

ME MILAN IL DUCA



The hotel ME Milan il Duca from Piazza della Repubblica in Milan.
The front was designed by Aldo Rossi in red brick and Lombard stone; on top the new panoramic terrace.
The renovation of the hotel was done by the contractor Nessi&Majocchi.

CONTENT AND CONTAINER SPEAK THE NOBLE LANGUAGE OF MASTER DESIGN.
THE INTERIORS AND THE BUILDING OF THE HOTEL ME MILAN IL DUCA ARE A
SOPHISTICATED REFERENCE TO THE GREATEST ITALIAN ARCHITECTS AND DESIGNERS

By Francesca Tagliabue
Photo by Pietro Savorelli

To intervene in a building signed by one of the most important Italian contemporary architects is not an easy matter. The challenge was taken - and won - by Arassociati Studio di Architettura (founded in 1997 by Marco Brandolisio, Giovanni da Pozzo, Massimo Scheurer and Michele Tadini), by architect Alvaro Sans and Nicola Gallizia Design who have dealt together with the renovation, the expansion and the new interior of the hotel ME Milan Il Duca. The green project instead was developed by E. Bortolotti AG & P Architettura dei Giardini e del Paesaggio. The interventions of modernization were necessary in order to adapt the structure to the high quality standards of the Meliá chain, but from the very beginning it was clear to all the protagonists that the pre-existing deserved to be preserved and returned to the city.

The hotel is located in Piazza della Repubblica in Milan, an urban space built in 1865 to house the city's main railway station. Today the Central Station is located about a kilometer away while luxury residences and local fashion boutiques overlook the square, which are a few steps from the new business district of Porta Nuova and Porta Venezia and near the famous Fashion Quadrilateral. The hotel ME Milan Il Duca takes the place of the hotel Duca of Milan, built between 1988 and 1991 by the architect Aldo Rossi.

Considered one of the greatest exponents of Post-Modern style, Rossi faced the renovation of the whole area (owned by the Reale Compagnia Italiana SPA) by enlarging the pre-existing building and realizing a new façade in red brick and Lombard stone with a large window on the mezzanine level. The works took place on occasion of the World Cup Italy '90, at the same time Line 3 of the subway was being constructed.

The design of the ME Milan Il Duca has seen a general reorganization of the interior, the modernization of the rooms, the renovation of the common areas and the construction of a new rooftop in order to equip it with a bar with a panoramic view. The interior design follows a very clear concept: to create tributes to the greatest masters of the Milan design. Therefore, furniture and lamps created by the most famous names in industrial Milanese design have been used in different areas. Specifically, each of the floors is dedicated to a designer, respectively, from the ground floor to the ninth: Gio Ponti and B.B.P.R., Gio Ponti, Aldo Rossi, Luigi Caccia Dominioni, Achille Castiglioni, Franco Albini, Ignazio Gardella, Vico Magistretti, Joe Colombo, Marco Zanuso, Guglielmo Ulrich.

The identity of each floor, in fact, is distinguished at every lifts landings by armchairs by the famous Milanese masters placed in pairs. Also an artistic photograph of those hanging on the wall en-



The entrance path marked by sculptural wooden septums.
Custom Venetian terrazzo flooring by Fantini Mosaici.
On the left a glimpse of the lobby with armchairs Fantasia, project by Nicola Gallizia Design for Molteni&C; on the right the chair Elettra designed by BBPR, Arflex production.



The elevator landing on the mezzanine level. The Venetian terrazzo flooring is by Fantini Mosaici, the D.153.1 armchairs designed by Gio Ponti and the sofa are by Molteni&C.. All the above enhance Aldo Rossi's drawing of the building façade, which is hung on the wall.



A view of the garden at the entrance of the hotel

Different views of the library, next to the reception desk: along with custom furniture the reissues armchairs D.153.1 by Gio Ponti produced by Molteni&C. and floor lamps Angoli by Oluce designed by Tito Agnoli (1954).



