

A step back to the future

GEO, designed by Luca Nichetto.

A rug of natural and dynamic forms having distinctive patterns of different Countries. Each unit can be combined and joined together by choosing the patterns and quantities you prefer to create different shapes.

NODUS
HIGH DESIGN RUGS

Il Piccolo

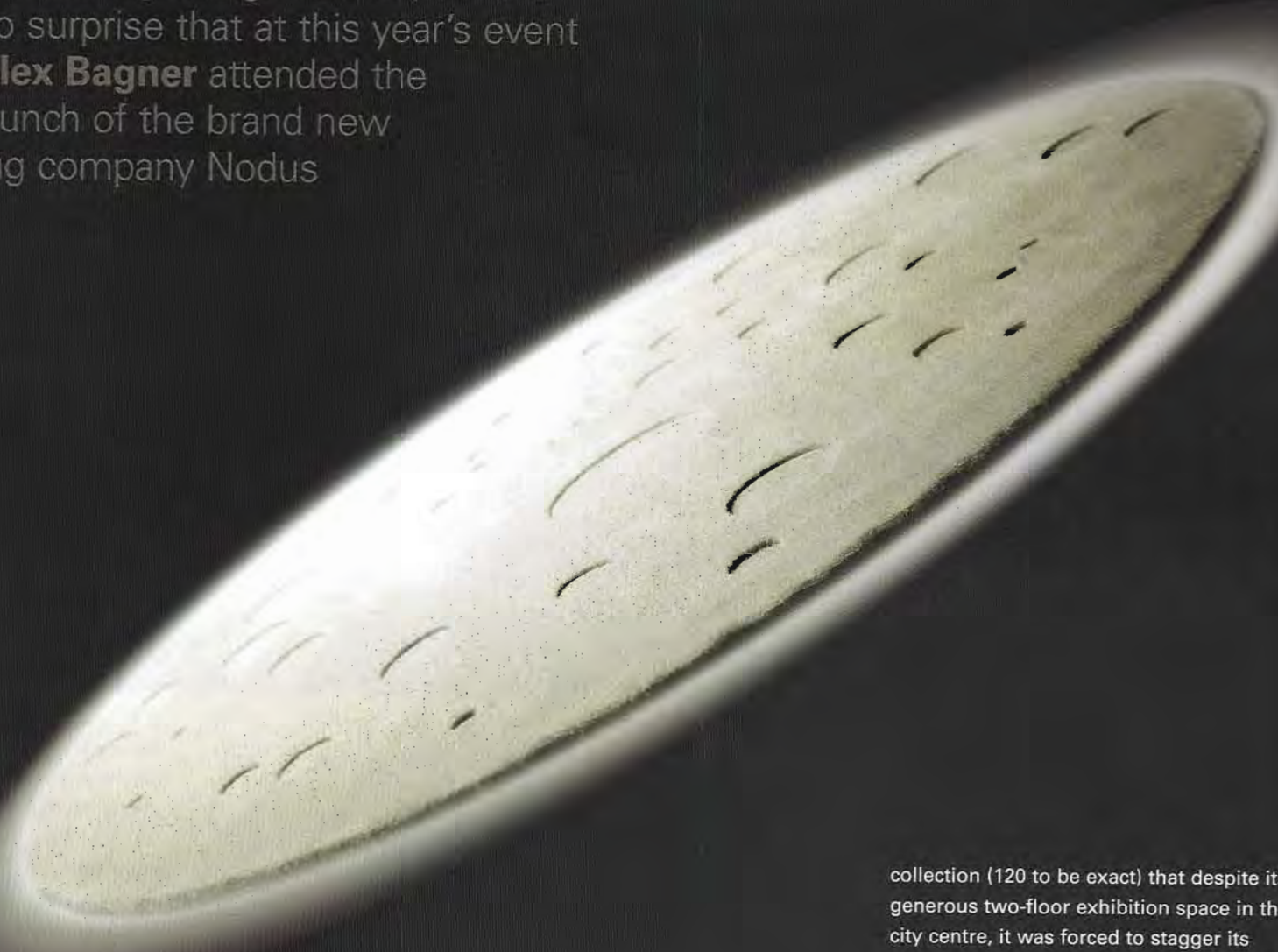
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TOP KNOTS

Recent editions of the Salone del Mobile in Milan have witnessed growing interest in rugs by the world's big design names, so it is no surprise that at this year's event

