

Kartell La Double J., About the Brand



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## How An Ex-Pat American Imported Her Love of Vintage to Milan



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When JJ Martin arrived in Milan 16 years ago from New York, she didn't really fit in with the notably chic Milanese dressed in her vintage flea market finds.

"There wasn't really a culture or tradition of that," says Martin, who explained that there were only two vintage stores back then and they catered to designers as an archival resource.

Fast forward to 2015, Martin launches her namesake website, La Double J, selling personally curated collection of vintage clothing and jewelry. It was a slow start, but using her years as a journalist writing for Wallpaper, Wall Street Journal, and Harper's Bazaar, she re-packaged the content as a place to regale her readers on how the well heeled, creative Milanese women lived, how they wore their vintage pieces, and the histories of the vintage fabrics and jewelry.

"We got a lot of attention because we tried to do things in a different way," said Martin of her website and initial collection of a single silhouette dress produced with eight different vintage prints. It garnered the attention of Matches Fashion, a luxury European retailer.

Working with Mantero Seta, a 116-year old silk company located in Lake Como, Martin scoured their fabric archives to expand La Double J's collection from a few silhouettes into an entire selection of dresses, shirts, pants, and skirts printed with patterns reminiscent of the 60's and 70's, elevating the vintage pieces into a luxury collection.

Vintage shy Italians took notice of the wildly colorful prints paired with modern silhouettes worn by some of the most elegant women in Milan.

Her brightly colored story filled website caught the eyes of luxury Italian fashion companies and soon Martin was creating content and events for them while building La Double J.

During one of her salon dinners for a client, she decided to print some of the table linens in the vintage fabrics to use as tablecloths and napkins and a collection of tabletop products was conceived.

Martin realized an opportunity to highlight the Italian sartorial craftsmanship of heritage manufacturers while building an authentic Milanese brand.

She worked with Ancap, a legacy porcelain company to produce her collection of plates and trays, collaborated with historic textile manufacturer, Mascioni, to create her table linens, and partnered with Salviati, a renowned glassmaking company on Venetian island of Murano to recreate delicate vintage goblets, tipetti, from hand blown glass.

When the opportunity to work with the iconic Italian furniture company Kartell presented itself, Martin couldn't resist. In true collaborative form, Martin chose recognizable silhouettes from Kartell's furniture collection and applied the vintage prints.

"Everything I've done has been a natural progression," says Martin, a sentiment echoed by Lorenza Luti, Kartell's Marketing and Retail Director.

"I like the idea of exploring this realm of patterns and vintage prints with such an international attitude and, at the same time, have a great respect for the Italian fabric tradition and quality," said Luti.



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Introduced at this year's Salone del Mobile, Milan's international design and furniture expo, it received instant approval from the sales team and public noting the buzz from the crowd gathered around the booth taking pictures.

For Kartell, widely recognized for their brightly colored transparent designs, printing patterns onto their pieces was a bit of a learning experience.

Citing a few hiccups in the production aspect of applying prints onto plastic, Martin deferred to Kartell's expertise in working with plastic and combining them with the printed materials stating it was the "perfect match between what they do and what we do."

"The harmony between Kartell and La Double J stems from many factors shared by the two brands: their ironic and positive view of reality, their pursuit of quality and elegance, and their super trendy and exclusive style," says Luti.

The inaugural collection contains two types of chairs with the vintage fabrics printed on the upholstery and finished with Kartell's signature plastic legs, a side table topped with vintage designs, a wrapped set of two and three drawer cabinets, and a sofa enveloped with pink, green, and black hues.



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"Kartell and I are such a good mix. As a furniture company, they are joyous, light, and playful and the prints lend themselves to the designs," says Martin.

For her next move, Martin is considering going into the bedroom, perhaps creating a collection of bedding and pillows. But for now, she's focused on expanding the existing collection of dresses, tablewares, and furniture and planning a pop-up shop in Kartell's Paris store featuring her entire collection of products during Paris fashion week.

In the three years since launching La Double J, Martin has elevated vintage dressing from weekend market finds into a luxury lifestyle brand noting that their collections "tick all the boxes."

"You get the fun vintage feel and playfulness, without the challenge of sizing issues and torn fabrics."

The collection will be available on Kartell's site beginning June 2018.

Price: Starting at \$45 - \$1,555

La Double J

kartell.com

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