

Matteo Thun

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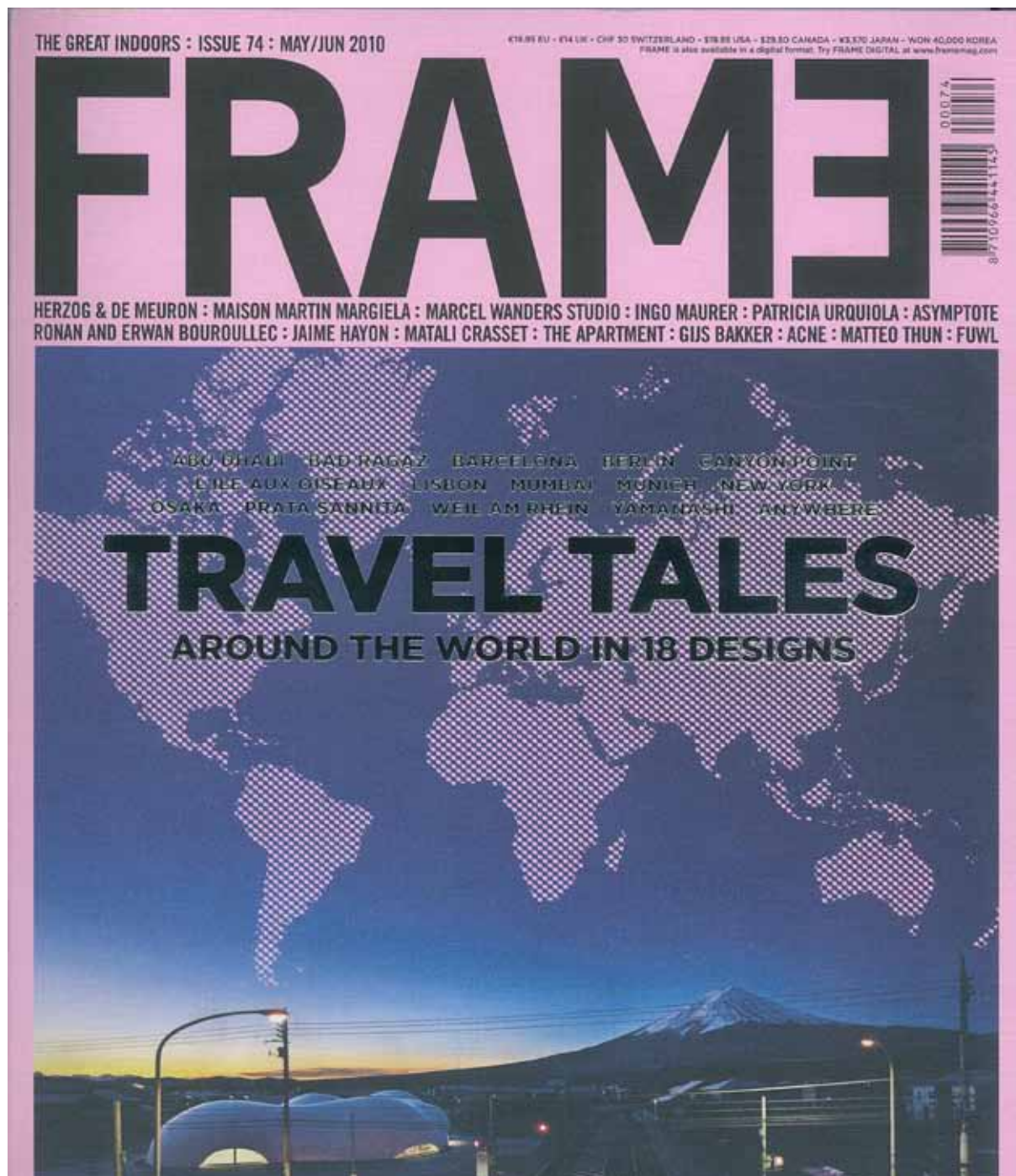
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RUGGED GOOD LOOKS

Matteo Thun's work on show in Milan this year includes, among other things, BRICCOLE VENEZIA, a craggily beautiful table made from salvaged Venetian mooring posts.

