

## MANUFACTURING

## Raw material

SUSTAINABILITY / ITALY

The furniture and building industry has a huge carbon footprint, accounting for 37 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions. It's a situation that has put pressure on design brands to consider how they make their wares and what they make them with. As a result, a host of new materials, from soybean-based textiles to mycelium panels, are increasing in popularity. But plenty of brands are showing the value of going back to basics. Here we look at three projects taking a renewed look at classic materials.

By Nic Meehan



LEATHER

## Poltrona Frau's Impact Less

"I've worked with leather for all of my professional life," says Daniela Gardini, research and development manager at Poltrona Frau, who has been overseeing the production of leather for the Telese-based furniture brand for more than 30 years. "I haven't thought of taking another job because this material is something that changes day by day." It's an evolution that he's used to start, as he takes inspiration on a visit of the two tanneries - Dadi and Riva Marzotto - that Poltrona Frau uses in its leather production. "The initial idea starts with us, but then we work together to develop the new," says Gardini (pictured, on right).

Based in the northern Italian province of Vicenza, both Dadi and Riva Marzotto are key players in the region's tannery and leather bootmaking industry.

the province is home to more than 700 tanneries that produce 60 per cent of all the leather in Europe and 35 per cent of the global total. Significantly, thanks to partnerships with firms such as Poltrona Frau, it's also becoming a leader in sustainable material production.

"There's a misconception that vegan leather is sustainable," says Gianluigi Dadi, the CEO of Dadi. "It's full of plastic. Our leathers are natural and made from waste material." Working his family's Dadi tannery, he has the need to reposition leather as a circular product by providing an alternative to the leather alternatives.

For the past three years at Riva Marzotto - now down the road from Dadi - Poltrona Frau has been developing Poltrona Frau Impact Less. There is no chlorine involved in the tanning of this product and water consumption has been reduced by 30 per cent at each stage of the leather-making process. "We talk about sustainability, it's hard to find something comparable to leather," adds Gardini. "It's durable and becomes more beautiful with age." And, with no-tannins so have its entire leather offering made in this Impact Less way. In 2021, it will become even more sustainable. **www.pofra.com**



LATA BOICE

## Raineri x Nüfuer

Raineri Nüfuer runs an inspiring studio over Naples. Though the view, which's distinctive from a sea-front location, may not attract the attention of a traditional firm like Giovinetti Raineri. For this generation, his family's business, Raineri's, has opened its mind to the innovative approaches, embracing it as a natural step to be used in architecture and interior design.

The company's sustainable design focus means embracing traditional techniques and materials that have been forgotten or overlooked in favour of contemporary design. Raineri notes that much of the work is carried out outdoors. "Working with large-scale glass facades," he tells himself. "My colleagues are doing by hand." In 2020, he was heavily awarded for his work, but he came up with an alternative of natural materials in still production. It's Marzotto tannery gives him a huge alternative with very green and better, while in Lata Boice that creates solid, attractive pieces. "It's a very subtle experience to connect from the fact, 400,000 others are not with it."

During Milan Design Week, Raineri hopes to demonstrate the potential of his work with his installation at Nüfuer's Dada gallery. Created by the company's creative director, Francesco Melis and David Lopez Quintana, the installation will showcase a wide range of hand-crafted furniture for the living, light grey oak table and chairs. "I think we're going to see off the production and get people to consider what you can do with it in the design space. For now, we're in the design space. For now, we're in the design space." **www.raineri.com**



MARBLE

## Marzotto x Barber Oggerby



Marble has been a material of choice for artists and architects for more than two millennia. It is still the material of the Athenian Parthenon, an iconic work of art and the sculpture of the Renaissance period. Recently, it has tended to be confined to contemporary, coffee tables and luxurious hotel lobbies. "Marble is not only a material for us," says Francesco Marzotto, creative development manager and multi-generation transmission of his family's marble-working firm, Marzotto. "It's a part of our history."

Now the northern Italian city of Mantua, Marzotto has been chafing at its own narrative for more than 200 years. In 2010 the family-owned company launched an effort, Marzotto Edificio, which is dedicated to collaborating with architects and designers. "My mother and father, Corinna and Mario, run the business and are design enthusiasts," says Francesco. "They wanted Marzotto Edificio to be a contemporary solution with marble products suitable for daily use in people's homes." Previous collaborators have included Berlin-based furniture designer Konstantin Grcic and Poltrona Frau, among the brand's previous David Chipperfield. The latest partnership opens courses of London-based studio Barber Oggerby.

"Francesco and Corinna came to London when we didn't even have a marble piece in our way of thinking of doing," says Barber Oggerby's Edward Barber. "They are descended from people who used to make sculptures and their craft is implicit in everything they do," adds Barber's co-founder Jay Oggerby. "It was impossible not

to engage in that position, so we knew we wanted to work with them."

The resulting Largo collection, officially launched last year, will be displayed at Milan Design Week in Marzotto's own showroom. "The showroom, as it is required in Milan's Fiera district, has been inspired by a classical model, which has created two triangular tables, elegant Oggerby. The result can be seen in Largo's table collection, which harmoniously blends form and function. The side table was the first piece commissioned and has a self-edged triangular base that is used as a counterpoint for its cylindrical top. "The design is very specific to the material," says Barber. "We have developed the same language with the large table and low table."

Marzotto combines age-old techniques with modern technology. "Our products use the latest technology to create the final form," says Francesco. "But all the finishing and polishing, done by hand." Every piece from the Largo collection is handmade and hand-finished by one of 15 artisans. "The traditional form of every piece goes through a multi-step marble and Marzotto's rich history, serving as a testament to the meticulous craftsmanship and expertise. Among the details that make the Barber Oggerby's approach to creating modern luxury. "It's a long term," says Oggerby. "This is a new challenge." **www.marzotto.com**



LAVA ROCK

## Ranieri × Nilufar

Mount Vesuvius casts an imposing shadow over Naples. Though the 1794 volcano's destructive force is well documented, many are unaware that it provides a livelihood to those like Giovanni Ranieri. For three generations, his family's business, Ranieri, has quarried lava rock from the mountain's southwestern slope, transforming it into finished pieces to be used in architecture and interior design.

The company's portfolio ranges from classic rectangular kitchen tiles to elongated concave pieces that make for decorative highlights in places like restaurant bars. Despite its emphasis on contemporary design, Ranieri stresses that much of the work is rooted in tradition. "Working with lava rock goes back centuries," he tells *MONOCLE*. "Many techniques are done by hand."

Typically, lava stone is offered in its raw state or heavily crumpled but Ranieri has come up with an assortment of nuanced surfaces to shift perceptions. Its Mercurio treatment gives tiles a lunar-like appearance with tiny craters and holes, while its Linear Color line creates subtle, attractive ridges. "It's a very tactile experience far removed from the flat, 2D effects often seen with tiles."

During Milan Design Week, Ranieri hopes to demonstrate the potential of lava rock with an installation at Nilufar's Depot gallery. Conceived by the company's creative directors, Francesco Meda and David Lopez Quintero, the installation will showcase a mix of hues from rugged anthracite for flooring to a glossy, light green shade for walls. "Here, we'll be able to show off the possibilities and get people to reconsider what lava rock can be in the design space."

Nilufar Depot, Viale Lamarmora, 34, Milan

BY VAN CAYTON