



BottegaGhianda

**Bottega Ghianda, at the forefront of global fine-woodworking.
A cult brand amongst leading designers and starchitects.
Its standard bearers – of yesterday and today**

Bottega Ghianda is part of the narrow circle of workshops at the forefront of the art of fine-woodworking and cabinetmaking in the world.

It was founded two centuries ago and has established itself over the course of generations as an Italian excellence in this form of craftsmanship – and particularly in its most refined tradition, ebanisteria. It has cultivated a precise vocation: **the mastery of its craftsmen enables exceptional designers to transform their creative vision into reality**. It is only the truly peerless skill of each of the fine-woodworking masters that makes it possible for wood to take the forms conceptualised by leading architects, designers and artists. They have always entrusted their ideas to Bottega Ghianda with the utmost confidence, in the knowledge that only here can they find the hands and knowledge they require.

In 2016 **two exhibitions** were dedicated to Pierluigi Ghianda, the Maestro who died in 2015: one was held in Tokyo at the Italian Culture Institute and the other – curated by Milan's Triennale – was at the Villa Reale in Monza.

Bottega Ghianda and its craftsmen are thus experiencing a moment of growing attention from a wider audience and the media. The interest echoes the cult status this artisanal workshop has always enjoyed amongst connoisseurs and experts like **Gae Aulenti, Richard Sapper, Vico Magistretti, Cini Boeri, Ettore Sottsass**, to name but a few.

One of these admirers, **Romeo Sozzi, founder and designer of Promemoria, an ebanista by descent** and personal vocation, set himself the task in 2015 of enabling Bottega Ghianda to continue its work and helping it to grow, while maintaining a profound respect for its tradition: this was the reason he and his three sons Stefano, Davide and Paolo bought the business from Pierluigi Ghianda shortly before he passed away. By directly taking the baton of a noble history from him, Romeo Sozzi has ensured that Bottega Ghianda's longstanding artisans can continue their virtuoso work. The pieces that are in production – tables and bookcases, lecterns and frames, trays, boxes, étagères and travel items – are and will continue to be the ones that were produced over time, between the Thirties and the present, and the ones conceived by new designers that current artistic director Michele De Lucchi has invited to collaborate with Bottega Ghianda.

Thanks to all these people, the tradition of ebanisteria fine-woodworking, that Italians have excelled in since the Renaissance, still has in Bottega Ghianda **a jewel in the crown** that our country can be proud of throughout the world.

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A two-century-long history. Pierluigi Ghianda and his artisans Manual expertise, a unique cultural heritage

Iginio Ghianda, the son of blacksmith Luigi, **founded Bottega Ghianda in 1889** as a carpenter's workshop specialising in the creation of inlaid parquet flooring. Bottega Ghianda quickly established itself as an exponent of high-level craftsmanship, garnering fame and orders from Vienna, London and Paris.

After it began producing furniture in 1920 – in the rigorous Rationalist style that was in fashion at that time – and had initiated important collaborations in the Thirties with architects like Emilio Lancia and Gio Ponti, the founder's son, Pierluigi, took over the reins of the company.

Under his stewardship, Bottega Ghianda acquired a new international prestige for ebanisteria, as it gave form – in particular starting from the Seventies – to the ideas of leading international figures in the fields of architecture, art and design. **The highly experienced hands of Bottega Ghianda's artisans translate into reality the designs** of names like Aulenti, Boeri, Castiglioni, Barokas, Magistretti, Cibic, Zanuso, Gray, Pomodoro, Mangiarotti, Bill, Noorda, Frattini, Thun, Bellini, Plečnik, Zanini, Dumas, Tovaglia, Sapper, Sottsass, Vignelli, Von Klier, Magnusson and many more.

The mastery of the craftsmen who grew alongside Pierluigi Ghianda manifests itself in a variety of manners. On the one hand, fine-woodworking of such a high level requires an ability to resolve genuine design conundrums: **delivering joints, inlays, inserts, connections** and other solutions to assemble wooden forms, that sometimes combine different wood varieties, without the use of nails or foreign materials. At the same time, a refined ebanista has **an extraordinary control of manual skills** and everything that concerns the actual working of wood: from the gestures that create intarsias of millimetric precision to those that impart a special softness to the wood, with the resulting tactile sensations offered by the finished piece.

