

A man with a beard and glasses, wearing a black hoodie, stands in a glass factory. He is holding a large, multi-tiered glass vase. The background shows industrial machinery, including a large conical furnace and various pipes. The lighting is warm and industrial.

Words by Ifeoluwa Adedeji

A clear vision

As Barovier&Toso's new
artistic director, Luca Nichetto
is not afraid to reshape the mould

BELOW Studio Blanco has designed a new visual identity for the company

RIGHT Barovier&Toso's historic showroom on the Murano canal side



OPPOSITE The company has produced glass in its Murano furnaces for seven centuries



Barovier&Toso and its new artistic director Luca Nichetto were born on the same Venetian island – though several centuries apart. The designer has previously worked with the company – and designed its Vallonné suspension lamp, which launched in 2022. But this wasn't his first Murano client, he explains. 'I studied at the Institute of Art in Venice and I'm also part of a generation that took on summer jobs to make money so that we could buy things and have fun.' Between the ages of 14 and 18, Nichetto found himself doing what most people who had world-class glassmakers on their doorsteps did. 'I made a lot of sketches and drawings, put everything inside a folder and knocked on the factory doors,' he laughs. 'I remember many pieces I sold, they were really crappy. It wasn't design.' Perhaps that's why his mother's reaction to the news that he'd been appointed by the storied brand was: 'Mamma mia! Let's hope for the best.'

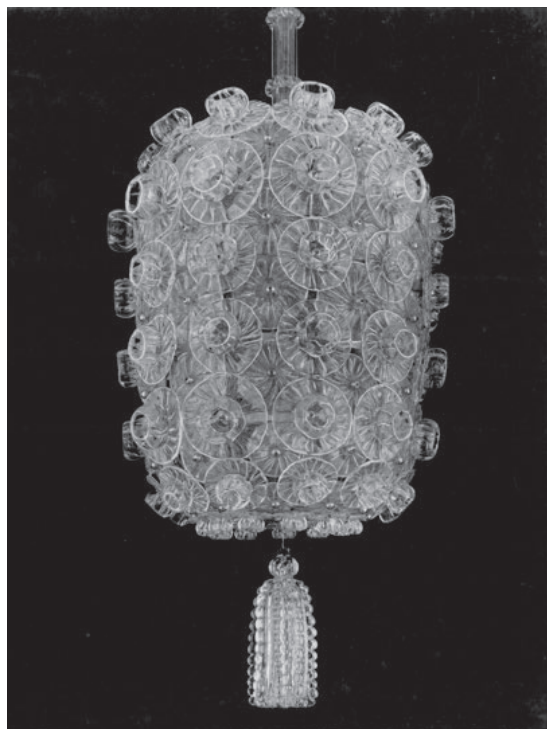
Nichetto is an established designer who has collaborated with brands including Hermès, Cassina and Ginori 1735. He has been running his Venice studio since 2006 and one in Stockholm since 2011, but his family are experts in the glassmaking field. 'My grandfather was a glassblower who created chandeliers and my mother decorated and painted on glass,' he says. Nichetto's maternal grandfather built the furnaces

BELOW A boutique designed by Nichetto Studio was opened in the centre of Venice in 2023

RIGHT Barovier&Toso's historic archive of glassware charts its work through the centuries



'He's a designer with a contemporary vision and he also has a deep knowledge of the glassmaking process on Murano'



for the glassmakers, and his uncle, Alessandro Vecchiato, co-owns lighting manufacturer Foscarini. Barovier&Toso, established in 1295, is an institution that is much revered on Murano, which explains his mother's prudent response to the announcement.

Barovier&Toso, however, was confident he was less of a gamble: having seen the work Nichetto had created for Hermès' windows in Milan's upscale shopping destination Via Montenapoleone, the company initially asked him to design those of its Venice store. 'I analysed their portfolio and when I presented my idea I told them that they didn't really have the right products,' Nichetto explains.

His analysis was timely – the company had recently appointed a new CEO. Andrea Signoroni came from Dolce&Gabbana Casa and, when the pair met, they knew they could work together. 'What struck me when I met Luca was his ability to engage with the company's heritage with great respect, while also bringing a very clear and personal point of view,' Signoroni explains. 'He's a designer with a contemporary vision and he also has a deep knowledge of the glassmaking process on Murano.'

The windows were designed, and a new boutique – also designed by Nichetto Studio – opened in 2023. Nichetto was appointed to his current role in spring 2025, although he's initially reluctant to declare that he is officially the first artistic director for the brand, explaining that technically the company's former



LEFT Swedish studio Claesson Koivisto Rune designed the Podio vases

BELOW At Milan Design Week 2026, the company previewed its 2026 Chapter 1 collection



CEO Jacopo Barovier worked with Franco Raggi on the art direction in the 1980s and 90s. This was around the time that the company stopped creating the smaller objects that Nichetto knew the stores needed, and which he wanted to bring back.

This year, during Milan's annual furniture fair, Barovier&Toso previewed 2026 Chapter 1, a series of objects created by international designers enlisted by Nichetto. Claesson Koivisto Rune, Emmanuel Babled, Studio Lani, Keiji Ashizawa and García Cumini produced glass items that range from vases to lights. Nichetto, too created pieces including the Aurora lamp, a reinterpretation of the traditional oil lamp with a coloured glass base and clear twist-ribbed long glass body. García Cumini designed new table and floor versions of its Agave lamp; inspired by the plant, these iterations resemble closed flower petals before they open and bloom.

New leadership can trigger new opportunities driven by a change in direction, but all too often criticism follows in quick pursuit. 'To be honest, the people who have been working with the company for many years were scared like hell,' Nichetto admits. 'They were very sceptical.' Undeterred, he delved into the company archives, gathering research and the designers that he felt could best interpret his vision. 'We discovered some documentation of what was done previously that aligned with where we are heading.'

OPPOSITE Etime, designed by Luca Nichetto for the 2026 Class 1 collection, brings together two primary geometric figures