

## PRODUCT DESIGN

### Two talents

**01 Mario Ruiz** If you've taken a taxi in Barcelona, then you've probably seen Mario Ruiz's bestseller: the sleek *taxímetro* (taxi meter) for Barcelona firm Taxitronic. With a degree in design from Barcelona's Elisava school, and a technical background designing phones, intercoms and electric saws, Ruiz branched out into domestic design in 2003. "I create honest, well-constructed products that can go unnoticed," says Ruiz, who has applied his clean-cut aesthetic to everything from lighting to bathroom fittings and outdoor furniture.

"Barcelona has an industrial tradition that created a very solid culture of design



here," he says. Working with a team of three, new commissions include acoustic panels for Swedish company Offecct and an armchair for the Dutch seating manufacturer Palau. [mario.ruiz.es](http://mario.ruiz.es)



**02 Pepe Andreu** This Barcelona native designs furniture "that combines contemporary forms with artisan traditions". Andreu spent years restoring furniture in Florence before working at Sotheby's in London. His design workshop is in Poblenou (above). "A good design is one you can read easily at first sight. I don't like over-decoration." Splicing the best of old and new, he is currently working on a new collection combining different woods and high-quality plastics. — EP [pepeandreu.es](http://pepeandreu.es)



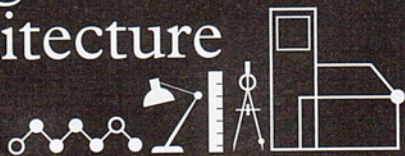
## GRAND MASTER Big-hitting studio

Milan-born Benedetta Tagliabue (above) founded EMBT studio in the early 1990s, alongside her husband Enric Miralles, quickly making a name for themselves with landmark buildings such as the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh and Gas Natural tower in Barceloneta (top).

Despite Miralles' premature death in 2000, Tagliabue has continued to attract commissions, peaking in 2010 with the warped wicker Spanish Pavilion for the Shanghai Expo. "Integrating" is my favourite word. It expresses very much the idea of accepting what exists," she says, "constructing new things that bring order to the old."

Based in Barri Gòtic, EMBT is now working on the new Hafencity port in Hamburg. "We're involved in several projects in China, including an office tower in Shenzhen and the Zhang DaQian's museum in Neijiang." — EP [mirallegtagliabue.com](http://mirallegtagliabue.com)

## ④ Design ⑤ Architecture



## NEWCOMERS

### Ones to watch

**López-Rivera** Argentina-born Emiliano López and Puerto Rican Mónica Rivera broke through with the hotel Aire de Bárdenas in Navarra. They are now designing a house in Girona's Port de la Selva and social housing for young people in Barcelona (pictured). [lopez-rivera.com](http://lopez-rivera.com)

**Diego Ramos** studied at Eina in Barcelona before becoming a pupil of Ron Arad and Tord Bontje at London's Royal College of Art. "I'm all for a sense of playfulness in my work," he says. His design for Eastpak is pictured.

**AV62 Arquitectos** Victoria Garriga and Toño Foraster



moved from museum exhibition designs to architecture in the 2000s. Projects include the new Cristóbal Balenciaga Museum in Getaria. — EP [av62arquitectos.com](http://av62arquitectos.com)

## STUDIO FOCUS

### Best Catalan design

Francesc Pons founded his studio in 1995, reinventing the dated vernacular of Barcelona with his restaurant Sandwich & Friends in El Born. His Noti restaurant design in the Eixample neighbourhood fuses red velvet with Japanese silk wallpaper and pink Formica. "I'm obsessed with materials, and a lot of the ones I use refer to the past simply because the majority of modern alternatives are so bad." Pons has just finished Dry Martini in Madrid, a branch of Barcelona's legendary cocktail bar, and is taking his designs abroad with a summer villa in Palermo's Conca d'Oro prairie. — EP [estudifrancescpons.com](http://estudifrancescpons.com)