

On Higher Ground

Century Properties' **Robbie Antonio**—with the interior design expertise of Milan-based Versace Home—carves out an iconic spire in the Makati skyline: The Milano Residences



REAL ESTATE DEVELOPER, art aficionado, and dapper dresser Robbie Antonio is a cut above the rest. His high-style swagger and forthright approach radiate a deviant persona with a can-do attitude.

In New York, he spent a lot of time with business tycoons, Hollywood celebrities and models, fashion and interior designers, and the world's largest art collectors—many of whom are tastemakers in their own right. Having sold his \$10 million apartments built by his company, he understands what the ultra-wealthy expect in the form of real estate.

Now, the jet-setting managing director of Century Properties launches his boldest and most awe-striking project yet—The Milano Residences. Located in the center of Makati City, the building is the marriage of fashion, art, and architecture; carved in stone, steel, and glass through a partnership with international luxury lifestyle label Versace Home, the designer of the building's interiors.

"It's my passion to remove any sense of timidity, to push the boundaries, and to thrust ideas beyond what is imaginable," says Antonio. A man of impeccable taste, he likewise wields the power to ultimately create it, for the purpose of serving the country's ultra-discerning and ultra-affluent market with the Philippines' first internationally designer-branded residential condo.

In this interview, the sultan of style tells us why the The Milano is "a fantasy that holds promise beyond imagination."

During your meetings with Versace S.p.A.'s management in New York, how did you convince them to collaborate with Century Properties? It's their first project in this side of the world, after all.

Century Properties and Versace Home have a multitude of characteristics in common. We both have a relentless passion for new and fresh creations. The Versace group has always been forward-thinking; never defined by bounds or limits and always presenting ways to recreate and inspire all fields of fashion, art, and design. In the same way, we not only want to excite but to astound our clientele. We strive to exceed expectations and challenge assumptions. We go for anything that is bold, edgy, and unconventional.

The opportunity came when our firm launched our project in Manhattan. I met a lot of notable personalities—Pritzker Prize-winning architects, global designers, and top developers. The city was a melting pot of talent and technique, and I was brazen about absorbing as much as I could from the people that surrounded me on a daily basis. When we met with someone from Versace's management team, we were actually discussing a project we wanted to do outside Asia. We were very aggressive at that juncture—looking to expand our development portfolio to Europe and South America as well.

When we were gearing up for the launch of our project in the Philippines, they understood that our group executes projects from a global perspective and therefore believed that it was the perfect opportunity for them to venture into the Asian market and for us to introduce a whole new lifestyle to the same.

DEC
2010

504



TOWERING FIGURE
Robbie Antonio, Project Head of The Milano Residences and Managing Director of Century Properties, stands in front of his company's Gramercy Residences—soon to be the tallest tower in the Philippines. *Opposite page:* With Santo Versace, Chairman and President of Versace S.p.A., in Milan.



ITALIAN JOB
Versace's bold imprint as seen in the The Milano's hammam (day spa).
Below: Antonio in front of the Four Seasons Hotel during Milan Fashion Week. Opposite: The pool with Versace Home's elaborate detail.

DEC
2010
506

“The Milano—with the Versace imprint of bold colors, striking embellishments, and intricate detail—is a piece of livable art.”

In Milan, what were your interactions like with siblings Donatella and Santo Versace, Versace S.p.A.'s Creative Director and CEO, respectively?

Donatella has achieved so much since she took the reins for Versace. She has been at the forefront of the company's design team and has been at the helm of the empire since Gianni's death. The brand has also extended into a plethora of disciplines, from fashion

and interior design to perfume and cosmetics. Altogether, the brand has transcended from fashion to one that exudes the pinnacle of luxury living. Her designs are both timeless and distinctive, and that is why the brand is what it is—considerably the most popular label synonymous with the words “luxury,” “style,” and “elegance.”

Santo, on the other hand, is a business savvy individual. Along with the CEO,

Mr. Ferraris, he manages the investments and ventures that the brand gets into, and discerns whether certain forays are plausible and would sizably benefit the company's growth and influence in the world. He isn't just the President of the Versace Group, he also holds a seat in Italy's Chamber of Deputies, the country's lower house in parliament. Together with Donatella, they comprise the ultimate powerhouse: a unit that merges perpetual style and sharp intellect, two of the most

important factors in a successful enterprise, which Versace most notably represents.

Versace Home has expanded to luxury resorts and hotels in the Gold Coast (the first Palazzo Versace) and Dubai (the second Palazzo Versace), as well as designing and detailing the interiors of private jets and helicopters, even the Lamborghini Murcielago LP 640. Can we expect the same skillful, lavish touch in their first Southeast Asian condominium?

Yes and no. Expect the designs to have the Versace Home imprint—such as the bold colors, striking embellishments, and intricate detail. On the other hand, it is something that has never been seen before. It is ultimately new and unexpected, which is what makes this style the most coveted brand in the market today. It is both classic and original, in my perception.

