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The image shows the interior of a store with a prominent spiral bookshelf on the left, filled with books. In the center, there is a counter area with various items for sale, including small decorative objects and books, with price tags like \$36, \$12, \$16, and \$15. To the right, there are more bookshelves and a wooden table with a thick top and turned legs. The ceiling has a modern lighting fixture, and the floor is polished and reflective.

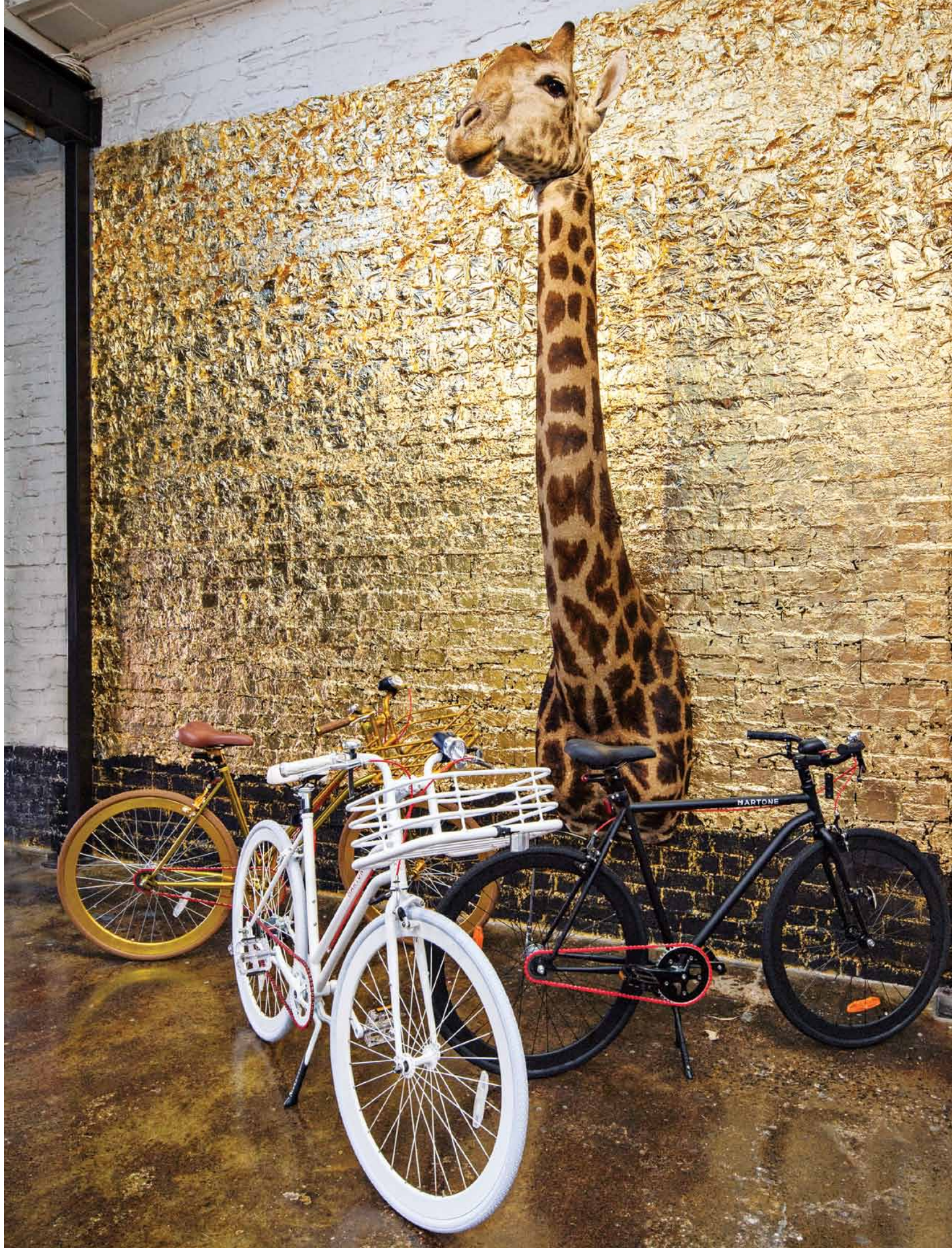
EMPORIO GESUALDI

THE NEW EMPORIUM-STYLE STORE, MONDOPIERO, BY DESIGNER
PIERO GESUALDI IS POPULATED WITH SOME OF THE FINER
THINGS SOURCED FROM MANY CORNERS OF THE WORLD.

