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HOMA DESIGN MAGAZINE



#4

Issue No. 4
April 2024
September 2024

Homa

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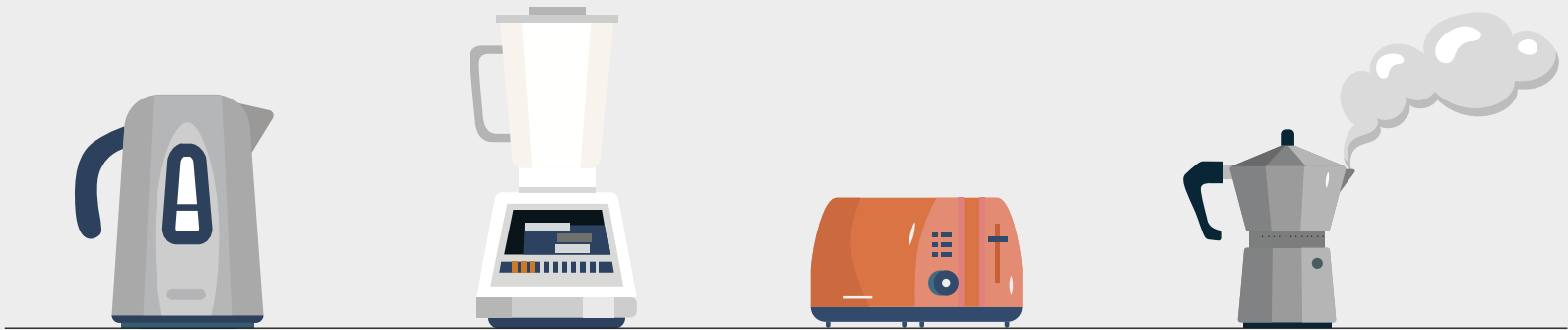
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The past and present of small domestic appliances



DM traced some of the most significant milestones in the technological and design evolution that led to the creation of some small kitchen appliances that became indispensable in the ritual of breakfast, but not only.

Going through the motions of breakfast is a true ritual cherished by millions of people every day. The long love story they have with this moment of the day is made up of food, drinks, but also of gestures and the use of appliances which today are considered indispensable to say the least. Like turning on the espresso machine or loading the moka or boiler to prepare tea, even toasting bread and juicing fruit. These daily electronic allies that surround us and make this ritual perhaps a little faster, but certainly more convenient, have evolved over time. Of course, change did not happen all at once; evolution is linked to mechanical innovations first, then to technological and electronic ones. Not to mention the use of materials and their design. What did the first electric juicers look like? How did we get to the hyper-technological espresso machines of today? What did toasters look like a hundred years ago? DM has traced back the history of the most iconic small appliances. Follow us on this exciting historical journey.

THE KETTLE

What is there to improve in a robust container that just heats water? Apparently nothing, yet inventors and engineers have been striving for centuries to equip it with contraptions capable of increasing its boiling speed, insulation, heat resistance, up to the automatic management of the “shut-off” function.

The kettle is traditionally understood as a container dedicated to heating tea only from the mid-1700s, when the British East India Company began to trade directly with China, focusing on tea imports. Tea became more widely available and therefore more popular and affordable for all social classes. This also fostered the emergence of a kettle specifically dedicated to this beverage: it was made of copper, a durable, ductile, and excellent heat conducting material. It quickly became common sight in the homes of wealthier British families. In most working-class families, kettles were made of cast iron or enamel.

The first attempts at creating an electric kettle began in the early 1890s. In 1891, American company Carpenter Electric launched its first electric kettle. Two years later, it was the turn of English Crompton & Co. Both kettles had a heating element placed in a separate compartment and took more than ten minutes to boil water. The problem was solved in 1922 by Arthur Leslie Large, an engineer from Birmingham, in the United Kingdom, who worked for Bulpitt & Sons. He invented a kettle containing a submersible electric heating element. It was marketed under the Swan brand.

The invention of the whistling kettle is commonly attributed to Londoner Harry Bramson, who sold the patent in 1923. This type of kettle has a device that whistles once the water inside reaches boiling point.

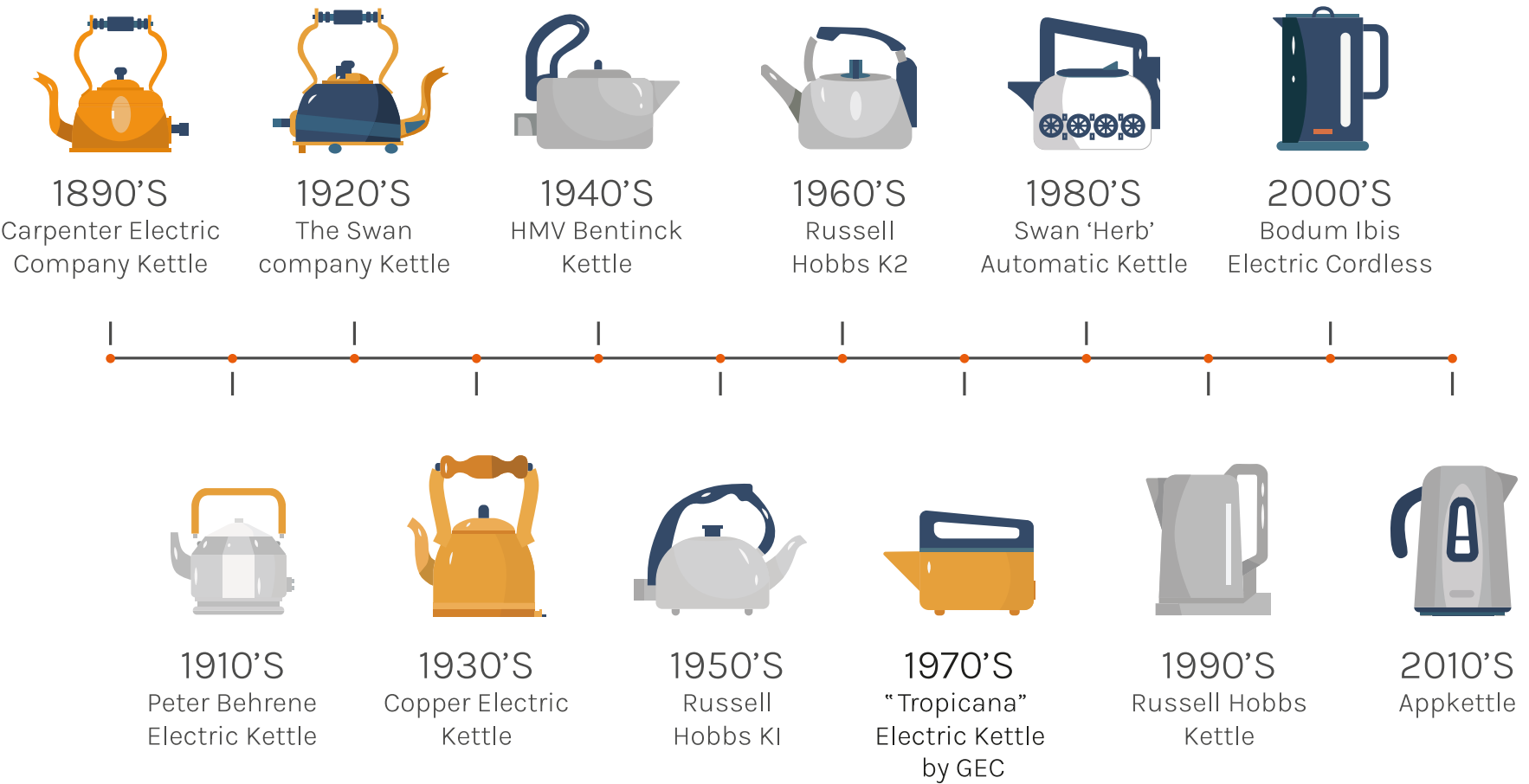
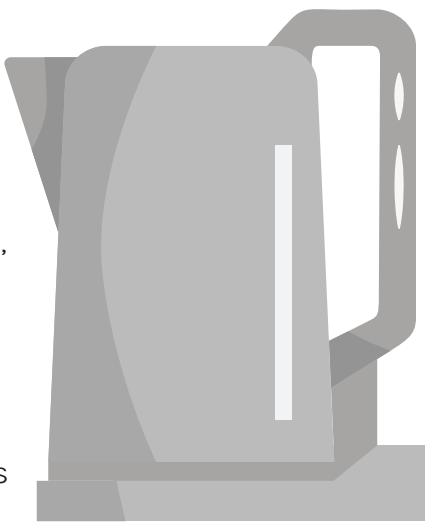
The steam pushing through the device creates a vibration, which then produces a sound.

In 1955, William Russell and Peter Hobbs, founders of British small appliance company Russell Hobbs, launched the K1, the first fully automatic electric kettle. Thanks to the use of a thermostat, it would automatically switch off the kettle once the water reached boiling point. This product marked the evolution of the product also in terms of design as it replaced iron and brass with stainless steel.

A few years later, in 1960, they updated the design and introduced the K2 model: the technology was the same but boasted a sleek, more elegant design, and was finished in polished chrome.

Since then, Russell Hobbs has continued to innovate, creating the first cordless kettle, the first 360-degree swivel base, and rapid boiling. In 1992, BODUM, a Danish company, introduced the cordless electric kettle Ibis to the market.

Modern kettles are made with a thermoplastic casing and thermoplastic handles. The transition from metal to plastic provided several advantages: besides reducing development costs, they are lighter, more airtight, see-through to check water level, and better insulated.

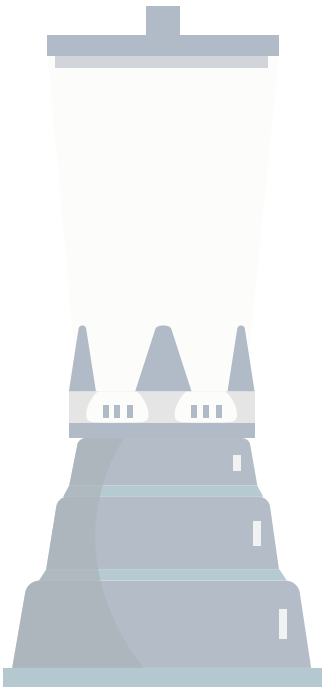


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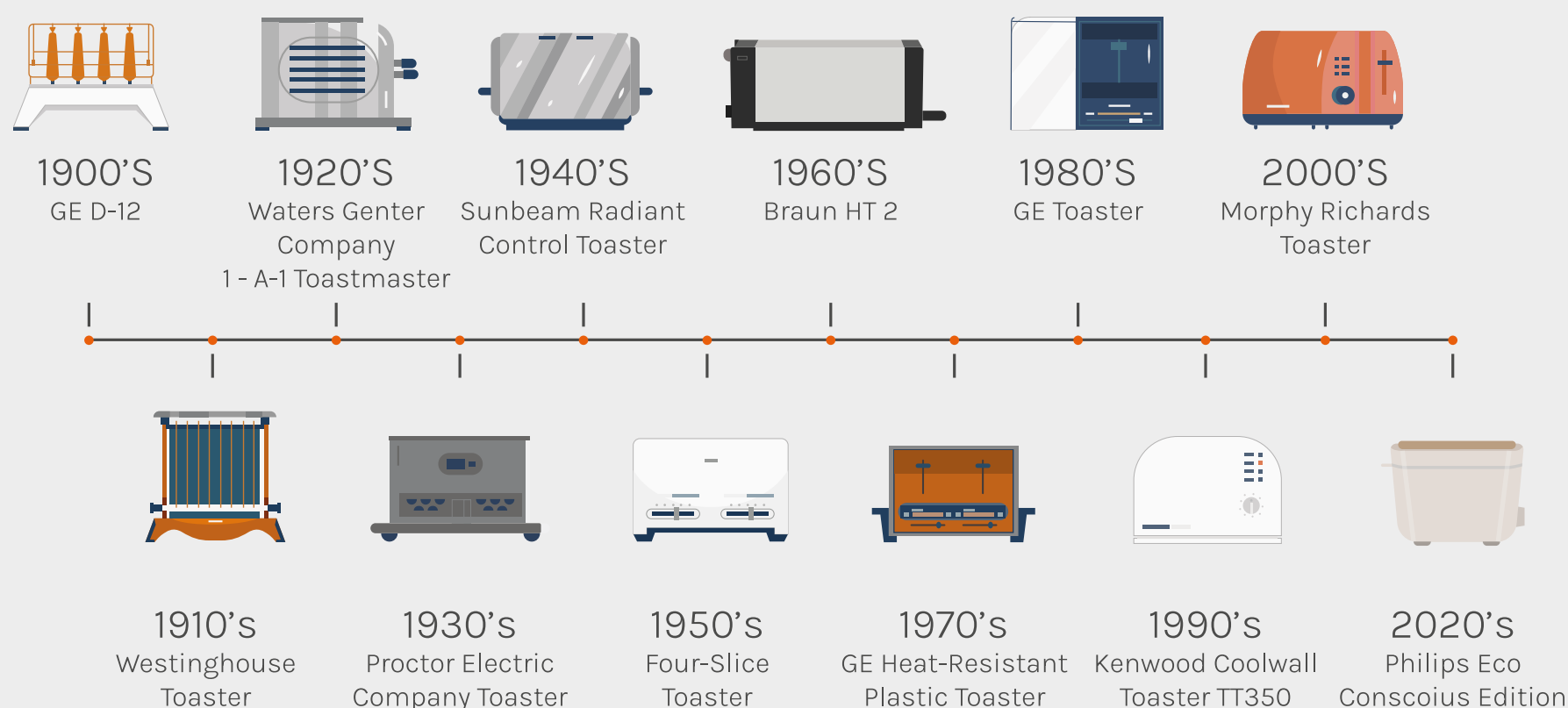
THE BLENDER

In 1922, Stephen J. Poplawski, a Polish-American chemist and owner of Stevens Electric, patented a mixer equipped with a rotating blade at the bottom of a large receptacle. He had invented the product three years earlier to facilitate the preparation of malted milkshakes, known as Horlicks (a popular hot beverage in Anglo-Saxon countries). Before his creation, mincing and chopping were done by hand only, with a mortar and pestle. In the 1930s, Louis Hamilton, Chester Beach, and Frederick Jacob Osius produced Poplawski's invention under the Hamilton Beach Company brand. Fred Osius was an inventor and improved the appliance, creating another type of blender. He approached Fred Waring, a popular musician but also a dreamer with an engineering degree, who funded and promoted the "Miracle Mixer," released in 1933. However, the appliance had some issues with the seal of the jar and the blade shaft, so Fred Waring redesigned the appliance, and in 1937, he launched his blender, the Waring Blendor, which became widely used in public venues, bars, and restaurants. It became popular in households as well, thanks to the advent of television, where a 30-minute commercial dedicated to the blender aired in 1949. By 1954, it had sold one million units. In 1937, William Grover Barnard, founder of Vitamix, introduced a product called "The Blender," a reinforced blender with a stainless steel container replacing the Pyrex glass jar used by Waring. In 1946, John Oster, owner of barber supplies company

John Oster Manufacturing, acquired Stevens Electric and designed his own blender, marketed under the Osterizer brand. It was the first blender suitable for everyday use for the preparation of meals. In Europe, the popularity of household appliances grew significantly between 1930 and 1970, especially in Northern Europe where brands like AEG, Electrolux, Siemens, Braun, and Philips were well established, and to a considerable extent also in England and France. In 1943, Swiss entrepreneur Traugott Oertli launched the Turmix Standmixer blender, revisiting Waring's design. After WWII, several companies offered different models of blenders. The first to do so was German company Electrostar, with its Starmix Standmixer (1948). The product had numerous accessories (coffee grinder, cake mixer, ice cream maker, food processor, thermos jug, milk centrifuge, juicer, and meat grinder). In 1950, Max Braun launched the Braun Multimix, featuring a glass bowl for making batter bread and a juicer, similar to the one developed by Turmix.



THE TOASTER



Toasting, presumably invented as a method to extend the life of bread, was very common even in Roman times (“tostum”, Latin for “rosted/toasted”). Their toasted bread was highly appreciated by the English, who introduced it to the Americas when they crossed the Atlantic ocean. It is precisely in the United States, in the early 1900s, that the first electric toaster was marketed. It was the D-12 model, patented by Frank Shailo, launched by General Electric for domestic use. Unfortunately, the toaster only toasted your slice of bread one side at a time and required manual turning off when the toast seemed ready. However, the compact size and manoeuvrability of the product ensured its success with the public and fostered the development of similar contraptions. In 1914, Westinghouse introduced its own version of the toaster, and in 1915, the Copeman Electric Stove Company added an “automatic bread turner” to its toaster. However, it was with the Toastmaster 1A1, invented in 1926 by Charles Strite, that this small household appliance achieved worldwide success. The device was accompanied by the slogan “You don’t have to watch it, the toast doesn’t burn”. Unlike competitors’ models, it was equipped with an adjustable timer and a spring mechanism that ensured the toast would be automatically ejected when time was up. Although it wasn’t cheap, Toastmaster was a global success right from its launch. About 1.2 million units were sold each year throughout the 1930s. However, what boosted its popularity and made it a familiar sight in every household was the commercial sale of pre-sliced bread: it began in 1928 with the Chillicothe Baking Company of Chillicothe, Missouri,

selling “Kleen Maid Sliced Bread,” and was further popularised by Wonder Bread. In terms of design, the early toasters imitated small items of furniture. In the 1930s, they replicated the Art Deco style of buildings, while in the 1940s and 1950s, their aesthetics evoked the streamlining of the automotive industry. The evolution of its design progressed hand in hand with technology advancements. In 1947, Kenneth Wood invented the electric toaster that did both sides of your toast at a time, and a few years later, some models were capable of calculating the exact toasting time. By the 1960s, toasters were in every household and had become a commodity. From the 1970s, they started featuring wider slots, and had the ability to toast up to six slices of bread, while using heat-resistant plastics for the casing. Millennial toasters have microchips assisting in various sophisticated functionalities, including defrosting and warming croissants, bagels, and muffins. The latest models are constructed entirely from bioplastics, reflecting a commitment to environmental consciousness.



THE JUICER

The history of electric juicers traces back to the early, simple manual models, typically crafted from wood. Between the 19th and 20th Centuries, there was a boom of patents for their mechanisation. The mechanical principles varied, but essentially they all described systems that applied direct pressure on the lemon, or orange, without rotation. They differed only in the means used to achieve this effect, which most often involved levers or pressure of some kind.

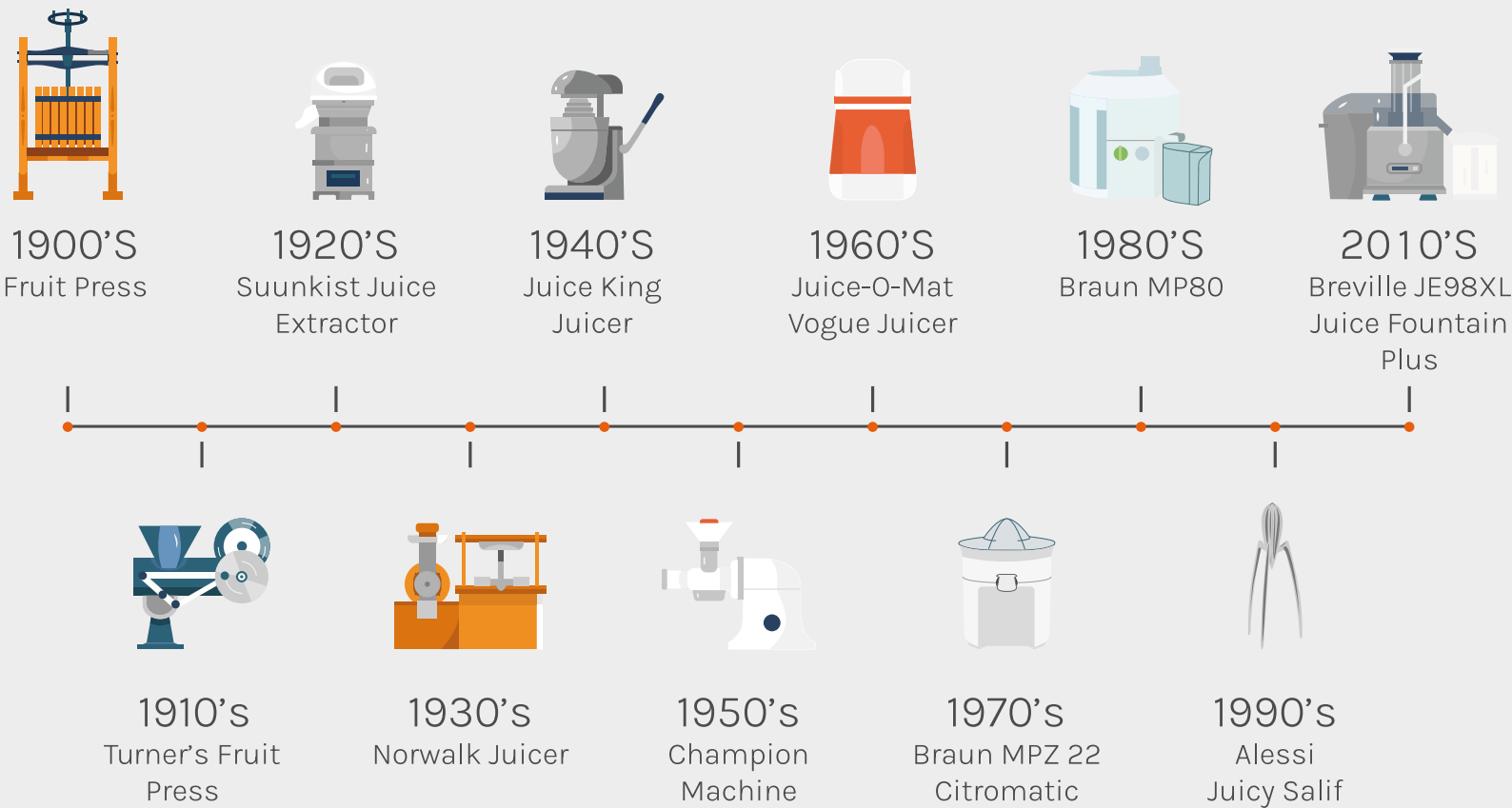
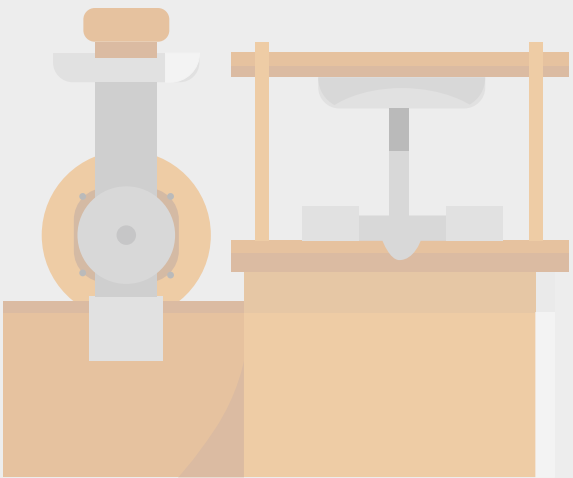
Among the pioneers of the modern juicer, Joseph L. Fuchs, an American of German origin, who applied for a patent as early as 1925, and Norman Walker, a British businessman, scholar of nutritional health, and an advocate of the vegetarian movement. Based on his studies, conducted in the 1930s, Walker invented the Norwalk Juicer, still on the market today. The machine was large but effective: it first grated and squeezed fruits and vegetables, then pressed the pulp in a linen bag using a hydraulic press.

