

THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS AN EMPTY SPACE.

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For Italian architect Jacopo Mascheroni, an empty space is a contradiction in terms. Known as a maestro of minimalism, his serene white spaces and streamlined surfaces are designed for people to fill with all kinds of entertainment, all invisibly inter-connected. Homes where you can be in one room but still feel an emotional continuity with the other rooms. And where the boundaries between indoors and outdoors are blurred. The effect? Like a sanctuary of serenity.

The son of an architect, Jacopo grew up surrounded by art and furniture from design legends like Eames, Le Corbusier and Breuer. But it was his trip to New York after high school graduation, which made him decide to study architecture at the Politecnico di Milano and in Paris at L'École d'Architecture, completing

his studies at the University of California Berkeley. He became the design principal at Richard Meier & Partners in New York, where his projects received numerous international awards, and continued creating highly acclaimed projects in the US and Europe. Jacopo went on to establish his own architecture and design firm in Milan, supported by a global staff keen on evolving his supremely simple, sleek, cohesive style.

"In New York City, I was surrounded by many things that helped me see clearly what was necessary and what was not," recalls Jacopo. *"After you've moved around the world a few times, you realise that there is not much that you really need to bring with you. All the rest is just an extra load you could live without."*

One look at the delicious homes Jacopo designs and this idea of eliminating the unnecessary is instantly apparent. There's an exquisite openness and feeling of expansion, often with the ability to see the upstairs while downstairs. His secret? *"The type of design we do involves making everything built-in and flush, with not so many seams. We can integrate everything from lighting to closets to audio / video systems. That's why the spaces look so clean,"* says Jacopo. He also constructs them so you never feel confined, with a continuous flow from one room to the next to the surroundings outside. *"It's important to feel connected to the rest of the house,"* notes Jacopo. *"We try to give maximum continuity and delete the boundary between indoors and outdoors, through a well-thought out positioning of transparencies and solids."*

Truly a man after our own heart, as BeoLink was conceived so walls won't be a barrier to entertainment systems you can experience from any room – to any room in your home.

How does he stay true to his minimalistic style for clients with a variety of entertainment systems – without intruding on their space? Jacopo designs tailor-made pieces to disappear into the décor, such as floating islands to conceal either audio / video equipment or their cables and connectors. "For us the task is for them to be easy to access and at the same time not too invasive in the space," explains Jacopo. "Most of the technology we use we don't really see. It's an instrument of comfort and convenience." And we couldn't agree more. That's why we've created Master Link Gateway, so one remote can even control the atmosphere in your home, like closing the curtains and dimming the lights. As Jacopo sees it, "If you sit with something that gives you power, then you become the master of your moods. You can customise your own experiences. Like directing your own films."

Of course, there's a difference between a room that feels empty and the same room that feels full of space. To this end, part of Jacopo's design process involves imagining how people will live in the space. The layout and how moving through rooms will affect their mood. "I close my eyes and try to envision the feelings that I would like to feel for each moment or area. For example, I imagine myself sitting in a certain chair, with the appropriate lighting, with music in the background, a certain view. The atmosphere. I also try to think of how people move inside a home, the sequence of rooms and the feelings they get."

His passionate pursuit is turning spaces

into experiences. "Architecture for me is an experience, not a simple photograph. I'm trying to explore a way to make people feel architecture with more than one sense (sight). To present architecture in sound and motion, not as still life. It would create a deeper experience and you would feel very involved, like in a movie. Imagine if you could just move in that movie. I know if I presented a new project with a soundtrack, it would evoke totally different emotions and involvement. Music is essential when I design. When I start a new project I listen to a very long playlist I've made which gives me inspiration. It totally changes how I picture things in my mind."

Living a streamlined life is something Jacopo sees as fundamental. With home automation to free people from unnecessary tasks, like walking outside to turn on the pool lights. Giving them more time to live in the moment. And to enjoy sensations without going to a lot of trouble to orchestrate them. In his view, "technology saves you time to focus on what really matters." And his dream home of the future? "Technology and home automation should be very connected to nature. Like the skin of a building that will change according to the seasons and exposure. For example, white to reflect the heat in summer and black to catch it in winter."

Currently designing a villa near Como and a luxury hotel in Bucharest replete with bars and restaurants, Jacopo is on his way to Bali for a vacation and inspiration. "I have been from Asia to Africa, from the desert in the Sahara to Madagascar. I try to explore remote places and different types of spaces to capture these feelings in my future projects." Whatever he designs next, no doubt the rooms will be absolutely full – of space.

