Galerie

TRAVEL

A Revolutionary Boutique Hotel Brand Launches in Italy's Dolomite Mountains with Next Level Interiors by Achille Salvagni

The *Galerie* Creative Mind conjures Le Graal's first property in Cortina d'Ampezzo by taking cues from the region's rich alpine heritage

BY JILL SIERACKI
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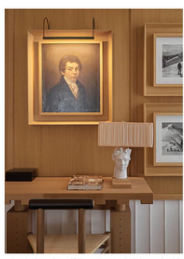
View from Le Graal Cortina.
PHOTO: GIULIO GHIRARDI, COURTESY OF LE GRAAL

At boutique hotel Le Graal, in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy, designer Achille Salvagni re-created the silhouette of the Dolomites in a multidimensional border near the ceiling.
PHOTO: GIULIO GHIRARDI, COURTESY OF LE GRAAL

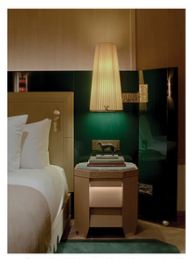
Cortina d'Ampezzo, **Italy**, paints an unforgettable tableau with brightly colored Austro-Hungarian-style buildings backed by the towering pink rock of the Dolomite mountains. This picturesque village particularly resonates during **ski season**, having lured the **Olympics** to its scenic valley for the winter games in 1956 and earlier this year. "When you ski in Cortina, you feel like you're the king of the mountain because the scenery is just breathtaking," says Italian architect and designer **Achille Salvagni**, whose second monograph, *Achille* (Assouline), debuted in May.

It's here that Salvagni is giving shape to **Le Graal Cortina**, the inaugural property of a new hospitality brand cultivating boutique hotels and private clubs with interiors defined by a sense of place and appreciation of culture. Best known for his visionary yacht interiors, residences, and galleries in **New York**, **London**, and Palm Beach, offering his limited edition furniture and lighting, Salvagni aimed to reimagine a former historic hotel without being constrained by Cortina's customary alpine tropes. "I didn't want to play this game with any nostalgia," says Salvagni. "I am a man of the future."

A bespoke angel sconce pays homage to the Venetian influence on Cortina.
PHOTO: GIULIO GHIRARDI, COURTESY OF LE GRAAL



In a junior suite, a 19th-century portrait hangs beside vintage photographs celebrating the village's history.
PHOTO: GIULIO GHIRARDI, COURTESY OF LE GRAAL



Salvagni devised custom decorative accents with motifs including mountains, deer, and other fauna.
PHOTO: GIULIO GHIRARDI, COURTESY OF LE GRAAL

Rooms are crafted from plaster with swirling bas-reliefs and a brushed oak indigenous to the region. "We prefer the theme of calm, serenity, and whispered elegance," says Salvagni, who reorganized the property's floor plan to construct 30 spacious accommodations, of which 13 are suites; three restaurants; an ethereal spa with a plunge pool; and a Surrealist-inspired lobby that greets guests with a curvy desk, sofas, and custom sconces shaped like skis beneath a starburst chandelier.

The bespoke lighting is far from Le Graal's only nod to Cortina's culture. Silhouettes of skiers decorate the ceiling and rugs. Suites filled with clever winks to regional charms and customs are encircled with molding carved to echo the peaks and valleys of the mountain range seen from the window. Yet Salvagni decidedly looked to avoid clichéd chalet aesthetics, instead leaning into the softness and undulating edges of the Jugendstil—a decorative movement that was a counterpart to Art Nouveau and a precursor to **Art Deco**—and "the clean, understated grandeur of the Viennese empire."

The view across the valley to the Dolomites.
PHOTO: GIULIO GHIRARDI, COURTESY OF LE GRAAL

Regional references abound: An elongated trumpet used by area shepherds is translated into sconces. A hat worn in local 18th-century costumes begets tall, cylindrical lampshades. Bronze-plated hinges on lacquer screens are cast with images depicting local folklore and wildlife.

"It's all a little story of Cortina," says the designer. "These referential elements are not done in a loud way, but all together they form a harmonic picture."

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