

# La Dolce Vita

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*Images / Frederik Vercruysse*



When Bangkok- and Singapore-based interior designer Albano Daminato first visited Villa Peduzzi, an abandoned hilltop home on the edge of Lake Como, it was almost as if the owners had just left. Furniture was piled up everywhere, but the pots and pans were still in place, and crockery and cutlery lay in the kitchen sink. 'The mood was solemn, rich and cinematically romantic,' says Daminato, creative director of his eponymous studio. 'This feeling really stayed with me, and it was important to me that the villa didn't lose these qualities.'

Perched almost a kilometre above sea level, the villa was designed by its Italian owner Rocco Peduzzi and built in 1909. Rumoured to have been inherited by his nephew in the 1960s, the mansion was left mostly vacant and little was known about its history until it was purchased in 2015. Set within a lush forested garden, the nine-bedroom villa is entered via a trip down a narrow village lane, through wrought iron gates and onto a raised garden terrace that leads to the formal entrance hall. Warm yellow flooring, featuring original mosaic tiles with Peduzzi's name set among decorative motifs, brightens the space.

The foyer leads to communal spaces that form the heart of the home, including a library, cosy piano salon and formal dining room, each of which open onto the sprawling stone terrace. Several al fresco dining areas were designed with Italian summers in mind, including a pergola overlooking the lake. The original attic was raised during the renovation to add a billiard lounge, outdoor terraces and a bar for entertaining. Finally, the basement housing the caretakers' quarters was extended to include a yoga and fitness area with stunning views.

Retaining historic details while updating the villa, which serves as a holiday home for a large family, was a careful balancing act. Studio Daminato spent almost four years working with artisans specialising in terrazzo, marble and frescoes to transform the interior architecture. The villa's intricate Liberty-style ceiling inspired the mood and colour palette of the home — for instance, a soft pastel-pink fresco was replicated in one bathroom clad entirely in rosy Portuguese marble.

In classic Art Nouveau fashion, sinuous and organic nature-inspired forms frame windows and accent sculptural works on the villa's facade. Taking this as a departure point, Studio Daminato designed delicate joinery and curved furniture. The team also sought out furniture with a similar sensibility from various periods. 'Mid-century cabinetry or armchairs, with sweeping arms in open, organic forms, sit comfortably in dialogue with fresco motifs, for example,' says Daminato.

Allowing the dramatic views to take centre stage, the designers emphasised simplicity and celebrated natural materials. Many rooms have walls clad in panels of hessian linen or heavily textured Italian linen, which add warmth to the interiors. The designers were also deeply influenced by the work of Giorgio Morandi, the Italian painter known for his subtle, muted still lifes. 'We were inspired by his compositions, his removal of excess,' says Daminato. 'In his paintings we find a sense of meditative calm and peace.' These qualities combine with Daminato's delicate, humble approach to create a blissful sanctuary that has one foot in the past with the other treading lightly into the future.

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Dramatic, romantic and classically Art Nouveau in style, this nine-bedroom hilltop villa on Lake Como was given an update that maintains its rich history with contemporary flair. Designer Albano Daminato made sure that the breathtaking views remained the focal point, creating a holiday retreat that embraces la dolce vita





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Original flooring and mosaic tiles were retained, and natural materials in the form of a 1920s Carl Westman lantern and vintage Danish oak-framed mirror complement the yellow tones. The wall-mounted marble shelf, custom designed by Studio Daminato, adds a contemporary touch

Facing page  
The details of the Liberty-style ceiling are the focal point in this sitting room, where Studio Daminato's furniture designs (with the exception of Maxalto armchairs), inspired by the muted and minimal work of Giorgio Morandi, are subtle enough not to detract from the details overhead. The rounded form of a Japanese paper and timber lantern mirrors the circular motif of the ceiling pattern



