

Pacifico on Portofino luxury and the value of time

Posted on July 13, 2026 by Tiziana Cosso Olivetti

PORTOFINO, Liguria — Perched above one of the world's most photographed harbours, Splendido, A Belmond Hotel, has just closed a multi-year renovation that this year brought the debut of a Dior Spa and Villa Beatrice, the group's new private residence in Portofino. General Manager Alfonso Pacifico, who arrived in late 2023 after years at Four Seasons Florence, London's Dorchester and Belmond's Caruso on the Amalfi Coast, tells Italy Now how you touch a century-old icon without breaking its soul, and why he believes the real luxury today is time.

Q. Splendido has just completed a major transformation. Which result makes you proudest?

"I'm a fan of changes that don't rhyme with upheaval. What makes me proudest is that the beauty inherent in the property has been heightened while respecting an identity that stays essentially untouchable, almost sacred. Even our regular guests, and there are many, don't feel the impact of the change but are reassured by work that added value to value."

Q. How has the guest experience changed?

"Today it is far more focused on the idea of time. We are no longer dealing with luxury as an end in itself, made of vast means and possibilities. Time is a precious value to be measured out, heightened and enriched. The engagement starts from the details. Guests who have everything need extra care, often as subtle and delicate as a pastel shade."

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View from Splendido (*Credits: Sandra Aberg*)

Q. How much does the bond with the territory shape the hotel's identity?

"The territory is everything. We are not an enclave resting on the territory and cut off from it. There is a relationship of osmosis, of interpenetration, and that gives us a precise identity that drives our traditions, our success, our history, our returning guests. I could never conceive of a property detached from what surrounds it. It would make no sense and could have no future."

Q. What does the Dior Spa add?

"The added value is not only a historic, prestigious name, but once again the way luxury is shaped and adapted to its setting, without feeling artificial. Whoever arrives at Splendido senses the care for detail, but also feels that behind that care there is study, an awareness that overlooked nothing and aims to choose only the best."

Q. How is the profile of your international guests evolving?

"The international context has certainly influenced the type of clientele, as everywhere. We can count on a hard core of loyal guests who renew their affection with real constancy and, of course, on the international jet set that never fails to show up. The Asian and South American markets, above

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all in recent years, are proving surprisingly lively and interesting.”



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Splendido (*Credits: Sandra Aberg*)

Q. And the biggest challenge in running a century-old icon?

“The weight of responsibility is the greatest challenge. I face it by asking myself first what I would want if I arrived at Splendido as a guest. What would I like to find, to be surprised by? You cannot hope for infallibility, but asking yourself questions, sometimes doubts, sharpens your sensitivity and lets you always act with a clear objective.”

Q. And the future for Splendido and Portofino?

“I imagine them at the heart of a conscious evolution in which luxury and refinement are never ends in themselves, never a sterile aesthetic gallery, but a heritage that comes from the territory and will remain with the territory.”

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