

Coffee Table, 1973, Alveo, Burr Thuya Brass  
Bohemian Vintage

Willy Rizzo

Sold



REF: 11234

Height: 33.7 cm (13.3")

Width: 130 cm (51.2")

Depth: 80.4 cm (31.7")

## Description

This is a rare edition of the Alveo (riverbed) coffee table, retailed by Mario Sabot in Italy from 1972.

The table is veneered in burr Thuya which is sought after for its beautiful figuring. The top has an inset brass-lined well. This may have been conceived as a bar, a wine cooler or for burning charcoal. The corners have been chamfered and finished off with bold, brass, triangular edge. The table stands on a recessed base.

Willy Rizzo has always loved beautiful things and fine antiques and in this piece he has created a contemporary piece that mixes perfectly with the old. The form is simple but striking and the grain of the burr thuya very beautiful. The well could be used for many purposes, it is shown here full of pot pourri. It could be adapted as a display compartment by fixing a Perspex or glass panel over the well.

Thuya Burr (*Tetraclinis articulata*): North Africa: The burr grows underground as a root burl and is dug out rather than felled. The colour is rich golded brown to orange red. The grain is contorted, hard and full of knots resulting in a beautiful mottled bird's-eye figure. The timber produces some beautiful patterns, taking an excellent finish.

Willy Rizzo: Willy Rizzo is best known as a photographer and his career began during the golden age of photojournalism. He began an illustrious 20 year career with Paris Match in 1948 that would see him photograph some of the greatest names of the age. Married as he then was to actress Elsa Martinelli, Rizzo has unparalleled access to the stars and his constellation of sitters would include such greats as Brigitte Bardot, Sofia Loren, Marilyn Monroe, Audrey Hepburn, Jane Fonda, Gene Kelly, Fred Astaire, Salvador Dali and Pablo Picasso. His assignments would take him to the Nuremberg trials and the French Indochina war. He was the first in the Vatican to photograph the new Pope Pius XII and his color portrait of Winston Churchill made the first cover of Paris Match. Herge even based the character of Paris-Flash photographer Walter Rizzato in Tintin's adventure The Castafiore Emerald on his real-life Paris Match counterpart.

His photographic work is well known and well documented, but less so is his design. In the late 1960s, he put down his camera and focused instead on furniture design, a field which, though he had no experience, he would go on to enjoy considerable success. His imagination and severe neoclassical style defines the Italian style between 1965 and 1980.

'Imagination and very modern style, which joins well with any environment' defines the Italian style of years 1965-1980 which Willy Rizzo claims. As reported by the designer so well, it all starts in a hair salon located Piazza di Spagna in Rome at the end of 1966. While his wife Elsa is getting a haircut, they both discuss moving to Italy. As Willy liked the neighbourhood, he asked the hairdresser where he could find a real estate agent close to the salon. 'Of course, just around the corner but you'll need a miracle to find an apartment.' And the miracle happened in a second floor occupied by a manufacturer of folders with views over the Piazza di Spagna. It was a commercial apartment, abandoned, without water inlet and virtually uninhabitable. Willy immedia...