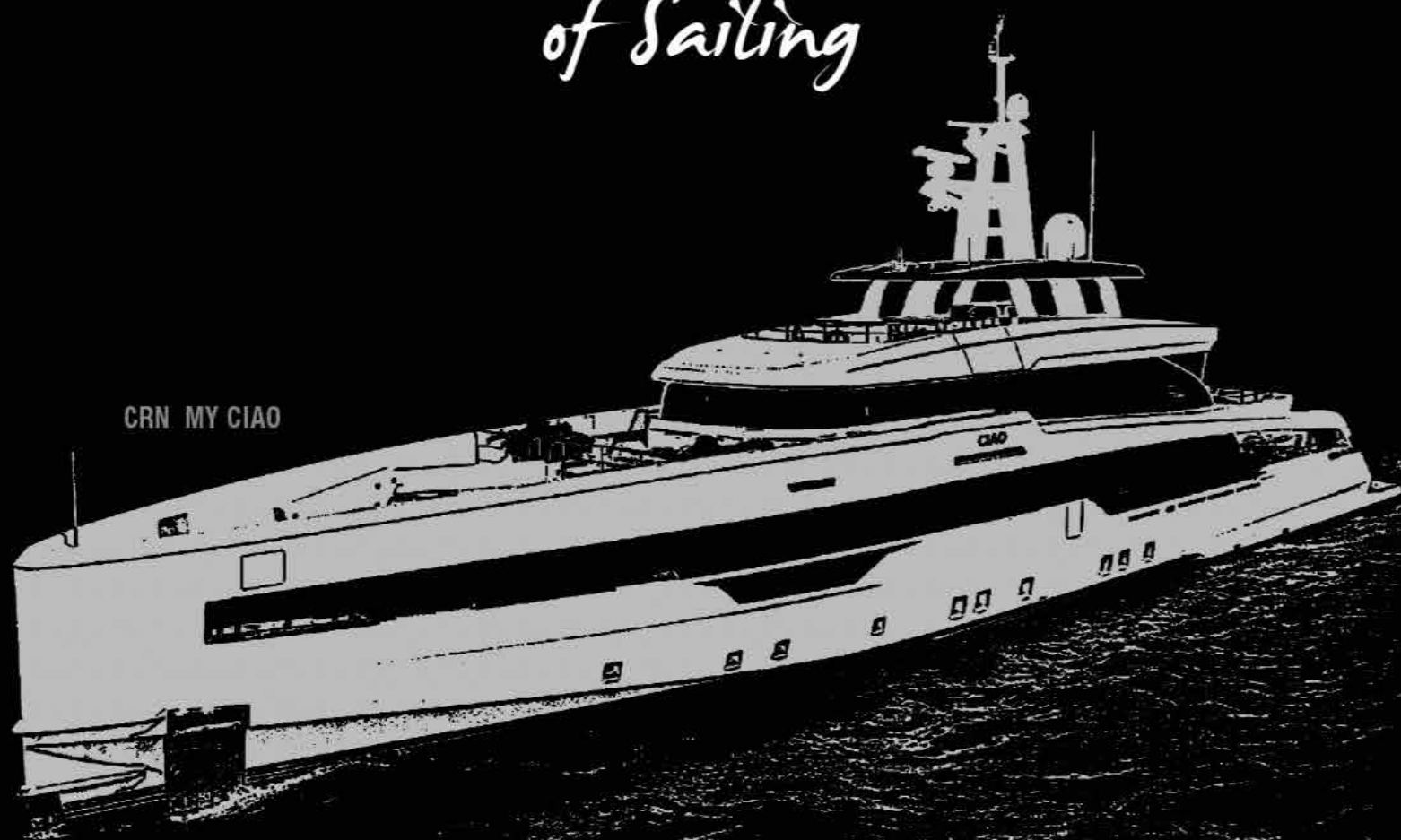


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The Art of Sailing



Matteo Thun Antonio Rodriguez

SILENT LUXURY

Remove and simplify. Designing with awareness and an emphasis on removal, in a context where essentiality is the single stylistic key, beyond trends and fashion. Respecting the object's environment to re-establish the deep, ancestral connection with nature that generates a sense of total well-being

by Désirée Sormani - Ph. courtesy by Matteo Thun & Partners

Reducing the work of Matteo Thun Antonio Rodriguez to a single statement is almost simplistic, because everything the studio creates, whether it's a knife, tap, mountain chalet, clinic, master plan or even a yacht, is the sum of a series of interconnected concepts that aim to generate well-being, a sensation rooted deep in our ancestral connection to nature. This is the theme underpinning all their creations, dictating equilibriums, perceptions, transparencies,

senses and tactile sensations. The most intense expression of this idea is essentiality. "Removing and simplifying - that's our task", say architects Matteo Thun and Antonio Rodriguez, the founders of the multicultural architect and design studio based in Milan and Munich. "The real meaning is subtraction. We always seek to eliminate, never adding. Reducing means technical and aesthetic durability. The result is a silent luxury. That doesn't mean ripping out the heart of



The studio handles interiors and product design. Above, left, the Désirée armchair designed by Matteo Thun & Antonio Rodriguez is from the RITO collection, characterized by lightness, sophistication and simplicity with graceful, minimalistic proportions.

