



# Homespun charm

*This simple, light-filled apartment in Milan is defined by its unique collection of furniture, all handcrafted by its creative owner*

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**Kitchen/dining area** The kitchen is homeowner Costanza Algranti's favourite room in the house. Units made from reclaimed galvanised iron with a stainless-steel countertop combine a handmade, patchwork-like look with an industrial, contemporary finish. The dining table, which has a salvaged copper top, is surrounded by vintage bistro-style chairs (try The Old Cinema). On the wall behind it, boxes crafted from recycled wood provide quirky shelving for books  
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Ask design-conscious homeowners to name their favourite furniture store and you'll get a variety of responses. Some will cite a well-known showroom stocked with classic models, while others might reluctantly reveal their neighbourhood secret. Markets, antiques shops and high-street brands are all likely to get a mention, but there aren't many people who would echo Costanza Algranti's reply: her number one destination for furnishings is always the landfill site.

Costanza, a designer, is a passionate believer in giving things a second chance. For more than 20 years, she has been breathing new life into discarded materials, first by collecting the flotsam and jetsam that washed up on the beaches of her native Livorno, and more recently by searching through Milan's scrapheaps.

Her light-filled apartment in the city's Isola district is a calm, welcoming space furnished almost exclusively with her own pieces, which are handcrafted from recycled wood and metal.

Costanza has lived here with her nephew and creative collaborator, Pietro, for the past year. 'This is an amazing district - it still has small artisanal workshops,' she says. 'All kinds of lovely people live here, and I immediately felt at home.' The building was once a social centre that provided a range of cultural activities and entertainment. By the time Costanza moved in, it had been transformed into apartments and the surrounding area, formerly an industrial district, was on the up. Just a stone's throw from her workshop and exhibition space, this was the ideal base for the designer, who enlisted architect Lorenzo Viola to help her reconfigure the interior.



Every home reflects its owner's style to some extent, but here, Costanza's personal aesthetic runs through every piece in every room: the apartment is the ultimate showcase for her creations. Wall-mounted boxes – each one meticulously sourced and reworked by hand – provide practical and varied storage solutions throughout, while more elaborate projects include a wardrobe made from a patchwork of reclaimed wood.

The scrap metal, broken pallets and corroded copper gutters that Costanza salvages today may not have the obvious romantic appeal of the driftwood with which she once worked, but she clearly believes fervently in the beauty of industrial materials. This enthusiasm, combined with her eye for design, has resulted in a unique home for which each piece has been carefully crafted. [costanzaalgranti.it](http://costanzaalgranti.it)

**Living space** Folding glass doors separate this open-plan area from the terrace outside, allowing light to flow throughout the space. The homeowner designed the sofa, which has storage concealed in its recycled copper base, and the pendant light – made from recovered iron – that hangs above the kitchen sink

**Terrace** The vibrant outdoor space is filled with plants, from bamboo to chilli peppers, and has wooden flooring that was salvaged from a local restaurant. Lanterns are stored in a Sunlight soap crate (try Baileys for vintage packaging)

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**Wall-mounted boxes made from reclaimed wood are used for storage. The wardrobe is crafted from a patchwork-like mix of salvaged timber**



**Bedroom** Most of the furnishings here have been made using reclaimed wood in contrasting shades. A series of panels are inlaid into the concrete floor in lieu of a rug, creating a striped effect that is echoed in the bed base. Even the pared-back staircase (left) is made from recovered materials: oxidised iron rails with wooden treads. Try Retrouvius for salvaged timber **Stockist details on p239 ED**