

Press release

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Lord Foster unveils show apartment at Milano Santa Giulia

Santa Giulia's new concept for urban living has been launched with the opening of Foster and Partners' show apartment in Milan. Norman Foster spoke personally about the scheme, revealing designs for the Crescent Housing development, which will offer the best of living in the city - close to the heart of Milan, yet with the benefits of suburbia. This balancing act will mean an excellent transport infrastructure, proximity to shops, restaurants and parks together with security, fresh air and privacy. Conveying the spirit of Santa Giulia, the show apartment is a fresh approach to such issues as views, light, flexibility, privacy and the quality of spaces - both inside and outdoors. By combining classic modern furniture, paintings and sculpture with traditional elements, the apartment is a timeless design for a contemporary lifestyle.

Norman Foster said, "To create a new model of living, we have considered everything, from the macro down to the micro - the environmental strategy to the quality of finishes in a kitchen."

Foster and Partners introduced the masterplan for a vibrant new urban quarter in Milan in October 2004. Reclaiming 120 hectares of derelict industrial land, the development will provide a resident population of 12,000 people with a balanced and sustainable mix of residential, commercial, social and cultural uses. Designed for cultural continuity, Santa Giulia will be in the best tradition of Italian cities, maintaining Milan's own urban DNA, while creating the infrastructure for it to compete in an international and global context. This "city within a city" will have input from a number of architects and artists, and the Crescent Housing is an early building that will establish the guiding design principles.

Designed for diverse appeal to promote a rich mix of residents, the apartments range in size and type from studios to large family residences to a luxury penthouse with a rooftop swimming pool. The crescent arrangement has created a 4.5ha private inner park, designed in collaboration with Landscape Architect, West 8. Stepped up from street level, the park provides a secure enclosure without visible physical barriers - ideal for evening promenades and leisure activities. A fitness centre, swimming complex, tennis courts and children's play area are integrated into the landscape, which extends onto a rolling carpet of grass beneath a delicate layering of trees. The environment is shaded and inviting, with a forest-like feel, providing a subtle play on light as it filters through the canopy of leaves.

Demonstrating the dynamic and sophisticated lifestyle of Santa Giulia, the show apartment is designed to give a flavour of the detailing, materials, fittings and spaces throughout the rest of the development. Like all apartments, it has a balcony large enough for outdoor dining, overlooking the park. The materials are warm - a timber floor and timber decking outside, offset by cool, neutral colours.

The interior is dominated by clean, uncluttered lines with soft curved edges, and the open plan layout allows for complete flexibility. Wardrobes are integral and storage is streamlined. Many of the elements,

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from the door handles to the kitchen system for example, have been designed by Foster and Partners. The strategy is to provide choice - the kitchen table, for example, can be used for the preparation of food or for informal dining when lowered. Smart technology enables residents to control lighting, electronic devices (kitchen appliances, heating, television etc.) and solar shading remotely via WAP mobile phone or via a centralised digital system.

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