

Not Just Fashion

In Australia, an architectonic complex - hotel and residential units - entirely designed by Versace: a project of "high fashion constructing" realized with the best products on the market. An appointment that Mapei could not miss.



For Versace, the Italian Renaissance and Baroque not only represent a source of inspiration for high fashion creations, but also and above all a deeply rooted stylistic influence. The elements and suggestions borrowed from this historic and artistic period have therefore influenced not only "haute couture" clothing, but everything that regards the fashion world and life itself, from show-rooms to private homes.

A striking example of this style's reproduction is the prestigious Palazzo Versace realized in Gold Coast, Australia, an important locality near Brisbane, in the Queensland territory, at about 400 kilometers north of Sydney. Indeed an ambitious project: an architectonic complex - hotel and residences - inspired by styling

elements and concepts of the late Renaissance-Baroque architecture and by the proven line for interiors "by Versace". This dream has come true thanks to the team work carried out by the architects of the DBI Design Corporation studio, responsible for architectonic design, by the designers of the Versace "team", responsible for the interiors and for image coordination,

and by the Sunland Group, the "main contractor".

The project will extend over 2.2 hectares, privileging a western exposure towards the "Broadwater Side" coast.

The architects have developed the residential areas on the sides of the central body, the hotel, orienting the nucleus towards the hinterland and the rear of the property towards the lagoon and the sea.

The presence of numerous pools, basins and fountains - just like in a Renaissance garden - create a suggestive continuity between the ocean and the mainland. Furthermore, the designers were required to obtain the highest number possible of rooms on three floors, which is the maximum height allowed by the municipal building plans: the solution adopted required the realization of numerous covered terraces. To take advantage of the panoramic view of the ocean, the rooms, the restaurants and other important common areas have been oriented in the direction of the sea.

The design of the entire complex transmits an intense architectonic message: it's a strictly formal construction, but characterized by evident classical elements such as columns, pilaster strips, gables, etcetera.

The complex is characterized by an absolutely luxurious setting, where the richness of the architectonic combinations of volumes and surfaces is combined with the extreme variety of formal and composite solutions of the gardens and fountains. The exterior is refined and characterized by green spaces and ponds, mosaics, basins refined with marble, decorations, statues and other ornaments such as stone obelisks that emerge from the pools, vases and terra-cotta objects. Even richer are the solutions for the interiors, in the hotel as well as in the apartments, where

everything has been realized following a strict rule: the search for quality and prestige. In fact, extreme attention is paid to details, to accessories and to the matching of materials, colors and surfaces.

Parquet on top, Lignobond below

With such richness and luxury, each solution is worthy of a detailed description. But we've decided to talk about the wooden surfaces used for the floors in the rooms, the meeting rooms and many common areas. For the areas finished with parquet, as for all other floors, the Versace design team developed elaborated geometric patterns characterized by inserts and crossings, enhanced by the contrast of the different color tonalities of the woods used. The flooring is made of American oak, Merbau and Sonokaling. It was supplied by the Ceipo company of Singapore, which guaranteed the absolute quality of the wood thanks to the experience matured in similar prestigious interventions. "The parquet floor is the signature of Versace hotels. We worked in close collaboration with the project manager - says Ceipo manager - to supply the parquet required on time and in compliance with their specifications". The parquet was cut and prepared in pre-assembled panels, ready to be exported to Australia and installed on the spacious surfaces of the Palazzo Versace. Panel installation was done by Fletcher Floors, a local family-size company, present on the market since 1966, and specialized in the installation and maintenance of wooden floors.

A difficult task for the installers, which can be summed up in the words of the manager Warren Fletcher: "We wanted to be sure that installation was adequate to the hotel's quality, so we developed special procedures that would satisfy the furnishing and finishing requirements requested by Versace". Since parquet installation, as all other applications, required that the designers carefully select the best products on the market, it was obvious that they include Mapei, represented here by LIGNOBOND®; this product, a two-component polyurethane adhesive for floor installation, was chosen for its excellent adhesive and flexibility qualities: "a product that ensures parquet's stability over time", said Warren Fletcher.

LIGNOBOND® is used to bond large and





small strips of wood and all types of wood parquet and on any type of construction support.

Totally solvent-free (which sensibly reduces the risk of allergies), it's composed of a polyurethane polymer (part A) and

of a special hardener (part B): carefully

mixing the two parts produces a uniform colored paste that is easy to apply with a notched trowel. After hardening, the product doesn't present shrinkage, and is transformed in an elastic film, resistant to humidity and heat and with excellent bonding properties. After the installation of wooden floors, the surfaces were treated with a specific oil that improves and protects the wood without causing it to lose its typical qualities, and avoids that the surface be covered with a plastic looking film.

From a technical and aesthetical point of view the result was again perfect: the wood harmonizes with the other materials of Palazzo Versace, such as marble, creating a refined and elegant atmosphere.

"The products mentioned in this article belong to the line "Products for the installation of resilient, wood and textile floor and wall coverings".

The technical data sheets are contained in the Mapei Global Infonet CD and in its Internet site www.mapei.com.

Lignobond: water and solvent free, two-component polyurethane adhesive for wooden floors.



TECHNICAL DATA

Palazzo Versace Hotel - Gold Coast, Queensland (Australia)

Year of construction: 2000

Project: DBI Design Corporation - Gold Coast

Main Contractor: Sunland Group - Gold Coast

Wood floors installed by: Fletcher Floors

Parquet supplied by: Ceipo Australasia, Singapore (American oak, Merbau, Sonokaling)

Mapei product used for parquet installation: LIGNOBOND

Mapei reseller: Fletcher Floors

Mapei coordinators: Ron Daniels, Ray Donaldson, Les Taylor

The opening photo and the one on this page are courtesy of "Australian Design Trends" - vol. 12/n. 12.