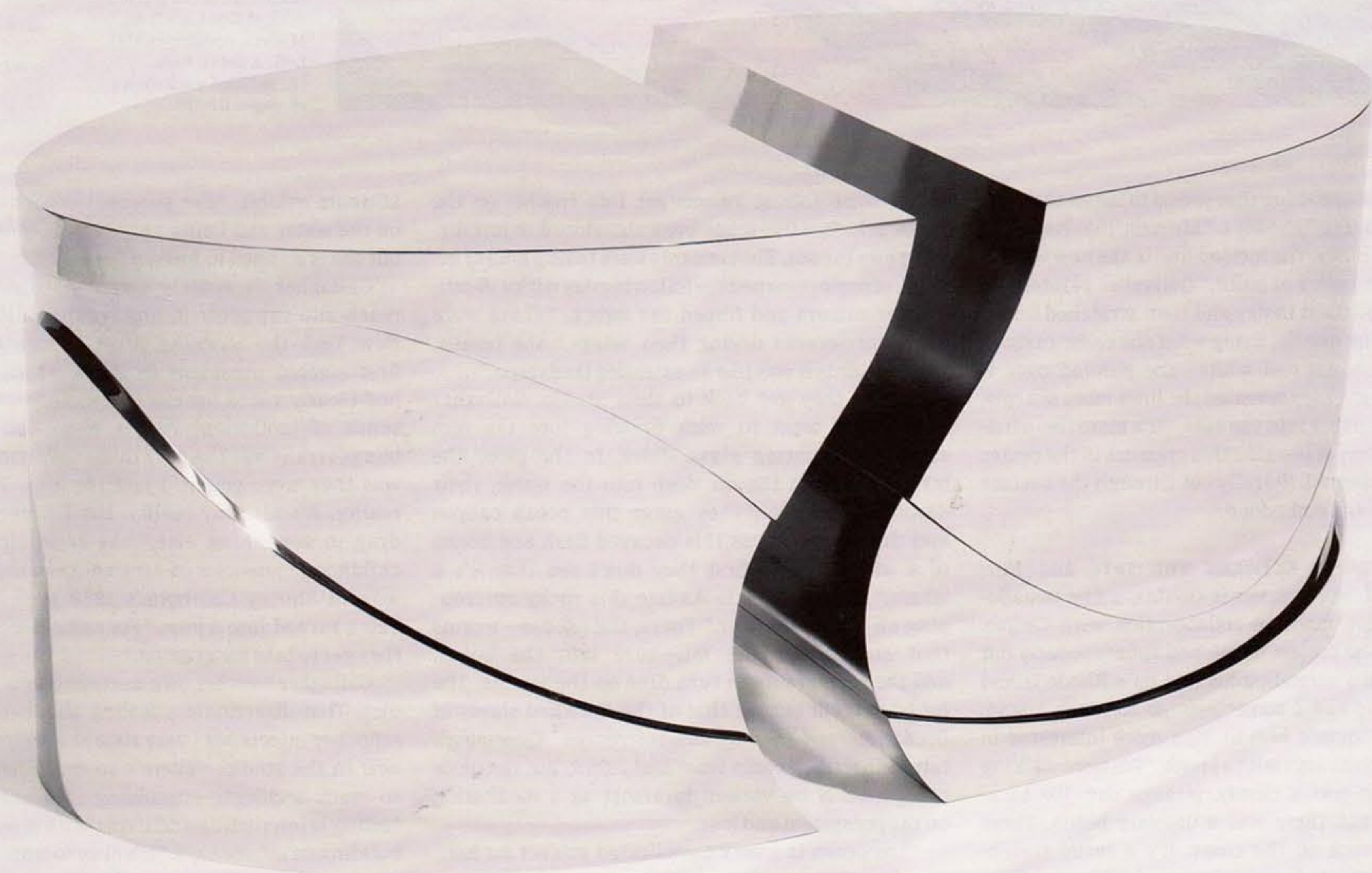


COLLECT IT

# PRECIOUS METAL

Two legendary silver houses—one Spanish, the other French—have forged a partnership decades in the making. The result is a limited-edition collection of household objects as monumental in scale as they are minimal in design.

