

Friday June 25, 2004

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Laws of Recycling

PARIS — Good design, even damaged by time, can become good again.

A handful of cutting-edge industrial designers here are focusing their current projects on refuse, either gently repairing damaged products or, in some cases, exercising some extreme plastic surgery — turning space heaters into floor lamps and broken pianos into coffee tables.

The trend gained steam at the Paris and Milan furniture fairs earlier this year, where a design team known as 5.5 set up a makeshift furniture hospital titled "Reanimate," complete with waiting, examination and operating rooms. There, the 5.5 designers presented a first aid kit for furniture, including prosthetic chair legs and visible back supports.

"We use our knowledge to increase the life expectancy of rejected pieces of furniture," said Anthony Lebossé, one of the designers with 5.5. "Imperfect objects have a story to tell."

Industrial designers Héliène Autheman and Wilfried Bechtold also make sure nothing goes to waste. Down a narrow passageway in Paris' 15th arrondissement, the duo recently opened a workshop called Mobo where they convert discarded furniture for new uses. Broken bistro chairs are repaired and painted, a sewing unit becomes a minibar and a decrepit cabinet gets covered with floral paper and outfitted with wheels.

"It's not just about getting things to work again, it's about giving objects a new identity," said Autheman. "Customers like having custom-made furniture at affordable prices."

Meanwhile, Tramp, a boutique at 25 Rue du Rosiers in the Marais district, takes a high-end approach to recycling.

"We redesign objects to become more sophisticated than their original form," said owner and designer Jean-François Lebrun.

In some cases, old furniture is simply raw material for a new form. For example, Lebrun converted an old barber's chair into a stylish leather lounge for 1,400 euros, or \$1,681. Meanwhile, an old teacher's desk was transformed into an elegant commode for 2,465 euros, or \$3,000. — **Emilie Marsh**

Cerruti's 2nd Career

MILAN — Three years after taking his last bow on the runway, designer Nino Cerruti is taking his aesthetics and style to the world of interior design through a collaboration with furniture manufacturer Baleri Italia.

"This project is about my concept of the home and how I view it, but I don't have the technical abilities to design furniture," Cerruti said. "[Italian fashion] designers today talk too easily about [combining] fashion and design, but they have nothing in common, except that they are both anchored in Milan and both are responding to people's growing sense of aesthetics."

The project comes at an opportune time for Cerruti, who is set on mixing touches from the past with modern elements as he renovates his house outside Biella, in the north of Italy.

"The ground floor is typical of a country house, with lots of wood and whitewashed walls, but I've added two different hanging rugs, one with a traditional hunting scene, the other a Cubist painting," he said. "My bedroom and studio on the second floor are modern and all in yellow. I enjoy the harmony of these two worlds."

According to Cerruti, furniture today is often "too big" and does not easily fit into an average apartment.

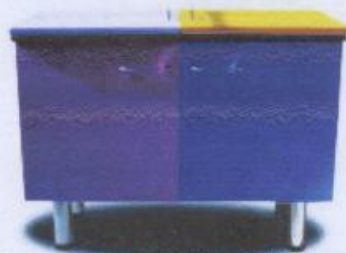
"We want our furniture to be easily assembled, as people are increasingly nomadic," he said, adding that Baleri's furniture is suited for interior and exterior spaces, and it also works for hotels, waiting rooms and libraries.

Baleri does not employ wood — an "ecologically correct" choice, he said.

Baleri Italia, founded in 1984 and based in Bergamo, an hour from Milan, has worked with designers such as Philippe Starck and Hannes Wettstein, and for companies such as the American Luminaire Inc. Cerruti said he's always been interested in design as he's "been lucky



Chair with repaired leg by 5.5 designers.



Commode by Tramp, reconstructed from an old desk.



Furniture designed by Cerruti with Baleri Italia.



Paolo Gerani
Photo Credit: Davide Maestri

enough" to see artists such as Vico Magistretti, Gae Aulenti and Antonio Citterio at work on his brand stores and apartments.

"I think there is still something interesting to say," said Cerruti, who sold his company to Fin.part in 2001. "As I did with my fashion, I always ask myself, 'What do people want?' I am interested in the real home for real people." — L.Z.

Design Award Nominees

NEW YORK — Marc Jacobs, Narciso Rodriguez and Yeohlee Teng are finalists in the fashion design category of the National Design Awards, the Smithsonian's Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum said Thursday.

This is the second year the awards, which are sponsored by Coach, have included fashion design as a category, having recognized Tom Ford at the event last year. The museum also said Aveda Corp. will receive the Corporate Achievement Award at the event on Oct. 19 in Manhattan. The Minneapolis-based beauty company, a subsidiary of The Estée Lauder Cos., is being recognized for its attention to design in products and packaging, as well as its record of environmental responsibility.

Graphic designer Milton Glaser, a co-founder of New York magazine and the creator of iconic images such as the cover of Bob Dylan's "Greatest Hits" album, the "I Love N.Y." logo and the interiors of Windows on the World and the Rainbow Room, will receive the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Finalists in the other award categories are James S. Polshek of Polshek Partnership Architects, Jos Spear of HOK Sport + Venue + Event Architecture, Rafael Viñoly of Rafael Viñoly Architects and Rick Joy of Rick Joy Architects for architecture design; @radical.media, MTV Networks' Design and Promos Department, and Second Story for communications design; Andropogon Associates, Ned Kahn and William McDonough + Partners for environmental design, and Burt Rutan, Interface Inc. and Yves Behar for product design.

A New Golf Hazard — Iceberg Ahead

SAN GIOVANNI IN MARRIGNANO, ITALY — **Iceberg**, the Italian brand known for its colorful, cartoon-inspired patterns and edgy advertising, might seem an unlikely sponsor for a golf club. But with the opening last month of Rivieragolfclub by **Iceberg's** creative director Paolo Gerani, the company is playing against its hip-hop image.

"This is a young, fun place to meet with friends and, though focused on golfing, it offers leisure for the entire family," said Gerani, noting that a spa, soccer fields, tennis courts and a children's playground — a Hansel-and-Gretel-style wooden house off the fields — were conceived to entertain those who are not engaged in golfing.

A few minutes from the Adriatic beaches and popular nightlife spots, and not far from the headquarters of Gerani's family-owned manufacturing company in San Giovanni in Marignano, the Rivieragolfclub centers around a steel and glass building.

"With the help of architect Marco Gaudenzi, we wanted the club to be part of the territory, with references to water and Venice [further north, also on the east coast of Italy]," said Giancarlo Tirotti, a friend of Gerani's and a partner in the golf club project.

The property also features suites and bungalows designed by 14 international architects.

"Each room reflects the style and vision of each architect," said Tirotti, noting the rooms range from one with a red padded bed nestled in a dark wenge-wood structure to another inspired by Austin Powers, complete with plastic tables and fur rugs, to a third with an all-white minimalist décor.

The bungalows are surrounded by private gardens and fenced in by olive trees and holm-oaks, a staple in the region.

Apart from the **Iceberg** water bottles sold at the restaurant and bar, there are no other evident signs of the brand at the Rivieragolfclub.

"I don't believe in that kind of aggressive marketing," said Gerani, whose personal touch comes through in the choice of the restaurant's beautifully ornamental and hand-crafted candelabra and cutlery — silver at lunch, gold-plated for dinner — or the white lamps from Spain surrounding the pool.

Gerani and Tirotti invested \$14 million on the resort, and plan to expand it between 2005 and 2006 with additional rooms. Also, the golf course, which currently covers 30 acres and has only 11 holes in operation, will eventually double its space. — **Luisa Zargani**