

# INTERIOR DESIGN TODAY

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COLOURS THAT "WOW" MAKING THE FUNCTIONAL FUNKY

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Images, this page: Floris by Baroncelli (left) and Brioso by Baroncelli (right)  
 Images, next page: Luca by Baroncelli (top) and Four Seasons Baku featuring Baroncelli lights

## MASTERS OF THE CRAFT

### Giovanni Corrado discusses the craft of Murano glass lighting

**Design innovation is at the heart of Baroncelli's design ethos. In the early 1990s Rinda Baroncelli brought her significant cultural and artistic curiosity to Murano. Her vision for design led craft with more relevance to a contemporary, cosmopolitan audience left clients hungry for personalised interpretations. A showroom opened in 1995 followed by much success and a well-established reputation.**

**G**iovanni Corrado, Creative Director of Baroncelli, joined the family business in 2004. He had previously worked as a Brand Operations Consultant in the fashion, hotel and interior design world. He has brought a breadth of vision to the company and introduced new concepts to the traditional manufacturing process of Murano glass, developing exciting ways of applying the techniques of blown glass.

#### What does lighting mean as a base for good design?

At its most basic, lighting has allowed us to conquer and control any environment we choose to inhabit or explore. Our ability to decide when we choose to work, rest or play is a direct result of our capacity to bring light into the dark. Today we take this basic tenet for granted, and lighting allows us to play with nuances of form and function to manipulate the mood of any space. More

than any other design element, lighting will create an immediate experience of the space we are entering. We live in ever more multipurpose spaces, and lighting allows us to bring harmony between the use and our perception of the space in that moment. So consider two essential and divergent ideas in lighting design, the quality of the light itself and the opportunity for creating shadow and shape that the sculpted lines of a lighting fixture allow.

#### How did Baroncelli come to use Murano glass in lighting?

Early Islamic glassblowing techniques were brought to the Most Serene Republic of Venice through its legendary trading links with the Middle East. The Venetian glassmakers pioneered the development of techniques for shaping molten glass, addressing with bravura the challenges inherent in the use of this sensitive material. They soon became celebrated masters of the craft, cementing the foundations of a lasting and lucrative trade. In 1292 the Grand Council of Venice ordered glassmakers to establish their business on the island of Murano in the Venice Lagoon, just an hour's row from Venice. Ostensibly to protect the city from the dangers of fire, this decree effectively created the earliest known monopoly. By isolating the secrets of the Maestros, Venice secured the dominance of its glass blowing industry, which has

survived centuries of Venetian style imitations. The manufacture of Venetian Chandeliers took off in the 18th Century as a result of changing fashions and the rise in popularity of bohemian crystal. Typical of their creativity and inventiveness, the Muranese glassblowers counteracted this new fashion with the introduction of splendid new forms which have since become icons of design.

In the early 1990s Rinda Baroncelli brought her significant cultural and artistic curiosity to Murano. A life spent living and travelling across the globe informed her vision for design led craft with more relevance to a contemporary, cosmopolitan audience.

Today Baroncelli continues to expand the breadth of its design collection with bold and daring ideas. Our perspective continues to challenge the traditional vernacular in favour of a daring and dynamic aesthetic.

#### What is the difference between historical replication and interpretation when relating to lighting design?

Historical replication is the result of skilled craftsmanship alone. It can be complex and difficult, but it relies purely on the technical expertise of the maker. There is no flight of fancy, no flash of genius, no flexing of the imagination.

Interpretation involves an active decision making process on what to carry forward into the new piece, what needs adapting or





respect for our heritage, but to us, continuing our relevance in the on-going conversation about Design means following the design idea. Sometimes this means bringing the craftsman along on your journey; sometimes it means bringing an understanding to the client of the nature of the hand made; often it's a little of both.

**As a designer, what is your first consideration when beginning a new commission for a client?**

The fundamental core of our approach to the design process is that we do not bring any preconceived limits to the design possibilities. We always start on the basis that if we strike on a good design idea we will be able to resolve the details, which will reveal a technical solution that satisfies design intent. In the very first instance we endeavour to understand the client's goals for the piece, disregarding any notion they have of how to achieve this in design. Whilst there will always be a functional aspect to fulfil, we try to identify what themes and emotion the client brings to the conversation.

Our clients often speak of a Wow Piece, our first objective is to understand what wow means to them. We need to respond to these primary emotive ideas such that, whatever the design becomes, the client has an enduring connection, which makes that piece unique to them.

**Which countries around the world have you found to be the ones most in demand of your designs and products?**

With showrooms in London and New York,

the UK and the US have long been key markets that serve as design hubs for Baroncelli projects installed worldwide. Fast growing cities such as Dubai or Hong Kong are, surprisingly, consistent destinations for our most contemporary and design led products. These cities, rich in returnees who bring with them the cultural exposure of more established cities, take a sophisticated design view. Our adventurous approach seems to resonate with those seeking to bring their traditional spaces into the 21st century without compromising quality.

**What is Baroncelli's focus for 2013/2014?**

The current advances in technology have us very excited at the moment. We plan to revisit the collection in its entirety to see where and how we can continue to introduce these new light sources to ensure that we integrate these developments not just into new pieces, but throughout. Having successfully introduced our first timber framed piece in Milan this year, we are also excited about pursuing additional materials which we can incorporate into new pieces. I have no idea how, but cork is at the top of my list! And we will continue to concoct crazy design ideas, because this is what we enjoy most in the studio: thinking them, drawing them, discussing them, and if they get traction from everyone involved, we start prototyping.

Watch this space for the new families launching September 2013.

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improving, and what to leave out. To interpret you must delve into the context of a design, era or movement to identify what aspiration was brought to the forefront and give that a contemporary relevance.

In design, memory plays a key role in how comfortably we occupy a space; because whilst we like to consider ourselves avant-garde, we are also, in many significant ways, anchored to idealised notions of our past that inform our future.

Successful interpretation seeks not only to apply more modern technologies, but to understand the functional and emotional requirements of yesterday to design an icon for today and tomorrow.

**How do you continue to employ traditional techniques in an increasingly modernised industry?**

We are constantly trying to push the boundaries of what can be achieved with glass, often to the despair of our production - and we are always looking for ways to combine glass with other, unexpected materials. My own design language reflects a desire to make each element precious and respect the integrity of what that material allows. As a result, we turn to modern manufacturing processes for many materials, components and light technologies. It is paramount to our design ethos that the complexity of certain glass blowing skills must be enhanced and reign supreme over other components, whilst less virtuoso glass blowing must be subdued for the benefit of the whole piece. Trying to artfully combine the old and the new without creating something that is a pastiche can be demanding. The challenge is to weave together design intent, production and commercial feasibility. We have great

