

Five Stars



■ PATRICIA URQUIOLA

If a single thread weaves through Patricia Urquiola's designs, it is her focus on the end user's state of mind. "People are looking for mental comfort," says the Spanish architect and designer. "We have so much stress and pressure that we need little pleasures from the habitat in which we live and work." This idea is tangible in the soft landings she considers essential in her seating, even when the frame of a sofa or chair is hard and angular. Tactile craftsmanship is just as vital as comfort, whether on hand-knotted rugs or in benches woven from plastic threads used in fish netting.

Urquiola embraces modularity because of its versatility for modern living. Her first big success—the Lowland sofa for Moroso, in 2000—incorporated upholstered components such as a chaise and a sofa that could be configured in multiple ways, "allowing you to create your personal island," she says. "It became the center of the house rather than just a sofa."

Before establishing her firm, Studio Urquiola, in Milan in 2001, the designer worked for Achille Castiglioni, Piero Lissoni (see page 84), and Vico Magistretti. Her work appears in the collections of such companies as Baccarat (vases), Kvadrat (fabrics), Paola Lenti (crocheted rugs), Foscarini and Flos (lighting), and B&B Italia (indoor and outdoor furniture). B&B chairman Giorgio Busnelli puts it this way: "What makes Patricia's approach different," he says, "is her ability to take inspiration from simple, daily things, reinterpreting and enhancing them."



The **CLARISSA HOOD CHAIR** for Moroso "is a piece investigating a new ergonomics," says Urquiola. "It is severe from the back side, comfortable and soft from the front." A limited-edition version (shown, \$4,290 to \$7,300) has leather lacing in back. 212.334.7222, www.moroso.it



Urquiola introduced her versatile **SALINAS KITCHEN** (pricing not yet available) for Boffi in April. "Boffi is very masculine," says CEO Roberto Gavazzi of the company's designs. "But with all the different materials and finishes of Patricia's kitchen, you can create something more personalized—hundreds of combinations—than what you usually expect from Boffi." 212.431.8282, www.boffi.com

PHOTO: (OPPOSITE) MICHELE BRANCA PISPO / PASMARTO



In 2012, Urquiola worked extensively with the molds for Flos's polycarbonate-and-steel halogen **TATOU PENDANTS AND FLOOR LAMPS** (\$445 to \$995) to create what she calls "a visual tactility" that achieves "a special effect with both active and passive light." 844.356.7872, www.flosusa.com



Urquiola's **CRINOLINE OUTDOOR CHAIR** for B&B Italia was an instant sensation upon its introduction in 2008. The decorative version (shown; \$4,685) boasts a pattern reminiscent of 1960s macramé designs. It had "the 'wow effect,'" says B&B Italia chairman Giorgio Busnelli, "combining good craftsmanship with strong personality, emotions, and culture." 800.872.1697, www.bebitalia.com



The designer shaped the **VARIATIONS GLASSWARE** (decanter shown, \$765) for Baccarat's 2012 collection. The glassware "introduced two new technologies" of glass cutting and coloration to the crystal manufacturer, according to Urquiola. 800.777.0100, www.baccarat.com



The **HUSK SOFA** for B&B Italia (price upon request), Urquiola's newest addition to the company's line of indoor and outdoor furniture, comprises a number of structural cushions that allow for flexibility in the design's back and arms. The piece is available in two lengths. 800.872.1697, www.bebitalia.com