

# VOGUE AUSTRALIA LIVING

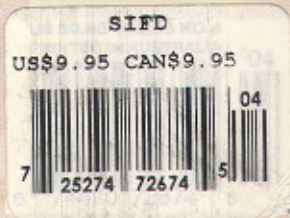
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# GLAMOUR

IN BED WITH MADONNA'S CHOREOGRAPHER





With its leather-lined walls, zebra rug and made-to-order silver fox fur on the bed, the bedroom is pure luxury. Airconditioning was fitted to accommodate Rome's hot summers. Details, last pages.





## TO ME A HOUSE IS A SET AND CAN NEVER BE FINISHED. JUST LIKE YOU WEAR A SHIRT, IT SHOULD ALWAYS KEEP CHANGING DEPENDING ON THE MOOD AT THE TIME.

"I BOUGHT THIS house from an old lady who took me around while holding my hand. When she found out I wanted to do something totally modern, she started to cry," admits Luca Tomassini. "My mother thinks I'm crazy too. She keeps telling me, 'this is not one of your videos, Luca'." But entering Tomassini's apartment is so compelling, there is something video-like about it.

Moving and shaking the pop world with his choreography and video production (Madonna, Kylie Minogue and Prince to name a few), Tomassini is behind London's management and production agency, Vibes UK, where he represents the best in the business.

As a professional dancer, Tomassini moved from Rome aged 18 in search of fame and fortune in Los Angeles. It proved a good move. Post 'project Madonna' he hasn't looked back, until now. "I think it's because I'm getting older," smiles Tomassini. "I missed Rome and besides, LA is too big. The real world is what you make it. I'm constantly telling people that," says Tomassini. "Life should be choreographed with dancing the whole time."

Tomassini lives the life of a pirouetting playboy in his newly bought and transformed celebrity crib. Located in Trastevere, Rome, the apartment is in a beyond-fashionable orange apartment block above a petrol station. Tomassini has the top floor and from his Julius Shulman Palm Springs-vibe roof terrace the garage can't be seen, only the palm trees and the rest of Rome. "I wanted a house full of surprises," explains Tomassini. "The apartment is like a box, a container, which I can use like a museum to project my life. My work is all about creating an atmosphere, so the house had to be emotive, looking good, but feeling good too."

Mixing the past and present to conjure his own vibe, the razor-sharp, graphic lines of the stairs set the tone. Smoked glass mirrored walls pull this way and that, crystal rocks from the ceiling multiply in the hyper-polished steel cabinets of the kitchen, pop wallpaper contrasts with the white flapper-fringing and the snugness of the open fires and furs work in conjunction with the airconditioning. "When it is hot I like to have it blasting so I can light the fires. It makes me feel at home," he shrugs.

Home to Tomassini is many places (he has a second home in LA's Malibu and then there's The Sanderson in London) but first and foremost it is Rome. "I grew up in a scene out of David La Chapelle's pictures," says Tomassini. "My mother made me wear pieces of carpet on my feet and plastic covered the couch." How times have changed. Tomassini worked with Milan-based architects Storage, who devised the concept for the interior and

implemented everything, from the structure to designing items such as the sexy white leather bed. Completing the picture, Jeff Andrews of TFP Design in Los Angeles, sourced the antique pieces in the apartment. Tomassini had a very specific brief – a wish list – itemising exactly what he wanted and where. "I have always kept wish lists," he explains. "First of all it was who I wanted to work with – Madonna, Michael Jackson, Prince. I managed to scratch people off the list. They're a powerful device to remind you of everything you want, so I made a wish list for the house."

The list was detailed. Tomassini wanted a party house over two floors with two fireplaces, a Jacuzzi, terraces, a Turkish bath, "the biggest closet you've seen in life", a movie theatre, and flat screens, music and bars everywhere. "There are four bars in this house. There's a house cocktail. It's called Luca and it changes every night."

