

ELLE DECOR

A WORLD OF STYLE

Special Issue

INSPIRATION



Simone Crestani's Tentacles glass decanter



Il Salimone glass sculpture

CRESTANI



Crestani in his Veneto studio



Blue Murano glass goblets and rings, a black glass vase by Fabiano Amadi

AMADI



Antonino Sciotto's iron Principessa chair

SCIOTTO



Ceramic bowl by Ceramica Piro



Gold-plated earrings by Martina Vicconti di Modrone



Schiraldi Metallo

keeping these people *in* business. "Artisans like Costanza are keepers of centuries-old techniques, and workshops like hers are disappearing every day," says the designer. Blame the economic downturn, the globalized marketplace, or the fact that fewer young Italians are interested in learning the trades, but the fact remains that Italian artisanship is in "a state of crisis," as she puts it. And the domestic market for handmade goods is simply not large enough to sustain the industry.

Last year, Rostagno took a leave of absence from her jewelry company to spend six months crisscrossing Italy by train in search of artisans to join Artemest, each of whom she has personally vetted. Many of these craftspeople do not have their own

storefronts, so she found most of the workshops by word of mouth. Often it was one artisan recommending another. An additional reliable source was the *aristocrazia*: "If you meet a court whose family china has been made by the same people for the past century, that's probably a good bet," Rostagno says. And though there are plenty of old-world crafts represented on Artemest, there's nearly as much to satisfy modernist tastes as well, from minimalist brass and iron furniture by Francesco Della Femina, an architect and designer in Campania, to whimsical glass art pieces resembling rabbit and chicken carcasses by Venetian craftsman Simone Crestani.

In certain cases, Rostagno's instinct for what contemporary customers crave has helped update an artisan's offerings. She suggested that Murano glassblower Fabiano Amadi offer his goblets and vases in glossy black, for instance, and that Giannini bind a selection of her house's most extraordinary papers, creating what Rostagno calls "a dream inspiration book for any designer."

By providing this type of consulting and the logistical supports of marketing, shipping, and customer service, Artemest promises to free up the artisans so that they can focus on what they do best. "These people are passionate about making beautiful objects," says Rostagno. "We just need to connect them with the people who appreciate them." CATHERINE HONG



LEFT: Wood sculptor Daniele Ramonore in his Tuscany studio. BELOW: Rostagno's Louis XIV-style Tavolo Francesco table, made of gold-finished pine.

RAMONORE



Rostagno, top-blender Maria Giannini

GIANNINI

Her Techna photo album of leather and marbled paper



ARTEMEST