

COMMERCIAL

# Interior design

The essential guide for Middle East interior design professionals

An ITP Business Publication

May Vol.8 Issue5

## On-site

AT SOWWAH SQUARE OFFICES

**Design meets Rock**  
AT MILAN FURNITURE FAIR

**Less is more**  
ETCETERA LIVING  
OPENS THE FARM



Mark Marin



Diane Thorsen



Sonal Kotecha



Ana Seixas



Pallavi Dean



Isarawan Apichoteworapat



Maja Kozel

# Milan Design Week 2012

SALONE DEL MOBILE CELEBRATES ITS 51ST ANNIVERSARY THIS YEAR AND SAW MORE THAN 2,700 ITALIAN AND FOREIGN EXHIBITORS. CID ASKS SEVERAL VISITORS 'WHAT DID YOU THINK OF SALONE INTERNAZIONALE DEL MOBILE' AND OTHER EVENTS IN THE CITY?

**S**alone Internazionale del Mobile is a mecca for design aficionados but many people found the sheer scale of the venue and the number of exhibitors at the Milan Fairgrounds in Rho overwhelming. Others felt, that where traditionally the fair was a place to showcase exclusive products, it has now turned into a venue where companies display everything they have on offer.

More popular were the events in the city for Milan Design Week, from La Triennale, design museum to studios in Via Tortona and showrooms in the Brera district.

"I started off at the exhibition fair with a map and an Italian espresso macchiato to prepare myself for a long day of walking, seeing and meeting. I was absolutely overwhelmed when I reached the showground by the huge scale of it. Over 20 halls with exhibitors and thousands of people walking around," said Maja Kozel, chief designer, Gemaco Interiors.

Similarly, Dubai designer Sonal Kotecha said she spent each day trying to soak up all that she could from the show, but still felt there was more ground left to cover.

"Austerity was perhaps the theme of this year's biggest event on the design calendar; the Eurozone economic crisis seems to be having some significant impact with many companies who traditionally have had elaborate and expensive stands have noticeably downsized or simply reduced costs," said Mark Marin, of Mark Marin Design in Dubai.

"Having said that there is still no substitute for the buzz and energy that the fair generates along with its now well established supplementary events such as Zona Tortona and all the other Fuori Salone (outside) events which are too many to list."

Marin felt Flexform had the best stand with the depth and quality of its collection but some of the major firms were disappointing.

"Traditionally the fair was the venue to showcase exclusive new products but increasingly these days it seems merely a venue for simply putting everything the company does on display — in some fashion — and not necessarily anything even new," he added.

"Perhaps the biggest event was Poltrona Frau celebrating its 100 year anniversary — the entire stable (including Cappellini and Cassina) staging a big warehouse event on Zona Tortona with an outstanding installation. However, I would have expected Poltrona Frau to have a separate and better stand-alone event for an anniversary of a company of such history and importance to the furniture industry."

Diane Thorsen, design director, Pringle Brandon agreed and said row upon row of furniture was the same that you see in the company showrooms. She said it was convenient to have all the big names in one venue but there was nothing that stood out that had that 'wow' factor, or any exceptionally designed stand or product.

"A fair such as this should force designers how to rethink ideas, but it was as expected.

The bathroom exhibitors were nothing extraordinary, and there was nothing revolutionary about the kitchen worktops apart from the PaperStone recycled counter surfaces, which was interesting," she said.

The highlight for most was the Temporary Museum for New Design in Via Tortona.

Isarawan Apichoteworapat, design director, dwp | design worldwide partnership said the most interesting factor for her was not the actual 'Fiera' itself but the area around Milan, such as Toreona, Lambrate and Brera where she found a lot of creativity and inspiration.

"The Tortona design fair was my clear favourite, since there were a lot of outstanding exhibitions from young designers, although not only new designers, but also many brands not being shown in the Fiera," she added.

In future, Apichoteworapat wants to see the organisers incorporate more of what is on offer around the city outside of the Fiera, to have a truly wide-ranging representation of the excitement of the furniture design industry.

"My favourite part of the week was Via Tortona's design studio as it offered a completely fresh, innovative, and 'out of the box' thinking," added Thorsen.

"Everything about it, even the furniture displays were extraordinary. The exhibitors displayed their products in a way that made you look at them in a different light for example Kusch + Co had products suspended on ropes hanging from the ceiling."