

MY PROJECT WAS TO TELL UNFORGETTABLE STORIES.



AMX 5079

41

MY PROJECT WAS TO BRING A CITY TO LIFE.



MY PROJECT WAS TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO DANCE TO THEIR OWN TUNE.





Art and commerce Above left: the atrium in Bellini's architecture and design studio, a former industrial space in Milan's Navigli area, was designed by the architect in zinc-coated iron. Above right: the main studio space, across the atrium from Bellini's office.

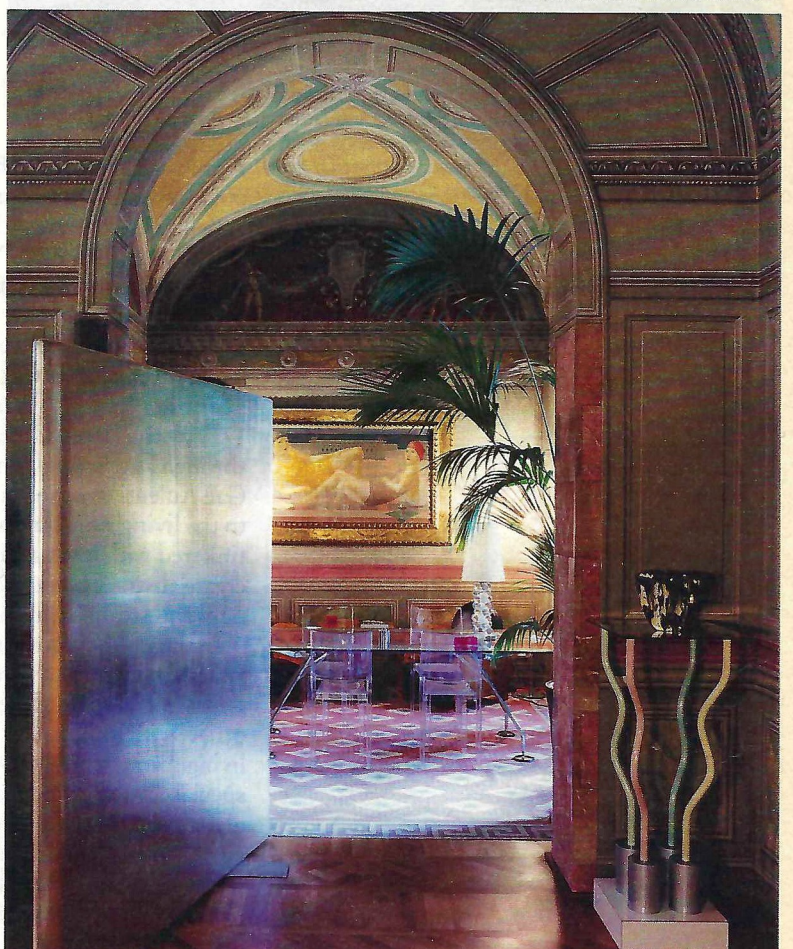
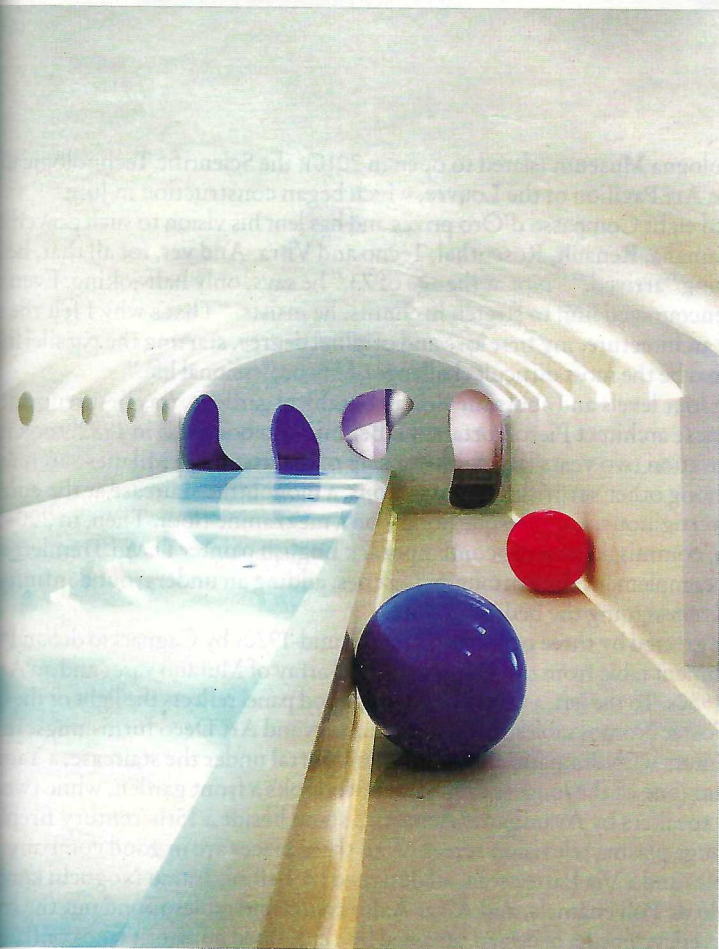
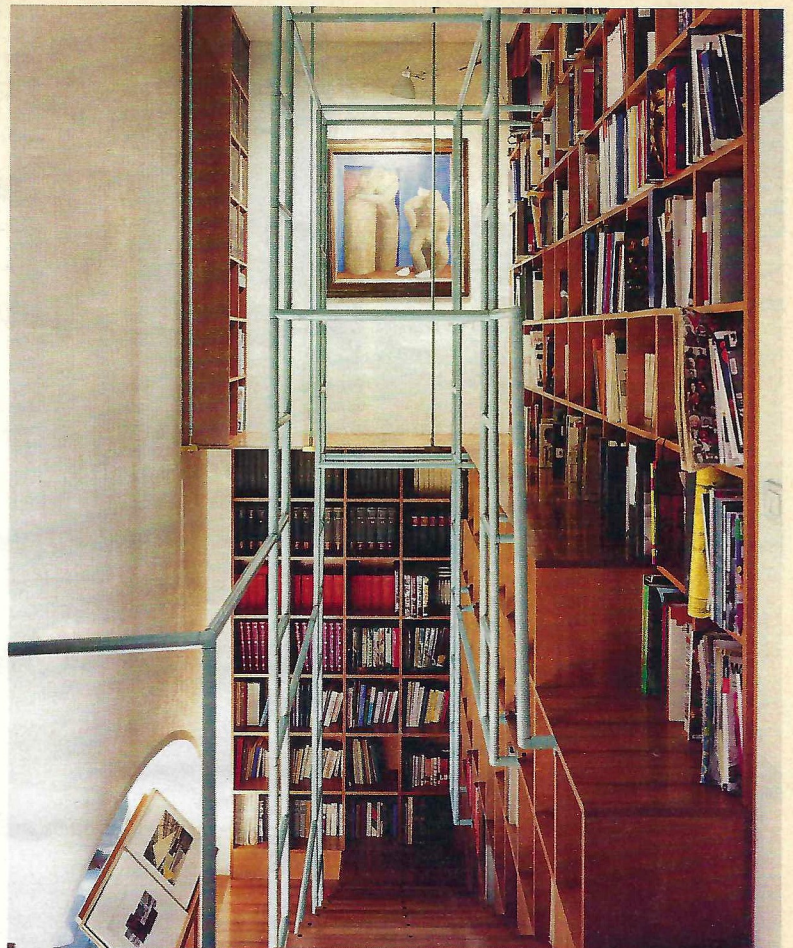
Frankfurt; the City of Bologna Museum (slated to open in 2010); the Scientific Technological Park of Genoa; and the Islamic Art Pavilion of the Louvre, which began construction in July.