In the mid-1950s, the first “masticating” juicer was invented, yet the high speed of the rotating shaft was excessive and caused friction, heating, and the destruction of live enzymes and other nutrients. Since then, it has undergone many design improvements and is probably the most widespread and successful model today. The universal adoption of juicers occurred in the 1960s thanks to the production of more efficient devices in terms of juice extraction, with less physical effort. In the 1990s, designers shifted to double-gear systems, eliminating overheating and preserving nutrient-rich juices.

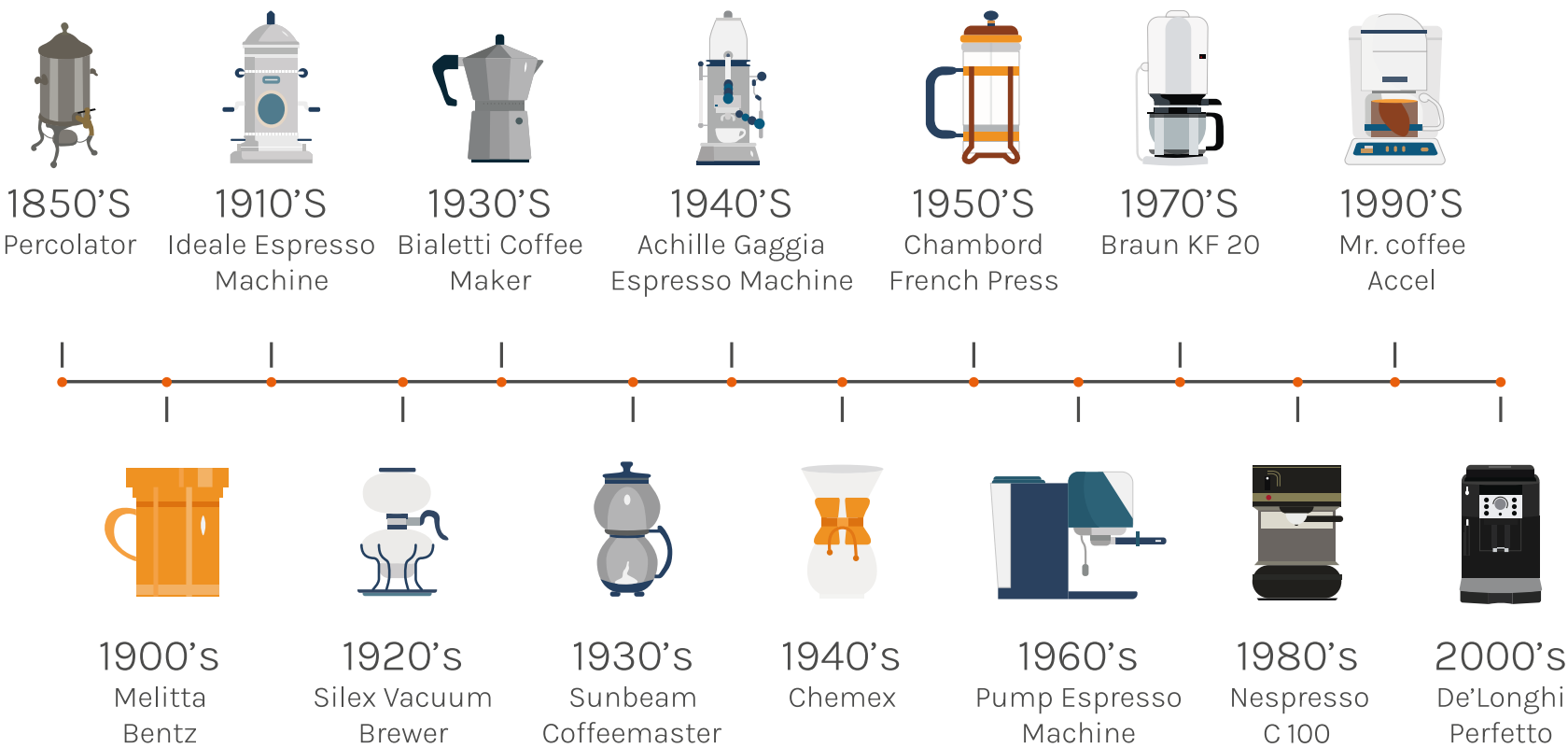
Among the most iconic products in terms of design, the Braun MPZ 22 electric juicer, better known as Citromatic, designed by Jürgen Greubel and Dieter Rams in 1972, deserves to be mentioned. This device

embodied the second of the ten principles of good design as postulated by Rams: it says “A product is bought to be used. It must satisfy not only functional but also psychological and aesthetic criteria. Good design emphasises the usefulness of a product while disregarding anything that could detract from its functionality.” For decades, Citromatic has been one of the most ubiquitous products in kitchens, and its original design was eventually and only slightly modified by Braun after more than twenty years.

The most iconic juicer of all time, and also the one that sparked most discussions, is undoubtedly the Juicy Salif, designed by Philippe Starck for Alessi. Made of die-cast aluminum with a polished effect, it features curvy forms composed of a central body from which three long legs extend. Since its launch in 1990, it has become part of the collections of nearly twenty museums worldwide, including NYC’s MoMA and Centre Pompidou in Paris. Not to mention its featuring in various films, TV series, and numerous book covers. Born out of Starck’s imagination while squeezing a lemon on a dish of calamari during a vacation in Capraia, in the Tuscan archipelago, it is indeed one of the objects that garnered the most attention worldwide. According to the designer himself, its primary function was to generate curiosity and stimulate conversations.



COFFEE MAKER



The preparation of coffee is a centuries-old affair, starting with the use of infusion and brewing techniques. Coffee grounds were submerged in hot water or boiled to extract the aroma for a cup of coffee. But it was only in 1884 that the first espresso machine came about, transforming the processes of home and commercial preparation of coffee with new specialties like espresso or cappuccino.

Before **1865**, coffee was obtained using the coffee percolator. That year, American James Mason filed the first patent for a machine that, placed on the stove, allowed the coffee to be infused “by gravity”, continuously passing boiling water through the ground beans until the desired intensity was reached. However, it had the defect of producing beverages with a bitter taste.

1884
Angelo Moriondo invents the first espresso coffee machine. His invention was patented and used for the first time at the General Exhibition in Turin. The machine was not marketed; Moriondo handcrafted only a few units and used them in his commercial establishments.

Luigi Bezzera patented a commercial version of the espresso coffee machine in **1901**, and later sold the patent to Desiderio Pavoni, who, began mass production.

1908
In Germany, Melitta Bentz invents the first drip coffeemaker using a paper

filter for brewing. This coffeemaker revolutionised the way coffee was prepared by eliminating manual labour and automating the brewing process using a filter basket filled with ground coffee and hot water pumped from a water tank.

1929
Italian designer Attilio Calimani patents a more advanced version of the plunger coffee maker. This filtration system, better known as the French press, was patented in France in 1852 by Meyer and Delforge. This initial version consisted of a cylindrical container and a plunger attached to the lid equipped with a perforated tin filter and flannel discs. The “Italian” version was further perfected by Bruno Cassol and Melior. The French press allowed for both hot and cold extraction.

1933
Birth of the moka pot, patented by Alfonso Bialetti along with Italian inventor Luigi de Ponti. The Italian entrepreneur wanted to create a lightweight and inexpensive coffee machine. He was inspired by observing some women doing laundry with the “lisciveuse”.

1948
Achille Gaggia introduces the lever espresso machine based on the use of water instead of steam.

1961
Italian company Faema takes a further step forward by launching its own pump-driven espresso machine, powered by a motorised pump instead of physical force. The design of this machine has become the standard for coffee production worldwide.

1986
Swiss company Nespresso revolutionises the market with the single-serve coffee machine. The first model (C-100) was reminiscent of the shapes of espresso machines used in bars, while initially there were only five blends available.

2000s
The use of electronics makes espresso machines increasingly sophisticated and intuitive. Technology advances affect all the main elements characterising a coffee machine: from the design of the machines to the level of automation, from function control to energy-saving performance.

Current automatic models are able to independently manage the entire coffee preparation process: from grinding the beans to making various coffee-based drinks, preparing all milk-based drinks, and providing hot water for steeping tea and infusions.



INTERIOR DESIGN:

The so-called “quiet luxury” is set to dictate a turning point in how homes are furnished, leading to further emphasis on trends such as customisation and green living, and contributing to opening the doors to new shapes (curves will be all the jazz) and the return of “old” materials. Driving this trend is a growing focus on people’s needs and “living” over design for its own sake.



CONTAMINATIONS

In the post-pandemic era, the boundaries between home, work, and leisure have overlapped. This is quickly leading to a blending of residential and outdoor spaces, starting with the hospitality industry. In response to a growing demand in that sense, interior designers will be increasingly compelled to offer bathrooms reminiscent of spas and to incorporate patios or utility spaces such as laundries or pantries in their work, as well as drawing inspiration for their projects from the most innovative hotels, restaurants, and hip stores.



QUIET LUXURY

Strict Minimalism has run its course and with it the aseptic, almost sterile environments it professes, making way for solutions that express personality, first and foremost that of those who inhabit the house, but with a discreet touch. The same goes for click-baiting, grandiose showiness, yielding the floor to the sophistication of a luxury defined as “quiet”, with spaces built around high-quality furniture pieces that have a soul and are designed to stand the test of time while staying iconic. Timeless pieces, with predominantly classic lines and materials. For some, also a smart form of investment, but even more so, true catalysts of the character one wants to express.



GREEN LIFE

Eco-conscious interior design takes center stage. Biophilic, i.e. nature-inspired elements, sustainable and recyclable architectural solutions and materials, a pervasive sense of connection with nature, and natural lighting solutions will bring the environment into the home, along with a focus on our impact on the planet. A path that is increasingly unavoidable and concrete, less superficial, not only for the younger generations.



WALLS ARE NOT THE ENEMY

If the open space concept has dominated for years, today people are looking for more intimacy, expressing a need to have their personal space. Therefore, house floor plans will see more walls, smaller spaces and rooms tailored to their different hobbies and needs, such as reading, music, fitness, and fewer vast expanses of empty space in which to lose oneself. All in favour of a welcoming and fluid partitioning, and of flexible and multifunctional spaces.



TAILOR MADE

Customisation is becoming a central pillar of interior design, a direct expression of people’s need to be increasingly recognised as unique individuals. The home must reflect the story and tastes of those who live in it, and their lifestyle, starting from the design of the space itself, to the selection of accessories and furniture capable of conveying a specific personality. The presence of objects and craftsmanship typical of the local area and its artisanal excellences is a must. The world is increasingly saturated with mass-produced goods, and designers are now aiming to break this standardisation by rediscovering the beauty of handmade, vintage objects, and those belonging to the family history of their clients.



THE RISE OF OUTDOOR LIFE

The boundaries between indoor and outdoor living will become increasingly blurred. Outdoor spaces are gaining importance, along with solutions aimed at bringing the comfort and aesthetics of interior design outside the house. From rugs to furniture, from cushions to weather-resistant fabrics, to gazebos and outdoor appliances, they make the distinction between the living room and the patio - or simply the terrace - ever more fluid. A constant call to relaxation and leisure that catches the desire to spend more time outdoors.



CURVES GALORE

We will witness the emergence of curved shapes everywhere, from furniture to walls, to lamps, as the heralds of an era of softer, more fluid furnishings. Sinuous solutions, sometimes almost sculptural, capable of making spaces more welcoming and giving them a functional yet modern and distinctive touch.



SAY GOOD BYE TO MONOCHROME

Colour combinations in two, three or even four shades signal the decline of monochrome, especially of total white, which, although timeless, has lost its allure in favour of bold colour combinations. Hence, splashes of colour are joyfully appearing in our interiors, with the trendiest tones of blue, brown, and red leading the pack, along with softer hues like mustard and olive. The goal is to give personality and character to living spaces, lending them a lively, nostalgic, pop or romantic atmosphere depending on the case.



MARBLE IS BACK, IN GOOD COMPANY

After wallpaper, the return of marble and glass tiles from the 80s and 90s will emerge, to be used for floors and walls, but also to coat furniture, though for a warmer and more welcoming touch, here's wood coverings and woods like shou sugi ban and smoked oak for you. In general, darker shades will become more popular in furniture, but not only. Also, after gold and brass, chrome, steel, and aluminum will be increasingly present in shiny or brushed solutions to embellish decorative elements, surfaces such as kitchen counter-tops, and coverings, from fireplaces to columns. However, the dominant imprint will not be industrial, but rather glam and lavish.



SMART, OR RATHER INTELLIGENT

There is no doubt artificial intelligence will continue to revolutionise the way we live, including how we experience life at home, and not just in the design aspect. AI is already poised to take over our homes starting from appliances, lighting systems, heating, and security, improving comfort and efficiency and making our lives easier, not only by automatically turning off lights or the irrigation system but also by suggesting recipes to avoid wasting food.



STONE ON STONE, WITH A PINCH OF CREATIVITY

Tone-on-tone decorations will continue to dominate, confirming how overlaying a single shade within a space or throughout the entire home is an art form. A trend that now also enters the domestic walls under the name of "milk dressing", the total look concept skilfully blending all the nuances of milk and coffee, which is already gaining popularity in the swanky urban wardrobes around the world.

TRENDS GOING HYPE IN 2024



Interview

WHEN FUNCTION CREATES EMOTION

DM interviews Ludovica Serafini and Roberto Palomba, from Palomba & Serafini Associati, the humanist architects and designers who put the users' wellbeing at the center of their beautiful, inspiring universe.

Rituals hanging lamps series for Foscarini. In their 30 years career, Ludovica Serafini and Roberto Palomba's work have spun architecture, interior design and product design. The Rituals lamps, coming in various shapes and sizes and which can be installed in a variety of combinations, remind of Japan's traditional paper lanterns, with their warm and delicate light, yet are made of blown glass and lacquered metal.

Ludovica Serafini and Roberto Palomba have talked to DM about their design philosophy and approach to innovation. The story they are telling is that of a profound passion for their work and a clear cut vision about how architecture and design should first serve the wellbeing of the human kind, and start from the conceptualisation of the whole to then concentrate on meaningful, emotional and highly functional details.

What stands at the origin of your design vision, and how did it evolve over time?

Ludovica Serafini: The vision and awareness of the whole is the dominant concept that generates all of our projects, details then derive from that prospect. In life, it's very important to have a path to follow: when you're working on a project, you need to know exactly what your objectives are. From there your road is quite straightforward, yet it can be extremely winding and full of ambushes and crossroads. You must know exactly where you want to get to. The human being stands at the center of the vision of Studio Palomba & Serafini. There is nothing that we design that doesn't concern the human being, and it's wrong to design anything that doesn't have as an end the wellbeing of the individual. Our core belief is that "good architecture is that which makes the human being using it happy".

Is there an area of design that you prefer above all others? If so, for what reason?

Ludovica Serafini: No, we rely purely on chance to select projects: we let them come to us quite accidentally, so we don't really get to choose any particular field. We're like the sea, in the end all rivers come to us, and we just take what comes in.



What’s the difference between simply “filling” a space and “designing” it according to your conceptual vision?

Ludovica Serafini: None, it’s the same. Space is a void, it’s anonymous, as wonderful as it can be. It doesn’t have a real value until it’s occupied and used by a human being. The value comes when we make that space suited to our needs. Architectural space is like a book, it’s a shell, then you need a pen and you have to write the words in to fill the pages. You need to have some concept, though, for it to make sense. Space is the place that allows you to tell a story: it might become a hotel hall, or a non-place between two wings of a house for you to relax, but regardless of what that space becomes, it will come out of anonymity and start existing. Purpose is fundamental. Sometimes I find it difficult when clients tell me to “just throw in a couple of sofas in that corner”. Easy, right? Not at all! What’s the purpose, who needs to use that space? Where’s the entrance, how high is the ceiling? Is it a passageway? All these are fundamental questions for that space to be meaningful. When a space is well constructed, it’s like eating a piece of a delicious cake: it’s got flour, sugar, egg, milk, maybe vanilla, chocolate chips, yet once it comes out of the oven you can’t separate the individual ingredients, they’ve become a perfect whole. You’ve hit your objective, and you achieved it through planning and design.

“Anything that’s specialised and focussed is destined to fail, sooner or later, for it doesn’t leave space for contamination”

Ludovica Serafini

Serafini and Palomba’s house in Sogliano Cavour, near Lecce, in one of Italy’s southernmost regions. Some projects stayed in the heart of the architects, especially when the results matched all their expectations. This is also the only place where Ludovica Serafini indulges in cooking, a relaxing activity she compares to yoga and enjoys in the company of friends. The building was originally a 17th Century oil-mill, which they entirely refurbished, maintaining some of the most characterising elements such as the old vaults and walls.





The stunning simplicity of the restored 19th Century Palazzo Daniele in Gagliano del Capo at the tip of Italy’s “heel”. Breathtaking interiors transport the guests of what is now a 9 bedrooms luxury hotel into a world of beauty, art and history, where the ancient and the ultra-modern coexist seamlessly. The Palazzo Daniele project received the AHEAD award for Hospitality Experience and Design in 2018.

Are there any projects that didn’t go the way you wanted?

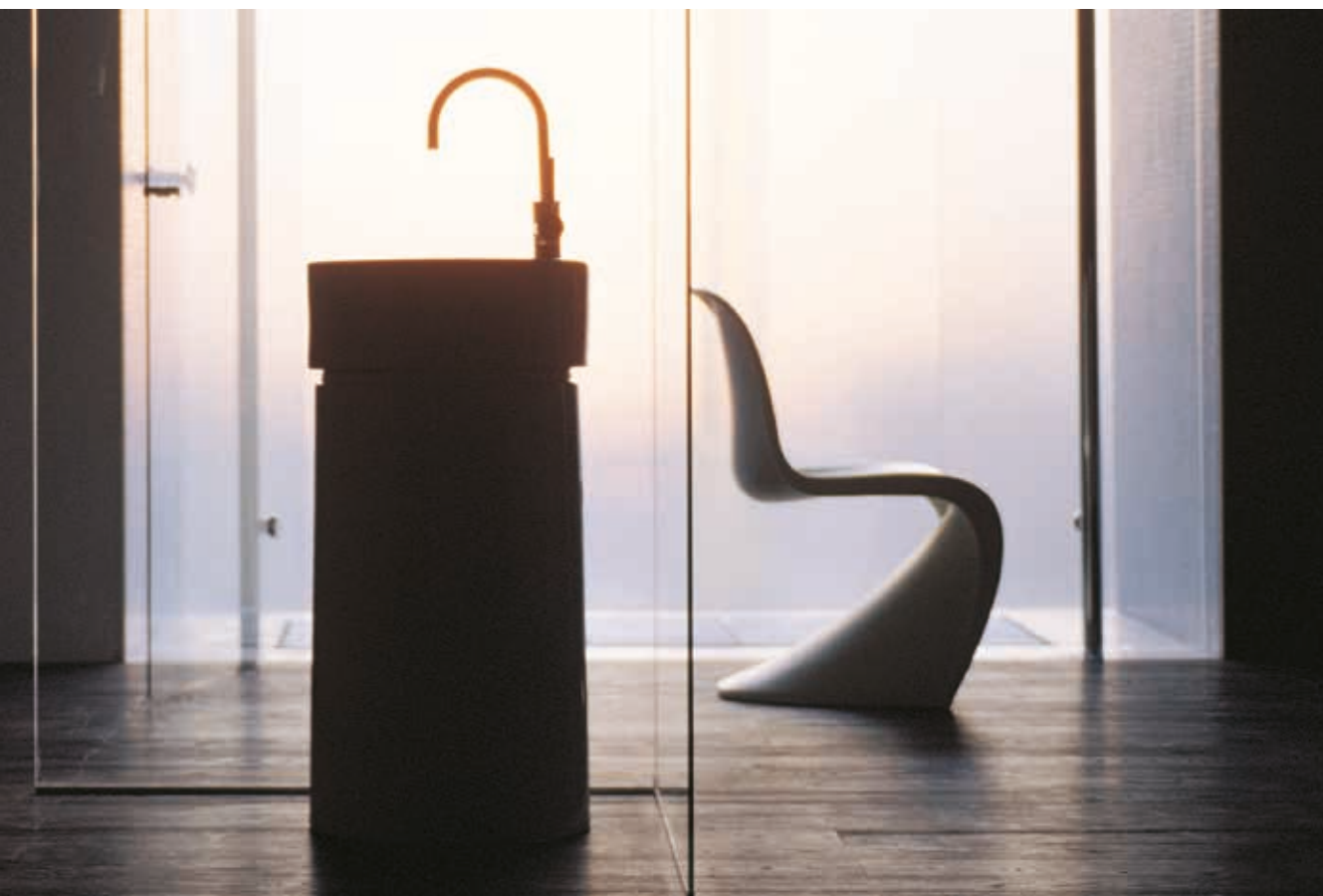
Ludovica Serafini: Yes, certainly. Making mistakes is part of the human condition, otherwise we’d all be gods. Putting a remedy to those errors is what it’s all about: 50% of our creativity is about rectifying mistakes. There’s a word that I really dislike, though: problem. Many things can happen in life, but none of these are a problem, they just happen, instead there are lots of solutions. Of course, if you get the design of a chair wrong, you just throw it away, but when that happens with an entire building, it’s somehow more difficult, so you need a great deal of humility in approaching any project.

