

A photograph of a dining area. In the foreground, a wooden dining table is partially visible, with three wooden chairs tucked under it. The chairs have a simple, modern design with horizontal slats on the backrest. On the table, there are some white dishes. The background is a wall made of horizontal concrete panels, with several small circular holes. A window with a wooden frame is set into the wall, looking out onto a lush green forest. The floor is made of large, square wooden tiles in a herringbone pattern.

A Brief History of De La Espada

 DE LA ESPADA

Company Overview



Beginnings on Sloane Avenue

De La Espada was founded by Luis De Oliveira and Fatima De La Espada in the early 1990s. Hailing from Porto and Madrid respectively and educated in London, the founders opened the De La Espada flagship store on London's Sloane Avenue in 1996, when there was comparatively little quality contemporary furniture in the city.

Worldwide Retailers

Today De La Espada furniture is available from fine contemporary retailers in several of the world's most exciting cities. The furniture is also available direct through De La Espada in London and New York, offering straightforward communication and swift, effective sales procedures.

Manutailer: Merging Craft And Service

De La Espada is a manufacturer and a retailer, endowing the business with a well-rounded perspective and approach. Knowledgeable sales teams provide a direct link between the consumer and the craftsmen in Portugal.

Produced in Portugal

The dedicated factory in Portugal is responsible for 70% of production. The remainder of the production is commissioned from a group of ten suppliers, all of which are located in Portugal. De La Espada will gradually move toward a 50/50 split of in-house/contracted manufacture. Craft is at the heart of their design ethos, so it is important to the company to preserve their in-house production.

Identity and Media



Understated Aesthetic

The De La Espada furniture range has a conservative, quiet, thoughtful aesthetic with a focus on superb quality solid wood and the beautiful detailing of traditional construction methods. The aesthetic evolved from influences including the Arts and Crafts movement from the turn of the 20th century and Scandinavian design from the 1950s. De La Espada is a luxury furniture brand, whose pricing directly competes with B&B Italia and Maxalto.

International Identity

The furniture ranges under the De La Espada “umbrella” draw from the best aspects of varying international influences. De La Espada is at once British, American, Turkish, Spanish and Portuguese. The international identity of De La Espada is a relevant strength, as the aesthetic is formed by a global culture, transcending boundaries of nationality.

Thoughtful Communication

Communication is a key aspect of the De La Espada business, and an in-house creative team carefully considers every aspect of company communications from graphics to copy, to sales approach.

Astute Advertising

De La Espada invests heavily in advertisements, appearing regularly in eight esteemed trade and consumer periodicals from around the world. These include: Wallpaper, Elle Decoration UK, Dwell, Attitude, On Diseno, Frame, Icon and Monocle.

Exploring New Markets

atlantico



Increasing Accessibility

Atlantico was created to provide a line of “basics” at a lower price, by sacrificing flexibility and size but never quality. The closest to a volume line that De La Espada has, the furniture range is made from premium natural materials, utilising a combination of production line manufacturing techniques and handcrafting. Prices range between 1500 and 3000 Euros for key pieces.

Entering Wholesale

De La Espada made their first efforts to enter the wholesale market with Atlantico in 2006 – ten years after opening the De La Espada flagship store in London. They approached wholesale from a retail point of view, keen to maintain their passion, commitment and customer service. The success of the venture led to the subsequent introduction of the De La Espada range and all associated ranges to the wholesale market.

External Designers

In late 2007, Atlantico branched out from designing solely in-house, and began to work with external designers Marina Bautier, Studio Hausen, and Leif.designpark. Hungry for fresh designs, Atlantico became more vigorously design-driven, working with these young designers to produce furniture in the same design ethos, with a new voice.

First Collaboration



External Designers

The first time De La Espada worked with external designers was in early 2007, when their joint venture with Autoban began.

About Autoban

Autoban is a prolific, Istanbul-based interior/product design studio, with a similar passion for natural materials and solid wood. Their unique aesthetic has received worldwide press attention since the beginning of their practice, due in part to their origin and story, but mainly due to their astonishing designs that playfully evoke memories of the familiar, with a sharp eye on proportion and timeless design.

Manufacture and Distribution

Autoban Built By De La Espada is a range comprised of select designs from the Autoban product portfolio, manufactured by De La Espada. Previously, Autoban had produced limited numbers of each product, but quality was an issue, as were volume and distribution. De La Espada worked with them to resolve quality issues, to realise their designs in the best possible manifestation, and to distribute them internationally through dedicated De La Espada stores and their network of worldwide retailers.

Collaborations Continue



Matthew Hilton Limited

In late 2007, De La Espada began collaboration with Matthew Hilton, becoming the licensed manufacturer and distributor for his brand, Matthew Hilton Limited.

About Matthew Hilton

Matthew Hilton is one of Britain's most highly respected designers. His understated, meticulously detailed designs reflect a craftsman's understanding of natural materials and a profound understanding of manufacture, with many of his pieces already considered design classics. He has three decades of experience in industrial design, with a stunning portfolio of work and numerous design accolades in tow.

Manufacture and Distribution

De La Espada and Matthew Hilton share similar values, with a passion for craft, design, and technology, as realised through luxury furniture. Keen to maintain creative autonomy, Matthew Hilton teamed up with De La Espada to manufacture and distribute his range of furniture, with respect to his unique vision. The partnership was a natural one, with wood the core material in the Matthew Hilton range, and woodworking De La Espada's core skill.

De La Espada Today



Debut Exhibition in Milan

2008 marks De La Espada's first exhibition in Milan, twelve years after opening their flagship store on London's Sloane Avenue. The ExAnsaldo space in Zona Tortona featured Autoban Built By De La Espada products and Matthew Hilton products on adjacent stands to great critical acclaim.

Annual Growth

De La Espada today is a dynamic company that grows by between 20% and 30% every year. A truly design-driven brand, De La Espada has launched approximately thirty products in different product categories every year since 2006. Between production and retail, De La Espada employs just under eighty people in three countries.

International Outlets

De La Espada and associated brands are available from De La Espada in London and New York as well as from approximately sixty points of sale worldwide.