WORDS JANE SZITA
PHOTOS COURTESY OF RIVA 1920



THE ANGLED LEGS OF THE BRICCOLE VENEZIA TABLE RECALL THE ANGLES OF THE MOORING POSTS IN THE VENETIAN CANALSCAPE.



MATTEO THUN RECLINES IN AN EAMES CHAIR – AN EXAMPLE OF THE TIMELESS AESTHETIC TO WHICH HE ASPIRES.

‘Nothing grows old faster than the new’

MATTEO THUN

Born in Balzano, Italy, Matteo Thun studied at the Salzburg Academy under the supervision of Gskar Kokoschka before obtaining a degree in architecture in Florence, Italy, in 1975. In 1978 he moved to Milan and began working with Ettore Sottsass, cofounding the quintessential 1980s' design movement, the Memphis Group. In 1984 he founded his own studio in Milan. He has worked for numerous companies, from Porsche Design to Swatch, of which he was creative director from 1990 to 1993. Along the way, he has designed everything from an espresso cup to entire hotels. In Milan this year, his works on show include Briccole Venezia, the deceptively simple table he designed for Riva 1920, which is made from reclaimed briccole, or 'mooring poles', from Venetian canals. This design forms part of a larger project for Milan by furniture company Riva

1920, which presented pieces by 18 designers and architects, all of whom used reclaimed oak from Venice's legendary waterways.

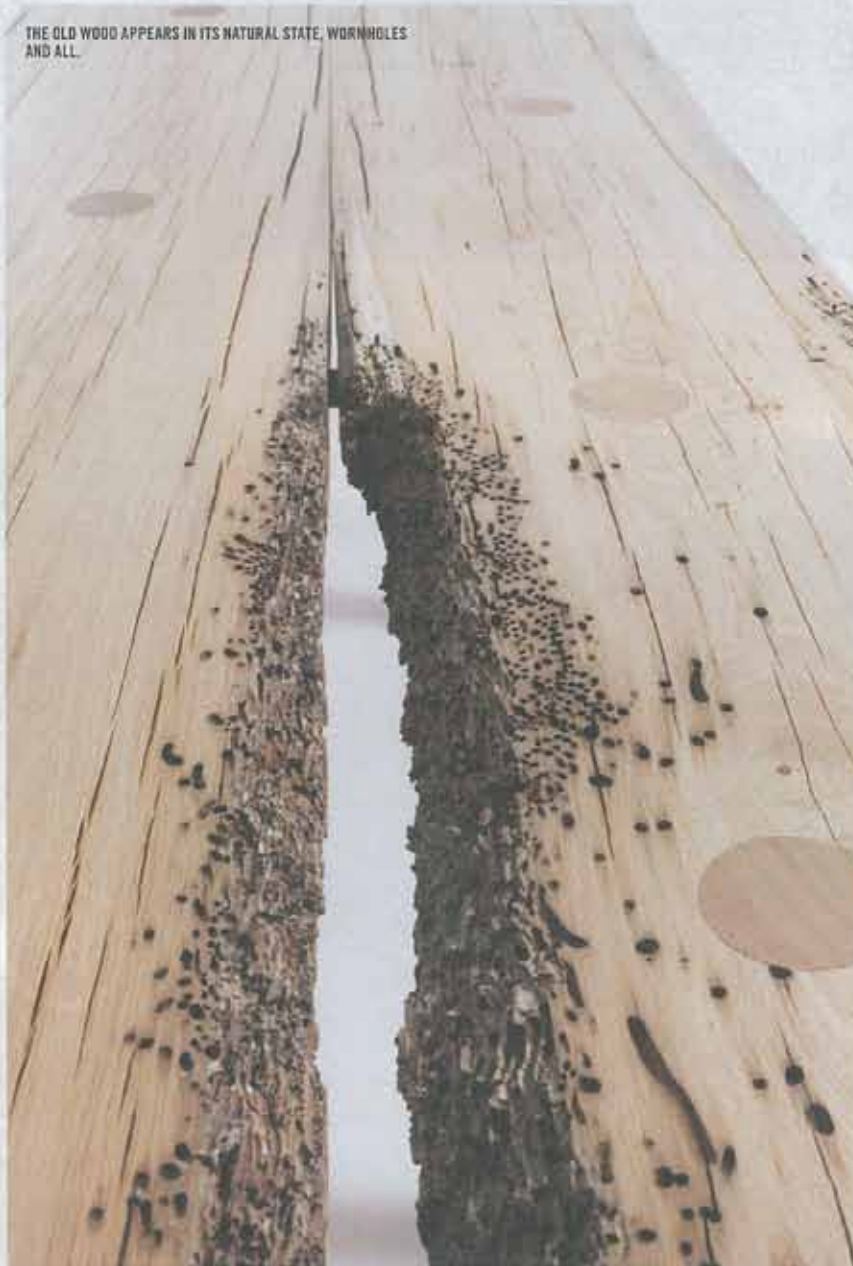
Tell us about your Briccole Venezia table.

