



Out in force

Molteni & C goes alfresco with two new collections and reissued classics, bringing its signature elegance to the great outdoors

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This page, 'Phoenix' sofa, chairs and coffee table; 'Regent' side tables, all by Vincent Van Duysen for Molteni & C's Timeout outdoor collection
Opposite, Foster + Partners' 2010 'Arc' table is now available in an outdoor version as part as the new Landmark collection

Right, alongside the two new collections, Molteni & C has also reissued the 'D.150.5' sun lounger, originally designed by Gio Ponti for the Andrea Doria cruise ship in 1952. A pair of 'D.150.5' are pictured here with a 'Panna Cotta' side table by Ron Gilad, part of the Landmark collection



Molteni & C makes its outdoor furniture debut this spring with two complementary collections celebrating our connection to nature and a refined approach to the home. Giulia Molteni, Molteni Group's chief marketing officer, sees this as a natural progression for the brand. 'Nature is an integral part of our life,' she says. 'It's a connection that aims at rediscovering seasons, colours and the pleasure of the outdoors.'

Overseen by Belgian architect Vincent Van Duysen, the collections merge sophisticated contemporary silhouettes with noteworthy older designs, touching upon the design codes that have defined Molteni & C throughout its almost 90-year history. In his six years

as creative director of Molteni & C, Van Duysen has combined his minimalist rigour with the company's Mediterranean roots, creating products and interiors that reflect what he calls 'a broader cultural aura'.

This concept was taken to the next level in late 2022, when Molteni & C unveiled a new pavilion at its Giussano HQ in Lombardy, designed by Van Duysen (W*284). Framing a new showroom and restaurant for the company, the pavilion is punctuated by two cloistered gardens cultivated by Italian landscape architect Marco Bay, mixing plants with different textures and heights to express the idea of nature evolving over time. This space provides the perfect backdrop for the launch of Molteni & C's outdoor »



furniture, which feels perfectly at home within Van Duysen's rigorous architecture.

'It was important for me to create collections that are really Molteni products, where I could really feel not only the heritage but also the core aesthetic we have developed in those six years,' says Van Duysen.

The new offering encompasses two collections: Landmark, featuring sinuous seating based on an unrealised 1994 design by Luca Meda (who served as creative director for the company from 1968 until his death in 1998), and Timeout, an aluminium furniture range that expresses Van Duysen's affinity with modernism. The outdoor catalogue also pays tribute to design masters, past and present, who have contributed to Molteni's history, including Gio Ponti, Ron Gilad and Foster + Partners, whose 'Arc' table from 2010 has been reissued in a new outdoor edition as part of the launch.

A contemporary take on Meda's design, the Landmark collection has a softer edge, characterised by a fluid frame and woven teak construction (also available in olive green EVA polyurethane) that encases the textile upholstery. Molteni's carpentry savoir-faire comes to life in this modular seating system that adapts to different approaches to outdoor living.

Contrasting in style and proportions, the Timeout collection is a modernist-inspired series that includes a two-seater sofa, armchair, dining chairs and table, a sunbed, stool, bench and low table. Van Duysen was inspired by *fer forgé* (wrought iron) traditions to create an elegant language through slim profiles. 'I am modernist in heart and soul, so this collection is more

Above, Van Duysen's 'Palinfrasca' sofas with woven teak backrests, from the Landmark collection, and 'Regent' side tables, from the Timeout collection, are displayed at Molteni & C's new pavilion in Giussano, with landscaped gardens by Marco Bay

architecturally oriented, rigorous and linear,' he says. His usual rigour is expressed through a bent aluminium band, coated with burnished paint that was chosen for the colour's connection to the natural world. Wooden tops, woven elements and upholstery lend a touch of softness to the collection.

The launch is completed by two Gio Ponti pieces that bring the Italian architect's distinctive silhouettes to the new outdoor dimension. The classic 'D.154.2' armchair, borrowed from the indoor catalogue, becomes a sophisticated addition to an open-air space. Alongside, the company has reissued the 'D.150.5', a sun lounger originally designed by Ponti for the Andrea Doria cruise ship in 1952 – a testament to Molteni's ability to mix design history with modernity.

While the collections are independently conceived, Van Duysen stresses that they are intended to be combined, thanks to the rich series of textiles. Designed by long-term collaborator Marta Ferri, these match Van Duysen's desire to connect the pieces with nature, through a series of woven textures, as well as geometric and organic patterns with a subdued, warm palette.

'The outdoors has become extremely important,' says Van Duysen, whose vision for Molteni & C encompasses every area of living. 'To create this collection, I searched for an idea of softness and wellbeing, of organic playfulness with an architectural vision. I was inspired by modernism to recall that idea of permeability and transparency between internal and external spaces, and that intimate connection with light and nature.' ★

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