Alex Bagner attended the launch of the brand new rug company Nodus



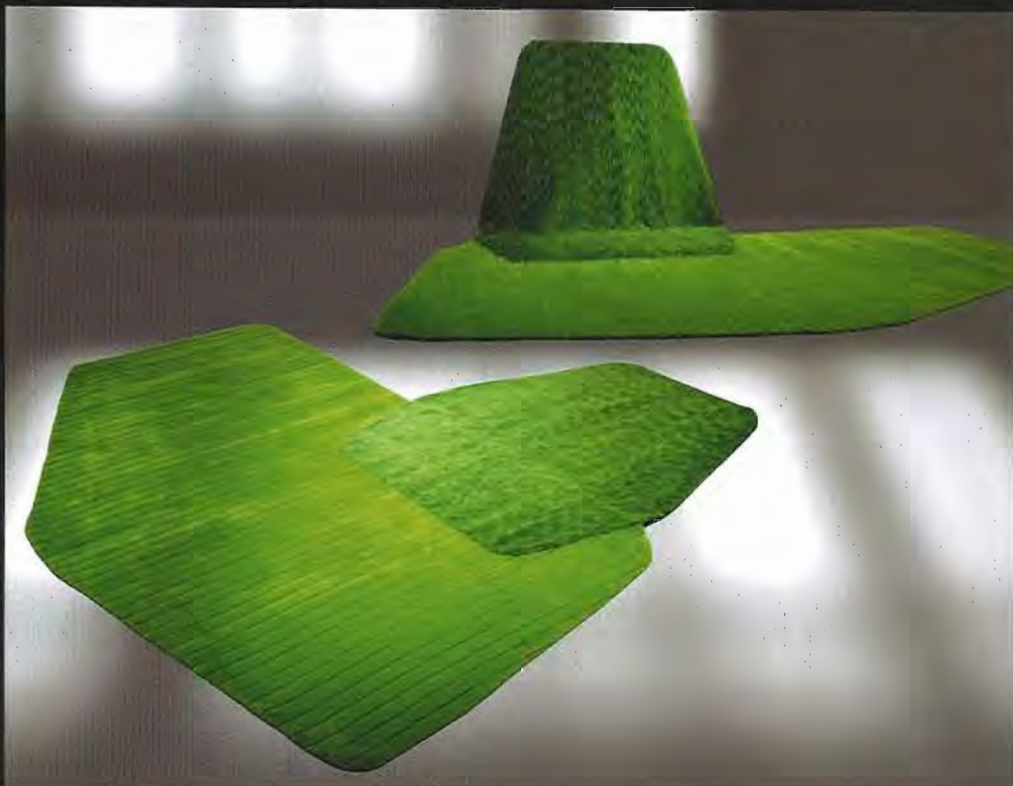
collection (120 to be exact) that despite its generous two-floor exhibition space in the city centre, it was forced to stagger its launch over a three week period in order to make sure that all the rugs were shown. Choosing which rugs were to hang where, and overseeing the entire project is Managing Director Andrea Galimberti, and it is his unbridled enthusiasm and passion for the company that accounts for the final size of the collection.

"I wanted to completely re-invent the process of rug-making," he explains. "I'm fascinated with the way rugs connect the East with the West. With Nodus [from the Latin word for knot], I wanted to create a junction where traditional Western culture meets oriental techniques."

Even in the best financial times setting up a company like this is incredibly ambitious, but Nodus is not quite as audacious

Subdued and less to see, were the predictions that most people were making for the 2009 Salone del Mobile, the world's biggest international furniture fair held in Milan every April. In fact, the situation was quite different; the fair was plump with new collections, while the city boasted hundreds of venues showing not just novel pieces but even a few new companies.

One such company, seemingly defying all economic odds, was Nodus. The rug company had so many pieces in its debut



most of the day-to-day running. Federico takes care of production and the financial side of things, leaving Andrea to pick up the creative side, as well as marketing and public relations. Nodus, is his brainchild and has taken two years to bring to fruition.

So why has it taken Il Piccolo so long to design its own products? "It was difficult up until now to come up with a project like this because it required getting in touch with a different reality. We have always had two aims, producing the highest quality and fulfilling other people's style objectives. With Nodus, quality is still fundamental but we are looking at a whole new approach elsewhere."

