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House tour: a minimalist Art Deco-style apartment in Milan

Against an elegant backdrop of restored details, an owner's appreciation for Art Deco polish, distinctive pieces and sensuous lines comes to the fore in this Milan apartment. Photographed by Helenio Barbetta. Styled by Chiara Dal Canto.

In a view of the living room, 1970s Atelier L'oeuf decorative aluminium architectural element, originally from the façade of a building.

Curves are at home in this Milan apartment, but then it is Italy (Sophie Loren, spaghetti, Gaetano Pesce's Up chair). Former lawyer Camilla Trutalli and her "eclectic" musician/artist husband Stefano live here with their 10-year-old twin boys, Dante and Ulisse.

The theatrical but simple space within an early-1900s building is the work of Luigi Di Mauro Morandi and Alice Frana, a team locked in after their success with Trutalli's brother's home. "For me, it was already a guarantee," explains Trutalli. "He is a professional with great taste and experience."

Di Mauro Morandi promotes the use of simple shapes and says he always starts with "the vision of the people who will live in the rooms". That ticks two boxes for Trutalli, who herself favours a simple aesthetic and certainly has a few ideas of her own. "We immediately found an understanding," says Trutalli. "He beautifully interpreted and respected my personal style and taste, helping me define what was initially just an embryonic and pretty confused idea."

Work on the home's interior design began two years ago, much to Trutalli's relief. "We carried out the renovation with great enthusiasm; it was the beginning of a new life," she says. "We came from a small apartment full of toys, highchairs, cots, strollers, the twins' mess — we couldn't really move!"

The couple and the design team agreed from the outset that the original distribution of the 180-square-metre home made sense. "The theatricality of the communicating rooms and the long corridor actually influenced other details, such as the dark floors and the low arched opening in the living room," says Di Mauro Morandi.





In the living room of this Milan apartment, Osaka sofa by Pierre Paulin for La Cividina; 520 Accordo low coffee table and 524 Tabouret Berger stool by Charlotte Perriand for Cassina, enquiries to Space Furniture; early-1900s French mirror; French Deco marble fireplace; botanical model of a flower (on fireplace); Akari 55A ceiling lamp by Isamu Noguchi, enquiries to Living Edge; Tidal rug by Germans Ermics from CC-Tapis, enquiries to Poliform.

The exterior's Art Deco style, with its geometric lines and refined materials, such as marble and wrought iron, also guided him. Similarly, the team preserved the original elements, including cementine (traditional decorative porcelain) tiles, herringbone timber floors and bow windows and doors with their original glass as well as the high ceilings, which was treated to a little un-Deco decor. "I love the Hausmann style," says Trutalli. "So I asked Luigi to insert decorative reliefs and mouldings to enrich walls that in my mind had to be strictly white." Conversely, the designers brought in a Deco marble fireplace to counter the sprinkling of ornate detail.

Even more unexpected is the 1900s mirror salvaged from a French building site. Di Mauro Morandi describes the spontaneous find, made while hunting for a Gino Sarfatti chandelier in an antiques shop: "We fell in love with the *délabré* [dilapidated] aesthetic of this mirror. Sarfatti's chandelier remained in the shop, and the geometry of the mirror inspired the choice of the Noguchi paper pendant."

In the kitchen, table and chairs by Jean Prouvé; 1950s suspension lamp from Cavalli e Nastri; island with rosso lepanto marble benchtop designed by Alice Frana and Luigi Di Mauro Morandi.

The design play has continued beyond two years as the three collaborators experiment and respond to evolving ideas. “Despite my clean-lined taste, I’m not afraid to dare with contrasts, mixing classic with extravagant, or irreverent elements,” says Trutalli.

After initially insisting on Mid-century Italian Modernism, Trutalli “fell in love” with French Modernism. “I appreciate the rigour and simplicity of [Jean] Prouvé and [Charlotte] Perriand, which balance the theatricality of the spaces and their boiserie [panelling] and dark wooden floors.”

In the small living room, 1950s Galbiati side table from Avanguardia Antiquaria; artwork by Paolo Consorti.

Elsewhere in the home are surprising splashes of colour, including petrol green in the guestroom, an idea initiated by Di Mauro Morandi and Frana. “They convinced me to insert colours in some rooms, and I must admit the final result is stunning,” says Trutalli.

The colourful retro style of the kitchen is wonderfully at odds with the rest of the home — a fitting tribute to its '70s-mad muse, the lady of the house. “We’ve reproduced the geometries of the boiserie in the other rooms in a playful way,” says Di Mauro Morandi.

In the small living room, daybed by Jean Prouvé from Laffanour Galerie Downtown; 1970s carrara marble vessel by Angelo Mangiarotti and ceramic pitcher by Bruno Gambone from Galleria Rossella Colombari; LT8 floor lamp by Osvaldo Borsani

The organic and curvaceous shapes that undulate through the seating, lamps, tables, artworks and rugs reflect the meandering process of the project itself. “The choice to insert curved elements was not accidental,” says Trutalli. “It is a composition that plays on a counterpoint between the sober and rather straight geometries of the boiserie and the home’s biomorphic presence, which seems to give life to a somewhat suspended atmosphere.”

Now — “finally”, sighs Trutalli — the family can put behind them the memories of a cluttered apartment and enjoy the benefits of a more minimal space. “We reserved the largest room for the twins,” she says with a smile. “And it’s the only room where we allow mess.”