

# hospitality design

march/april 2013 [hospitalitydesign.com](http://hospitalitydesign.com)

## the hd expo issue

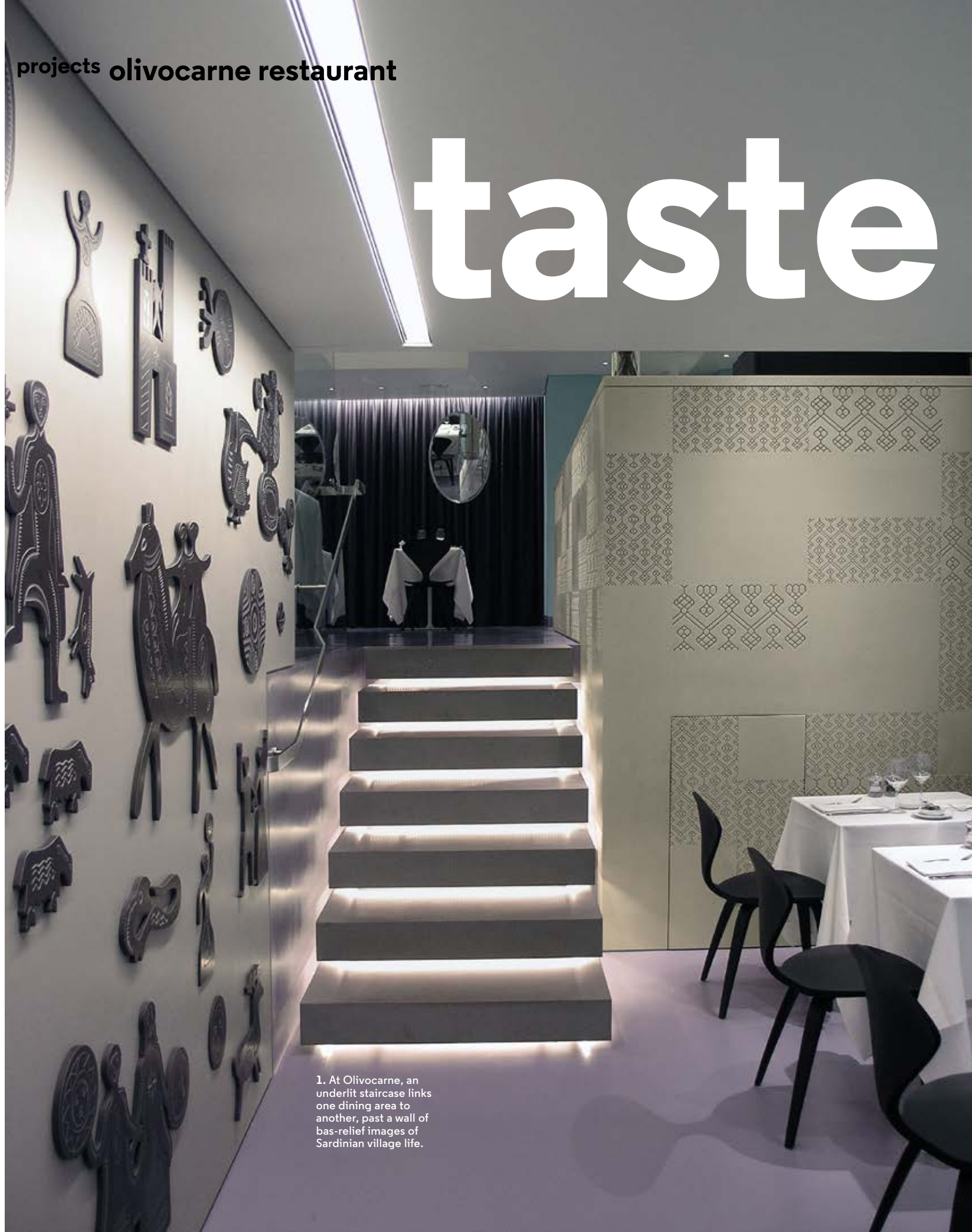
Presenter of

 Hospitality DESIGN  
EXPO+  
2013



# taste

# of home



1. At Olivocarne, an underlit staircase links one dining area to another, past a wall of bas-relief images of Sardinian village life.



