

World Furniture

International Markets Review

94 June 2022 - Year 24

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Ceramics of Italy

by Paola Govoni

THE RADISSON COLLECTION HOTEL PALAZZO NANI IN VENICE

The Radisson Group, a prestigious brand of the hospitality industry worldwide, invested to turn a historic residence in Venice into an enchanting 5-star hotel with 52 rooms and suites and 3 private apartments. Palazzo Nani has become part of the Radisson Collection chain, where hospitality finds its highest expression in the offer of iconic structures, reflecting the spirit of this unique place, where the atmosphere of an 'authentic' stay combines with the comfort of a high-profile design.

This outstanding project signed by Studio Marco Piva SMP in Milan, has been realized in partnership with the Valtellina-based contractor Concreta.

The inspiring concept became a high-profile creation, fully respondent to the investor's needs.

IN THE HEART OF VENICE

The Radisson Collection Hotel Palazzo Nani is located in the heart of Cannaregio, a suggestive and 'authentic' area of Venice with plenty of restaurants and 'bacari' (wine bar), shops and artisan boutiques and a fundamental route for the urban layout of the city since the Middle Age, when the Cannaregio Canal was the entrance to the city for those who came from Padua or Treviso through the lagoon routes. The hotel is not far from the Jewish Ghetto, with its quiet tiny streets and its unmistakable architectural imprint. From here you can easily reach the rest of the city on foot or by 'vaporetto'; the Le Guglie ship stop is located right in front of the hotel. The Santa Lucia railway station is less than 10 minutes away by foot.



Stefano Gavazzi, CEO Concreta (on the left) and Marco Piva, Studio Marco Piva SMP, speaking at the GUEST LAB day in Milan on May 4, 2022

The building that houses the hotel is a sixteenth-century historic building that belonged to the ancient Nani family, active in the political, social and cultural life of the 'Serenissima Republic'. Over the years, various properties have taken over and the building has changed its intended use several times. It was a private residence, then an Austrian barracks and, finally, a school. During the work on site, plenty of objects and documents were found, testifying to the past of the building. Once recovered and treated, some of the finds have decorated the rooms and the garden.

The façade is punctuated by arches and elegant coats of arms in Istrian stone, possibly due to an intervention of Alessandro Vittoria, who helped emphasize and enhance the preciousness of the building.

BETWEEN HISTORY AND CONTEMPORANEITY

Architect and Designer Marco Piva, Studio Marco Piva SMP, and Stefano Gavazzi, CEO Concreta, outlined the concept and main topics of this project in a presentation held at Palazzo delle Stelline in Milan during the GUEST LAB day on May 4, 2022.

According to Marco Piva, a major challenge of this work was to find the right tuning between the enchanting historic imprint of the building and the requirements of a high-performing hotel in terms of comfort and quality of service.

A solution was found through a 'box-in-the-box' furnishing concept aimed at keeping intact the strong identity of the building, enriching it with a language of elegant contemporaneity. Large and bright spaces, some overlooking the Cannaregio Canal, offer chromatic tones recalling the nuances of the frescoed ceilings, with seats upholstered in intense colours reminding to the nature and value of the Territory: the shades of the water, the reflections of the glass, the interiors of the 'gondolas'. The hotel was conceived as a place of hospitality not at all closed and exclusive but open to the city and usable by those who wish to enjoy the Restaurant, the enchanting garden and the relaxing space of the lounge bar and the lobbies.



Radisson Collection Hotel Palazzo Nani Venice. Outside view



'Salone Nobile' 1st floor

THE REALIZATION OF COMMON SPACES

Stefano Gavazzi explains that all common areas of the Radisson Collection Hotel Palazzo Nani show the sign of a formal balance among decorative effects, to leave the view free to enjoy these spaces and capture the infinite suggestions coming from the lagoon city. The main entrance of the hotel houses the console-reception and gives access to the two restaurants and the lounge bar / breakfast room. A milky white ribbed glass paneling was chosen for the private Restaurant, to give rhythm to the space. In the main restaurant, the focus is made up of a sculptural monolith-filter, a large marble bench with upholstered seats in a soft teal velvet. A curvilinear bar counter dominates the scene and follows the floor islands. The covering is a textured carpet of white Venezia marble and Paradigma marble which contrasts it



Gym



Main Restaurant

in a darker shade. The chromatic dominant of the spaces is the lagoon-green declined in its various shades. In the lounge bar - which serves also as breakfast room - very dark colors have been opted running from wall to ceiling to create an immersive, enveloping atmosphere and to emphasize precious custom metal elements - such as the wall bottle holder - with a ribbed dark wood that gives rhythm to the wall, the motif of which is taken up by the striped ruby-colored upholstery that recalls the interior of a 'gondola'.

The lobbies are frescoed with 'marmorini', muses painted in the ovals above the doors, and fresco ceilings show Apollo, Venus and Cupid and Orpheus in Olympus. The recovered historic 'seminato' floor was joined by a custom-made mobile furniture designed by Studio Marco Piva, in dialogue with the colours of the frescoes, with lounge chairs created in collaboration with Natuzzi, alongside tables, work tables and meeting tables always designed by Studio Marco Piva.

The hotel gym is housed in a frescoed room cleaned with the intervention of a company specializing in the restoration of works of art which has followed the restoration of all decorative elements of the building.



Bar

This space showcases a large self-standing cylinders, almost high to the ceiling, handcrafted in metal bent by Concreta and fully equipped, with a high part with decorative and separation function and a base with cabinet function to contain towels, products, small tools and accessories and with an original metal mesh designed to separate while maintaining the lightness of a perforated surface crossed by light.

The lighting project includes both custom and branded luminaires. The technical lights were created ad hoc in collaboration with Artemide and completed with large circular chandeliers and LED light sculptures from leading brands such as Italemp, Flos and Vibia. The decorative lighting was handled by Concreta.

The large chandelier made up of opal glass spheres especially designed for this project stands out. The opalescence effect crosses the rooms and common areas like a fil-rouge and lights always refer to the transparency and reflections of the glass, to emphasize once again the strong relation with the Territory.

It's no surprise that in a project like this for Palazzo Nani, fabrics play a quite relevant role. The decorative elements and the chromatic choices of textiles are closely linked to the local context.

Most of the fabrics were produced by Rubelli, a historic and prestigious Venetian brand.

The bright velvets are by Rada Tessuti and the colorful rugs by Besana Carpet Lab. As Stefano Gavazzi underlined, all these spaces required particular efforts to harmonize the current intervention with the needs of a historic building that expresses its beauty and fragility. Not to mention the challenge of working in such a unique and peculiar environment like the lagoon.

Today, Palazzo Nani has returned to new life to tell the story of a distant past in a contemporary, smart and fascinating language, thus becoming a top address of the high-profile hospitality in Venice.