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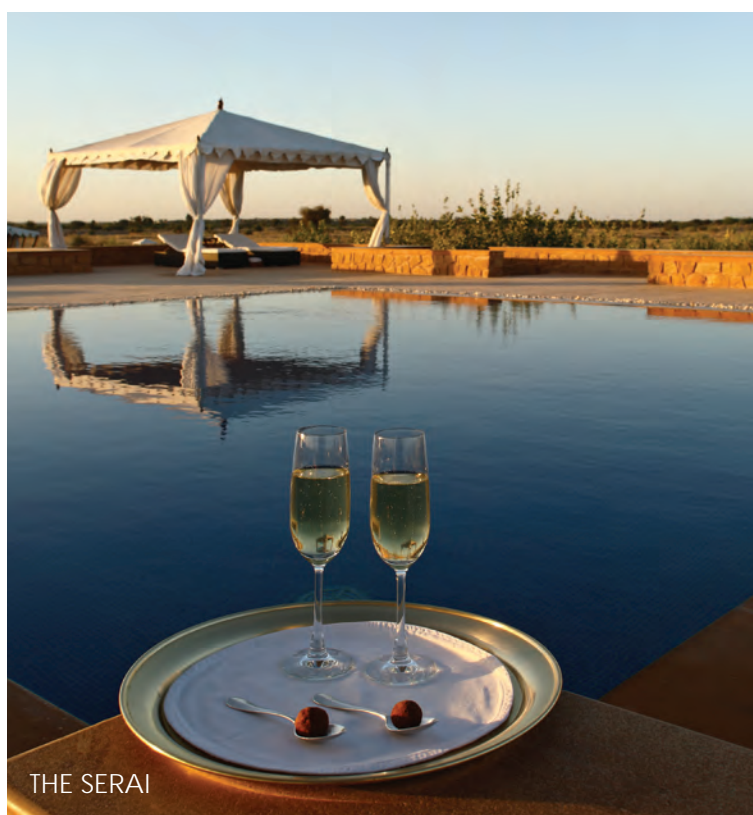
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BELMOND HOTEL SPLENDIDO



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# GUIDE

to some of the newest  
and all-time favorite

# LUXURIOUS ESCAPES

| By Smitha Sadanandan



BELMOND HOTEL  
SPLENDIDO

*Colorful  
Landscape*



## Colorful Landscape | Belmond Hotel Splendido, Portofino

Most resorts and hotels in Portofino focus on the Italian Riviera; such a gorgeous view as if it were a frame from a romantic Hollywood blockbuster: a sun-entrenched Ligurian harbour glistening with toys of the rich and famous, cheerful tourists taking in the colourful palette of the dramatic landscape and the sounds of water being gently ruffled by the wind. Belmond Hotel Splendido has the glamour side of things covered, with a flamboyant view of the bay, some interesting history sprinkled with pirate attacks (we'll get to that soon), a lot of Hollywood sparkle and romance, and an enviable roster of jet-setting guests.

Originally a monastery, the four-storeyed structure was so often attacked by Saracen pirates in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, that the monks were forced to abandon it. Sometime in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Italian aristocrat Baron Batta gave the building a new lease of life: he turned it into his summerhouse and called it the Villa Baratta. In 1901, Ruggero Valentini bought the villa and converted it into a hotel to kick-start the glamour-tourism boom in Portofino. Since the hotel threw open its door to guests, the Duke of Windsor, Lauren Bacall and Humphrey Bogart, Clark Gable, Ava Gardner, Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton, and Rex Harrison have all stayed here.

The Belmond Hotel Splendido, with its 69 rooms and suites and private terraces, nestles on the contour of a hill, shyly glancing at the piazzetta and harbor. Its gardens wander down the slopes to the sea while tangled bougainvillea – overhanging the benches – whisper in the breeze.

Portofino, once a non-descript fishing village, has had a chic makeover and offers plenty of culinary options. Start off at the hotel's restaurant, La Terrazza. Indulge in delicacies – lobster salad with fennel and Sicilian

citrus, homemade short pasta served with traditional pesto sauce, local black olive dumplings served with cherry tomatoes and basil – cooked to perfection by Chef Corrado Corti and his team. Olive oil is the staple of the Mediterranean diet; learn more about it by joining the hotel's olive oil tasting sessions on the terrace. Also, lounging by the pool becomes ever more appealing with the Poolside Restaurant, open from spring through autumn, serving up tasty snacks.

There's a lot you can do here. Stroll through the piazzetta and nearby areas; take a break for more delicious sampling of the local cuisine. Go on a fishing expedition with fisherman Renato (arranged by the hotel) or set off on a romantic cruise to watch the sun setting over the pastel hued village. Water skiing along this Italian Riviera would probably win hands down, if you love to get your adrenaline going. Prefer less adventure? Paddle to Olivetta and walk to the lighthouse for an aperitif or kayak along the coast. If you're game for exploration, head to the Cinque Terre (five villages) on the Ligurian shore.

Prolong the luxury experience back at the hotel with a healing Lomilomi Hawaiian massage, derived from ancient Polynesia or work your stress away with an ultimate aromatherapy experience. An all-time favourite is the garden massage done in an open area, with a knockout vista of the bay. Enjoy the view while the masseuse works her magic to rejuvenate your muscles.



## GETTING THERE

International airlines have connecting flights to Genoa International Airport. The airport is 37 km away from Belmond Hotel Splendido and takes about 45 to reach the hotel. The hotel also arranges private jet charters within Europe. Helicopter transfer from/to Rapallo and private car to Belmond Hotel Splendido is another travel option worth exploring.

## HIGHLIGHT

Belmond Hotel Splendido is dog friendly. You can have the staff arrange canine room service, grooming and even a dog's massage for your pet.



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