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EVA LONGORIA

DERMOT KENNEDY LUKAS GRAHAM
PATRICK AOUN VALERIANO ANTONIOLI



VALERIANO ANTONIOLI

TEXT: DYLAN LODISE
IMAGES & INFO: WWW.LHW.COM

A PORTRAIT OF CLASS

Valeriano Antonioli, CEO of Portrait Hotels & Resorts, on the art of personalised hospitality, Italian identity and what it means to make a guest feel genuinely at home.

There are hotel groups that grow by replication, and there are those that grow by conviction. Portrait Hotels & Resorts, part of the Lungarno Collection owned by the Ferragamo family, belongs firmly to the second category.

At its helm is Valeriano Antonioli, a man who decided at the age of fourteen, during a visit to a hotel in Milan, that he would dedicate his life to hospitality. That early clarity has not wavered. Across three decades and three of Italy's most storied cities, he has helped build something that resists easy categorisation: not a hotel brand in the conventional sense, but a philosophy of place, expressed through properties that feel less like accommodation and more like a city experienced from within.

As the Lungarno Collection marks its thirtieth anniversary and Portrait Hotels & Resorts enters a new chapter, Antonioli sat down with SETTE to discuss modern luxury, the courage of selective growth and what it truly means to make a guest feel at home.

SETTE: What distinguishes Portrait Hotels & Resorts from other luxury hotel brands?

Valeriano Antonioli: Portrait Hotels & Resorts is not simply a collection of luxury hotels. It is a niche Italian hospitality brand built around identity, authenticity and emotional connection. Our philosophy is rooted in the idea that a hotel should feel like an ecosystem rather than a standalone property. At Portrait Milano, guests enter a complete world where hospitality, gastronomy, culture, retail and events coexist, creating a genuine sense of belonging. The experience becomes less about booking a room and more about joining a community. We deliberately distance ourselves from standardised luxury, focusing instead on individuality, quality and authenticity.

How do you define modern luxury in hospitality in 2026?

Luxury has evolved far beyond opulence or formality. Today it is defined by authenticity, personalisation and meaningful experience. Guests are looking for a strong sense of place, for tailored experiences that reflect their personal interests, for a feeling of belonging rather than anonymity, and for seamless, intuitive service that anticipates needs without being intrusive.

Luxury today means access to something rare, authentic and human, rather than simply expensive.

What expansion strategy is Portrait Hotels pursuing in the coming years?

Our approach is highly selective and philosophy-driven rather than purely growth-oriented. We are open to international opportunities, but only where we can authentically express our vision of Italian hospitality. Every new destination must offer a rich cultural and historical identity, a strong alignment with our values of craftsmanship and elegance, and the potential to create a meaningful connection with the local community. Growth for us is not about scale. It is about coherence and integrity.

What role does sustainability play in your long-term strategy?

Sustainability is a core pillar, integrated across environmental, social and cultural dimensions. We implement circularity principles across our properties, as demonstrated by Portrait Milano, which draws on the historical self-sufficiency of its location. We hold internationally recognised certifications including





Portrait Milano



Portrait Milano

GSTC and DCA, and we actively engage with local communities through charitable initiatives. Responsible tourism, for us, means preserving cultural heritage, supporting local ecosystems and creating lasting positive impact.

How do you ensure a consistently exceptional level of personalised guest experience?

Personalisation begins with the people who know our cities best: our Lifestyle Teams. Every team member is encouraged to experience the city firsthand so they can share insider knowledge that goes far beyond conventional recommendations. We go well beyond suggestions. Our Lifestyle Teams bring experiences to life by listening carefully to each guest and transforming their interests and desires into tailor-made, memorable moments.

Which leadership principles have most shaped you personally?

Clarity of vision, maintaining a consistent identity across all aspects of the business. Seriousness of purpose, aligning decisions with guest expectations and long-term goals. Respect for individuality, both for guests and for team members. And an uncompromising commitment

to quality in every detail. The goal is to create an environment where excellence is not imposed but naturally pursued.

What has been the most defining moment of your career?

The realisation, early in life, that hospitality could be more than a profession: it could be a lifelong purpose. At fourteen, during a visit to a hotel in Milan, I set myself the goal of becoming the general manager of the best hotel in the world. Over the years that vision evolved. It became less about titles and more about creating meaningful experiences for people. Hospitality is not just about operations or service standards. It is about emotion, memory and connection.

The Collection

Portrait Milano opened in 2022 within a meticulously restored former archiepiscopal seminary on Corso Venezia, designed by Michele De Lucchi and furnished by architect Michele Bonan. Its 73 rooms and suites give onto the Piazza del Quadrilatero, a 2,800-square-metre courtyard connecting Corso Venezia to Via Sant'Andrea at the heart of Milan's fashion district. The property houses Longevity, a first-of-its-kind urban spa merging biohacking technology with Blue Zone wellness

philosophy, alongside restaurants 10_11 and Beefbar and boutiques Antonia Milano and SO-LE Studio.



Portrait Milano

Portrait Firenze is an all-suite hotel overlooking the Arno, steps from the Ponte Vecchio and moments from the boutiques of Via Tornabuoni. Designed by Florentine architect Michele Bonan, it is built entirely around the individual



Portrait Roma

guest: a suite arranged to personal preference, experiences calibrated to a specific way of living, and a city encountered from within rather than observed from a distance.

Portrait Roma occupies an elegant townhouse on Via Condotti, Rome's most exclusive address, offering fourteen suites and a rooftop lounge with views across the city's skyline. Its Penthouse Trinità dei Monti, with a private terrace overlooking the iconic steps, represents the collection at its most singular. The spirit of Salvatore Ferragamo lives throughout, in the precision of the materials, the quality of the service and the particular attention to privacy that has always distinguished this house. All three properties are proud members of the Leading Hotels of the World.

Three cities, three addresses, one coherent philosophy. What Portrait Hotels & Resorts has built under Antonioli's leadership is something the hospitality industry produces rarely: a group with genuine character, where the identity of the brand and the identity of each place reinforce rather than dilute one another.

The Ferragamo family's involvement ensures that the vision remains undiluted, and Antonioli's own clarity of purpose, formed at fourteen and refined over thirty years, ensures it is pursued without compromise. For a reader who already knows what good hospitality feels like, Portrait offers something more precise: the sense that someone has thought about exactly who you are, and prepared accordingly.



Portrait Firenze