

Desk and Dine

With its multi-service programming, Tenoha offers Milan's freelancers and small companies a centrally located hub that combines work with pleasure.

Words

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AN OFFICE BUILDING is a company's business card. The impression it makes on visiting clients is part of their perception of the occupant's brand as a whole. For smaller companies and freelancers, however, investing in the design of a workspace can be financially challenging. That's where co-working spaces come in. With attention to spatial expression and the presence of additional amenities, they provide tenants with the equivalent of what today's business giants afford their guests and employees.

Although less ubiquitous than those found in cities like London and New York, co-working chains have made their way to Milan, too. Spaces opened its doors in the city's central Porta Nuova area last year, and WeWork got its footing on Italian soil by partnering with Sonos and Hay for an exhibition at Milan Design Week 2018. A new kid on the block is Tenoha, a multi-service venue that combines work with retail, hospitality and events. It's the second location of Tenoha, a company owned by Sayu, a Japanese importer of Italian food. Sayu's CEO, Sato San, previously opened an outlet with a similar concept in Daikanyama, a neighbourhood on the west side of Tokyo. Shoppers there can find the same composition of functions, but the interior design, restaurant menu and product range are driven by Italian culture. Mario Pescetto, general manager of Tenoha Milano, explains the reversal of the concept in Milan. 'Here, we introduce Italian people to a *Japanese* lifestyle, an important part of which is guided by *omotenashi*, Japanese for "hospitality"'. Pescetto stresses that 'knowing how to welcome people and make them feel at home is a must for a co-working hub as well'.

The design of Tenoha Milano is a good fit for contemporary work habits. 'The desire for flexibility that characterizes modern times creates a need for distinctive co-working locations that encourage communication

and exchange,' says Michele Rossi, cofounder of Park Associati, the Milanese architecture firm tasked with the conversion of a 2,500-m² former wallpaper factory in the city's Navigli district. 'Hospitality venues have already gone through a transition, acquiring features more and more sensitive to the comfort of their guests. Workspaces are slowly following suit, becoming less impersonal and more domestic.' He sees future development on the horizon, as workspaces increasingly invite users to meet and share. 'Design solutions will respond to people's social needs, evolving from the shared table to an entire shared environment. Access to supplementary services will make time spent at work more pleasant, while also promoting professional relationships. The coexistence of different destinations within the same space will enable both sharing and further interaction.'

It's this mix of 'destinations' that defines Tenoha Milano. The way the areas are connected – along with an unambiguous design language throughout – generates what Rossi describes as 'a fluid path that ensures continuity in the move from one function to another. The store, the restaurant, the bar – each adds to the pleasantness of the place, while also contributing to its recognizability and making it a point of reference in the city.'

Visitors enter through the shop, which lends access to the restaurant and, in turn, to the workspace. The events hall is on one side of a courtyard that offers members a more private, 24-hour alternative for reaching their desks. All transitions have an open character. Although a membership pass is required for the office areas, a clear glass partition wall establishes a sightline to the dining room.

The workspace is divided in two. At the very back is an area for tenants who pay a monthly fee for a more permanent desk or a small semi-private room. Between this section and the restaurant is a more 'collaborative/collective' option, where on-the-go workers sit together at long tables. Apart from serving today's desk-hoppers, this flexible space can become an extension of the restaurant after working hours. It's used for dinner parties hosted by Tenoha members or 'outsiders'.

Pescetto says the strength of Tenoha lies in its ability to 'give workers a place to *centralize* their professional lives at a *central* location that's got everything they need but doesn't ask for long-term, financially risky commitments'.

tenoha.it
parkassociati.com

Andrea Martiadonna, courtesy of Park Associati



Tenoha Milano – a multi-service venue that combines work with retail, hospitality and events – introduces Italians to a hospitality-driven Japanese lifestyle.



Giulio Montani Fargna



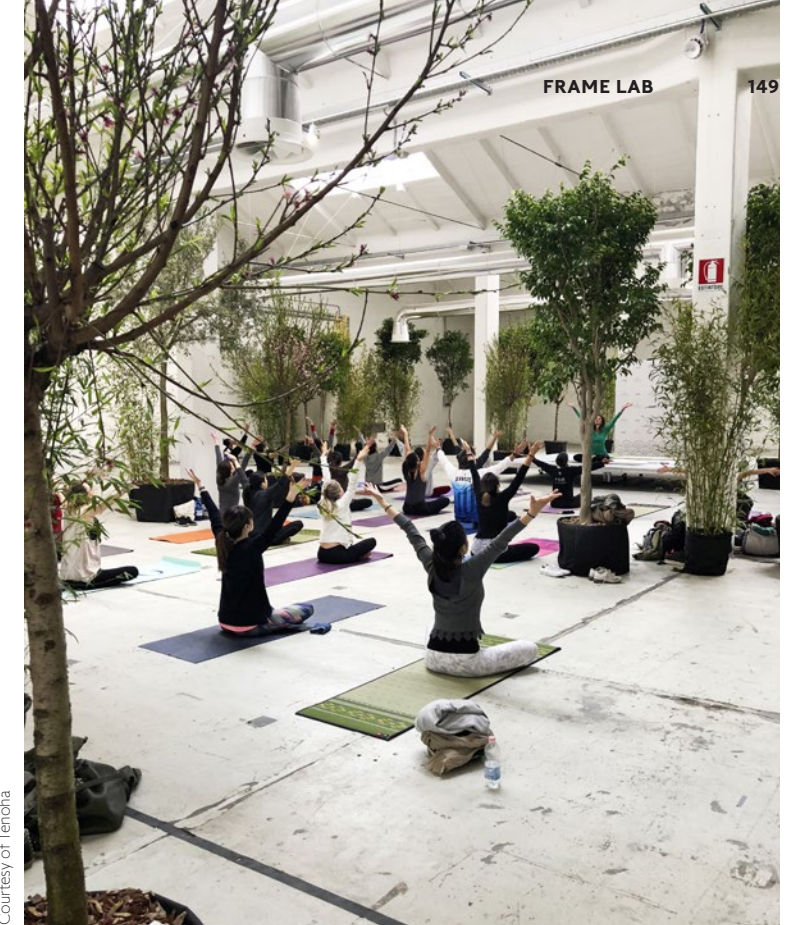
Photos: Andrea Martiradonna, courtesy of Park Associati

WORK

Options for workers include dedicated desks (top left) and a collaborative area with long tables that can be used to increase the capacity of Tenoha Milano's restaurant.

SHOP

Products for sale in the store reinforce Tenoha Milano's goal of sharing the Japanese aesthetic with the Italian market.



Courtesy of Tenoha

EXPERIENCE

A large events space hosts everything from exhibitions and fashion shows to yoga classes.



TASTE

The restaurant and bar serve Japanese specialities made with seasonal, locally sourced ingredients.