

# LUXURY LONDON

Winter 2023  
£8.00

MAGAZINE

+

**MADELEINE  
MANTOCK**  
DESCRIBES THE MAGIC  
OF THE WEST END

**ALEX MICHELIN**  
HOW THE FINCHATTON  
FOUNDER IS TAKING  
THINGS UP A LEVEL

**MATTHIAS  
BRESCHAN**  
ON PRESIDING OVER  
A BILLION-DOLLAR  
WATCH BRAND

ALSO INSIDE

*Extraordinary  
GIFTS for an  
unforgettable  
CHRISTMAS*

Jimmy  
**Choo**

“You have to be patient to learn.  
If you rush, you’ll never feel it in your heart”

PLUS: SKIING IN SWITZERLAND, RACING ACROSS THE DOLOMITES,  
DINING AT THE REOPENED L'ATELIER ROBUCHON & CHECKING INTO THE UK'S BEST HOTEL





LUXURY LONDON  
PROMOTION

# The Imagination Factory

CHAMPIONING COLLABORATIONS WITH LEADING DESIGNERS,  
CHELSEA-BASED, HIGH-END ITALIAN FURNITURE SPECIALIST,  
**LEMA**, PROVIDES INTERIOR DESIGN SOLUTIONS  
YOU WON'T FIND ANYWHERE ELSE

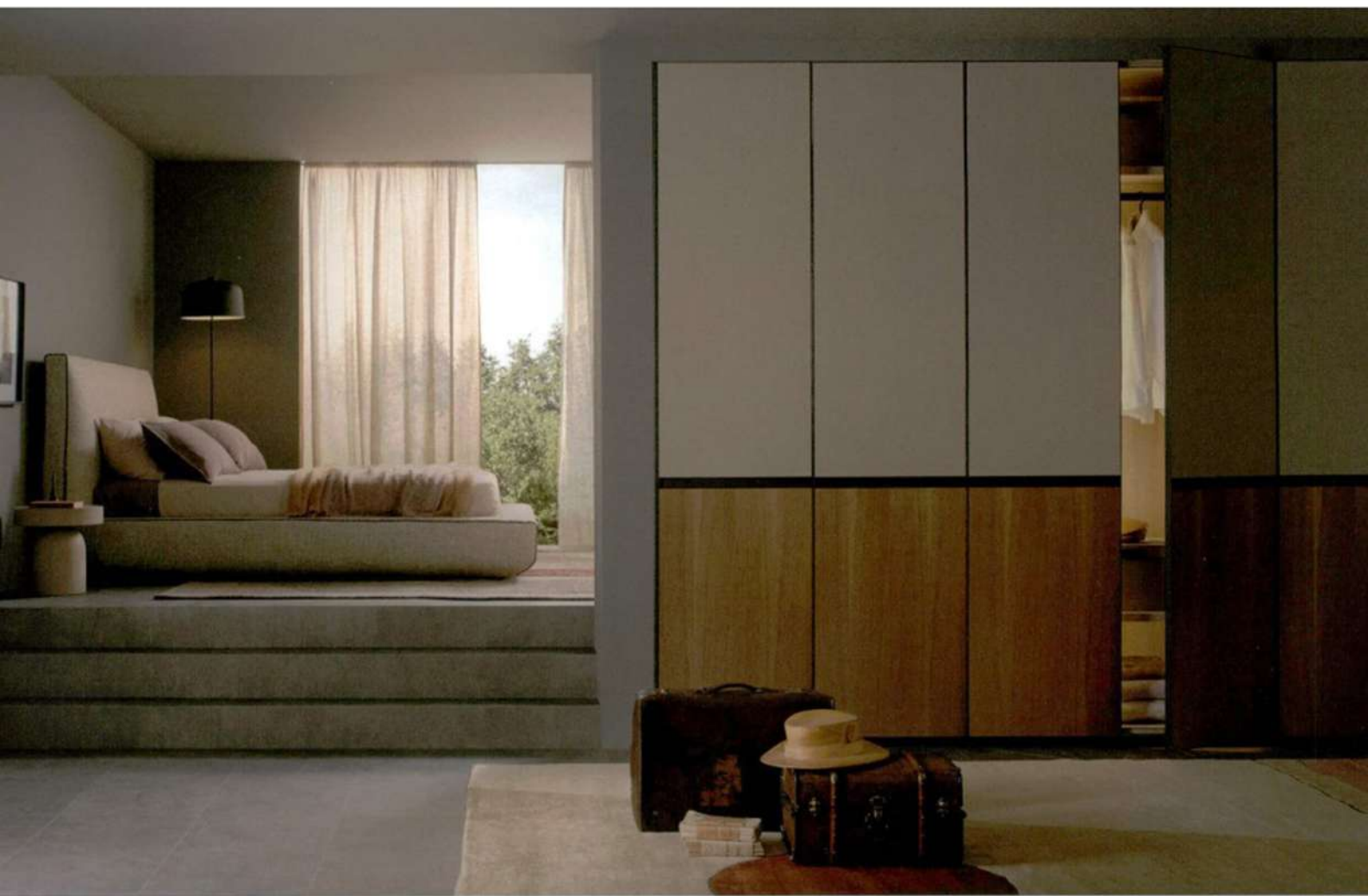
Allow us to set the scene. It's London Design Festival 2023, you wander past the Portland stone façade of a pristine furniture showroom in Chelsea, and, once inside, you're greeted by the sight of acrobats performing over super-modern designer furnishings. This dichotomy between the traditional and the contemporary is at the very heart of Italian furniture purveyor, LEMA.

