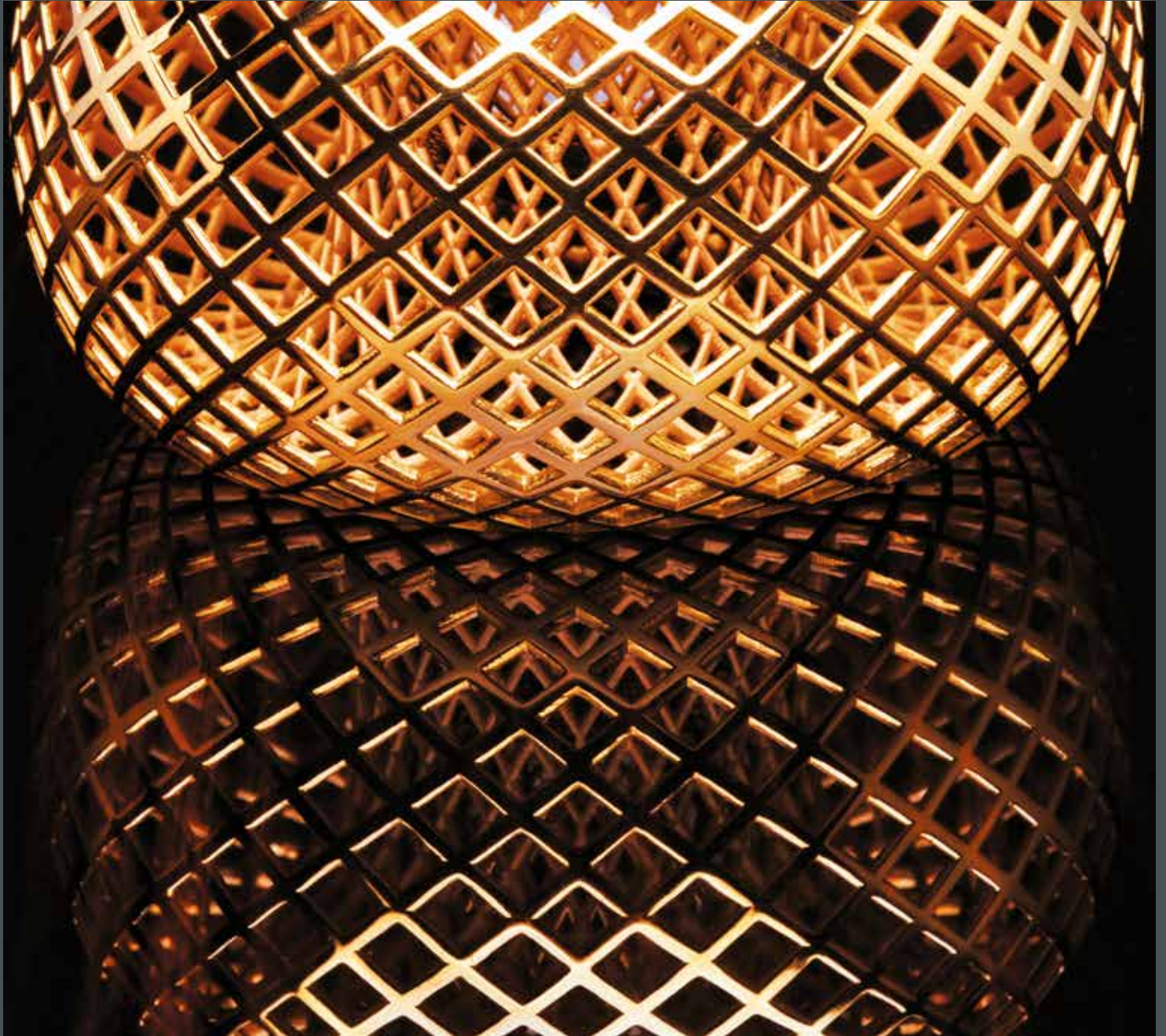


# Superyacht

INTERIOR DESIGN    EXTERIOR SPACE    CREATIVITY AND ARCHITECTURE



# DESIGN

**CASE STUDY**

Evan K Marshall reflects on his career and the development of American design.  
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**ARTISAN**

A look at Spanish glassblower Gordiola as it approaches its 300th anniversary.  
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**IN BUILD**

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Sailing on board 47.6m *Wisp* together with Jonathan Rhoades and Andre Hoek.  
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# THE HEART OF GLASS

Crystal often takes preference on the dining table in many yachts; but glass can offer a different elegance when crafted in the right hands. However, there are few bespoke glass manufacturing houses still in operation today, and those that remain rely on their artistry to survive. We visit Spanish glassblower Gordiola in its 46-year-old faux-castle 15 miles outside of Palma, Mallorca to discover how it has succeeded where others have failed.

GORDIOLA

**ARTISAN**







ANDREW JOHANSSON

**“M**y ancestors, who from 1719 to the present day, through seven successive generations, have kept their glassmaking tradition alive; creating, producing and selling their original works of art which today can be found in museum collections worldwide,” says former director Dr Daniel Aldeguer Gordiola in his book *Glassmaking In Mallorca And The Gordiolas*, published in 2001.

Founded as Gordiola-Rigal at the beginning of the 18th century in Palma by Gabriel Gordiola Balague and Blas Rigal, the Rigal part of the name was dropped in 1790 following the death of Blas. While little has changed in the business since then, the relocation of its facilities to a new 3,500sqm area in 1969 allowed the company to expand beyond the walls of the city and marked Gordiola’s 250th anniversary—an extraordinary achievement. “Nine years after the death of my uncle Bernardo Gordiola, I decided, with the approval of my uncle Gabriel [Gordiola Manera], to move the glassworks to Manacor road...in Algaida,” Daniel wrote.



