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LOCATION MILAN, ITALY
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PHOTOGRAPHY HELENIO BARBETTA/LIVING INSIDE

SECOND ACT

If all the world's a stage, this lovingly refurbished mid-century apartment allows its occupants complete freedom to play many parts



Living room Vico Magistretti's 'Ospite' daybed for Campeggi is paired with a 1950s reclining chair by Antonio Gorgone. The tables include a powder-coated aluminium design by Caspal and a vintage glass-and-wood piece, while the rug is a section of the one created by Aquafil from regenerated nylon waste for the Green Carpet Fashion Awards back in 2019



Portrait
Homeowners Marco and Alessandro in front of the custom Douglas-fir joinery that separates the living area from the bedroom ▶

Marco and Alessandro, the owners of this apartment, are not afraid to put on a show. Upon entering their home, you're instantly met with a stage-like setting. The layout is fluid, illuminated by a restored and polished Calacatta Oro-marble floor. Different 'islands' are dedicated to rest, dining and study, while a raised platform enhances the theatrical effect. 'As soon as we saw the space, with its different levels, we thought of creating a tatami corner for relaxation and meditation, inspired by Alessandro's passion for Japan,' recalls Marco, showing the quieter side of this home of dualities: a balance of past and present, East and West, art and rationality. He has a background in architecture (having worked for several years at the Renzo Piano Building Workshop in Genoa) and is the partner at Bivio Milano, Italy's leading fashion-resale brand. And Alessandro, the creator of fashion label A-Lab Milano, who is now a professor and writer (his latest book *Spazi Sospesi*, published by Morellini Editore, is an intimate collection of stories exploring the feminine universe).

With windows overlooking a small patch of shared greenery, their property is in keeping with the 1950s buildings in the old Milanese neighbourhood of Città Studi, which – as one of the campuses of the Politecnico di Milano – attracts thousands of students every year. It's a busy, buzzy place that suits the vibrant and welcoming atmosphere of this home. Marco and Alessandro worked with architect Valentina Lombardo on the project, which included the creation of a large, bespoke Douglas-fir storage unit, enlivened by neon-yellow accents. This multifunctional element separates the bedroom from the living area and even incorporates the entrance, allowing the surrounding space to remain free of bulky furniture. The material was selected to honour the timber used for the window frames, which were meticulously restored. The interior doors were refurbished and, where they had been lost, recreated – just like the handles on the doors and windows, cast in brass from the original models. This was a meticulous restoration designed to bring the structure back to its former glory.

Like the main living area, the bathroom is airy and spa-like, with its terrazzo cladding and steps echoing the apartment's shifting levels. The other separate spaces are the kitchen, dominated by a row of tangerine-hued 'Flowerpot' lights by Verner Panton and glossy green cabinetry, and the bedroom with its full-height wardrobe. Between the Japanese influences and 1950s nostalgia, Marco and Alessandro's stage welcomes and enchants, providing calm respite from the busy city and also energy for the future.



Dining area Franca Helg's 1967 'Primavera' armchair, made of curved Indian cane in a special yellow finish by Bonacina 1889, stands in front of a vertical 'Ptolomeo' bookshelf by Opinon Ciatti and a 1940s cabinet. The floor lamp is by Westwing. Enzo Mari's 'Frate' table for Diade, designed in the 1970s, is surrounded by restored 1950s chairs from a school in Chiavari. Overhead hang custom-designed yellow lacquered metal lamps ►

Breakfast area The 1950s chairs with yellow frames are sourced from a school in Chiavari, while the custom-designed table is topped with Calacatta Oro marble. A 1950s chandelier hangs above, and the bright-blue cabinet is a vintage find
Tatami corner Cushions by L'Opificio and Fazzini add colour and comfort to this area. The floor lamp in front of the window is by Westwing. The olive-wood coffee table was handcrafted in Puglia. Pictures on the shelf include *The Firegirl* (2021) by Elisa Muliere and *Meoto Iwa* (2018) by Davide Bedoni ▶





Kitchen Glossy lake-green cabinets and Verner Panton's orange 'Flowerpot' pendants pop against the crisp white walls in the room, with the original Douglas-fir windows framing the view of the greenery outside the apartment. The table is Alberto Meda's 'Frame' design for Alias, paired with Giancarlo Piretti's iconic 'Plii' chairs from 1967, sourced from Anonima Castelli. The teapot painting is by Paola Campanella. Verner Panton's 'Flowerpot' table lamp and a painting titled *Moon Flowers* (2023) by Elisa Muliere sit on a custom steel-laminate cabinet crafted by a local artisan >



Bathroom Custom terrazzo cladding by Grandinetti covers walls and floors, creating a clean and serene feel, with brown details in the form of a coffee-glass stool by Caspa and a chequerboard towel from Hay. The fixtures are from Ceramica Flaminia's 'Quick' collection, and the lights are by Westwing.

Bedroom The bed is dressed in pink linen sheets by Borgo delle Tovaglie and topped with a plaid blanket by ZigZagZurich. Above hangs a framed silk scarf designed by Alessandro Biasi for A-Lab Milano. The bedside table is the 'Curva' design by AYTM. A sleek 1950s ceiling light nods to the building's past. See [Stockists page](#) for details 

