



Building A World View

Fabrizio Casiraghi on his projects, passions, and philosophy.

Fabrizio Casiraghi was born and raised in a family deeply rooted in Milan, the cradle of Italian industry, finance, and design. His father used to be a graphic designer for the *Corriere della Sera*, the legendary national newspaper with headquarters in the Brera District and the emblem of the Milanese intellectual and liberal bourgeoisie. He studied architecture at the prestigious Politecnico, the famous architecture faculty whose graduates and professors include Piero Portaluppi, Gio Ponti, and Renzo Piano. After graduating, he worked for the FAI, the Italian National Trust, at Villa Necchi, the iconic Portaluppi's mas-

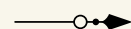
terpiece. Its interiors and classical yet avant-garde decoration fascinated him and strongly influenced his work. In 2015, at the age of thirty, he decided to move to Paris, where he founded his own independent studio. He started by working from home, and now, after eight years, he runs a firm of twenty with projects extending across all continents.

Fabrizia Caracciolo: Is your work more focused on residential or commercial projects?

Fabrizio Casiraghi: My projects today alternate equally between residential, hotels, restaurants, and boutiques. I always try to convey

a sense of coziness and a “home” feeling in non-residential spaces as well. In one of my first hotels, “La Ponche” in Ramatuelle, I tried to recreate the sparkling atmosphere of the Brigitte Bardot and Françoise Sagan time when George Pompidou used to be a guest at the hotel. The summers were long and marked by visits to the local market, long swims, lunches, and siestas with the sound of the cicadas. What I like is to follow the project from the foundations to the choice of the tablecloths, passing through the garden so that everything is in tune to create a specific and unique atmosphere.

Alexandre Logé plaster chandelier, Jean Royere sconces, '70s French lamps, woven coconut rug, Louis XVI chairs upholstered in blue silk, custom-made sofas, fabrics on Josef Frank Denmark by Sues + Terni.





From left: Bespoke kitchen in ivory lacquer and green handles; floor in reclaimed terracotta tiles; Bathroom, Stella taps, ivory waxed concrete floor; vintage French chair; Ceramica Vogue tiles; Scandinavian art deco scones; Arts & Crafts chairs; Maison Lelieur rug; Brutalist bar-stool from the '30s; made-to-measure seat with Loro Piana fabrics; "Balthus" floor lamps for Astier de Villatte.

FC: What is your most significant project?

FC: Doubtlessly, the new Four Seasons which will open in Rome bordering the Vatican City. It is a 15th-century palace overlooking St Peter. And the fun fact is that to build one needs to follow all the ecclesiastic rules.

FC: Would you define yourself as a "Neo Rationalist"?

FC: Definitely, I consider myself a spiritual son of the Milanese tradition, quoting Gio Ponti, Piero Portaluppi, and Gabriella Crespi. It is for that reason that I was so particularly satisfied to work on the recent restoration of my hometown's legendary Sant'Ambroeus Restaurant, where I did my best to revisit a gentle approach to Rationalism. Of course, my work also integrates other influences as well, such as Madeleine Castaing, Maison Jansen, Jakobsson, and the Viennese Secession.

FC: How would you describe your methodology?

FC: My major at University was Urbanization, so my priority is the rationalization of space. I am first and foremost interested in the volume through which I try to impose rigor and purity. I then like to subdue it through the decor: the shimmer of materials, the softness of colors, and the exoticism of unusual furniture, all framed by a subtle and controlled use of light. I like to mix and contrast styles without ever breaking the harmony of the interiors. My aim is to convey a refined balance in which the overall vision and general atmosphere prevail.

FC: What are your inspirations?

FC: I am inspired by all forms of art, such as theater, opera, and the readily available art in my adopted hometown, Paris. My sources vary from flea markets to antiques. My aim is to create a free modernity that is not opposed to the past. For my furniture collection, which I developed during the lockdown, as well as for a line of carpets I developed with Nordic Knots, the in-

spiration came from my Milanese roots: the rigorous and geometric architecture of Piacentini and Ponti, but with a decorative and dreamlike touch to soften it.

FC: What is the room or piece of furniture that is most important to you?

FC: In that sense, I am the "real bourgeois." I cherish a harmonious sitting room where you can receive and spend time with company. It is not by chance that the most recognized and sought-after piece is my very neoclassical ruffled sofa.

FC: In your opinion, does the architect of our times still have a social role?

FC: Absolutely. I definitely attribute a political value to decoration. A "minimalist" home is a declination of "totalitarianism." Our role is to pave the way for living spaces that are synonymous with open-mindedness, cultural diversity, and curiosity. ☐

Fabrizia Caracciolo