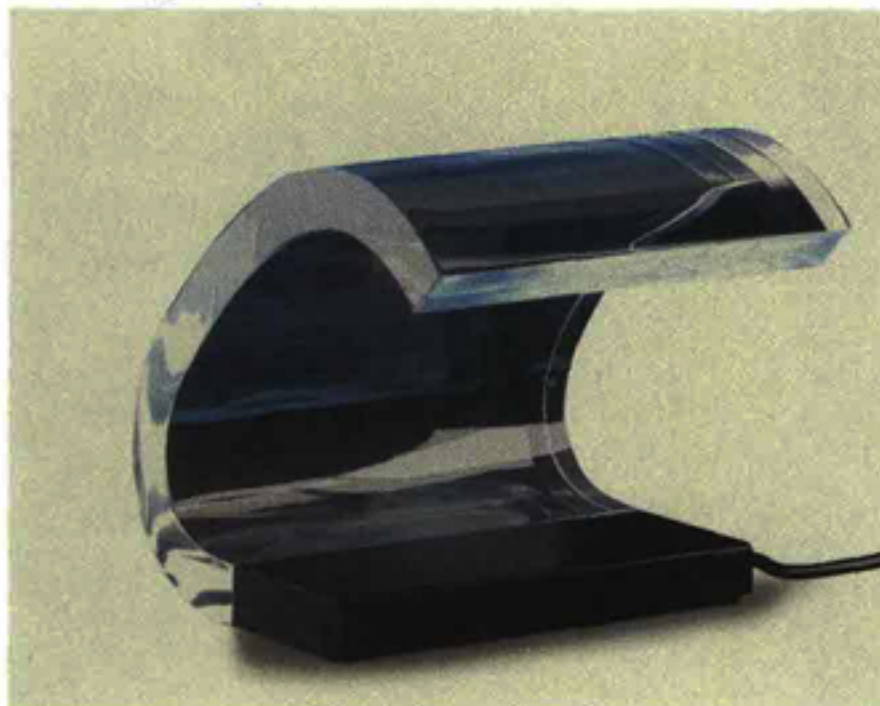




**Joe & Gianni Colombo**  
Acrilica lamp, 1963, Oluce



**Vico Magistretti**  
Vidun table, 1986, De Padova



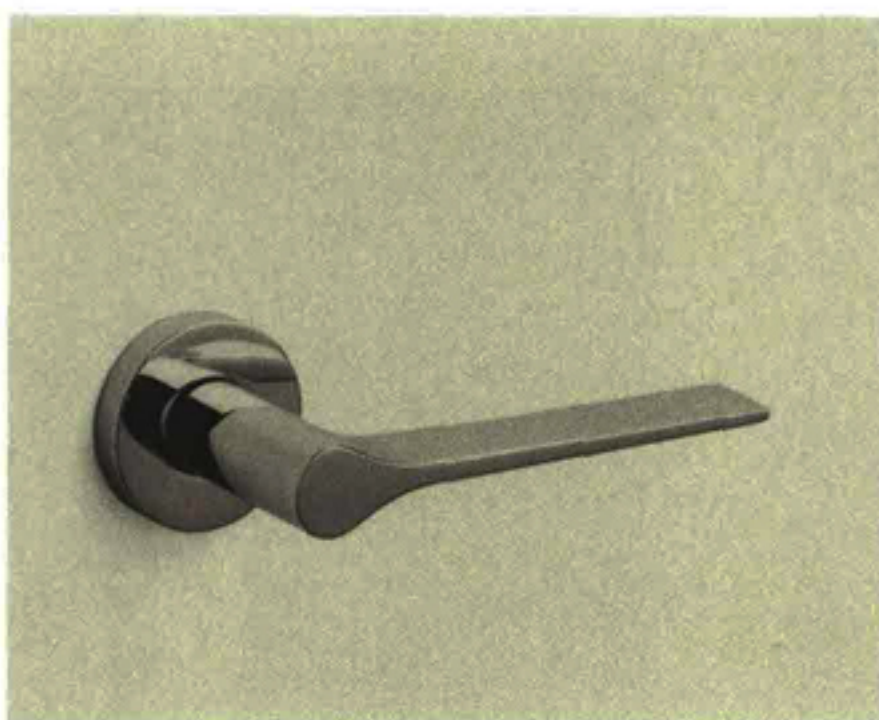
**Alessandro Mendini**  
Anna G. corkscrew, 1994, Alessi



and as many captains of industry at the helm of factories big and small. Indeed, here in Italy we've had Gio Ponti with his strong drive to reinvent himself time and again, changing styles over the course of several decades. We've had Franco Albini and his distillation of refined reasoning, rigour and compositional skill. There have been Bruno Munari, the maverick outsider in this group of unbeatable talents; Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni, who knew how to make us smile at their many acrobatic feats; Marco Zanuso, "the amazing personification, the equivalent of a living machine fully geared to design"; the great Ettore Sottsass with his continually updated visual language, always original right up till his 90<sup>th</sup> year; Vico Magistretti with his innate talent, always making things look effortless as he chalked up his many records; Angelo Mangiarotti the engineer (*honoris causa*) of daring and remarkable structures; Joe Colombo, who bewitched us then and still astonishes us now with his ability to give shape to the future; the methodical and sensitive Alessandro Mendini, able to turn his gifted hand to anything, nimbly designing both theory and action; Enzo Mari, the unrelenting critical conscience of this discipline who has managed to deliver 30 masterpieces of art and design; and last (strictly in order of age) but not least, Mario Bellini, with his distinctive capacity for perfecting objects meant to be touched by our body, from typewriters to upholstered furniture. Next to this home-grown team that will clearly be unbeatable for the next five centuries, we have had as many unique entrepreneurs. They applied the equally unsurpassable lesson they had learned from Adriano Olivetti, who very successfully combined culture, profit, research and the market. In Olivetti's footsteps and at their

own personal risk, they built the dreams of the designers mentioned above by inventing for them and together with them new techniques and production possibilities. Around their developments they set up companies, some of them craft-based and others highly industrialised, companies that brought (Italian) design to the world, to 40, 50 or more different countries. Some of them were established at a time bursting with hope, right after World War II. Others had been producing since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century but did not begin associating with designers until later. Others still emerged in the 1960s and '70s, on the crest of the economic boom. In recent years, more companies have come onto the scene with clear-cut identity, well-defined objectives, critical acclaim and commercial success. As they continue to work with still-prominent maestri and other incredibly talented people (who along with Antonio Citterio, Rodolfo Dordoni, Piero Lissoni and Patricia Urquiola account for a large slice of the entire design system), these newer companies demonstrate a propensity for exchange with a fresh generation of incredibly brilliant foreign designers who have found ample room and scope for expression, here before anywhere else. Aside from a few major instances (like Knoll and Vitra), and one or two small but outstanding "workshops" (such as Nils Holger Moormann and Hay), design continues to be (made) here in Italy. Over the years it has been endorsed and fostered by the fundamental support of at least 10 important national magazines, most of all *Domus*, where all 1,000 of these things were timely recorded.

\*Alessandro Mendini in *Il design italiano degli anni '50*, edited by Centrokappa, Ricerche Design Editrice, Milan 1985



**Gio Ponti**  
Lama handle, 1954, Olivari



**Ettore Sottsass**  
Ultrafragola mirror, 1970, Poltronova



**Marco Zanuso**  
Lambda chair, 1960, Gavina

