

LAKESIDE LUXURY

With its relaxed interior and enviable position overlooking Lake Como, this ancient Italian villa is a lesson in easy-going elegance

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Living room An ornate, original fireplace is the focal point of this formal reception area. The paintings on the mantelpiece were sourced from antique markets in Italy and China. Dark wood flooring, worn leather chairs and navy blue accents add warmth to the white-walled space ►



‘It is perhaps one of the most beautiful places in Italy,’ asserts Pietro Castagna, owner of this romantic, ivy-clad villa in the bay of Pescallo, a picturesque fishing village on the shore of Lake Como. The house is five minutes’ walk from Bellagio, a town noted for its sublime scenery, celebrity visitors, and for the dubious honour of inspiring the casino in Las Vegas of the same name.

Pietro, who during the week lives in a loft apartment in Milan, came across Pescallo 20 years ago when in Lake Como hunting for abandoned vintage sailing and motorboats to restore. ‘I was lucky enough to buy this wonderful property at the same time,’ he enthuses. Built in the 1600s and added to over the centuries, the home’s current façade, which dates from the mid-1800s, is the most recent addition. The building was originally a convent before being converted into homes for fishermen and their families.

Nevertheless, an interior designer by trade, Pietro was undaunted, and set about opening up the villa to make it bright and liveable. As his family has been in the business of designing and manufacturing furniture since 1939, he was well placed to realise his ambitions for the renovation. ‘I wanted the house to be a neutral space – white, bright, with few furnishings, a mix of things that we produce and vintage details,’ he explains. It is a winning formula. White walls unify the interior and provide a clean, crisp canvas for the furniture

and accessories; natural materials including wood, leather and stone subtly build up texture, and a predominantly monochrome colour palette looks smart and timeless, yet never severe thanks to the select addition of shades of taupe and gentle muted blues. Metal lights and kitchen chairs and a polished concrete floor add a contemporary, industrial edge, while paintings, photographs and collections of books bring richness and a sense of history.

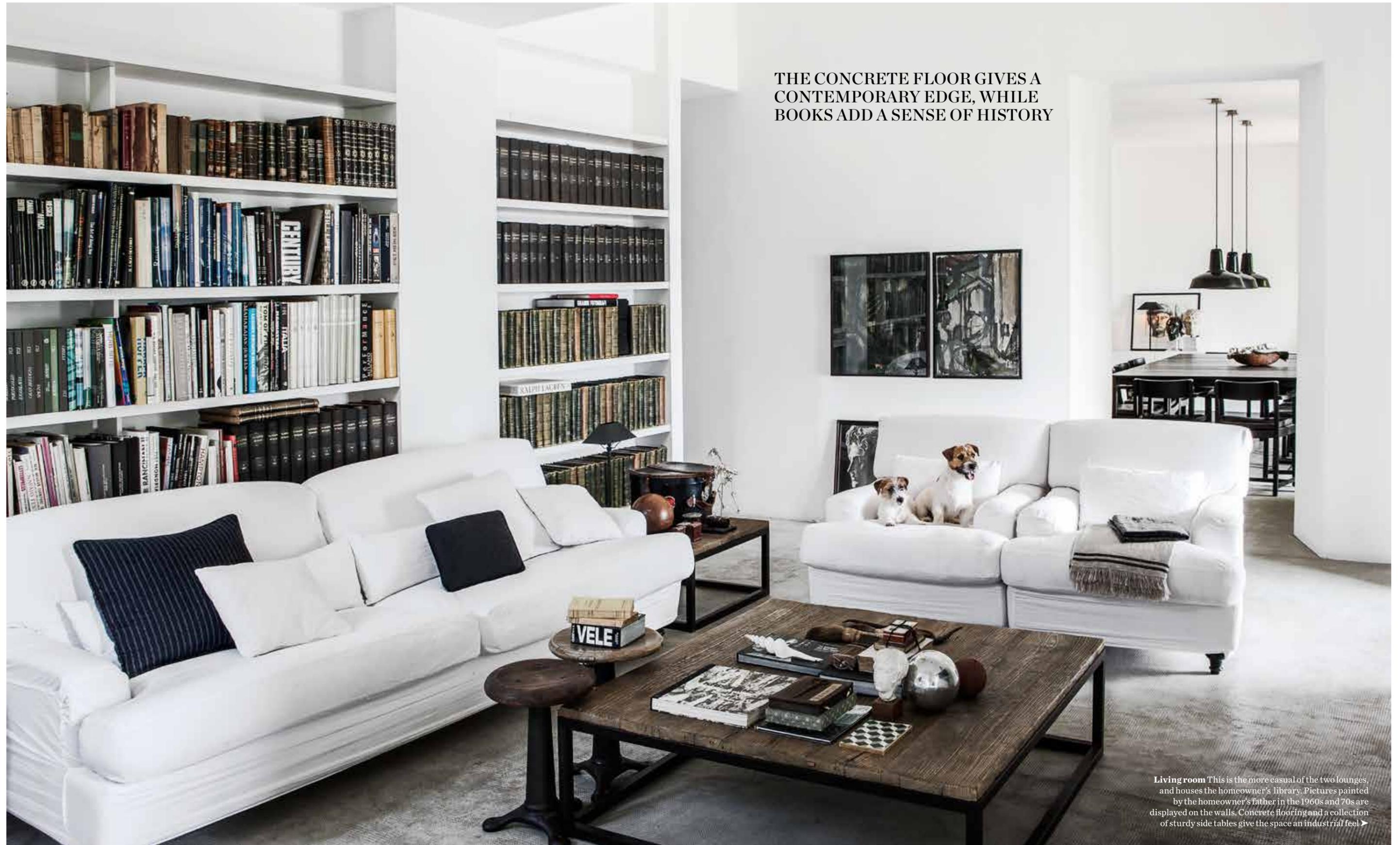
The house is large, and as Pietro lives alone – aside from his beloved Jack Russells, ‘husband and wife’ Enzo and Nina – he has divided the property into four units, two of which he occupies, the other two being rented out for short periods. ‘I always have guests arriving from America, Australia and England. I often meet interesting people with whom I share my home for a little while,’ he remarks.

