

Soho House Istanbul



COSE DA TURCHI

INAUGURA LA TREDICESIMA SEDE DEL CELEBRE CLUB INGLESE: UN RAFFINATO MIX DI ORIENTE E OCCIDENTE AFFACCIATO SUL BOSFORO. PER SOCI E NON SOCI

TESTO – SHONQUIS MORENO



Poltrone di velluto, affreschi e atmosfere ottomane nel Club Bar della nuova Soho House Istanbul



La scala principale poggia su un intricato groviglio di draghi, grifoni e centauri che sembrano usciti dall'immaginario barocco. Le stanze circostanti sono preziosi scrigni decorati con lampade in ottone, porte di palissandro, pavimenti in legno e marmo, finestre con vetri acidati e piccole composizioni artistiche degne del Louvre. Non c'è tuttavia spazio per il superfluo: un rigoroso processo di eliminazione ha fatto riemergere gli affreschi originali da 140 anni di oblio e dieci strati di pittura, gesso e lacche. Una ristrutturazione durata due anni a cui hanno lavorato 60 persone. A tornare alla luce sono composizioni floreali, motivi astratti, cherubini e persino un Cristo assorto. Benvenuti alla Soho House Istanbul. Questo non è che uno dei bar.

Lo scorso marzo, per festeggiare i suoi 20 anni il club londinese ha aperto a Beyoglu la tredicesima sede (celebri anche quelle di New York, Miami, Berlino). Quattro edifici con 87 camere, due ristoranti, caffè, palestra, centro benessere, nightclub, sala da ballo, cinema e 13 bar. Il club si trova nella villa italiana del XIX secolo chiamata Palazzo Corpi, che ha ospitato per un secolo l'ambasciata degli Stati Uniti. Fino ai primi del Novecento, il quartiere era il cuore finanziario dell'Impero Ottomano e la base degli stranieri d'Occidente. Tra questi c'era l'armatore genovese che nel 1882 non badò a spese per costruire Palazzo Corpi. Si dice che fosse destinato a un'amante e che l'abbia

**«IL CLUB SI RIVOLGE
PRINCIPALMENTE A UNA
CLIENTELA DI CREATIVI
LOCALI, TRA ARCHITETTI,
DESIGNER E ARTISTI»**



A decorare il Club Bar, oltre agli affreschi di fine 800, ci sono lampade in ottone, porte di palissandro e pavimenti in legno e marmo (a sinistra). Palazzo Corpi, la sede di Soho House Istanbul, è stato costruito nel 1882 da un armatore genovese (sopra)




Un ritratto dell'inglese James Waterworth, direttore del progetto di interior. Foto Ben Eagle (sopra). Varie atmosfere di stile per le 87 camere dell'hotel (sotto)

poi perduto in una partita a poker con l'ambasciatore americano. Oggi, i soci del club possono sorseggiare un drink e gustare *meze* (una selezione di antipasti tipici della cucina turca) per poi chiudere la giornata in una delle due piscine sul tetto o all'Embassy Club, il bar con luci soffuse e atmosfera intima ispirato ai locali clandestini del proibizionismo. Il design della Soho House Istanbul è un concentrato di spirito e tradizione locale. «Sebbene abbiamo numerosi ospiti internazionali, ogni sede è dedicata a una clientela di creativi locali, tra architetti, designer, artisti», dice James Waterworth. Direttore progettazione e sviluppo, fa parte del team di 16 designer che prima di iniziare hanno studiato Istanbul per tre mesi. «La città vive un continuo e rapido sviluppo, più di qualunque altro luogo in cui abbiamo lavorato. C'è una profonda fede religiosa in contrasto con la direzione in cui si muovono le arti e i giovani, ma ascoltando il richiamo alla preghiera dal tetto è impossibile non provare un'emozione unica». Trattandosi di Istanbul, i designer hanno dovuto superare o reinterpretare diversi stereotipi, come il lungo divano che copre tre pareti e che rimanda al classico ottomano orientale. È un arredo europeo del XX secolo che dà vita a un ibrido storico-culturale. Lo splendore qui è incredibile: nella palestra perlinata si trovano lampadari in vetro intagliato grandi quanto una palla ginnica. La sala cinema può accogliere



