

# Le Bambole

50<sup>th</sup> anniversary design Mario Bellini

**B&B Italia presents Le Bambole by Mario Bellini, in a radically renewed version. Fifty years after their initial creation, these icons of Italian style are evolving thanks to new design choices that make them even more comfortable and increasingly sustainable.**

## 1972: the social context

The '60s and '70s were fundamental years for Italian women, and women in general; they were key decades for their emancipation and their rights, in tune with great cultural and social movements that were spreading all over the world. On the one hand we saw street demonstrations attended by thousands of women, on the other hand laws were enacted that were dedicated to maternity protection, job protection and career opportunities in public administration.

The '70s saw the arrival of tangible initiatives for family law, crèches and advice centers, culminating in the successful referendums on divorce and abortion. At the same time, cinema, music, art, fashion and communication began to present an image of an increasingly emancipated woman, master of her own appearance, who often used her body in total autonomy, as a weapon of seduction or as a claim to her own strength, as an instrument of conquest or as a declaration of independence.

It was in this context that **Le Bambole** and their surprising communication campaign were born in 1972. These objects and images have become part of the collective imagination and the history of design.

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# The birth of Le Bambole

In 1972 B&B Italia (known as C&B at the time) presented **Le Bambole** to the world, a collection of revolutionary upholstered furniture items designed by Mario Bellini. Cozy softness, plush roundness, gentle harmony and playful informality are the keynotes for armchairs, sofas and beds that mark a point of no return thanks to their aesthetics, production technology and unprecedented communication campaign.

**Le Bambole** are presented as a series of large cushions arranged in an almost random manner, in line with the transformations of living in progress at the beginning of the '70s. Inside, the metal frame ensured solidity, while the generous polyurethane padding - the company's trademark from the outset - made it possible to enjoy the embrace of each Bambole. The upholstery was also designed to provide elasticity and support, in keeping with the structure.

The advertising campaign at launch made history in communication and design.

**Le Bambole** were the subject of a shoot by Oliviero Toscani, who photographed Donna Jordan, a model best known for her work at Andy Warhol's Factory. Donna Jordan dances and laughs topless, relaxed and happy, next to or nestled in **Le Bambole**. The images were revealed for the first time in the corridors of the 1972 Salone del Mobile and were immediately censored. Since then, these images have appeared in magazines, but also in design manuals and exhibitions.

Not only effective in communication, but also a product so memorable that in 1979 won the Compasso d'Oro, an award that accompanied the first years of success and launched **Le Bambole** into a long life as a protagonist of Italian and international design.

# Le Bambole in 2022

A constant presence in the B&B Italia catalogue for 50 years, **Le Bambole** evolves and becomes even more contemporary. The revamped version recaptures a look and feel more akin to the original, favouring generous, curvy, increasingly feminine shapes.

As Mario Bellini states: *"I feel the pleasure of revisiting this family again, because it confirms to me that it is anything but aged; on the contrary, it is enjoying a thriving and promising second life, a rebirth done in a big way, done with enthusiasm, with breadth, with decorations and with the original flourishes. We have recovered its charm, its sumptuous floridity, its softness"*.

The new range sees confirmations and new elements, for a collection that restarts from the basic elements: the **Bambola** armchair, the **Bibambola** two-seater sofa, the **Bamboletto** double bed. In addition, the three-seater sofa has been updated to meet today's needs, with a deeper seat that has earned it the name **Granbambola**.

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# A new construction method for circular design

Throughout their history, **Le Bambole** have seen slight adaptations in shape, proving that they are always able to keep up with the times.

In addition to appearance, comfort is a key element of the design. Once again, softness is guaranteed by a series of clever construction measures despite the minimum amount of polyurethane used. Where the original construction was based on a metal structure embedded in polyurethane, now the materials used are of the latest generation. Recycled polyethylene gives structure; elements in polyurethane foam and thermoplastic elastomers are added to shape the geometry and define comfort and breathability, all sheathed by an undercover derived from recycled PET.

These design choices mean that every item in the new **Le Bambole** collection is completely disassembled and therefore easily recyclable.

# The new coverings

The renewal of this collection brings with it **Sila**, a new sablé fabric available in eight colours. Its pleasingly irregular, three-dimensional nature masks the orthogonal effect of warp and weft, amplifying the effect of softness through a studied irregularity that seems reminiscent of natural, spontaneous surfaces. This sensation begins with sight and is completed by touch. In fact, as Mario Bellini says: *'The variation of this fabric, when in contact with your hands, your arms, your body, empathises with your skin and is extremely pleasant'*.

Another exciting new addition is the **Manila** fabric, a dreamy and humorous floral print characterised by large roses with a classic feel, an unusual contrast capable of giving each Bambole a totally unexpected outfit. This limited edition fabric is available on a white or black base.

**Le Bambole** can also be upholstered in high-quality **Kasia** leather, an extremely soft and naturally marked full-grain leather. Here, too, touch and sight are equally satisfied, giving each Bambole an even more elegant and refined appearance.

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