This skill, **an important heritage of great cultural and productive value**, bears fruit in the form of the pieces that Bottega Ghianda continues to produce. A veritable cult of wood, that passes through the unique abilities of a well-trained manual artisan. In the words of Romeo Sozzi, Bottega Ghianda's art **"saves the centrality of hands and thus of the mind**. Only someone who works with their hands, touching the material and working it through direct contact, can produce something that is truly significant. With the work of Bottega Ghianda we celebrate manual and gestural expressiveness".

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The Milan Shop, in Brera. The commitment of the Sozzi family (owners of Promemoria) to the future of Bottega Ghianda

In November 2016 Bottega Ghianda celebrated a very important milestone in its history.

The opening of a shop in Milan, where people can admire and buy the precious pieces produced by Bottega Ghianda, represents the fulfilment of a dream.

The Shop – in via Formentini n. 9, amidst the historic buildings and alleyways of the Brera area – will offer all of Bottega Ghianda's productions: the pieces designed by Pierluigi Ghianda and its longstanding designers like **Carl and Emanuela Magnusson, Gae Aulenti, Mario Bellini, Cini Boeri, Pino Tovaglia, Livio Castiglioni, Gianfranco Frattini**; but it will also host the future creations of new designers selected by the artistic director, architect Michele De Lucchi, who enthusiastically accepted his invitation to contribute to a tradition that is admired throughout the world. It will also stock the iconic Casette produced by Bottega Ghianda in a new interpretation of De Lucchi's original idea: passionate celebrations of wood and essential architectural forms that are also **an ideal link between Bottega Ghianda's past and future**.

A unique collection of objects of a more utilitarian or artistic nature, all of which share that suggestive embodiment of an intense love for wood: **"It is the most beautiful material in the world," states Michele De Lucchi, "and Bottega Ghianda's craftsmen know how to work it like nobody else:** this knowledge was born and developed over years of dedication, experimentation, errors and successes".

The unveiling of the Shop – a memorable step in Bottega Ghianda's history – is a legitimate source of pride for **the Sozzi family, which, as owner, has invested resources but above all the necessary vision for creating this location** dedicated to the cult of wood and craftsmanship.

After taking over Bottega Ghianda, Romeo Sozzi, the founder of the Promemoria brand, declared "I am faced with the great challenge of building a future for this prestigious Italian institution"; with this important first step he has laid the strongest possible foundations for success and is already closer to reaching the business objectives that will make this venture sustainable. Paolo Sozzi, Sozzi Arredamenti's sales director, summarises these objectives as follows: "Expand the range of products and the geographical markets we serve, while continuing to represent the creativity and high quality of Italian manufacturing in the luxury segment".

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**What is ebanisteria, the most noble of the arts of wood.
History and techniques. Bottega Ghianda represents
the pinnacle of a tradition that is admired the world over**

The art of ebanisteria has a **long tradition**.

It distinguishes itself from other branches of high-level wood craftsmanship through its extreme precision, linked to **the use of wood alone**. This may involve different varieties, which are indeed not uncommon to find in the same finished piece. The discipline owes its name to ebony, a refined species of wood that was for a long time the "exotic variety" par excellence in Europe.

In various countries, from Japan to Great Britain to Denmark, the first movements of fine wood craftsmanship emerged in the Middle Ages or even earlier; but it was in the area comprising France, Germany, Spain and Italy that *ebanisteria* in the strictest sense developed. The name itself does not have a precise equivalent in languages spoken outside this region.

