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I SALONI. TAILOR-MADE DESIGN IN MILAN

by Paola Govoni

At I Saloni 2012 the Italian furniture and furnishings industry responded to the current situation in the sector in a design/production perspective, adapting supply to a demand that has not only contracted, but has also changed. A close re-visit of the catalogues has made products more realistic in terms of size, easier to transport, and more suited to a wider range of consumers, avoiding excesses and provocations. The 2012 collections presented soft, warm, plain colours. There were lots of neutral tones and reassuring shades of beige, sand, ochre, tobacco and grey. The more marked touches of colour were mostly the sophisticated composite

colours like maroon, orange, deep blue and peacock green. Even the forms are comfortable, in some ways reassuring, king size, soft and elegant.

Considerable attention is paid to the material. The design begins with the material and must respect its intrinsic characteristics and peculiarities, like Edra's "Bois de rose" containers, by Massimo Moruzzi, with randomly placed geometric modules in veneered wood, or the elegant and essential glass tables in Ron Gilad's "Grade" collection for Molteni.

Sophisticated research into materials and finishes for the Veneto firm Hange, which offers "cappuccino stone" marble, thermally treated eucalyptus, swamp oak, natural tanned leather, hand-burnished brass, fabrics woven with steel thread and finishes with natural oils and no chemical treatments or solvents.

There was a lot of marble and natural stone, even in the most unexpected applications (table legs); glass was used as a structural element in bookcases, along

with plaited leather and suede.

Fabric takes on an important role, not so much as a pattern but more as a "structural" element. Patricia Urquiola's M.a.s.s.a.s.i sofas for Moroso has a textile-covered form that is shaped by asymmetrical stitching, and for B&B Italia Urquiola once again artistically plumps up the cushioning of the "Husk" outdoor armchair. On display was also Zanotta's new collection of sofas in decorative fabrics designed by Ludovica and Roberto Palomba. Brocade and velvets were used in the seating collections showcased by SOG, accompanied by rip-stop technical fabrics and natural cowhides in imaginative art nouveau-inspired forms.

The use of fabrics cannot be separated from the concept of tailoring and attention to material inevitably brings with it renewed attention to details that are no longer considered finishing, but an integral part of the design. One example is the coloured glass top of Luca Nicetto's "Ruli" table for Gallotti & Radice, which re-visits an old Venetian technique used for glass windows in homes and churches. Others are the solid wood legs and Cristalplant top of Luis Alberto Arrivillaga's "Beam" table for MDF, and the spiral grain that rises up from the base of Antonia Astori's Spiro table for Diesel.

LIQUID KITCHEN & SURROUNDINGS

The kitchen space is one of the most complex, structured and technology-rich areas of the home. Here the research into materials, finishings, hinges and worktops and the organisation and rationalisation of movements and functions are very advanced and open up new perspectives in interior design, where the kitchen and living spaces interact closely contaminating each other's roles until they almost become one.

With Elisa and Stefano Giovannoni's "Liquid Frame" for Veneta Cucina, the kitchen frees itself from the clutches of the wall and stands in the centre of the room, offering access to utensils from two sides. The breaking away from the canonical block is now the state-of-the-art and can be realised through free standing mono-



Ernesto Gisconi. Photo Elio Basso



BLU Scavolini



Random Sides



TM Italia

functional elements (like the 'Libri' in custom furniture from Apes Inca) or free combinations of pieces (like 'Artek' designed by Paolo Piva for Veneta), with slimmers becoming a part of the design (see also Ludovica and Roberto Palomba's 'Sini' kitchen for Elnari).

Diesel, the fashion firm, is already present in the furnishings field through a partnership agreement (with Moroso) and has entered the world of kitchens with Scavolini suggesting a vintage idea with aged materials, especially oak with the knots in clear view, what has been rechristened the 'Social Kitchen'.

The historical French brand La Cornue proposed a new induction cooking range that can be integrated into the classic compositions of its kitchens. Tailoring in the kitchen, too, where the firm TM Italia, a custom-made kitchen manufacturer, presented its 'Off Kitchen', the first kitchen without technical volumes under the sink, where everything is hidden in the legs and the 'FX Carbon' kitchen in carbon fibre and wood with advanced domotics. Icon, designed by Giuseppe Basuso for Ernestomeda, offers technologically advanced solutions, like the Flex wall unit with doors that slide vertically and also rotate granting maximum accessibility to everything inside the unit.