WORDS STEPHEN CRAFTI
PHOTOGRAPHY JAMES BROADWAY

ARCHITECT MOS ARCHITECTS
LOCATION MELBOURNE | AUS
PROJECT MONDOPIERO





OPENER Designer Piero Gesualdi brings his own world 'Mondopiero' to Brunswick Street, Fitzroy. The designer homewares emporium is delivered with an 'Italian touch', with products sourced from Italy and Europe

LEFT A taxidermy giraffe displayed on a gold leaf wall is one of the more unusual exhibits

RIGHT Black mild steel shelves in the centre of the warehouse-style emporium provide a nook for books, furniture, homewares and other unusual finds that capture Gesualdi's imagination

Designer and entrepreneur Piero Gesualdi can't bear to be without a project. In the 1970s, Gesualdi – then a graduate architect – started Masons, a set of fashion boutiques in Melbourne and Sydney. In the late 1980s he opened Rosati's, an Italian-style bistro in Flinders Lane, Melbourne.

It proved a precursor for the transformation of the city's laneways through the 1990s and into the new millennium.

But it was from as early as a new graduate in the mid-1970s, that Gesualdi had also harbored a dream of having a homewares store – “an emporium-style store filled with things that deeply resonate with my aesthetic,” he admits.

Gesualdi, along with his colleague Paolo Gnecciuscone, project director and product developer, have been searching the globe for some of the most innovative and unique products. Scents from Florence, fashion from Milan courtesy of Alberto Aspresi and linen from Italian company Busatti (a family-run company that once dressed Napoleon Bonaparte's troops).

Gesualdi can't exactly define why one product – such as an outdoor chair made of resin in the mould of an Eames armchair and ottoman makes the 'cut' – yet another design fails to excite. Then again Gesualdi does have an extremely fine eye for spotting talent. He was the first to import Jean Paul Gaultier's fashion into Australia well before JPG could be identified by his initials alone. Gesualdi's first order from Gaultier was made from the designer's kitchen table in his apartment in Paris.

Mondopiero, Gesualdi's new venture in Brunswick Street, Fitzroy was formerly the showroom of La Pe Ge tiles. With this now located on the first floor of the Victorian-style building, Gesualdi was able to create his own “emporium-style” world at ground level. The store has been carefully crafted into separate functions. Front of house, contained within the original Victorian shop, now has a florist on one side and – eventually – a champagne bar will find its place on the other.

“What could be more pleasurable than the smell and sight of flowers as soon as you enter, along with people enjoying an aperitif?” says Gesualdi.

Gesualdi's gift for identifying and sharing unique design is matched by his knack for creating fitouts where past and present beautifully fuse. The rear



“It's about creating an experience, as much as searching the world for some of the finest things.”

PIERO GESUALDI



ABOVE The outdoor Eames style furniture made from resin creates a 'welcoming mat' for those entering the emporium

warehouse, for example, still retains the original timber ceiling trusses and highlight windows. But there's a fine contemporary overlay at ground level. Curvaceous mild-steel bookshelves, designed by Gesualdi, create a centerpiece for the new emporium. Between the shelves will be a revolving 'feast' of designs, whether taking the form of a chair, an objet d'art or even some taxidermy.

"It could be a one-off chair by Gio Ponti or this great outdoor chair and ottoman designed by Mal from the Netherlands," says Gesualdi.

While furniture is displayed like art in some instances, linen, including towels and bed linen, is showcased on the half-sphere mild-steel shelves on one bagged brick wall. Other items, such as knives, sunglasses and smaller objects – wallets from Tokyo, for instance – are arranged in glass-fronted cabinets, also designed with steel legs.

"I love designing furniture. It's something that's been integral to many of the houses that I've designed for clients," he adds. Because Mondopiero boasts two street frontages it also seemed appropriate to include a café at the rear of the store that would cater for both customers and locals to use. "It's about creating an experience, as much as searching the world for some of the finest things," explains Gesualdi, "ones that I've always wanted to have myself."

Mondopiero is at 28-30 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy, Victoria, mondopiero.com.au

Stephen Crafti is Indesign's Melbourne correspondent.

MONDOPIERO

ARCHITECT MOS Architects
CONCEPT, INTERIORS Piero Gesualdi
BUILDER Circa Constructions

BUDGET \$2m

TOTAL FLOOR AREA 340 m²

MOS ARCHITECTS
mosarchitects.com.au

FURNITURE
 Ikebana, Shoso Shimbo

FINISHES
 Floor surfaces and walls throughout, Lapege.

LIGHTING
 Spotlights, Darkon. Lighting design, Dean Philips

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