

|| FRIDAY FIVE

## FRIDAY FIVE WITH MAURO LIPPARINI

Posted by [Caroline Williamson](#) on 12.04.15 in [Architecture](#), [Home Furnishings](#), [Interior Design](#), [Main](#)



Photo by Alberto Ferrero

*This week's [Friday Five](#) looks at Mauro Lipparini, an Italian architect and industrial designer based in Florence, Italy, who heads his own firm, [Studio Lipparini](#). While maintaining his design studio, he's also the creative and design director for new, Turkey-based furniture brand, Casa International, which recently debuted their inaugural collection at Salone del Mobile reflecting his minimalist aesthetic crossed with Mediterranean influences. When not designing home and office furnishings and textiles, Lipparini is known for his cutting edge architectural and interior design projects, as well as corporate brand identity. Here, we see what he selects as some of his favorite things.*



Photo by Studio Lipparini

### 1. My 1970 Fiat 500

How could anyone not have a crush on this sweetheart of a car with its pure design concept: a flawless form/function nutshell that seats four...or even more. It's a vehicle that's made for a place like Florence—Italy's most heavily fined city!—where, every forty seconds, a motorist is cited for a traffic violation. The car's so tiny, it's usually no trick to fit it into an already occupied parking spot. At work, I can drive it straight through the open-air gallery that serves as my studio's front lobby, right to my doorstep. The 500 attracts even more fun-loving rubberneckers than a Ferrari. Even the police are charmed by her winsome grace and wave salutations as I drive past at top speed, in full reverse, down one of Florence's age-old, narrow one-way streets—at least, such are the dreams it excites.



Photo by Christopher Little

## 2. Love at first sight and evermore

Falling water. Frank Lloyd Wright's belief, rooted in transcendentalism, that human life is experienced most richly in the realm of nature, and the radical yet elegant manner in which he merged that realm and the constructed one, exemplified by his stunning idea to literally suspend a house over a waterfall, is what first inspired me to go to architecture school. In the case of Falling water, the engagement and connection with nature is amplified by the layout, an array of cantilevered floors and terraces, and by the extensive deployment of glass. No walls intervene between the building's sandstone core and the falls, pulling one's gaze into the surrounding woods and through them to the horizon beyond. Wright challenged convention again and again here, with transformative consequences. The house's greatest legacy, in the words of one scholar, is no less than the "acceptance of modern architecture itself." When I look at Falling water, I still stop and ask myself how we could ever have lived without it.



Photo by Inferno – Gelateria de' Medici

### 3. I scream for gelato

I have an irrepressible sweet tooth, so gelato is never out of season as far as I'm concerned—and I'm speaking specifically of the premium handmade kind, a special treat made by artisans in small batches that bears virtually no kinship to mass-produced, industrial ice cream. Florence's finest gelato parlor, Gelateria de' Medici, truly designs flavors that change along with the seasons and are inspired by the city's brilliant literary and artistic history. My favorite trio of flavors here are named for the books of Dante's epic *Divine Comedy*—Inferno (a spicy dark chocolate), Purgatorio (almond-hazelnut cream with candied citrus), and Paradiso (rose essence, black cherries, and other delights)—perfect for the Tuscan tongue! And then there's the fabulous texture and mouth feel that's entirely different from ice cream right down to the molecular level: it's served not with a scoop, but with a flat spade, and the tradition calls for a whole other level of artistry and architecture.



Original source unknown

#### 4. Looking for the true meaning of life?

Zen gardens are my answer. They are exactly conceived to evoke the intimate essence of nature, rather than imitate its surface guise, and thus to serve as an aid to meditation and insight into the character and purpose of, quite simply, existence. These verdant yet austere miniature landscapes, with elements meant to suggest the inaccessible land of the immortals, convey a seemingly paradoxical sense of transience and the Zen belief that the world as perceived by the senses is nothing more than illusion. I find inspiration in the unachievable, so this is part of my fascination with Zen gardens. And then there's the interplay of physical structure, light, and color, all in equilibrium and formal unity—now that's inspiring. For a Zen master, the only moment that unequivocally exists is the “now,” and this insight is fundamental to all good design.



Photo by Brightroom Event Photography

## 5. Running all out

In music, counterpoint refers to the relationship between instrumental or vocal strands that are harmonically interdependent yet rhythmically on their own, and that's what long-distance running feels like to me. It creates a zone, an environment in which my mind and body can work in tandem toward achieving whatever goal I've set, while still operating largely independent of one another and—crucially—free of the demands and distractions of the everyday world. As Haruki Murakami puts it in *What I Talk About When I Talk About Running*, “Exerting yourself to the fullest within your individual limits: that’s the essence of running, and a metaphor for life.” For Murakami, it’s also a metaphor for writing; in my circumstances, it has that same relationship to the entire vocation of design.