

Superyacht

INTERIOR DESIGN EXTERIOR SPACE CREATIVITY AND ARCHITECTURE



DESIGN

DOMUS DESIGN

Kamini Ezralow brings a fresh perspective to interior design with *Celestial Hope*.
Page 10

CASE STUDY

Exploring the three pillars of London-based design studio Rainsford Mann Design.
Page 18

IN BUSINESS

A look behind the lines of family-run List General Contractor with Burkhard List.
Page 32

ARTISAN

Crystal manufacturer Baccarat prepares to celebrate 250 years of success.
Page 62

PERSPECTIVES

THE PAST & PRESENT PERFECT

Since setting up his studio in 2002, architect Achille Salvagni has earned a reputation for working with authentic materials combined with fierce attention to detail for a signature style that is discrete, balanced and timeless. Last May, he presented a bespoke collection of furniture and objets d'art at the exclusive Maison Gerard gallery in New York.



SHIELD



Achille Salvagni Architeti is located in the historic heart of Rome, a stone's throw from the Roman Forum. The centuries-old building that houses the studio used to serve as an ironmonger's warehouse for the farriers who built and repaired the city's horse-drawn carriages. The connection is an appropriate one because Salvagni himself has a penchant for including hand-worked metals such as bronze and nickel silver (alpaca) or metallic finishes like palladium in his furniture pieces.

Architects are defined by their cultural heritage and Salvagni's conversation is peppered with historic precedents and references to his world-renowned peers such as Richard Meier, Jean Nouvel and Renzo Piano. But he also derives inspiration from the craftsmanship and style of Italy's master cabinetmakers from the 1940s and 1950s. "I'm looking to

revive the golden age of design when it was still aimed at the individual," he insists, "before the advent of industrialised mass production."

Salvagni burst on to the superyacht scene with his interior design for *Numptia*, the award-winning 70m motoryacht launched by Rossi Navi with exterior styling by Tommaso Spadolini in 2011, but he had previously worked with semi-production builders such as Canados, Otam and Azimut. *Numptia* was a much larger, full-custom yacht for a discerning client and provided the interior volume and creative licence to develop his complex yet calming signature style derived from architectural research, elegant materials and fine craftsmanship. The same sophisticated design has been transposed into his high-end residential projects in London, Paris or New York and typifies the limited edition collection of furniture, lighting and textiles designed by Salvagni presented at Maison Gerard.

Salvagni heads up a studio of 11 architects that work to "valorise the clients' vision and to take them beyond

"You provide the ideas and I do the design; you tell me what you want or need and I translate those requests into the design. It's a fine line, but one I'm always very clear about."

SPIDER



their expectations". He draws a subtle distinction, however, between working for and with the client: most of his clients come to him with ideas based on interiors they have seen before, but he has little interest in reproducing the work of others. "It's easy to produce a tasteful interior design based on what the market already has to offer," he remarks. "It's much more difficult to produce something fresh and different, but ultimately the creative process is more stimulating and rewarding for the client."

He distinguishes between the designer as the medium and the mediator of ideas. In the former role he gives form and perspective to a concept, whereas the latter risks results that have neither higher value nor represent what the client really wanted. In other words, the owner should inspire or provoke the creative agent without entering into compromising negotiations. It is a process that requires dialogue and trust, combined with freedom for the designer to follow his own intuition—something that Mario Sbarro, the owner of *Numptia*, understood intuitively.

"You provide the ideas and I do the design; you tell me what you want or need and I translate those requests into the design," Salvagni insists. "It's a fine line, but one I'm always very clear about. When Sbarro came to visit us here at the studio he saw how we had transformed the original building and realised we could do something special. It was a signal we could work together and that ▶

GIO

WATERCOLOUR ILLUSTRATION
BY JEAN-PHILIPPE DELHOMME



he was looking for something different.”

Although he champions Italian craftsmanship—and nearly all his artisan suppliers are based locally—Salvagni distances himself from the ‘Made in Italy’ slogan, which he feels lumps both the best and the worst the country has to offer into one unexceptional category. He believes the Italian yachtbuilding industry is too busy comparing itself with its counterparts in northern Europe to target quality for its own sake.

“To excel in any field depends on your desire to be the best—otherwise, you may survive but you will never shine,” he remarks. “Whenever I start a new interior project, I close my eyes and imagine how the top five or six international architects would go about it. If what I’m doing is substantially different, then I know I’m on to something worthwhile.”

This commitment to interior architecture and design has meant he has turned down commissions for designing the exteriors of yachts. Given the choice, most designers prefer to do both as the best path to providing continuity between the interior and exterior. Salvagni, however, is not convinced by this logic. “The danger is that the interior design becomes a banal extension of the exterior styling,” he explains and draws a comparison

with the flamboyant American designer Peter Marino, whose unconventional residential interiors range from ancien régime to avant-garde with little or no respect for the exterior architecture of the building. “I see no reason why you couldn’t have a Wally with a less contemporary interior, for example,” he continues. “The two things aren’t mutually exclusive.”

With the focus on continuity between the

OYSTER – CONCAVE PATINATED HAND
HAMMERED BRONZE AND ONYX SCONCE



MENHIR – CARVED ONYX
MULTIFACETED TABLE LAMP
ON A LAQUERED AND
POLISHED FIBERGLASS BASE



“To excel in any field depends on your desire to be the best—otherwise, you may survive but you will never shine.”



STING – POLISHED PATINATED
GUN METAL BRONZE,
ORGANIC SILK LAMP SHADE

inside and the outside, he faults the lack of consistency of many yacht interiors whereby “the succession of spaces open and close like a series of events with no connection”. His interior concept for a 60m sailing yacht from Perini Navi (showcased in Q14 of *SuperyachtDesign*) clearly demonstrates the high level of pre-design required to ensure connectivity down to the smallest details. He further criticises what he sees as an over-reliance on precious materials or exclusive products to confer a semblance of high quality to an interior, “without realising that these materials or products have to integrate with the interior design”.

“It’s very easy to detract attention from the overall quality when you have works of art or other objects of high value,” he continues. “But that’s like gift-wrapping a diamond in a brown paper bag. I’m an architect first and a designer second, so for me the space always has priority.”

It was this desire to harmonise the entire interior—fixtures and fittings included—that drove Salvagni to design the limited edition collection of furniture

and accessories that bears his name. Clearly a proponent of haute design over the ready-to-wear variety, Salvagni is aware that designers are sometimes inclined to take themselves too seriously. So to keep things in perspective he added a touch of tongue-in-cheek humour to the collection’s website (www.achillesalvagni.com) with playful illustrations by French artist and columnist Jean-Philippe Delhomme. Synonymous with charm and gentle wit, Delhomme’s whimsical watercolours depict rather posh characters on the verge of one style crisis or another and have appeared in magazines such as *The New Yorker*, *Vogue* and the French version of *Architectural Digest*. The message is that even if Salvagni’s creations are the precious playthings of his well-heeled clients, they reflect the same creativity and craftsmanship that were the hallmarks of bespoke design in the past. ■