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## VILLA FRANCISCI IN UMBRIA, ITALY

It's many a person's dream: to restore an old villa in the Umbria region of Italy. The architect Giancarlo Alhadeff realised that dream for an art collector-cum-project developer.

He transformed the old Villa Francisci from a dilapidated complex with an olive press into a comfortable home, retaining its original ambience. Jean Pierre Tortil was called in to take care of the interior design.

Villa Francisci is in Todi, Umbria. It is an ancient estate with a villa and an olive press. When the architect Giancarlo Alhadeff embarked on the restoration and refurbishment, his main aim was to preserve the characteristic historical architecture. Accordingly, he went about rebuilding and refurbishing the complex in keeping with the requirements of a modern city dweller.

During the operation, an old tower was uncovered and after restoration, entailing revealing the original stone, it was to provide visual and structural stability to the entire edifice.

The second structure, the olive press, had to be fully restored. The original double height was reinstalled in the central space, the immediate effect of which was to lend dramatic impact to the interior, especially as it now affords views of the typical Umbrian countryside.

The villa's restoration also resulted in the transformation of the former stables into guest accommodation and the addition of a portico in local stone. The terrace above the portico provides additional space for the upper rooms.

Throughout the building operations every effort was made to protect the trees and plants on the estate, in particular the mulberry and olive trees, also with a view to preserving the authenticity of the complex. That authenticity was further reinforced with the use and re-use of local and original materials. For the architect, who grew up in Japan and studied in the United States, the project constituted a return to his Italian roots. Although he trained as a modern architect, he threw himself into this 'classical' assignment with great enthusiasm.

The outcome can be seen in the accompanying photos.



