

# Cassina

**A Passion called ‘Project’**

**Mario Bellini tours Asia**

**and presents an authentic account where design meets architecture**

*June 2014.* The Italian architect Mario Bellini tours **Singapore, Taipei and Shanghai** to talk about his **strong relationship with Cassina** and the **international architectural projects** which have made him one of the most influential architects of our times.

## **Experimentation and innovation: a record for the most awards received in the design world today**

Bellini started collaborating with Cassina at a young age after a short design apprenticeship with “La Rinascente”, the prestigious Milanese department store, and while starting as a consultant for the company Olivetti, internationally renowned for its culture and design policy.

His first meeting with Cesare Cassina, where he proposed a table for which he had **already won his first of eight Compasso d’Oro prizes**, led to a strong relationship which can today be identified in a variety of innovative projects.

The **experimental work carried out by Mario Bellini with Cassina in the 60’s and 70’s** created some original and ground-breaking designs. **Research of new materials and structural technology** resulted in pieces like the *Teneride* prototype, an office chair which launched a new ergonomic style, and the timeless *Break* chair, both conceived thanks to the application of a new type of polyurethane foam.

## **More than 500,000 iconic Cab chairs produced to date, a legend in design history**

One of Bellini’s most recognisable pieces, **still a best-seller in the Cassina Collection**, is the Cab chair designed in 1977. In its privileged relationship with the human body, **the chair is according to Bellini one of the pieces of furniture most deeply rooted in our collective memory**. The Cab is in fact conceived as an extension of the body itself. **Cassina’s craftsmanship know-how can be identified in the workmanship of the leather hide** which fits like a glove over the chair’s metal skeleton, defined by a zip that runs around the profile of its legs. The structural and organic design of this piece is **still today pioneering** and subject to many imitations.

## **Architectural know-how in the form of a table**

Mario Bellini’s table designs for Cassina, the *La Rotonda*, *La Basilica* and the *Pantheon*, particularly stand out for their **architectural influence**. Made up of columns, pilasters or crossed beams, thanks to the smart **joinery expertise of Cassina’s carpentry**, they are a clear reference to the shapes of primary structures in the history of architecture.

*“ .. chairs are like body furnishings, while a table is more like an architectural object, a piece of raised flooring.”* Mario Bellini

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## **Mario Bellini**

Mario Bellini is internationally renowned as an architect and designer. He has received the Compasso d'Oro Award eight times, and other prestigious architecture awards including the Medaglia d'oro awarded by the President of the Italian Republic for his contribution to furthering design and architecture in the world (2004) and the Ambrogino d'oro for civic merit awarded by the City of Milan (2011).

He has given talks in many of the world's great cultural centres and was the editor of the magazine Domus from 1985 to 1991. He has 25 of his works in the permanent design collection of the New York Museum of Modern Art, which dedicated a personal retrospective to him in 1987.

He has held countless art, design and architecture exhibitions over the years, both in Italy and abroad. Since the 1980's, dedicating himself almost entirely to architecture, the manifold projects he has designed include the Portello Trade Fair district in Milan, the Villa Erba Exhibition Centre in Cernobbio (Como), the Tokyo Design Centre in Japan, the Natuzzi America Headquarters in the United States, the Essen Expo Centre in Germany, the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne, the headquarters of the Deutsche Bank in Frankfurt, the Verona Forum complex, the City History Museum in Bologna, the Department of Islamic Art at the Louvre in Paris, and the new Milan Convention Centre, the largest in Europe.

Projects currently underway include the refurbishing works on the Brera Pinacoteca in Milan, while others nearing completion include the Erzelli Science and Technology Park in Genoa and the Civic Marble's Square in Carrara. He has various projects at the design stage, which include the "New Eco-City" of Zhenjiang in China and a large Residential, Cultural and Sports Complex in Qatar.

[www.bellini.it](http://www.bellini.it)

## **Cassina, the mark of authenticity**

Cassina, founded in 1927, launched industrial design in Italy during the 50's. The company was pioneering in the way it showed a striking inclination for research and innovation, working side by side with important architects and designers with differing backgrounds and encouraging them to envision fresh designs, a characteristic that still distinguishes the company today. Cassina's identity lies in fact in an innovative fusion that closely links technological skill with traditional craftsmanship.

In 1964 the Cassina I Maestri Collection began with the acquisition of the exclusive worldwide rights to produce four models designed by Le Corbusier (who was living at the time) together with Pierre Jeanneret and Charlotte Perriand. Over the following years this collection has exclusively brought together some of the most iconic furniture by the great architects of modern classics working in close collaboration with the heirs and official foundations (Gerrit T. Rietveld, Charles R. Mackintosh, E. Gunnar Asplund, Frank Lloyd Wright, Charlotte Perriand and Franco Albini).

Today many important Italian and international designers and architects collaborate for the Cassina I Contemporanei Collection including: Mario Bellini, Rodolfo Dordoni, Piero Lissoni, Vico Magistretti, Luca Nichetto, Gaetano Pesce, Gio Ponti and Philippe Starck.

This transversal culture of absolute quality defines the uniqueness of each Cassina piece.

In June 2013 Cassina acquired Simon – the historical Italian furniture design brand founded by Dino Gavina and Maria Simoncini: two pioneering companies united today by an experimental approach and the expression of the relationship between culture and production. Cassina SimonCollezione, inserted in the Cassina I Contemporanei Collection, brings together renowned names such as Carlo Scarpa, Marcel Breuer and Kazuhide Takahama.

[www.cassina.com](http://www.cassina.com)