

A home dressed by Armani

You may already choose Giorgio Armani for your wardrobe. Now, your home can also be designed with classic Italian style. **Rebecca Burgess** reports on the launch of Armani Casa's bespoke interior design service.



'A WAY OF LIVING THAT COMBINES SOPHISTICATED, COMFORT AND ELEGANCE TRANSFERRED INTO A PHILOSOPHY OF HOME LIVING.'

In the global headquarters of Armani Casa in Milan, a team of interior architects and designers are waiting to launch the Italian-style of Giorgio Armani upon the world. The design service is the latest brainchild to come out of the Armani empire, following the launch of the fashion guru's stores in New York and London.

But while the Armani name is often associated with the finer and more expensive things in life, Armani Casa is pitched as subtle, stylish and far from ostentatious. When Giorgio Armani launched his home furnishing collection, Armani Casa, in 2000, his aim was to create a complete concept of an Armani lifestyle.

He described his perfect environment as 'an intimate and sophisticated space in which to relax, unwind and entertain guests surrounded by beauty manifested through furniture and objects for the home'.

20Pine

The former headquarters of Chase Manhattan Bank has been converted into luxury apartments by developers Leviev Boymelgreen. Located in the heart of the financial district, 20 Pine Street is a classic of downtown Manhattan architecture, originally designed in 1928 by Graham, Anderson, Probst & White.

'We are thrilled to be creating something as unique and extraordinary as 20Pine, The Collection and we are privileged to be collaborating with Armani/Casa Interior Design Studio on this important project in the New York residential market,' said Shaya Boymelgreen, chairman of Leviev Boymelgreen.

Made-to-measure interiors

On the back of the success of his line of furnishings and fabrics, he launched the interior design service in March this year to offer 'made-to-measure' solutions for private clients and property developers. His design team work out of offices in London, New York and Milan, liaising closely with the Milan headquarters where Giorgio Armani himself supervises the process.

An Armani spokeswoman said, 'We are giving more and more importance to the design service because it's becoming a very important part of the Armani Casa business. We are targeting both private customers and property developers – designers who wish to create an Armani environment with the contribution of Mr Armani himself.'

A first for fashion

Armani personally supervises larger projects and has a hands-on role in the Milan headquarters, which directs all the Armani outlets worldwide. 'The whole collection is about the personal feel of Mr Armani – it's a first for a fashion designer to create a comprehensive collection,' commented his spokeswoman. 'It's a way of living and an experience of the aesthetic which has been created during more than 30 years and released into home living.'

'It's not just a matter of the brand, but what Mr Armani himself represents – his taste, style and fashion. It's a cultural phenomenon which recognises a way of living that combines sophistication, comfort and elegance applied to a philosophy of home living.'

Armani Casa brings Giorgio Armani's sense of textiles, materials and fashion sensibility to the home - in a sense 'dressing the house'. However, using the Armani interior design service does not necessarily entail using entirely Armani Casa products.

International developments

Projects since the launch have included flats, houses, yachts, holiday villas and residential projects. In a residential project in Harbour Green, Hong Kong, developed by Sun Hung Kai Properties, Armani Casa was commissioned to design two penthouses on towers overlooking the sea.

Meanwhile, in Pine Street, New York, the team was commissioned for the interior design of the former Chase Manhattan Bank, which was converted into more than 400 apartments.

The Armani spokeswoman said: 'Here we helped create the design for the common areas of the building in a prestigious residential centre. Alternatively, other private clients want to create an entire Armani apartment in the Armani style.'

From redecorating a room to total home planning, the process starts with client meetings with an interior designer in the London, New York or Milan stores. For larger projects the Milan-based team is brought on board and the process continues with site visits, design ideas and installation.

From layout to use of space, selection of materials and finishes, lighting, windows, furnishings and accessories, the Armani team has it all covered. For Giorgio Armani, his ambition is global. He hopes to open 40 Armani Casa stores by the end of the year, particularly in the Far East, and create a network of design studios connected to his fashion hub in Milan. 'I believe that through the consultancy we offer we can better translate the Armani philosophy into interior projects, reaching the very heart of our customers' lifestyles,' he says. ■

Explore Armani's interiors on the web at www.armani.com



The launch of the Harbour Green development.

Harbour Green

Located in West Kowloon, Hong Kong, the five towers of Harbour Green will rise to 48 and 56 floors. It offers 1,514 units ranging from about 600 to 2,150 square feet. The property will have units from two to four bedrooms with two en suites, together with specially designed full sea view penthouses and duplexes. The estate is next to the Olympic MTR station and many shopping malls. The premium residential clubhouse will have extensive facilities for residents, including banquet rooms, a multimedia centre, spa area, and indoor and outdoor pools. The penthouse at Harbour Green is the first residential penthouse designed in collaboration with Armani Casa.

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