Is there a project in particular that best incarnates this vision?

Ludovica Serafini: All children are equally loved by their parents. Some time ago we did this charming little guesthouse here in Milan. It was adorable. When the owner, a friend of ours, called to tell me he was selling it, I lost my sleep over it for a month. But yes, there are certain projects I found more interesting than others, like my house in Sogliano. The results exactly matched the objectives I had set myself. There also was Palazzo Daniele, where the collaboration with the owner was marvellous. We managed to do something really interesting, full of innovations, but in a simple manner. Simplicity doesn’t need to be shouted, it expresses itself quietly. This all creates a wealth of experience that can be used in future projects. The boat project, too, I found very interesting, although it remained on paper. We were asked to provide a concept for a yacht. My initial idea was that I wanted a proper house, but one that would lay in the water. I started off with the typical sketch of a house, like the ones children draw, with a pointed roof, windows and everything, and I sat it into the sea. This was the first yacht with a domestic, homey aesthetic. There were large, proper full height windows like the ones in a loft. Yachts traditionally have cabins, with narrow windows, and you lose every perception of the horizon and the outside world. Although it was never built, it set a new trend in the world of nautical design. Initially, we were told that “this design doesn’t belong to the nautical world”. That struck me, and I replied “there isn’t such a thing as a nautical world, there’s only a people’s world who loves the sea”. Anything that’s specialised and focussed is destined to fail, sooner or later, for it doesn’t leave space for contamination.

“By removing the superfluous, you achieve true durability, your creation will never become obsolete”

Ludovica Serafini



When in 1999 Ludovica Serafini designed a bathroom with mirrored walls, she did not want to drill holes in them, so she asked Roberto Palomba to design a freestanding sink that could sit in the middle of the room. The Twin Column for Flaminia was a groundbreaking innovation in the world of bathrooms, originating from the design of Palomba & Serafini's Twin collection of basins but with the particularity of being completely standalone.

By looking at your work and career, the term “moving essentiality” comes to mind. Do you recognise yourself in this description?

Ludovica Serafini: It's spot on. Our intention is to not-create a style, still we must have beautiful ideas, intelligent and respectful ones. We always try to work with local suppliers and materials. Our hotels are built with local materials, by local craftsmen who know best how to work with them. You must never lose sight of the location, of its purpose and meaning. When you get to the essence, and you can even be playful about it, you don't need to add anything. By removing the superfluous, you also achieve true durability, your creation will never become obsolete.

In your work, how do you strike the right balance between rationality, in the sense of technology, and emotion, in the sense of perceptions and feelings?

Ludovica Serafini: There is no contradiction in terms, something beautiful can be perfectly functional, and vice versa.

Roberto Palomba: I recently got into a discussion with a company who wanted me to work on the claim “design and performance”. I told them that design does indeed include performance. There is this basic misconception about design, whereas people think it only refers to the aesthetic element of an object. Design is not the aesthetic part of a project, design is the project in its entirety, and represents its value as a whole. As you said, it's a matter of balance, and we must ensure that neither of the two elements predominates at the expense of the other, and this comes with experience.

How do you reconcile product innovation and How would you define innovation?

Ludovica Serafini: Thirty years ago, I was designing a bathroom where I included mirrored walls. At the time Roberto was working on bathroom fixtures. I asked him to design a standalone sink for me. I needed to place it in the middle of the bathroom because I didn't want to drill holes in the walls. That's how the first freestanding sink was born. This is innovation, not technological innovation, but typological. By this I mean there are many kinds of innovation.

Roberto Palomba: As a studio, we have a certain inclination for typological innovation, this is kind of our hallmark, especially in the bathroom sector. I can say we've brought many innovations to this industry, not only in terms of products, but we contributed to evolve the entire market. Not only did we reinvent the wall-hung toilet by removing the side mountings and introducing the concept of a band “embracing” the object, we entirely redefined it by bringing it into the premium end of the market. Also, we broke the paradigm of the classic fixtures suite, whereas the toilet, bidet, sink and bathtub always came in a matching series. We designed individual products to be mixed and matched with other furniture elements, giving much greater freedom in the design of bathrooms. It was a true revolution. This idea of going beyond the single object, or typological innovation, cuts across our whole work, which is characterised by the concept of “meta-projects”, where design impacts and innovates entire sectors.

“Home interior is inviting itself into the kitchen”

Roberto Palomba



PlayGround, designed for Elmar, is a furnishing arrangement that adapts to numerous spatial solutions. An innovative approach adds new colour vibrations to the traditional modular kitchen, thanks to its geometric shapes and refined taste.

Moving on to another domestic space, the kitchen, how did your approach to this subject evolve over the years, especially in relation to the current trends in the field?

Ludovica Serafini: The trend today is to consider the kitchen as the center of the home, so it has become the center of domestic living. Alas it does so while maintaining the typical aesthetics of a kitchen. Why should I live in a kitchen environment? I'd rather have the aesthetics of the rest of the house come into the kitchen, and it's precisely what we're doing with one of our latest projects, developed for Elmar: making a kitchen domestic. Of course it keeps all of the technological features that belong to a kitchen, but it is characterised by certain proportions, by materials and furniture that have a strong connection with tradition. It was conceived as a display piece for our client's showroom, and the underlying theme we worked on is that of the metropolitan kitchen. Quite often, displays in showrooms have inflated proportions that don't correspond to the real spaces in actual houses. In this case we wanted to give a precise idea of what the kitchen truly would look like in a real home, and precisely in a city apartment. Still, the showroom is impressive and the kitchens on display are stunning while keeping real-life proportions, so details become very important. The message we are conveying here is that the home interior is inviting itself into the kitchen, which starts acquiring many characterising elements you would find in the rest of the home but which it normally lacks.

Roberto Palomba: I'd like to add that not enough is being done in that sense at university. While designers and architects receive impeccable formal training, they lack the capacity to see things from different perspectives. Worse, they seem to mistake innovation for “making it weird”. Professors, and even journalists encourage this attitude and tend to reward surprising and odd designs. As a lecturer I always tried to explain students that the real challenge was having the courage to look at things from a different perspective, to view the old with a fresh eye. It is important for new generation designers to understand this, otherwise there is a risk of stagnation, which will then require a revolution in order for this profession to survive. However, I prefer evolution to revolution, and changing our perspective is a good way to evolve.

“Food is culture, and our relationship with the kitchen derives from our culinary cultural background”

Roberto Palomba



What is your personal relationship with the kitchen, and cooking?

Roberto Palomba: I try and stay clear, since I'm always on a diet, yet recently I've started baking cakes which I then give away to friends. One of them recently moved to China, and he keeps posting photos of food on his social media. The relationship we have with food is changing. In one of the projects we did for a hotel, we had the public almost literally walking through their kitchen, with food and its preparation becoming a true entertainment piece. Also, food is culture, and our relationship with the kitchen derives from our cultural culinary background. The kitchen should be a cultivated space within the house, maybe with a library, a place where you can travel in your mind whilst preparing educated food.

Ludovica Serafini: I personally hate routines, anything that's repetitive and boring and that distracts me from my passion, architecture. In fact I never cook, I spend very little time in the kitchen, but I entertain a lot. I like having friends around, and we often prepare something simple on the spot. My true relationship with the kitchen is in Salento (one of Italy's most Southern regions and notoriously rich of culinary traditions, Ed.): to start with, when I'm there it means I'm not working, so the kitchen becomes the place for creativity, it's my own kind of yoga. Then it's positioned in such a peculiar way inside the house that when you start cooking you'll never find yourself alone, everybody comes along, so it becomes a hub for conviviality. We start discussing about the recipe being made, exchanging opinions, arguing at times. I like it, but it's not something I want to engage in every day.

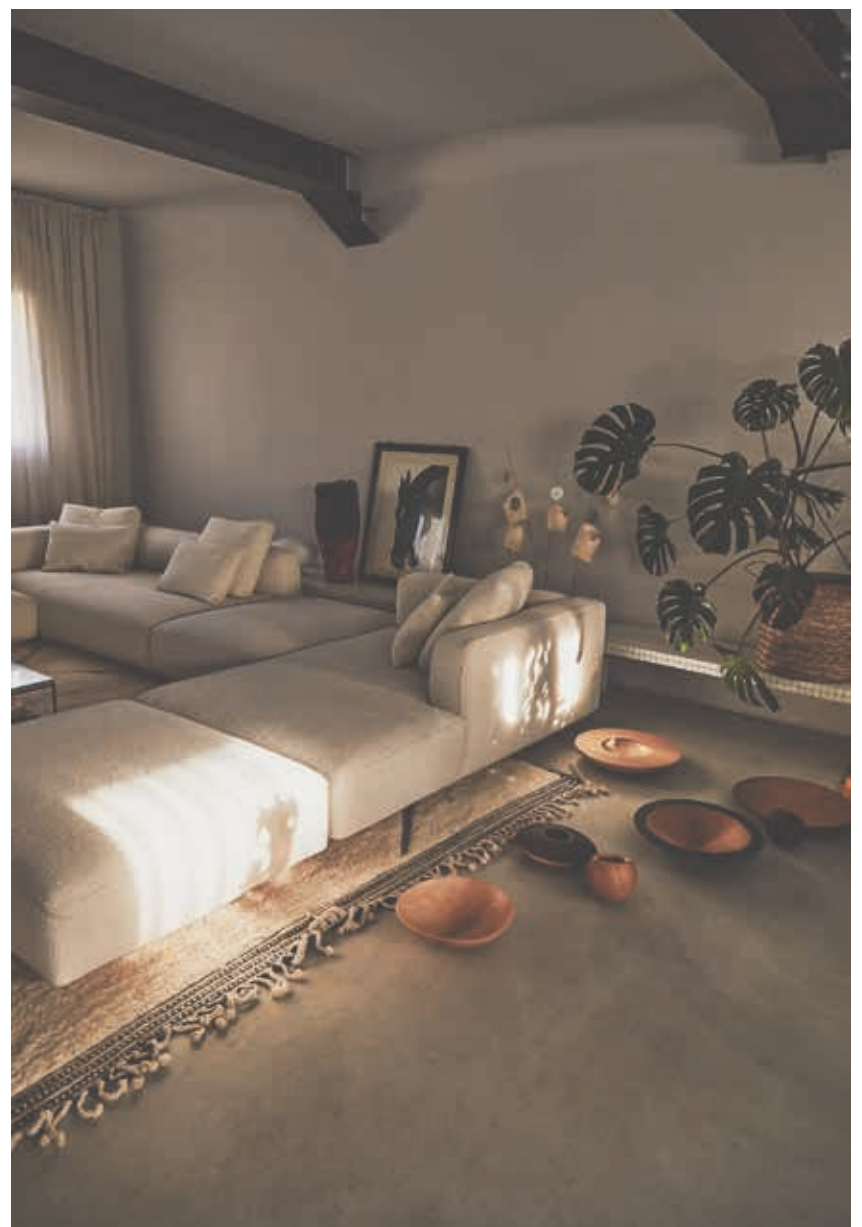
This kitchen was specifically designed for Elmar to be put on display in their showroom. It embodies the architects' vision of a "milanese kitchen", where, while being the beating heart of the home, it lets the home invite itself into the kitchen, in terms of materials, design and organisation of the space. Appliances are also given particular attention, with lights enhancing their lines and shining finishes."

In your ideal, educated kitchen, should appliances be visible or hidden?

It depends on whether we designed them!

Roberto Palomba: After recently starting to cook, I've come to realise that certain appliances can evoke affection, and even have a decorative value. Some of them have become iconic, almost erotic objects, and are put on display in trendy kitchens.

Ludovica Serafini: Appliances are central elements in a kitchen from many points of view, starting with that of the architects, but also of the users and their guests. They need to be easy and intuitive to use while being technologically advanced and complex. However, some of them consume far too much energy. Also, it's terribly confusing and complicated to find the right aesthetic to match that of your kitchen. If I were to design new appliances, I would want them to be customisable in terms of finishings, handles, materials, colours. This would be very interesting as it would open up numerous possibilities. Also, ease-of-use would be a priority, with them being totally intuitive.



The Pianoalto modular sofa designed for Zanotta in 2012, here in the own home of Palomba and Serafini. Its modularity enables numerous spatial arrangements playing on the interchange between the various upholstered elements and their different depths. The seating frame gives the sofa a suspended appearance thanks to the inward positioning of the feet and to the innovative camber of the upholstery guaranteeing exceptional ergonomic comfort.

Could you tell us about your most futuristic and forward-thinking project, the drone-house?

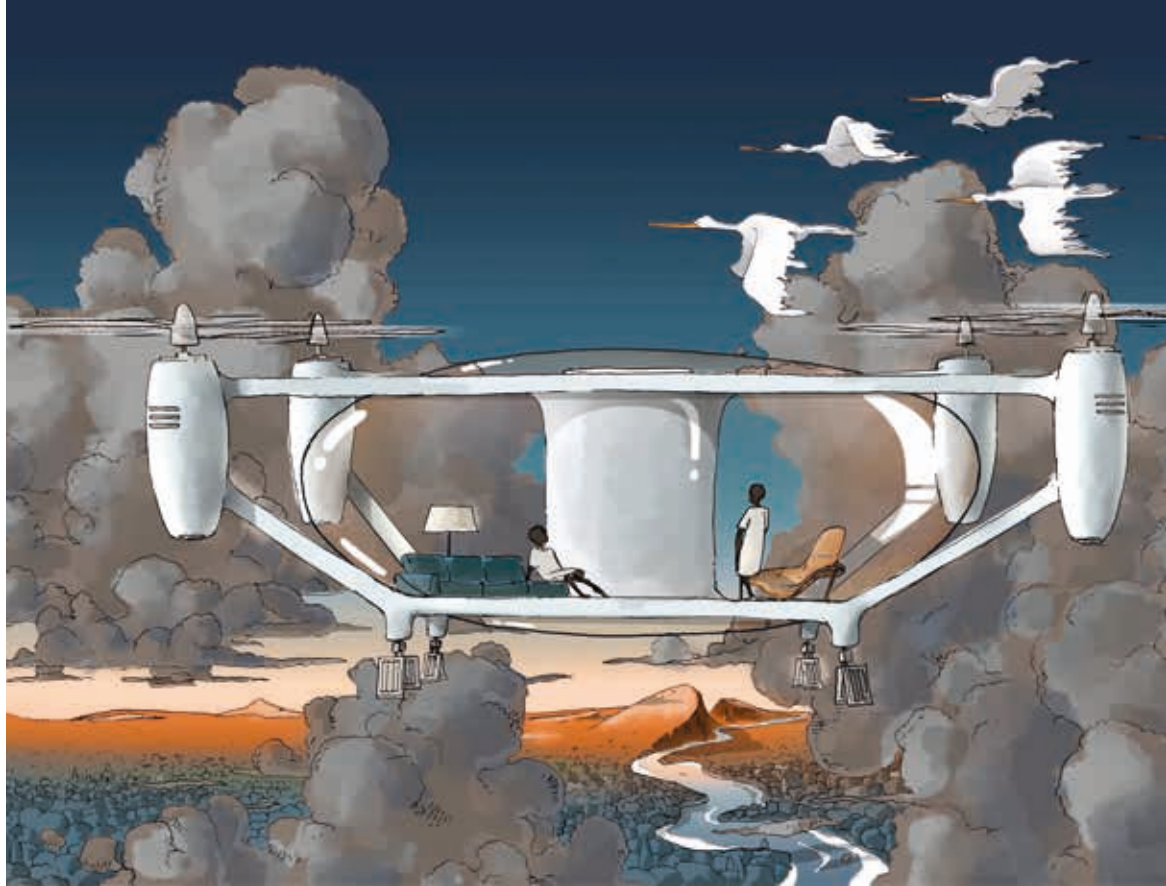
Ludovica Serafini: The idea of the drone-house originated from a series of reflections we made around the success of food delivery services. Architects are visionaries, and we started reasoning on what was really essential in a house for us to live in. Younger generations would tend to occupy the sofas, tending to their laptops, so no real need for tables or desks, and by that count chairs become superfluous, too. Sofas are comfortable, and one can sleep on them, so there goes the bedroom! Kitchen? Who needs a kitchen when you can have food conveniently delivered to you doorstep? In the end, if you go on drastically eliminating all the unnecessary parts, you're left with the bare essentials, i.e. the sofa, and a bathroom. All this is actually very light, so much so we might imagine it being flown around by a drone. You already have drones which can transport people, so why not a drone-house? You'd be able to stop over wherever you'd feel inspired, and send for food and supplies, in a sort of nomadic yet connected lifestyle. As a result, cities as we know them would cease to exist, disappearing altogether.

How do these extreme visionary concepts reflect in your current work?

Roberto Palomba: This meta-vision about the future introduces some extreme concepts which we have translated, through a different point of view, into a more traditional approach in some of our recent projects. Take, for instance, the walk-in closet in our house in Milan. Where do people normally have it? Right next to the bedroom, but purely out of convention. You see, the sense of comfort given by common habits and practices often makes you lose common sense. It makes much more sense to place it next to the main entrance. When we come in, we can take off our coats and change into our home clothes, and vice versa. This is only a small example, and the rest of the house is full of these ideas that originate from a deep examination of the real use one makes of a house and of its spaces.

You talked about bringing the domestic space into the kitchen. What about taking the kitchen out in the open air?

Roberto Palomba: We architects are great colonisers of space, and we certainly like to expand our work outside the home. Outdoor living started to become fashionable ever since textile producers started offering quality outdoor fabrics. The concept of outdoor changed radically in its perception, and so did the furniture. The same goes for the outdoor kitchen. Outdoor cooking is everybody's dream, you can unleash your creativity and attempt to cook stuff you'd never do indoors. The outdoor kitchen opens up an entire new perspective on food culture, which is very interesting.



Casa Drone was possibly one of the most futuristic projects of the Studio. A wonderful, imaginary exercise de style, it was born out of a profound reflection on the evolution of society during the long months of isolation of the Covid lockdown period. The house is stripped down to its bare essentials, since everything can now be ordered through the internet and delivered to one's doorstep. On the other hand, it can fly and take the drone-home dwellers haphazardly to wherever they feel happy to settle.

“The sense of comfort given by conventions often makes you lose common sense”

Roberto Palomba

BIO

Ludovica Serafini and **Roberto Palomba**, the visionary minds behind Studio Palomba & Serafini, have a shared passion for blending outstanding functionality and moving aesthetics, having the human being, the ultimate user of their creations, as the center of gravity of all their work. In their 30 years career, their internationally acclaimed and visionary projects have spun architecture, interior design, and product design.

Born and raised in Italy, Ludovica Serafini and Roberto Palomba both studied architecture at the University of Rome. After earning their degrees, they embarked on separate professional journeys before establishing Studio Palomba & Serafini in Milan in 1994.

Drawing from their profound knowledge of design culture and history, they set out to redefine contemporary design. Their collaborative approach, marked by a deep appreciation for craftsmanship and attention to detail, combines a contemporary vision of society's lifestyles with users' needs and aspirations, resulting in a diverse portfolio of projects that captivate and inspire.

With a commitment to creating spaces that resonate with emotion and essential authenticity, with a particular sensitivity towards function and the longevity of their products, Ludovica Serafini and Roberto Palomba continue to influence the world of design through their personal approach to innovation.

palombaserafini.com

DESIGN AND DIGNITY

An interview with Nigerian-Canadian designer Lani Adeoye, winner of Milan's 2022 Salone Satellite Design Award.



Interview

DM asked the internationally acclaimed, Lagos and NYC based designer about her work philosophy, inspired by the desire to connect and act on the empathy she feels with the world around her. A firm believer in cross-cultural collaboration, in this captivating interview she reveals how feelings and emotions play an important role in her work, all the more so when designing functional objects. Adeoye also shares some personal, inspiring reflections on food, appliances and kitchens, which she conceives as the heart of the home.



“RemX was named after my grandfather, Remi. I wanted to design something that had a sense of dignity, something that wouldn’t remind him of his condition.”

The RemX walker, named after Adeoye’s own grandfather, won the Nigerian Canadian designer the 2023 Salone Satellite award. Functionality mixes with a sense of beauty and dignity as traditional colours and materials stand out in a beautiful object that can be mistaken for an art piece.

Your work, spanning interior design, wearables, furniture and medical devices, seems to be driven by a sense of melody and rhythm. Do you recognise yourself in this?

Very much so. As a designer, I am motivated by connection, and empathy. I am not particularly driven by a specific product category. A lot of it has to do with things that are going on in the community. There’s the artistic, but also the problem-solving nature, so I’m responding to things that I am observing.

You won a prestigious international award, among many others, for a medical assistance device, a walker. How did you come about entering this field, and would you define your work as inclusive design?

