

Enlightened Oasis

Italian architects Mirandolina di Pietrantonio and Carmine Lucini create a Zen-inspired home in the Roman countryside.

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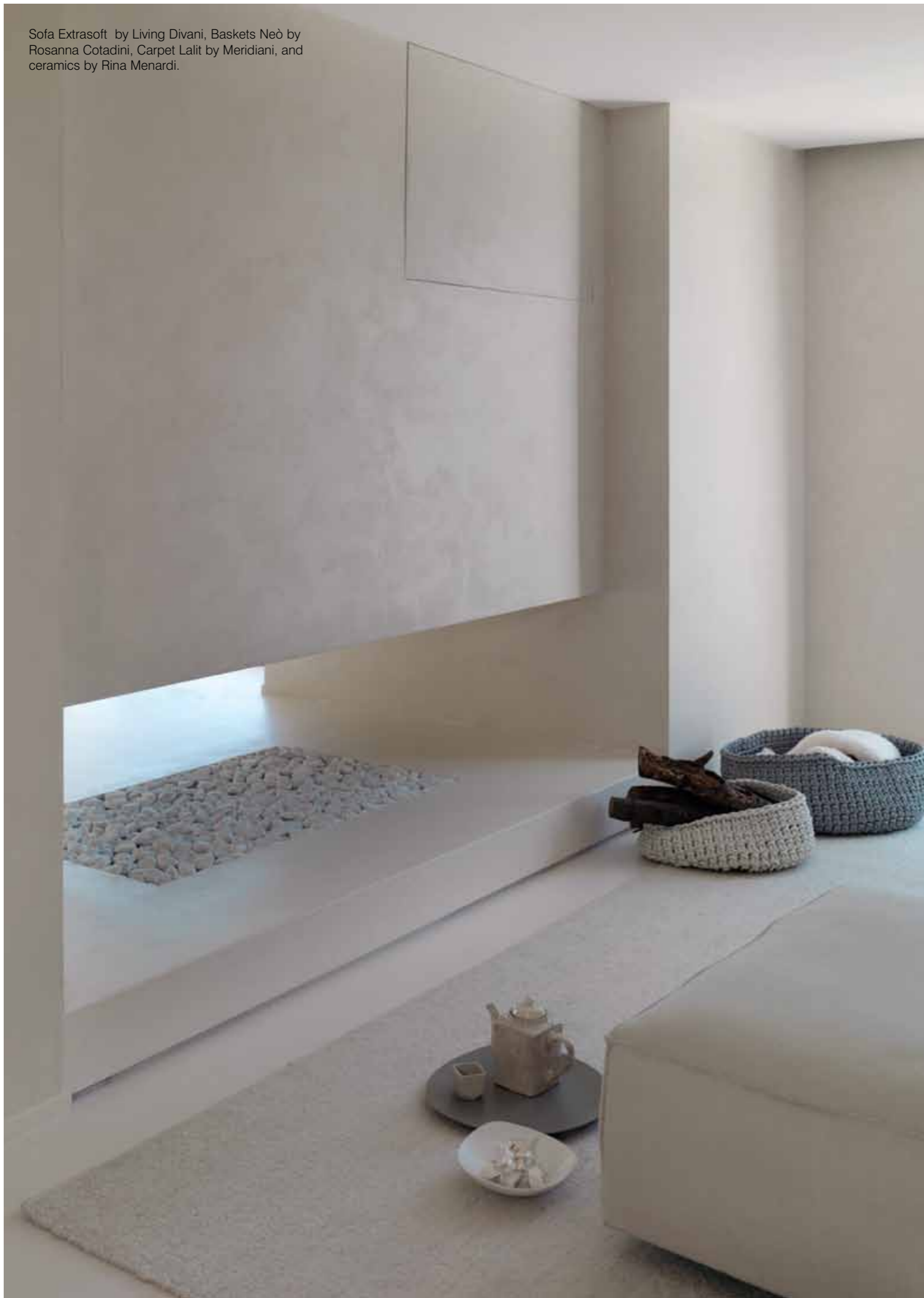
A large retractable glass wall creates a relationship between the intense green of nature and all the whiteness of the interior space.

Sofa Extrasoft by Living Divani, Dining table La forma del vento (The shape of the wind) by Mirandolina Di Pietrantonio, and Costanza lamp by Luceplan



From above: Close up of the sofa, Extrasoft by Living Divani, sofa table, Family lounge by Living Divani; Architects Mirandolina Di Pietrantonio and Carmine Lucini.





Sofa Extrasoft by Living Divani, Baskets Neò by Rosanna Cotadini, Carpet Lalit by Meridiani, and ceramics by Rina Menardi.



From above left: Close up of the ceramics by Rina Menardi; White high stools, Teresa by Zeus, customized kitchen block from the furniture collection by Mirandolina Di Pietrantonio

Built in the 1970s, the renovation of the three-floor, 450-square metre bungalow was an ideal project for architect Mirandolina di Pietrantonio and her partner Carmine Lucini. Surrounded by natural light and the luxury of a solitary landscape, the Buddhist principles guiding their design philosophy seemed a natural fit.

