

ALLA MODA

A pair of fashion-forward creatives collaborate with another design duo to marry past grandeur with a busy lifestyle in their tailored home in Florence.

By Francesca Sironi Photographed by Monica Spezia Styled by Maya Vazzoler



THIS PAGE in the living room of this Florence home, de Sede DS-600 leather sofa, enquiries to Domo; Haumea coffee table by Massimo Castagna for Gallotti&Radice, enquiries to Ultimo Interiors; 1970s armchairs and Murano floor lamp; chandelier by Delta-bo Project from Ottod'Ame's Milan store; custom rug designed by B-Arch and the homeowners with Boralevi. **OPPOSITE PAGE** the dining room. *Details, last pages.*



THESE PAGES in another view of the living room, natural iron **console** designed by B-Arch; Murano glass **lamp** found in Mercanteinfiera; **artwork** by Simafra; 1960s Mazzega Murano glass **wall sconce**.



Standing on the main floor of Palazzo Spinelli, in the heart of Santa Croce district in Florence, a few steps from the Basilica with the same name, homeowner Silvia Mazzoli reveals the lyrical secret to the literal success of her home. “A balanced mix of styles and a bit of poetry,” she details of her apartment. After an apprenticeship working for small fashion ateliers, Mazzoli founded and became the artistic director of Ottod'Ame, an eclectic and contemporary casual clothing brand, in the early 2000s. It's a business she runs with her husband Gianni Guastella. “In my job you always need to experiment, to surprise,” says the designer, and this home is the ideal extension and reflection of her life.

“Gianni and I have always lived on the hills outside the city and dreamt about a house in the historic centre,” she continues. “A pied à terre that would allow us to visit Florence more closely, strolling on foot or by bicycle, wandering through local markets, alleys and monuments.”

The opportunity came a few years ago. The building dates back to the 15th century, and features original graffiti with monochrome drawings on the facades and a central courtyard with a loggia. Having once been the home of a famous restoration academy, the dwelling lay dormant and uninhabited for years. Time passed and inevitable decay set in; water dripped from the ceiling, the ceiling coffers — decorated with lime — needed rehabilitation, and misguided whitewash hid the frescoes on the walls.

“We tried to rediscover what was underneath and recover what was possible,” says architect Sabrina Bignami of B-Arch, a Tuscany-based architecture and interior design firm. Along with her partner Alessandro Capellaro, the duo were tasked with re-imagining the apartment, preserving the structure as well as the elegant feature work of sculptor and architect Bernardo Rossellino.

There was the inevitable issue when it comes to salvaging heritage buildings: to save the home from looking too staid, serious or becoming a museum. It's a challenge architects know well. There was no fear in this case however. In their restyling of this project, Bignami and Capellaro had a different perspective. “We didn't contrast the past but neither left it immobile over time,” says Capellaro. In Mazzoli and Guastella's home, even if everything seems preserved and restored to as it once was, all the mod cons are up to date and — between a kaleidoscope of faded patinas — there is an easy atmosphere suited to a busy lifestyle.

After all, the sense of home is a matter of comfort and feeling good for Mazzoli. “It must be a refuge that reflects your personality,” she says. “And, since I travel a lot, it's the place I like to come back to.”

The layout of the rooms is straightforward: three rooms, one after the other, with doors redesigned to a typical Florentine standard, framed in the original marble. “You enter from the dining room, overlooking the internal courtyard,” says Mazzoli. “In the middle there is the living room, then the bedroom, that points straight to the city. All of it within 150 square metres.”

For the living area and private areas to coexist and facilitate the continuity of the timber ceilings, functional sliding walls were worked into the floor plan by Bignami and Capellaro. “This way the rooms are fluid and can be shielded if necessary,” says Capellaro.

A mural adorning hand-decorated mobile panels separates the kitchen from the dining room while in the bright bedroom the bed is hidden behind a bookcase, “so that you can leave the door open towards the living room in order to let natural light in from the outside,” says Bignami.

There are a select few furniture pieces, chosen following sentimental connection and an exacting eye. There is the leather sofa from de Sede, the blue velvet armchairs and the custom chandelier recovered from an Ottod'Ame store. Objects found by Mazzoli and Guastella during visits to markets and fairs around the world and online from B-Arch feature throughout the reinvigorated space. The remaining elements are the work of local artisans made to the designs of the architects, including the kitchen in burnished brass that reflects the light and complements the tones of the lime walls. The finishing touch of poetry here? “A lamp made of old metal flowers on a brass stem,” says Mazzoli. **VL** b-arch.it ottodame.com

OPPOSITE PAGE in another view of the dining room with the kitchen beyond, 0414 chairs by Studio G&R for Gallotti&Radice, enquiries to Ultimo Interiors; custom moveable walls in wallpaper by artist Elena Carozzi.





THIS PAGE in the main bedroom from the living room, custom **bookcase** in ebonised timber, brass and iron designed by B-Arch. **OPPOSITE PAGE** in another view of the dining room, **table** with rosewood top by BBPR for Olivetti redesigned by B-Arch; **chandeliers** from Vistosi; **rug** from Boralevi. Stuoia 1923 **vases** by Gio Ponti for Ginori 1735.





THIS PAGE in another view of the bedroom, original 1960s-70s solid brass **bed** by Luciano Frigerio; **bedside lights** designed by B-Arch; **bed linen** and wool **blankets** from Society Limonta, enquiries to Ondene; hand **sculpture** (on shelf) by Gio Ponti for Ginori 1735; 1960s Venetian **vases**. **OPPOSITE PAGE** in another view of the bedroom, **floor lamp** designed by B-Arch with metal flowers found at Mercanteinfiera. *Details, last pages.*