2. The restaurant's storefront entrance, painted a charmingly quirky aubergine.

## A new London restaurant honors a designer's native land

By MICHAEL ADAMS  
Photography by RICARDO SANNA



**The ancient island** of Sardinia, the second largest in the Mediterranean, has long been a tourism mecca for those who seek a temperate climate, inviting beaches, and magnificent, craggy scenery. But for some native Sardinians—count architect Pierluigi Piu among them—what is often missing in the country's profile are the local culture and crafts that give it its special character.

Piu was given the opportunity to indulge his love and loyalty to his homeland when asked in 1990 by owner Mauro Sanna, also Sardinia-born, to design London's Olivo restaurant. Three Olivo



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**Olivocarne Restaurant**  
London

restaurants and a shop followed over the years, including the latest, Olivocarne, which opened last year.

Piu, who still calls the island his home, explains his concept: "I tell my tale with a language that winks at contemporary design with iconographic references to Sardinia's traditional economy, such as weaving and sheep farming."

But in his endeavor to evoke his homeland, Piu relied on wit and imagination rather than a slavish adherence to literal artifacts. One wall of the first-floor dining room, for example, was created by two local artists, sisters Stefania and Christina Ariu, who fashioned a wall cladding in relief with textured and waxed terracotta tiles. But guests may not immediately perceive that the whimsical figures are meant to evoke a flock of sheep.

Such subtle touches permeate the cool, pastel-hued spaces. Suspended upholstered

banquettes are covered with a wool-and-cotton fabric once used to create packsaddles from the village of Samughéo, nodding to a time when a horseman's village could be identified by the pattern of this cloth. The counter of the bar is partially carved after a pattern from carpets once woven in a small Sardinian village.

And in perhaps Olivocarne's most memorable feature, upstairs dining rooms boast large walls dotted with bas-relief figures (created by Mauro Angius and inspired by the style of Sardinian artist Eugenio Tavolara) that represent a cheerful, animated panorama of country life: peasants, animals, horseman, and hunters. "It was exciting," says Piu, "to have the opportunity to turn such stereotypes upside-down and tell people about my country using a contemporary aesthetic language." **hd**

[pierluigipiu.it](http://pierluigipiu.it); [olivorestaurants.com](http://olivorestaurants.com)

**3.** In the first-floor dining room, a wall cladding of terracotta tiles creates a stylized flock of sheep.

**4.** The main dining room, showing a full panorama of Sardinian iconography by artist Mauro Angius.

**5.** Another view of the room that reveals a wall covered in blue-purple linen acting as a backdrop to backlit "floating" mirrors.



5

Owner  
**Mauro Sanna, Oliveto & Olivo Ltd**  
Interior Design and Architecture Firm  
**Architetto Pierluigi Piu, Cagliari, Italy**  
Structural Engineer  
**Michael Blacker Partnership**  
Contractors  
**Peter Jusko, Pam Victoria Ltd. and C3S Projects Ltd.**  
Lighting Consultant  
**Pinto Lighting Design**  
Ceramics  
**Stefania and Cristina Ariu**  
Glass Panels  
**Chelsea Artisans Products Ltd**  
Stone  
**Ideal Stone Interiors Ltd**  
Electrical  
**M&M Electrical**  
Air Conditioning  
**Climate Control Ltd**

Flooring  
**Paolo Giusti**  
Ceiling  
**PJC Acoustics Ltd**  
Awning  
**Flamingo Blinds & Fabrics**  
Curtain and Cushions  
**Sylvie Webster**  
Tables  
**Arper**  
Chairs  
**Interior Addict**  
Lighting  
**Delta Light, KKDC, Lucent Lighting, Light Projects Group, Xenon Architectural Lighting, Helvar, and PJR Engineering**  
Corian Silhouettes  
**Mauro Angius/Tuttolegno-Arcof**