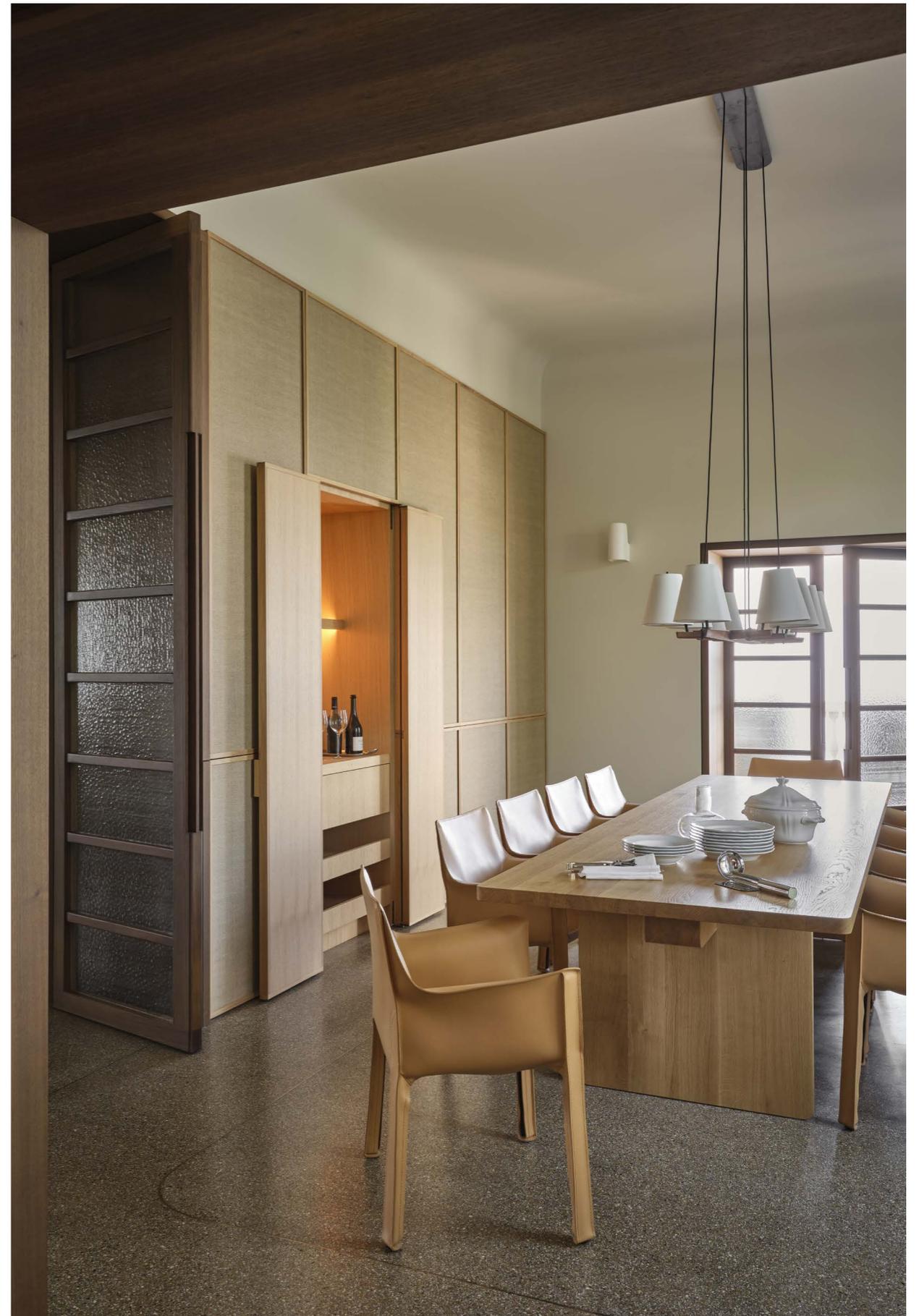


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A custom terrazzo countertop and island unit combine with a custom leather banquette to give the kitchen a retro Italian feel. A Danish element is added via the oak dining table and chairs, designed by Børge Mogensen for Fredericia Furniture, while handmade ceramic tiles from Thailand add a clean touch

