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CREATIVE LIFESTYLE

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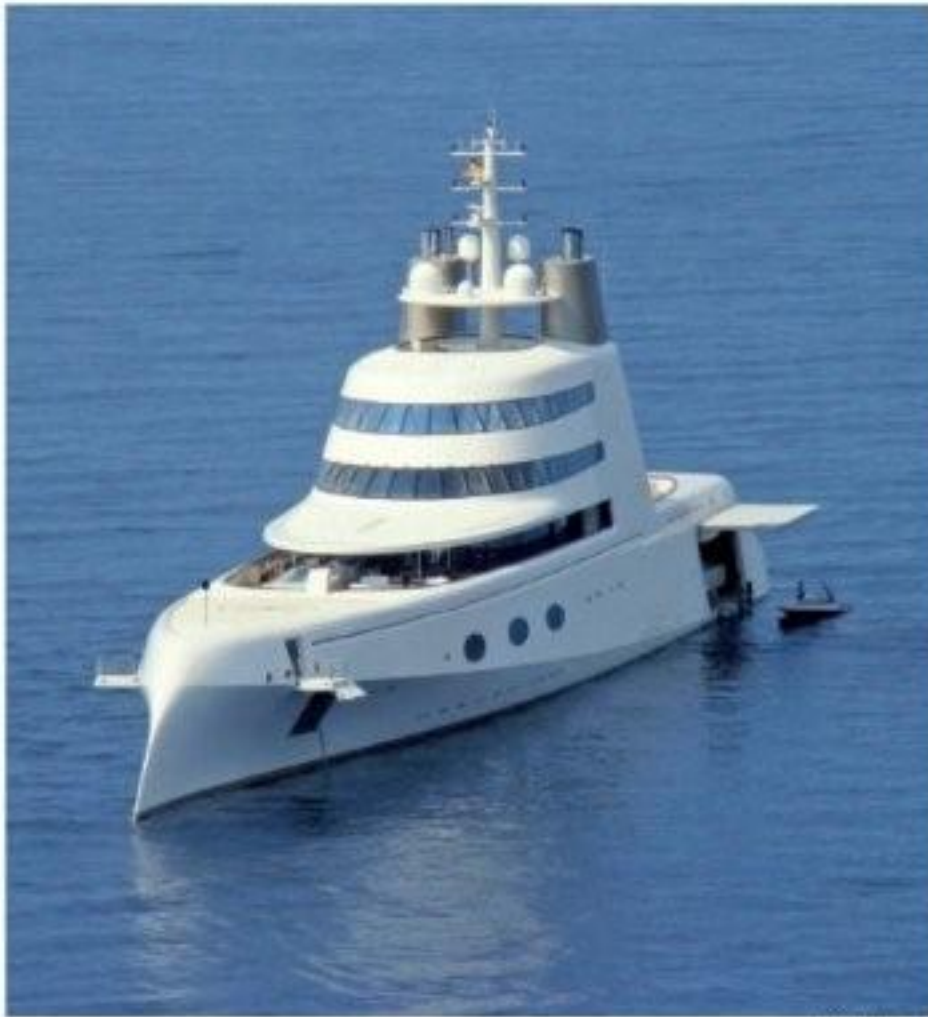
design

MAID IN LOVE

PHILIPPE STARCK

His nonchalant existence, complex simplicity, purity of thought, genuine beliefs, mental sickness, ability to surprise every time and stupendous creativity makes Philippe Starck one of the few in this world who even the uninterested, unconnected, and unfamiliar recognize, applaud and appreciate.





© 2008 Mega Yacht



Louis Ghost Chair



'Each one of my products is a letter that helps me communicate an idea.'

