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Charlotte Moss

The decorating doyenne dishes on
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how she captures a mood in a room.

BY SHARON KING HOGE



SPOTLIGHT

Orient Expression by Maria LaPiana

ITALIAN DESIGN VISIONARY MAURO LIPPARINI MAKES HIS MARK IN THE NEW STYLE-CONSCIOUS CHINA



There's a design revolution under-way in China: A young, savvy (and affluent) society is embracing Western fashion, architecture and design as never before. To wit: the opening of a new

*Baker furniture showroom in Hong Kong and a record-breaking 622 pages in last September's fifth-anniversary edition of Vogue China. In Shanghai, residences are nearly all sold out in Royal Garden, an edgy, contemporary housing complex whose creative director is none other than **Mauro Lipparini**, the renowned Italian architect and designer. We caught up with Lipparini recently and he shared his thoughts on his work, his vision for Royal Garden and how it came to fruition.*

You have been called a master of natural minimalism. Is that an apt description? "Minimalism" has, of course, informed my style, but it does not represent my stylistic ideal because of its inherent limitations. If I had to categorize my style, I would call it "essentialism"—with an idiosyncratic mix of rigorous, yet eccentric, extroverted forms.

What inspires your designs? For me, it's fundamental that each project I handle allows me to engage my fascination with the past, and simultaneously set forth my dream of the future.

You were charged with defining every aspect of the 3,500 apartments and

townhouses in Royal Garden—from its façades to every indoor amenity. Describe your personal vision for the project. The most fundamental statement of the project's mission, from a creative standpoint, is the resident's well-being. The idea was to create a "residential oasis," an environment where a resident's sense of privacy is paramount, yet one in which the establishment of a community—founded on principles of well-being and relaxation—is also possible.

Describe the complex. It consists of two contrasting building formats; some extend along a horizontal axis, while others extend upward, vertically. In essence, we have a series of perpendicular "straight lines" playing off each other. Just as important, the residential structures are closely integrated with surrounding park space—manicured lawns, trees, reflecting pools—blending seamlessly with the project's natural areas.

What feeling/mood did you want the interiors to evoke? Based on my international experience in home interiors and furniture design, I was able to identify four different thematic lifestyles: "Warm and Cozy," "Light and Transparent," "Natural and Outdoors" and "Young and Colorful." Each theme was designed and furnished accordingly, appealing to differing tastes, customs and cultural affinities.

How did you achieve that? Our interior formats were thoroughly researched and carefully constructed; we've given each client well-designed solutions organized to fit personal needs and desires. The practice of coordinating materials, colors and optional features has become something of a science. In order to

ROOM: BARBARA KRAFT



SPOTLIGHT



Happy Occident Italian architect and designer Mauro Lipparini sought to create the feeling of a "residential oasis" in designing the residences at Royal Garden in Shanghai (OPPOSITE AND LEFT). Interiors of the luxury apartments and townhouses blend seamlessly with the project's natural areas. A Lipparini-designed sculptural sofa (BOTTOM) from his new "Echoes" collection for Roche Bobois. See Resources.

realize this ambitious project, I selected products from leading Italian furniture companies: Antonio Lupi, Boffi, Misura Emme, Paola Lenti, Poliform, Tisettanta, Zanotta, among them.

What is your favorite aspect of the project? What's exciting about the Royal Garden project is the opportunity it gives me to contemplate the home of the future. One of the challenges of the project is to render these homes warm and accommodating, rather than purely technical. Because humankind is forgetting about the pleasurable rituals of living, a related challenge has been to design homes that stimulate and nurture a humane attitude, a humanistic way of life.

It's clear that China is embracing Western and especially Italian design. What is the appeal, and why now? The essence of Italian design is the perfect union of form, function, style and charm—who wouldn't find that appealing? What's happening is that China's rapidly increasing purchasing power is having an intrinsic effect on how its growing upper classes define and show their wealth. Paradoxically, China's tendency to copy Italian originals has actually informed consumers of what well-designed and proportioned furniture should look like. Now homeowners want to own the "real thing."

In addition to your work as an architect you are a very prolific home furnishings and industrial designer. Tell a little about "Echoes," your latest collection for Roche Bobois. The "Echoes" collection evokes the pure graphic lines and sculptural geometries of my architecture. The materials' neutral hues lend great versatility to the collection, which encompasses virtually the entire home. In order to reach a diversified, global community, I articulated the design's pure lines with slightly abstract asymmetries. The materials, colors and geometries of the collection are contemporary, yet convey a calm, mature sense of timelessness. ✨

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