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A Meeting of Minds

ITALIAN DESIGN DUO MENEGHELLO & PAOLELLI SHARE A COMMON DESIGN VISION THAT MAKES THEIR CREATIVE PARTNERSHIP TICK. THEIR COLLABORATION WITH VICTORIA + ALBERT TAKES A SIMILARLY LIKE-MINDED APPROACH...

The Lario 100 vanity unit – available in Antracite or Stone Grey – includes an integrated basin made from Victoria + Albert's Quarrycast material which contains Volcanic Limestone and high-performance resins

“INSPIRATION IS ALMOST EVERYWHERE, YOU JUST NEED TO BE ABLE TO FIND IT”

Right The Mandello 114 vanity unit by Meneghello Paolelli has a bold curve that combines the classic and traditional look. Available in Antracite or Piano Black

Bath manufacturer Victoria + Albert launched its first range of bathroom furniture at ISH in Frankfurt recently, marking the latest stage in an ongoing collaboration with Italian design studio Meneghello Paolelli Associati.

We spoke to the increasingly prolific designers about their own rapid development and the latest fruits of their collaboration with the British brand.

DESIGNER: What is your background and what initially led you both to a career in design?

SANDRO MENEGHELLO & MARCO PAOLELLI: We are actually based in Milan, even though we are both originally from the other side of Italy. We both graduated in Design from

Politecnico di Milano in 2004 and our friendship and collaboration began during University. Every student has a trusted sparring partner and we played exactly that role for each other!

We had the chance to cooperate with manufacturing companies right after our graduation, and the best way to start is to be part of a team who believe in each other. After this experience we got the chance to design toilets and we kept on working together seriously.

We probably started thinking about becoming designers through curiosity. You know, today we create things, and to do that you must be curious.

DESIGNER: How did your collaboration with Victoria + Albert first come about?

MENEGHELLO & PAOLELLI: We met Victoria + Albert at their first Salone Del

Mobile in 2012. A mutual friend talked to us about the company, the material and manufacturing process. We reached out to them in order to see the material and we were impressed by the quality. Then we discussed the potential of an initial collaboration and nearly two years on, we are here revealing the new collection. This collaboration is ongoing and we are really proud about the finished items and to be part of the team. We think we have all done a great job together.

DESIGNER: How does the collaborative relationship vary from one manufacturing client to another? Are some more specific about their design brief?

MENEGHELLO & PAOLELLI: The most incisive way to answer is to mention our mission statement – 'We create added value applying our lateral

Victoria + Albert's Amiata bath was the first collaboration with Meneghello and Paoletti, launched in 2014



thinking to industrial design and product strategies in connection with clients.' Every company has its heart, its body and its brain, but at the base of every relationship you'll find the three key concepts mentioned in our mission: 'adding value'; 'lateral thinking'; and 'connection with clients'.

Every brief is different to another, but as professionals we must be able to turn some notes from a brief into the best product that will be able to represent the company's values, and secondly will be able to compete in its target market. You could easily find all those three key concepts at the base of our relationship with Victoria + Albert, and our collections created in connection with them are a clear example of our working method.

Victoria + Albert's brief was clear to understand but not easy to solve! They asked us to create a bathtub able to connect their two core collections, the classic one with the modern one. Chris Davis, V + A's CEO, was really incredible with us, because he

completely trusted us and we gained his confidence with the design of the Amiata collection.

DESIGNER: What are the key design strands/themes behind your designs for Victoria + Albert?

MENEGHELLO & PAOLELLI:

The big challenge is to interpret the company's values. Victoria + Albert is a solid and very serious company, nothing is left to chance.

Behind our designs for Victoria + Albert you will find our idea of classic, that actually we call 'Neo Classic'. Our products are serious, well-balanced, neo classic, detailed – and of course awesome!



DESIGNER: Natural shapes and materials seem to be dominating the bathroom scene right now. How do you feel this has influenced your own design output over the last couple of years?

MENEGHELLO & PAOLELLI: Speaking about the bathroom means to speak about water, a natural and dynamic element. This source of inspiration is inevitable, but our works don't follow this trend at all times. Everyday life brings us all sorts of inspiration from unexpected items. We look at everyday objects from a different perspective – sideways! Inspiration is almost everywhere, you just need to be able to find it.

DESIGNER: What new projects are you working on now, and are there any new product areas you would like to work on in the future that you have not been involved with so far?

MENEGHELLO & PAOLELLI: Our design point of view is currently changing and we are always looking to move forward, to enhance our minds. We are actually increasing our market share, working in several markets, and sometimes they are really far from each other. Right now, we are developing a folding bike for a British start-up company and we are designing an urban furniture collection.

The Tombolo bath rack designed for Victoria + Albert by Meneghello Paoletti. It contains cut-outs to accommodate a glass of wine and yet is super strong and could be used as a seat

Contacts

Victoria + Albert / vandabaths.com
Meneghello Paoletti Associati /
menegheloapaoletti.com



The Amiata bath is also accompanied by basins matching its distinctive aesthetic form