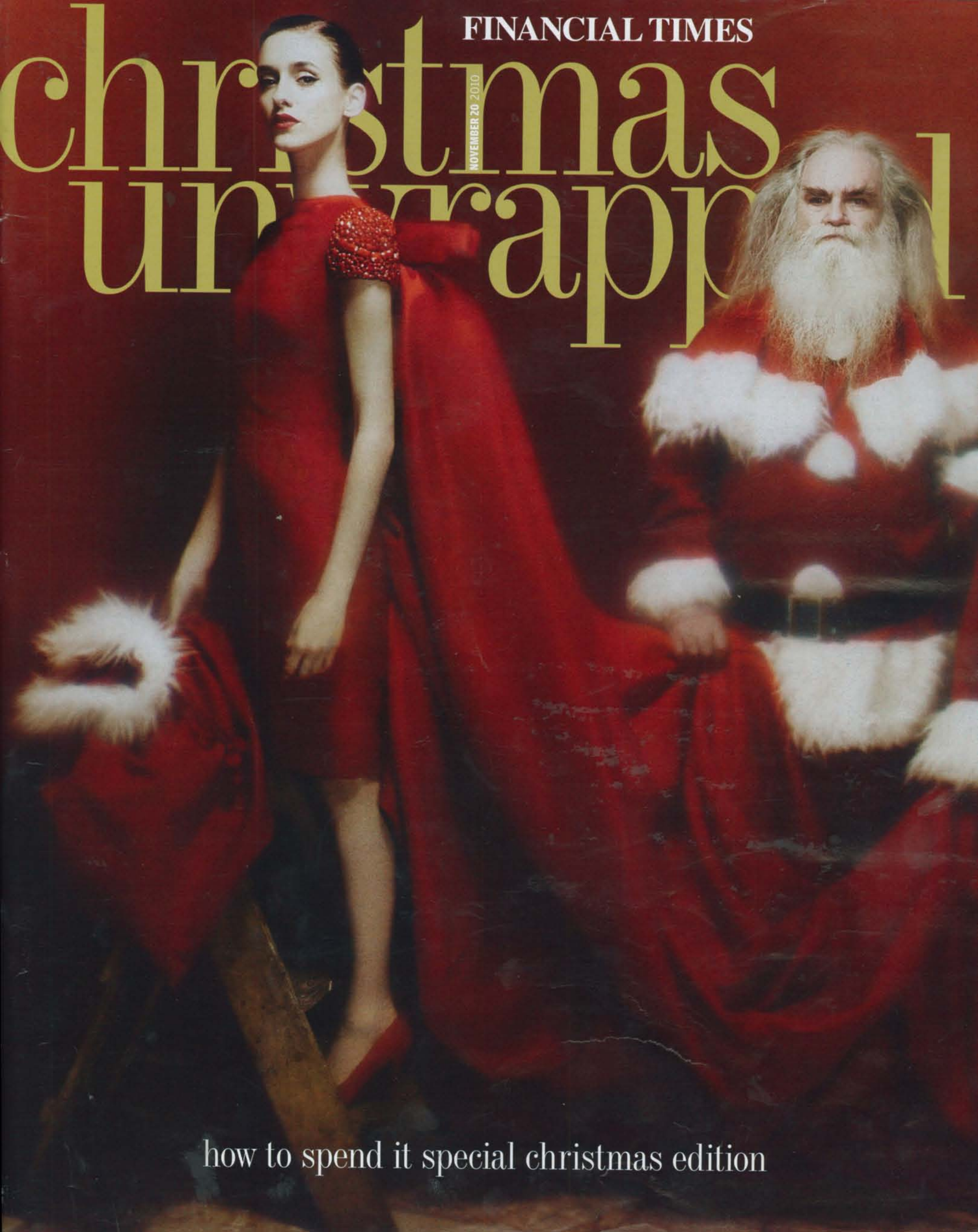


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how to spend it special christmas edition



Zaha Hadid

The Stirling Prize winner brings her curvilinear style to mirror-polished cutlery for WMF (left, £95 a five-piece set).

The scale is miniature, but the elegant proportions, spatial handling and clever use of materials speak volumes. For the glamorous accessories and sharply designed domestic tools on these pages were all created by architects of international standing.

Welcome to the world of micro-architecture, where the constructive arts pervade even the most utilitarian items. From lamps, vases and tableware to knives, kettles, trays, cook-pots and even loo brushes, if ever there was evidence that everyday objects can be both useful and beautiful then it is revealed in the many and varied homewares created by contemporary architects.

Of course, architects have long had a hand within the home. Frank Lloyd Wright, Josef Hoffmann, Alvar Aalto, Walter Gropius and Eileen Gray all designed complete environments –

dining with Zaha...

Big-name architects have taken to moonlighting from the day job, turning their talents to the creation of striking homeware, says Nicole Swengley.



Ludovica and Roberto Palomba

The Milan-based partners' Murano glass bowl (left, £960) was inspired by a 1987 Herb Ritts photograph.

a small object then it will embody truth, utility and soul."