BY TIM MURPHY  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY NICHOLAS ALAN COPE



**STERLING PEDIGREE**  
The partnership between Damian Garrido Orfebres S.L. and Puiforcat has produced bold designs for the home, including this freestanding oval mirror, which sits on a sculptural base, \$38,000. Opposite page: The console breaks apart to form separate end tables, \$57,000.





**REFLECTIVE QUALITY**  
The candelabra, with space for four candles, \$63,000. Opposite page: The centerpiece inspired by the movement of waves, \$38,000.

**I**N 1992, THE SPANISH SILVERSMITH Damian Garrido journeyed to Paris to discuss a partnership with the venerable Puiforcat silver house, but the alliance wasn't to be. Puiforcat—founded in 1820 by the master craftsman Emile Puiforcat—had recently been acquired by the French luxury giant Hermès, which voiced concern over the potential hire distracting from the brand's Gallic image. Talks were dropped. "It was a wise decision at the time, but I still felt regret," says Pierre-Alexis Dumas, Hermès's artistic director. "We felt close in spirit with Damian."

So it felt like old seeds bearing fruit when, a few years ago, Puiforcat approached Garrido's children, Juan, 47, and Paloma, 44, about producing a limited-edition line of large-scale home objects and furnishings that would merge the bold Garrido DNA with Puiforcat's signature sleek style. "We felt completely honored," says Juan, who, along with Paloma, took over their father's business after his death in 2002 (the firm is called Damian Garrido Orfebres S.L.). "But could we create a union point of lines that were both soft and strong?"

The collaboration is just the latest triumph for Juan and Paloma, whose sensuous yet understated metal furniture and sculptures are in perpetual demand on both sides of the Atlantic. Represented by New York decorative-arts gallerist Barry Friedman, the siblings have created designs for Asprey of London and Paris's Alexandre Biaggi gallery, among others. Working in a studio outside Madrid with a staff of seven, they've continued a tradition inherited literally at their father's knee. "We'd come home from school and go to his workshop behind the house, and he'd give us a piece of silver and say, 'Go play with it.' We'd bang on it, engrave it," says Paloma. "The first thing I made was a keychain, while Juan made a wine cup."

Garrido *padre* made objects that the Spanish royal family would give as gifts—similarly, Emile Puiforcat's son-in-law, Louis Victor Tabouret (who later took his wife's name) collected ornate silver pieces, many of them made for the French aristocracy of the 17th and 18th centuries, which he then encouraged factory workers to

faithfully reproduce. In the Jazz Age, Emile's great-grandson Jean Puiforcat—who collaborated with pivotal French modernists like René Herbst, Le Corbusier and Pierre Chareau—revived the house's name with his early appreciation of Art Deco. Andy Warhol, in turn, imbued those avant-garde designs with new cachet when he began collecting them in the '70s.

Now on view at Puiforcat's Avenue Gabriel flagship, the seven-piece Garrido collection is called Magnificat Puiforcat, in part a reference to its impressive scale. Composed of shimmering nickel-plated brass in warm tones that never tarnish, the collection comprises an oval-block coffee table that ingeniously breaks into two end tables; a massive floor candelabra that reaches upward like the Tower of Babel; a gleaming standing oval mirror; a smaller wall mirror; a vase that looks like a miniature skyscraper in London or Dubai; a centerpiece bowl that simulates the swell of a wave; and, in a similarly undulating style, two weighty candlesticks. Each of the pieces required four to ten weeks of work by seven different master craftsmen to complete. "You can see in the collection that the Garridos have really played with simple geometric shapes like cones and tubes," says Héléne Dubrulle, Puiforcat's current president and the general manager of Hermès Maison, "and that's very much in the philosophy of Jean Puiforcat. They're sculptors."

Make that tight-lipped sculptors. The Garridos won't offer a word about how they actually crafted the collection's beguiling forms—that's proprietary information, they say. But division of labor they will talk about. "Juan loves the design process, playing with Photoshop, while I'm quality control, meeting with the workers each day," says Paloma. "They're the ones who know what the metal can and can't do." For their next project, the Garridos plan to tackle objects of even more mammoth size, like fireplace surrounds and upholstered daybeds—and they'd like to work again with Puiforcat. Perhaps the pairing of Spanish and French echoes something at the heart of their sibling relationship. "We have different opinions, which can work for and against us," says Juan of his sister. "But at the end of the day, we have to cooperate." ●