49 spettatori in altrettante sontuose poltrone di velluto. Il team di designer ha però evitato di eccedere con lo sfarzo, giocando con materiali, tappeti e tessuti turchi tradizionali (come l'ikat), che in alcuni casi sono stati immersi nell'acido per ottenere un look vintage. «Abbiamo una predilezione per i pezzi d'antiquariato perché offrono la comodità del vissuto. Le cose nuove sono dure, troppo perfette, troppo pulite». La varietà di mobili e complementi d'arredo (come i due lampadari italiani Anni 60 a forma di ragno) regala a ogni stanza un carattere unico. «Non vogliamo che i membri del club vivano ogni giorno la stessa esperienza», dice Waterworth. «Ci sono quattro o cinque varianti di stile, ogni stanza ha un'atmosfera diversa».

Tutto ciò che non è vintage è stato prodotto a Istanbul. Un artigiano locale ha impiegato sei mesi per realizzare una scultura di bronzo per la lampada delle scale. Un altro ha intagliato gli sfarzosi set di bicchieri in dotazione nei minibar delle stanze. La scelta di operare a livello locale è una dimostrazione di rispetto: «È bello restituire qualcosa al tessuto locale, così il progetto risulta più autentico», continua Waterworth.

A poco più di due mesi dall'inaugurazione, chiunque abbia un briciolo di immaginazione non può fare a meno di essere rapito dall'atmosfera che si respira qui. Prima di ordinare un altro gin Martini. 

➤ SOHOHOUSEISTANBUL.COM



LA FORMULA

La domanda di ammissione alla Soho House Istanbul costa poco meno di 300 euro; 1.800 la quota associativa. Con 700 euro in più si ottiene la membership per tutte le sedi del club. Chiunque – anche i non soci – può prenotare una camera a partire da 195 euro a notte e usufruire degli spazi normalmente riservati agli iscritti. La Cowshed Spa, l'Allis café e il ristorante Cecconi's sono aperti anche ai non membri

Guarda più immagini del servizio cercando SOHO HOUSE ISTANBUL nella sezione **INDIRIZZI** di living.corriere.it

La piscina sul tetto con vista sul Corno d'Oro (sotto). Il look vintage della Soho House è stato studiato ad hoc. Qui, uno scorcio della dining room (sopra)



105

SALENTO. HOLIDAYS IN WHITE

In place of the farmyard, there's a kitchen with a barbecue and industrial lamps. Meanwhile the animal shed has become a living room in retro taste. For this Tuscan couple, it was love at first sight

Through the door from the street: white sunlight and the shade of a mandarin tree. A table with Nature all around it, and on it too. Whether anybody's eating or not doesn't make any difference. «We normally live in Arezzo, but in the summer we move here to Patù with our sons» explain Daniela and Gianfranco. She's Tuscan, through and through; he originates from the Trento region. Both are entrepreneurs who have a passion for travelling and photography. The house has a floor area of 150 m²: six rooms and a garden in the historic centre of Patù, a village in the Salentino, in Puglia. The building dates back to the 17th century: «there used to be an underground oil press and a byre for animals. Later on it was inhabited by a local family». Nothing had anything to do with design. There were only old carpets, straw, and rust. The byre has now become the living room; the stone floor slabs were cleaned and put back in place, one by one. «We tried to keep as much as we could. The tiles belong to a bygone age, as does the fireplace. And the sinks? They're actually drinking and feeding troughs we bought from local antique dealers». But please don't talk about vintage. Nothing here is à la page, which is just fine. Anything new is at least 30 years old. Such as the Tolomeo lamp by Artemide, designed by De Lucchi in 1987. It gets switched on when the little windows are closed. The sun lets you know when it's midday. «We bought this house in 2011. We were struck immediately by how unusual it was to find a farm in a village square». And in fact this farm is closer to the tables of the osteria Rua de li Travaj than it is to the ancient olive trees. But the macchia mediterranea, the wild marine shrubland, is very close by, and the Adriatic Sea meets the Ionian just 5 km away. The blocks of tufa stone are left unplastered, and the vaulted ceilings are star-shaped. The walls are thick and finished with lime plaster. Everything, or almost everything, is exclusively white. Like the canopy bed. Whiter than white. «The doors and windows were completely remade from wood, as per the originals» says the architect Luca Zanaroli, who designed and refurbished the interiors and the garden: «the outside space used to be for animals, but today it has a concrete worktop for cooking, a barbecue, and a shower» he explains. On the terrace there are jute bags filled with flour, which have become comfortable cushions. «We like looking down at the village from above, and enjoying the life in Patù when the summer festivals are on» say Daniela and Gianfranco. In June, the illuminations for St John the Baptist enliven the evening; the local kids perform the traditional pizzica dance while the grandmothers do their crochet. It's still a glimpse of life, but a life of the past. «Here people still leave the house keys outside the door».

