



Rassegna Stampa

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A Basketball Coach's Ultramodern Milan Loft



Dante Benini, who was named Italy's top architect by a Rome-based magazine, *re Real Estate*, in February, designed this apartment for Andrea Trinchieri.

Andrea Trinchieri balances two worlds — the heritage of Italy and the sleek modernity of a New York City loft.

Mr. Trinchieri's newly renovated 200-square-meter (2,153-square-foot) apartment is on Corso Magenta in the center of Milan, tucked away in the second courtyard of a typical 100-year-old building just a two-minute walk from the 15th-century church that houses da Vinci's "Last Supper." But walk into his home and everything, from the sleek design to the creative lighting, declares that you are in the 21st century.

"The real story about this apartment is that I love New York and I love lofts," said Mr. Trinchieri, 38, who coaches Vanoli Soresina, a basketball team in Italy's Lega 2 that is based in Cremona, a city about 50 miles southeast of Milan. "I have a great job, but it's full of stress, and I spend most of my life in a gym or traveling, so I need a crib that I can come home to and be comfortable in."

He credits his comfort to the work of Dante Benini, who was named Italy's top architect by a Rome-based magazine, *re Real Estate*, in February. Mr. Benini, who oversees the work of 60 architects at Dante O. Benini & Partners Architects in Milan, had a direct hand in turning a dilapidated open space into Mr. Trinchieri's luxurious apartment. Mr. Benini also designed some of the furniture, including ultralight aluminum dining room chairs that will be available to the public in the future.

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“There was just a box when we started,” Mr. Benini said in an interview in his Milan office. “Now this house has become a style of life, just like the custom-made suit I’m wearing. My aim is not to be a minimalist with a Japanese style, but instead to have a simple, comfortable atmosphere. If that is close to Japanese style, then I have a Japanese style.”

Minimalist or not, the four-bedroom, three-bath apartment can change on a whim. The living room ceiling is covered with a paper-thin sheet of aluminum to reflect the lights of different colors that can be turned on to alter the ambience. There also are sliding doors and removable walls.

“If I invite people, I can show them how I cook or I can call a chef and close off the kitchen,” Mr. Trinchieri said as he slid aside glass walls, demonstrating to a visitor how the kitchen can be opened up to the dining area. “I gave Dante a track to follow, but he was the train and did all the rest. I told him that I wanted what I see in some very nice hotels.”

Mr. Trinchieri grew up within walking distance of his new house, so the apartment represents something of a return to his roots — he has an American father, a Croatian mother and citizenship in both the United States and Italy.

“Growing up all I wanted to do was play basketball,” he said, “but very early on it was clear I was not going to be good enough to play at higher levels. So I figured coaching was a good way to stay close to the game.”

Mr. Trinchieri has been preparing for the Lega 2 basketball playoffs, which begin Sunday, and has not had much chance to enjoy his new home, which was completed in December. If his team wins the playoffs, it will earn a spot next season in Italy’s top league, Lega A.

During the regular basketball season, which runs from October to April, he lives much of the time in a team-provided apartment that overlooks Cremona’s central square. “It’s nice, 300 years old, original frescoes on the wall, but I wanted a loft,” he said. “This is more me.”

Mr. Trinchieri would not disclose how much he has spent on the apartment, but it probably would be valued at 2 million euros, or almost \$2.68 million, considering its size and the fact that the average price per square meter for a refurbished apartment in his area is about 10,000 euros, or almost \$13,550.

Apartments in Milan’s five most prestigious neighborhoods — among them the area where Mr. Trinchieri lives — sold for an average of about 9,000 euros, or almost \$12,200, a square meter in the second half of last year, according to a study by Tirelli & Partners, a real estate agency in Milan. The agency deals exclusively with properties that have a minimum value of 600,000 euros (\$813,000) or are 6,000 euros (\$8,130) or more per square meter.



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“A house in a prestigious area of Milan is destined to grow in value because the population tends to grow richer and there are a limited number of luxury apartments,” said Marco Tirelli, the senior partner at Tirelli & Partners. “In Milan, the same areas that were exclusive 50 years ago are still exclusive, and the places that weren’t still aren’t.”

“Compare that with New York,” he continued, “where you have places nobody wanted to live five years ago that have been completely redone and now are very desirable. In New York the market can go into overproduction — but in Milan that’s almost impossible.”

Mr. Trinchieri says that he is not worried about resale value and that, as he gets used to his new digs, he is instead still busily juggling the two sides of his life. There is a hint of nostalgia for the United States, which he visits often for pleasure and to scout for new players.

“You live very well here — after all this is Il Bel Paese,” he said, using Italy’s nickname, the beautiful country. “But the Oyster Bar in New York at Grand Central is something special, and you don’t have that here in Milan.”