Bellini has been awarded eight Compasso d'Oro prizes and has lent his vision to such powerhouse brands as Heller, Flou, Yamaha, Renault, Rosenthal, Tecno and Vitra. And yet, for all that, he has never seen himself as having "arrived." "Not at the age of 73," he says, only half-joking. Even the MoMA exhibition only encouraged him to stretch his limits, he insists. "That's why I felt the need to get back in the field of architecture, my first love and original degree, starting the parallel life of a 'young architect.' It was maybe the most difficult challenge of my professional life."

The house, which is on four levels and abuts the Brera's botanical gardens, was first renovated in 1930 by the famous Milanese architect Piero Portaluppi. Bellini, who bought it in 1982, took it through a structural renovation two years later with the help of his friend the Milanese architect Gae Aulenti, creating, among other surprising interventions, a monolithic staircase at the entrance to the living room and a vertiginous, Escheresque library on a mezzanine floor. Then, in 2004, he tinkered with it yet again, commissioning the contemporary English painter David Tremlett to create abstract murals to complement the Portaluppi frescoes, adding an underground infinity pool and steam bath, and redesigning the bedroom suite.

In the foyer, visitors are greeted by three paintings from the mid-1920s by Cagnaccio di San Pietro, an Italian maple and parchment table from the 1940s, a colorful array of Murano vases and an Angelo Lelii floor lamp from the 1950s. To the left, a silvered, rotating wood panel reflects the light of the home office, with its Norman Foster Nomos tables, Eames office chairs and Art Deco furnishings. In the living room, which one enters with dramatic effect through a portal under the staircase, a Yamaha special edition grand piano (one of the longest ever made) overlooks a front garden, while two giant electric-blue stereo speakers by Avantgarde Acoustics stand beside a 15th-century fireplace, currently occupied by a huge plasma television screen. And these pieces are in good company: Vortex vases, Basilica tables and a Via Lattea sofa, all designed by Bellini; Isamu Noguchi lamps, a Carlo Mollino table, Paolo de Poli enamels, and Alvar Aalto chairs and tables round out the room.

Clearly, the palazzo is an encyclopedia of design, amassed by a cultivated humanist who conflates the scientific and the philosophical, with particular heed to semantics. "I don't believe in the easy formula 'design follows function,'" Bellini explains. "The shape of an object must relate to its symbolic function. This is the only way it can appeal to the human sensibility and relate to today's space and



House and garden Clockwise from top left: a 16th-century Aubusson tapestry hangs in the bedroom; the staircase and mezzanine-level library, part of the Bellini-Aulenti collaboration; a pivoting silver-leaved wood panel separates the home office from the foyer, with Ettore Sottsass's *Le Strutture Tremano* table at right; the indoor swimming pool, with its plastered barrel vault and stone walls and floor. Opposite: a view toward the house from the lushly planted garden.

THE CONRAN SHOP



THE MOST EXCITING HOME FURNISHING STORE IN NEW YORK

407 East 59th Street, New York, NY 10022
Toll free 866 755 9079 www.conranusa.com