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Castello di Reschio in Umbria.



RENAISSANCE MAN

His family's 11th-century estate in Umbria inspires Benedikt Bolza to craft a line of furnishings that exemplify Italian flair

"Everybody dreams of having a house in Italy," Benedikt Bolza says of Castello di Reschio, his 3,000-acre family estate deep in the golden hills of Umbria. It was this tranquil corner of Europe that inspired his B.B. for Reschio collection, a line of furniture and lighting in a nostalgic style that he terms "undressed classicism." Grisaille-stained oak beds, patinated-bronze tables, and skeletal ebonized-steel garden furniture evoke the traditions of Italian design yet are shot through with crisply modern understatement.

These custom-designed pieces feel somehow timeless, even as they tap into the rich seam of local history—the dominant influences of his bronzed Etruscan window seat and his brusquely modernist floor lamps are separated by millennia, yet they are united in a shared love of powerful geometric forms. There is a sense of humor, too—the Canary bed is a whimsical take on a canopied cot that recalls the gondola of a Ferris wheel, while the Corsini recliner, resembling a plushly upholstered wheelbarrow, melds Umbrian rusticity with the decadence of the Baroque aristocrats that lend it its name.

Bolza's own background is aristocratic, albeit characterized by a seemingly ceaseless dedication to hard work. The Reschio estate, which was bought in 1994 by his father, Count Antonio Bolza, centers around an 11th-century castle orbited by some 50 farmhouses, as well as a design studio and workshop based in a converted 1940s tobacco factory. The farmhouses were initially derelict, picturesquely sited but little more than ruins. Over the past decade, many have been gradually restored (and adapted to run on eco-friendly alternative energy) by Benedikt himself—he trained as an architect at London's University of Westminster, later going on to work for Piers



Etruscan window seat.

TALENT

Gough's firm, CZWG. "I love design," Benedikt says. "But it's just a small part of what I do." This is undoubtedly the case. Alongside the furniture line and the program of sympathetic restorations, he also manages the estate, oversees its vineyards and hunting reserves, and caters to the every need and demand of Reschio's community of what he describes as "like-minded people"—i.e., the well-heeled and aesthetically inclined—who share his love of the Umbrian countryside and enthusiasm for timeless design.

Furthermore, Benedikt serves as decorator to those who rent or purchase his farmhouses, employing a holistic approach on the estate that also extends to its interiors. Each is, of course, custom-renovated, but there is a sense of a shared mood; one that reflects the tranquillity of rural Italy but is tempered with a modern lightness. The B.B. for Reschio collection grew organically out of these ongoing commissions, with many of the pieces derived from bespoke furnishings originally created for the properties on the estate. Given Benedikt's dedication to eco-consciousness, it is significant that everything is entirely handmade by local artisans, using materials from Umbria—ironwork, carpentry, and upholstery are performed on site at the Reschio workshops. "You can make anything in this country," Bolza says of the wealth of highly specialized workers on his doorstep. "We're keeping these crafts alive." **STEPHEN PATIENCE**



Campaign bed.



Claw table lamp.



Corsini recliner.



Etruscan sofa table.



Modernist lamp table.



Cylinder floor lamp.



Dumb valet stand.