A crucial factor has always been a **demanding customer base that was prepared to meet the costs** that quality entails. **The fame of Italian artisans quickly grew** with two major European monarchies, the House of Bourbon in France (though there were no interruptions in the Napoleonic era) and the Hapsburgs in Austria. This was particularly true in the North of Italy, which had been a longstanding economic and political satellite of Paris and Vienna. The title of Master Inlayer of the House of Habsburg was conferred upon an ebanista from Lombardy, Giuseppe Maggiolini, by his patron, Archduke Ferdinand, while Messers Piffetti and Bonzanigo flourished under the House of Savoy. Our nation's reputation for excellence from the Eighteenth century onwards mirrored that of Italian masters from the Renaissance.

Other regions, like Liguria and Veneto, developed their own legacy. But it was only in Lombardy – in particular in the area between Milan and Lecco – that a genuine bedrock of production was consolidated over the centuries: master cabinetmakers, specialist artisans, but also production and distribution networks. Above all, **a widespread heritage of experience that was passed down from fathers to sons**: by virtue of the dedication and special skills required, ebanisteria flourished through family-run workshops.

The maestros continued to reach new heights thanks to knowledge that was built on from one generation to the next and the invention of new styles and techniques.

The art of ebanisteria often poses unique problems in terms of what we now refer to as engineering: the **search for design solutions that enable the desired forms to be created**. This has resulted in the perfecting over time of all sorts of connections, joints, dovetail inserts, tenons and mortises. To this we must add the development of new approaches to processes like intarsia, marquetry, and the different finishes in the Baroque tradition to heavy varnishing or lacquering.

But the most authentic and prestigious thread of ebanisteria is still the one where incomparable – and essential – mastery is put to the service of a more modest and restrained aesthetics, highly elaborate yet free of unnecessary frills and gimmickry: like the pieces Bottega Ghianda specialises in, with a taste that is more architectural than decorative.

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Romeo Sozzi Profile

Romeo Sozzi, the man who created the Promemoria brand, is a designer and entrepreneur, but he is foremostly an ebanista. He represents the third generation of a family that has always cultivated a painstaking attention to artisanal detail, with a special ability to understand wood



by folding it to the inspiration of individual designers: with cuts, joints and the *satinatura* that gives the wood a special silkiness – types of workmanship that are entirely unique to this most noble material.

This skill, which is now also alive in his sons, has always complemented his design vision. They form an indissoluble pairing: the great strength of Promemoria, which has evolved and prospered through wood.

It is inevitable that Romeo Sozzi should have been a connoisseur and admirer of Bottega Ghianda, a global excellence in fine-woodworking.

A short time before Pierluigi Ghianda's death, the Sozzi family directly took the baton from him, to continue a journey that celebrates wood and keeps alive Italian artisanal know-how that is admired the world over.

Romeo Sozzi was born in a Valmadrera in 1948 and studied in Milan at the Academy of Fine Arts in Brera. A profound lover of his native land, he has always lived in the province of Lecco, surrounded by nature but within touching distance of a large city, Milan.

He always carries with him a notebook, taking notes with pens and pencils out of instinct and passion. He scrutinises forms and sketches their outlines: the profile of a mountain, a possible inspiration for a handle; the sinuosity of a wave in a lake that could be the profile for a chest of drawers. His notes are always taken on paper, because – just as it is for woodwork – the manual gesture is an indispensable step, that no keyboard or software will ever replace. Continuing in his family's footsteps, with its background in the working of wood and restoration, Romeo Sozzi set out in interior furnishing in the Seventies. He founded Promemoria in 1988 and today, alongside his sons Stefano, Davide and Paolo, he runs a company that is not only a leading name of international luxury furniture, but also a boundless testing ground for innovative projects.

Romeo Sozzi has brought the same rigour and discipline that drove his own brand – not to mention his great enthusiasm and *bon vivant* personality – into this new adventure with Bottega Ghianda: as an admirer of its unique history and a connoisseur of *ebanisteria*, his aim is that of allowing this peerless institution to continue to thrive, not as a museum of itself but rather as a precious Italian artisanal business that is productive and forward-looking.

