



ART OBJECT  
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# Versace brings Milan to Manila



A sample of an interior decked in Versace Home furniture and accessories

**F**or a fashion brand to be successful, it seems that a corporate mind should be present to provide the methodical support to the creative designer. Think of Richard Tan to Inno Sotto, Tom Bugbee to Monique Lhuillier, Sergio Galeotti to Giorgio Armani. In the case of Versace, arguably one of the most up-market lifestyle brands in the world, it's Santo Versace to his brother Gianni Versace who, after the latter's untimely death, was replaced by the latter's sister Donatella.

It was this sharp business acumen that was remarked upon by Robbie Antonio, Century Properties' managing director when he introduced Santo Versace last Saturday. Mr. Versace was here in the country to see the strides being made by the Milano Residences whose interiors will be sumptuously furnished by Versace Home, grace a lifestyle exhibition of the brand and bring the shine of his gold-flecked last name on the fund-raising event for the Operation Smile Philippines.

Mr. Versace, dapper in an all-black ensemble and a pair of black-framed reading glasses and avuncular with his close-cropped white-as-snow hair, was all business-y when he stated the purpose of his visit. "I am here tonight to celebrate along with you the project created with Century Properties, of which I am particularly proud: Milano Residences," he said. "It is a project that will allow future inhabitants to really know and live the Versace lifestyle."

**Left:** Santo Versace, president of Versace SPA, saw the strides that Milano Residences, the only condominium in Asia to be furnished with Versace Home collection, is making.

**Below:** Dubbed the world of 'Versace at Milano Residences,' the exhibit showcased select pieces from Versace home and couture collections.



pieces from the brand—be it a couture gown or a home accessory—are found in some of the most prestigious museums in the world, underscoring the cultural and artistic importance of Versace. "Art, beauty and charm belong to the Versace DNA."

Invited guests were able to have a glimpse of Versace *objet d'art* in a mini-collection that was exhibited in the lobby of the Pacific Star Plaza which serves as the home of Milano Residences' model suites. A crystal-encrusted cell phone, enchanting red-carpet gowns and ultra-chic tableware made an appearance. One actually hoped that there were more pieces, especially gowns (J. Lo's heart-stopping, open-chested piece designed by Donatella would have been great), arranged with a more thoughtful curatorial eye.

The real gems of the exhibition, however, were the model suites decked in all Versace Home finery. (Finery is too strong a word and might convey the notion of ostentatious design, if anything, Versace Home is all about contemporary taste, with the furniture having swelle, streamlined bones. The real opulence is evoked by high-gloss finish and velveteen upholstery.) Launched only in January 28 of this year, the Milano Residences has reportedly sold 70 percent of its inventory.

What made Mr. Versace's visit particularly meaningful was his support of the Operation Smile Philippines, an initiative that provides corrective surgery for indigents with harelips and cleft palates. Together with Century Properties chairman Jose Antonio and his son Robbie, Mr. Versace donated P200,000 to the advocacy. The senior Antonio said that for every unit sold during the one-night event, P50,000 would be added to the donation purse. Capping the event was the rendition of "Hero" of Mariah Carey by Operations Smile singing ambassador Charleen Lardoa. She took the hand of Mr. Versace who stood throughout the performance. He was visibly pleased.

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**CHIC TO CHIC**

Santo Versace (left) is greeted by Robbie Antonio (right) of Century Properties at the Naia VIP Lounge. Versace is accompanied by Giovanna Perri and Gabriela Saracino. They are in Manila for the launch of Century Properties' Milano Residences.

