

TIME & Wallpaper* present

Ahead of the Curve

THE LATEST IN GLOBAL LUXURY



Fashion moves fast.

To keep you current, TIME turned to *Wallpaper** editor in chief Tony Chambers to curate this guide to the world of luxury, from reborn classics like the Gucci loafer to high-tech treasures like the Apple Watch Hermès.

But luxury is about more than what you can buy—Henrietta Thompson shows how designers are seizing the spotlight, while Amy Serafin visits Beirut's new Aishti Foundation building. This is the space where the best of art, design and fashion meet.

—Bryan Walsh

**Ilary side table by
Jean-Marie Massaud for
Poltrona Frau, \$6,240**

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOANNA
MCCLURE FOR TIME

The World of Luxury

Gucci's dark-horse genius, table presence from Chivas and Aïshti's new home



The Gucci effect

FROM TOP EDITORS to snobby buyers to gushing bloggers, Gucci has become the brand that is currently on every fashion insider's lips—not to mention their feet and hips. Not since Tom Ford's winning streak in the late '90s and early 2000s has this historic Florentine brand had such a hot moment. And that's all the more surprising because the company had been on creative cruise control since Ford departed in 2004, and in the past two years, its

quarterly sales had begun a retreat.

The shower of buzz and bankable product is thanks to new CEO Marco Bizzarri and creative director Alessandro Michele, who together in less than 10 short months have orchestrated an unexpectedly fast fashion turnaround. Bizzarri was plucked from within the ranks of the sprawling luxury group Kering (which also owns Gucci), where as CEO of the Italian leather-goods company Bottega Veneta he increased

Gucci's creative director **Alessandro Michele** at Milan Fashion Week in September

sales from \$440 million a year in 2009 to more than \$1.2 billion by 2014.

Upon arriving at Gucci in January 2015, Bizzarri made the swift but unorthodox move of hiring the unknown Michele, who had been working inside the company's accessories department for over a decade, as the brand's new creative director. "There was a need to change perspective by recapturing the spirit of innovation and by concentrating on the present and future of the brand," says Bizzarri.

Michele may have been unknown, but he understood immediately how to jump-start a sleepy Gucci. In just two seasons, his fashion shows in a far-flung warehouse became the must-see events in Milan, while his very particular vision of eccentric, intricately dressed teenagers has made geek chic not only the new guiding creative force at Gucci but a full-fledged industry trend that has other fashion brands emulating Gucci's new look. He staged an unexpected show on the streets of New York in June, created a colorful, personality-filled new store concept in the brand's flagship Montenapoleone boutique in Milan (which will soon roll out globally) and has zeroed in on small but crucial details like creating rich, floral printed shopping bags that are too beautiful to throw away.

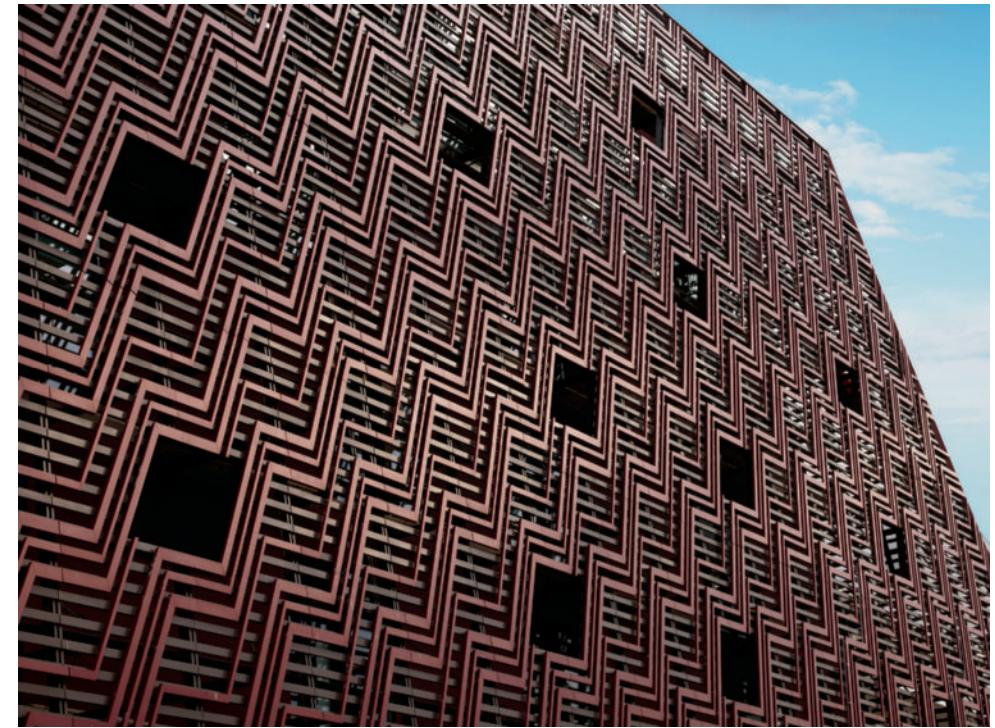
Of course, Michele's magical touch centers on Gucci's iconic accessories, especially the brand's classic horsebit loafer which he reimagined as an achingly cool, fur-lined slipper that has both men and women lining up to buy at \$995 a pair. The seismic changes have even reached fashion's notoriously hard-to-please niche multibrand boutiques like Dover Street Market and Collette, who are now buying Gucci for the first time in years. Not bad for a brand that will celebrate its 95th birthday next year. —J.J. MARTIN

