



Beautiful art need not just be for the rich, but can be found in a public garden, or a common marketplace. It rubs away the rough edges of our daily existence and makes us more caring and mindful of what is worthwhile around us. Built spaces and thoughtful landscaping are never just for our comfort, but to make the world a place where each person, living creature and beautiful object finds its rightful space.

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IYO AALTO

milan, italy

commission :
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This project evokes

Japan with a sensibility that eschews stereotypes and clichés with subtle references to tradition that evolve a contemporary and pure design language. IYO Aalto offers a dual experience, in environments designed right down to the smallest detail, i.e. Tokyo's *edomae zushi* culture in a traditional sushi banco and contemporary cuisine in the elegantly designed gourmet restaurant.

The 320 sq. m. space embraces a spacious, open kitchen, wine cellar, the sushi banco and the gourmet restaurant. Natural materials – walnut, porphyry, brass, leather – are combined with sophisticated and more technological elements.

At the entrance, floor to ceiling glass plates and smoked mirrors visually expand the space in a game of transparency and infinite reflection. Inside, guests are welcomed by a light installation and a desk made of flamed gray-green porphyry and brass, introducing a dialogue between form and material that continues throughout the restaurant.



Discreet design touches such as small brass inlays drowned in the wooden slats of the floors; brass swallow-tails that recall the culture of high carpentry, are everywhere.

Canaletto walnut and porphyry are the dominant materials. The walls, never continuous, define and delimit spaces without ever completely isolating them: like the imposing central partition in slabs of split porphyry, flanked by brushed surfaces and void sections. Custom-made furniture and fittings, are produced in collaboration with Poliform Contract.

The sushi banco is an intimate room for eight guests to partake of the Japanese *edomae zushi*: a set of rituals where the nigiri are prepared in front of the guest. The entrance wall is a *brise soleil* in Canaletto walnut and allows a glimpse of both the internal environment and the lofty window.

The counter is in Canaletto walnut, with worktop and plates in smooth gray-green porphyry, characterized by thin brass

inlays. The leather seats, with a black elm structure and a leather custom-made cladding, are also used for the upholstered furniture in the main dining area.

Modular glass shelving holding ancient Sake barrels creates a visual demarcation between the sushi banco and the gourmet restaurant.

The gourmet restaurant is designed to accommodate 38. Canaletto walnut covers all surfaces while the ceiling is embellished with sheets of float glass. The table lighting consists of spotlights that provide controlled illumination without altering the overall lighting of the room.

Clean and formal precision define a language that refers to Japanese tradition without reproducing stylistic features. The wooden tables have brass swallow-tail inlays and, in the center, a gray-green porphyry swivel plate.

On the walls, there are movable sliding walls in Canaletto walnut, which act as

brise soleil and allow external light to be filtered according to the time and needs.

The kitchen is enclosed in a glass case which makes it, along with the other rooms, visible not only from the inside but also from Piazza Alvar Aalto, consolidating the relationship between the restaurant and the city.

All doors are automatic, with photocell opening to allow chefs and staff to move freely in complete safety. In the restrooms, luminous vertical and horizontal lines play with dark vertical surfaces, mirrored at full height, alternating with sheets of back-lacquered glass and round mirrors with LED backlights. Polished floors and ceilings made with recycled glass grit slabs get reflected, thus multiplying the space, causing an unexpected effect and adding a level of experience to the project. ifj

