

HOMWORKS

INSPIRATION IMPROVEMENT STYLE



THE A&D ISSUE
It's all in the design



THE URBANITE'S AP[ART]MENTS

Japanese duplex townhouse overlooking Piazza Tigné.
Hans J Wegner 'Shell Chair' for Carl Hansen & Son,
'Ponti Silk' Rug by Suzanne Sharp, 'Light' by James Vella
Clark, Abstract Bronze by Amelia Saint George

Tailored design is perhaps the ultimate luxury: designing specifically for the end user. That's precisely what Chris Briffa Architects did with 22 new apartments at Piazza Tigné – each one individually conceived, planned and finished to provide unique, timeless and functional spaces for living, working and entertaining

Photography: Tonio Lombardi
Styling: Chris Briffa Architects with Books Plus, core (Bulthaup, Carl Hansen and Son, Magis, Artemide, Kristalia, Cesar, Bemezzo), Lily Agius Gallery (paintings and artworks), onepercnt (Poliform), The Rug Company (rugs)

The concept of home for young professionals has changed. Life has become so fast-paced that old roles and rules need to be adapted to encompass new living and working requirements, which must be met efficiently and comfortably.

The apartments at Piazza Tigné have fulfilled this brief by creating 22 individually designed and dedicated personal spaces, comprising studios, two bedroom homes and distinct townhouse apartments with their own landscaped roof terraces. The mix is varied and distinct, offering options for different requirements and a multitude of lifestyles. Chris Briffa Architects have created a variety of different artistic concepts, where each apartment has been designed with its own personality. Architect Chris Briffa outlines his inspiration for the 22 projects: "A set of diverse realities was drawn up in order to establish each apartment's – and its end users' – specific needs. We studied the requirements of the modern urban dweller ranging from the single to the contemporary couple, the seasoned professional to the home-worker. While each apartment is distinctly designed, the attention to detail and the sophisticated combination of divergent materials is constant throughout, depicting varying interpretations of luxury".

The approach of creating by hand which is typical in Briffa's studio - be it a free hand sketch or an architectural model - is often extended to the building site, where certain aspects behind a building's construction are left visible at a project's completion. At the Piazza Tigné Apartments, this is most evident in the rough concrete ceilings and walls which in many cases were left exposed, revealing the hand of the concrete shutterer, and how different pieces of wood were organically placed one near the other in preparation for the concrete cast. Shying away from the more common local tendency of covering things up with flat suspended ceilings filled with a barrage of equally spaced light bulbs, the craft of the construction, as well as the building's complex structure were celebrated – the connections between different concrete beams and ceilings sometimes suggesting a three dimensional interpretation of Piet Mondrian's studies of the proportions between lines in space. The lighting was then designed to highlight certain aspects of the construction – a series of beams, or a roughly finished column – resulting in a dramatic chiaroscuro. In some cases, even the graffiti left by site workers was retained and sealed to recount the building's story. ▶



Entrance hall with Japanese rice paper 'shoji' screens concealing storage and guest WC; open plan living/dining area in the background. Hans J Wegner 'Wishbone' Chair for Carl Hansen & Son, 'Flute' table by Poliform



Kitchen worktop oriented towards living space. Bulthaup B2 'Workbench', 'Fish' by George Eynaud, 'Man' and 'Ship' by Julien Vinet

This concept was married with a varied but limited palette of natural materials which were left in their natural state: timber was not varnished, but oiled or finished with a matte finish; marbles were not polished, merely brushed or honed; steel was not sprayed, but sealed only once it oxidised, in some cases retaining grind marks, welds, and its raw, rough, factory texture. Natural textures and finishes were not made to look 'plastic', but left in their natural state, instilling a sense of timelessness. The crux behind the design revolved around attention to detail, particularly where rough materials meet smoother, more traditional finishes. Joints were not concealed, but made evident by creating gaps and shadows, sometimes incorporating concealed lighting to accentuate the contrast.