I’d definitely go with that. During Covid I was thinking about the idea of our future selves, and reflecting on the universality of us all getting older. Also, at the time I was spending a lot of time helping to take care of my grandfather in Nigeria, and I was seeing how he was psychologically impacted by the various changes in his life, like his mobility.

We bought him things to walk better, like a walking stick or a walker, and a wheelchair at one point. They all looked so clinical, so cold, he was embarrassed and wouldn’t take them to certain places, or he’d hide them. I started to think there was more to this, in terms of purposeful aesthetics. That these assistance devices should do more than just their utilitarian function.

I wanted to design something that had a sense of dignity, something that wouldn’t remind my grandfather of his condition. Also, something a bit ambiguous, which you wouldn’t know whether it’s a sculpture or a piece of furniture. To the point that when I brought it to Milan, I thought to myself “they’re not gonna know what this is!” The response was overwhelming, and we’re looking forward to collaborating with the right people to make sure it goes through rigorous prototyping and testing before bringing it to the market.



SISI EKO Lamp by Studio Lani



In your opinion, how did interior and furniture design evolve in recent years?

I think that, especially with the internet and social media, we're all so interconnected. Also, people are travelling more, so there's a lot more exposure to what's going on in other parts of the world. I teach at Parsons in New York, and interestingly enough I teach a class called "Hybrid Design", which is a lot about merging different sectors. The academic world is realising how much overlap there is in the work of designers, and that's very much how I function, how I practice. For what concerns interiors, and products, too, there's a lot of cross-cultural learning and exchange happening. There's so much we can learn from each other, and I want to engage more in that.

Your chairs, stools and tables are for the most part made of natural materials. Is that a deliberate choice with sustainability in mind?

Yes, it's very much motivated by sustainability. Also, having grown up in Nigeria, I wanted to show the possibilities of using local materials and production techniques. I wanted to explore contemporary language in furniture design, too. When Nigerians or other Africans see my pieces it's quite nice to see them catch something that's familiar but then see it in a different way. There's that sort of duality.

Are the names of your creations linked to any particular language? Do they have a meaning?

Definitely, I design things I feel connected to, which I hope to say something with. For example, the walker is named after my grandfather: his name is Remi, and the walker is called RemX. The "X" was added just to give it a little tech touch. The collection I presented in Milan, is called Ekaabo. In the Yoruba language - the tribe I'm from in Nigeria - it means "welcome". It was inspired by the West-African hospitality and warmth, which reflect in the shapes, the colours and the materials. If you ever go to a Nigerian home, they will overwhelm you with warmth! They will feed you, they will take care of you, pamper you in all sorts of ways.

What's your perspective on food, food preparation and the way kitchens are conceptualised and designed today?

In New York, space is a big constraint, it's smaller and more expensive. Kitchens function differently for most people here in New York. Some people don't typically have a dining table, or a kitchen island, so it's about the essentials of what a kitchen needs to do, whereas in other places, where space is not as much of a luxury, the kitchen becomes more like the heart of the home. Personally, I've experienced it both ways. When I'm here it's more about the utilitarian aspect of the kitchen, and when I'm in Nigeria it's about the heart of the home.

What is the principal role of the kitchen space today, and what should be its principal characteristics?

It depends from where I am, but I'd say it would be that of making it easy to cook efficiently while also making it easy for people to gather around. The number of people will depend on the space available, but there is that bonding moment whether it's friends cooking together, or family. I think lighting can also play a part in that as well.



1. DUNDUN coffee table. It derives its sculptural form and sense of rhythm from the Talking Drum (also known as Dundun). The silhouette of the drum is re-interpreted through the metal rods. Creating this under stated yet intriguing coffee table
2. SISI EKO LAMP. In the Yoruba language, Sisi Eko can be interpreted as Lagos Lady. The Sisi Eko lighting fixture celebrates that wondrous contradiction of strength & gentleness. It's alluring form and double light creates its unique identity.
3. ITE hanging lamps. ITE means Nest in Yoruba. Inspired by the layered structure of a bird's nest, the curved metal rods aim to evoke the embracive nature of a nest.



What is the importance of appliances in a kitchen?

They aid the whole process, they bring a sense of ease into it, and enjoyment. Beyond functionality, they should also be nice to look at, be part of the design of the whole kitchen. I just moved into a new place here, and I'm into choosing accessories, in particular for my kitchen. I think nowadays we are spoilt with choice, so consumers expect a lot more out of even the seemingly mundane appliances. They need to fulfil their purpose but also add something to the environment from an aesthetics perspective, unless they're going to be hidden, but I don't think we want them to be hidden anymore.

If it's going to be in my kitchen, it doesn't have to be a statement, but it needs to be compelling, bringing some kind of visual delight.

Is your personal relationship with food and its preparation influenced by the lifestyle of the society your are living in?

I love cooking, though I don't cook that much in New York. My life is quite fast-paced, but I am a big foodie, and I enjoy bringing people together to share a home-cooked meal. Also, wherever I am I try and be in tune with seasons when it comes to ingredients. It's not always easy, but I feel there's a connection between our health and Earth's rhythms: Earth knows what we need during that season. In Nigeria I move around quite a bit, and there are quite a lot of street vendors, and what's on offer has very much to do with what is being grown in that season.



SISI EKO Lamp by Studio-Lani, Luca table by Costantini Design.
Photo credits: Costantini Design

BIO

Lani Adeoye, a Lagos & New York based designer, seamlessly merges contemporary aesthetics with traditional craftsmanship. With a Bachelor's in Commerce from McGill University, she graduated from NYC's Parsons School of Design and founded Studio Lani in 2015, spanning New York City and Lagos. Her diverse portfolio, from eco-conscious urban interiors to wearables and medical assistance devices, reflects her commitment to environmental stewardship and social equity. Influenced by her Lagos upbringing, Adeoye views design as a catalyst for inclusive change.

Adeoye's groundbreaking work has garnered international recognition, including first prize in Milan's 2022 'SaloneSatellite: Designing for our future selves' for RemX. Featured in Elle Decor's Women of the World: 75 Global Female Designers Worth Celebrating and Phaidon's Woman Made and 1000 Design Classics, she also won New York's WantedDesign (Launch Pad) Furniture Award in 2017.

studio-lani.com

WHEN AMERICA DISCOVERED ITALY

NEW YORK'S LONG ITALIAN SUMMER OF 1972



CREDIT: DIGITAL IMAGE, THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK/SCALA, FLORENCE
"TOTAL FURNISHING UNIT". DESIGN BY JOE COLOMBO IN COLLABORATION WITH IGNAZIA FAVATA, ARCH., 1972. ILLUSTRATION FROM
"THE NEW DOMESTIC LANDSCAPE" CATALOGUE OF MOMA EXHIBITION, 1972 (PHOTOGRAPHER: ALDO BALLO). THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART LIBRARY, REF. NO.: 300062429_0183

"Total Furnishing Unit: Joe Colombo's Ingenious Compact Living Solution for the Urban Dwellers of Tomorrow
a fully fitted kitchen, a bathroom, a sleeping corner and a wardrobe, all in 28 square metres.

In the history of Italian Design, a turning point was marked by 1972. It was the year when, in the eyes of the world, Italy moved away from the romanticised notions of the Grand Tour and Renaissance masters clichés, and discarded the pedestrian stereotype of chequered tablecloths and hanging garlic beads, at least for the sophisticated universe of contemporary design. That year, at New York's Museum of Modern Art, America and the world fell under the spell of a groundbreaking exhibition, as a group of Italian avant-garde designers and architects left an indelible mark and influenced global design trends forever.

"Domus", one of Italy's most authoritative architecture magazines, provided comprehensive coverage of the exhibition.

The exhibition was called “Italy: The New Domestic Landscape”, and it was a bomb. Not only was Italian Design alive and kicking, but it was leading the pack and offering fascinating, visionary perspectives on society’s evolution in those incredibly dynamic years, on the emergence of new lifestyles and our very own and deep perception of modern living in general.

Here's how MoMA itself presented the exhibition in the opening lines of a press announcement released on May 26, 1972, acknowledging the historic significance of the event right from the onset: "Italy: the new domestic landscape, one of the most ambitious design exhibitions ever undertaken by The Museum of Modern Art, will be on view in the galleries and garden from May 26 through September 11. [...] the exhibition reports on current design developments in Italy with 180 objects for household use and 11 environments commissioned by the Museum."

The exhibition was directed and installed by Emilio Ambasz, the Argentinean Curator of Design in the Museum's Department of Architecture and Design. The relevance of the event, and indeed of Italy and of Italian Design on the world contemporary scene was also expressed by Ambasz: "Italy is not only the dominant product design force in the world today but also illustrates some of the concerns of all industrial societies. Italy has assumed the characteristics of a micro-model where a wide range of possibilities, limitations and critical problems of contemporary designers throughout the world are represented by diverse and sometimes opposite approaches."

Columbus journey, reloaded

On their epic journey to New York, the eclectic band of brothers led by Ambasz brought forth a new, fresh vision of the role of design and ambitiously hinted at what the future might look like. In many cases, they hit the mark. It was indeed a discovery journey, like that of Columbus five centuries earlier, only this time it was America that discovered Columbus, or rather Colombo. In fact, Joe Colombo's 'Total Furnishing Unit' was part of the trip, serving as a tribute to the award-winning designer who had passed away the previous year. Colombo had perfectly understood that the



Credits: Domus 510, maggio 1972, p.21 - Archivio Domus © Editoriale Domus S.p.A.

future of urban living would entail smaller housing, and imagined a self contained living space that came complete with a fully fitted kitchen, a bathroom, a sleeping corner and a wardrobe, all in 28 sqm.

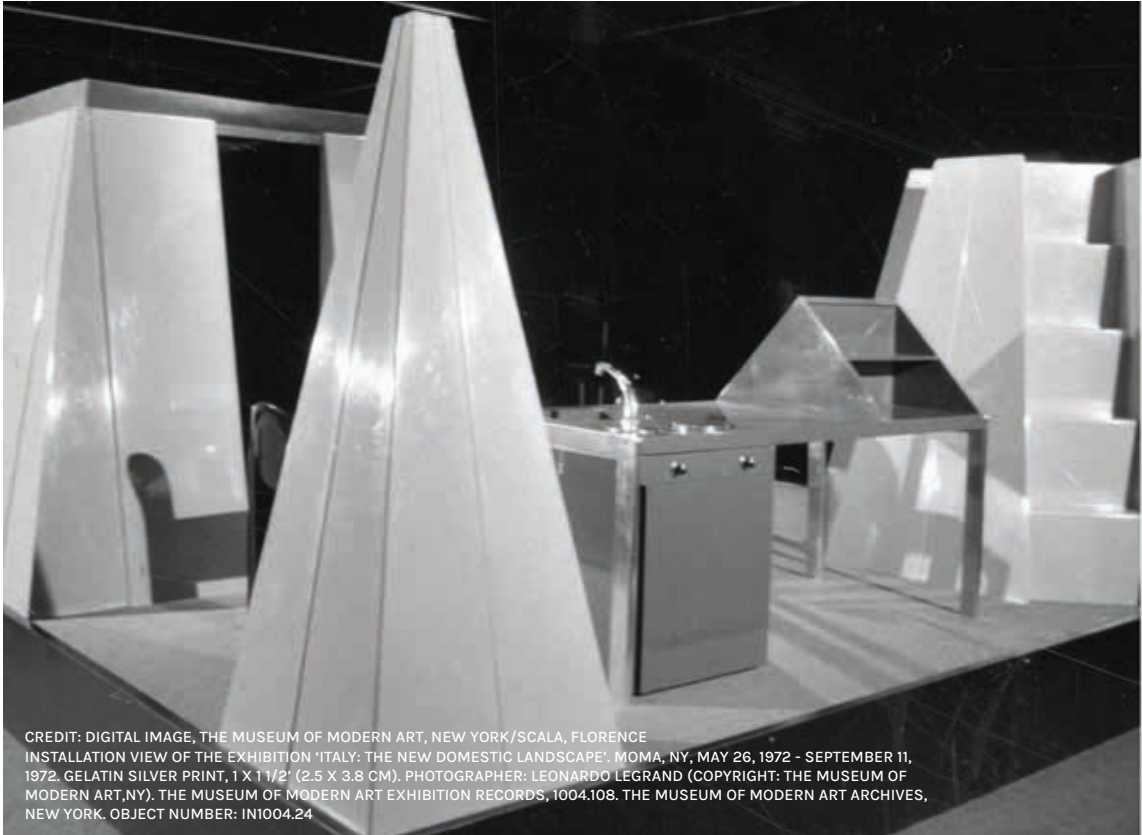
Other participants, among the many chosen by Ambasz truly representing Italy's finest and most disrupting design minds of the time, included Ettore Sottsass, Gae Aulenti, Vico Magistretti, Ugo La Pietra, Gaetano Pesce, Alberto Rosselli, Mario Bellini, Marco Zanuso.

The expedition could also count on renowned design studios such as 9999, Archizoom, Gruppo Strum, Superstudio, further enriching the diverse array of talents showcased.

All together, they embodied the most formidable expression of design

genius in the post-1968 era, all loaded into the cargo of the admiral's ships: the Reformist, the Conformist and the Contestatory. This was in fact the subdivision of the "Objects" section of the exhibition, displayed outdoors, while the 'Environments' section's pieces were exhibited in the interior formal spaces of MoMA. They were themselves classified under three conceptual categories: 'Design as Postulation', 'Design as Commentary' and 'Counterdesign as Postulation'.

Such was the significance of the operation, providing a global showcase for Italy, that it had the support of both institutions and corporate Italy, from the Ministry of Foreign Trade and the Italian Institute of Foreign Trade (I.C.E.) to Gruppo ENI, Lanerossi, Fiat, Olivetti, Alitalia and many others.

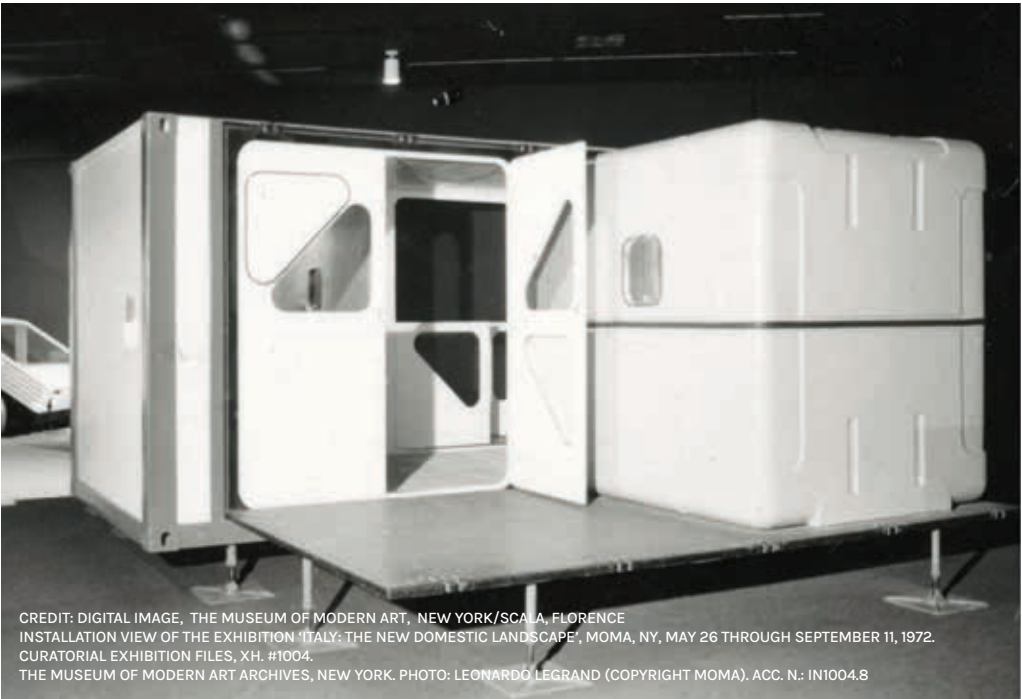


"Living Unit: Gae Aulenti's Vibrant Pyramid-Shaped Oasis of Contemporary Domestic Life, commissioned by Kartell. The pyramid was to become a common sight in her work, a sort of hallmark also found in some of her most famous architectural urban projects"

Environments, an odyssey of space

In addition to Colombo’s ‘Total Furnishing Unit’, the Environment section of the exhibition comprised 10 other works, each accompanied by a film, a completely innovative way of conceiving this kind of events. The “Design as Postulation” segment stood out as the most prominent, presenting proposals rooted in the contemporary housing landscape. These innovative solutions were tailored to evolving conditions, introducing new domestic rituals. In her contribution, commissioned by Kartell, Gae Aulenti experimented with plastic, to create a “Living Unit” (‘Unità Abitativa’). Her aim was to build a functional yet emotionally resonant space, with bold pyramid shapes in bright red, aligning with the societal shifts of the 1970s.

Marco Zanuso and Richard Sapper’s ‘Mobile Housing Unit’ was also based on plastic, but the project had a totally different perspective as the unit was intended as a mobile housing solution to be deployed in emergency situations. Once folded, it would fit into a 20ft (6.10 mt) ISO container for easy transportation. Ettore Sottsass, on his part, focused on redefining interior spaces with his creation called “Micro Environments” – a series of fiberglass boxes on casters. These adaptable units could be effortlessly relocated within the house, offering the flexibility to configure different layouts based on the inhabitants’ needs.



“Mobile Housing Unit”: Zanuso and Sapper’s Revolutionary Concept for Portable Emergency Shelter. It would fit into a 20ft (6.10 mt) ISO container when folded up.



Micro Environments: Sottsass’s modular living spaces redefining interior flexibility. The fineglass boxes featured casters and could be moved around the house to create endless configurations and layouts according to inhabitants’ needs.



"Kar-a-Sutra: Mario Bellini's Futuristic Vision Transforming the car into a Social Hub, anticipating Monospace and MPVs, for Citroën. Notice the lines and the ribbed plastic bodywork, typical of the Méhari, launched in the 60s"

Mario Bellini's astonishing Kar-a-Sutra concept car for Citroën was also part of the this section. His attempt at liberating car interiors from the fixed constraints of the auto industry and make them a place for conviviality paved the way for the design of future monospace and MPV (Multi Purpose Vehicle) models.

The Design as Commentary section featured just one entry: Gaetano Pesce's post-apocalyptic housing unit envisioned for the year 2000, presented as an archaeological discovery from the 3000s, while the Counterdesign section was a showcase of provocation across various media, from the oral description of a totally empty space by Archizoom, to Ugo LaPietra's Telematic House, a visionary anticipation of domotics, to the "Supersuperficie" (Supersurface) void of any object by Superstudio and Enzo Mari's 'Proposta di Comportamento' behavioural recommendations. Yet they all had the great merit of forcing a serious reflection on the profound changes taking place in society at the time.

Objects of desire

While much of the work featured at MoMA seemingly expressed criticism of consumerism, paradoxically, many of the exhibited items have since become iconic examples of design and highly sought-after collectibles. This was particularly true among the 180 entries in the Objects section, from Vico Magistretti's chairs for Artemide, to Zanuso and Sapper's portable TV set for Brionvega, to Piero Gatti's 'Sacco' sacklike armchair for Zanotta and many others.

Beyond MoMA's walls, the exhibition won widespread acclaim and support, pushing boundaries and anticipating societal shifts. It also and foremost underscored Italy's emergence as a global design powerhouse.

The provocative designs challenged prevailing norms and prompted critical reflection on societal changes. Many showcased items have since attained iconic status, proof of the enduring impact of Italy's avant-garde scene. In retrospect, the 1972 exhibition stands as a testament to Italy's design legacy and its ongoing influence on the global design landscape.



Unveiling (versatile) icons

A symbol of versatility, the stool is the quintessential passe-partout of home furnishing. An object that has driven all of last Century's most important designers to experiment with design, materials, and processes.

Possibly one of the longest-lasting objects in the history of humanity, the humble stool has certainly stood the test of time. Right from its origins, it was created for the most mundane tasks, accompanying mankind throughout its journey of social, economic, and cultural evolution. A chameleon by nature, it is the piece of furniture that has best embodied, in a flexible manner, all the functional criteria and various purposes attributed to it over time. At the same time, it doesn't require instructions and holds no secrets, which may explain its reassuring nature, regardless of its use and the forms it has taken over time

Despite its humble origins, it went far beyond being a mere work tool to become a true universal piece of furniture, both in terms of vocation and of functionality. Perhaps for

this reason, it was re-invented and reworked countless times by all the creative minds and designers of the twentieth Century. Its versatility made it an ideal candidate for new design experiments, material applications, and processes. It can be safely said that the stool represents the quintessence of freedom for the creative mind, allowing for the exploration of new forms, materials, even to extreme levels, or, conversely, it is capable of encapsulating in a simple form the memory and heritage of the past. It can bring a smile, create good humour, or convey irony. The objects featured in the following pages perfectly embody this creative and formal journey. Regardless of the choices made, what is certain is that even today the stool continues to possess the necessary potential to be interpreted almost endlessly, telling beautiful stories.

