

Press Release

27/03/2019

ELESA Design wins again!

We are pleased to announce that [VB.839 three-arm knobs](#), previously awarded IF Design Award 2019 and [VTD torque-control knobs](#) have both been awarded the Red Dot Design Award in the Product Design category.

The jury recognized the unique design of the VB.839 three-arm knob: an ideal overlap of two triangles rotated by an angle of 8°. The particular ergonomic shape allows a more direct application of the tightening torque by the operator, resulting in maximum comfort and safety in clamping operations.

The three-lobed design of the VTD torque limiting knob fits perfectly to the operator's hand thanks to its ergonomics. A slight tapering increases the grip, maximizing the effort of the hand in rotating the knob. In addition to its special design, the knob also features an innovative functionality: an internal system limits the applied tightening torque during clamping preserving the application surface.

The ability to innovate and renew is once again winning in Eles!



reddot award 2019
winner



reddot award 2019
winner



Find out more about the history of Eles design ...

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Elesa Design: innovation in the world of components

The 42 industrial design awards won by Elesa, from 1977 to today, have marked the course of its history. **Anty Pansera, design historian and critic, tells about Elesa's great care and attention for "design culture"**

"Every single detail be it aesthetic or functional is essential and can significantly improve the perception of a product." This is the key principle adopted by Elesa for product design, aiming at perfect functionality and best ergonomics in the creation of components with a unique design, that can be recognised all over the world as Elesa products.

This story dates back to the 1950's, when the Monza-based company started a revolution in the production of traditional mechanical components for machine tools.

"Such innovation started from a specific market trend, namely the development of machines that were more and more ergonomic for human interaction, but also nicer to see, in contrast with the old machines (grey or green, and quite sad anyway) that you could find in workshops in those times," says Anty Pansera, Professor at the Brera Academy of Fine Arts and board member of the Triennale Design Museum Foundation, describing Elesa's interest and attention for design.

"In a typically technical business that did not care about the elegance of a mechanical part, Elesa introduced the "design" factor, believing that a mechanical component, besides performing well, can also be beautiful," Anty Pansera adds.

This was the reason given by the Jury of the 17th edition of the Compasso d'Oro award in 1994, assigned to two operating elements of the ECW. 375 and EWW. 240 series. **"A concentrate of extreme and essential morphology in an industry where formal solutions are normally neglected. The circle is focused and emphasised until it becomes sort of metaphysical."**

In the following years, such vocation turned into a real pioneering mission, also supported by the peculiar moulding properties of the plastic materials introduced in production, compared to the mechanical machining of metal parts (casting, turning, milling etc.). This was the first step of a wider future trend, characterised by the introduction of engineering plastics parts in the automotive industry, a trend called "**metal replacement**": products that were traditionally made of metal started to be manufactured using alternative materials, initially thermosetting plastic materials and more recently thermoplastic materials, up to modern technopolymers boasting high mechanical and thermal performance (Super-Technopolymers).



Example of cast aluminium handwheel



VDN.FP-SST
Solid handwheels



VRTP.
Spoked handwheels

Elesa alternatives in thermosetting material and in the latest thermoplastic materials

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"The opportunity for big innovation came by chance in the early 1960's, when a British customer asked Elesa to provide a handwheel (spoked handwheels were common back then, to offer a firm grip on the unit) that might also rotate automatically during some operation stages, driven by motor rotation with no risks for the operator – Anty Pansera says –. Elesa's solution was a solid handwheel, with no spokes, to offer higher safety in the workplace. However, a round, solid shape – a real disk – with up to 200-250 mm diameter, all black (thermosetting material with the required mechanical strength existed only in black), looked "very heavy" and displeasing to the eye. This was the starting point for Elesa's idea to "lighten up the weight" of the black mass by adding a purely aesthetic element: a ring made of matte anodised aluminium, with suitable proportions, located between the hub and the outer disk, to brighten up the handwheel with a peculiar light, generated by the visual contrast and light reflections between the glossy black colour of the handwheel and the matte anodised aluminium of the ring".

Presented at the Chicago Design Show in 1971, the handwheel was a big hit immediately, creating new awareness in the market: even a component with a purely mechanical function can be "good looking".



A handwheel with a matte anodized aluminium ring which contrasts with the glossy black of the plastic material

This approach led the company to win several awards over the years: *"In 1977 the handwheel was awarded by the international jury Die gute Industrieform IF in Hannover, Germany, for its "unique and distinctive design", which was also recognised several times later on by the Court of Milan, when Elesa presented a claim against a competitor who tried to copy their original product,"* Anty Pansera remembers.

In the following years, with the increasing availability of new plastic materials and the mission to offer innovative solutions at the leading edge of technology, Elesa developed a solid handwheel, series VDS, that was rewarded by the IF international jury in 1985 and included by the Compasso d'Oro jury in the nominations for their 1987 award edition.

This successful creation led the company to focus its design activities on the innovation of the traditional shapes of industrial components, combining ergonomic requirements and functionality to visual qualities, also through the use of colours. So, a profitable and longstanding partnership was established with Giorgio Decursu, a designer committed to creating a new culture in machinery design, boasting solid expertise in combining ergonomic requirements with efficiency and elegance, according to the best tradition of Italian design.

In the 1990's, the [Ergostyle® line](#) was launched to meet the aesthetic requirements of new markets that opened up for mechanical components with totally new applications. Not only machine tools, but also equipment for civil applications such as hospital, medical, fitness and office equipment, where the operators interacting with the machine were no longer qualified mechanical workers, but doctors, nurses or gym customers. Anty Pansera remembers: *"A subtle brand was created, consisting of five dots, one for each letter of Elesa, to make the components of this family recognisable as Elesa products and also as design elements".*

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ERGOSTYLE®



In 1994 the entire Ergostyle® line by Elessa obtained a mention of honour by Compasso d'Oro and two components won the Compasso d'Oro award.

In the following decades, Elessa's commitment was recognised by several international juries of design awards, including IF in Hannover, the Design Center in Stuttgart, the Good Design Award in Japan and the Red Dot Award in Germany. Besides the Ergostyle® line, the range of traditional Standards by Elessa has generated a set of elements with solid colour or colour inserts, available in a special colour range: ELECOLORS®.

Colours can be combined with the brand colour of each customer and, from a functional point of view, they play an essential role to identify a component's function quickly and easily.

"With the diffusion of these new values in the business of components for mechanical construction, the Elessa brand has become a synonym for "stylish" mechanical components, recognised all over the world – Anty Pansera concludes –. Elessa is an excellence of Made-in-Italy that constantly shows realistic inventiveness and innovation capacity".

This concept is clearly summed up in the opening statement of Elessa's product catalog: "We design our products to achieve perfect functionality and best ergonomics. But we also try to create products with a unique design, recognizable all over the world as Elessa products. And many times, we have even succeeded".

Anty Pansera

Design historian and critic, president of DcomeDesign; member of the Scientific Committee of the Design Museum of La Triennale Foundation in Milan; board member of FHD, Design History Foundation; Design History professor at the Brera Academy of Fine Arts, past president of ISIA/Design department in Faenza.

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