Right, the Isy22 bathroom fittings collection designed for Zucchetti



Matteo Thun, left, moved to Milan, and here in 1978 he started work in the Ettore Sottsass studio. In 1981 he became one of the founders of the Memphis Group. In 1984 he founded his own studio in Milan. His projects included developing prototypes of energy-efficient houses. Right, Antonio Rodriguez. Born in Valencia, in 1993 he moved to Milan, worked with the Taipei Design Center, Studio Matsunaga and Ugolini Design and taught at Milan's European Design Institute. The Matteo Thun Antonio Rodriguez company was launched in 2003



[TREND SETTER]



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things, we're not at all minimalist. For us luxury means having the time to be with friends or family in a beautiful space that makes you feel good, with the correct balance of light, not too strong, not too low".

Matteo Thun, an internationally renowned architect, was among the founders in 1981 of the Memphis Group, the group of innovative design radicals led by Ettore Sottsass, whose members included Michele De Lucchi, Shiro Kuramata and Arata Isozaki, never betrays his link with nature. His roots are in Italy's Alto Adige region ("I was born in

the mountains - but I also like swimming. When I'm by the sea I love enjoying the horizon") so he's perfectly aware what it means to live in symbiosis with what exists around us. This heritage has been a strong influence throughout his career. In 1984 he opened his own studio, and in 2001 he founded Matteo Thun + Partners and then Matteo Thun Antonio Rodriguez. He and the Spanish architect share the same values: "I arrived in the studio in 1999, becoming involved in product and interior design", says Antonio Rodriguez, who studied in Valencia,



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These pages, some examples of the variety of products created by the studio. Above, the infinity pool in the JW Marriot resort on a private island in Venice. Above, right, Brera and Botanica lamps for Strolz. Right, the Now for Zwilling knife collection. Below, The Bagno che non c'è "invisible" bathroom system for Rapsel, where the washbasin, shower and 'hideaway' WC almost disappear and become geometric modules that function as sculptural shelves composed of slats. Below, right, the Vigilus Mountain Resort. Opposite page, top, left, Faucet Collection, Venezia Special Edition for Fantini and Venini; right, Bar Campari in Vienna. Below, left, Langham Hotel in Venice; right, Eisenberg Waldkliniken



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the city of his birth. “In 2001 we designed Isy, a series of taps for Zucchetti, and Thun wanted my name to be on the collection. In 2003 we decided to form a partnership. Now we have a number of companies, with various partners, involved in various aspects of design and architecture”. In short, “From spoon to city”. Each project has its own identity – the genius loci creates the architectural style. Building with the genius loci, respecting the soul of the place is what the studio does. That’s why structural transparencies are their hallmark, enabling nature to enter the spaces and become part of them. “The location is respected, we don’t want to cause pollution, we have to intervene silently. Feeling good doesn’t only mean functionality, it’s in our head, too. Glass lets natural light enter, and this means well-being, because it stimulates the production of serotonin, the feel-good hormone”, says Rodriguez. “We like wood, and it features in all our projects because we love natural materials, which become even more beautiful with the passage of time and have a textural solidity. Tactileness is very important to us. Matteo always says, “Touch with your eyes and see with your hands”. We use a lot of recycled materials, recyclable or natural. But these days “sustainability” is a much-abused term, we prefer to talk about Conscious Design”, says the Spanish architect. “You always have to be aware of where you want to go and what to do, with all the possible variations. We try to use as little materials as possible, and the materials we do use are locally sourced. When possible, for example, we reuse stone from building foundations in our architecture. That’s what we did for the Waldhotel, a clinic built

in Switzerland. We try to make architecture and objects that will endure, they shouldn’t be thrown away tomorrow just because the fashion has changed. If you design a clean, simple product then it will last. That, too, is Conscious Design”. Their mission is to design according to the Three Zeroes - Zero Kilometres, Zero CO2, Zero Waste. Zero kilometres means nearness of construction materials and local skills, Zero CO2 means energy management and lower emissions and Zero waste means lifecycle-management in the building process and the reuse of building materials.

All these principals have shaped the development of Seadeck, the new series of yachts by Azimut whose overall concept by yacht designer Alberto Mancini is based on a more conscious relationship with nature, protecting it and placing at the heart of the on-board experience. Matteo Thun and Antonio Rodriguez handled the interiors. “It was a new adventure for us, but also a straightforward one because it involves transposing what the studio offers on land to a marine environment. Our encounter with Azimut was inspired by the fact that we share some clear values – a desire to cut away, to allow the heart of the interiors to emerge, creating spaces where it’s easier to feel at ease. It’s a new interpretation of luxury, one developed in terms of well-being and a choice of natural or recycled materials. That’s the case with antique and Mediterranean cork, which can regenerate spontaneously, taking the place of teak.

“We, Azimut and Alberto Mancini are all very enthusiastic about the new Seadeck series and we’re ready to offer a truly conscious



In these pictures, renderings of the Seadeck series (Seadeck 6, above, the first of the three models, will be presented at the Düsseldorf Boat Show 2024; Seadeck 7, below and opposite). The interior design concept emphasises simplicity and well-being, a redefinition of luxury based on subtraction, "Because reducing means technical and aesthetic durability. A yacht should endure and be beautiful forever". With a selection of a just a few natural or recycled



experience on the yachts. We had to do a great deal of research to find a solution that was at the same time contemporary, light and conscious, working exclusively with recycled, recyclable and natural materials", says Matteo Thun, who had already worked in the yacht-building industry with the German shipyard Dehler on the creation of a fully custom 33-foot sail yacht. "That project was all about the

interiors of a very small yacht", says Thun. "With Azimut it is a completely different experience and we've introduced some new products", adds Rodriguez, "like the carpet made from plastic recovered from the sea. It feels like wool. We like to think that we've taken something ugly from the sea and given it a new shape and beauty".