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TRAVEL

24 Hours with Milan Design Darling J. J. Martin

With the Salone del Mobile furniture fair in full swing, the journalist and shop owner takes us on a whirlwind tour of the city's best galleries, stores, and eateries

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J. J. Martin, founder of LaDoubleJ.com, in the Wunderwall, the new home base of her pattern-filled showroom in Milan.



Photo: Alberto Zanetti

Spot a flash of pattern zipping down the streets of Milan? That's J. J. Martin, the design and fashion journalist who does double duty as the founder of the retro-resplendent retailer [LaDoubleJ](#). With a collection of cohorts ranging from buzzy Dimore Studio founders Emiliano Salci and Britt Moran to the queen bee herself, Nina Yashar of Nilufar gallery, when

it comes to the Milan design scene, this American turned Italian is the resident expert. So in the midst of the insanity that is Milan Design Week, we caught up with the princess of prints to get a look at her agenda during the busiest time of the year. The lesson here? Every great design-scouting day should start with meditation and end with bologna. Case closed.



Clockwise from top left: Martin's terrace, Pasticceria Marchesi, the Wunderwall, Patricia Urquiola tables at Spazio Pontaccio.

7:30 a.m. “Design week in Milan is intense. It’s a lot like fashion week—back-to-back appointments, events, openings, parties, dinners. I always want to do more than I am capable of, so the best thing is to start the morning calmly at home in Milan with a little bit of meditation out on the terrace. It sounds counterintuitive, but these crazy colors and prints are actually quite calming to me. Emiliano Salci and Britt Moran of [Dimore Studio](#)—my partners in maximalist crime—designed those floral outdoor cushions to go with my happy Gio Ponti tiled tables.”

9 a.m. “First stop is a PR meeting at [Pasticceria Marchesi](#) on Via Montenapoleone, which Prada lined in a fabulous silk floral jacquard. I’m a big fan of mixing patterns, so here we have a LaDoubleJ Editions dress made with vintage Mantero fabric and some juicy jewels from Pomellato.”

9:30 a.m. “Once caffeinated, it’s off to see some good design, which I find in my very first stop at [Spazio Pontaccio](#). I love this stained-glass credenza that Patricia Urquiola designed with Federico Pepe.”

10:30 a.m. “The next stop is DoubleJ’s new headquarters on Milan’s canals, where we just debuted our Wunderwall pop-up shop designed by Milan architect Luca Cipelletti. This is the first time that we have an actual physical space to sell our vintage clothes and vintage jewelry and show off the work of other talents like the artist Liselotte Watkins, who created a series of hand-painted vases for the Salone del Mobile furniture fair. We debuted for Milan Design Week, but we’re open by appointment year-round.”



