

THE FALL FASHION ISSUE

Robb Report



ITALIAN GENIUS

SEPTEMBER 2017

LAYABOUT

Florida sectional by Minotti

●● Perhaps nothing says Italian contemporary design more characteristically than streamlined, low-slung sectional seating: The Italians, after all, have perfected the art of leisurely lounging. Milanese architect Rodolfo Dordoni extends that insouciance to the outdoors with his Florida seating collection for Minotti, blurring the lines between casual and formal, indoor and out. The coated metal structure resists corrosion, and the upholstery, available in four neutral hues with eco-leather piping, is easily removable. Feet and rear supports are made of iroko wood. Multiple geometric shapes allow for creative configurations. Dordoni also designed the companion Caulfield coffee table with weather-friendly metal and a Pietra del Cardoso brushed-stone top, which naturally resists the rigors of the alfresco environment and encourages idling, Italian style. (S-shaped sofa from \$28,587; coffee table, \$5,694) minotti.com



Antonio Canova's *Paolina Borghese as Venus Victrix* from Rome's Galleria Borghese.

FLAWLESSLY CHISELED FORMS

Italy's top designers of fine furnishings share with their country's greatest painters and sculptors a passion for timeless beauty and perfection of form. Neither Leonardo nor Michelangelo likely gave much thought to comfort when wielding paintbrush and chisel; however, these modern maestros render 10 masterpieces that marry artistic splendor with flawless function.

By JORGE S. ARANGO

Italians have always been at the vanguard of the visual arts.

Romans of classical antiquity did not merely mimic earlier Greek and Hellenistic sculpture; they strove instead for more realistic—rather than idealized—depictions and assimilated influences from the east to arrive at their own distinct aesthetic. In architecture, these ancient engineers pioneered the construction of domes and aqueducts and made inventive use of concrete, while the Italian Renaissance gave us oil painting and one-point perspective. The somewhat democratic creative spirit that pervades the Italian culture—in combination with the national preference for playful livability at home—accounts for the near-universal appeal of the country's lifestyle. The Italian design vernacular is at once sophisticated and down-to-earth, often irreverent with respect to shape, color, and materials. This characteristic blend of traits is clearly present in the selection of classic and newly conceived pieces offered here.

DRIVEN DESIGN

Cockpit chair by Poltrona Frau
in collaboration with Ferrari

●● Tolentino-based Poltrona Frau has upholstered the interiors of Ferrari cars with its famously supple leathers for years. In recognition of the automaker's 70th anniversary, Ferrari's head of design, Flavio Manzoni—who oversaw the design of the LaFerrari Aperta, GTC4Lusso, and 812 Superfast models—teamed up with the company on the Cockpit chair. Featuring style and ergonomics common to competitive racing seats, the chair comes in the high-back President and low-back Executive models. The swivel base (of matte or polished powder-coated aluminum) mirrors the design and mechanical elements of the steering wheel, and a contrasting streak down the spine emulates racing stripes. Colors and materials can be customized. (\$10,000-\$11,000) poltronafrau.com



A detail from Baccio Bandinelli's *Hercules and Cacus* in the Piazza della Signoria in Florence.

GLASS ACT

Layers shelving by Glas Italia

●● Glas Italia's theme at this year's Milan furniture fair was illusion. To that end, the brand commissioned designers to utilize mirrored, colored, and iridescent glass to create unusual optical effects. Nendo—the Japanese company led by chief designer Oki Sato—contributed Layers, a free-standing bookcase whose overlapping, movable panels of colored glass are suspended from a track in front of and behind the shelves. Those panels can then be positioned to conjure varying chromatic imagery. The piece comes in two color schemes: warm tones (orange, red, and brown) and cool hues (blue, gray, and violet). (\$11,200) Available through ddcnyc.com



St. Luke the Evangelist from the Papal Basilica of St. Paul Outside-the-Walls in Rome.



FLAWLESSLY CHISELED FORMS

A HAPPY MARRIAGE

Edward chair by Armani/Casa

●● Italian couture and furniture design have carried on an ardent relationship for decades, and Armani/Casa, it could be argued, is that coupling's most celebrated love child. The new Edward chair was actually conceived on the water as a reinterpretation of a tub chair designed by Giorgio Armani for his yacht. A solid wood frame supports a rounded back and seat that can be upholstered in myriad Armani/Casa fabrics for Rubelli or a variety of soft-touch leathers. Fabrics can be removed for dry cleaning by releasing the seat and backrest from the frame. (\$4,035-\$5,620) armanicasa.com

Left: Generosity from the entrance to the Palácio Nacional da Ajuda in Lisbon, Portugal; right: Bacchus.

CHAIRS: FABRIZIO NANNINI

PAN-ITALIANISM

Lilo chaise by Moroso

● ● The Lilo chaise longue exemplifies the way Italy reimagines various global ideas through its particular aesthetic prism, balancing elegance of form with comfort. Spanish designer Patricia Urquiola conceived the Lilo line partly as a homage to Scandinavian design and modernist ideas of the 1950s. The chaise's materials speak to this. However, the chunky volume of its base was influenced by Achille Castiglioni, while the segmented reclining seat feels more generously upholstered than Scandinavian seating and less overstuffed than the Brazilian version (think Sergio Rodrigues's cushy, sink-into chairs). The result is an amalgam that's old and new, from here and there, but unquestionably Italian in the sum of its parts. (from \$3,280) morosousa.com



L'Architettura by Giambologna from the Museo Nazionale del Bargello in Florence.

LAKE LIVING

Garda sofa by Achille Salvagni

●● At its most essential, the work of Rome-based architect Achille Salvagni testifies to his never-ending love affair with his native country—from its myths and historic locations to its centers of fashion and design. The sensuality of 1940s and '50s furniture by such masters as Gio Ponti, Ico Parisi, and Osvaldo Borsani are a particularly rich vein of inspiration, which Salvagni mines with a contemporary twist. Garda—named after one of the great lakes of northern Italy—is a sofa produced in a limited edition of six, boasting a luxuriously long 118-inch, lacquered wood structure with engraved, bronze-detailed feet. Like its namesake body of water, it bends gracefully at one end. (from \$65,000) Available through maisongerdard.com



Tacitus from outside the Austrian Parliament Building in Vienna.