Andrea has long been an admirer of modern design, and over the years had dreamt up a list of contemporary designers he wanted to work with including Fabio Bortolani, Matteo Thun, Peter Rankin and James Irvine. With the company's roots in textiles, rugs seemed a logical and practical step. He approached over 20 designers initially, trying to get a balance of Italian and international, and gave them an absolute blank canvas to work with. As long as it was contemporary, there were no limitations to the designer's creativity. Whether it was playing with colour, pattern, shape or relief: anything was possible.

As a result, he travelled the world finding different factories capable of achieving the results he needed. While most rugs are

as it may first appear. It is a new company, designing rugs for the first time, but its parent company, Il Piccolo, is one of Italy's finest furniture manufacturer and interior design business and has been around for over 40 years. With a large factory just outside Milan, Il Piccolo was set up by Andrea's father, Massimiliano, initially as an upholstery and textile firm making for other companies including Ferre and Versace, as

well as working with architects and designers on interior design projects. "Il Piccolo is a behind the scenes company", explains Andrea, "it has worked with some of the most innovative designers around, from Etro to Cavalli to John Galiano, to fulfil their visions and dreams, but it has never designed its own products."

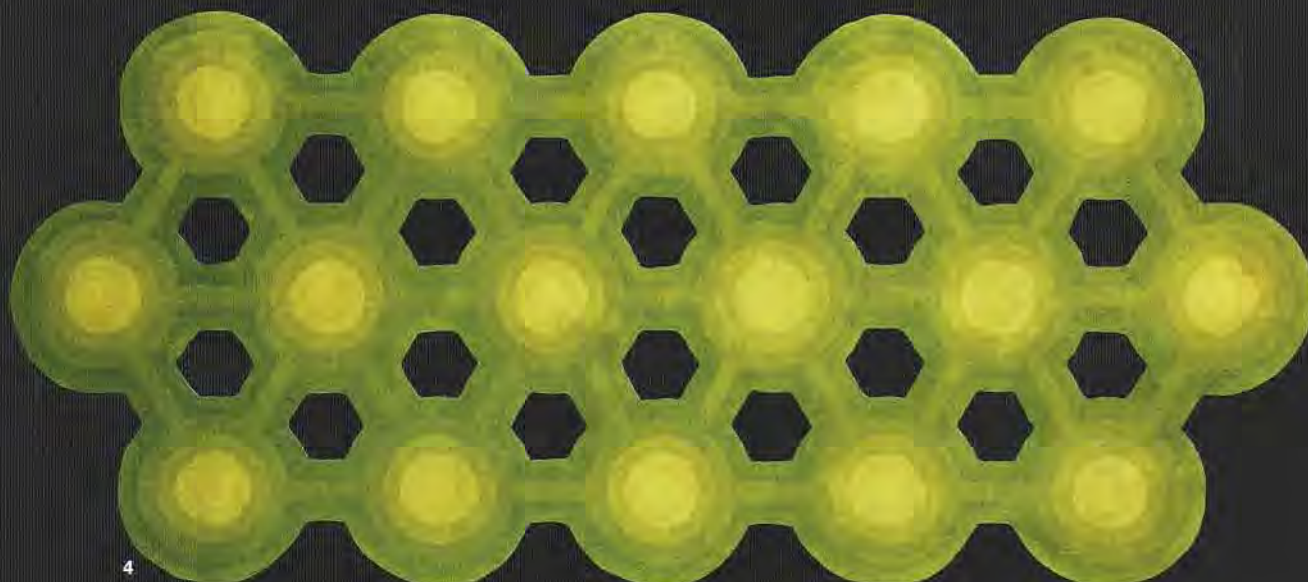
Although Massimiliano remains at the helm, his two sons, Andrea and Federico do



1 Moon designed by Peter Rankin for Nodus, hand-knotted wool. Material, size and colour can be customised.

2 Sail designed by Luca Nichetto for Nodus, available in a range of four colours but only one size, 4.40 x 2.29m, as it is made of two rugs joined together with a lacquered back stand

3 Geo Art designed by Luca Nichetto for Nodus. Each workshop was sent a shaped rug and told to use their local pattern and technique to make it. The resulting multi-cultural rugs symbolises the Nodus manifesto



normally made in Nepal or India, this project Andrea has also commissioned workshops in China, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Pakistan. "All have different skill sets, and all were vital in fulfilling the designer's demands. The *Zen Gel* by Bartoli for example is made of 332 knots per inch in some places; this is the finest I've ever heard a rug being and hence we struggled to find a laboratory that could handle it."