Preferring a spiritual and philosophical approach to design, rather than simply mimicking fly-by-night trends and fads, di Pietrantonio's signature style is a breath of fresh air. "I was 'electrocuted' during my studies in architecture when I read this quote by Hermann Hesse: 'There is in you a peace, a sanctuary where you can retreat at any time and be yourself...' I've always wanted that 'place' both inwardly and in my projects, conceiving the house as the place to retreat and rediscover the peace and joy that is always there in our hearts," she muses.

The former traditional style was meticulously transformed into an open concept living space – a vast white, geometric plane imbued with soul, unified by a deep and profound engagement with the senses and the natural environment. Inside are bespoke furnishings by the architects, as well as key

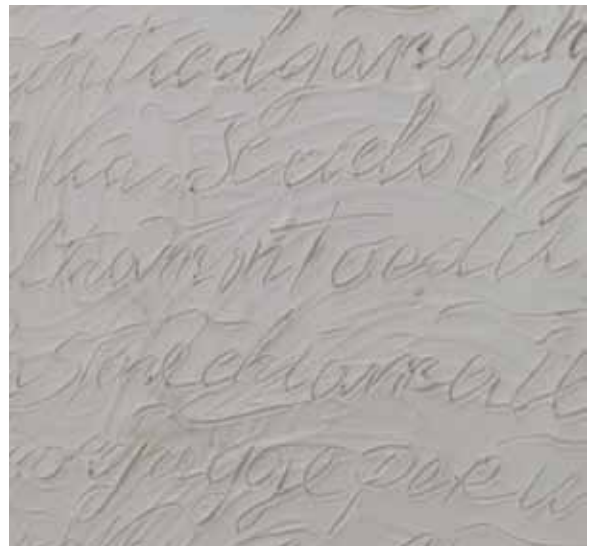
contemporary furnishings from Living Divani, Luceplan, Salvetti and Poliform.

Throughout the residence, variations in volume and proportion create a breadth of vistas and interconnected spaces with enchanting and unexpected details. Far from static, their commitment to white creates constantly changing colouration according to the forces of nature: the sky, the weather, the vegetation, the clouds and light.

"The main concept guiding the design of the house was to create 'a space of emptiness', a mystical place to find peace, balance, simplicity and light (brightness) and enjoy the silence," says di Pietrantonio.

Using these spiritual principles, each of the three floors was designed to spark an inner journey towards a divine element – giving residents the assurance of inner strength, peace and a deep personal awareness, even when the outside world gives them painful challenges.

The entrance to the first floor was created using a simple concrete staircase with two layers of seven steps, a numeric expression of the bridge between heaven and earth, between human and divine. Conceived as a small path (trail)



Clockwise from above: The artwork of Artist Anna Russo is in the staircase hall. The small spa engages all the senses, and the bedroom was designed as if the large bed was an island cradled by a wave.



of 'lost steps' (the traditional Japanese roji) made by large white stones, placed far apart so it's necessary to pay attention to one's 'steps'.

Seven white stones (Yang) are combined with the seven grey steps (Yin) of the steps, suggesting the continuous interchange of opposites, where Mirandolina sees the balance and harmony; then a 'moment' of unity, which is right when opposites meet.

The path of seven steps leads to a small spa created in the Greek tradition using the Golden Ratio. Designed to purify in the deepest sense of the term, there are four small square niches, symbolising the four elements – earth, water, air and fire – with the fifth element, the 'fifth essence', represented by the large square of the basin which is meant to 'enlighten'.

The living room's fluid design features a large retractable glass front that discards the tactile and visual experience border between 'full' and 'empty' space by creating a seamless relationship with the garden. The bold whiteness of the interior space, paired with the intense coloration of nature



throughout the seasons, created a peaceful synergy.

"White works best if there's light coming into it," Mirandolina says. "Thanks to the large glass doors facing the garden and large windows in most rooms, lots of natural light flows into every area, and rooms that are lacking enough daylight have been magically transformed with indirect artificial light."

The elemental aesthetic continues with natural, ivory-coloured limestone flooring from Turkey that feels like walking on sand, while a substantial fireplace symbolises the heart of the home.

Travelling up the white stone staircase with crystal railing to the third floor, one is captivated by work by artist Anna Russo, upon which a sutra is engraved on white cement.

The bedroom was designed as if the entire horizontal surface was a large bed – seen as an island cradled by a wave to protect the sacred moment of rest.

Illuminated only by candlelight, the small tearoom is a place for meditation and is therefore only equipped with two 'tatami' mats on the floor.

"Architectural quality is experienced when architecture can be used for a long span of time, when it ages beautifully and is comprehensible, original and simple to use", says Carmine. We think their display of architectural depth and prowess has created an instant classic. **ID**



Clockwise from below: Outdoor chairs and low table are by Salveti, seven concrete steps lead to the first floor, and the bathroom offers a glimpse of the bed adorned with linen by Society and a clothes hanger, Guccia, by Henry Timi

