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LA DOLCE VITA

SPLENDIDO MARE, A BELMOND HOTEL, PORTOFINO HAS REOPENED ITS DOORS EARLIER IN MAY THIS YEAR FOR GUESTS TO ENJOY NOT ONLY A RESTFUL STAY, BUT ALSO A FEAST FOR THEIR EYES THROUGH ITS BRILLIANT ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN.

Text LISTYA MANOPO Photos courtesy of BELMOND/PETRIE PR

HighEnd is privileged to present an exclusive interview with Splendido Mare, A Belmond Hotel, Portofino representatives; **Michela Nicosia**, Hotel Manager of Splendido Mare, A Belmond Hotel, Portofino and **Festen Architecture**, a Paris-based interior design company responsible for the beloved hotel's elevated new look.

What are the initiatives of Splendido Mare, A Belmond Hotel, Portofino that cater to the locals' preferences?

Michela Nicosia: So much thought has gone into the renovation of this property - every detail has been carefully curated to honor the building's heritage and yet reflect a contemporary sense of Portofino as the destination. Individual references to the harbor's nautical history can be found

throughout the property, each of the 14 rooms and suites feature locally sourced and hand- varnished wood, traditionally used in the fishing and sailing boats that dot the harbor.

What ground-breaking moves are planned for the reopening?

Michela Nicosia: One of the ground-breaking moves for Splendido Mare, A Belmond Hotel, Portofino reflect the collaboration between art & fashion. We worked together with the fashion designer, Arthur Arbesser, recognized by Vogue and LVMH as an emerging talent in fashion, in designing stylish attire which reflects the detailed design elements of the hotel. He is passionate about creating timeless pieces that celebrate the destination. In order to create an overall aesthetic of relaxed sophistication, Arthur had created elegant, mid-century modern silhouettes for the uniforms, working with geometric patterns, nautical detailing and botanical references from the national park.

What architectural approach is employed with the new look of Splendido Mare, A Belmond Hotel, Portofino in relation to the region's culture and traditions?

Festen Architecture: Splendido Mare, a Belmond Hotel, Portofino maintains its distinctive and iconic character and charm, the Ligurian way. The traditional Ligurian colors of the harbor buildings are found in a palette of amber, terracotta and sea green, used to accent the archways and ceilings. The pastel colors are symbolic of the region and have been used to decorate the facades and window shutters for generations.

Our work for Splendido Mare, A Belmond Hotel, Portofino cherishes the cinematic setting of Portofino and we focused on transforming a classical space with a storied past and conceptualizing its future. What's truly amazing about Portofino is that despite its rising fame, this village has retained its authenticity. Nothing has been built since the 1930s so everything looks exactly like it did in the past. The redesign evokes a stylish home where contemporary and vintage pieces co-exist to provide a timeless feel. Creating projects that are consistent with the local culture and environment is always important to us.

Can you tell us what additions are added to the newly renovated hotel design- wise?

Festen Architecture: The new design of Splendido Mare, A Belmond Hotel, Portofino draws inspiration

from nautical traditions and the hotel's modest past. Each guestroom references the interiors of a typical Italian fishing boat, drawing on aesthetics of natural wood, ropes and brass. Bespoke wooden latticed flooring in square patterns further reflects Portofino's culture. Door archways and ceilings are accented with traditional Ligurian colors; amber, sea green and terracotta, complemented by the use of crisp black lines typically seen in the traditional painted door frames.

Splendido Mare, A Belmond Hotel, Portofino's fresh new look is a love letter to Liguria. Heritage Italian colours frame the sea views. Bespoke handcrafted pieces by local artisans are layered with Loro Piana fabrics and design pieces from Gio Ponti create a bright, calm hideaway.



What can you tell us about your collaborations with the local artisans when renovating Splendido Mare, A Belmond Hotel, Portofino?

Festen Architecture: We worked with the local craftsmen and artisans and it was an enriching experience for us. We believe that authenticity is the key, we used materials that were sourced locally, such as the Carrara marble and slate. All of our customized furniture and lights were also made in the north of Italy.

The rooms and suites at Splendido Mare, A Belmond Hotel, Portofino are designed with locally sourced and hand-varnished wood, traditionally used in the fishing and sailing boats. The hotel also has 7,000 terracotta tiles, handmade by local Ligurian craftsmen and laid in the restaurant, that feature the undulation of the water to create a feeling of walking on the sea.