



FIRE ACCORDING TO EMO DESIGN: 10 YEARS OF COLLABORATION WITH MCZ GROUP

MCZ was the first company to introduce design into the world of pellet stoves, traditionally focused on the concepts of cost-effectiveness, sustainability and ease of use. That focus on beauty and on the balance of shapes, combined with unceasing technological research to obtain a pellet flame that would be equally pleasant as in wood burning stoves, has granted MCZ remarkable success in the market and over the years the brand has stood out internationally, so much so that it was awarded the iF Design Award for Toba, the first pellet stove to win such a prestigious design award.

Among the designers who work with MCZ Group, there are world-famous designers and young professionals, each one selected for the ability to have a rational as well as emotional “sense” for the stove, which often goes hand in hand with direct experience in using the product.

Today, in a conversation with Andrea Brosolo, Marketing Manager of MCZ Group, we look at the topic in detail with Carlo Ciciliot, Founder & Managing Partner of Emo design - a design studio based near Venice with a cosmopolitan spirit.



The collaboration between Emo design and MCZ started in 2010, just two years after it was founded. So we can say that your story literally started with MCZ. Could you tell us a few anecdotes in this connection?

Carlo Ciciliot: That's exactly how it went. A series of fortunate events put us in touch with former CEO Walter Breda, who immediately believed in us and allowed us to launch our firm. Without him and without MCZ, we might not be here today answering these questions.

Andrea Brosolo: Andrea Brosolo: The encounter with Emo design happened at a time when the company was about to take a leap into a wholly new way of designing a pellet stove, as an integral part of home decor. It was a bet for both of us. A winning bet, because it led to the development of Toba stove and to the iF Design Award 2011, which was a turning point not just for us, but for the entire industry.

How has the collaboration between you and the company changed from the beginning to the present day? How have MCZ's design needs changed over time?

Carlo Ciciliot: Today, the collaboration with MCZ is mature and clearly structured, based on a well-established process that has taken shape over time. I have fond memories of the first, thrilling design presentations to the product committee, which consisted of marketing, sales, R&D and CEO. There was always a lot of energy and lightheartedness, as if we already knew that the projects would have been a success. Everyone was accountable for their skills, with the highest professionalism and thoroughness, like a great team. Back in 2010, design was a novelty in the pellet heating world and MCZ was the first company to believe in it. Nowadays, design is an integral part in the development of a new product.

How does the work process between the studio and MCZ Group unfold today?

Carlo Ciciliot: It is a rather traditional process. It starts with a joint briefing after which the product concepts are developed, which are then finalised together with R&D before moving





on to engineering, always lead by the company. At MCZ we have always found a strong leadership in product development which, combined with the experience we have gained during this collaboration, allows us to work together with great synergy.

Andrea Brosolo: We know each other very well by now and this certainly helps making the process more seamless and, in essence, making fewer mistakes. However we have not lost the eagerness and will to experiment that was typical of our very first meetings.

What aspects did you take into consideration in the last designs you developed (Costanza and Regina for the Sergio Leoni brand)?

Andrea Brosolo: Sergio Leoni is the utmost expression of craftsmanship in the world of ceramic. Without losing or belying this unique feature, we wanted to give it a more contemporary interpretation, able to live even in the most modern homes.

Carlo Ciciliot: The recent project for Sergio Leoni stemmed from a deep analysis of the brand's history and its production process, to define new aesthetic standards that are deeply connected to the experience that may only be conveyed by a Leoni product.

What are the aspects that make a stove interesting on one hand but also difficult on the other as an object? What sets this industrial sector apart from others?

Carlo Ciciliot: A stove contains fire and heats, it is therefore directly linked to our ancestral needs. Fire and heat may be used for functional needs (e.g. heating or cooking) but also to stir emotions, and this is where our contribution is often significant. The technical needs of pellet stoves often entail limitations and complexities for designers, although we have always sought to encourage the company to see a new opportunity as the consequence of a problem to be solved. The biomass heating sector is subject to ever more demanding emission restrictions and is therefore continuously evolving, but we are confident that MCZ will win this challenge as well.



How would you sum up your approach to design? What sets you apart from other studios?

Carlo Ciciliot: Our studio has always tackled very diverse projects in extremely heterogeneous markets. We still chance upon designs for products we didn't even know existed until recently. We internationalised almost immediately and today, more and more often, we deal with organic and complex projects where product development is the consequence of strategies and User Experience. We collaborate with companies all over the world but we are always connected to our origins and to our country!

What did MCZ appreciate in the way Emo design works, to the point of entrusting increasingly demanding projects to them?

Andrea Brosolo: I must acknowledge EMO has a great knack for listening to the company and to the end customer. If the collaboration continued through all these years, it is because we have always appreciated their balance, the ability not to let design prevail over function, at the same time without shying away from great leaps in the concept and character of the products.

The special times we are living have placed the ethical issue of design in the limelight: can design have a positive effect on society? If so, how?

Carlo Ciciliot: Sure, in a broader sense design is not restricted to merely designing objects. Countries like the United States have used this tool for some time now in a more permeable manner, by designing much broader ecosystems that lead to innovation, solve problems and generate great opportunities. To do so, we need to integrate design in company processes and not just in product development – in this sense, there should be a designer in every private and public office, and things would certainly be better.

Andrea Brosolo: I don't know whether there should be a designer in every public or private office and whether design should necessarily play an ethical role. However, it is true that often, in common experience, there still prevails a reductive meaning of design as being limited to the "sign" that can be read visually in a product. Luckily, however, the world is going forward.

Photos: http://www.ergo-online.it/press/MCZ_Interview_Emo_design.zip

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