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Getting to Know Master Architect Antonio Citterio

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Since coming onto Milan's design scene in the 1980s, Antonio Citterio has become a bonafide force for luxury brands. He has worked with Hermes, B&B Italia, Flexform, Luminaire, Vitra and Technogym, giving each of them the Midas touch when it comes to sales.

His work has reshaped the luxury design industry and changed the way we view modern elegance. He is now the go-to designer for Bulgari's hotels and resorts and is working on projects in Tokyo, Paris and Moscow.

Following the launch of his first project in the US, a luxury residence in Miami Beach called Arte, Antonio speaks to *Elite Traveler* about his love for design, reveals where his inspiration comes from and talks about his plans for the future.



How did you get into design and architecture?

Growing up in Meda, a small city between Milan and Lake Como, I was always surrounded by design. In the 50s during Italy's "boom economic" postwar years, many artisans specializing in elegant furniture making settled in Meda and were then discovered by wealthy families traveling back and forth between their city and lakeside homes. This drew international attention to Meda, and the city quickly became known as a center for furniture production and manufacturing. Many of today's major brands were born out of Meda, and I had the privilege of learning from the very best in the industry. These experiences are at the core of my passion for design and architecture and continue to influence me today.

What has been your proudest achievement?

I've been blessed with many fantastic opportunities throughout my career, and I'm incredibly proud of the global portfolio we've built at Antonio Citterio Patricia Viel. Watching our firm grow into a leading design company, seeing our work's impact on contemporary Italian design and knowing we're leaving behind a legacy are all immeasurably gratifying achievements. Every project along the way has served as a huge milestone in its own right, and it has been an honor to lead this firm and be recognized for our creativity and vision.

One project, however, that stands out specifically is Arte, my very first US development. I had the extraordinary opportunity to create something special for the Miami area, which is transforming into a serious capital for design and architecture. In Miami, you get a sense of Art Deco from the '20s and '30s, and our firm re-contextualized this aesthetic for modern luxury living.

And the most challenging moment in your career

My most exciting yet challenging revelation was the Sity sectional. I was convinced that there was something missing from sofas. They needed to be drawn into modernity, and not just by combining three armchairs. This was interesting for me because not everyone saw the 'problem' as I did. The Sity collection was the perfect solution, and I ultimately was awarded my first Compasso d'Oro prize, one of Italy's highest honors, for my innovation. It seems as the challenge paid off, too, as many of today's modern sofas take inspiration from my original design.

Who and/or what inspires you?

My hometown, Milan, is always a great inspiration, but recently, I'm feeling inspired and empowered by my involvement in both the sustainability and wellness movements. Working toward a larger civic goal has really helped me to evolve my perspective as an architect and designer. Design has the potential to impact quality of life greatly, and that notion is a constant driver in my creativity.

Where is your favorite place in the world?

Milan will always hold a special place in my heart.

What is on your bucket list?

I am an avid art collector. I would love to collaborate on a major cultural institution in the future, where I'd have the rare opportunity to combine my two passions.

Working on Arte in Miami Beach has been interesting in this regard because art is one of the project's most integral elements. The developer acquired an amazing and timeless work from Robert Indiana, who helped to bring the pop art movement to the forefront."

What does 'luxury' mean to you?

Everyone has a different perspective on 'luxury', but for me, it's neither tangible nor an experience. It's knowing that you've achieved your ideal quality of life and feel very comfortable with where you are – physically and spiritually. This same idea goes for design in the luxury sector. It's not about making a statement in aesthetics; it's about improving quality of life and having a pointed purpose.

Is there any advice you'd give to your younger self?

Luxury shouldn't be complicated. Now I see that it's a careful combination of simplicity and elegance, a balance that is difficult to strike but extraordinary once achieved. When designing a sofa, for example, I've learned to prioritize practicality and aesthetics. Elaborating from a basic structure—thinking about each additional detail with intention—is how one creates something truly unique and luxurious.

I took this same approach with my latest project, Arte in Miami Beach's Surfside neighborhood. At its core, this development is an oceanfront sanctuary with a collection of 16 private residences. To convey exclusivity, we reinterpreted Miami's famed Art Deco architecture with Roman travertine. This subtle change, using a material that's rarely seen as a façade, adds a layer of intrigue and thoughtfully communicates the building's importance along the shoreline.

What are your design trend predictions for this year?

While glass and steel have been popular modern building materials, I anticipate a move toward a more natural look in cityscapes. Using travertine, as I've done at Arte, is a nice segue between the two aesthetics.