Cassina iMaestri 1927 collection

The “8” Tabouret Tournant stool is inspired by the design “Fauteuil” armchair created by Charlotte Perriand for her apartment at Place Saint-Sulpice in Paris. Designed in 1927, it was part of the furniture section at the Salon d’Automne exhibition in 1929. Today, it is part of the Le Corbusier®, Pierre Jeanneret®, Charlotte Perriand® – Cassina iMaestri Collections. Charlotte Perriand, a French architect and designer, is one of the most prominent female figures in the history of twentieth-Century architecture and design. She started her career in 1927 with Le Corbusier, the guiding figure of the Modern Movement, with whom she collaborated until 1937. The iconic and versatile shape of the stool reflects Charlotte Perriand’s desire to rationalise mass production through the use of common elements. In 2023, the company introduced the 8 Tabouret Tournant stool in the ‘durable’ version, i.e. sustainable, developed with recyclable materials.

www.cassina.com



Tabouret tournant, durable, Charlotte Perriand, intégré à la Collection Le Corbusier®, Pierre Jeanneret®, Charlotte Perriand®



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60 Stool, Alvar Aalto, Artek, 1933

A classic of 20th-century design and an icon of modern Scandinavian design, the 60 stool was designed in 1933 by Alvar Aalto for the Russian library in Vilipuri. Its distinctive features are the simplicity and the minimalism of its forms. It consists of a circular seat supported by three legs made of bent birch wood. It was precisely the L-shaped form of the three legs, achieved through a wood bending process that was absolutely innovative at the time and of which Aalto was the pioneer, that constituted the revolutionary idea behind this project. The purpose of the bending is twofold: on one hand to support the seat, on the other to make it stackable. In 1958, Stool 60 became part of the permanent collection at NYC’s MoMA.

www.artek.fi

Tabouret Berger, Charlotte Perriand, Cassina iMaestri 1953 Collection

The Modern Movement, emerging between the two world wars, was characterised by a lively debate on how to reconcile regional traditions with the universal language of rationalism. Charlotte Perriand made a significant contribution by salvaging simple materials and elementary forms inspired in particular by alpine architecture. “La manque de matériaux donnait de l’imagination,” wrote Charlotte in her memoirs, recalling how it was precisely the scarcity of materials that stimulated creativity in mountain and rural communities. Her great passion for the mountains inspired one of her stools, the Tabouret Berger, which takes its name and form from the milking stools used by shepherds. The stool stands out for the honesty of its simple forms and the concreteness expressed by its function and by the material used.



Cassina iMaestri collection



Cassina iMaestri Collection, ph. De Pasquale + Maffini

Mexique stool, Charlotte Perriand, Cassina iMaestri collection, 1952-1956

Included among the en forme libre tables created by Charlotte Perriand between 1938 and 1939, the final design of the Mexique model was conceived in 1952 for the student dorms of the Maison du Mexique at the Cité Universitaire Internationale in Paris. The stool, designed to take up as little space as possible, provided for the possibility of combining several pieces together in order to create compositions of a wider and more regular shape. In 1952 the author replaced the wooden legs with triangular folded sheet metal legs. In 1956 a shorter version was produced for the Galerie Steph Simon in Paris. The thickness of the wooden top, available in both solid or glossy lacquer or matt, conveys remarkable beauty, while the edges reveal a functional profile adapted to the shape and size of a hand.

Elephant Stool, Sori Yanagi, Vitra 1954

One of the most famous Japanese design objects, the Elephant Stool, was created by product designer Sori Yanagi who, after World War II, wanted to try and use fiberglass, which had begun to spread in Japan in those years. Stackable, and with legs resembling an elephant's foot, hence the name, the stool was subsequently produced in injection-moulded polypropylene. Perfect for both indoor spaces and for terraces and gardens, it was easy to carry around and could also be used as a picnic chair. Its linear shapes and functionality continue to make it contemporary.

www.vitra.com



Butterfly Stool, Sori Yanagi, Vitra, 1954

The Butterfly Stool represents the perfect fusion between Eastern world forms and the plywood bending techniques developed by Charles and Ray Eames. The curved plywood structure is made of maple or rosewood, with brass finishes. The curvy silhouette of the two shells not only recalls a butterfly but it also evokes Japanese calligraphy and reminds of the typical Shinto temples' gates, known as Torii.

Mezzadro, Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni, Zanotta, 1957

Designed in 1957 by Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni for the exhibition "Forme e colori nella casa d'oggi" set up at Villa Olmo in Como, the Mezzadro stool has been produced by Zanotta since 1970. The inspiration behind its peculiar design was the typical seat of tractors from the early twentieth Century. Reflecting on the ready-made applied to the world of design, the Castiglioni brothers assembled existing objects, deliberately diverting their original intended use. The result was an ironic and playful object, suitable for home use. They only reversed the orientation of the steel stem, using a leaf spring to enhance the originality of the stool and emphasise the sense of support, and stabilised the seat with a wooden crossbar inspired from the nautical world.

www.zanotta.com





Sella, Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni, Zanotta, 1957

Like Mezzadro, Sella (“saddle” in Italian) was also designed by the Castiglioni brothers in 1957 for the “Colours and shapes in today’s home” exhibition, putting together existing objects but diverting their original use. In this case, they combined a racing bike leather saddle with a painted steel rod, and a heavy semispherical base. It was designed as a stool to be placed next to the telephone, which at the time was often hung on a wall at home, but with the intention of discouraging long phone calls. Even the colours were not chosen randomly: the black leather saddle was typical of racing bicycles, while the bright pink of the rod paid homage to the colour of the winner’s jersey in the Giro d’Italia, itself inspired by the colour of the Gazzetta dello Sport, Italy’s main daily sports newspaper.

Tabouret Mériabel, Charlotte Perriand, Cassina iMaestri collection, 1961/62

The Tabouret Mériabel stool, also doubling as a small table, represents the taller version compared to the Tabouret Berger from 1953. It too is inspired by the mountains beloved by the French architect and designer Charlotte Perriand, and takes its name from the French alpine resort much beloved by Perriand, while its shape is inspired by the milking stools of the local shepherds. It was first presented in Tokyo on the occasion of the Synthèse des arts exhibition in 1955. Created for a chalet in Méribel, France, it reinterprets local interior architecture. Produced by Cassina through meticulous craftsmanship enhancing the authenticity of the design, both of these masterpieces can be used individually or in original compositions.



Cassina iMaestri Collection, ph. De Pasquale + Maffini



ph Courtesy of Knoll

Platner, Warren Platner, Knoll, 1966

Designed by American architect and designer Warren Platner in 1966, this stool is part of the eponymic collection for Knoll, which represents an attempt to infuse modernism into the “decorative, gentle, and graceful forms that appeared in the Louis XV style.” Platner welded hundreds of curved steel bars onto circular frames, which served both as a support and decoration, creating what is now considered an icon of modern era design.

www.knoll-int.com

Tam Tam, Henry Massonnet, Stamp, 1968

Considered an icon of French design, the Tam Tam polypropylene stool was originally created as a fishing stool by the owner of STAMP. Produced in a multitude of colours, it could be dismantled into two identical parts shaped like an hourglass, and was highly appreciated for its compact dimensions (30x30x45 cm), lightness, and easy portability. Its international commercial success was due to a 1970 photo shoot by Paris Match magazine in the St. Tropez home of actress Brigitte Bardot, who was photographed sitting on an orange Tam Tam stool. The stool continues to be produced by the STAMP company in the same factory, using the same mould that gave life to the original object, but with a greater variety of colours and shapes.

www.stamp.fr





Giotto, De Pas -D'Urbino - Lomazzi, Zanotta, 1975

This minimalist stool with a swivel seat owes its aesthetics to industrial functionality. Its structure consists of three legs made of natural beech, joined by a red painted metal crosspiece, deliberately revealed, like the threaded support that holds the circular seat and allows for easy height adjustment.

Backenzahn, Philipp Mainzer, e15, 1996

This stool is a tribute to the material it is made of, solid wood, and to the craftsmanship of the cut that recalls the work of carpenters. Designed by founder Philipp Mainzer in 1996, Backenzahn (which means “molar tooth” in German) is an iconic piece for e15 and is part of various museum collections. Its uniqueness lies in its minimalist geometric shape, but above all in the craftsmanship shown in the solid wood work. Its shape and peculiar characteristics call for the use of the trees’ heartwood. During the seasoning of the wood, the veins and splits that emerge are preserved and visible, and become an essential part of the design itself. To celebrate its 25 years anniversary, it has been offered in a matte black finish.

www.e15.com



Miura, Konstantin Grcic, Plank, 2005

This one-piece plastic bar stool made Konstantin Grcic one of the most innovative and visionary designers of his generation. Nearly twenty years after its launch, it still stands as a visionary and innovative project. Created after the well-known chair_ONE, Miura allowed Grcic to change his approach in terms of forms, in order to experiment with a new language. Moving away from the angular and faceted shapes of the chair, he chose softer forms. The creation of the stool’s geometries and surfaces started from its function and its relationship with the human body. The stool immediately became part of the collections of the world’s most prestigious institutions, such as the permanent design collection of the MoMA in New York, the Milan Triennale, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Museum für Gestaltung in Zurich, and the Vitra Design Museum.

www.plank.it

Wiggle Stool, Franck Gehry, Vitra, 1972

Architect Frank Gehry is known for his use of unconventional materials. The Wiggle Stool is part of “Easy Edges,” a furniture series that managed to dignify the aesthetic dimension and highlight the formal potential of an ordinary material such as cardboard. Its distinctive trait lies in its sculptural form. Although its appearance is surprisingly simple, it is crafted with the expertise of a seasoned architect, making it not only very comfortable but also durable and sturdy.





Attila, design Philippe Starck, Kartell, 2000

Attila, Napoleon, and Saint-Esprit are three stool-tables, three charismatic characters from the Gnomes series designed by Philippe Starck for Kartell. Striking for their originality and nonconformity, these playful objects are meant to furnish any space without restrictions, but also with an eye for functionality: the gnomes' hats, in effect, are flat and circular specifically to be used as a table-top, or stool. Pictured, the Attila stool-table in the gold version.

www.kartell.com

Cork Family, Jasper Morrison, Vitra, 2004

The five Cork Family stools series is the result of experimentation with cork, a natural and sustainable material, very durable yet lightweight, pleasant to the touch, but almost never used in furniture. Inspired by the shape of the classic bottle cork, these stools enhance the beauty of the material and meet the desire for seemingly anonymous yet durable objects that discreetly fit into everyday life.



Pilastro, Ettore Sottsass, 2004, "Kartell goes Sottsass collection - A Tribute to Memphis" (2015)

"Pilastro" is part of the "Kartell goes Sottsass - A Tribute to Memphis" collection, conceived in 2015 to honour the design movement founded by master of design Ettore Sottsass. Although they were signed by Sottsass in 2004, they were never produced. Each individual element was characterised by unique volumes and post-modernist geometries. The five colours they come in are dynamic and tied to the pop culture of the past century: red, lime green, glossy white and black, and intense pink.

Efesto, design Martinelli Venezia, De Castelli, 2022

More than mere furniture, the Efesto stool is a sculpture for the home which underscores the brand's manufacturing capabilities: by curving and bending sheet metal, brass is manually shaped and hammered to create its unique triangular cross section. The polished finish further highlights its sinuous shape. Entirely without mechanical joints, Efesto's ability to support heavy weights is created through its meticulously designed structure. Technical savoir-faire and the intrinsic qualities of brass elevate it beyond a functional object to a unique, sophisticated design piece.

www.decastelli.com



Once upon a stool in the kitchen...

The stool and its versatility are undeniably central to a particular area of the home: the kitchen. This domestic space is increasingly multifunctional as it serves for cooking, working, studying, spending time with family or friends, or simply as a passageway area between different parts of the house. Most of these activities often revolve around the kitchen island, an increasingly prominent feature in kitchens of all sizes. Around this island, family and guests typically sit on a stool. DM selected some of the most representative in the history of design, and which better interpreted these new functionalities.



Bertoia stool, Harry Bertoia, Knoll, 1952

The Bertoia stool is part of the metal seats collection (Side Chair, Asymmetric Chaise, Diamond Chair) designed by artist, sculptor, and designer Harry Bertoia, who aimed at creating chairs that would allow people to “sit on air”. He used to say: “If you look at these chairs, you’ll realise they’re mostly made of air: just like sculptures, air passes through them.” With this collection, Bertoia introduced metal, a material until then considered simply “industrial,” into the world of furniture: in his hands, steel bars have become expressive elements.



Lio – Leo, Roberto Barbieri, Zanotta, 2005

These stools are an extension of the Lia and Lea chairs successful project, to which they are tied both in terms of aesthetics and construction by the important and elegant flank made with a single piece of cast aluminum. They can have a visible painted structure (Lio) or be entirely covered in leather or hide (Leo). To better suit the various uses, domestic and contract, they are available in two different heights.

www.zanotta.com



Hal Stool, Jasper Morrison, Vitra 2010-2014

Hal represents Jasper Morrison’s interpretation of the shell seat, in line with the tradition of Charles and Ray Eames’ Plastic Chair, which was characterised by a wide variety of bases, allowing for its versatile use in any kind of interior. It stood out for its simple, clean, and contemporary design. The comfort of the pleasantly flexible wooden or plastic shells could be further enhanced by the addition of cushions or upholstery, or by opting for the HAL Soft model with a complete padding. In the versions with a plastic shell and a powder-coating paint base, it was also suitable for outdoor spaces.



Nerd Counter Stool, David Geckeler, Muuto, 2012

“Nerd Counter Stool takes a playful approach to the archetypal wooden chair through its innovative integration of the seat and backrest, adding to the design’s unique expression” (David Geckeler). The Nerd Counter Stool is designed with a playful contemporary spirit, complemented by its wooden Scandinavian materiality. The seamless integration of its backrest and seat makes for a quirky detail alongside the curved edges of its seat. The back and seat of the Nerd Chair is made in form-pressed veneer while its legs are in solid wood – both with a water-based lacquer. Glides are plastic.

www.muuto.com



Koki, Pocci + Dondoli, Desalto, 2015

The contract world infiltrates the living space in the Koki project with chairs and stools sporting a contemporary and fresh design. A perfect distillation of form, functionality, and innovation, captivating from every angle. The stool bears the same name as the chair, and represents a new addition to the versatile character of the family. Designed by Pocci and Dondoli for Desalto, it is built with a steel internal structure and a self-supporting polyurethane shell. The perfect combination of materials and lines makes Koki particularly comfortable, with a wraparound backrest that invites relaxation, offering refined aesthetics and robustness at the same time. Koki is available in two heights, with the shell and structure coming in various finishes.

www.desalto.it

Jens, Antonio Citterio, B&B Italia, 2017

Antonio Citterio drew his inspiration from oriental seating to design the Jens line, interpreting it in a contemporary and modern way. He rediscovered the extraordinary craftsmanship behind turned and bent wood to create the structure and the seat, also proposed in a rope version or paired with leather, another natural material, for the seating and backrests.

www.bebitalia.com



Passion Stool, Philippe Starck, Cassina, 2017

Timeless, iconic aesthetics characterise this stool designed by Philippe Starck for Cassina. It consists of an aluminum stem base and a seat with a wraparound shape. The shell automatically realigns with the stool's footrest thanks to a special mechanism. The cover, leather or fabric, is firmly and precisely fastened to the chair as if it were a tailored garment, making for a welcoming and fluid appearance. The stool is available in two heights, with the aim of consolidating Cassina's positioning in the business segment and in the furnishing of the new scenarios between home and office.

www.cassina.com

Mixu, Arper, 2021

Mixu is a collection of chairs and stools designed with versatility and sustainability in mind with simple shapes that offer virtually limitless customisation. It's a system comprised of three distinct parts – seat, backrest, and base – that can be combined in countless configurations, varying colours and textures to adapt to different contexts and needs. The stool, particularly suitable for contract and hospitality use, ensures complete comfort with a seat the same size of the chair. Both stools and chairs have a flat-pack delivery option to reduce volumes and minimise the environmental impact of transport. They can be entirely disassembled at the end of their life cycle to facilitate disposal.

www.arper.com



ph credits @SalvaLopez

Masters stool, Philippe Starck, Kartell, 2021

The Masters stool, designed by Philippe Starck, is inspired by the silhouette of his already famous chair. An extremely educated product, a tribute to the masters of Scandinavian design, which has become an icon of design itself. The backrest is indeed the result of the intertwining of the outlines of three iconic chairs: the Series 7 by Arne Jacobsen, the Tulip Armchair by Eero Saarinen, and the Eiffel Chair by Charles Eames. This solution also allows for the succession of voids and solids, making the seat both complete, comfortable, and lightweight. In the stool version, the seat becomes more contained, but the unmistakable look of the structure remains. Ideal for both home and contract, the Masters Stool also likes outdoors.

www.kartell.com



A.I. Stool recycled, Philippe Starck, Kartell, 2021

AI Stool is a stool entirely made from recycled material and conceived by Artificial Intelligence based on input from Designer Philippe Starck. The stool is completely developed by an algorithm ensuring it meets the original requirements: creating a product with the least amount of material and energy possible, a comfortable seat, ample and welcoming, with simple yet elegant lines. This eco-friendly stool comes in two heights to meet every need, and is perfect for a living room, a relaxation area, or a bar area.



Nena, Lanzavecchia+Wai, Zanotta, 2022

The striking visual impact of this stool is created by the contrast between the lightweight frame and the generous shapes of the padded elements. Coming in two different heights, it's an ideal solution for kitchen islands and for the furnishing of hospitality spaces. The stool possesses a recognisable aesthetic and a sartorial feel. The study on comfort, showing in the elegant, welcoming, and comfortable seat, ensures complete enjoyment of breakfast or dinner in total relaxation.

www.zanotta.com



Kitchen preview from Milan's Design Week

DM unveils some of the new kitchens presented in Milan at the Eurocucina / FTK - Technology for the Kitchen biennial and the Fuori Salone. Discover the exciting previews reflecting new lifestyle habits and trends in the forms and materials of possibly the most important room in the house.

"Increasingly sustainable choices of materials, high tech solutions, innovative design, and creativity." These are the four pillars defining the kitchen universe according to the organisers of the Salone del Mobile 2024, as declined at the Eurocucina / FTK - Technology for the Kitchen biennial and, of course, at the Fuori Salone, all taking place in Milan from April 16th to 21st. This year, thanks to Studio Lombardini22, the event has an entire new layout for Eurocucina and FTK, with concentric ring boulevards along which exhibitors will be located to optimise visit times and maximise visitor engagement. A week packed with events in the streets of Milan, too, which goes to show that the kitchen is indeed one of the central rooms of the house, and revealing the new trends influencing interior design. Furthermore, technological and green solutions, not only in terms of energy savings and production cycles, will continue driving the design and role of the kitchen in the coming years. Here's an exclusive preview of the models, including outdoor options, that will be showcased during Milan Design Week 2024.



AL 32 by Arrex

In the AL 32 model, the kitchen is much more than just a space for food preparation; it becomes the beating heart of the home. There are no compromises on functionality, design, and reliability: every detail and material have been carefully selected to ensure elegance, maximum quality, and durability. Clean lines merge with textured stone-effect surfaces, the warmth of wood grains, and refined finishes. Versatility is also high on the agenda thanks to the modularity of single elements and the offer of five materials that can be combined in multiple ways. The components are available in veneered finishes, laminated (in 12 variants), ceramic stoneware, Fenix, and glass in both matte and glossy versions. The doors have an extruded aluminum frame cut at a 45° angle and joined together. The handle grip with a groove system is available in both “flat” and “L-shaped” versions for maximum ease of use.

PlayGround 2024 by Elmar

The new Elmar model developed by Palomba Serafini Associati, shows a desire to expand the potential of the “kitchen space” and create a flexible and eclectic environment, which becomes a central character of home furnishing. The kitchen hence adopts the same aesthetic code as the other rooms in the house, becoming an integral part of it, and particularly of the living area. Not only it harmonises with it, but it even contributes to its design and style. The kitchen seamlessly merges with the rest of the rooms and incorporates the aesthetic elements of the house, transporting them into the kitchen context. Functional and technological aspects have also been conceived as to impart a sense of familiarity, more suitable to the domestic environment. The cabinets above the countertops, the perforated metal doors, and the drawers placed at an unusual height ensure maximum practicality while also giving a distinctive character to the kitchen. All these solutions, along with the handles, with a seemingly random position, add a contemporary touch to the elegant design with classical references to home furnishing.



LAIN ANTIS by Euromobil

This new proposition by Euromobil embodies the spirit of the two configurations it takes its name from: Lain and Antis. It features neutral colours, tone-on-tone, and thus has a natural imprint dictated by the combination of light finishes, wood, and transparencies. In detail, the structure of the Lain kitchen is made of a Thermo Structured Surface (TSS) with Opus lime finish, with a Laminam sandstone in-side top in a 'terra di Matera' shade, and integrated sink. Backlighting highlighting the backsplash and shelves, giving depth to the front columns, also in TSS with Opus lime finish. The island is enhanced by a convenient top in natural sanded oak veneer, supported by a leg in extra-clear tempered glass, that appears to be floating mid air. The Antis front drawers in the main structure and in the island are instead made of 'wood caneté plus naturel'. A linear and contemporary kitchen capable of offering quality performance with an elegant visual impact. This confirms that the evolution of kitchens also involves the combination of materials and colours.



MODULA by Febal

The essential design, with clean and elegant lines, is the hallmark of the new Modula kitchen, conceived to create compositions that seamlessly integrate with the living spaces without sacrificing any of the kitchen's functionalities. The square door panel in matte black slate finish and with an aluminum Champagne handleless opening translates into a portal solution in the increased modularity of the Over version, in line with the most current demand. A storage and laundry cabin concealing the appliances confirms the combination of aesthetics and practicality as one of Febal's major assets.



N.O.W. by Lago

Designed by Daniele Lago, the N.O.W. kitchen, or rather the N.O.W. storage system, as the company prefers to define it, was born from the brand's iconic collection of cabinets to create a distinctive environment. This effect is produced by the glass strips generating endless colour moods and defining the volumes of the kitchen. The linearity of this kitchen is enhanced by the absence of handles, thanks to an innovative, patented opening mechanism, and by the continuity of the side finishes eliminating the perception of wall units. The transparency of the smoked bronze glass cabinets creates an alternating effect of containment and display, emphasised by the integrated lighting. The base units, both suspended and floor-standing, are characterised by an essential design, with lacquered fronts and a handleless opening, finished internally with the same material as the top, an innovative material made with natural minerals evoking the materiality of rock. Also worth mentioning is the Wildwood oak table, integrated into the base and resting on a transparent sheet of extra-clear glass. A solution that gives further centrality to the island and a distinctive personality to the space.



