"Mario Bellini. Italian Beauty"

On show works designed by the Milanese architect for Cassina, sponsor of the exhibit.

C90: 2017 marks Cassina’s 90th anniversary.

Cassina has been designing the future of interiors for 90 years. Founded in 1927, the company launched industrial design in Italy during the 50’s by taking a completely new approach which saw a shift from handicraftsmanship to serial production.

The company was pioneering in the way that it showed a striking inclination for research and innovation, combining technological skill with traditional craftsmanship. For the first time important architects and designers were involved and encouraged to envision new designs to be transformed into projects, a characteristic that still distinguishes the company. Today Cassina continues to represent new ways of living, creating harmonious settings that bring together the best of contemporary design.

A 50 year collaboration between Cassina and maestro Bellini.

This year Mario Bellini celebrates his 50 year collaboration with Cassina. 50 years in which he has designed works that have marked the history of Italian design. A selection of these items are on show at the exhibition "Mario Bellini. Italian Beauty" at La Triennale in Milan.

Models from Cassina’s historical archive like the Teneride ergonomic office chair (1970), the Wiskey armchair (1976) and the mod. 932 armchair (60s), are featured with pieces that are still today in the collection such as the La Rotonda and La Basilica tables, the Bull chair, the Break armchair and the iconic Cab family of products.

Experimentation and innovation.

Bellini started collaborating with Cassina at a young age after a short design apprenticeship with “La Rinascente”, the prestigious Milanese department store. His first meeting with Cesare Cassina, where he proposed a table for which he had already won his first of eight Compasso d’Oro prizes, led to a strong relationship which can today be identified in a variety of innovative projects.

The experimental work carried out by Mario Bellini with Cassina in the 60’s and 70’s created some original and ground-breaking designs. Research of new materials and structural technology resulted in pieces like the timeless Break chair, conceived thanks to the application of a new type of polyurethane foam.

Mario Bellini’s passion and affinity for structural design can be particularly recognised in the tables designed for Cassina over the years (La Rotonda, La Basilica and Pantheon) which further highlight the close relationship between furniture design and architecture. Made up of columns, pilasters and crossed beams, these complex masterpieces also enhance Cassina’s long heritage mastery in working with wood.

Cab: a legend in design history.

With over 500,000 produced to date, one of Bellini’s most recognisable and copied designs is the Cab chair designed in 1977. The saddle leather fits like a glove over the chair’s metal skeleton to embrace the sinuous shape of the body. Cassina’s craftsmanship expertise is particularly evidenced in the workmanship of the upholstery, a long and complex process carried out in the brand’s factory in Meda. 16 different parts, cut with a CNC machine, undergo 14 subsequent manual processes resulting in a craftsmanship masterpiece.

“It took me almost twenty years to find the courage to design a chair (and I think that Cab is just that). It was designed just like a chair, that is simply and as always with a seat, a backrest and four legs. A stitched dress in leather and mounted onto a metal frame, stretched like skin on a skeleton, in a structural and organic symbiosis.” Mario Bellini

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