As well as enjoying beautiful interiors, guests also get a taste of Pietro’s enviable lifestyle. A typical day begins early, watching the dawn rise over the lake. This is followed by a walk with the dogs into town to buy a newspaper, vegetables and freshly caught fish. As he likes to entertain, he often spends time cooking with and for friends. But he might sit in the courtyard reading, or go sailing in one of the small boats he has restored. ‘It’s a place of absolute relaxation,’ says Pietro of his lakeside abode. What more could you want from a home? castagna.info



Portrait Homeowner and interior designer Pietro Castagna
Living room The walls, floors and seating are kept neutral, allowing the homeowner’s collections of art, books and curios to take centre stage ▶

THE CONCRETE FLOOR GIVES A CONTEMPORARY EDGE, WHILE BOOKS ADD A SENSE OF HISTORY



Living room This is the more casual of the two lounges, and houses the homeowner's library. Pictures painted by the homeowner's father in the 1960s and 70s are displayed on the walls. Concrete flooring and a collection of sturdy side tables give the space an industrial feel ▶



'I LIKE TO COMBINE WOOD AND WORN SURFACES WITH SLEEK, MINIMALIST DECOR'

Dining area Like many of the key pieces of furniture in this house, the table and chairs were designed by the homeowner and made in his family's factory. For a good selection of industrial-style pendant lights, try Davey Lighting. **Above** Displays of art, books and objects add character to the sober scheme. **Stockist details on p181** ▶



WHITE WALLS PROVIDE A
CLEAN, CRISP CANVAS FOR
ART AND ACCESSORIES

Living area One of the homeowner's two Jack Russells with a collection of framed prints and paintings. Bundles of magazines sit on a weathered stone plinth, which was brought in from the courtyard
Kitchen Crockery, glassware and paintings are artfully displayed on slim shelves behind the island, which overlooks one of the home's two dining areas ▶





Bathroom Combined with carefully chosen fittings, the pared-back concrete bathroom is unexpectedly luxurious
Bedroom A vintage trunk, which the owner bought in Paris, sits at the foot of the bed (try salvage specialist Lasso or heritage brand Globe-Trotter for similar); the 'Tolomeo' table light is by Artemide
Stockist details on p181 

THE TIMELESS MONOCHROME PALETTE IS SOFTENED WITH THE ADDITION OF SHADES OF TAUPE AND MUTED BLUES

