

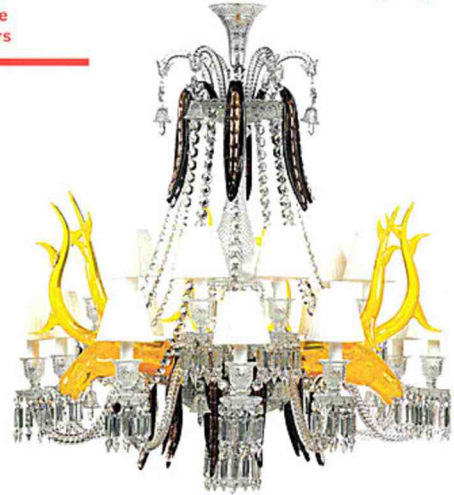
This page  
Zenith le  
Samed  
chandelier  
for Baccarat



## Milan Furniture Fair

Over the following pages, Icon brings you the best of its discoveries from the Salone del Mobile, where we spoke to Starck, Libeskind, Urquiola and the Campana brothers

053



MILAN

### PHILIPPE STARCK

The French designer launched 16 products full of trademark whimsy and trickery, but his "real revolution" was a sofa designed for comfort

WORDS:  
Mandi  
Keighran

At Kartell's stand at Rho Fiera, Philippe Starck got the Madonna treatment with signage simply reading "Philippe". It was a reflection on his status as design royalty, a status supported by the launch of 16 products for seven brands, all showing the French designer's idiosyncratic view of the world as a place where everyday objects are imbued with a sense of magic.

In Starck's world, plastic chairs and sofas take on the personalities of favourite aunts and uncles (Collection Tantes et Oncles for Kartell), children's desks inspire creativity through canine forms (Chien Savant for Magis) and lighting surprises by way of reflective trickery (Kiki le Cube and A4 Lamp for Flos). "I don't know what the role of design is," he says. "We have a duty, which is to always create ... One of the parameters to judge the quality of what you create is surprise. If there is surprise, perhaps you have proposed something new."

New lighting for Flos and Baccarat highlights this penchant for the surprising. Kiki le Cube - heir to the iconic Miss Sissi - and A4 Lamp are studies in minimalism and the magic of reflection. Another lamp, Chappo, turns on only when a hat is placed over the

luminaire, whimsically taking its cues from the film tradition of leading men throwing their hats to one side as they arrive home. The chandeliers for Baccarat are an investigation of contrasts - "The old way to make chandeliers and the magic way," says Starck.

For Cassina, the designer discarded his familiar fancifulness in favour of comfort and practicality. The MyWorld sofa, with integrated technology, is designed to be the island of energy in the house. Its biggest innovation though, says Starck, is that it is designed for comfort. "It is a real revolution ... It looks easy, but we worked for two years and made 20 prototypes to learn again how to make a sofa comfortable."

The two extendable tables for Magis, Calippo and Big Will, were also refreshingly practical and affordable, reflecting Starck's aspiration "to serve the dream of democratic design". "The first thing in designing is to be useful," he says. "But there are different ways to be useful - to be functional, to bring poetry, humour, low cost, to be political, sexual, surprising, to make people more open, more alive and more creative."

Top left  
Chien Savant  
for Magis

Top right  
Zenith sur  
la Lagune  
chandelier  
for Baccarat

Above  
Collection  
Tantes et  
Oncles  
for Kartell