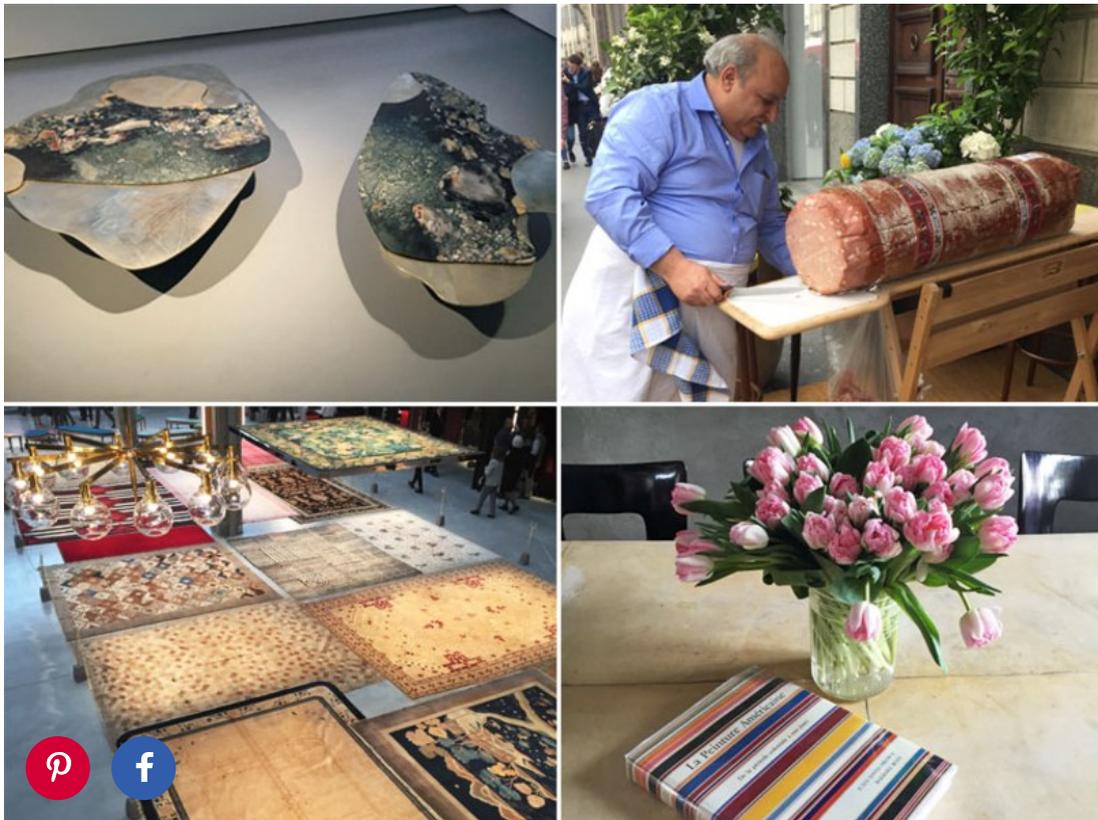
Clockwise from top left: Laura Baldassari at Atelier Biagetti, Karin Dobbin in the library of Moshe Tabibnia Gallery, De Padova, Kenneth Jay Lane earrings at Cavalli & Nastri.

10:40 a.m. “Pop in to kiss my furnituremaking neighbors, Alberto Biagetti and Laura Baldassari of [Atelier Biagetti](#). But Laura is passed out on the couch she designed. #DesignWeekFatigue”

1 p.m. “Drop in to see one of my favorite girls in Milan, Canadian-born Karin Dobbin, who runs the [Moshe Tabibnia Gallery](#) in Milan. They have the most exquisite collection of rare carpets from the Renaissance through the 1970s. Karin greets me in the library and then serves me a lunch of goat cheese and avocado salads that make me kiss the ground she walks on. (Trust me, healthy North American-style food is hard to come by in Milan!)”

2:36 p.m. “Across the street from the gallery I spy these fabulous vintage Kenneth Jay Lane earrings at [Cavalli & Nastri](#). By now I’ve befriended all the dealers in town, so I pet the earrings, chat with the owner, and then jump off in my Cinquecento to the next appointment.”

3:05 p.m. “At [De Padova](#), I get wall envy over this lovely framed arrangement.”



Clockwise from top left: Marble-and-fiberglass tables by Vincenzo de Cotiis, the Mortadella Man on Via Durini, tulips from Chi Chi Meroni, Nilufar gallery.

3:40 p.m. “Pay a visit to [Vincenzo de Cotiis](#). He’s one of those hidden, very special Milan designers who really push the boundaries of design. His pieces are gallery worthy, but I still wouldn’t mind having a couple of his marble-and-fiberglass tables at home.”

4:10 p.m. “Midafternoon snack anyone? The Mortadella Man is getting busy at a bar on Via Durini next door to my B&B Italia appointment. I didn’t think I liked bologna until I moved to Italy and tasted this.”

5:30 p.m. “I pop into Nina Yashar’s [Nilufar gallery](#)—[which I wrote about for AD last year](#)—and it continues to be the highlight of Milan. I especially love the floating carpets and chandeliers in her incredible Depot space.”

9 p.m. “My husband calls me ‘Nonna J. J.’ [Grandma J. J.] because I always head home early. When I finally get back, I find these gorgeous tulips

from Chi Chi Meroni, an amazing Milanese women whose home I just wrote about for *Wallpaper* magazine. She sent me a cool book on American paintings from her vintage gallery [L'Arabesque](#). After reading the note, I make a big plate of vegetables and am in bed before ten!”

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