Facing page

A dining room wall is covered in an oak-framed hessian and linen textile, the soft material a contrast to the leather-upholstered armchairs by Mario Bellini for Cassina. The ten-armed Admont pendant lamp by Kalmar hangs low over a custom-made solid oak table by Finnish carpentry studio Nikari





Linen and wood predominate in the piano salon, where a Studio Daminato-designed sofa is joined by a vintage coffee table by Hvidt & Mølgaard and armchair by Otto Færge. Eero Saarinen's Womb chair and ottoman and a 1901 Steinway grand piano bookend the space



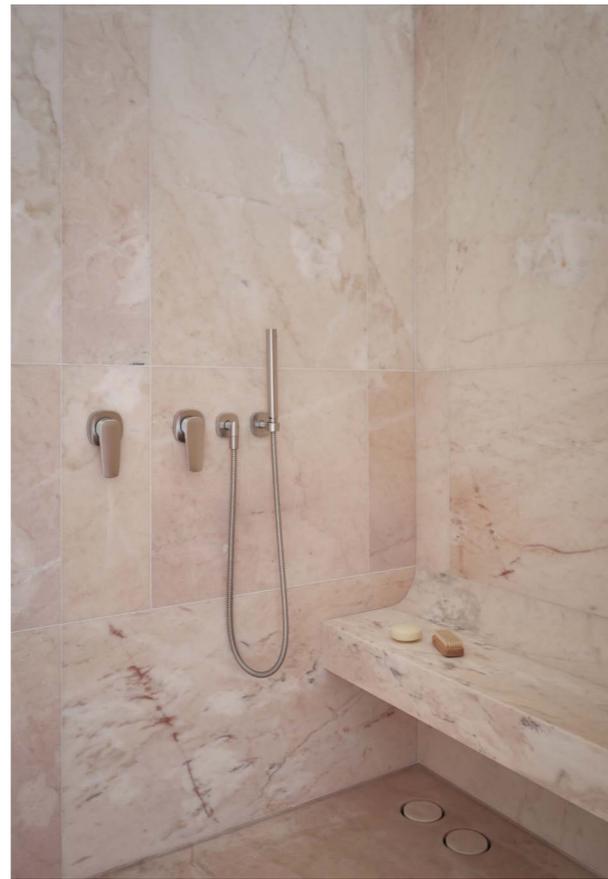
In one sitting room, the materiality of an Italian linen wall covering is echoed in the modular sofa from Verzelloni, while the deep tones of the mid-century Danish rosewood coffee table are matched by Studio Daminato's smoke-stained oak media armoire and hand-beaten bronze side table.



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Views and fresh air can be enjoyed from the Nanna and Jørgen Ditzel-designed basket chair or the Pure sofa by Andrei Munteanu for Tribù in one of the terrace lounges

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Floor-to-ceiling windows, more basket chairs and a Verzelloni linen sofa make for an inviting seating arrangement in this lounge area. The custom nettle rug is by Studio Daminato





The master en suite is known as the Rose Bathroom, named after the Rosa Portogallo marble that envelops the room. The dusty pink ceiling is an original fresco that the designers had restored