The iconic look of Chivas

Once upon a time, when traditional Scotch drinking was regarded purely as a thoughtful and solitary pleasure, befitting of deep leather upholstery and roaring library fires, distillers focused their bottle designs on the artful notion of "back-bar presence." Whisky glassware was skewed toward drawing patrons' attention to the illuminations of the back bar; silhouette, sculpture, glass coloration and label fonts all conspired to engender a positive and seductive message to the casual, occasional whisky drinker—while appearing immediately familiar to the premium-whisky loyalist.

But about 10 years ago, with new markets in China and elsewhere in East Asia booming, the industry suddenly woke up to the idea of whisky as a social lubricant that, like vodka, could be consumed table-service-style and bottled in glassware, admired from all angles by aspirant consumers. This new fashion for what experts call "table presence" has caused a quiet revolution in whisky-bottle design, with distillers battling for a whisky connoisseur's attention with ever more elaborate and elegant bottles.

Now Chivas Regal has set an international standard for table presence with the Icon. It's a blend of rare Scottish whiskies from over 20 distilleries in Strathisla, Longmorn and Glen Keith, all presented in a hand-blown crystal decanter crafted by artisans at Dartington Crystal in England. Each example of the Icon's bottle glass is etched and finished with precision-crafted metalwork and adorned with a signature luckenbooth stopper, a heart-shaped traditional Celtic symbol of love. And the cost? A bracing \$3,500 a bottle. So, guys—how about we split the bill on this one? —Simon Mills



The Aïshti Foundation, designed by **David Adjaye**, opened in late October

The Aïshti Foundation in Beirut

HOBNOBBING AT THE recent opening of the Aïshti Foundation, a private art space and retail complex in Beirut, fashion photographer Juergen Teller joked that he would have liked the party better had he not given up drinking. These days Teller is more into yoga. On the pages of the book he produced for the event (*pictured*), a riot of images range from Beirut skylines to Gisele Bündchen in a trash can to a model doing downward dog on the construction site. The book, which throws together art, fashion, architecture and yoga, is totally of the moment, like Aïshti itself.

The man behind Aïshti, Tony Salamé, opened his first clothing store in 1989 down the street from where his foundation now stands in the seaside neighborhood of Jal el-Dib, just north of Beirut. He has since turned it into an empire selling luxury brands throughout the region, even as he nurtures a side career collecting art. Salamé and his wife Elham have acquired more than 2,000 works by the likes of Urs Fischer, Giuseppe Penone and Christopher Wool. "Over the years we

went crazy, Elham and me, and we have a big collection," he says with a laugh.

Salamé hired the hot British-Ghanaian architect David Adjaye to design the new foundation—an enormous, slightly rotated red box with a patterned facade that Adjaye says symbolizes "the abstraction of water."

The space houses four floors of art and retail and will soon include a spa and rooftop nightclub. Outside, reclaimed waterfront will host a sculpture garden.