Besides the delicate use of materials, importance was given to establishing the detailed contemporary requirements of the intended, diverse end-users. Living rooms were oriented towards Piazza views; kitchens were moved away from walls and more social kitchen islands were planned oriented towards the living spaces and the principal sources of natural light, elevating the art of cooking to a 'social' event. Bedrooms were redefined based on their functions: sleeping, dressing, and the 'processional' relationship between them. Hallways and double height spaces were designed to celebrate art, in some cases doubling up as art galleries. The 'spare bedroom' was revisited to double up as a study or alternative living space, based on the notion that successful relationships are forged when individuals are entitled to the commodity of having their own private space. ▶



Afternoon light penetrates through the bedroom sliding door and tearoom, all the way into the stairwell. Hans J Wegner 'Elbow Chair' for Carl Hansen & Son, Eames LCW Plywood Chair in Tea Room by Vitra, 'Untitled' by Ritty Tacsum, 'Little White Lies' Series by Teresa Sciberras in Master Bedroom



The master bedroom. Hans J Wegner 'Elbow Chair' for Carl Hansen & Son, 'Cocoon' lamp by Kristalia, 'Untitled' by Ritty Tacsum, 'Playground' and 'Little White Lies' Series by Teresa Sciberras



Bedroom suite with marble clad bathroom in the background. 'Easy bed' and side tables by Bemezzo, 'Blow' lamp by Studio Italia Design, 'Palio' by Donal O'Neill



'Bachelor pad' overlooking Piazza Tigné. Wooden bench by Cesar, 'Snake' chairs, 'Gaston' armchair and 'Tridente' side tables by Poliform, 'Key Turquoise' rug by Suzanne Sharp, Artemide 'Tolomeo' floor lamp

The concept of luxury was therefore reassessed: not simply restricting it to a combination of rich materials, but extending it to the varying spatial functions.

The apartments mirror the technology solutions that make fast lives more efficient and in turn, more comfortable. Entrances are securely gated using SIS security systems. There is swipe card access to all private areas, fire detection systems and CCTV cameras in underground public areas, which provide a substantial security factor. Innovative and effective telephony, Internet and building technology solutions and services are provided, as well as centralised HVAC. The option for high-

speed IT connectivity and innovative telephony services using Siemens technology, along with 24/7 customer care, ensure that residents enjoy the most up-to-date communication technology available.

An environmentally-sound and energy-efficient centralised climate control system (HVAC) supplies heating and cooling to the piazza apartments. At the core of the HVAC design lies the optimisation of energy use, allowing for simultaneous heating and cooling in each apartment. From consumption to maintenance, the system also offers a significant efficiency and cost savings. ►



Bath 'Suite' open to the master bedroom. 'Alfa Fusion' bathtub by Hidrobox, Gessi 'Trasparenze' mixers, 'Basics 14' towel warmer by Tubes Radiatori, accessories by camilleriparismode, marble works by Halmann Vella Ltd



Natural materials come to the fore in the bathroom – teak wall cladding concealing a storage cabinet, brushed travertine flooring and wall cladding. 'Alfa Fusion' bathtub by Hidrobox, Gessi 'Trasparenze' mixers, Scarabeo 'Zefiro' WC



Travertine clad 'wet room' opens towards the bedroom. Bespoke central console concealing shower mixers and wash hand basin. Flos lighting, Tubes Radiatori 'TBT' towel warmer, accessories by camilleriparismode, travertine works by Halmann Vella Ltd

The brief for the Tigné Point lead architects, aOM Partnership, was to design a new 'contemporary village' with a central piazza, which would become the heart of the development and indeed, the whole peninsula. With its contemporary design and size, it may be hard to remember that this is a Sliema square – yet it is, and in a very vibrant setting. This is the future – smart architecture (radial walkways that allow light to permeate through to every residence, as well as cooling breezes to make their way from the sea) within a distinct and very comfortable car-free zone, with every element carefully considered. [www](#)