TABLET by Lube Creo

Tablet, the name of the new kitchen from the Creo collection by Lube, encapsulates the linear, modern, and informal essence of this solution and its great versatility. The “monolith” island configuration includes a functional sliding “quick” snack top, columns, and wall units to rationally organise everything. The design is light and bright thanks to the suspended bases, glass doors, and radial lighting on the open elements. The minimalist shelves bring an additional touch of style while being perfect for accommodating utensils and other objects. Even the corner configuration stands out for its clean style, with base units and ‘neck opening’ columns. The open elements define the space in an original way, while the sideboards can add originality to the kitchen. A contemporary style, enhanced by the new floor-level doors of the column block, also defines the peninsula solution where the different depths of the modules create a pleasant effect, making for a seamless continuity of style between the wall units and the open elements. A work area was created within the “open” element of the wall unit, an extremely functional solution. The wedge-shaped peninsula constitutes another highly distinctive element.



S2 NEXT GENERATION by SieMatic

The S2 Next Generation kitchen is the linchpin of SieMatic's latest innovations, the newest version of the iconic handleless SieMatic SL. New compositions, materials, and unprecedented shades are blended with unexpected functional and design elements, including the new SieMatic SecretSpace columns and bases that turn into open cabinets simply by rotating them with one hand. The island's StoneDesign worktop in natural Taj Mahal stone conceals an additional surprise. Thanks to an extremely precise and smooth sliding system, it opens up, revealing a second level where a hob or a sink with a lowered faucet can be positioned. Worktops can be extended from both sides, and can be used with chairs or stools or to provide a larger work surface. A contemporary proposition with clean, minimalist lines, yet welcoming and functional. The S2 Next Generation kitchen also offers great versatility and ample customisation possibilities through materials and colours, integrating seamlessly into any living space.



THE OTHER KITCHEN

The desire for outdoor living has led architects and interior designers to blur the boundaries between the interior and the exterior of the home. Just having a garden or terrace is no longer sufficient; people are now seeking new designs that ensure a more profound and fulfilling interpretation of these spaces. The creation of outdoor kitchens is top of the list, transforming this corner into much more than just a barbecue area to become “the other kitchen.” The goal is not just to have an outdoor cooking area, but to have a space for socialising, in close connection with the interior of the house.

The outdoor kitchen according to:



Abimis

Abimis expands its range of outdoor kitchens. In addition to Ego and Atelier, established symbols of the brand, designed for large spaces - the former with soft lines in 1950s style and the latter more rigorous and with a professional touch - the more versatile and compact Atria is about to make its debut. The first outdoor project by Abimis, it carries the mark of the Delineo studio and Massimo Rosati. Its minimalist lines and extensive customisation possibilities, in terms of configuration and colour, make it suitable for various types of contexts, while details like the slender legs with adjustable feet and contrasting handles, define its character and its sartorial soul. Every Abimis kitchen is tailor-made to meet diverse needs in terms of structure/materials and equipment.



Modulnova

With Project 05, curated by designers Carlo Presotto and Andrea Bassanello, Modulnova introduces an innovative kitchen designed for outdoor spaces that perfectly embodies its expertise and strong identity. Timeless design blends seamlessly and harmoniously into the landscape, playing with volumes, colours and textures. The dynamic interaction of volumes and colours beautifully echoes the interplay of light and shadows found in nature. Elements from the Mediterraneo and Block collections feature precious materials such as Graphite raw stone, Nero absolute granite, and Black dust metal in an elegant chromatic scale of intense grays. At the heart of the project lies the Block island, in Nero absolute granite with a millerighe finish, and the Mediterraneo worktop in Graphite raw stone, 20 cm thick, featuring an integrated basin and stainless steel hob. The island incorporates a compartment for herbs and another space that can be customised according to individual preferences. The Sipario sideboard, available in various modular configurations for further personalisation, completes the system. The interplay of light and shadow that mark the entire project is also reflected in the sideboard, accentuated by the alternating volumes between swinging doors and vertical elements, mirroring the finishes of the kitchen to establish a harmonious connection between the elements.



COOKING UP HISTORY: THE STIRRING TALE OF POTS AND PANS

In the bustling, steamy heart of every kitchen lies a legacy of history told by humble yet indispensable tools: our everyday pots and pans. From the rudimentary clay vessels of ancient civilisations to the rocket-science designer marvels of the modern age, these kitchen essentials have witnessed the evolution of culinary culture. Join DM on a captivating journey through time as we investigate the fascinating and at times surprising saga of pots and pans.

In today's society, while much emphasis is placed on the quality and origins of ingredients in our kitchens, the essential tools used for cooking are often overlooked, yet they play a vital role in the success or failure of our culinary endeavours. The history of cooking utensils traces back to the discovery of fire, which enabled early humans to settle down and develop civilisations. The advent of cooking, particularly boiling water, marked a significant transition from nature to culture, tenderising food and creating hearty broths. Initially

crafted from clay, cooking vessels evolved with the progression of civilisation, incorporating materials like copper, iron, bronze, and steel.

Common roots

In the early stages of civilisation, the remarkable consistency of cookware's fundamental characteristics across different cultures stands out. While varying in decorative elements and specialised utensils for specific, local recipes, pots and pans serve the same essential functions worldwide.

Whether in Japan or Scotland, these tools boil, stew, fry, and sear with uniformity, adapting only in shape, material, and size to local customs and kitchen settings. For example, woks, designed for open flame stoves in Chinese cuisine, offer distinct advantages for stir-frying with their rounded shapes and temperature control. Similarly, cast-iron pots suit Northern European slow-cooked stews, allowing cooks to multitask as meals simmer unattended.

“Roman ‘puls’ is the ancestor of nearly all of the civilised world’s traditional specialities”

The universal stew

Wet cooking was the watershed innovation that set apart the prehistoric hunter-gatherer from the civilised cook. It implied the use of water, a vessel to boil it in, and any ingredients that were at hand, such as cereals, vegetables, fats and, when available, meat and fish.

This combination, believe it or not, is in fact the recipe to almost any traditional dish in the Western world, and for that matter also of a good part of the rest of the planet.

The Romans called it “puls”, from the sound flour made when it was dropped into it to thicken it. Roman puls was of course exported to the rest of the Roman world, and adapted to local ingredients and tastes, so it might have become ‘Polenta’ in Northern Italy, after Corn was introduced from the Americas, of indeed Porridge in Great Britain, or French Cassoulet, Brazilian Feijoada...

The ennoblement of cuisine

For centuries, cooking and cooks were confined to the kitchen, and it wasn’t until the 19th century that they gained relative importance in society. The Congress of Vienna, where the future of post-Napoleon Europe was discussed, saw food and cooks take center stage in the proceedings, as if diplomacy had been left to cooks and pots. The well-known quote from Talleyrand in response to Louis XVIII, who attempted to give him instructions before his departure for Vienna, is emblematic of this evolution: ‘Sire, I need more pots than written instructions. Give me good cooks, and I will give you a good treaty.’ Antonin Carême, chef to Talleyrand, was possibly the first celebrity chef in history. He initiated a trend that never stopped and continues to the present day, with celebrity chefs sharing the public limelight with football players, movie stars, pop singers, and politicians.



Designers stir up the scene

Eugenio Medagliani, known internationally as “the humanist cauldroner”, was an artisan maker of bespoke pots and pans for the hospitality industry. Among his clients, avant-garde chefs and designers from the most iconic brands. In the second half of the 20th Century, design gave a push forward to the dormant world of pot-making, which hadn’t evolved much since the early codification of Scappi in the 15th Century. Apart from Papin’s invention of the pressure cooker, there hadn’t been much innovation either, except perhaps for non-stick coatings, still controversial to the present day, and the use of noble materials such as gold and silver. Pots certainly adapted to advances in technology, notably induction cooktops, that required iron-based bottoms, and microwaves, with an entire panoply of plastic cookware.

Medagliani experimented with shapes with a pragmatic, yet at the same time poetic, approach, taking into account the scientific principles behind the cooking process but also the need for an emotionally engaging result. For Gualtiero Marchesi, a three-starred Italian celebrity chef, he designed a “straight-spaghetti cooker”, and a “pyramid shaper” for one of Marchesi’s signature rice dishes.

He also collaborated with Bruno Munari, who, along with brother Francesco, founded FBM for the production of moulded plastic

“Before the ingredient, there’s the pot”

*Eugenio Medagliani,
the humanist cauldroner*

handles and accessories for pots. These were years of great ferment, and true innovation broke through in 1985 with Alessi’s Pasta Set, designed by Massimo Morozzi with technical assistance from Medagliani. Featuring an integrated strainer, this revolutionary design instantly became widely copied, transforming the way pasta is cooked worldwide. Alessi emerged as a true emblem of style in the field, collaborating extensively with world-acclaimed designers. It is worth mentioning Patricia Urquiola’s iconic Edo collection in this context.”

The rich history of pots and pans, and its evolution, provides us with a roadmap for future innovation. While reflecting on the timeless functionality of these humble kitchen essentials, we are prompted to explore new horizons in design, materials, and technology. The future holds untapped potential for reimagining these tools in ways that marry tradition with innovation. From integrating smart technology to enhancing sustainability, the possibilities are endless, embracing the challenge of reinventing pots and pans for the modern age, while honouring the timeless legacy of cooking that they represent.

THE DEMOCRATISATION OF MISE EN PLACE

A visual journey into the evolution of the art of dining in the company of Alessi, the iconic brand who has been interpreting and anticipating trends and new design styles in this field for over 100 years.

For a long time, the art of entertaining served as the measuring stick to assess a hostess's capacities, to the extent that placing a silver fork instead of a mother-of-pearl one could signify a passport to social ascension rather than failure. The art of table setting has long been deeply intertwined with the public certification of a certain status, primarily financial, of a family or even an entire social class. It was, and to some extent still is, a way to express one's taste, but more importantly, one's wealth and social prestige.

This need was met by the hyper-specialisation of plates, glasses, and especially cutlery, which has remained unchanged and was handed down through generations until recent decades. In the last twenty years, there has been a slow but gradual evolution of table setting towards simplification, a sort of "democratisation" of the table. To visually narrate this journey, we chose to be accompanied by Alessi, an Italian company that has been producing design objects for the home and kitchen since 1921 and is now considered an icon of design due to its focus on innovative design and craftsmanship, as well as for many collaborations with renowned international designers, including Ettore Sottsass, Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni, Stefano Giovannoni, Alessandro Mendini, Philippe Starck, Ron Arad, and many others.



CREDITS: 150UP

From formalism to personalism

What influenced the evolution of mise en place?

Firstly, social simplification, which, while preserving the value of this ritual, made the preservation of the table's aesthetic formalism less stringent. On the one hand, there's a growing trend towards a personalisation in the dynamics of table setting, in line with one's own style, aesthetic taste, and culinary habits; on the other hand, there's a certain inclination to a more minimalist mise en place. Visually, this translates into fewer objects on the table, with the elimination of the superfluous and focusing only on the essential elements. This may include, for example, the use of a single set of cutlery, and a reduced number of plates and glasses. In line with this trend, Alessi redesigned its plate collections over the years, proposing two plates for the main courses, together with a variety of differently sized plates inspired by different culinary cultures.

The reduction of the number of elements also characterised the proposal of cutlery and tableware, now composed almost exclusively of the four main utensils (fork, knife, spoon, and teaspoon). This simplification of the table is also a direct consequence of the fact that homes are increasingly compact, leading to the purchase of simpler, fewer, but more functional kitchen accessories.

The simplification of the table also affected the offer of dish collections, with sets consisting only of main course plates, or divided by size and function.

Alessi's Tonale dinnerware set designed by David Chipperfield.



Compared to twenty years ago, the mise en place was simplified by eliminating superfluous elements and focusing on the essentials. Cutlery collections have been drastically downsized in favour of sets composed of only the four main utensils. Above, the Mami cutlery set designed for Alessi by Stefano Giovannoni in 1999, below, the KnifeForkSpoon cutlery series designed by Jasper Morrison for Alessi in 2004.



CREDITS: SANTI CALECA



A second factor that contributed to this evolution is the increasing variety of food products: thanks to the greater availability of foods from around the world, people have had the opportunity to experiment with new ingredients, mixing different cuisines. This directly impacted the use of table objects. One significant example is what is called the “menage”, typically a set of containers for oil, vinegar, salt and pepper, and traditionally among the best-selling items for Alessi : it is now less considered by consumers, who are increasingly oriented towards buying new kinds of containers in order to offer a variety of condiments from various culinary cultures. It should also be noted that the sharing of different recipes and culinary traditions is also interpreted as the actual sharing of what one is eating, resulting in a fragmentation of the traditional dish system and an overall reduction of dimensions.



CREDITS: 150UP

Over the past 20 years, the blending of different culinary traditions and the new inclination for sharing dishes at the table, contributed to the evolution of specific table objects, such as condiment holders: the traditional set for oil, vinegar, and salt has been replaced by individual items that are specific to each condiment or spice.

Left, the Oliera 5070 condiment set designed by Ettore Sottsass for Alessi in 1972. Right, Pepé Le Moko designed by Jasper Morrison in 1998.

The growing popularity of cooking TV shows like Masterchef and Bake Off led to an increasing number of people developing a passion for cooking. Many individuals have become true “home chefs,” paying attention to ingredients and creating new recipes capable of expressing their personality and style. Home cooking has thus become a creative and rewarding activity, and the food preparation process is shared with family and friends, becoming an opportunity for bonding and conviviality.

These new dynamics have also resulted in the merging of food preparation and consumption, consequently, the objects dedicated to these two distinct moments have also fused. The new behaviours have influenced the kitchen environment itself, as in the case of a layout conception that until a few years ago was typically American: the “island”, around which one can cook for friends while nibbling on appetisers.



PH MATTEO IMBRIANI

Today, unlike some years ago, cooking and enjoying food represents a unique moment that aims to promote socialising and conviviality, starting from the aperitif, which preparation has also evolved, becoming more elaborate and requiring the use of new accessories.

On the left, one of the first Alessi cocktail sets by Ettore Sottsass bar2, on the right, the recent Tending Box.

The beauty of simplicity

One last factor that has influenced the transformation of mise en place is a growing keenness for relaxation, mirroring the language of fashion and photography. Various cultural and social factors have contributed to this, like the desire to find moments of peace and relaxation within an otherwise hectic lifestyle. Relaxation thus becomes a highly sought-after attribute and is translated, in the fashion world, into the proposition of comfortable clothing with relaxed lines, and in images and messages that highlight aspects of individuality and authenticity in photography. Always attentive to expressing the spirit of the times through its products, Alessi, on the occasion of its centennial anniversary celebrations in 2021, introduced a new limited edition cutlery set imagined by fashion genius and streetwear inventor Virgil Abloh, who sadly passed away that same year. His “Occasional Objects” set upturned the old paradigm of cutlery which conceived its design as entirely related to the table. Abloh linked it instead to the human body, as if they were fashion accessories (see box). This democratisation and rejection of perfection in favour of a growing appreciation for natural and spontaneous aesthetics translates, in terms of mise en place, into a reduction in the number of elements, which have also shrunk in size. The only exception to this simplification is the glasses, a “counter-trend” linked to the growing wine culture and therefore to the desire of enjoying it using the most appropriate objects.



CREDITS: ALESSANDRO MILANI

Occasional Objects, a three-piece limited edition cutlery set with a carabiner.



CREDITS: ALESSANDRO MILANI

Conversational Objects, a 16-piece cutlery set with a cutlery holder and a candlestick.

ALESSI AND VIRGIL ABLOH: DISRUPTING MISE EN PLACE ETIQUETTE

In 2021, on the occasion of its 100 years anniversary, celebrating the beginning of a new century of artistic experimenting, Alessi introduced the first of two projects resulting from their collaboration with fashion designer Virgil Abloh, who passed away that same year. The first collection is called “Occasional Objects” and consists of a limited edition set of stainless steel cutlery composed of a knife, a fork, a spoon, and a singular carabiner that binds them together, both as a way to contextualise them in a new way of setting the table and as a wearable fashion accessory. The cutlery, traditionally associated with the formality of mise en place, is interpreted instead as an instrument of conviviality, free from all conventions.

In 2022, Conversational Objects was launched: a 16-piece cutlery set paired with a candlestick and a cutlery holder resembling a threaded bolt, inspired by the world of mechanical workshops. The collection aims at stimulating conversation over the ritual of the meal, envisioning the table as a stage for dialogue.



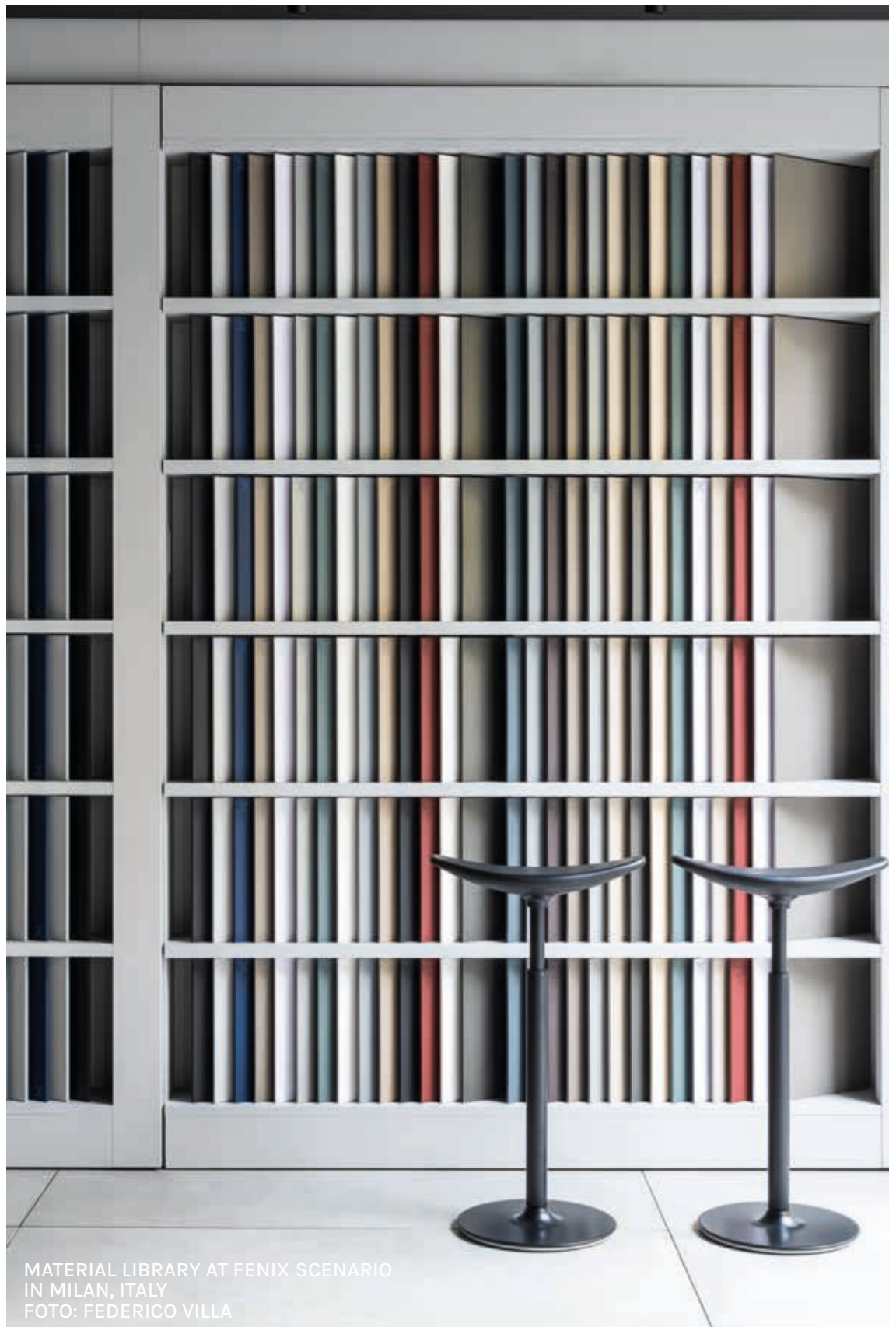
CREDITS: 150UP

The growing trend of relaxation translates into a natural look and the reduction of overall elements. The Alessi PlateBowlCup set in the photo exemplifies this evolution.

FENIX[®], INNOVATIVE MATERIALS FOR INTERIOR DESIGN

Due to their unique features, resulting from the use of proprietary production processes and raw materials, FENIX[®] surfaces are among the most innovative in terms of environmental sustainability, lending themselves to a wide range of applications, from various types of furniture to interior design, and even industrial design products.

The issue of the environment is now central, due to the negative impact humans have on the planet in terms of pollution and excessive consumption of energy, water, and land, resulting in a direct effect on climate change. The growing awareness around this issue also influenced the world of interior design, to the extent that in recent years, there has been talk of sustainable interior design. This translated into an approach to interior furnishing that takes into account the environmental, social, and economic impact of design choices. This means creating interior spaces that are environmentally conscious through the use of sustainable materials, envisaging waste reduction, and the efficient use of resources. This may also involve the use of low-energy lighting systems, the adoption of water-saving devices, and adapting natural lighting to reduce electricity consumption. Some principles of sustainable interior design further include the use of quality and more durable furniture, thereby reducing waste and obsolescence.



MATERIAL LIBRARY AT FENIX SCENARIO
IN MILAN, ITALY
FOTO: FEDERICO VILLA

Sustainable materials and interior design

The main aspect of sustainable interior design, however, concerns the use of sustainable materials. These are defined as materials that are produced in an environmentally conscious manner, minimising their environmental impact throughout their lifespan, and that can be recycled or safely disposed of at the end of their lifecycle.

These materials are subjected to international standards through various organisations, which provide guidelines and certifications to assess their impact on the environment (see box).

