

Escape



“WEARY TRAVELLERS ARE LULLED TO SLEEP
BY THE SCENT OF CITRUS GROVES AND
SALTWATER ON THE BREEZE”



A Different Light

The enchanting Palazzo Avino hotel on the Amalfi Coast has been given a modern makeover by Italian design star Cristina Celestino

Perched atop a hill with cascading green terraces overlooking Italy's Amalfi Coast sits Palazzo Avino, a 12th-century villa-turned-boutique-hotel in the enchanting town of Ravello. "It's a magical village, suspended in time," says Italian architect and designer Cristina Celestino, who recently completed a collection of seven rooms and suites for the hotel that are full of captivating colour combinations and charming historical details.

Because of the building's history, each of the hotel's rooms and suites is distinct, with its own unique layout. "The greatest challenge was to keep my design vision and make these wonderful spaces more contemporary and at the same time rooted in the coastal landscape," says Celestino. For the latter, she took cues from "the wonders of the Italian gardens of Ravello, and the odyssey of forgotten legends of the Tyrrhenian Sea."

Emphasising existing features (wall niches, cross-vaulted ceilings, panoramic sea views) and pairing them with contemporary furniture and finishes, was central to achieving this fresh take on fairy tale grandeur. Her 'mermaid refuges' as she refers to the rooms and their adjoining bathrooms, are nothing



Arched motifs and terracotta tiles of Celestino's design appear throughout. LEFT: Niches create storage on either side of the sinks in one guest bathroom. BELOW: Custom beds are sumptuously cocooning.



short of transporting; iridescent finishes shimmer while colour palettes of aquamarine, coral, and sand create a space that feels of-the-sea and yet also of the moment.

"I wanted the bathrooms to be a precious alcove, a wunderkammer for self-care," says Celestino, referring to the German word for a cabinet of curiosities, a place where special objects and precious items were kept.

The show-stopping material selection for the bathrooms include striped onyx, a stone made of layers of silica minerals like quartz and morganite. Its undulating bands of pinks, greens, and golden tones enliven the space and act almost as a piece of naturally created artwork – "its warm, Mediterranean colours fit perfectly with the mood of the project," says Celestino, whose terracotta tile designs for Fornace Brioni cover the floors.

But, of course, in a hotel room the bed is the key element. All are framed by curved, padded headboards and, where possible, sit proudly in the centre of the space, the most opulent enveloped by shell-like concave walls. It's the perfect slumber spot for both mermaids and weary travellers to be lulled to sleep by the scent of citrus groves and saltwater on the breeze. palazzoavino.com; cristinacelestino.com - KATE REGGEV

PHOTOS: DAVIDE LOVATI