An architectural approach, she believes, provides clarity and functionality while embracing a poetic response. And this is palpable in the designs. Inspired by Herb Ritts' photograph *Male Nude with Bubble*, a Murano glass bowl (£960, pictured above) by Ludovica and Roberto Palomba attempts to capture a bubble's fluidity. The cross-beams of an under-construction timber roof are echoed in Japanese architect Shigeru Ban's fruit stand (£2,170, pictured overleaf), while the hand saws that sparked Jean-Michel Wilmotte's steel fire dogs (pictured on previous page, £1,750 for a set) are strikingly self-evident.

Most WOW pieces are hand-crafted. The Hybrid cutlery designed by the late Maarten van Severen marries simplicity of form with contemporary materials – a titanium fork, zirconium ceramic knife, a spoon hand-lacquered 65 times using Japanese Urushi lacquering techniques (in 999 limited edition sets, €999 each) while each piece of Vincent Van Duysen's Pottery collection (£885, pictured on previous page) comprises a matt ceramic container and a sandblasted oak lid (from £88 to £170). The latter serves as a cover or plinth, with the wood's soft, weathered grain combining with the clay's irregularity to give the pieces a serene presence. Meanwhile Richard Meier's elegantly proportioned candlesticks (£95 and £117, pictured on previous page), bonbonnière (£117) and Half Full collection glasses (£75 each) employ the Modernist language of his architecture, and reflect his fascination with space, form and geometric clarity.

Another high-profile architect with a growing portfolio of homewares is Zaha Hadid. Her signature style of curvilinear geometry is expressed in bowls designed for Sawaya & Moroni in colourful metacrylic (€28,800, pictured overleaf) and sterling silver (€79,200), in the alloy Series ZH lever door handles for Valli & Valli (£238) and the stainless-steel Zaha

"We commission designers to explore decorative art as superlative domestic equipment."

cutlery for WMF (pictured on opening page, five-piece set, £95).

The Crevasse vase for Alessi, reissued this year in stainless steel with a PVD (physical vapour deposition) coating in a limited edition of 999 pieces (£245, from Design Museum Shop) is cut from a single block and scored along two diagonal lines to make a warped, inverted surface. Several vases can be placed together like a cityscape or left to stand alone like landmark skyscrapers. Similarly, the five separate elements of Hadid's melamine Niche centrepiece (£87, from Alessi) can nest together or be reconfigured.

Earlier this year, Hadid launched four designs for wall-covering specialist Marburg in its Art Borders wallpaper series. Their names – Elastika, Stria, Swirl, Cellular – epitomise Hadid's dramatic, spatially aware designs and are available in various contemporary colourways (£115-£250 per 2.2m x 6m roll, from Brian Yates). But perhaps the Hadid homeware that has literally caused the biggest splash is the Triflow By Zaha kitchen tap for Triflow Concepts, launched last year, with an updated version, the Quadro, in matt gold, black chrome, black, pewter and nickel now available (from £6,779). The faucet's fluid shape is said to be inspired by flowing water – although it does chime conveniently with Hadid's signature Z-motif. Technically clever, it has a separate waterway for purified water, controlled by a touch-sensitive electronic device, while the single lever controlling



John Pawson

Echoing a kneeling figure, Pawson's candlestick (right, from €145) was originally designed for a monastery.



Andrea Branzi

The Italian architect's unusual twin-spouted Mama-ò kettle (above, £190) is part of Alessi's kitchen appliance collection.

hot and cold water blends with the tap's innovative shape. The new version will also offer hot (98°C) filtered water.

Another architectural microcosm is Hadid's organically shaped Genesy floor-lamp for Artemide (£5,050). Moulded from polyurethane, it is inspired by research into natural growth systems, its sweeping canopy of branches emerging through an interconnected network at the base. It's as indicative of Hadid's architectural work as Norman Foster's Gherkin lamp is of his design for London's 30 St Mary Axe building. Available in two sizes (30cm, £260; 60cm, £446, from Nest) the Gherkin lamp (pictured overleaf) is made of acid-etched, mouth-blown Murano glass and stands on a chromed metal base. It is produced by Italian lighting company Kundalini, which also makes the mouth-blown, opal-glass Drop Wall and Ceiling Lamp (£204, from Nest) designed by architects Future Systems.

The Corrubedo lamp for Fontana Arte (from £110) – a minimally designed wall-mounted fitting that casts soft, indirect illumination – is another architecturally inspired homeware, this time by David Chipperfield. And although Chipperfield's Tonale tableware for Alessi (from £14 to £52) draws inspiration from the vernacular ceramics of Japan and China, it nevertheless echoes the purity and restraint of his built work, such as the Folkwang Museum in Essen.

The concept of micro-architecture is also embraced in the 100 Piazze collection by Italian manufacturer, Triade. Architect Fabio Novembre's eight silver-plated brass trays (from £625) are modelled on Italy's