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PROJECTS

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Small but perfectly formed, this London pied-à-terre apartment is designed by Toméf for an art collector filled with English charm and Italian style that reflects the family's love of art and design.

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Setting a welcoming tone, Toméf has transformed a small, uninspiring space into a comfortable and refined home. The international studio founded by Tommaso Franchi, defines sophisticated spaces people love to look at, live in, and experience. When Italian art collector and philanthropist Umberta Gnutti Beretta purchased a pied-à-terre in London, she enlisted Toméf to redesign the space into a functional yet beautiful apartment for her family that reflects their love of art and design.



The apartment, located in a Grade II listed 1850s building in Chelsea, was run down and uninspiring, but the Toméf design team led a reconfiguration and decoration that realised the potential of the space. The overall brief was for a comfortable and refined space, with elements of English style but also reflecting the Berettas' Italian roots and way of living. The apartment also needed to be a versatile backdrop for Beretta's impressive art collections.

Centred around art

The apartment is filled with light and Toméf took this and the art as a starting point for the design. The flow of the space was redesigned, crucially incorporating a larger hall to set a welcoming and spacious tone. "Although it's a small flat, the introduction of a larger hall makes it feel much grander than it is, and also allowed us to separate the private bedroom areas from the public living areas", says Tommaso. A bespoke chandelier from Nilufar Gallery in Milan hangs above a bespoke shagreen table made by specialist artisans in France. Two 1950s stools sourced from London gallerist Dorian Caffot de Fawes sit below brass sconces from Gong, while the Knowles and Christou wallpaper hides discrete storage cupboards for coats and utilities. Toméf also selected the flooring pattern, made by Walking on Wood.

The colour scheme for the living room was largely inspired by the palette of the Flora Yuknovitch artwork above the mantelpiece. Umberta was keen to breathe new life into an old pair of sofas she had, so these were reupholstered in a silk velvet from Dedar. The centrepiece for the living room is a showstopping undulating carved mantelpiece, which Toméf designed bespoke for the space. The original chimney breast was off-centre to the room – a common issue in London period properties – and Tommaso designed it asymmetrically to disguise the imbalance and make it feel deliberate. It was hand-carved from one piece of Carrara marble to reflect the family's Italian heritage.

Exquisitely crafting comfort

Toméf also designed the cabinetry, introducing a mirrored back to add depth and highlight objects on the shelves. Warm lighting was also introduced to create a comfortable atmosphere, and a chic brass line detail was added to the shelves to give a glimmer of reflection and refinement. A bespoke pouffe hides further storage, while an original Meret Oppenheim Traccia Sculptural Table for Cassina stands proudly on an abstract rug.

In the dining room, a Knoll Tulip table and Saarinen chairs upholstered in Dedar fabric and a Tom Dixon sconce light sets a modern tone, offsetting a striking artwork by Lucio Fontana. The kitchen was deliberately separated from the living and dining areas, small but functional with bespoke cabinetry, Black Belgian marble countertops and splashback and mother of pearl brassware, as well as a convenient breakfast bar.

The character of the master bedroom is defined by monochrome erotic wallpaper from Pierre Frey on the ceiling, bringing an edge and sense of humour to the space. Above the bed an Andy Warhol artwork nods to the family's manufacturing background, and two paintings from Le Tipe Umame by Andrea Incontri flank the door to the bathroom. Wherever possible, the team included pieces made at San Prignano within Toméf projects, a community in northern Italy offering drug rehabilitation and training in artisanal skills. An example is an exquisite hand-woven blanket on the bed, with a Toméf chevron design.



Adorned with Art Deco

The luxurious Art Deco inspired bathroom combines three different marbles, monochrome, black, pink and beige inlays, all designed bespoke by Toméf. As well as for the herringbone floor, the marble was also used for architectural detailing such as the architrave, dado, skirting, and panelling. The loo is custom made to match the pink marble, while the vanity is also bespoke made, with a grooved mirror front and bevelled shelving. Two jewel-like mirrors conceal hidden storage, and the towel rail from Bard and Brazier was customised to fit the other brass tones.

The second bedroom was designed for guests. With the bedroom's small footprint, storage was built either side of the bed, and the monochrome theme continues into the bathroom which has a more masculine aesthetic.



Tommaso Franchi says of the design, "Our work at Toméf is all about striking the right balance. We are like conductors for a well organised orchestra, bringing together many different elements, each beautiful in its own right but even more beautiful when carefully combined with others. In this space antiques are offset with contemporary items, matte with reflection, colour with monochrome. The apartment is small but luxurious; it functions well for its owners but is also comfortable and aesthetically inspiring for visitors."

About the design firm:

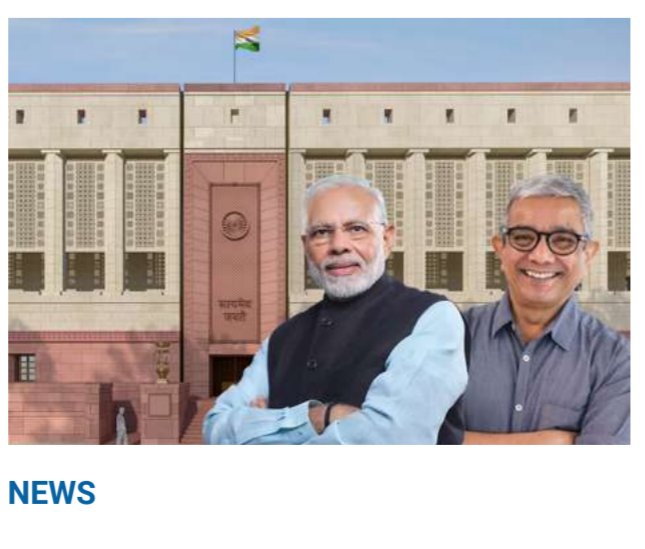
Toméf is a creative architecture and interior design studio founded by **Tommaso Franchi**, defining sophisticated spaces people love to look at, live in, and experience. Toméf projects are distinguishable through their precision, cutting-edge detail and an originality of touch. The team considers it a daily ambition to push boundaries, to innovate through reinterpretation, to excel. Its ethos is to forge beauty with function in an enduring combination. The team is comprised of international talented architects and interior designers, who work passionately together and constantly exchange their experiences and expertise for a truly collaborative and creative approach. Selected by clients for its sophisticated bespoke services and discreet approach, Toméf is London-based but operates globally.

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