

Statement Sinks Made from Murano Glass and Lava Stone

04/02/2020 | By Valerie Dennis Craven

A trend that our team has seen popping up recently is washroom and restroom basins and sinks that are made from unique materials, featuring eye-popping designs that are almost asking to be touched. Below, learn about two that have recently caught our eye.

Murano Glass Basin

When thinking about Murano glass, it's usually in a decorative sense. The process, specific to the Murano island in Venice, Italy, creates works of art. Already the youngest glass master on the island, Roberto Beltrami, who is the owner, production chief and glass master at Wave Murano Glass, along with his team, create traditional designs for lighting, vases, decorations and more.

Beltrami recently took the idea and design from his trademark Spike vase and created an entirely new product out of Murano glass: a washroom basin named Scilla. Launched in January at the Maison&Objet 2020 exhibition in Paris, Beltrami sees Scilla being a statement piece in hospitality or residential settings that are as unique as the basin itself.



Photo: Roberto Beltrami is the youngest glass master on Murano island. Although not originally from the region, he wanted to create something with his hands. His team can create custom pieces for each client and project, both small- and large-scale; Courtesy of Wave Murano Glass

"One day I was making one of our signature Spike series vases. Suddenly, I realized that the shape of the spike vase was perfect for a wash basin," Beltrami notes. "The fluidity of glass when we shape the molten material is very close to that of water. This brings to Scilla an ancestral connection with the water that is destined to forever splash on the smooth surface of this Murano glass wash basin."

The sink is created using the traditional technique of rostrato, an ancient process that requires a particular speed of execution, concentration and precision, he says. The hot glass is quickly worked with a special tool called a tagliol, or sculpting knife, which allows the artist to create a series of square shapes along the entire surface. With small tweezers, each shape is stretched to form a spike.

(Photo: The Scilla washroom basin was launched in January at Maison&Objet and was inspired by a vase glass that master Roberto Beltrami created; Courtesy of Wave Murano Glass)



The whole process must be carried out in a very short time due to the glass reaching up to 1,000 degrees F and the fast cooling of it. "It's an intense and stimulating physical and mental exercise that requires great concentration and attention," Beltrami explains.

Lava Stone Basin

As the name suggests, Made a Mano's products are handmade. The Aqua sinks and basins use stone from the active Strato volcano in Mount Etna, located in Sicily, Italy, which is more than 10,000 years old. This unique item is available in custom shapes, sizes and glazes to fit your space and overall aesthetic.

"The lava stone is a warm stone and it is an open stone; even after 10,000 years it moves and breathes," explains NanaKi Bonfils, founder and owner of Made a Mano. "The composure is minerals and metals, formed through eruptions of the earth. It has literally been spit out of nothing and to just think about the lava running, the transformation, sustainability and resources is beautiful."

Not all lava is created equal, Bonfils notes. The lava stone from Mount Etna is composed of minerals and metals that allow it to be burned and glazed in an oven at very high temperatures for a long time, resulting in a look like no other natural stone.

The Made a Mano team chooses the blocks of lava stone in person to ensure the materials used for the products meet their standards. From there, the sinks and basins are carved from a block with a water drill and by hand.

(Photo: The handmade Aqua sinks and basins use stone from the active Strato volcano in Mount Etna, located in Sicily, Italy, which is more than 10,000 years old; Courtesy of Made a Mano)



"Lava stone should be used where beauty and durability are important, and where a client wants to put personality into the design," Bonfils notes. She says that all this handmade and handpicked beauty comes at a price, so the products are often found in high-end hospitality or residential settings.

"We are constantly trying to push the boundaries further regarding the use of lava stone, and it keeps amazing us," she notes of the creative process and what's next. "Lava stone is a unique resource with features and beauty no other natural stone has."