Founded in the 1970s by Carla and Luigi Meroni, today LEMA is in the hands of the couple's three children. They have developed the business into three distinct divisions: Home, which includes standard products; Atelier, which provides personalisation; and Contract, which focuses on fully bespoke offerings and works with

the likes of Bulgari Hotels, Four Seasons and Mandarin Oriental.

As part of London Design Festival, in September 2023 LEMA's flagship King's Road showroom played host to a coterie of spectacular designs the company had previously showcased at Salone del Mobile in Milan. Highlights from LEMA's 2023 collection include the modular Soffio armchair and sofa, designed by Danish studio Norm Architects, and the Lullaby bed, designed by Italy's Ludovica + Roberto Palomba.

An hour before LEMA's Design Festival party got underway, *Luxury London* sat down with company President, Angelo Meroni; Commercial and Marketing Director of LEMA Home, Massimo Maestroni; and UK Managing Director, Umberto Saloni. ▶



ABOVE THE LULLABY BED, DESIGNED BY ITALY'S  
LUDOVICA + ROBERTO PALOMBA  
BELOW THE MODULAR SOFFIO SOFA,  
DESIGNED BY DANISH STUDIO NORM ARCHITECTS



**LEMA is proudly Italian. How does that pride inform the company's core values?**

**Angelo Meroni:** We are Italian to the depth of our hearts. The company started with my grandfather, followed by my parents and now my two sisters and I run it. The company has grown year by year since 1968.

**Massimo Maestroni:** Everything we do is very Italian. Our designers come from all over the world, but our ideas are Italian. The LEMA claim is the art of dialogue because dialogue is the base of the family. The family is the main value for LEMA. LEMA itself stands for Luigi Enrico Meroni Arredamenti – Luigi and Enrico are Angelo's father and uncle's names; Meroni is the family name; and Arredamenti is Italian for 'furniture'. So family is literally in the name.

**Can you tell us more about the 2023 collection, which you presented at the London Design Festival?**

**MM:** For our 2023 collection 'sustainability' was the keyword. We developed two new products. The first is the Soffio sofa, which is fully recycled and recyclable. It is a completely new concept for a sofa and can be completely disassembled so that at the end of the product's life, you can easily separate the wood, metal, and upholstery. The fabric also comes from PET bottles and old clothes. The second product is our walk-in closet, which is made with aluminium, glass and reused wood. At the end of life, again, you can separate all the components.

**How closely does LEMA collaborate with designers?**

**MM:** Behind every product is a father and a mother. The designer is the father and the company is the mother. If they do not work well together, the baby won't be what you want it to be. We work with international designers as well as Italian designers. We usually brief the designers we'd like to work with and receive a proposal from them. We then shortlist the product and start to develop it.

We've had a few cases in the past year where we started talking to new designers but immediately realised there was no passion. If you know there's no passion, even if they present you with a good product, you know it won't end well.

**Umberto Saloni:** It is a very exciting process. It's the heart of the company – pulling together the manufacturing expertise and product development to stay ahead of the curve. We represent Italian design as well as the Italian manufacturing process. It can be a challenge

but since we have to raise the bar each year, the relationship with the designer is key.

**Why did you decide on the King's Road for your flagship London store?**

**AM:** In London, LEMA started by doing contract business for hotels. After a few years, we wanted to open our first London store. We decided on Chelsea because it is one of the most important areas in the city for design.

**What have been the most difficult challenges you've faced as a business since the Covid-19 pandemic?**

**AM:** To be honest, 2021 and 2022 were great years for furniture because people began focusing and investing in creating beautiful homes. This helped our market a lot. Our clients are at the top of the market and they are increasingly prioritising personalisation.

**MM:** One big challenge we faced during the pandemic was a lack of raw materials. Our supplier selection changed dramatically. We were used to working with the same supplier for a specific material. During the pandemic, we had to add five new suppliers for every different material. Production became a huge challenge.

**What does LEMA do to try and reduce its carbon footprint?**

**US:** Sustainability is very important to us. We use solar panels for electricity wherever we can. We minimise our water wastage. We are working with our suppliers to develop sustainable raw materials. Delivery and logistics are also key. We have a dedicated team that analyses the different options of delivery. Here, in London, we tend to deliver straight from the factory to the site. Our target is to eventually achieve zero waste.

**What does LEMA have in the pipeline for 2024?**

**US:** We'll soon be completing the W Hotel in Edinburgh, which is a fantastic development. We are doing a project near Holland Park Gate, where we're handling the wardrobes for the luxury development. We have also been awarded a boutique hotel for Fulham Football Club, which will be by the Craven Cottage stadium. Because we have such a great relationship with architects and developers, they tend to come to us whenever they have a special, high-end project in mind. In that way, we are very fortunate. ■

[lemamobili.com](http://lemamobili.com)

The family is the main value for LEMA.  
LEMA itself stands for Luigi Enrico Meroni  
Arredamenti... So family is literally in the name”