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Italian architect Fabrizio Casiraghi has infused the Ftelia Beach Club on the Greek island of Mykonos with a warm palette that glows against the stark white exteriors and the cool blues of the Aegean.

PHOTOGRAPHER: ROMAIN LAPRADE

DESIGN *Fabrizio Casiraghi*

Retro hues of ochre and burnt orange add a summery warmth to the Italian architect's Ftelia Beach Club, on the Greek island of Mykonos.

By Jason Mowen Photographed by Romain Laprade



FROM LEFT the signboard and flags at the beach club recall the old beach stations on the Riviera in the 1960s. The sun umbrellas shading the beachside lounges are custom made to withstand the brisk coastal winds.



Inspiration for the Ftelia Beach Club in Mykonos came to its designer, Paris-based Italian architect Fabrizio Casiraghi, the first time he flew over the island. He was surprised to see that the church rooftops were painted in a brick-like colour and not in blue, the colour usually associated with Greece.

"I understood that this was the colour of the island and began imagining an atmosphere full of warm tonalities," says Casiraghi, who describes the palette as the most powerful aspect of the project. It packs some subtle punch: varying shades of red, yellow and burnt orange play contrast against the stark white of the vernacular architecture and the cool, crisp colours of the Aegean. "The rest," he says, "was inspired by the landscape: terraces and an amphitheatre to enjoy the view; simple but iconic furniture; and handmade fabrics."

Casiraghi, whose practice encompasses both architecture and interiors, describes his aesthetic as "generous" and enjoys mixing ages, origins and styles to achieve a harmonious equilibrium. That rows of shapely '60s-era orange-framed armchairs by Gae Aulenti should look so at home at Ftelia's classic Greek setting attests to his lightness of touch. Born in Milan, Casiraghi took Ancient Greek, Latin and Philosophy at school before moving on to architecture at the Politecnico di Milano. A certain

'sensitivity' is evident, as a result, throughout his work, which strikes a fascinating balance between the decorative and the erudite but all the while grounded in his architect's sense of space and form.

Moving to Paris three years ago and establishing a studio in the Haut Marais, Casiraghi has seemingly thrived in the French capital. "Milan is a northern city," he explains, "more

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FABRIZIO CASIRAGHI

similar, perhaps to Paris than Naples in terms of lifestyle. I love living in Paris even if I miss, every day, some aspects of what makes the Italian way of life so wonderful." His oeuvre reflects both his Milanese heritage and his love of the exotic. Oriental lanterns, bright-green velvet seating and gilded accents against burgundy-coloured walls make for a rich environment at the Café de l'Esplanade in Paris, while the bamboo-and-brass-clad bar and Fungo >>



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT rattan chairs found at an antiques market on an island near Mykonos. Milanese designer Gae Aulenti's '60s-era armchairs complete the retro vibe. The cushion fabric and tabletop tiles reflect the red brick church rooftops of Mykonos that Casiraghi fell in love with.



« formed table lamps reference the iconic Rising Sun collection from the early '70s by Gabriella Crespi — a fellow Milanese Francophile and favourite of the architect — at restaurant Cassio in Hong Kong. At the other end of the spectrum is the Paris boutique he conceived for French jewellery designer Aurélie Bidermann, which, with its arched niches, off-white walls and terracotta floor, teeters in spirit between an old French residence and the Parisian jewellery shops of the 1930s.

And then there's the exquisite Venice pied-à-terre crafted for his agent, Julien Desselle. Far in shape from the city's typical Baroque palaces, richness comes via dark terrazzo floors paired with pale pink walls, with doors and half-metre-high skirting lines in *sang de boeuf* (oxblood). A sparse arrangement of exquisite furniture, art and objects speaks to the haute-bourgeois style of 20th-century Milan but also the more exotic, gateway-to-Asia heritage of the Venetian city-state of centuries past. Forthcoming projects, both commercial and residential, are equally layered: a hotel in Switzerland; a private home in the US; and a new Kenzo flagship store in Paris.

Whatever the project, Casiraghi's Milanese roots are sure to hew closely to his craft. "Milan's understated charm and design culture has always influenced my aesthetic," he says. "When I was a child, I spent my holidays between my grandparents' place at Lake Como and my parents' holiday house in Cinque Terre — two of my favourite places, so full of beauty. The house in Cinque Terre is all white but with a massive parquet floor, and full of objects that my parents collected on their travels — this has influenced me a lot." **VL** fabriziocasiraghi.com @fabriziocasiraghi