



TRAVEL &amp; LIVING

# #INTERVIEW: Salvatore Ferragamo on Heritage, Hospitality, and the Art of Italian Living

Salvatore Ferragamo reflects on the legacy of his family and how the Lungarno Collection is redefining luxury hospitality with timeless Italian elegance.

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by Tanja Beljanski



Salvatore Ferragamo

From bespoke shoes that defined Hollywood glamour to boutique hotels that embody Italian refinement, the Ferragamo family has always transformed lifestyle into an art form. Today, their hospitality venture, the **Lungarno Collection**, translates this heritage into intimate hotels across Florence, Rome, and Milan, where craftsmanship, culture, and quiet sophistication shape every guest experience.

In this exclusive conversation with *L'Officiel*, Salvatore Ferragamo shares how the Portrait hotels capture the soul of each city, why authentic connections matter more than ever in luxury travel, and how the family's enduring values continue to inspire the next chapter of Italian hospitality.

**Tanja Beljanski: The Ferragamo name is synonymous with Italian elegance. How does the Lungarno Collection reflect your family's values in hospitality?**

**Salvatore Ferragamo:** My grandfather arrived in Florence in 1927, following his success in America. In 1938, he opened his first boutique on Via Tornabuoni—now Florence's most renowned luxury shopping street—where he welcomed Hollywood stars, aristocrats, and diplomats. That natural warmth and sense of Tuscan hospitality became our family's hallmark. Creating the Lungarno Collection was a way to carry this cultural heritage forward. Just as he crafted shoes made to measure, we strive to create tailor-made hotel experiences—spaces that blend craftsmanship, intimacy, and timeless style. Our goal was not to leverage the Ferragamo name, but rather the values and innovation behind it.

**Tanja Beljanski: Each Portrait hotel—Milano, Firenze, and Roma—feels like a window into its city's soul. What was your family's vision behind such tailored experiences?**

**Salvatore Ferragamo:** The Portrait brand was conceived to be more than a place to stay—it's a doorway into the city itself. Each property is designed to embody its unique surroundings, while engaging deeply with culture and community. For us, true luxury lies in authenticity: in creating

meaningful connections through local partnerships, cultural initiatives, and a philosophy we call the *Art of Italian Living*.



Portrait Firenze

**Tanja Beljanski:** Portrait Milano has transformed a historic seminary into a vibrant hospitality destination. What does this project represent for you?

**Salvatore Ferragamo:** As my uncle Leonardo Ferragamo has said, we are honoured to add a new chapter to this extraordinary site. Reopening the former archiepiscopal seminary to the public allows people to admire its architecture while experiencing new cultural and lifestyle offerings. Portrait Milano represents a milestone for us: it's a project unlike any other, rooted in heritage yet shaping the city's future.

**Tanja Beljanski:** Florence is both your family's home and the birthplace of the Lungarno Collection. How does the city continue to inspire you?

**Salvatore Ferragamo:** Florence is a constant source of inspiration. It is the cradle of the Renaissance and a symbol of creativity, craftsmanship, and passion—all values that guide our work. Our first hotels were built along the Arno River, near the Ponte Vecchio and Palazzo Feroni, our fashion headquarters. Just as the river reflects the city's spirit, Florence infuses our hospitality with timeless elegance and authenticity.



Portrait Firenze

**Tanja Beljanski:** How do you balance preserving Italian heritage with appealing to a new generation of luxury travellers?

**Salvatore Ferragamo:** We see it not as a balance but as a dialogue. Today's travellers—especially Gen Z—seek purpose, connection, and authenticity. Through design by Michele Bönan, collaborations with artists and artisans, and engagement with local culture, we preserve tradition while innovating meaningfully. The result is a hospitality experience that blends heritage with modern refinement, always rooted in authenticity.

**Tanja Beljanski:** The Portrait spirit is defined by quiet sophistication and tailored service. How

ings began. The brand spirit is defined by quiet sophistication and tailored service. How do these values connect with the Ferragamo legacy?

**Salvatore Ferragamo:** My grandfather's philosophy was always about creating something personal and crafted with care. Portrait carries this spirit forward. Just as a bespoke shoe was made for the individual, each guest's experience is tailored, thoughtful, and unique. Our teams bring fresh energy to this legacy—transforming traditional luxury into something more spontaneous, human, and meaningful.



Portrait Firenze

**Tanja Beljanski:** What has been the response from Middle Eastern guests at Portrait hotels?

**Salvatore Ferragamo:** The response has been extraordinary. We've seen a shift from guests seeking international chains to choosing authentic, intimate experiences that reflect the destination's soul. Our Middle Eastern clientele particularly value our spacious, interconnecting suites and our Lifestyle Team, who curate personalised stays with discretion and warmth. Hospitality, respect, and generosity are deeply rooted in Middle Eastern culture, and these values resonate beautifully with our philosophy. Today, the Middle East is our second-largest market—something we treasure deeply.



Portrait Firenze

**Tanja Beljanski:** Looking ahead, how will the Ferragamo family continue shaping the future of Lungarno Collection?

**Salvatore Ferragamo:** The Lungarno Collection is wholly owned by our family, and we remain committed to preserving its values. As a Board member and global ambassador, I work closely with my family to ensure every step reflects our heritage of creativity, passion, and elegance. The Ferragamo legacy will continue to guide us as we write the next chapter in hospitality.

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