

“ON LAKE COMO, A NEW DESIGN-FORWARD HOTEL OFFERS A DIFFERENT KIND OF LAKESIDE LUXURY”

VOGUE; OCT 2026

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VOGUE

TRAVEL

On Lake Como, a New Design-Forward Hotel Offers a Different Kind of Lakeside Luxury

BY ANNA CAFOLLA
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Photo: Jiri Lizler

[Lake Como](#) has never been particularly concerned with keeping up with the times, but nor has it needed to. Replete with aristocratic grand villas, celebrity boltholes, and cinematic mountain scenes, this particular pocket of northern Italy has spent centuries perfecting the art of *villeggiatura*—the leisurely and often very lavish business of escaping everyday life. There are the storied hotels, where afternoon aperitivo stretches indefinitely into dinner and galas are thrown to fête everything and anything. The fantasy is well established, and arrives via water taxi with a Negroni upon landing.

But there's a growing generation of travelers who want something a little different from the Como experience. Still grand, but with more of a contemporary interpretation of luxury that takes in the region's growing modern design and cultural scene. Enter [The Lake Como Edition](#), which opened this spring on the western shore of the lake, in the village of Cadenabbia. Set within a restored 19th-century palazzo overlooking Bellagio, the 148-room hotel makes a persuasive case for a new kind of lakeside retreat.

The distinction becomes clear from the entrance, where a cantilevered teakwood portico, enveloped in climbing greenery, leads into a soaring lobby where classical Italian architecture meets a more contemporary design language. The property was conceived by Edition creative directors Kirstin Bailey and Paul Haslhofer in collaboration with Shanghai-based design studio Neri&Hu and architects De.Tales. They've managed to preserve the

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building's historic character without becoming overly beholden to it, resisting the overwrought and ornate for something cleaner.



A view of The Lake Como EDITION.

Photo: Nikolas Koenig

The original vaulted ceilings and classical arches remain, but are complemented by sculptural marble, terrazzo floors, and carefully considered modern furnishings. An expansive staircase pays homage to the Venetian architect Carlo Scarpa, while a particularly striking celadon-green marble bar anchors the lobby. There are antique mirrors and tapestries, too, but instead of feeling fusty, the interiors feel like a dialogue between eras.

Upstairs, the rooms offer a cozy interpretation of this philosophy, with European white oak floors, pale plaster walls, custom walnut furnishings, and touches of Calacatta marble. The palette takes its cues from the landscape, with soft blues and neutral tones. My always light-dappled room overlooked the lake and the property's floating pool and lido space, designed by Omnam Design Studio. The restored French balcony frames even more expansive views of Bellagio and the sweeping mountains across the way—a fabulous spot to wrap yourself in a faux fur throw and enjoy a morning espresso.

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One of the most interesting things about The Lake Como Edition is how much there is to do when the mood strikes. Traditionally, the appeal of the grand lakeside hotel has been its ability to insulate guests from the outside world. While the sense of retreat remains, there's a real sociable air about the place. More than once, I find myself in lively conversations with other guests and locals alike under the Lobby Bar's orb-like chandeliers, huddled on the Mario Bellini-designed Camaleonda sofas. On other days, I took the ferry to the bustling Bellagio to pick up russet-colored loafers at family-owned Relando shoemakers and eat frutti di mare at La Punta, as recommended by our concierge—and later, hazelnut ice cream from Caffè Bar Sport Bellagio, the area's oldest and most quaint gelateria.)

My final meal—on another recommendation from our brilliant sommelier—was at the stunning Il Gatto Nero on the cliffside, where I enjoyed tiramisu under its canopies as a filmic thunderstorm took place. (Something the Clooneys, apparently, often do.) I also had time for visits to Villa Carlotta to see rare works by Canova and Villa del Balbianello, the historic backdrop for James Bond. I stayed in late spring as the season began to stir, which felt like the perfect time to capture both serenity and some pre-summer fizz in the air.

Food is central to the overarching philosophy. The hotel's dining program is overseen by Mauro Colagreco, the Argentine-Italian chef behind the three-Michelin-starred Mirazur in Menton, France. At Cetino, the more gastronomically ambitious of the hotel's two restaurants, biodiversity, seasonality, and a close relationship with local producers inform a menu that looks to the natural landscape for inspiration. A salt-crusted catch of the day—a

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local lake fish finished with fig leaves, hyssop beurre blanc, and crushed potatoes—arrives with considerable ceremony, presented tableside to a smattering of camera flashes. One could quite happily fill up on the chilled selections alone: a delicate sea bass rosette in citrus-honey vinaigrette, or red prawn carpaccio dressed in caviar cream. Even dessert has a botanical flourish, with the Mirabelle flower bringing together almonds and lemon tagetes.



Renzo, the rooftop restaurant and bar.

Photo: Nikolas Koenig

Under the rooftop pergolas is Renzo, a more easygoing proposition for leisurely breakfasts, sunset drinks, and dinners. Here, Italian classics are executed with care and a little bit of that theatrical flair: vitello tonnato dotted with quail eggs, a hulking veal Milanese served tableside, and a cherry babà to finish. Though the hotel's signature cocktails, including an anchovy-spiked martini, are best enjoyed downstairs in the Lobby Bar, where celadon-green marble and sweeping five-meter vaulted ceilings provide a particularly cinematic setting to channel your inner Loren or Vitti.

The balance between classic and contemporary luxury extends to the hotel's wellness offering. At The Longevity Spa, the emphasis is focused on the modern affinity towards—you guessed it—longevity and bio-hacking. It's the first of its kind in the area, zeroing in on science-based approaches to wellness and a roster of treatments to aid everything from sleep quality to inflammation, while still offering classic herbal saunas and steam rooms

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with panoramic views. During my stay, I had a signature Re Balance massage with a choice of local herbs and oils, opting for a reinvigorating orange concoction that propelled me out into the late afternoon sun. More of my time was spent under the striped parasols on the swimming pool overlooking the lake, even spotting an engagement on a boat when I looked up from my magazine.



The spa offers seven treatment suites, including a herbal sauna and vitality room.

Photo: Nikolas Koenig

Contemporary hotels, more and more, understand that cultivating a meaningful identity increasingly means becoming cultural destinations in their own right. At The Lake Como EDITION, that ambition has started to take shape. At the recent Lake Como Design Festival, the hotel presented a collaboration between Argentinian artist and designer Conie Vallese and Canadian watercraft design house Beau Lake. The result was a limited-edition series of handcrafted paddleboards, tapping into the sport's current moment.

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The floating pool and lido.

Photo: Nikolas Koenig

Of course, The Edition is not the first property to introduce contemporary design to the region—we still have Il Sereno, with its modernist architecture as a long-loved alternative to the more grand gilded interiors on the lake, and the old guard of Villa d'Este, Passalacqua, and the Grand Hotel Tremezzo remain enduring symbols of a particular kind of Italian hospitality. But what's happening on Como is offering a new take on the lake's enduring mythology. Old-school Italian glamour isn't reproduced wholesale, but all the best bits—the ceremony, indulgence, the dress-up and *la dolce vita*—are made modern.