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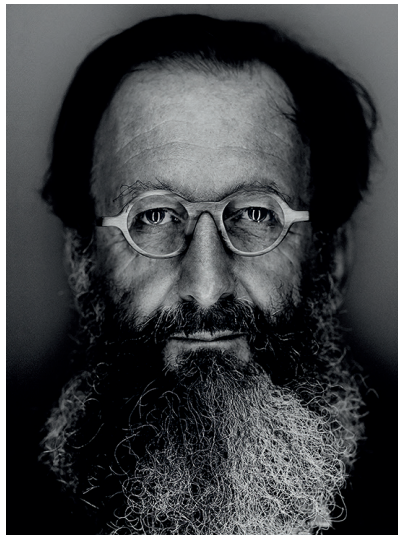
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Michele De Lucchi Profile

A love for wood has been a constant feature in the life of Michele De Lucchi. It is the material he uses for his architectural creations and the inspiration for all his projects. This love is also cultivated in other more personal projects like *Produzione Privata* – a small company that creates products using artisanal techniques – and his “Casette”, sculpted with a chainsaw. This celebration of wood and essential architectural forms will now be interpreted afresh by the hands of Bottega Ghianda’s craftsmen; and as the company’s new artistic director, Michele De Lucchi’s contribution aims to be an ideal link between its past and future.



De Lucchi was born in Ferrara in 1951 and sits amongst the great names of international architecture thanks to a career that has always been guided by a spirit of curiosity and research.

During the period of radical and experimental architecture he was a prominent figure in highly innovative movements like *Cavart*, *Alchimia* and *Memphis*. He designed for *Artemide*, *Hermès* and *Alessi*. He was *Olivetti*’s Design Director and developed experimental projects for *Compaq*, *Philips*, *Siemens*, *Vitra*, drawing upon his own personal

theories on the evolution of office spaces. He designed and refurbished buildings for *NTT*, *Deutsche Bank*, *Novartis*, *Enel*, *Piaggio*, *Poste Italiane* and *Telecom Italia*. He brought technical and aesthetic innovation into workplaces through collaborations with some of the latter companies and *Deutsche Bundesbahn*, *Hera*, *Intesa Sanpaolo* and *Unicredit*.

His extensive work in the cultural sector has included the setting-up of exhibitions and the design of museums such as *Milan’s Triennale*, the *Palazzo delle Esposizioni* in *Rome*, the *Neues Museum* in *Berlin*; he designed various buildings for *Expo 2015* including the *Padiglione Zero*, which was hailed for its tribute to the unique charm of wood, in the same vein as the *Unicredit Pavilion*, conceived as a seed that’s ready to sprout in the heart of *Milan*.

Michele De Lucchi’s deliberations on the emotional and conceptual value of seeds – that contain the essence of life and the magic of materials that transform and regenerate the very things that created them – successfully apply to the role he recently took up with *Bottega Ghianda*: his stewardship will provide a new impetus in the life of this peerless ebanisteria workshop. A contribution to a long story of love for wood, with the capacity to regenerate like a plant.

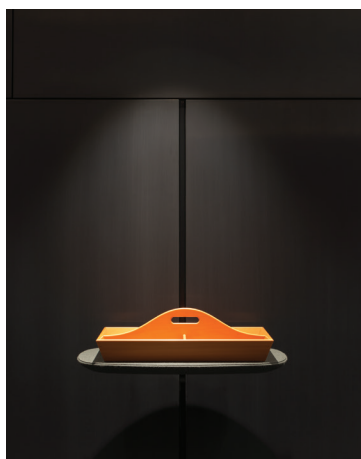
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CESTINO A BAGUETTES

Emanuela Frattini Magnusson - 1986

Size:

ø28 x 25 cm

ø35 x 35 cm

Wood varieties:

Beechwood



LEGGIO D'ORSAY

Gae Aulenti - 1986

Size:

62 x 43 x 47 cm

Wood varieties:

Maplewood

Pearwood



LIBRERIA GIREVOLE DA TAVOLO

Cini Boeri - 1989

Size:

25 x 25 x 25 cm

35 x 35 x 35 cm

Wood varieties:

Walnut

Pearwood



PORTAMATITE

Carl ed Emanuela Magnusson - 1989

Size:

15 x 14,5 x 1,5 cm

Wood varieties:

Walnut

Pearwood

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