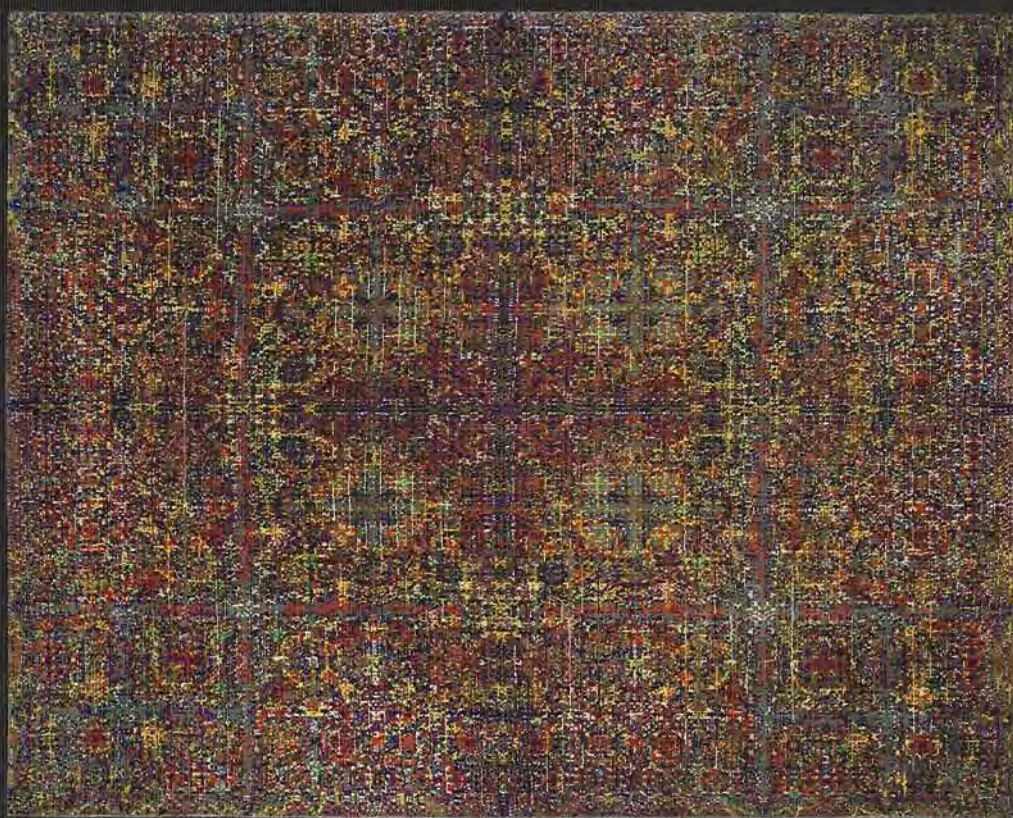
Each rug is handmade and can be customised according to size, colour and quality. "For every order the design is put on the frame and produced only a single

time. Most workshops would use the frame five or six times, we only use it once to make sure that only one original rug exists," insists Andrea.

As a result of the quality and originality of the rugs, they are priced accordingly. Ranging from E850 to E2,000 per sq. m, each rug currently on display is for sale but of course should you wish to customise any of them, or design your own, that is only encouraged. Indeed altering the shape, size and fabric can all be tried and tested on their website www.nodusrug.it.

Meanwhile Andrea is already working on

the next collection for Salone 2010. He's looking to add new designers "including Starck, I'd love to work with Starck" as well as develop different techniques and experiment with different fabrics. "This collection was all wool and silk, but I'd love to try out others, including linen or even banana fibre." He has also launched a room fragrance that he is promoting and intends to continue his travelling seeking out new cultures and bringing back weaving techniques. "Nodus is all about interchange of culture, travel, experiences and trying out new things," Andrea explains. And you won't get that from staying at home.



4 *Atom* designed by James Irvine for Nodus. 2.56 x 1.12m, handknotted in wool but available in six colours, silk and wool and silk mixes.

5 *Ali* designed by Italo Rota and Alessandro Pedretti for Nodus. 3.50 x 2.80m, handknotted in wool but available in silk and, wool and silk mixes. Such an intricate design could not be drawn on graph paper. In the end a real-size poster of the rug had to be made and sent to the workshop for them to work from.