111

SOHO HOUSE, ISTANBUL

TURKISH DELIGHTS

The famous English club has opened its thirteenth branch: a refined mix of the Orient and the West, overlooking the Bosphorus. For members and non-members alike

A tangle of dragons, griffins and centaurs supports the main staircase, a baroque bestiary wrought into the iron balustrade. The surrounding rooms are jewel boxes that are simultaneously dressed - with brass table lamps, rosewood doors, parquet and marble floors, etched glass windows, Louvre-like clusters of art—and stripped down to their original frescoed walls. The frescoes were excavated from under 140 years and 10 layers of paint, plaster, mesh and lacquer during a 60-person, two-year restoration. They cover almost every visible surface in many rooms, tiling walls and ceiling. On the first floor, a skylight and tall windows illuminate sepia abstractions, florals and cherubs, even one pensive Christ, as well as jewel-toned murals graced with generous white space—sky, puffy clouds—in which to daydream. Welcome to Soho House Istanbul. This is just one of its bars. This March after four years of work, the 20-year-old, London-based members' club opened its thirteenth outpost dedicated to the creative classes in Beyoğlu. Its four buildings host 87 hotel rooms, two restaurants and a cafe, a gym, spa, nightclub, ballroom, cinema and 13 bars. The member's club fills a restored 19th century Italianate

villa called the Palazzo Corpi that was, for a century, the American embassy. Until the early 1900s, this district was the Ottoman Empire's financial nexus and home to expatriate Levantines: European merchants, bankers and bureaucrats. Its inhabitants patronized fashion and the arts, had the city's first telephone lines, electricity, and the world's second subway, and enjoyed a flourishing cafe culture. One of those Levantines was a Genoese shipowner who spared no expense, building the Corpi in nine years, by 1882. He may have built it for a mercurial mistress and lost it in a poker game to the American ambassador to the Ottoman Empire; whatever the case, by 1906, the US embassy had moved in. (Today, one of the three House rules bans the business suit.) Corpi is where members drink lowballs or pressed juice, eat Turkish-inspired mezze made from local ingredients, take a swim in one of two rooftop pools or enjoy the intimately dim, prohibition-style speakeasy dubbed The Embassy Club until 3 AM. Location and locals drove the design. «Even though we have international people coming over, every House is designed for the local creative», says James Waterworth, director of design and development and one of 16 in-house designers, who started by living in Istanbul for three months. «More than any city we've done, it is up-and-coming, fast. There is a deep-rooted religious faith in contrast with where the arts are going and what the kids are up to, but when you stand on the roof and hear the call to prayer, it is an inspiring moment». Being in Istanbul, the designers had stereotypes to transcend or transform. Twentieth century European furniture reflects the late Ottoman era obsession with western décor, but is also used to translate the historical visual culture into more contemporary hybrids, for example, by stretching a sofa along three walls to suggest an Eastern divan. Actually, the splendor of the Corpi, which influenced the new buildings' design, might have proved alienating: The wood-paneled gym is hung with cut-glass lights as big as Physio balls and the cinema seats 49 on velvet chairs with footstools. But the team tempered this with a well-considered materials palette—Turkish fabrics like ikat and hundreds of rugs, some dipped in acid to age them. «We use antiques because they've been lived in and they're comfortable. When things are brand new, they're harder, too fresh and too clean». Table tennis doesn't hurt either: In the Game Room a pair of ping pong tables are disguised as laptop friendly work surfaces during the day. Diverse furnishings—like the two 1960s, Italian, daddy-long-legs chandeliers—make no two rooms alike and everyone develops a favorite. «We don't want members to have the same experience from one day to the next», Waterworth says. «There are four or five variants of style, different rooms have a different feel, so as a designer, you have to train your mind to jump in and out of design concepts constantly». Anything not vintage was crafted in Istanbul. One local artisan spent six months hand-carving a bronze sculpture to replicate a stairwell light. Another cut swanky glass minibarware for each room. Staying local expresses place: «It's nice to give back to local areas, and it gives the project authenticity. The hardest thing to do is create something new that has authenticity that will last», Waterworth says. «And then make it look great on day one». Not long after Day 1 and anyone with a little imagination will be transported. Out of one window in the palazzo, past caned armchairs, a fireplace and gilt stars carved into celadon walls, the Radisson Blue Hotel is visible. To anyone inside, a Soho House guest may think, poor soul. Before ordering another mezze and a gin Martini.

