



Credit: Andrea Martiradonna.

Ground floor main room, at Sushi Club, Cesano Maderno (Italy). Project Maurizio Lai Architects.



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# THE SHAPE OF LIGHT: A NEW IDEA OF SPACE TO SET THE FOOD EXPERIENCE OF AN ASIAN RESTAURANT IN MILAN

EDITED BY TREVOR STORK

Italian architect Maurizio Lai shapes the spaces of the Asian restaurant Sushi Club in Cesano Maderno, Milan, as a scenographic backdrop within which to enjoy a renewed gastronomic experience. An immersive space characterised by dark colours, lines of light and a theatrical atmosphere, with clever use of ceramics to emphasise the lighting project.

The project is spread over two floors and is characterised by a large central lighting installation, accompanied by light geometries that create an effect of depth and dynamism. Ceramics are entrusted with a critical role, not only in terms of composition and for the effectiveness of performance, but also for the skilful usage of maxi-formats with wood and concrete effect.

## SUSHI CLUBS: A NEW CONCEPT FOR RESTAURANTS

The Design was intended not only as an experience, a generator of shapes and atmospheres, but also as a tool that contributes to the creation of a recognisable brand. This is the **Sushi Club** project, born from the encounter between a young food entrepreneur and *Maurizio Lai's* ability to give a new shape to a phenomenon, in search of a place and an interpreter.

Now in its fifth expression – each one located in the North of Italy – the constellation of **Sushi Club** has transformed the very concept of Asian gastronomic experience, inserting it into a completely new aesthetic and formal context. It is an exemplary case in the manufacture of “accessible luxury” experiences, through the exclusive originality of the built environment and its atmospheres.

A bold proposal, which has changed the Italian panorama of Asian dining in suburban areas and beyond, leading an entire sector to pursue new expressive standards through research, interior architecture and design.

## SUSHI CLUB IN CESANO: THE INTERIOR PROJECT

*Maurizio Lai* conceived the spaces of the **Sushi Club** in Cesano Maderno as a real scenographic backdrop, choosing a compositional language that is resolved in the material dialogues, in the design of the volumes, in the diffused lighting that culminates in the large central lighting installation.

Over the two floors of the restaurant the interiors are characterised by a chromatic continuity that favours warm and dark tones, in contrast to the scenic use of light. On the vertical surfaces, luminous inserts define a precise metric, increased by the ceiling installations and further amplified by the wall mirrors of the main room. The dark/light dichotomy is resolved in elegant, welcoming and refined environments.

On the ground floor, a flexible distribution of the furnishings leaves room for different compositions, while on the upper floor large panoramic windows help to make the atmosphere even more suggestive.

The dialogue between materials and light accompanies all the environments, including the stairs and passageways, where the same immersive atmosphere that reigns in the rest of the room is maintained.



Ground Floor – view of the central light installation, an almost full-height sculpture made with backlit extra light glass blades at Sushi Club, Cesano Maderno (Italy). Project Maurizio Lai Architects.

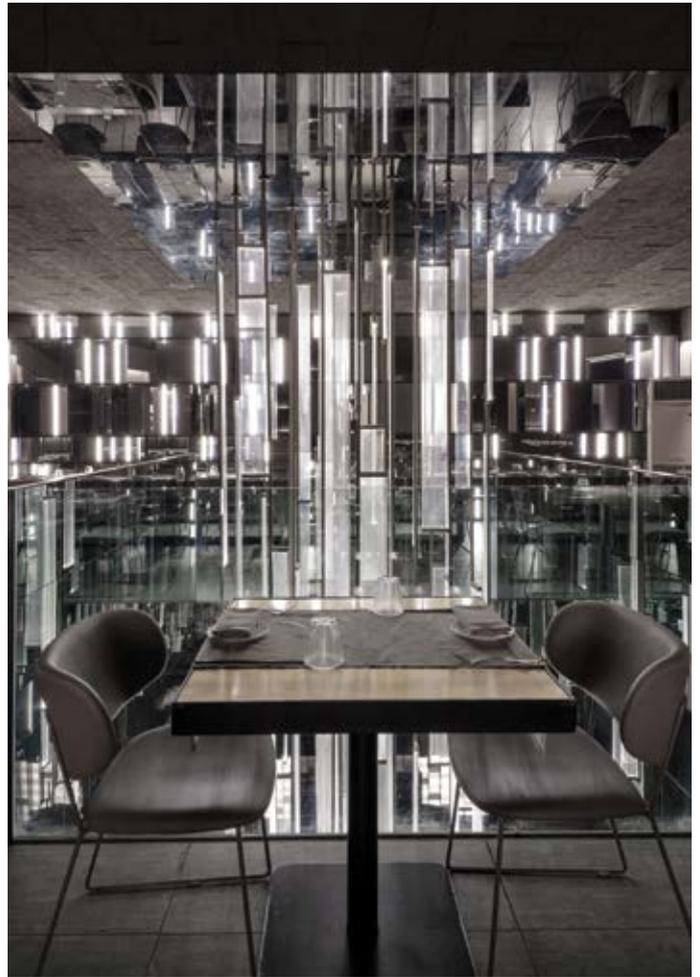
## THE LUMINOUS INSTALLATIONS

The space is marked by the constant presence of orthogonal luminous signs, which accompany the guest starting from the entrance: from here you proceed towards the rooms in a theatrical atmosphere defined by thin luminous lines integrated into the walls.

At the centre of the space, an installation inserted in the void obtained between the two levels becomes the protagonist of the rooms: the almost full-height sculpture, made with backlit extra light glass blades, is embraced by mirrors that amplify its perception in every direction.

## THE USE OF CERAMICS

Ceramics are given a critical role, not only for the effectiveness of performance, but above all for the ability to contrast the expanded lighting project, through compositional and chromatic choices. ■



First floor – view of the central light installation, an almost full-height sculpture made with backlit extra light glass blades at Sushi Club, Cesano Maderno (Italy). Project Maurizio Lai Architects.

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## ABOUT MAURIZIO LAI

Architect and designer, Maurizio Lai is an original interpreter of a contemporary aesthetic, in which light plays a fundamental role. He studied in Venice and Milan, where he graduated. He initially designed for television and fashion, to rapidly extend the business to the commercial and tourism sector.

Hospitality and retail is the scene of an expressive research, which manifests itself in the building as a visual impact and creation of experience, delicately moving into private residential design. The firm provides exclusive and customised design solutions, on an international scale, using a network of proven manufacturers, according to the principles of Design Excellence.

Maurizio Lai was awarded the Restaurant & Bar Design Award as the best Lighting Design International and nominated at the Dezeen Awards 2020 as the Best Interior Design Studio of the Year. It collaborates with prestigious institutions to train and promote the culture of excellence in design.