

# HOUSE & GARDEN<sup>®</sup>

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## The city issue

INDIVIDUAL INTERIORS &  
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*In conversation with...*

## Molteni&amp;C

LAURA NORMANTON talks to Giulia Molteni and the company's creative director Vincent Van Duysen

As contemporary design brands go, Molteni&C, established in 1934, is about as big as you can get. From its base in Giussano, just outside Milan, it makes a huge range of furniture, innovative wardrobe systems and ultra-modern kitchens, and collaborates with designers such as Patricia Urquiola, Yabu Pushelberg and Rodolfo Dordoni. Recently, it has also developed the Heritage range of archival designs by the likes of Gio Ponti and Ignazio Gardella. And, this spring, it launches its first outdoor furniture collections with a mixture of new designs and reworkings of classic pieces.

*What sparked the development of the new outdoor collection?*

**Giulia:** It felt like a very natural extension to the Molteni&C product offering and it was the result of a lengthy research process. We took our time to release this collection.

**Vincent:** It fits in well with the brand's exploration into the art of living; every moment and every aspect of the home is considered. There is a real yearning now for living en plein air – a freedom that is related to the respect we have for nature and sustainability.

*You mention sustainability, which has become increasingly important in your collections.*

**Vincent:** Yes, sustainability is a responsibility to be pursued at every step – from the initial design and sourcing materials to the finished product. The outdoor collections embody this, as the pieces are made using materials from certified supply chains. When it comes to the upholstery, the fabric is made mainly from polypropylene, which is easily recyclable.



*What is the aesthetic relationship between the indoor and outdoor collections?*

**Vincent:** Just as with the latest Molteni&C indoor collection, I pursued ideas of comfort and wellbeing. The outdoor pieces are more free and sensual, but without denaturing this architectural vision. I was inspired by modernism to explore the concepts of permeability and transparency between indoor and outdoor spaces and, when it came to the colour palette, I was influenced by nature. And I took time to consider lightness and softness. A good example is the 'Guell' sunbed from the Timeout range. While its long and sinuous structure gives it a certain lightness, it remains strong graphically.

*What is the thinking behind the features of the outdoor pieces?*

**Giulia:** The furniture in both the new outdoor collections – Landmark and Timeout – is designed to work well together. Landmark pieces in solid teak complement the strong metal profiles of Timeout designs. Woven motifs feature throughout the two collections – from the striking interlaced polypropylene rope detailing on Timeout pieces such as the 'Phoenix' sofa, to the banded woven back rest (available in teak or EVA) on the Landmark 'Palinfrasca' sofa, inspired by traditional basket making.

*What is it like to design furniture collections that have to stand up alongside iconic pieces created by the likes of Luca Meda and Gio Ponti?*

**Vincent:** I have always tried to maintain their distinctiveness and timelessness in my own creations for Molteni&C, as these are characteristics that are intrinsic to the company's very strong design identity. The beauty of the individual pieces – all skilfully crafted with sophisticated details – reflects the past work of these great architects and designers, which has been interpreted by the company over the years □



FROM TOP 'Panna Cotta' small tables, by Ron Gilad, from £1,590. Giulia Molteni with creative director Vincent Van Duysen. 'Palinfrasca' sofas, by Vincent Van Duysen, from £13,044. 'D.154.2 Outdoor' armchair, by Gio Ponti, from £5,333. 'Guell' sunbed, by Vincent Van Duysen, from £5,174

de Le Cuona  
rooted in nature

