

# Miami Heat

**Cappellini has always supported talented, young designers. In the heart of Miami's design scene, its new digs reinforce that legacy.**

words : lori fredrickson

Known as much for reinventing furniture design as for curating young design talent, Giulio Cappellini might well be the figure-head of Italian avant-garde design. Since taking over his family's flagship store in 1979, he has transformed a historic tradition of craftsman furniture into an internationally recognized brand that often verges into object art, cultivating young talent into design stardom along the way. Tom Dixon, Marc Newson and Marcel Wanders are just a few of the many renowned designers who worked with Cappellini early on.

Now with the October 2009 opening of a new Miami flagship showroom—a 2,200 square-foot space located adjacent to Poltrona Frau (both Poltrona Frau and Cappellini are part of the Poltrona Frau Group)—Cappellini continues its legacy of innovation. An accomplished architect, designer and art director who sits on the Architecture and Design Committee of Acquisitions at MoMA New York, Giulio Cappellini designed the new space himself. "The idea is to present Cappellini Miami more as an art space than a typical furniture shop," says Cappellini. "It's to engage artists as well as present their work."

Tapping into the growing art and design community in Miami, which has achieved a reputation rivaling New York and Los Angeles—the sites of Cappellini's two other U.S. showrooms—for emerging markets in both fields, Cappellini aims to make the new flagship store uniquely focused on the curatorial aspect of design. "We're focusing

now on special projects that are new to the Miami community," he says, noting that artist lectures and other events are in the works, as well as a large-scale installation during December's 2009 Art Basel.

The shop is also very focused on presenting Cappellini projects to the emerging Miami market. To this end, Cappellini is drawing on some of its most recognizable designers, including Jasper Morrison, Marcel Wanders and Ron Arad. And in addition to items from its 2009 catalog, such as a geometric-patterned Atelier Mendini armchair, it will present high-end limited editions—chairs and barstools from the Bugatti America and Bugatti Racing collections and an au courant lounge chair from New York-based designer Dror Benshetrit that recently received impressive reviews at Cappellini's presentation at Salone del Mobile in Milan.

The Poltrona Frau Group, which has been Cappellini's umbrella since 2004, has high hopes for introducing Cappellini's internationally lauded work to a wider U.S. audience and promoting collaboration between the two brands. "These shared showrooms bring together the classic of Poltrona Frau and the new and exciting designs of Cappellini's younger designers," explains Giampiero Di Persia, CEO of Poltrona Frau Miami and Cappellini Miami. And, he adds, it will also give them a hub at Miami's art events. For the installation at the upcoming Art Basel, they have plans to include works that otherwise would not be presented

in showrooms. "We've been working with Cappellini to search through his archives and select limited-edition pieces and unique products to be displayed at the showroom. There will be objects decorated by famous artists from his own personal collection," says Di Persia.

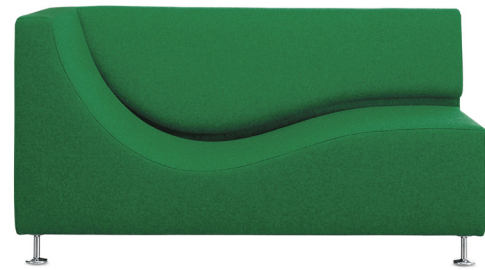
Though their base of established contributors will help draw a lot of attention to the new opening, some of the most interesting products planned for display come from the emerging designers—Adam Goodrum's Stitch Chair and Stephen Burks's recycled papier-mâché Cappellini Love tables, for example. And since experimentation is core to Cappellini's reputation, this will reinforce its niche. "Young artists are in touch with what's going on in the design world, and they offer fresh ideas," says Cappellini. "Working with our technical team, we have the ability to bring them step by step to successful products, and it helps us bring the work in more compelling directions."

And this, Cappellini notes, is the real importance of the new Miami showroom. Establishing its presence in a city where the art market is constantly breaking with the traditional, Cappellini Miami will have even more freedom to push boundaries that have previously separated furniture craftsmanship from object art. "An important part of our history is having discovered new talent from around the world," he says. "The new monograph store will help us to show the real image of Cappellini."

All images courtesy of Cappellini.



Bird by Tom Dixon, 1991



Three Sofa Deluxe by Jasper Morrison, 1992



Extra Bed by Fabien Baron, 2001



Smoke by Marcel Wanders, 2001



Igloo by Eero Koivisto, 2005



Hole by Ronan Bouroulec, 2000



Double Bottle by E. Barber & J. Osgerby, 2008



Sharpei by Massimiliano Adami, 2008



Cloud by Ronan & Erwan Bouroulec, 2004



Universal Seating System by Giulio Cappellini, 2008