Versace Home designed all the interior amenities of the Milano, which includes the grand lobby, hallways, swimming pool, library, juice bar, hammam (day spa), and others. Would-be residents will also be given





DEC
2010

507

the option to have their units stylized with Versace Home detailing, décor, tapestry, and tiling. It is our passion to push the boundaries of both work and leisure. That motivates us to be the best in what we do. We like to create tastes and craft trends, rather than follow them.

The Philippine setting, though flocked with high-society globetrotters and fashion aficionados, remains behind many of the world's greatest cities in real estate development. The Makati skyline is indubitably astounding, but it is without comparison to the ostentatious hyperstructures of London, New York, and Dubai.

In a place where high-rise condominiums serve to overcrowd, and common areas seem all too commonplace, we at Century Properties refuse to sacrifice ingenuity for a mere take in the profiting cookie-cutter industry. We stand at the forefront of Philippine real estate's facelift via the Milano Residences.

Aesthetically, how will we see the Italian brand's signature imprint in the interiors and furnishings of The Milano? Will it reflect the late Gianni Versace's celebrated style, which took equal amounts of inspiration from Italian architecture, theatre, and the Miami beach life?

Versace Home's designs reflect a mix of bold and vivid colors with soft patterns—which create a statement that is altogether fresh and

ultra-sophisticated. We consider Milano as a piece of livable art, and this is how we intend to make our residents and visitors feel each time they walk in.

Can you tell us about The Loggias? We heard these exclusive Italian-inspired units will have their own private plunge pools, a first for a Makati condo. How are they different from the Townhouse and Penthouse units?

The Loggias are two-storey units where plunge pools will be placed in the balcony areas offering breathtaking views of the city skyline, as well as provide owners their own area for intimate gatherings. The Townhouse units are located on the ground floor of the building with private pools. The Sky Townhomes are located in the middle of the building with a private garden and private pool per resident.

The Penthouse units will be amongst the most luxurious penthouse units ever to be delivered in the entire country, fit with private pools and unadulterated sexiness. To give you an idea of how luxurious the Penthouse units are, if we had built this building in New York, the units would likely cost \$12 million each.

Let's talk about the architecture. Will the Milano's structure have any unique architectural design features?

The Milano's architectural features include a landscaped rooftop garden atop the structure with magnificent views of the city, as well as dramatic lighting that

Liveable Fashion

VERSACE HOME BRINGS RUNWAY GLAMOUR TO EVERYDAY LIVING

From the very beginning, the creative universe of Versace has always encompassed many disciplines, not just fashion, but design in the broadest sense and the essential art of living.

Versace Home was therefore a natural extension of this interest. Created in 1992 initially as a collection of textiles for the home (sheets, duvets, pillows, and cushions) and a landmark range of porcelain dinner sets, it has evolved into a full-service interior design arm with a complete range of exquisite home furnishings and tailor-made fittings—which includes a team of designers equipped to plan and oversee personalized interior design projects.

Versace Home takes the fashion house's glamour and luxury into everyday living: from massive luxury resorts and hotels to private homes.



INTERIOR MOTIVE
Versace Home interiors showcase cutting-edge design with timeless elegance. Opposite: The Milano's geometric contours and curvilinear patterns.

DEC
2010
508

“In any project, I always remind myself to ‘think big or go home.’ The Milano is beyond luxury—it falls under the category I’d like to call ‘uberluxury.’”

further enhances the building’s design. An iconic design language can be seen rising up the entire building’s façade and will be lit up in the evening. The overall theme is modern geometric contours softened with curvilinear patterns.

Unit owners of The Milano have the option of customizing their condos with Versace Home-designed furniture, accent pieces, and bathroom finishes. Can you tell us more about this “tailor made” design process? The Versace label’s creative and high-style imprint will be seen in the furniture, tapestry, décor, and tiling, with the project standing as a testimony to a unique lifestyle experience. Never has a project as daring as this been available in the local market.

You call it “collectible real estate” and

“livable fashion.” As an art collector yourself, how do you think an avant-garde development like The Milano would appeal to country’s art- and design-savvy market, as well as to anyone with a discerning eye? We believe that the market has long expected a project of this magnitude. We have a prominent taste for flair, and Century Properties intends to blaze that trail for clients in the Philippine market to finally have a piece of ultra-luxury and high style. What is great about the Versace brand—and how its design theme is embedded into the project’s architectural and interior motifs—is that it appeals to anyone who has a zest for high design.

There is nothing modest or expected about this venture, which is what makes it more alluring. I always remind myself, in any project I am given the privilege of managing,

“think big or go home.” The Milano is beyond luxury—it falls under the category I’d like to call “uberluxury.”

The Milano will rise in 2015 in Century City, your company’s flagship “vertical village” in Makati, which seems to be a high-end microcosm of world capitals (New York-inspired Gramercy, London-inspired Knightsbridge, now Milan with The Milano). What is the grand vision of Century City? Century City is the flagship development of Century Properties that is envisioned to showcase the best of the world in one place, hence the name inspirations for our buildings. It is a sustainable “live, work, and play” vertical village that will house residential towers, office buildings, a lifestyle center and, most recently, a \$100 million techno-medical outpatient tower. □