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THE LAKE COMO EDITION - ITALY - NEIL ADRIEN - MILANO/ROMA - HOTEL SERA - POME





THE LAKE COMO EDITION - ITALY - NEIL ADRIAN - WILD ORANGE - HOTEL IDEA - ROME



The Lake Como Edition

ITALY

A 19th-century palazzo is reworked through a lens of restraint, revealing a quieter, contemporary expression of lakeside luxury.

Words: Naomi Chadderton
Photography: © Nikolas Koenig (unless otherwise stated)

There's an alluring concept at the heart of Lake Como known as villeggiatura – the tradition of long, leisurely stays by the water, which has historically drawn aristocrats, intellectuals and celebrities to its glamorous shores. It is this laidback movement that has informed the recent transformation of a 19th-century palazzo in Cadenabbia into the second Italian outpost for Marriott's luxury lifestyle brand, Edition Hotels, following its Rome opening in 2023.

Occupying a sprawling site on the lake's edge and overlooking the promontory of Bellagio, The Lake Como Edition has been developed by Omnam Group in partnership with Bain Capital and Marriott International. Conceived as a contemporary, lifestyle-led retreat, the hotel offers a distinct counterpoint to the destination's more traditional luxury properties, reimagining the Lake Como experience for the next generation of travellers.

“What immediately stood out about the former Hotel Britannia Excelsior was its extraordinary position on Lake Como and its inherent architectural presence,” reveals William Montecchi, Design Manager at Omnam Group. “At the same time, the building carried layers of additions and transformations that had diluted its original identity, giving us the opportunity to reinterpret it in a contemporary way.”



Fine-dining restaurant Cetino is guided by chef Mauro Colagreco's affinity for natural textures and earthy tones

In bringing the project to life, Omnam enlisted Milan-based firm De.Tales and American-Chinese duo Neri & Hu, who worked alongside Edition's Creative Directors Kirstin Bailey and Paul Haslhofer. Together, they adopted a measured approach to restoration and intervention, preserving the palazzo's historic lobby, classical archways and a series of restored French balconies. "The process was selective and intentional," explains Bailey. "Rather than preserving everything, we focused on retaining the building's proportions and spatial rhythm, introducing a new architectural layer that feels precise and current. The result is a study in restraint and material sensitivity."

The core language of materiality is immediately evident through a dramatic cantilevered teak entrance. Inside, white Palomba stone terrazzo floors take pride of place in the lobby, while matching stone borders

frame a sculptural marble staircase – an Edition signature, as well as a subtle nod to Italian architect and designer Carlo Scarpa, whose tactile approach to materials informs the design of the public spaces. "We worked with stone, terrazzo, timber and plaster in a very honest way – Palomba stone, Calacatta marbles, Dolomite plaster and European oak recur throughout," explains Bailey. "The marbles were chosen for their subtlety – veining that feels almost like movement rather than pattern."

Craftsmanship is Italian where possible – think local stone, Murano glass and millwork by Extra Ordinario – to ensure the building feels grounded in its geography. The colour palette is also deliberately muted and mineral, drawing from the natural tones of Como; ivory plasters, soft celadon greens, pale blues and warmer tones like rose Dolomite make appearances throughout. "It's a palette that allows light to move through the space and gives prominence to material and texture rather than colour itself," notes Bailey.



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PHOTOGRAPH BY NERI & HU

Framing views of the lake, guestrooms are furnished with walnut headboards and custom curved sofas by Neri & Hu

Across the 148 guestrooms, including 25 suites and two crown-jewel penthouses, there is a strong emphasis on spatial flow, with interiors designed to frame the lake at every opportunity. “The positioning of the bed, the alignment of the doors and balconies – all of it is designed so the landscape becomes the focal point,” explains Bailey. Guests enter through a marble archway, which leads to an arrangement of custom curved sofas by Neri & Hu, alongside walnut headboards and hand-tufted rugs that subtly reference the colour of the water. Bathrooms meanwhile, are crafted from Calacatta gold marble, accented by fluted glass doors in polished brass frames.

Wellness forms a central pillar of the guest experience, delivered in collaboration with pioneering Italian wellness brand The Longevity Suite. Home to seven treatment rooms, Finnish and herbal saunas, plus separate steam rooms and Turkish baths, the spa leans into a more cocooning atmosphere – a contrast to the light-filled, outward-looking nature of the rest

of the hotel. “The spa shifts the experience inward,” notes Bailey. “It is more enclosed, more tactile – focused on softness, shadow and material depth. Natural elements are still present – stone, wood, filtered light – but used to create a sense of protection and calm.”

Where the guestrooms and spa are quieter and introspective, the restaurants and social spaces bring a different energy – being more open, social and expressive. “There is a clear shift in tempo,” says Bailey. “This is achieved through scale, material richness and light – higher ceilings, stronger architectural gestures and a layered mix of materials and furnishings.”

A case in point is Cetino, conceived as cosy, womb-like setting guided by Michelin-starred chef Mauro Colagreco’s affinity for natural textures and earthy tones. Marking the chef’s debut in Italy, the fine-dining restaurant showcases Mediterranean flavours through inventive dishes inspired by lake, sea and land. Meanwhile, all-day dining destination Renzo spills out onto a sun-drenched terrace,



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creating a relaxed, sociable backdrop that feels rooted in the rhythm of the lake. The menu draws on the spirit of long family gatherings, reworking familiar recipes with a lighter, more contemporary touch.

The Lobby Bar is perhaps the most striking space of all, anchored by an oversized bar crafted from celadon green Sekoya marble and surrounded by handpainted landscapes by Italian artist Costanza Alvarez De Castro. Elsewhere, a billiard table – another Edition signature – sits alongside a Steinway baby grand piano and a carved Palomba stone fireplace. “The Lobby Bar is deliberately grand,” describes Bailey. “With its five-metre ceiling and a monumental marble bar, it is designed as a place of energy and interaction.”

Step back outside and the experience opens up again with the floating infinity pool, which sits almost directly on the edge of the lake, surrounded by bespoke outdoor seating by Talenti and Tribù. “From the outset, we saw this as one of the project’s most distinctive

features, and the design approach focused on enhancing and refining this condition,” explains Montecchi. “Rather than trying to blur the pool into the landscape, the intention was to preserve its clarity as an architectural element – something that sits in dialogue with the lake rather than disappearing into it. This creates a more deliberate experience, where the surrounding nature is framed and amplified.” Guests can also enjoy a lakeside lido – designed by Omnam Design Studio – which is the perfect spot for a bite of lunch and a dip.

Ultimately, The Lake Como Edition offers a quieter counterpoint to the region’s established aesthetic. “It was less about creating a new language and more about removing excess,” concludes Bailey. “Lake Como is often expressed through ornament and tradition. We wanted to distill that – retaining its elegance, yet translate it into something more restrained and architectural. The intention was to create a sense of modernity that feels deeply connected to place, rather than imposed onto it.”



EXPRESS CHECK-OUT
Owner: Bain Capital
Developer: Omnam Group
Operator: Marriott International
Architecture: De.Tales
Interior Design: Neri & Hu
Lighting Design: Isometrix
Art Consultant: Visto
www.editionhotels.com