



Sopra, la terrazza affacciata sulla cittadella antica di Jaffa. Divani Orlando di Paola Lenti; braciere Ercole Concrete di Ak47; ombrellone di Tuuci. Nella pagina accanto, la sala da pranzo vista dall'antico portale di ingresso su strada. ● Above, the terrace facing onto the ancient citadel of Jaffa. Orlando sofas from Paola Lenti; Ercole Concrete brazier from AK47; sunshade from Tuuci. Facing page, the dining room viewed from the old entrance on the street.

sign italiano», conclude Shani. «Con la sua storia e competenza, l'industria del mobile italiana si caratterizza per una qualità senza compromessi che corrisponde esattamente ai principi alla base del nostro progetto. Abbiamo scelto quindi alcuni nuovi classici per enfatizzare lo spirito senza tempo di questa residenza storica».

● Over the last fifteen years, the Israeli studio Pitsou Kedem Architects has renovated six old houses hidden away in the alleys of Jaffa, the citadel and port in the ancient heart of Tel Aviv. "They are complex projects, that require years of planning and execution owing to the challenges posed by their state of preservation and by the need to work in a densely populated and hilly area," explains the architect Avital Shani. The latest is a stone building constructed three hundred years ago, under Ottoman rule, on an even older site dating back to the time of the Crusades. The space – 400 square metres in all – is laid out on two levels: the ground floor, divided up into a series of rooms with cross vaults surrounding a central patio, now houses a large kitchen and the living area, while on the first floor, built on in more recent times, there is a generous master bedroom with a walk-in wardrobe and en-suite bathroom and another bedroom, both facing onto the old port and the Mediterranean.

"Unlike what happens when a residence is constructed from scratch, our approach to design in a historical context, and to integration into an already built-up area, is focused above all on respect for what is already there," continues the architect. "Our work is nothing but another layer in the long history of the building." With the limestone façades and courtyard restored, the intervention

started with the demolition of several existing partitions, to permit a free flow through the rooms. Subsequently, all the internal spaces were given a uniform appearance by plastering the walls and laying an aggregate floor, made from local rock. Completely new, on the other hand, but inserted harmoniously between the cross vaults, is the sculptural spiral staircase that connects the two floors on the inside ("The most significant element of the design," says Shani), created as an alternative to the old and narrow flight of stone stairs that is now situated next to the dining room.

At the centre of the house, the patio, which has always been its hub, regulates the temperature through shading, lets light and air into the building and invites movement between the inside and outside, reflecting the Mediterranean tradition of combining life indoors and out. "To make the most of it," adds Shani, "we have turned all the arched openings in the living area into large windows." And the interior design has certainly not been of secondary importance, featuring as it does numerous pieces of furniture made in Italy, including beds from B&B Italia, armchairs of Living Divani, tables from Desalto and lamps from Flos. "In the search for unique pieces to complement the space, with its distinctive characteristics, we have bet on Italian design," concludes Shani. "With its history and expertise, the Italian furniture industry is characterized by an uncompromising quality that matches the principles at the base of our project. So we have chosen some new classics to emphasize the timeless spirit of this historic residence." ■

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