We have a longstanding relationship with Riva 1920, and they are always open to experimentation when it comes to realizing our designs. The table was inspired by the Grand Canal; the way the legs are angled and cross over recalls the way the mooring posts look in the canalscape of Venice. The tabletop is sectioned from the mooring post itself and preserves the original shape, intact. What is really special is the almost fossilized surface, as well as the fact that the table brings a piece of Venice into the home.

What else of yours can be seen in Milan this year?

Our atelier has been on high alert for Salone, developing a lot of pure, simple and beautiful designs, mainly working with wood. They go from bath collections and accessories to furniture and kitchen designs. We're also involved in two different exhibition projects – free works that are challenging and a lot of fun as well. We hope you'll have a look at them. Outside of Salone, the architecture team has finished the multi-use complex at Via Tortona 37, just behind the Nhow Hotel. **Your Venetian table seems a long way from Memphis. Looking around today, what would you say has been the legacy of Memphis?** Forward-thinkingness, a search for

THE OLD WOOD APPEARS IN ITS NATURAL STATE, WORN HOLES AND ALL.



EACH TABLETOP USES A SECTION OF A BRICCOLE (MOORING POST), ITS SHAPE UNCHANGED.



THUN PRAISES THE 'ALMOST FOSSILIZED' APPEARANCE OF THE SALVAGED WOOD.

new solutions and the nerve to overstep boundaries – that was our motto in the Memphis days. And my motto has never changed. I learned a lot during that period. **Architecturally speaking, what are you working on now?**

Several different, very challenging hotel projects all over Europe.

You've won several design awards for your hotels and spas. What's the most important thing in designing a hotel?

Architecture means designing the soul of the place. Considering the location of the hotel is as important as having a courageous owner – one brave enough to go for a long-lasting and sustainable architecture and interior: ecologically, economically and technologically.

How did you go about developing the Missoni hotel concept, for example?

I've known Rosita Missoni for a long time; I've followed her fashion, and I understand her philosophy. Almost a decade ago, we designed the store and brand concept for her New York, Italian and German stores. So for the hotels, we did not start from scratch. Missoni's fashion signature was the starting point – it was all about marrying Missoni colours and the Missoni lifestyle to our experience of hospitality concepts.

What mistakes do people usually make in designing a hotel?

If you don't respect the sense, the soul of the place, you interfere either with nature or with the infrastructure of the

surroundings. Another mistake is to not respect the human approach – especially regarding the interior. There is nothing that grows old faster than the new. Only the pure, simple and beautiful concept endures.

Describe your philosophy of design, please. Use technology – don't dress up technology.

Finally: what are your ambitions for the future? To never stand still. ■■■■

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