127

ÁLVARO CATALÁNDE OCÓN

THE GLOBETROTTER

His recycled plastic Pet Lamps are continuously evolving. Woven by hand in Africa and South America, they're about to migrate to Japan

«Sometimes one product a year is already too many»: for Alvaro Catalán de Ocón, design requires time and thought. This year he didn't bring anything new to the Fuorisalone because the prototypes hadn't yet convinced him. Waiting isn't a problem for him; what matters is the result. A timeless vocation that also affected his highly colourful PET lamps, which he makes himself by hand from woven recycled plastic. They were the revelation of the 2013 Salone del Mobile, and were quickly transformed into an evergreen. «Three key points outline the strength of PET: design combined with artisan work, the ecological background of the project, and its social impact». These award-winners are now often seen on display; most recently they were flown to Tokyo for exhibition at the 21_21 Design Sight gallery, of the Issey Miyake Foundation. Needless to say you can shop for them at their own dedicated website (petlamp.org), choosing out of four collections and a hundred variants. The Chimbarongo collection, with its natural effect, is hand woven by Chilean artisans. Abyssinia, made in Ethiopia, features



From Madrid, designer Alvaro Catalán de Ocón and his handcrafted lamp

African patterns. The multi-coloured Colombian Perara-Siapera and the Andean Guambianos both come from the north coast of the Pacific. Now forty, de Ocón comes from Madrid, and has made his globetrotting vocation into a business. Not surprisingly, he holds a degree in business administration as well as two masters in design: Industrial Design from IED in Milan, and product design from Saint Martin's in London. The idea for PET came in fact from a trip to Colombia, in 2011. After a couple of years to develop the project as a mix of craft work and design, it took off. And it hasn't stopped since. Upcoming destinations: Japan and Ecuador, again in collaboration with local artisans, who use their know-how to interpret the colours and decorations for these globetrotting lampshades. When de Ocón isn't travelling he teaches and works at the Madrid office of IED, the European Institute of Design. The open space where he lives is both home and workshop. His Home/Office chairs are set around the big table, which is «used by day for meetings and for family dinners in the evening»: an irreverent 2014 project that took the rigorous 1960s Aluminium Chairs by Charles & Ray Eames (manufactured by Vitra) and 'tattooed' them with embroidered flowers in Victorian style. «The language of Home/Office is very close to that of the PET lamps» he explains. «In both cases I used a craft textile technique to intervene on an industrial design object. I took a chair that had an iconic, severe look and made it domestic with a petit point bouquet». He does have one dream that's in cold storage (for now): to design his own house in the country. Whilst he waits for a chance to create this getaway for himself and his family, he's concentrating on his city loft. Here, the multifunctional spaces are separated by shelving, jungles of plants, and low walls. The furniture is mostly the result of bartering: «incredibly, 90% of the pieces I have in my house come from swaps with other designer friends. I have a fantastic display case that I traded with Piet Hein Eek, which I use to keep all the curiosities I've collected going around the world. Whether my objects come from travel or from trading, I like them to have a story to tell». In June he'll be having a one-man show at MM, the Muñoz Machado, a new design gallery that has just opened in Madrid. «I feel I have industrial design in my heart; thinking in terms of individually numbered pieces doesn't come easy for me. Even though most of my objects have a strong poetic and crafts component, I've always thought of them as industrial projects. I want to use this exhibition to put myself into discussions».