hances the setting. Not only that: the entire ground floor reserves corners that are tributes to Italian creativity. All the pieces chosen are "contemporary classics", such as the table lamps Atollo by Oluce positioned on the reception desk or the beige chairs D.135.1 signed by Gio Ponti and today produced by Molteni & C. The hotel has 132 rooms (34 of which are suites divided in such way: 32 Chic Suites, 1 Personality Suite, 1 Suite ME). All the rooms are furnished in an essential, urban and contemporary style. The dark wood, chosen for the base of the bed and the furniture, perfectly contrasts with the floor in technical textile in light color; the ensuite bathrooms are all equipped either with bath-tubs or large walk-in showers with a glass door. Special mention should be made to the very spacious ME Suite, flagship of the entire hotel. Considered like a private apartment available for parties and meetings, the ME Suite has a living area with living room, sitting area, dining table and pool table in style, a professional kitchen and a bedroom that can be completely closed and isolated from the rest of the space. In addition, the ME Suite has a private terrace of 200 square meters, perfect for receptions during the mild

season. Within the ME Milan Il Duca there are also places open to guests and the public. The first is the STK restaurant, located on the mezzanine floor (right behind the large windows that are visible on the facade) specialized in New York cuisine and meat cooked both in American and Italian style.

Relaxed and trendy atmospheres also at the Radio bar, accessible both from inside the hotel and from a reserved entrance located in the homonymous lateral street. Radiobar is an amazing rooftop terrace, located on the tenth floor, of 500 square meters offering a privileged view of the Milanese skyline, including the new skyscrapers that have defined the skyline of Milan in Recent Years. Finally, only for hotel guests, there is the Giardino del Duca Restaurant, which is open from breakfast time until late at night.

Ideal for a holiday, to organize business meetings (especially by virtue of its proximity to two of the biggest transportation hubs of the city, Central and Garibaldi stations) and the perfect place to spend an evening out, the ME Milan Il Duca is - surprisingly - also an interesting modern architecture and an unexpected tribute to internationally renowned designers.



ARASSOCIATI

Arassociati, founded in 1997 by Marco Brandolisio, Giovanni da Pozzo, Massimo Scheurer and Michele Tadini, have designed and built many structures for both public and private use in Italy and abroad.

In its architectural research the office pursues the idea of continuity between building and territory/city, adhering to the principles of rational construction. In 2004 the office received the Premio Internazionale di Architettura Teatrale (International Theatrical Architecture Award) for its reconstruction of La Fenice Opera House in Venice. In 2008 Electa published a monographic volume on the construction of the Tiscali Campus and in 2013 the book *Arassociati Architetture*. Numerous other projects, writings and competitions have been published in reviews specializing in architecture and the construction sector. The firm's achievements have also been displayed in exhibitions, conferences and international competitions. Its major achievements include the redevelopment of the former Philips Site in Leuven (Belgium), the hotel Starhotels Rosa Grand in Piazza Fontana, Milan, the Tiscali Campus at Sa Illetta, near Cagliari, the restructuring of the Chiostrì del Carmine (Cloisters of the church of Santa Maria del Carmine) in Brescia as a university library, the Müller-Martini site in Zürich (Switzerland), the MAMbo - Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna, and the restructuring and extension of the Théâtre National Populaire (TNP) in Villeurbanne, near Lyon (France). Also noteworthy are the residential projects on Via Varese and Corso Garibaldi in downtown Milan, as well as the Heydar Aliyev Museum, the Khojaly Memorial Complex in Baku (Azerbaijan) and The Azerbaijan Pavilion at Milan Expo 2015.



The new design of spiral staircase that connects the lobby to the STK restaurant on the mezzanine floor. The suspended lamps Kin are designed by Francesco Rota and produced by Oluce. The Venetian terrazzo flooring is by Fantini Mosajci.

The suite on the first floor: the furnishings are designed by Molteni&C, the lamps on the tables are Atollo dorata by Vico Magistretti, Compasso D'Oro 1979, production Oluce.



The living area of one of the two suites on the first floor, with private terrace. On the pool table are two suspended lamps Canopy designed by Francesco Rota for Oluce.

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Architectural project:

Interior design project:

Garden design project:

Custom made solutions for entrance;
glass facades, doors and roofbar canopies:
Construction:
Metal structures:
Lighting:
Bathroom fittings:
Finishings:

Furniture:
Outdoor:

Arassociati: M.Brandolisio, G.da Pozzo, M.Scheurer, M.Tadini,
collaborators: Gabriella Cricri, Giulia Zambon
Arassociati with Alvaro Sans and Nicola Gallizia Design
E. Bortolotti AG&P Architettura dei giardini e del paesaggio

Thema
Nessi&Majocchi
Colombo Spa Como
Oluce
Zucchetti.Kos
Iris Ceramica, Fantini Mosaici, Cudicini
Molteni&C., Kettal, Arflex
Kettal

Detail of a Junior Suite: the furniture and the chairs Montecatini designed by Gio Ponti are produced by Molteni&C.; the floor lamp is the Coupé 8320/R designer Joe Colombo (1967) by Oluce.