

The art of wellness

The Capri Palace hotel (Anacapri) welcomes site specific works by Pomodoro, Plessi and others

By Silvia Nani

Under the portico of the entrance, one can admire a high-relief work of art of 36 meters in length, made of fiberglass and marble powder from the Maestro Arnaldo Pomodoro, called "Sea Shores" that reproduces the seabed, with shells, and anything left behind by humans. It leaves open the windows to the main pool where a mosaic by Bisazza representing the painting by Lombard artist Velasco called "The Sail" is present.

Arnaldo was one the very first artists in residence I welcomed. I had been admiring him for a while and one day I invited him with, in the back of my mind, the idea to ask him to create something special for us.

He then created "rive dei mari", adapting the sculpture to the windows of the pool that the famous architect Gianfranco Frattini designed. It was our first entirely "site-specific" work said Tonino Cacace, CEO of the Capri Palace when introducing the imposing sculpture and the deep relationship with the artists, in the name of beauty without compromise.

Art Collector, passion for design and aesthetics, with a great capacity to put together items that at first sight seem unable to co-exist: an eclectic taste that is present in the interior design where even art takes center stage. "I love contradictions, to put together an antique Louis XV style chair with an Allen Jones' work; the helmet of Mimmo Paladino, a massive bronze sculpture with a Sicilian table from the 17th century.

Whoever comes here feels the amazement of the unexpected" explains Tonino Cacace when talking about the works of art in the lobby area, saying that, ever since he inherited the hotel more than 40 years ago, at the young age of 23, he keeps looking for and collecting art. Many are born here, says Cacace, for example when I invited Fabrizio Plessi in the 1990's. He immediately fell in love with Anacapri. At first he studied the idea to create something for the main square in Anacapri, for the cloister, but the difficulties were far too many to proceed. At this point I offered him the opportunity to create an art site-specific work. I bought a wooden boat that was once used to enter the Blue Grotto and he transformed it. He filmed the sea at the Blue Grotto, placed TV screens inside the boat, and sent it in loop" explains Cacace when talking about the installation placed close to the entrance at the Bar degli Artisti. On the terrace of the Bar, you can admire the sculpture of the French artist Arman that seems to somehow interact with the terracotta sculptures of Paolo Sandulli. I like to put together world-famous artists with local ones as it recreates the genius loci.

The pool, his obsessions: for the historical one, the largest, I asked Velasco to create a Mosaic for me. Subsequently, I came up with the idea of private pools in suites, and to hire a local artist to decorate them. He keeps smiling when remembering the motives behind the choice of Mao by Warhol and the Magritte hat-man with the green apple. No one had ever come up with such an idea!! We studied the best possible to have the painting resistant to chemical treatments but until today, we keep making tests.

8 pools in total, 2 of which offer panoramic views (one infinity pool in the Callas Suite, the other in the Presidential Suite dedicated to Gwyneth Paltrow with her face in black and white painted on the bottom), the others are the Kneipp located at the Capri Beauty Farm for the patented Leg School Treatments, with hot and cold pools of which I am extremely proud. We were the very first in Europe to offer this; it is part of my approach to aesthetic and sensorial experience.

This year in particular, the pools are at the center of the new program "artists in residence": themed meetings between art dealers, artists and students, who work together, locally, using each other stimulus to create. The purpose is for students, through art, to recognize the concept of beauty and appreciate it, within them and

around them in the landscapes and locations all over the island. It is somehow a way to ensure that this place will be valued and preserved/maintained in the future.

New works of art? I am currently “wooing” Mario Ceroli, and already invited Anish Kapoor and who knows.....my dream is still a diffused museum of contemporary art in Anacapri. But this is another story.