133

MADRID IN MOTION

The enchantment of the historic parks, a new waterfront, ecological-chic restaurants, but above all, the people: «warm, well-mannered, and with a surreal sense of humour». So says Juan Gatti, the legendary art director who's a friend of Almodóvar

ARCHITECTURE. The majestic past of a rich architectural history can be seen everywhere, but Madrid looks to the future as much as the past and it's to the credit of some of the cities emerging talent that for every historical monument you can find the arresting, modernism that is transforming the city. The MediaLab Prado by young architects Langarita Navarro, is a perfect fusion of the digital age with the industrial past. «We were working on that at a theoretical level», says Maria Langarita, «Media Lab was our chance to put all those ideas into practice». The older buildings are connected by the new, a form of intervention and re-invention that Langarita Navarro excel at. Not far from the Media Lab, the Caixa Forum designed by Herzog and de Meuron combined an old power station with an oxidized cast-iron structure above and sculptural underworld below which make the remnants of the original building appear to float in apparent defiance of the laws of gravity. The Rio Park brought the neglected waterfront back to life and united the neighborhoods on the right and left banks of the river, via the futuristic, Arganzuela Footbridge. Designed by Dominique Perrault as two conical shapes of interlocking metal spirals, wrapped by a metallic ribbon to form a helix, the design creates shade during the day, and gains a whole new aspect as the sun goes down and it lights up the night. **CREATIVE SCENE.** For a major city there are surprisingly few degrees of separation amongst its creative talents. «It's really a series of villages, word of mouth and friendships will always work here», explains Nicolás of the Familia Plomez. The very existence of this cultural association is a testament to the strength of community. Formed by friends united over their love of beer and type they used Crowdfunding to buy their first press and open their workshop, a print lovers paradise. «We have old equipment but we don't want to be a museum, our machines are for working, we want to bring back the beauty of print to the digital worlds». For architect and designer Paloma Cañizares, it's the street life of her native city that beats at the heart of the creative scene. «For us, to go out, to be in the street, to see the people you know, to go to your local haunts, is usually what inspires us. The creative scene here has always been driven by personalities more than styles or trends. Nevertheless, right now in Madrid there is an outstanding architectural scene». For David Delfín, the polymath fashion designer and artist whose work can be seen on the catwalks of New York, his creative world is also one based on community. He formed his fashion label with his muse, Bimba Bosé and his friends the Postigos. Beyond fashion, he collaborates with friends across multiple creative mediums and if you are lucky you might just catch him as a DJ one night too. All of his work he says is «driven by emotions». **UNMISSABLE MADRID.** Home to some of the world's greatest art, the vibrant street life and the Rastro flea market are equally famous, but some of Madrid's most magical places are it's most tranquil. The 'golden triangle' of its best, known museums is a 'must see' but make time for Retiro Park, the green oasis at the heart of city. Filled with monuments, sculpted landscapes and set around a lake, it has some 15,000 trees, enough to shade even the hottest afternoon. Hidden along the south side of the lake is the magnificent metal and glass Palacio de Cristal built by architect Ricardo González Bosco in 1887. Originally intended as a greenhouse for exotic plants from the Philippines, it's glass domes are reflected in the waters of the lake creating an illusion of a floating palace. Now used as one of the branches of the Reina Sofia Art Museum, it no longer plays host to plants and flowers but instead to contemporary art installations. Legend has it, that in the 17th century, Felipe IV buried a large fortune in the park, no-one knows if the buried treasure is real but the park with it's hidden corners to discover lends an air of intrigue to the city. Madrid is above all a cinematic city and what better place to experience the city's rich association with the film world than the Cinema Doré. Affectionately known as la filmo it featured in Almodóvar's movie Talk to Her, this classic art nouveau cinema is also home to the national film archive, conserving Spain's film heritage, a cinephiles nirvana. **JUAN GATTI'S MADRID.** It's to his credit that Juan Gatti is still as busy on multiple projects since, as his friend Almodóvar, states, he is already a living legend. To enter his airy, three-storey studio is to enter a world of inspiration. Housing a surprisingly small team, he explains: «I like to work for friends, if you have a big studio, you need to find more clients and then it gets impersonal, that's not my style». On his desk, prints of the paintings he is working on for entrepreneur Alan Faena, on his table, a recently designed book for Peter Lindbergh. Books, he says, were one of his first passions. He confesses that it's impossible for him to choose any favourites from his huge body of work «the ones that mean most to me are rarely the best known». Argentinian by birth, he has long called Madrid his home and has a deep affection for the city, expressed of course, in