You are one of the most celebrated designers of our time. Do you ever feel some kind of pressure with that praise? Unlike many designers who, for cultural or aesthetic reasons, remain attached to their creations, I do not care. That is, maybe, the reason why people say I am 'the most celebrated designer of our time'. I do not go to design stores, nor events. I have spent my life trying to gain a small understanding in biology, quantum mechanics, mutation of species, etc. What matters to me is the impact, and effect of my creations on peoples lives. I consider myself more of an explorer and a sociologist. All my projects come from a series of intuitions that leads to ethics from which arouse concepts. On a more personal basis, I live 'elsewhere', anywhere in the world, with my wife Jasmine, so that I can live with my mental sickness called 'creativity'. My daughter found a good expression to depict me 'a modern artist'. I continue to dream about the life we should have that we still do not have.

When did you realise your passion for designing and when did that passion want to go beyond just designing stunning objects and spaces? I inherited this sickness I call creativity from my father who was an aircraft engineer and who had his own airplane company. If we assume that each generation should uplift, I cannot say that designing toothbrush and Xmas-brush is a real improvement. But design chose me, more than I chose it, and for some reason it is the only thing I can do. Therefore, I decided to use this weak tool as much as possible; I reinvented this job of design by making it political. Design and architecture for me are just pretexts to talk about something else. I started Democratic Design 30-years ago by giving quality to the maximum by decreasing the price on

design items. Recently, I continued with my Democratic Ecology movement by creating affordable easy to find and use ecological items such as my personal windmill. And I continue now with Democratic Ecological Architecture by creating prefab ecological wooden houses with utmost technology starting at very affordable prices. I would call myself an explorer. There is nothing that I do that does not fit in the big image of our human species, even little as it may seem. I am a constant worker. I do not seek happiness. I feel I have this task that is to deserve to exist. I am constantly trying to deserve to exist. Maybe this comes from my religious education. My reasons to exist are to serve — to serve my wife, family tribe and society. I see myself as a maid in love with her bosses trying to serve her best, trying to facilitate their life.

In one of your interviews you said you were working on 'pure creativity'. Can you explain that? Materiality is vulgar because it breaks, leaks, stinks etc. Clearly our future is going towards dematerialization. Look at a computer: 30 years ago it was a house, then it became an armoire, then a suitcase, then a laptop, now it is an envelope and in some years it shall be under the skin. If you look at my production I have always shown that direction. I always work to the minimum, I go to the essence. Take my Louis Ghost chair, or even the revolutionary A 20m Mega Yacht that is inspired from the fish world and that has a hull that I created that makes no waves at 20 knots in order to blend into the landscape. Also, as mentioned earlier, not only do I try to always go to the bone, to avoid decorative things that would add material but I also always have a message behind my production. It is as if each one of my products is a letter that helps me communicate an idea. Among my creations I spoke about





Lemon Squeezer

'If you take my lemon squeezer: it works, no better, no less than a regular one, but it offers a surprise.'



Gun Collection, Flax

— the poetry of mathematics with Baccarat pieces; about disappearance and dematerialization with Louis Ghost chair and the Nixon motorbike; about health with GAO, my organic food line and my organic olive Oil LA Amarillo de Ronda; about the collusion of money and war with the Gun collection with Flax; about humour with the Dwarf's etc. My ideal goal is not reachable with materiality. Therefore, I am now working on my biggest dream that shall partly come to fruition in a year or so: the creation of a fundamental research laboratory on pure creativity. So far, only applications of creativity have been studied and searched (such as art, design, dance, etc.). This lab shall try to understand why and how ideas come up and then try to rationalize and teach it.

How do you balance function and style in design? Neither style nor beauty has ever interested me, as it is a cultural thing. What people find beautiful or stylish today, they hate day after. Therefore, I prefer goodness and honesty to style or beauty. If you take my lemon squeezer: the function of squeezing a lemon already exists, so, I created something additional. I created an object that works, no better, no less than a regular one, but it also offers a surprise. When seeing it on a kitchen shelf, people would question themselves: Is it sculpture? Or a toy? It will arouse curiosity, so I brought another function to the classic lemon squeezer. Considering the massive worldwide success, it seems that people have understood it. Before anything the chair is a chair, it must be functional. It is much more difficult to design a good chair than a building. Then, you can add other parameters depending on the message you wish to pass. Louis Ghost is about disappearance and our common occidental memory; if you look at the M-Ming it is about our common Asian memory. Also, the only seat I did that includes sense of humour is the Colored dwarf that I developed in the ambience of the overwhelmingly austere minimalist period. I wanted to say, relax, do not take yourself too seriously!