On the subject of eco-sustainability, TM Italia presents 'Oread', the ecological kitchen with the green heart as regards materials used and in every element, thanks to a wall equipped with a plant that can depollute 50 m², the production of sparkling drinking water in order to reduce plastic waste, an intelligent sensor that

analyses the water and recycles the clean water. Valucine is also at the forefront with the new Meccanica system with a light frame and mechanical joints without any glue or formaldehyde, which is 90% reusable and 100% recyclable.

MAKING A SPLASH

One new entry in the bathroom segment was the BLU project from Scavolini, offering a series of pleasing and rational ambiances, created by mixing and matching the over 1,500 articles of the new collections inspired by the utmost modularity and a wide choice of materials, complete with accessories, fabrics and lighting systems.

What is noticeable about the bathroom project is the interest shown in the covering materials, which are treated with a creative design approach. Take the suggestions provided by Patricia Urquiola for Budri by superimposing glass on multi-coloured marble chips or Raw Edges' design of the 'Tex' tile for Molteni, whose rhomboid shape reminds you of large stitches in a knitted fabric or the three-dimensional chiaroscuro effect of the 'Tulle' modular stone cladding designed by Raffaello Gallicchio for Libesko Design. A touch of nostalgia from tubs that look like the old copper bathtubs (Ludovica and Roberto Palomba for Laufen and Marco Merendi for Peperoni) is mixed with the latest technology, as in the ATT horizontal shower from Dornbracht or the 'Paper' tub with Hydrolite whirlpool created by Talocci Design for Teuco. Talocci Design's 'Logica Twin' bathtubs for Effighi combine saunas with hammams, and Canadian hemlock wood with laminated stone. In the

design of the fittings there seem to be two approaches: on the one hand some experiment with hybrid formulas (see 'Ecleri', a combination of sink and tub designed by Gabriele and Oscar Buratti for Antonio Lupatini); on the other, forms are softened (as in the 'Nativo' sink designed by Giovanni Lavanti for Azuma and the 'Le Gare' collection by Claudio Silvestrin for Cosentino Cielo).

MILAN. NEW KITCHEN OPENINGS...

The third monobrand Scavolini Store was inaugurated in Corso Sempione, which joins the historic store in Corso Venezia and the more recent opening (June 2011) of the city centre location in Piazza Miseroi. The firm currently has more than 1,300 sales outlets around the world, of which over 50 are Scavolini Stores abroad and 60 are Scavolini Stores in Italy.

In the new Dada Flagship Store (215 m²) in Via Larga, the Molteni Group company presents the latest version of the 'firm' kitchen (designed by Dante Bonuccelli) and the 'Hi-Line 6' model (design by Ferruccio Laviani).

Bulthaup's strategy focuses on the sales outlet; this leading German producer of top range kitchens uses its flagship store in Via Durini and store in Porta Nuova to showcase its supply of kitchens with innovative finishings, offering tailor-made solutions for the details and accessories. Italy is one of the leading outlet markets for Bulthaup, which exports 75% of its production.

...AND HOME FURNITURE TOO

The new Rimadesio showroom (800 m²) in a seventeenth century building on Via Vacardi di Modrone is a light space filled out by Giuseppe Basuso. Since its foundation in 1956, the name Rimadesio has been synonymous with glass. Today the firm is run by two of the founder's three children and it continues production in Briansa with a workforce of around 100. The launch of the new MD Home brand by Modulnova coincided with the opening of a new showroom on Corso Garibaldi, in the Bresa quarter, on an area of 600 m² on two levels, which enables the firm to display a full range of kitchens, bathrooms and living rooms.

The second Lagostre in Milan was inaugurated in Via Turati. This follows the other year openings in Italy and abroad, four years after the launch of the first Milan Lagostre in Corso Lodi. The new store covers an area of 150 m² on two levels and the two shop windows display new products, such as the 'Weightless' bookcases.



Edra Bois de rose



Zanotta booth



Molteni Gisconi Collection



Veneta Liquida Frame