**“Blowing glass freehand, as opposed to using a mould, is more of an art and a true representation of the artisan.”**

Today, the company is run by Daniel’s five children, who each have a share in the business—a first in the family’s history. While they all perform administrative duties, it is Daniel’s daughter Marisa Gordiola who



MASTER GLASSBLOWER PEDRO TORRES

is most active in shaping the future of the business. As principal designer of Gordiola's collections, Marisa works in collaboration with other designers when bespoke pieces are commissioned and is responsible for producing the various colours that enrich Gordiola's glass.

"Marisa is the only one who knows the formula that makes up each pigment" explains Alex Buckley-Bryce, director at Moncada Hispania and exclusive supplier of Gordiola to the superyacht arena. "This knowledge is passed through the family only. When more pigment is needed, Marisa comes in and mixes a new batch, all of which is done behind closed doors."

From lighting, glassware and tableware to decorative pieces and gifts, Gordiola makes all its glasswork using traditional glassblowing techniques. Every piece is made from clear or coloured glass or a combination of the two. While it is possible to make pieces with more than a single colour, it is an option that factory manager Jesus Fernandez considers on a case-by-case basis.

"We normally make clear glass combined with one colour for our collections and private projects as this is the most commercially viable option," says Fernandez. "It costs approximately 20,000 euros per month to run an oven, which you need per colour, and so we only run two ovens. However, we can fire up an oven for a bespoke project if needs be." ►



ANDREW JOHANSSON

ONE OF 800 WINE DECANTERS MID PRODUCTION



A team of four artisans work in the heart of the castle and produce a total of 250 pieces a year from its collections, with bespoke and private projects forming additional work. While glassblowing is the only technique practised today, Gordiola's master craftsmen of yesteryear used moulds to ensure each piece was perfectly uniform. It was a quicker and therefore more commercially feasible process, but this method was dropped in favour of a freehand approach. As many glass-manufacturing houses adopted the more popular mass production method, Gordiola identified the need to stick with tradition to differentiate from its competitors. "Blowing glass freehand, as opposed to using a mould, is more of an art and a true representation of the artisan," says Fernandez.

Combine this artisanal approach with a small team and limited production and you get a rare and special collection of glass pieces that is well known and loved in Spain. Queen Sofia and Prince Philip of Spain, Prince Rainier and Princess Grace of Monaco and Queen Paola of Belgium, have all visited Gordiola's facilities. In fact, Fernandez receives up to 15 bespoke tableware orders a year from renowned Spanish families, each desiring variations from its existing collections.

"These purchases might not always be for personal use and are commonly given as wedding gifts," says Fernandez. "Orders vary from client to client with some buying a modified collection or mixing and matching. For instance, a family from Madrid recently requested 80 units including wine, champagne and drinking glasses. They liked the base from one collection and the cup from another

collection. As we hand produce the glass, we can combine the two styles as part of a bespoke order."

Gordiola has a number of established relationships with producers of fragrances, olive oil and wine and has worked closely with luxury brands such as Bulgari to produce special projects. At the time of our visit, Fernandez was working on a prototype bottle for an undisclosed cosmetic company, while the production of 800 decanters was under way for a famous Spanish wine producer celebrating an important anniversary. Each year, Gordiola takes on 20-25 bespoke projects, of which up to 35 per cent are completely new creations and the rest are adaptations from its current collections. Although Gordiola has relationships with existing designers, one of its goals is to build more partnerships with the design community and to develop new pieces, especially lighting products.

"Interior designer Michael Smith in Los Angeles is one of our clients," Fernandez points out. "He decorated the inside of the White House during Obama's first term and the request for our glass came from the President." With each order, an additional 20 per cent is produced from which the best of the batch is selected, inspected, packaged and shipped to the client.

"Each piece produced is singular and unique," continues Fernandez. "Even if the pieces are from the same collection, there are a few subtle differences that make each glass unique and beautiful. The most significant thing for the craftsmen here is to create something artistic and to convey the art within each piece that is made."



ANDREW JOHANSSON



A COMPLETED CIRCULAR CANDLESTICK HOLDER

**Each year, Gordiola takes on 20-25 bespoke projects, of which up to 35 per cent are completely new creations and the rest are adaptations from its current collections.**



At the time of our visit, Buckley-Bryce collected an order for 20 circular candlestick holders which were sent out to clients as Christmas gifts. Like every piece produced by the Spanish manufacturer, the base of the candlestick has a small, rough unfinished surface. It marks where the glass was once attached to the metal rod used to form and shape the glass. For Gordiola's master craftsmen, it gives the pieces identity and has become the company's stamp of authenticity.

"One of our charter clients came to the office and saw a metal tree we have—each branch provides a platform which we use to present pieces of Gordiola glass," says Buckley-Bryce. "The client was inspired by these pieces and wanted different coloured glasses for her homes in Portofino and Milan. It highlighted how special and limited Gordiola glass is and I thought the candlestick holder would be a good way to show my clients what they can do."

Gordiola's glassworks won't be to everyone's tastes but there is something unique and special in each piece created. In a world where one-offs and limited editions are highly sought, they offer a playful alternative to crystal. The elegance of Gordiola glass is in the master's ability to turn the ordinary into a work of art and the dedication to remain true to traditional craftsmanship—a legacy started by its forefathers. ■



ANDREW JOHANSSON

OLD MOULDS ONCE USED TO PRODUCE GORDIOLA GLASS NOW SIT IN ITS ON SITE MUSEUM