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VILLA BORSANI
MILAN, ITALY
DESIGNER CAMPBELL-REY

BORSANI'S VISION REVISITED

Taking a tour of Villa Borsani—the rooms arranged by Campbell-Rey creative consultancy—it is incredible to think that the original styling is just 20 years shy of a century old. The work of celebrated Italian designer Osvaldo Borsani, completed in 1943, the house is one of the iconic designs of the mid-century modern era. While embracing the Gesamtkunstwerk concept of the art nouveau and art deco periods, the design is resolutely rationalist, with large open-plan rooms, sweeping vistas, and floor-to-ceiling windows—all hugely avant-garde at the time.

Rooms are filled with pieces Borsani designed himself, many of them custom-built, and foreshadow the sleek lines and technical mastery of the modern age. Central to the house, for example, is a

three-tier staircase with marble steps and a walnut handrail that seems to float above almost invisible glass panels. This styling by Duncan Campbell and Charlotte Rey is an exercise in color, texture, and form: a checkered cushion in the study mirrors the geometric layout of the parquet floor, towels in the bathroom are carefully selected to match the color and patterning of the walls and floor, and in the dining room, Borsani's exquisite onyx table is dressed with stunning glassware in amber and indigo. Throughout, colors range from rich topaz and violet through to gold and cinnamon. And yet, so subtle are Campbell-Rey's touches that, instead of competing with Borsani's originals, they complement them and only serve to emphasize the timelessness of their design. ◆

216

217