In the world of interior design, one of the most sustainable materials today is FENIX, a product created by Arpa Industriale in 2013. It has now become an open system encompassing innovative surfaces and solutions designed for interior furnishing and installations.

The FENIX range comes in three versions - FENIX NTM®, FENIX NTM® Bloom, and FENIX NTA® - ideal for both horizontal and vertical applications in kitchens, tables, bathrooms, doors, and any furniture element, in addition to a multiplicity of other market segments. FENIX is part of the laminates family, one of the most common surface materials for furniture, countertops, and wall finishes in kitchens and bathrooms, obtained by pressing multiple layers of paper impregnated in thermosetting resins. Its strongpoint is the high resistance to various mechanical and chemical stresses to which it is subjected: impacts, heat, stains, scratches, or abrasions...

X-KIN, a recent addition to the FENIX® family, was developed specifically for wall coverings and cladding of structural elements for interior design. It is a flexible material which can be applied like wallpaper. Like the entire FENIX® family, it is exceptionally opaque, soft to the touch, fingerprint-resistant, and has excellent colour resistance to light.



TABLE IN FENIX® GRIGIO ARAGONA AND BLU SHABA
FOTO: NATHALIE KRAG



FENIX® X-KIN GRIGIO BROMO /
COURTESY OF ARPA INDUSTRIALE

Why FENIX is FENIX

The result of years of research, FENIX® is made with next generation acrylic resins, hardened and fixed through an Electron Beam Curing process - which confers it its distinctive characteristics. Among these is the low light reflectivity that makes the surface extremely matte, anti-fingerprint, and pleasantly soft to the touch. The exceptionally matte appearance of the surface stands out as unique among other laminates, to the extent that Arpa Industriale can be credited with igniting the matte trend in interior design and significantly contributing to its widespread adoption and success.

Its main property is the possibility to thermally repair micro surface scratches. Not surprisingly, the name FENIX® is inspired by the legend of the Phoenix, the mythical bird capable of rising to new life from its own ashes.



BATHROOM VANITY BY LEM ARCHITETTURA IN FENIX NTM®
BLOOM AZZURRO NAXOS / COURTESY OF ARPA INDUSTRIALE



KITCHEN BY LEM ARCHITETTURA IN FENIX NTM® BLOOM ROSSO
ASKJA / COURTESY OF ARPA INDUSTRIALE

The FENIX® family

With respect to FENIX NTM® products, the firstborn of the FENIX® family, FENIX NTM® Bloom products stand out for their core, made with a thermosetting resin that uses lignin, the second most abundant natural polymer in the world after cellulose. This allowed for a significant reduction, namely 50%, in the amount of phenol.

The Bloom technology, developed by Arpa after more than seven years of intense research work, is applied across the range to the “core” of Arpa laminates. Similarly, FENIX NTA® shares the same properties of the FENIX® family but distinguishes itself by the presence of a metal layer in the surface structure.

Sustainability = concrete actions

The thermal healing of superficial micro-scratches and other unique characteristics make FENIX® an extremely durable material. Product durability is indeed the main driver of Arpa Industriale’s entire sustainability policy. The longer the product’s life, the more time is available to mitigate the environmental impact associated with raw material production and the manufacturing process. Not only that: since they involve fewer replacements, long-lasting products result in reduced resource usage, lower pollutant emissions, and less waste compared to shorter-lived goods.

The capitalisation of product and material longevity is part of the company’s corporate sustainability policy since 2010. It has been incorporated into the company’s business plan and can be summarised by the motto “do no harm, do good, do better”.

The objective of such policy is the constant reduction of the environmental impact as measured by the Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) method. This methodology involves measuring key indicators that affect environmental impact throughout the production process. It enables the definition of effective strategies to reduce the company’s overall impact in terms of energy, water, and CO2 emissions. In this respect, Arpa’s most ambitious goal focuses on CO2 emissions, with a 28% decrease by 2026 to successively reach full Carbon Neutral status, which FENIX already achieved in 2021.



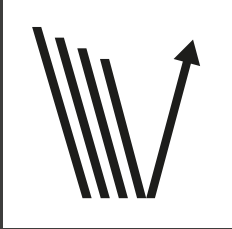
FENIX® X-KIN ROSSO JAIPUR BRINA LIMITED
EDITION / COURTESY OF ARPA INDUSTRIALE

CORPORATE PROFILE

Arpa Industriale is an Italian company founded in 1954, operating globally in the interior design materials market. Its high-quality surfaces and innovative materials are produced at its 150,000 sqm plant in Bra, Northern Italy. The company has long been aware of its responsibilities towards all stakeholders, including the broader social and environmental context in which it operates. Arpa Industriale is part of Broadview Holding, a leading global group in surface materials.

arpaindustriale.com
fenixforinteriors.com

FENIX’S MAIN FEATURES



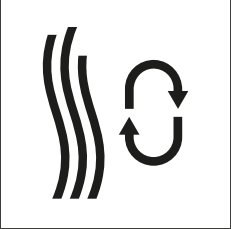
Low light reflectivity



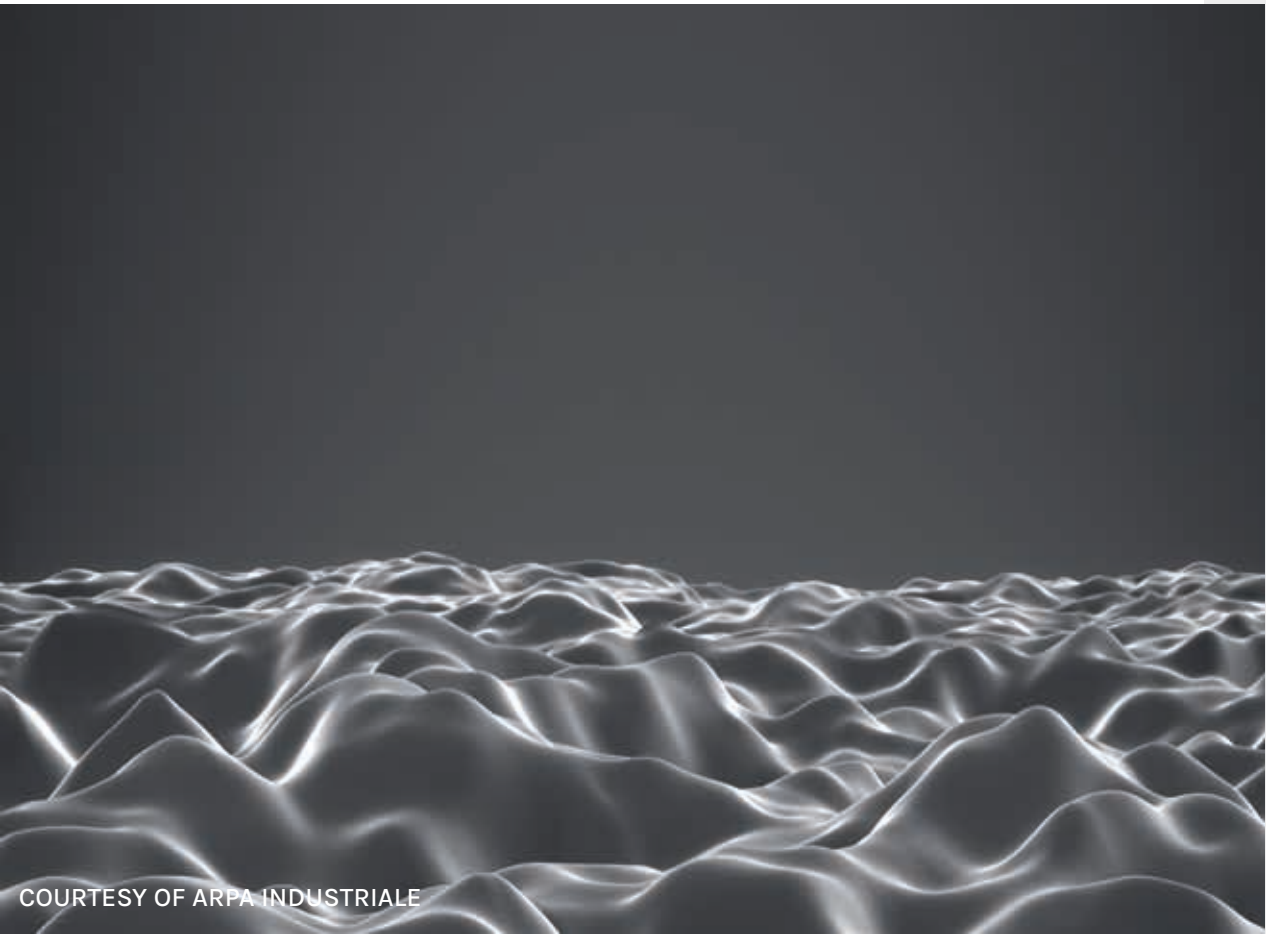
Soft touch



Anti-fingerprint



Thermal healing



THE TECHNOLOGY BEHIND FENIX®

FENIX® is obtained by the simultaneous application of heat and pressure, in order to achieve a homogeneous, non-porous product with a high density. The core consists of paper impregnated in thermosetting resins. The outer surface is composed of a substrate of paper treated with next generation acrylic resins, applied as a multilayer coating and then polymerised through an Electron Beam Curing process. Observed under a microscope, the structure of FENIX® appears as an irregular landscape of peaks and valleys. When light waves strike this material, the angle of incidence is not equal across the entire surface. Therefore, light is reflected in different directions. This is what makes FENIX so perfectly opaque.

CERTIFICATIONS

FENIX is certified according to current reference standards. Furthermore:

- Food contact suitability.
- NSF (National Sanitation Foundation) certifies the material as suitable for food contact.
- Greenguard IAQ confirms that the material excels in low indoor pollutant emissions.
- IMO MED. FENIX NTM (0.9 mm thickness) and FENIX NTA (0.7 mm): both materials are suitable for use on board ships.
- M1 certification according to the Building Information Foundation RTS, verifying the emissions of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from FENIX when used as a building material.

Visitors at the upcoming EuroCucina and International Bathroom Exhibition “Biennali” are in for a thrilling experience, as new exhibition paths have been designed following a human-centric philosophy, with the help of neuroscience and AI. Three large immersive installations, pervasive cultural events, talks and tasting experiences linked to the food&design world: this and much more is awaiting visitors from all over the world at the 62nd edition of this leading design event slated for April 16th to 21st in Milan. DM talked to Salone del Mobile’s President Maria Porro.



CREDITS: SALONE DEL MOBILE MILANO @DELFINO SISTO LEGNANI

Salone del Mobile.Milano 2024: sparking a new era of evolution and innovation.



CREDITS: GUIDO STAZZONI

Maria Porro, president of the Salone del Mobile.Milano

It's that time of the year again when Milan hosts its internationally acclaimed stage for the "beautiful" and "well-crafted". Salone del Mobile, held every April, has been a cornerstone in the furniture and design industry at global level since 1961. It alternates biennial events Euroluce, EuroCucina, and the Salone Internazionale del Bagno. The former in odd years, the latter two in even years, as is the case with the 2024 edition. The 62nd edition is taking place at Fiera Milano Rho from April 16th to 21st and is marked by a new and challenging approach, continuing its evolutionary process and transformation in order to consolidate its international leadership in the furniture and design sectors.

At operational level this translates, among other novelties, into a radical rethink of layouts and itineraries within EuroCucina, with a communication campaign created through artificial intelligence. This year the FTK - Technology For the Kitchen - pavilion is integrated into the main venue, and the Salone Internazionale del Bagno was conceived with the contribution of neuroscience and under the banner of a human-at-the-center philosophy.

Also, visitors are offered an impressive, extensive cultural program throughout the event, not to mention the celebrations for the 25th anniversary of the SaloneSatellite, a launchpad for young designers and a reference point for companies seeking new talents. This edition boasts around 600 designers from 37 countries and 22 Design Schools and International Universities from 13 countries. DM discussed all of this, and more, with President Maria Porro:

In the 2024 edition of the Salone del Mobile, FTK-Technology For the Kitchen is effectively integrated into the new spaces of EuroCucina. Is this confirmation that the world of appliances is playing an increasingly central role within the kitchen environment, also in terms of design?

It is absolutely so, the integration of appliances into kitchen design is a fact. Just think of fully integrated induction hobs in kitchens, or the invisible ones hidden under the surface of the countertop. The integration of FTK within EuroCucina is the result of the evolution of the furniture industry, which today, when called



CREDITS: SALONE DEL MOBILE MILANO @DELFINO SISTO LEGNANI

upon to design a new kitchen, starts from the technological innovations developed in the world of appliances. This integration also brings a greater design freedom and the use of new materials that allow for the creation of a seamless connection between the furniture and the appliances.

The new layouts of the Biennials also mean a new positioning in pavilions 2 and 4. What's the reason behind this move?

In fact there are two: on one hand, to consolidate the physical location of the Biennials, which in the future will tend to stay there, and on the other hand, to create a whole district dedicated to the world of furniture, with all the major manufacturers who always participate in the event, and the various pavilions being closer to each other and more accessible.

Also in this edition, many events will be related to food design...

Food design stands at the forefront of research in the culinary field. We chose to link many events to this theme, through the participation of independent culinary magazines, artists, and food designers, in order for food research to take center stage. This is also a way to evolve the “furniture” product, which aim is indeed to prepare and cook food. This “reverse” approach to the product represents, in my opinion, the most unrestricted and interesting form of research, both for visitors and for the companies participating in the Salone del Mobile.

In the past months the Salone has been engaged in a world tour. For what purpose?

Our priority is to enhance the quality of visitors who come to the Salone, which is why we have chosen to promote it with a world tour, touching Europe, the United States, Canada, China, India, Japan, Korea, and South Africa. We were able to meet with high-quality stakeholders whom we want to come and visit the Salone and discover our companies and brands.

Shanghai's Red Night last November proved the strategic importance of the Chinese market for Italian design. What opportunities does China offer today, and in the near future, for the world of Italian designer furniture?

The Salone has a crucial role in facilitating encounters among top players, which may translate into solid and enduring relationships over time. On one hand, it supports companies in strengthening existing connections, while on the other hand, it assists companies that have not yet entered foreign markets in discovering their optimal positioning. Moreover, when expanding abroad, the Salone handpicks the brands it introduces, thereby guaranteeing the quality expressed by these companies participating in the international editions. This role for the Salone del Mobile Shanghai is significant as it helps Chinese final consumers and buyers understand which players are the most important, innovative, and reliable. China is a vast territory, and currently, the distribution of brands is mostly limited to first-tier cities and only occasionally to second-tier ones. Therefore, it is a market that offers numerous opportunities, and the quality of designers is constantly improving. Consequently, establishing relationships with interior designers and architects would make for very interesting synergies for the world of Italian furniture. The COVID-19 pandemic put this opportunity on hold for a long time, but today, all conditions are there for it to happen.



What contribution can the Salone del Mobile, and more broadly, Italian-made, offer to the Chinese/Asian markets in terms of environmental sustainability?

When I think of European Union's regulations on environmental sustainability, the European Green Deal, or the United Nations Global Compact (advocated in 1999 to promote a sustainable global economy), there's a very clear indication that the entire Italian furniture system and the Salone, both as the organiser of the event and in the content it offers, have moved along the sustainability path with great seriousness. This clearly shows in the ISO 20121 certification, obtained in 2023, for the sustainable management of the entire event and in particular of the areas dedicated to this subject, as well as for a series of initiatives and actions aimed at implementing principles of circularity and regeneration. These issues are central to our actions and to our thinking.

In your opinion, what are the main challenges that designers and architects will have to face in designing the future of our homes and living spaces?

Certainly, the durability of products and their ability to be replaceable, repairable, and renewable will be increasingly appreciated. In practice, it's about the intrinsic value of a product and its longevity. The test, therefore, lies not in the product itself but in the service offered to meet these requirements. This is a challenge of the greatest significance since it represents our most sustainable response at this time.

salonemilano.it



CREDITS: LOST AND ROLL. GIANLUCA VASSALLO



Salone del Mobile.Milano

16-21 april: duration of the event

More than **172.500 sqm:**
total surface of the exhibition area

Close to **1.900:**
the number of exhibitors,
600 of which are designers

30%:
percentage of foreign brands
and companies (excluding
SaloneSatellite).

**EuroCucina/ FTK
Technology For the Kitchen**

100:
number of exhibitors

35%:
percentage of foreign participants

24.000 sqm:
total dedicated floor surface

SaloneSatellite

600
designers and international design
school graduates

3.500:
dedicated floor space

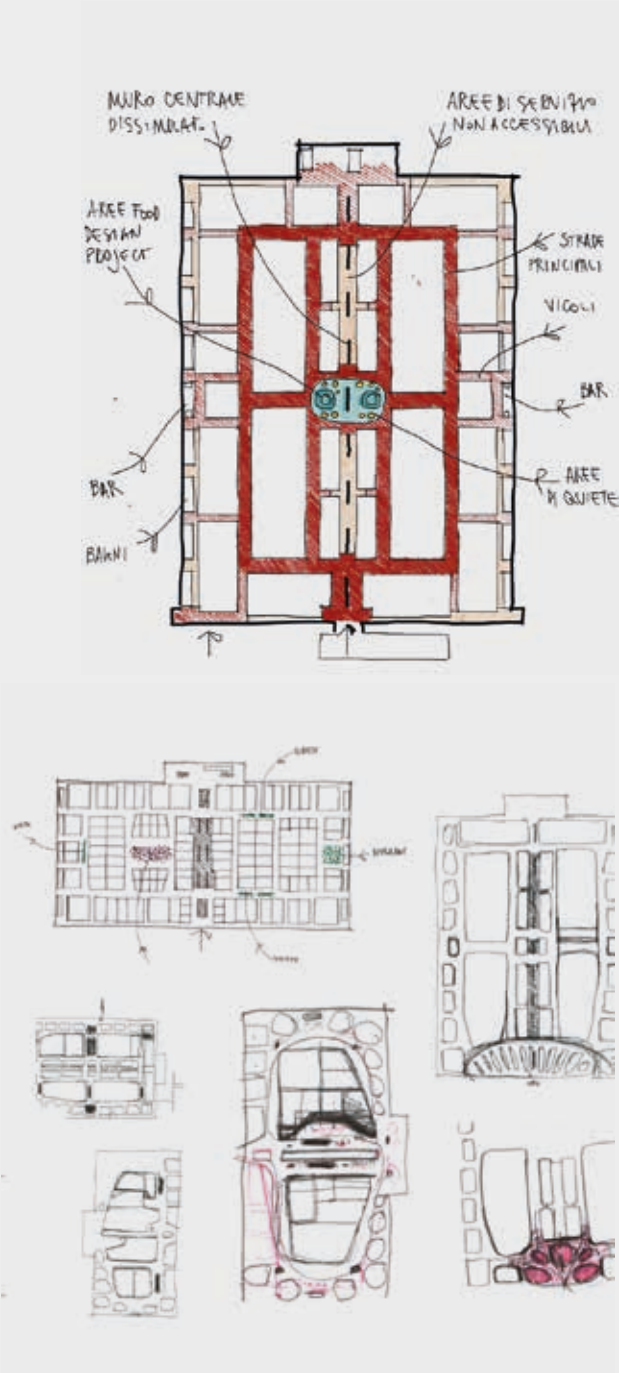
The Red Night



After an absence of three years, the Salone del Mobile made its return to Shanghai on November 7th with the exclusive event “The Red Night,” where it unveiled previews of the 62nd edition of the trade show and outlined future projects for the Salone del Mobile.Milano Shanghai.

EUROCUCINA’S NEW LAYOUT

Starting from the centrality of the individual and leveraging artificial intelligence, Studio Lombardini 22, a leading group on the Italian architecture and engineering scene, has redesigned the layout and paths within EuroCucina, FTK - Technology For the Kitchen - and the International Bathroom Exhibition. The pavilions’ locations have been totally redistributed, with exhibitors grouped by content and target visitors in order to enhance the visiting experience. For the first time, the two biennials are now located in pavilions 2 and 4, adjacent and interconnected. The exhibition spaces of EuroCucina and FTK have been integrated, abandoning the traditional grid display with the central “decumanus”, in favour of a ring-shaped track layout with a “boulevard”. A symmetrical path has been created by placing the booths against the external perimeter walls, as if they were shop windows in a city high street. By doing so, visitors can access all the booths by traveling half the distance compared to the traditional setup, without the risk of getting lost or confused. The main alleyways, at least 6 meters wide, have been clearly differentiated from the secondary ones, making orientation simpler, and cultural installations and quiet areas have been inserted in the wider boulevards.



CREDITS: LOMBARDINI22

“INTERIORS BY DAVID LYNCH. A THINKING ROOM”

The celebrity American director conceived one of the three immersive art installations of the 62nd edition of the Salone. The intent was to offer a reflection, in an original and metaphysical way, on the production of interiors and how deep and intimate their relationship is with those who purchase those furnishings. The 50 sqm installation is located between pavilions 5 and 7. Italian filmmaker and writer Antonio Monda, curator of the project, emphasised how Lynch himself loves creating furniture with his own hands. The project was developed in collaboration with the Piccolo Teatro di Milano, who translated Lynch’s fascinating, artistic thoughts into actual scenery, materially building his Thinking Room, preceded by a winding architectural structure consisting of a burgundy curtain leading into the installation.



David Lynch

CREDITS: DEAN HURLEY



CREDITS: LOMBARDINI22

Interiors by David Lynch. A thinking Room

A communication campaign using generative AI

It’s called “Where Design Evolves” and it’s the new communication campaign of the Salone del Mobile.Milano 2024. It was conceived by Publicis Groupe with the scientific collaboration of Paolo Ciuccarelli, a design professor and founder of the DensityDesign Lab at the Politecnico di Milano and the Center for Design at Northeastern University in Boston.

