



**NEW
DIGS** Milan firm 8&A architetti
presides over an architectural

TEXT THOMAS CONNORS PHOTOGRAPHY ANDREA MARTIRADONNA

An intimate salon off the living room is anchored by an Eda-Mame sofa by Piero Lissoni for B&B Italia. Terrazzo floor and fireplace surround are original.





The ground floor foyer retains its original terrazzo flooring and 1920s balustrade, designed by architect Luigi Maria Brunelli.

“Rejoice in the things that are present; all else is beyond thee,” urged Montaigne. Philosophically speaking, sure. But in the physical world, yesterday and the day before are right around the corner. Buildings that went up before our time remain in our time. They may not be of-the-moment, but like a pair of well-made shoes with many miles on them, they can be as fine a fit as anything new.

When Anna Barile and Antonio Ottoboni, founders of 8&A architetti in Milan, were charged with reviving a residence in a 19th-century building perched between the arty Brera quarter and the newly fashionable Porta Nuova district, they dug deep. Like archaeologists unearthing a lost treasure, they cleared away space-confining walls from the 1980s to create grandly scaled rooms, then detailed these with decorative stucco flourishes and handsome new doors kissed with gilt and fitted with newly crafted bronze handles copied from antique hardware.



Large-format artwork, Murano chandeliers and significant contemporary furnishings – such as the Naviglio sofa by **design duo** Yabu Pushelberg – make for a lively mix in the formal living room.

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A new stairway leading from the kitchen to a service area, designed by 8&A architetti in black iron with brass inserts.

Scrupulous as they were in reviving the apartment’s original profile and respecting its extant features (including the formal, curving staircase with a balustrade designed in the 1920s by architect Luigi Maria Brunelli, mosaic and terrazzo floors and a yellow-and-black mantelpiece), the architects countered this with contemporary additions, most notably in the kitchen, where they incorporated gridded walls and an open staircase made of black iron with satin brass inserts. “Contemporary elements make the whole more interesting,” suggests Barile, “and we introduced these with harmony and balance in mind.”



The kitchen is set with a Saarinen Tulip Table, Bertoia chairs, and a minimalist Wireflow pendant, designed by Arik Levy.



1.



2.



3.



4.

1. The double-basin vanity in the primary bath was custom designed by 8&A architetti. 2. The austere elegant steam room is one component of the home's health and wellness suite. 3. A guest bathroom, enveloped in Calacatta Macchia Vecchia marble. 4. A lamp sculpture by Corrado Levi occupies a niche in the gym.

The homeowner requested sumptuous bathrooms, and the architects obliged, fashioning these from Calacatta Macchia Vecchia marble and creating a singular detail – a backlit, alabaster oculus-like feature evocative of a Roman bath. A steam room, massage room, and gym support his health and wellness regimen.

While in scale and proportion, the apartment projects a *gran signore* air, yet the home is lively and furnished with a collection of modern and contemporary pieces. The living room is anchored by a swoosh of a sofa – the Naviglio from B&B Italia – and a complementary 8&A architetti coffee table. A classic Le Corbusier LC1 chair, covered in brown-and-white hide, sits in the foyer at the foot of the staircase, and a vintage Pierre Paulin desk occupies a corner of the drawing room. Lighting fixtures range from custom Murano chandeliers to a Wireflow pendant designed by Arik Levy, which hangs above a Saarinen Tulip Table in the kitchen. Art abounds as well, with large-format works by Pierre Bonnefille, the Bremen-born Kinki Texas, American artist Ryan Sullivan and Italian fashion photographer Gian Paolo Barbieri displayed throughout the home.

For all the volumetric heft of these interiors, the home projects a certain lightness. Far from minimalist, it is nonetheless infused with a streamlined aspect, a clarity enhanced by the abundance of natural light admitted through substantially scaled windows. Grand but not grave, formal yet free of gravitas, it is an eloquent testament to the companionship of past and present.

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A Pierre Paulin desk and a custom shelving unit designed by 8&A architetti create an elegant workspace in the drawing room.