Originally having six bedrooms and three kitchens, Tomassini re-invented his apartment into a one-room lounge, with guest bedroom, bathroom and kitchen. Up the mirrored-wall staircase is the main bedroom, gym and steam room. "To me a house is a set and can never be finished. Just like you wear a shirt, it should always keep changing depending on the mood at the time," he says. Right now the mood is part *Chicago* (fringed curtain), part Frank Sinatra (the bars and Delano Hotel terrace) and part Tomassini (the rest). "I love to be in the kitchen, having a glass of wine, smoking a cigarette and cooking with Sinatra playing in the background."

In contrast to his all-white house in Malibu, here the walls are black. "The colour is less present. It disappears," he says. The cement floors are glazed with a high-gloss resin and the concrete continues with the slabs making up the stairs. "They're dangerous without the banister, but I don't care; they look good," explains Tomassini. The area behind the stairs serves as the guest room which can be closed off as needed with a black glass wall.

Apart from the glass walls, surprises, and special effects such as the concealed red lighting that seduces by night, the significant others are the designer pieces. A favourite is his chrome-plated lounge, re-upholstered in Gucci 'G's, the fabric normally used for the luggage. "I love good design. I work a lot with Missoni, who have the ideal balance of style, class, longevity and family. They are the perfect Italian picture. The Missoni pillow on the terrace is from their recent 50th anniversary celebrations. The same applies to the Acqua di Parma candles everywhere. When I saw the black monogrammed candles I thought they were perfect. When I find something I like, I buy it and I buy a lot of it." **CLAIRE BINGHAM**









ABOVE: the far end of the apartment is for lounging with its 'Charles' sofa by Antonio Citterio for B&B Italia and Arne Jacobsen 'Egg' chair. The coffee tables are by Eero Saarinen for Knoll International. OPPOSITE: beyond the kitchen is the black-and-white dining room with black chiffon drapes, a 'Less' dining table by Jean Nouvel for Molteni and a ceramic chandelier, typical of the Capodimonte region. The glassware is the 'No Base' collection by Ed Annik for Driade and the cubes are covered in 'Egrets' from the Black & White Collection by Florence Broadhurst.





"THEY'RE DANGEROUS BUT I DON'T CARE. THEY LOOK GOOD."





A graphic staircase leads to the upstairs bedroom cutting through the central space of kitchen, fire-side lounge and fringed cinema. A circular leather bed, by Storage, sits in an area that converts to a guest bedroom by pulling across a smoked glass panel. The 'Dioscuri' lamp is by Michele de Lucchi for Artemide; the walls are papered with a Vernon Panton design from Kvadrat and the 1960s alabaster lights beneath the stairs are from Blackman Cruz in LA.

CAST CONCRETE SLABS MAKE UP THE GRAPHIC STAIRS.





OPPOSITE: in the kitchen is a cantilevered worktop and polished steel units by Storage architects, a crystal chandelier from Driade and 'Navy Chairs' redesigned by Philippe Starck for Emeco. ABOVE: with its back to the kitchen, the main living area has a fire set into a Zebrano veneered wall and displays a mix of vintage furnishings and designer pieces. On an 'Antelope' rug from Prada's home collection are a vintage chrome rocking chair and vintage brown leather chairs all from Spazio Novecento, the table is Minotti and the 'Giraffa' lamp is from Vincenzo Caffarella.







Tomassini's apartment, with its resin-glossed floor, is divided into different areas with devices such as sliding smoked glass screens, and here, with a floor-length fringe inspired by the film *Chicago*. Aimed at with a projector, the back wall effectively serves as a home cinema. Details, last pages.





# THE REAL WORLD IS WHAT YOU MAKE IT.

Luca Tomassini believes in making his wishes come true. Shaking his way to the top as video producer and choreographer for the likes of Madonna and Kylie Minogue, his Rome apartment is as much a visual extravaganza as his work. PHOTOGRAPHER: ANDREA FERRARI PRODUCER: CLAIRE BINGHAM