Harrison worked at numerous financial companies in the City before realising she wanted to combine her business skills with her love of design by starting her own company.

I STARTED MY career working for a number of consultancy practices within financial services including Deloitte, AT Kearney and Fidelity Investments. The role I had before leaving the City was with ICI where I was group head of employee benefits.

For a long time I'd wanted to set up my own business but the problem was that I wasn't sure what business to begin. I'd always been interested in design; I even took time out a few years ago to do a design course at Chelsea Art College. A few members of my family work within creative arts and one day it suddenly clicked: I could use my business skills to set up a company that promoted fine craftsmanship.

I knew I was going to leave the City when ICI was taken over by AkzoNobel. I felt that was a watershed moment; nothing compelled me to stay there any longer. I saw a few projects through, but I felt that it was a good time to move on and try something new.

The idea behind Miratis came from problems I had as a consumer. I was always interested in buying beautiful handmade items that I could cherish,

but as a busy professional I found that I never had the time to visit craft fairs or galleries to locate them. The internet didn't address the top-end of the market either and I found myself thinking more and more that I could fill that gap.

I had the idea to build an attractive, online shop where busy professionals could buy gifts knowing that they would be of the same high quality of something found at a gallery.

I found the move from a corporate world to setting up and running my own business to be really exciting. There has been a very steep learning curve but, luckily, I've had the support of some fantastic designers who work on the site and who have been a great help. There were times when the decisions to leave the City seemed frightening but since I've done it I've not regretted it at all; the challenge of starting my own company has been great. I particularly enjoy the sense of empowerment that running your own business brings.

The only thing I sometimes miss about the City is the excitement that a fast-paced corporate environment can bring – but the challenge of running Miratis with the aim of developing it into a successful high-profile website brings more than enough excitement as recompense. ■ –Matt Huckle

Lisa Harrison is the founder and owner of luxury design website miratis.com

City in Words

Stress Testing (phrase)

Regulatory procedure in which bank staff are subjected to humiliating trials to justify high remuneration. Trials include being force-fed the entire Basel III consultative paper, racing micro-scooters through the Royal Exchange while being towel-whipped by members of the Monetary Policy Committee and salsa dancing with George Osborne.