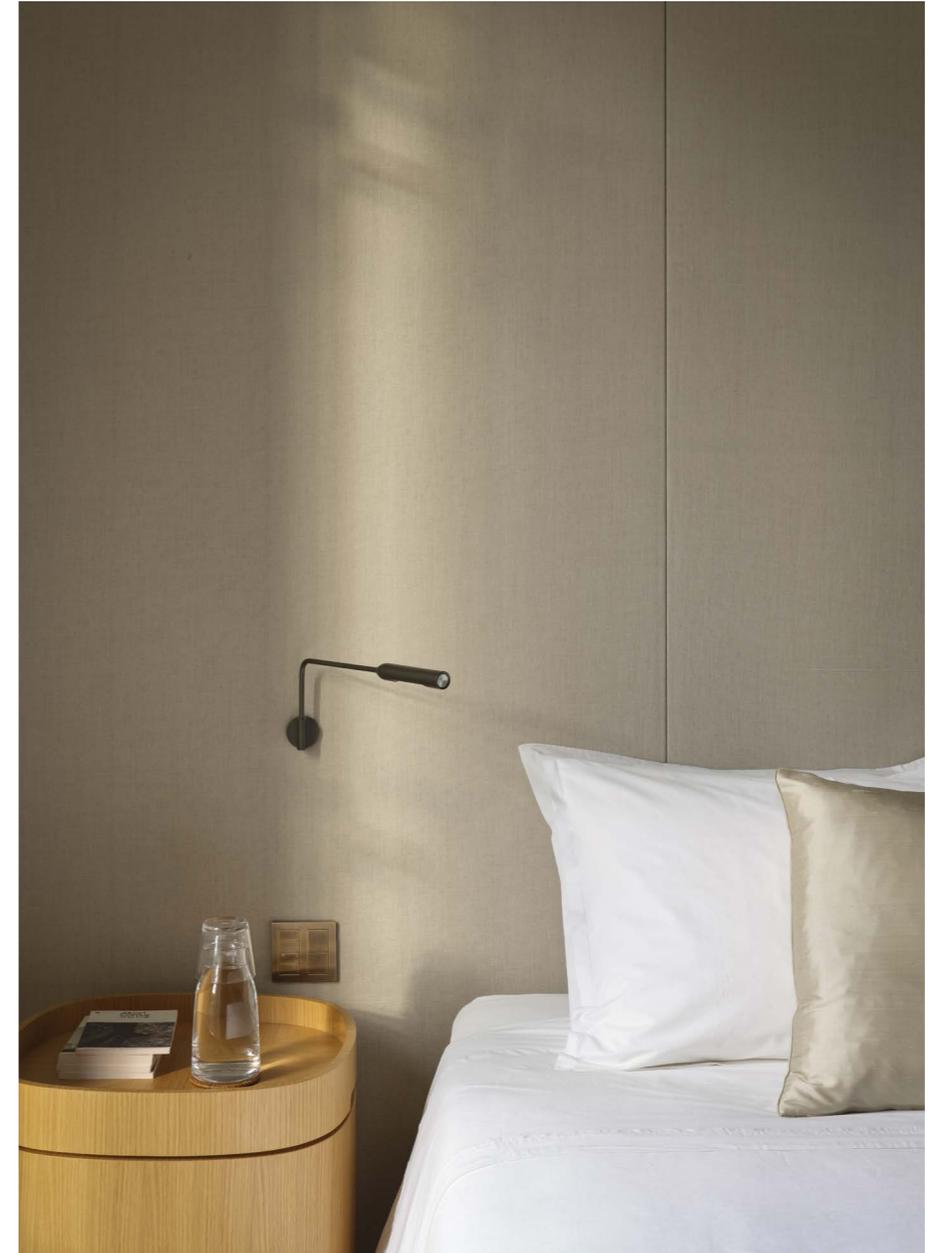


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As in the rest of the home, the nine bedrooms are all accoutred with mostly Danish and custom design in similar materials and colour schemes. In the master suite's dressing room, a 1960s Birgitta dressing table by Carl Malmsten is paired with a reupholstered oak chair from the same decade, designed by Guillerme et Chambron

Right

Another vintage Danish oak mirror frame appears in a first-floor suite, hung above a Peter Løvig Nielsen and Jens Quistgaard-designed flip-top desk and an Elbow chair by Hans Wegner



The first-floor junior suite has its own en suite and terrace, complete with free-standing bathtub from The Albion Bath Company. In the bedroom, walls are covered in linen from Belgian textile company Designs of the Time, while the oak bedside table was custom designed by Studio Daminato to include an integrated carrying tray



Designers Albano Daminato (standing) and Nicola Acquafredda were deeply influenced by the scenery of the Lake Como area, which sits at the foothills of the Alps, and succeeded in designing a villa that perfectly captures the landscape as well as the home's history

