

milan report

This year's Milan Furniture Fair was a celebration of the everyday pleasure gleaned from good design

WORDS VANESSA KEYS

TREND ALERT: NICE SET OF PINS



Cast your eyes downwards: tables have been transformed by statement legs in all shapes and sizes.

1. Eschewing the traditional four-leg approach without losing any of the stability, Sander Mulder's quirky 'Crow' trestle table leans on legs shaped like birds' feet; sandermulder.com.
2. Built to resemble paper furniture, Studio Job's 'Paper Table' has legs inspired by classic chandeliers; moooi.com.
3. Matthew Hilton's 'Cross Oval' table for Case Furniture boasts a pair of lean, lithe legs which cheekily peek out from the tabletop; casefurniture.co.uk.



{designer to watch}

WE LOVE: PHILIPPE STARCK



Judging by the excited buzz surrounding legendary designer Philippe Starck's 'Aunts and Uncles' collection for Kartell, these plastic fantastic pieces look likely to inherit the iconic status of his famous 'Louis Ghost' chair. Visit starck.com.



Self-described "interaction and product designer" Jessica Bala's 'Mueble Luco' collection had passers-by enraptured – and not just because of the clever composition or handmade details. All of her designs suffer from different

"physiological disorders" – a world where cups are scared of saucers (a magnet keeps the two forever apart), and lamps are in mutually dependent relationships. Genius! See more of the Germany-based artist's work at la-bala.com.

Milan showed a push towards **functionality**, comfort and smaller, more **affordable** products



top 3
small storage
solutions

1. Turn a lamp upside down and what do you get? A table and storage unit in one, as evidenced by Alessi's lightweight 'Pick-Up' side table by Jakob Wagner. It's the perfect place to store everything from magazines to umbrellas; alessi.com.
2. Inspired by old Scandinavian toys, Domaas Høgh's 'Cassiopeia' coat hook (below) lets you choose and move pegs to your heart's content; domaas-hogh.com.
3. All Lovely Stuff's 'Moose On The Loose' wooden coat rack (below) has lots of clever nooks for hiding – er, we mean storing – all those fiddly bits and pieces; alllovelystuff.com.

Cult designers like **Issey Miyake**, **Philippe Starck** and **Patricia Urquiola** unveiled **standout pieces**



'Phobia' porcelain magnetised cup and saucer.



'Lamps in Love' entwined lights.



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{designer to watch}

Swedish designer Per Söderberg uses materials rich in contrast, like vegetable-tanned leather, powder-coated metal, plywood and brass. He's also passionate about working with locally sourced materials and manufacturers. His 'No Early Birds' furniture was one of the standouts at the fair; noearlybirds.se.



TREND ALERT:
MODERN MARBLE



It's hardly the material you'd think would take centrestage in tough economic times, but marble has bid adieu to its ostentatious ways and is taking its place in surprisingly informal settings.

1. Noergaard & Kechayas' 'Material Pendant' lights for Nevvworks come in marble, as well as cork, terracotta and concrete, proving the adaptability of natural stone; nevvworks.com.

2. Influential Iraqi-British architect Zaha Hadid is leading the pack with her limited-edition 'Mercuric' marble tables for Citco; a fluid, undulating design that mimics her sensual architecture; citco.it.

3. Crafted from polished marble, Tom Dixon's 'Screw' tabletops with a 'Fan' base are a seamless pairing of marble and wood that encourages laid-back living; tomdixon.net.

DYNAMIC DUO: PATRICIA URQUIOLA & GANDIA BLASCO

Lean living was off the agenda, with designers unveiling sofas that swaddle and soothe. Our favourite was Patricia Urquiola's modular 'Mangas' collection for Gandia Blasco, which expands on her 2010 patchwork rug designs. Like a large knitted jumper, 'Mangas' (which translates to 'sleeve' in Spanish) is an invitation to curl up and get cosy; gandiablasco.com.



Dual-purpose designs made serious impact, from this coffee table planter to versatile modulars



WE LOVE...
BELLILA'S
BLOOMING
BEAUTIES

We've got the dirt on a radical new furniture collection guaranteed to knock your gumboots off. French design studio Bellila's customisable tables, consoles and shelving units feature an in-built planter that allows for proper drainage and maintenance. It's perfect for space-poor city-folk who want the luxury of fresh herbs on hand; bellila.fr.

DYNAMIC DUO: ISSEY MIYAKE + ARTEMIDE

Cult Japanese designer Issey Miyake has turned his hand from fashion and fragrances to lighting, collaborating with Artemide on 'IN-EI', a LED lighting collection made entirely from recycled PET bottles. The otherworldly lights demonstrate Miyake's unique ability to translate tradition into modernity, as well as highlighting the adaptability of LED lighting and recycled materials. in-ei; artemide.com.



WE LOVE...
RESIDENT

It's not often we come across a burgeoning design studio that makes us covet every one of its creations but Resident, a New Zealand-based designers' collective that exclusively showcases local talent, has done just that. We're beguiled by their authentic blend of craftsmanship, scrupulous detail and organic forms; resident.co.nz.

1



2



Lights were in flight this year, with many designers showcasing lighting that emphasised movement



WE LOVE...
ISLAND DREAMING

Could this be the pinnacle of modular living? Boasting literally hundreds of different seating and living arrangements, Werner Aisslinger's 'Bikini Island' for Moroso is as aesthetically pleasing as it is practical. Encompassing low daybeds, circular seats, stand-alone chairs and a variety of additional components – including plant holders and curtains – Aisslinger's island has the potential to shake up the traditional lounge setting; moroso.it.

Top designs from Resident:

1. 'Lotus' lights, Simon James.
2. 'Cross' pendant, Resident Studio. 'Hawk' table and 'Tangerine' chair, both Simon James.
3. 'Oud' desk lamp, Nat Cheshire.

3



TREND ALERT: INTO THE FOLD



1

2



3



Geometric shapes created by the ancient art of paper folding have long fascinated designers, and this year was no exception, with many eschewing soft materials for metal and glass.

1. Alessandra Neacchi's 'Leaves' wall decorations are created from a mixture of metal and plexiglass; alessandrameacci.it.
2. Made from only three parts, Sander Mulder's 'Pythagoras' laser-cut chairs can be flatpacked; sandermulder.com.
3. Tom Dixon's 'Gem' pendants, sandcast from nickel-plated aluminium, are inspired by gemstone facets; tomdixon.net. 