

# Campo Marzio

## *Design*

### HISTORY

In 1933 an anonymous Roman craftsman carried out his work in a small shop in the heart of Rome. This shop was equipped with all kinds of machinery used for the decoration and personalization of pens and writing instruments. After the Second World War, the quality and skill of the Campo Marzio Bottega became well known in the Roman entourage. Nobles, politicians and artists looked for the excellent workmanship of Campo Marzio in order to find unique and uncommon pens.

Historical events changed the Italian lifestyle in this period and also influenced the style of writing. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, fountain pens continued to evolve with small but constant changes required to solve problems such as increasing the capacity of the tank to avoid any accidental spills or staining of ink.

In 1939 Italians were invited by the fascist government to donate their gold to their country in order to finance the army's entrance into the war. Consequently, gold also disappeared from pens and artisans were grappling with the problem of replacing it.

Thanks to the skill of Italian craftsmen, stimulated by these needs and constraints, they were able to brilliantly solve the problem by creating pens with nibs built in Murano glass. Nowadays these unusual creations are highly sought after by collectors around the world and Campo Marzio boasts one of the best items in its collection of vintage pens.

The war forced the Bottega to stop its activity and when the shop was moved to the Prati neighbourhood in Rome after the war, trends and consumer patterns had changed. The market had been drastically transformed by the invention of the ballpoint pen. Writing instruments such as pen nibs and inkwells were no longer used. The Bottega's activity was consequently reduced to a laboratory specialising in the repair and sale of pens, mostly imported from the US and Germany which were, even before the war, the leading experts in technical solutions for writing instruments.

During the 60s and 70s industrialisation and consumerism caused the crisis of the artisan class. But the Campo Marzio Bottega was able to make use of the traditional skills of its craftsmen to produce high quality objects which became avidly sought by discerning customers who would not settle for characterless, mass produced stationery products. In the 80s the Campo Marzio workshop was moved to Corso Vittorio Emanuele. By then, thanks to the twists and turns of the fashion world, the emergence of the first collectors of vintage pens, and a new passion for small jewellery, the shop that offered handmade products was given a second life. In the 90s the business went back to Via di Campo Marzio which used to be the center of the greatest Roman craftsmanship. The district had changed considerably since the 30s: by now craft shops and the great Italian and international fashion brands' boutiques were established here. But instead of giving into this trade hegemony, the apprentice stayed true to the Bottega's original founder, bringing back Campo Marzio Design.

The new company is determined to revive the original activity by designing, producing and marketing products and writing accessories for the business world. The aim is to maintain a high level of quality craftsmanship with a trendy new design. Following the strategy of other Italian and European companies from the jewellery and sewing business, the name became a "brand" capable of being expanded to every corner of the globe making history in fashion retail. Finally the reality created seventy years earlier in the same place has found a new way to make a difference in the current market.

The uniqueness of the concept had immediate success that grew exponentially on the occasion of the Jubilee of the Roman Church in the year 2000 when Campo Marzio Design had the opportunity to produce a special collection of rare and precious fountain pens for the Vatican Museums. The pens produced for the Vatican Museums are the seal affixed to the century that saw the birth of the workshop activity – the pride of three generations of Roman craftsmen who reached their goal of seeing a fountain pen in the hands of the Holy Father. This monumental occasion launched Campo Marzio Design to an international audience.

Despite this success, the brand remains out of the franchising scheme and is still identified by pens and writing instruments, business accessories and leather items. To maintain the identity and tradition of the original concept, repair and personalization services are still being offered and executed by the old craftsmen who survived after the industrialization period. Campo Marzio still promotes its rare collection of unique fountain pen models collected over many years. Since 2006, Campo Marzio has expanded on an international level throughout Asia and Europe. Campo Marzio Design Boutiques can be found in London, Madrid, Hong Kong, Singapore, Tokyo, Riyadh, Venice, Milan and Cape Town. These are in addition to a presence in numerous department stores, chain stores, and bookshops in Italy and all over the world.