A couple thousand of the Salamés' friends—from couturier Elie Saab to crocodile-bag tycoon Santiago Gonzalez to artist Maurizio Cattelan—showed up for the three-day launch in late October. They admired the building, which cost more than \$100 million,

the art collection and the designer duds. Out-of-towners marveled at Beirut's indefatigable spirit, which endures in good times or bad. Salamé says putting the foundation in his native city was an obvious choice. "If you don't share it with people you like, people who should be a part of it, then what's the point?" —AMY SERAFIN





Clockwise from top left: **Puzzle bag** by **Loewe**, \$2,190; **D.154.2 armchair** by **Gio Ponti** for **Molteni**, \$5,772; **Princetown leather slippers** by **Gucci**, \$995; **Apple Watch Hermès Double Tour with Etain leather band**, \$1,250



JANNA MOCCURE FOR TIME

Futurecraft 3D by **Adidas**, a customized 3-D-printed running shoe that is currently in the concept stage

Ahead of the Curve



- 1. Alfi Chair by Jasper Morrison for Emeco, \$325;
- 2. Copycat lamp by Michael Anastassiades for Flos, \$595;
- 3. Alfi Chair, \$325;
- 4. Collo Alto cutlery by Inga Sempè for Alessi (fork and spoon, \$17 each);
- 5. Elliott coffee table by Rodolfo Dordoni for Minotti, \$7,705;
- 6. Twist 1586 collection by Saint Louis (wine decanter, \$635; water tumbler, \$125);
- 7. Brass watering can by Lee West for Carl Aubock, \$623

Designers as entrepreneurs

“THE FLUFFY STUFF.” That’s what designers used to do. After everything important had been decided by the moneymen or the manufacturers, the designers could come in and choose the colors, perhaps parts of the shape or where the buttons went. It was fine-tuning at best. A business that wanted to make products that a) worked and b) sold would think twice about letting a designer loose on the scene.

Over the past decade or two, that old world has been systematically blown up by a series of design mavericks. Intent on being involved from the start and taken seriously as changemakers and entrepreneurs, designers are now not only leading big businesses from the very top, but they are taking the game into their own hands.

Take trailblazer Jony Ive, largely credited with turning around Apple’s astonishing fortunes; or Yves Béhar, who redesigned a laptop to be so cost-effective it could be distributed to children in the developing world, and then did the same with spectacles, while revolutionizing fitness trackers, wireless speakers and thermostats along the way. Marcel Wanders brought the fun back into furniture, as did Tom Dixon—who has created a lighting and furniture empire with his own (now household) name that shows no signs of slowing down. A visit to Milan’s annual furniture trade fair, Salone del Mobile, is a very different experience than it used to be. Once a showcase for venerable brands, it has been taken over by superstar designers.

Consumers of everything, from fashion to furniture, have become less interested in the manufacturer than in the creator, breaking down the wall between art and commerce. This year, Japanese design studio Nendo exhibited a one-year retrospective of more than 100 products it had designed for commercial brands at the Museo della Permanente. When designer Jaime Hayón created a fantastical urban installation of a play cityscape to showcase the carmaker Mini’s Citysurfer electric scooter, everyone came to see the 40-m-long marble table with gold road markings on it and handmade copper “street lamps” he had created—rather than the actual product.



Brew stovetop espresso maker by Tom Dixon, \$175

There was a similar marriage between art and industry in Lee Broom’s faux department store in Milan, an installation he put together in abandoned shops to showcase his products. Meanwhile, Dixon has rethought the whole concept of retail with Multiplex, a monthlong multisensory shopping experiment in London’s Selfridges department store, and he’s moved into chocolates with Marcolini and soon into perfumes because, well . . . why not? “I think that design thrives with unexpected combinations and can’t exist in a void,” says Dixon. “It’s a broad concept that stretches through software, theater, fashion, product, systems and graphic design. It’s impossible to speak of it as one single thing.”

The new entrepreneurial design landscape is as diverse as it is complicated. As the boundaries between disciplines blur, the very term *designer* has become a catchall for a variety of cre-

ative forces. And as routes to market become more streamlined, there is more freedom to make, do and sell whatever a designer can dream. See Barber & Osgerby, who put their innovative mark on everything from school chairs to sound systems to gigantic spinning installations like the one they built inside the Victoria and Albert Museum last year. Or British designer Thomas Heatherwick, who could just as easily revolutionize a restaurant as he could a razor.

In a relatively short time, designers have gone from being nameless entities to established entrepreneurs. They have proved their ability to use creativity to change the world because it’s finally being acknowledged that things that work well and look good are not superficial—especially when they sell in big numbers. The result may have blurred the lines between business and art, but it is a very long way from fluffy stuff. —HENRIETTA THOMPSON