

PAST AND PRESENT

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Historical depth was *restored* in a charming PALAZZO APARTMENT
in dire need of a *harmonious* style overhaul suitable for everyday LIFE.

This page homeowner and art collector Elisabetta Morandini in
a sitting area of her Brescia apartment, **floor lamp** by Franz West.





This page in the kitchen, stone table designed by Paola Moretti; chair by Hans J. Wegner; vintage chandelier by Carlo Scarpa. *Opposite page* in the dining room, AT-324 table by Hans J. Wegner; Superleggera chairs by Gio Ponti from Cassina, enquiries to Mobilia; Mamacloud pendant light by Frank Gehry from Belux.



This page in a salon, vintage velvet lounge suite by Florence Knoll; Akari 20N table lamp by Isamu Noguchi from Vitra, enquiries to Living Edge. *Opposite page* in the entry hall, custom sideboard by Osvaldo Borsani; custom stainless-steel skirting board designed by Paola Moretti; wooden vases by Ernst Gamberi; Akari UF4-L8 floor lamp by Isamu Noguchi from Vitra, enquiries to Living Edge; branch artwork by Ariel Schlesinger; artwork (on wall) by Runo Lagomarsino.





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aola Moretti is convinced that time should not set any limits on design. The interior designer knows what she's talking about. Having worked in Paris, London and the United States, Moretti has experience across arthouse cinema, fashion and styling. Elisabetta Morandini, art collector and fashion expert, sees time the same way, and therefore entrusted Moretti with a challenging task: the *piano nobile* (main floor) of an imposing palazzo with ceilings more than four metres high and elaborate wall decorations from the late 18th century was to be converted into an apartment in cultivated, sophisticated minimalism. According to Morandini, the interior should appear a little austere, but it should also leave room for a certain joy of experimentation and a passion for art and design.

We are in the historic centre of Brescia, immersed in the wide Po Valley just a few kilometres from the shores of Lake Garda.

La leonessa d'Italia, the lioness of Italy, as the city is known in memory of its citizens' resistance to Austro-Hungarian rule during the years of the Risorgimento (the reunification of Italy), is now industrial and unfussy. Pompous architecture, which everyone immediately notices, is rare to find here. Therefore, when Morandini decided to transform the opulent rooms of the history-steeped 15th-century Palazzo Martinengo della Motella into a contemporary home for herself, her husband and daughter, she turned to an interior designer wary of convention and clued in to her mantra. Although her sense of aesthetics is so strong that she ironically calls it the "pushy beast that I've learned to keep in check", Moretti always manages to create spaces that not only reflect the tastes of their occupants, but are also suitable for day-to-day routines.

The project was complex, admits Moretti. Not only because of the sheer number of rooms (a number of rooms face the street and another, arranged in parallel, opens onto a tranquil courtyard) or the neoclassical paintings and architectural details, but above all because of a previous renovation. This work had disfigured the palazzo and affected its original patina. "Reviving a lost atmosphere is not easy," says Moretti.

Her concept for the colour palette played a large part in the success of this considered update. Gone are the reddish tones of the 1990s glossy parquet — the wood has been stripped and painted a matte grey that complements the seamless *terrazzo alla Veneziana* that survives in the dining room and one of the bedrooms. The walls, previously painted a smooth anonymous beige, have been plastered in shades of *chiaroscuro*, making them appear distinctly richer and livelier. The most striking of Moretti's interventions, however, are surprising details that unequivocally refer to the eclectic nature of the present: polished stainless-steel skirting boards that reflect Tuareg rugs woven from natural reed and leather; the contrast between the concave wall mirror by Anish Kapoor, the 18th-century doors and ceiling and the Campana brothers' blue-violet sofa in the entry hall. Or the tension between the drama of the lavish frescoes by the painter Giuseppe Teosa and the friezes in the Pompeian style on the one hand and the poetic lightness of the furniture on the other — lamps by Isamu Noguchi and Ingo Maurer, mid-century classics or a simple five-metre-long bench that was salvaged from a French country house.

Other rooms are simple yet still offer points of material interest: the focus of the minimalist kitchen is a round table made of matt grey marble ground by a woven rug. In the restorative bathrooms, the showers, bathtubs and sinks were made from heavy blocks of stone and also left unpolished.

Notable works of art that further elevate the palazzo setting include Kapoor's concave reflective piece, a bust of Vanessa Beecroft, a burned branch by contemporary artist Ariel Schlesinger and, also in the entry hall, the *WE* mural by Swedish artist Runo Lagomarsino. You could easily mistake Frank Gehry's Mamacloud pendant light for an art installation, floating above a Hans J Wegner table and Gio Ponti's Superleggera chairs in the dining space. "Our goal was to restore this *piano nobile* to its former glory, but in a contemporary form," says Moretti. "In other words, to create a place where everyday life is surrounded by so much beauty that it becomes a contemplation of the past, present and near future." ■ paolamoretti.eu

This page in another view of the entry hall. Boa sofa by Fernando and Humberto Campana from Edra, enquiries to Space Furniture; walnut stools by Charles and Ray Eames from Vitra, enquiries to Living Edge; vintage Murano glass chandelier by Angelo Mangiarotti; curtains in linen from C&C Milano, enquiries to South Pacific Fabrics; mirror artwork by Anish Kapoor.



These pages in one of the living areas, Gran Khan sofa by Francesco Binfare from Edra, enquiries to Space Furniture; vintage armchairs by Jindřich Halabala; nesting tables by Grete Jalk; Akari BB3-33S floor lamp by Isamu Noguchi from Vitra, enquiries to Living Edge; friezes and frescoes by Giuseppe Teosa.







This page in one of the bedrooms, bed from Flexform, enquiries to Fanuli; vintage chandelier by Carlo Scarpa. *Opposite page* in another view of a living area towards the dining room, bench (on left) from a French country house; Uchiwa bamboo and rice paper lamps by Ingo Maurer. *Details, last pages.*



VOGUE

AUSTRALIA

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