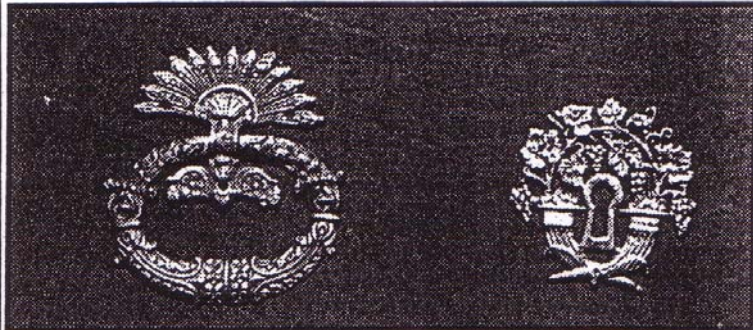


Florence



Marco Bruzzo/Agenzia Contrasto

Empire-style ornament and keyhole plate at Baldini's.

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original in the Silver Museum in the Pitti Palace, surrounded by cabochons of carnelian, tiger's eye, agate and jade, cost about \$400 for a 30-inch size, \$800 for a 60-inch size. Turn-of-the-century-style lamps with petal-shaped glass shades cost from \$50 to \$75. Like all bronzisti, Mr. Banchi repairs and restores old bronzes. He said that the most exciting restoration job he has done was a statue by Giambologna. The statue is swathed in protective white cloths with only the damaged part exposed.

At another shop, Alvaro and Romano Ugolini cannot remember how long their family has been bronzisti, perhaps 100 years, perhaps more. Their workshop is on the Via del Drago d'Oro (Street of the Golden

Dragon) opposite the Via dei Tessitori (Street of Weavers), a reminder of the days 600 years ago when Florence was the most important wool-producing city in the world, the workers washing and rinsing fleeces in the Arno River. This and much more Alvaro Ugolini will tell you about Florence as he sits in his showroom surrounded by a small forest of table lamps.

The shop's glossy catalogue shows 70 types of standard lamp, but there must be double that on the showroom shelves. The lamps are mainly columns in rounded, fluted, tapering or square black, white, red, green or amethyst-colored veined marble with a bronze-colored or shiny brass base, topped with plumed Corinthian capitals or bronze candlestick containers for light bulbs. There is even a copy of Nelson's column in Trafalgar Square.

The Ugolini brothers prefer to sell to the trade, a minimum of four pieces of every model at a time. But they can be persuaded to execute individual orders, depending on their work load, which also governs the amount of time each order needs.

The average price of a lamp is around \$160. A few models have shades incorporated into the stand in fan-shaped or conical bronze, which take two men a week to make and cost about \$80 more. Chandeliers run from \$165 to \$1,650. A personal favorite is a "bronze" wall light consisting of a frame to hold a plate of one's choice with little sconces in an acorn design; it costs about \$65.

Giving details of an order and making arrangements to mail it to the United States might be difficult without an Italian interpreter. Like almost all bronzisti, the Ugolini brothers do not speak English. A hotel concierge might come to the rescue by writing out your request in Italian. In more simple cases, it's enough to point. ■

If you go

Where to Shop

All of the following shops are in Florence, and all of them close for the month of August.

Ditta Baldini Ubaldo, 99/R-105/R
Via Palazzuolo; telephone 210933.
Open 9 A.M. to 12:30 P.M. and 3:30 to 7 P.M. Closed Saturday.

A. M. Z.