The key visuals were created using generative Artificial Intelligence to understand, analyse, and visualise the stories, relationships, and emotions that the event brings out throughout the year. The new all-channel communication platform, using AI-driven processes, was specially developed to analyse conversations on relevant topics, catch real-time debates in the community, hear the voice of brands, designers, and visitors, expressing their thoughts, through a constantly evolving fluid platform.

By integrating human creativity with the innovative power of Artificial Intelligence, the various key visuals of the campaign will become true harbingers of experiences, memories, and conversations, constantly evolving and conveying the emotions stirred by the event in real-time.



Total freedom of space

The FF4-65 Perfect Slot-In model is the first of a new generation of free-standing refrigerators designed by Homa for the built-in world, blending style, technology, and high performance.

Imagine having just purchased a new designer kitchen, fraught with high-quality materials and refined finishes, and meticulously crafted in every detail. Now imagine wanting to install a new refrigerator. You would want it to be large, possibly a four-door model as per the current trend, and therefore in full view, indeed stunning to look at, but perfectly integrated into your kitchen environment. You start your search, but soon realise that you'll have to give up on your dream because free-standing refrigerators currently on the market only partially meet all these requirements: say you finally found the four-door version with the aesthetics you were looking for, but its depth is greater than that of the cabinets, not to mention the fact that to avoid the risk of the product overheating or the walls of the adjacent cabinets being damaged, you must leave some clearance all around it to allow air circulation. Consequently, gone is your visual wow effect of a seamless fit between the furniture and your star appliance: a solution that is nothing short of cringe for your designer kitchen. You're better off giving up on the much-desired four-door refrigerator and opting for a panelled built-in model, fully integrated with the kitchen.

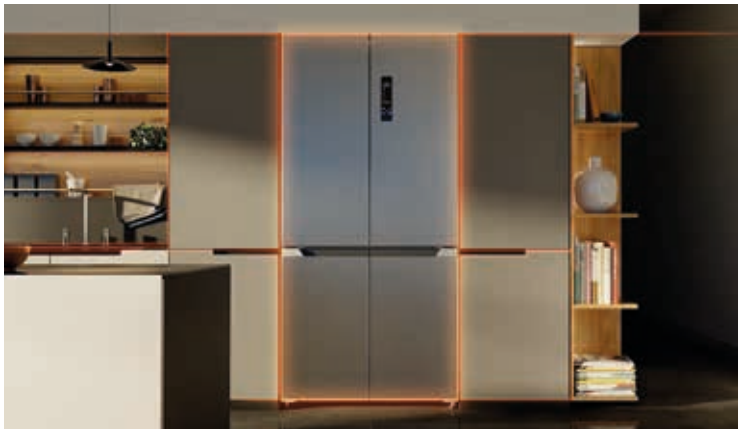
Problem solved, with Perfect Slot-In

The new Perfect Slot-In FF4-65 refrigerator is the first of a new generation of freestanding refrigerators designed specifically for the built-in world, allowing you to finally fulfil your longing for a large, freestanding refrigerator in your kitchen, without panels, fully integrated and aligned with the furniture. The model currently available is offered by Homa in the four-door version with a width of 90 cm, but the company's future plans include additional four-door models with smaller dimensions, as well as French doors and 60 cm combi models.



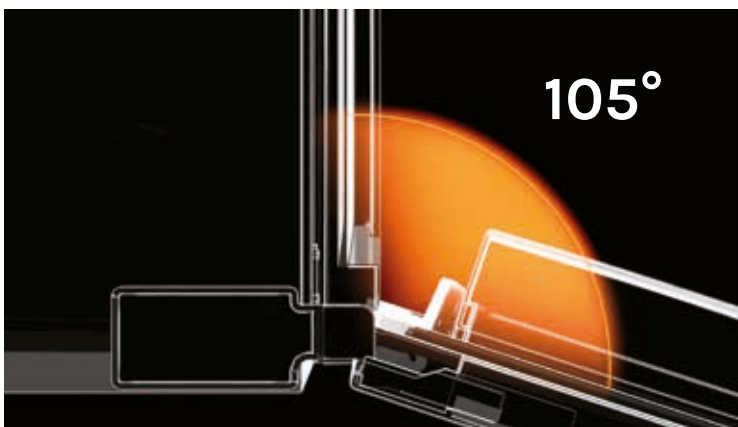
1

Compared to its counterpart free-standing model, the new Perfect Slot-In FF4-65 has a depth of 60 cm, identical to that of the kitchen cabinets. The result is a perfect alignment of the two elements.



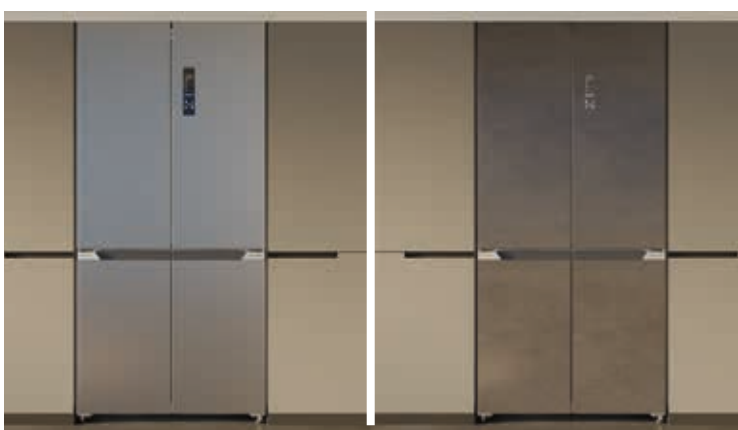
2

A second distinctive factor is true flush installation, without any gaps between the appliance and the cabinets on the sides and the back wall. The secret lies in the integrated compressor-inverter compartment located at the bottom back of the refrigerator. Heat is vented off at floor level by forced convection through a high transfer power Inverter fan, thus preventing overheating of the appliance's side walls.



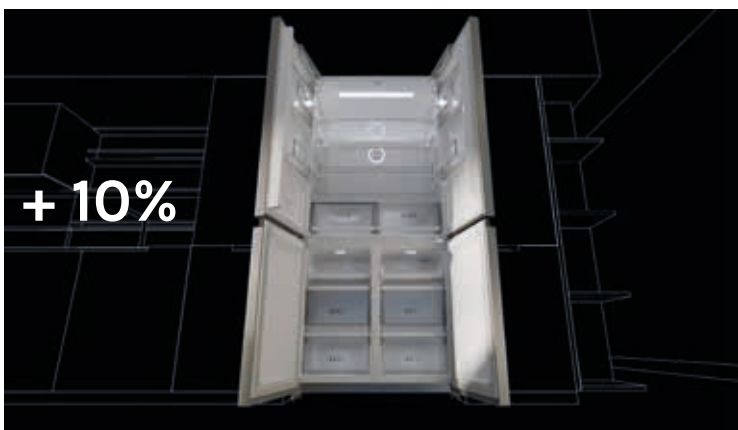
3

Once the Perfect Slot-In refrigerator is installed in its niche, the innovative hinges at the top of the doors let them open up to a maximum of 105°. This enables the freezer compartment drawers to slide out perfectly. The optimal opening of the freezer drawers combines with the high ergonomics typical of four-door models thanks to the compact size of the doors: only 45 cm.



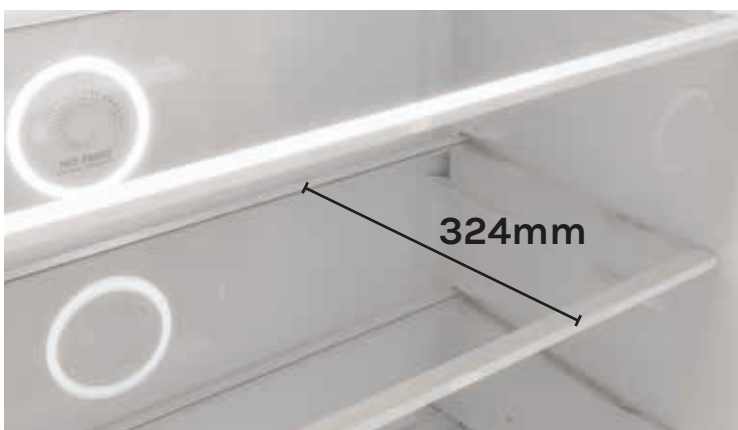
4

A further distinctive feature of the Perfect Slot-In refrigerator is the choice of two door finishes, either steel or glass. These trendy finishes, combined with a completely flat aesthetic, make for the seamless integration of the refrigerator in both modern and old-style kitchens.



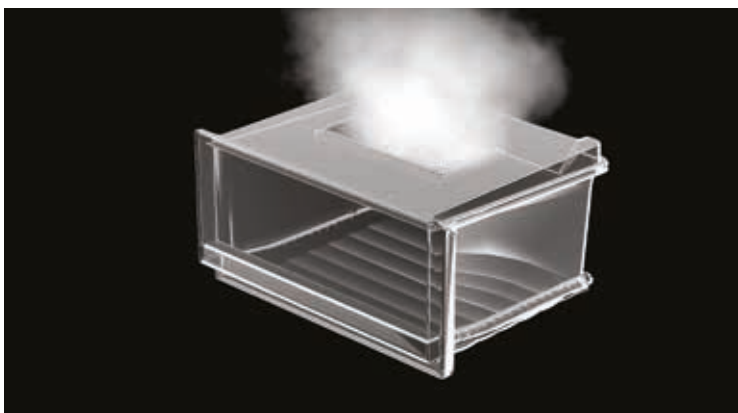
5

The technological innovation underlying the new Perfect Slot-In translates into a significant increase in the internal capacity of the refrigerator. Compared to the equivalent free-standing model, the FF4-65 features a new, reduced-thickness air circulation duct in the fridge compartment, allowing for a 10% increase in the overall internal capacity, corresponding to an additional 150 litres.



6

The full-width glass shelves are deeper compared to equivalent built-in models: a generous depth of 324 mm, allowing for the storage of large-sized food items and with a load capacity of up to 45 kg. The shelf above the crisper drawer can even accommodate dishes or particularly bulky vegetables up to a maximum of 52 cm, using all the space between the front of the refrigerator compartment and the internal door.



7

The high-end version features a moisturising drawer equipped with a special semi-permeable membrane, located at the top of the drawer, which lets gases go through but not water vapour. This way, moisture stays inside, with no increase in temperature, further optimising food hydration.

The taste of Innovation

When science meets emotions

Ferran Adrià is possibly the living incarnation of avant-garde, innovative cuisine, having disrupted all established beliefs about fine dining in his 40 years career. In this exclusive interview to DM, the father of techno-emotional cuisine reveals some inspiring insights on the philosophy of his extraordinary and unique culinary journey that changed the world of haute cuisine forever.

How would you define innovation in the kitchen, and what would you consider to be your most significant contribution to the evolution of gastronomy?

Innovating means opening paths that no one has previously explored. That was the mission of elBulli restaurant, pushing the boundaries of the culinary journey and experience. As to my own contribution to the evolution of gastronomy, it would be that of having made thousands of cooks and culinary professionals around the world think.

Continuously questioning everything allows you to evolve and define your own personality.

In your career, you have explored the connection between cuisine and art. How do you conceive the relationship between culinary creativity and artistic expression?

“I believe that cooking and art do not belong in the same realm, but in both worlds there is the intention of a creative form of expression that can resonate with humans on the same level, both sensorial, emotional, and spiritual.”



Molecular gastronomy has been an important part of your culinary approach. How do you perceive the influence of science in cooking, and how has it impacted the way we conceive flavours and textures?

In the beginning, the relationship with the scientific world served to establish a dialogue between scientists and chefs. It was a pivotal moment in the creative system of elBulli restaurant. This collaboration, and the sharing of all the advancements achieved, resulted in an unprecedented evolution in the world of cuisine.

This science-cuisine partnership gave rise to what is known as

molecular gastronomy, which in the case of elBulli stimulated creativity by incorporating scientific knowledge into haute cuisine and developing new paths in cooking. Although it should be noted that all cooking is molecular by definition, as it involves altering the molecular structure of substances through the application of heat or cold.

What changed in this case is that a dialogue was established between chefs and scientists, with the aim of developing new products, techniques, and tools for cooking that resulted in new formulations and new culinary concepts.

You have mentioned on occasions that elBulli was not just a restaurant but rather a laboratory for ideas. How do you apply this experimental approach to the interpretation of current trends in society and in haute cuisine?

As I mentioned earlier, the mission we set for ourselves at elBulli restaurant was to create new paths for others to follow. That's why it's true that elBulli restaurant pursued a mission that brought it closer to the concept of an R&D lab.

This means being at the forefront, and it's something very complex and challenging because the results are not always understood. Interestingly, I believe there's a simple reflection that explains this issue... for tradition to become such someday, there must have been a previous moment when creation and innovation paved the way. But pioneering, I repeat, is very difficult and complex.

In a world where gastronomic and social trends, in terms of lifestyles, change rapidly, how do you believe chefs can stay updated and relevant without losing their culinary identity?

I believe that the most important thing is to give priority to your own identity, remaining steadfast in your path without being swayed by the continuous changes you may perceive in the environment.

However, every chef should have an innovative mindset, with an attitude of continuous reflection and questioning in order to keep evolving.

It is also important to understand what your objectives are as a chef and/or entrepreneur, and what the customer wants when seeking a distinctive experience at your restaurant. There can be infinite aspects that influence the path to follow; your cuisine will define your restaurant and your guests' experience, but the restaurant is also a business which management is much more complex than one would imagine.



You have been a pioneer in the application of cutting-edge culinary techniques. How do you balance traditional gastronomy, the emotional cooking of our memories and hearts, with the need for constant innovation? What is the role of appliances and kitchen equipment in all of this?

The gastronomic process relies on products, techniques, and tools, along with human intervention, to apply culinary knowledge. They are fundamental. As I explained earlier, for tradition to be spoken of at some point, there must have been a first

time sometime, and therefore, not all innovation will end up becoming tradition, but every tradition has been avant-garde at some point in history. Another thing is the disruptive levels of innovation: there are many levels in the creativity pyramid, and one must seek one's own path and feel comfortable facing the challenge of creation, that is, finding the right level of disruption in order to feel fulfilled.



1 - Ferran Adrià, portrait
ph. Archivo elBullifundatio - author Juancho Everman
2 - 878/ carrot air with bitter coconut milk - 2003
ph © F. Guillamet
3 - 1062/ alphabet soup - 2004
ph © F. Guillamet
4 - 2002 Cocina equipo elBulli
ph Archivo elBullifundatio autor Bob Noto

all photo materials courtesy of elBulliFoundation archive

Food is not only a physical experience but also an emotional and aesthetic one. How do you consider the connection between food and emotions, and how does it influence your creative process?

In the kitchen of elBulli's, we worked not only on sensory perception but also on the emotional and intellectual aspects of the culinary journey. There is no experience more complex than the gastronomic experience when the creator and the recipient stand at the highest levels of excellence. All cognitive processes can interact in an extraordinary way, and therefore the connections with our emotions and feelings can be infinite.



5

Some critics argue that avant-garde cuisine can be intimidating for certain diners. How do you address accessibility without compromising culinary excellence?

The main goal of an avant-garde chef is never to please the diner but rather to create paths never successfully explored before. At elBulli restaurant, we always cared for the happiness and the enjoyment of those who visited us, but the offerings were in line with that objective. When you innovate, you must accept in advance that your proposals will not always be liked nor understood.

You have worked with unconventional ingredients and surprising techniques. How do you select your ingredients, and what is your approach to incorporating unexpected elements into your dishes?

Every creative process is different and there can be many factors influencing the outcome. The search for new products, new tools, and new culinary techniques and concepts always was our creative drive, our guiding principle, and the final creations were the result of more or less complex processes of research, testing, questioning, and reflection. Each case is different, but we certainly achieved a systematic approach to our research work that allowed us to be very efficient and long-lasting in terms of creativity.



6

About Techno-Emotional Cuisine

The Techno-Emotional movement began its journey in 1994 when elBulli started to refine its culinary style, gradually exerting influence first in Europe and America, and later across the globe. elBulli's cuisine evolved into a distinctive movement, amalgamating various culinary styles with its own unique characteristics. The term "Techno-Emotional Cuisine" was coined by Spanish food writer and journalist Pau Arenos. Techno-Emotional cuisine is frequently confused with "Molecular Cuisine," yet the latter is merely a subset of the former. Molecular Cuisine encompasses only certain aspects of Techno-Emotional cuisine, such as the utilisation of products like hydrocolloids or liquid nitrogen, among others.



Sustainability and environmental awareness are important topics nowadays. How do you integrate sustainable practices into your kitchen, and how would you encourage other chefs to do the same without sacrificing the quality of the gastronomic experience?

Sustainability is a broad concept and must be approached with an open mind, avoiding turning it into a marketing element and focusing on trying to contribute as much as possible. First we need to figure out what parts of sustainability a chef can or should be responsible for, being honest with oneself and with the environment. I believe that a clear contribution from the kitchen should involve avoiding to deplete the planet's natural resources. So obvious and yet so difficult at the same time.

5 - 247/ textured vegetable panaché - 1994
 ph © F. Guillaumet
 6 - 1628/ vanishing ravioli - 2009
 ph © F. Guillaumet
 7 - 298/ two ways of presenting chicken
 curry - 1995
 ph © F. Guillaumet
 8 - 1846/ peach Melba - 2011
 ph © F. Guillaumet
 9 - 1988 Ferran Adrià / Marketta Shilling /
 Juli Soler
 ph Archivo elBullifoundation



BIO

Ferran Adrià Acosta was born on May 14, 1962, in L'Hospitalet de Llobregat, Barcelona, Spain. Initially drawn to football, his journey into the culinary world began as a dishwasher at the Playafels Hotel, later advancing to the Admiral's kitchen during his military service in the Spanish Navy. Inspired by a fellow recruit, he embarked on a transformative path, joining the renowned elBulli restaurant in Cala Montjoi in 1983. Adrià's ascent at elBulli was meteoric; by 1986, he assumed sole chef responsibilities, spearheading a culinary revolution that would shape gastronomy forever.

During his tenure at elBulli, Adrià's innovative talent propelled the restaurant to unprecedented heights, earning it accolades as the world's best restaurant multiple times. He revolutionised culinary paradigms, departing from traditional Nouvelle Cuisine recipes to forge his own gastronomic ethos. In 2011, elBulli transitioned into the elBullifoundation, dedicated to preserving its legacy and fostering culinary innovation. Adrià's influence extends far beyond the kitchen; he has championed education, collaborated with artists, and promoted innovation worldwide, leaving an indelible mark on the culinary landscape.

elbullifoundation.com



Glossary

The Homa Essential Design Glossary: a quick reference guide to some of the concepts inspiring Homa’s design philosophy. They define the principles behind its continued success as the world’s first cooling appliances OEM provider.

Ageism

/ˈeɪdʒɪzəm/

Ageism in design refers to discrimination based on age, neglecting the needs and preferences of older adults. It involves stereotyping and exclusion, often resulting in designs that fail to accommodate their changing abilities. Addressing ageism means promoting inclusive and age-friendly solutions for people of all ages.

Biennale

/baɪˈen.i.əle/

A major international exhibition or event held every two years, typically featuring contemporary art, architecture, design, or other cultural disciplines. Notable examples include the Venice Biennale for Art and Architecture, Eurocucina in Milan, and the São Paulo Biennial.

Biophilic

/ˌbaɪ.əʊˈfɪl.i.ə/

Biophilic design refers to an approach in architecture and interior design that incorporates natural elements and processes to create spaces that enhance human well-being and connection with nature. It seeks to foster a sense of harmony, vitality, and productivity by integrating features such as natural light, vegetation, and natural materials into built environments.

Conviviality

/kənˌvɪvɪˈæləti/

In kitchen and interior design, it refers to spaces that foster social interaction and shared experiences, promoting a sense of warmth and connection among people.

Fluid spaces

/ˈfluːɪd ˈspeɪsɪz/

Environments that seamlessly transition between different functional areas or zones without the traditional barriers or boundaries like walls or partitions. These spaces are characterised by open layouts, flexible furniture arrangements, and a cohesive design aesthetic that promotes movement and interaction.

Inclusive design

/ɪnˈkluːsɪv dɪˈzaɪn/

Inclusive design aims to create products, environments, and systems that are accessible and usable by people of diverse abilities and backgrounds.

Integrated

/ˈɪntɪɡreɪtɪd/

A seamless combination of multiple components or systems into a unified whole, often providing a cohesive and efficient solution.

Kol

/kəʊl/

Acronym for “Key Opinion Leaders” Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs), individuals or entities with significant credibility and influence in the field. They are recognised for their expertise, innovative ideas, and ability to sway opinions and preferences among consumers, designers, and industry professionals. KOLs often have large followings on social media platforms and are sought after for their insights, recommendations, and endorsements within the design community.

Meta-vision

/ˈmetə-ˈvɪʒən/

It refers to an architect’s visionary approach that transcends conventional forms, shapes, and trends. It involves looking beyond the immediate object or building and its functions to envision broader concepts, ideologies, and impacts on society and the environment. It embodies a holistic perspective that considers the deeper implications and long-term effects of architectural interventions.

Outdoor living

/dɪˈzaɪn/ /dʒʌstɪs/

One of the latest trends in interior design is... outdoors! The desire for outdoor living has led architects and interior designers to blur the boundaries between the interior and the exterior of the home. Just having a garden or terrace is no longer sufficient; people are now seeking new designs that ensure a more profound and fulfilling interpretation of these spaces.

Platform

/ˈplætfɔːm/

An ensemble of products performing different tasks, but connected to each other into an integrated system, generally from a single manufacturer or brand. If you own the platform, you might also own the market.

Seamless

/ˈsiːmləs/

Smooth and uninterrupted, without visible joins or interruptions, often used to describe integration or transitions between components or systems.

Homa

ORIGINAL MARKETING ACADEMY



**New Homa Perfect Slot-In:
embrace total freedom of space.**



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Issue No. 4
April 2024
September 2024

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