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Sustainable DESIGN

*ROBBIE ANTONIO and GOGA ASHKENAZI reveal
their plans for the first precrafted sustainable home*



FOLIA FANTASY

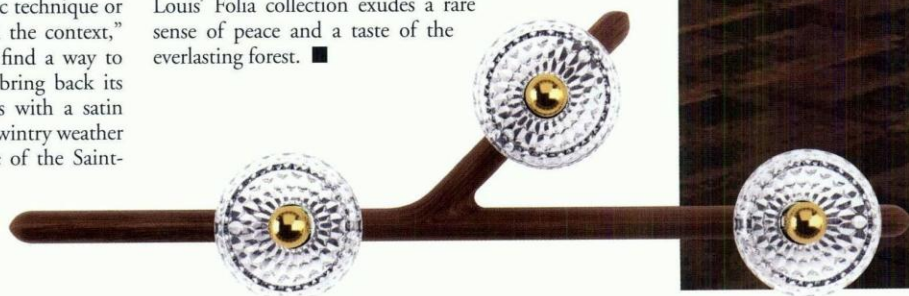
Inspired by the Vosges forest, Saint Louis's latest Folia collection forms a marriage between crystal and wood

Inside the sacristy of Santa Maria del Carmine was a sight to be behold: a large white oval structure, extending up the ceiling and supported by three beams, housed Saint Louis's latest crystal collection. There was something almost spiritual about the presentation, its location, covered in meticulous wooden detailing done in Neo-Gothic style provided the perfect backdrop for French interior architect and designer Noé Duchaufour-Lawrance's latest collection to shine. With roots dating back to 1586, Saint-Louis was the first crystal glass manufacturer in continental Europe. Its existence today testifies to the brand's timeless craftsmanship as well as its ability to adapt to the style and needs of the time. "To feed the fire to make the crystal you need wood and that's why all the glassmakers are in the forest and so the wood complements the fire to help the glassmakers create beautiful pieces of crystal," explained Anne Lhomme, Saint-Louis's Creative Director. "When Noé arrived at the factory for the first time he immediately made this alliance between the wood and the crystal." The combination of crystal and wood in Folia is brought to life with made-to-measure organic shapes due to a modular and easily customizable design.

"Each project I work on needs to be dedicated to a place or a context, whether with craft or a specific technique or a certain industry, the project must reveal the context," said Duchaufour-Lawrance. "We tried to find a way to recontextualise the crystal collection and bring back its essence." For the first time, Folia appears with a satin finish, as if covered with frost, recalling the wintry weather that permeates the surrounding landscape of the Saint-Louis manufacture. "The people working at the manufacture have this special link with nature," adds Lhomme. "Obviously, they use nature to help them to create but also, they love nature

and they preserve it. A forest is grand, eternal and grounded in its essence and in a way, our factory has these same elements." Duchaufour-Lawrance's point of departure when designing the collection was the wood emblematic of the forests surrounding the manufacture. This same wood is needed to create the glass. The wood the designer used is clear, dark or white ash with a matt varnish from the French forests. Crafted with meticulous detail, each piece has finishes in brushed brass or chrome exemplifying the structure of the lamps and their radiating crystals inside, which are themselves distinctly cut into pure shapes with rich decoration. Additionally, the crystals are embellished with geometric and organic patterns inspired by the leaves of the trees near the factory.

Moreover, the wood reveals the crystal – almost like a shell. Duchaufour-Lawrance further explains that it is "the wood that is supporting and driving the crystal." This intense and beautiful relationship between the two materials can be found in the 2019 collection in chandeliers, sconces, ceiling and portable lights – all dazzling and illuminating their surroundings. "Crystal has the amazing ability to capture and amplify the slightest ray of light." The mood created from the Folia collection is gentle, calming and elegant. Like stepping inside the sacristy of Santa Maria del Carmine, Saint Louis' Folia collection exudes a rare sense of peace and a taste of the everlasting forest. ■





Facing page: Saint Louis
lights from the Folia
collection; below: three
light left and right unit,
clear ash; above: 16
light unit, white ash
Above: an installation
view of the Folia
presentation at the
sacristy of Santa Maria
del Carmine in Milan