



TRAVEL & LIVING

#INTERVIEW: Valeriano Antonioli on Milan, Rome, Florence – and the Soul of Portrait Hotels

CEO Valeriano Antonioli shares how Portrait Hotels are redefining luxury hospitality through authenticity, intimacy, and Italian elegance.

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by Tanja Beljanski



Valeriano Antonioli, CEO of Lungarno Collection

With a career dedicated to redefining Italian hospitality, Valeriano Antonioli has shaped Lungarno Collection into one of the country's most refined hotel groups. At its heart lies the Portrait Collection, a trio of award-winning properties in Florence, Rome, and Milan that embody the "Art of Italian Living." Each hotel offers not only prime locations but also highly personalised experiences curated by dedicated Lifestyle Teams, turning a stay into something deeply intimate and authentic. In this exclusive *L'Officiel* interview, Antonioli discusses Portrait's vision, its connection to local culture, and how it continues to resonate with a new generation of global travellers.

Tanja Beljanski: You've been instrumental in shaping Lungarno Collection into one of Italy's most refined hospitality brands. What does the Portrait Collection represent today?

Valeriano Antonioli: From the beginning, our mission was to offer something distinct from the traditional hotel experience. Individuality has always been our guiding principle: moving beyond industry stereotypes to create authentic connections with the cities we call home. In 2012, together with our President Leonardo Ferragamo, we saw an opportunity to redefine luxury hospitality – an idea that became the Portrait brand. Today, Portrait transforms classic luxury into something intimate, spontaneous, and tailor-made. Each property reflects the Art of Italian Living, offering guests an experience that is uniquely personal and deeply rooted in place.



Portrait Milano

Tanja Beljanski: Portrait Milano, Firenze, and Roma each have their own soul. How do you curate experiences that feel so hyper-local yet consistently luxurious?

Valeriano Antonielli: It begins with our Lifestyle Team, the true ambassadors of our cities. They live Florence, Rome, and Milan deeply, allowing them to share authentic insights that go far beyond tourist recommendations. Their role is not just to advise but to listen—to create moments that reflect each guest's passions and interests. This approach ensures that while every stay feels uniquely local, the level of care, refinement, and personalisation is consistent across all Portrait properties.

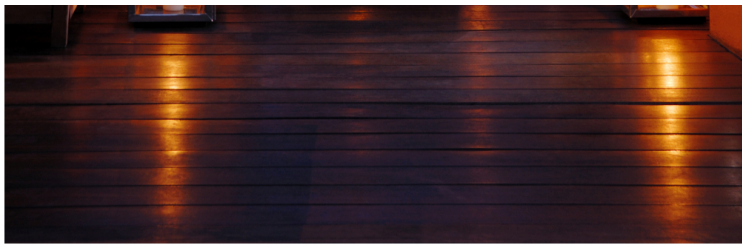
Tanja Beljanski: Portrait Milano is redefining hospitality in the heart of Italy's fashion capital. How did you envision blending hospitality, culture, and retail into this destination?

Valeriano Antonielli: In 2013, I first discovered the former Archbishop's Seminary hidden behind Corso Venezia—a monumental 16th-century building that was closed and forgotten. We saw both an opportunity and a responsibility: to restore this jewel and return it to Milan. The result was Portrait Milano, with a 2,800-square-meter piazza at its heart, now a hub for locals and travellers alike. Around it, we integrated boutiques, jewellery, restaurants, bars, gardens, and a wellness center, creating a seamless mix of hospitality, culture, and lifestyle. It is more than a hotel—it is a destination where the city's past and future meet.

Tanja Beljanski: With Portrait Firenze overlooking the Arno and Portrait Roma near the Spanish Steps, how do these properties offer guests an "insider's" Italy?

Valeriano Antonielli: Location is fundamental, but what makes the experience transformative is how we engage with it. Portrait Firenze and Portrait Roma place guests at the cultural heart of their cities, but it is our Lifestyle Team that turns those locations into personal journeys. From private access to hidden ateliers in Florence to after-hours museum visits in Rome, our hosts craft experiences that feel like living the city, not just visiting it. Guests leave with memories shaped by authenticity, intimacy, and Italian elegance.





Portrait ROMA

Tanja Beljanski: You've welcomed many high-net-worth individuals from the GCC. How is the Portrait experience tailored for Middle Eastern guests?

Valeriano Antonioli: We focus on privacy, personalisation, and cultural sensitivity. From discreet check-in and in-suite dining to private shopping experiences, we ensure comfort and exclusivity at every stage. Spacious suites and interconnecting rooms are ideal for families, with bespoke services such as butlers, Arabic-speaking staff, and family-focused amenities. Partnerships with visionary boutiques like ANTONIA and sustainable jewellery brand SO-LE STUDIO bring a cultural and fashion-forward dimension that resonates with our Middle Eastern guests. Above all, our Lifestyle Team, chosen for their mindset and warmth, ensures every stay feels both personal and respectful.

Tanja Beljanski: What are some of the most requested or surprising services among your guests from the region?

Valeriano Antonioli: Personalised shopping is highly valued—our guests enjoy private previews, in-suite fittings, and exclusive access to luxury brands. Culinary experiences are another priority: private dining with tailored menus, certified ingredients, and chefs who can meet cultural preferences. Privacy is also essential—we provide discreet services, enhanced security, and entire floor bookings for delegations or families. Extended stays with multi-room suites, butler service, and dedicated family concierges are particularly popular, ensuring that larger groups can enjoy the comforts of home while traveling.

Tanja Beljanski: What's next for Lungarno Collection, and how do you see the brand expanding in the Middle East and beyond?

Valeriano Antonioli: Expansion for us is not about numbers but about resonance. We are exploring new destinations that align with our values of authenticity, craftsmanship, and cultural connection. While we have no announcements yet, we envision Portrait in cities rich in history and vibrancy—places where our philosophy of Italian elegance and the Art of Italian Living can truly thrive. The future will be guided by quality, not quantity, ensuring every Portrait remains a benchmark of intimacy, refinement, and timeless hospitality.

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Courtesy of Portrait Collection

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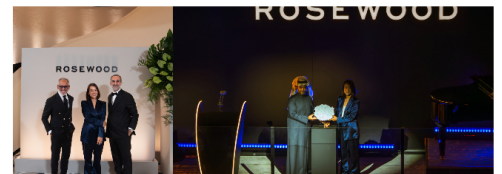
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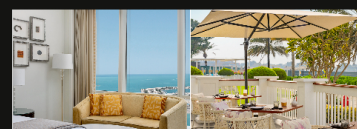
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