What are the factors that are influencing design today? Today, unlike 30 years ago, we have to face all sorts of challenges from political,



GAO Tower, Dubai





Iron, South Beach



social, religious and financial orders; therefore, the only inspiration design should get is POLITICS. One of the ways is to go ecological.

How do you manage keeping that element of surprise in your designs time and again? I get my inspiration from the big story of our evolution and mutation. Intelligence is THE best symptom of human beings. When you look at our evolution it is clear. We are the only animal species that controls its speed of evolution. Nobody needs to be a genius, but everybody needs to participate in this beautiful story of our evolution that started four-billion years ago and that stops in four-billion years later when the sun shall implode and vitrify the earth. The only way to be as good as our ancestor was is by using our intelligence. Sadly, I do not see so much creativity nowadays; and if our ancestors had been so little creative as we are today, we would still be in the cave ages. Fortunately, there are still sparkles of intelligence; look at the TED conferences in California. It is the pure crystal of intelligence. This is what the world needs now.

Do you use the same guidelines when you design a chair, hotel or object in any country or does design change with nationality?

Whether a toothbrush or a hotel, I only think of the benefit my creations shall bring to the person who shall use or go to the place I create. Countries do not exist. The world is now built of different tribes spread all over the world. I design for my tribe. I call it 'the smart tribe' they can be in France, Japan, Spain or India. It is impossible to try to please everybody; I try to serve people I know, and they are part of my tribe.

What is your thought process when designing an exotic high end product and an affordable consumer good?

Exactly the same vision, attention, inspiration; the only difference: working on big budget projects such as multi million mega yachts helps me to have my advanced research laboratory. Then, I can apply some technologies and ideas, on very affordable projects such as my line of baby products at Target in the US with baby bottles of less than 1 USD. It is a Robin Hood strategy.



Copenhagen, Culture Living

The Philippe Starck design trademark is? Ethic. Vision. Poetry. Humour.

What comes to your mind when you think of India? I do not believe in segmentation by country. People before anything else interests me, and the energy they reflect. I love Indian people ever since I had my first house in India when I was 23. Since then, I know we share the same value as we are people who dream about something else, with passion.

I read somewhere you listen to Bollywood radio, what is it about the sound that appeals to you? I live in music; I live in sound more to say I believe it is of utmost importance to find one's own sound, like we can find the love of our life. Indian music and classic Bollywood music (not the recent remixed ones) reflects one of the many states of my mind. It brings my mind 'somewhere else'.

Any spaces in India that have caught your fancy? I spent two weeks

in the South of Maharashtra with my wife Jasmine last Christmas. It was truly one of the most beautiful, powerful and energy-like places on earth.

What are the key three things you are keeping in mind for the yoo Pune project? 1) Protecting the existing (real tropical) jungle garden as a fantastic contrast to the modern buildings, but trying to live with the snakes! 2) Realizing we are making a project that is not just new for Pune but for India. External comments have confirmed this and surprise is a key element in the clients' request of our design. 3) Realizing that the population in Pune is an average age of 28 and are a sophisticated audience who are aware of current design and brand identity as any Londoner or New Yorker!

What's in the pipeline? The laboratory on creativity. Opening of the *Palace Royal Monceau* in Paris, *Café La Cigale* in Plagele, *Perfume L'Air du temps* by Starck, a harbour in Majorca, Spain: *Port Adriano*, a shipyard dedicated to non fossil energy. And many more...