



Classic Italian Style

An Interview with Lucia Garau,
General Manager, Hotel Caesar Augustus



EDITORS' NOTE Lucia Garau was born, raised, and educated through college on the island of Sardinia, but relocated to Florence to continue her university studies in modern languages and literature. She also found her first job at Forte Village, a 700-room resort in Sardinia. In this role, Garau gained experience across many departments including reservations, banqueting and events, public relations, and sales and marketing. She eventually became Hotel Manager of Le Dune, a five-star property within the Forte Village resort. She later moved to Turin to work as a sales and marketing director for Le Méridien. Three years later, she headed to Rome to join Royal Demeure Company and open the five-star Grand Hotel Continental. Her career with Royal Demeure continued first in Siena as a sales and marketing director and then in New York where she opened a sales & marketing office to oversee four of the company's Italy-based hotels. Upon returning to Italy, Garau worked for two Relais & Châteaux properties. She then took up her current position at Hotel Caesar Augustus.



Lucia Garau

PROPERTY BRIEF On a cliff 1,000 feet above the sea, the luxury Hotel Caesar Augustus (www.caesar-augustus.com) offers one of the most spectacular vistas to be found on the Isle of Capri. The property features 56 rooms and suites with private balconies and the most spectacular panoramic views of Capri and the Gulf of Naples. Amenities include a natural zone of relaxation and well-being offering a selection of massages, a gym with Technogym equipment, and a Turkish bath, as well as exquisite Mediterranean cuisine at Lucullo Terrace, and the Terrace & Lounge Bar where guests can enjoy a drink while listening to live piano music and watching the sun set.

How has Hotel Caesar Augustus evolved?

The Caesar Augustus was named after the first famous visitor to the Island of Capri, the Roman Emperor Augustus, and it was a private villa owned by a wealthy German until the end of the 19th Century.

After the first few years of the 20th century, Villa Bittar was turned into a noble house by a Russian prince, Emmanuel Bullock, who escaped the Russian revolutions. He discovered Anacapri on the Island of Capri, and he decided to stay here

for 35 years. Bullock is the one who placed the statue of Caesar Augustus – the first replica of the original from Villa Livia, Rome – on the terrace. After the end of the Second World War, he went back to Russia and sold the house to the family that still owns it.

It has now been a hotel for 30 years, but it has been refurbished continuously and has been affiliated for seven years with the prestigious hotel collection, Relais & Châteaux.

What can guests expect from your room and suite offerings?

We have 56 rooms and suites, including the new Penthouse that has just been built on the rooftop.

The rooms are all elegantly decorated in a typical Italian classical style, so it's refined. Capri is a famous location in Italy in one of the most beautiful parts of the country, and people expect to find a classical style rather than a hotel with a modern design.

All of the rooms except five are sea-facing and feature balconies or terraces with stunning views of the Bay of Naples, Mount Vesuvius, Ischia, Capri, and the Amalfi Coast. The five are on the backside of the hotel and overlook the beautiful lush gardens that surround the property.

Among all of these rooms, we have five special master suites: the first is named after Prince Farouk of Egypt. In order to guarantee the same suite with a particular view, he decided once to book the room for 365 days – so we named it after him.

The Tiberius Suite is named after the Emperor Tiberius. It's a beautiful suite beloved by honeymooners because of its large arched windows that offer ample light and a four-poster bed, which makes the room very romantic and cozy. In addition, the suite features great views from the bed, the terrace, and even the bathroom.

The Caesar Suite is named after the Emperor Caesar Augustus and gives the impression that the guest is in the suite of one of the most powerful men in history with a king-sized bed, great terrace, stunning views, and columns in the room.

The Vesuvius Suite is named as such because when lying on the bed, you can see Mount Vesuvius.

The Tatiana Suite is named after one of the Russian Emperors that lived in that special room with a great view of the sunset and the Island of Ischia.

We now have a beautiful large penthouse suite which has just been finished. It has a

360-degree view of the bay, a romantic fireplace in the living room, oversized windows, a king-sized bed, two columns, and a huge marble bathroom with separate bathtub and rainforest shower.

What kind of culinary experience do you offer?

The team working at the restaurant is brand new – we changed them completely last year. The chef is only 33 years old so this was his first challenge last year and he has improved greatly in just one season. We're taking the menu back to traditional, tasty food, which is what guests are seeking.

He often uses vegetables and herbs grown directly in our garden at the hotel, so everything that comes from the kitchen is fresh and seasonal, and doesn't contain many creams and sauces. Through our dishes, the client gains an understanding of the geographical location of the place where he is vacationing via our careful selection of local seasonal products.

Would you elaborate on your spa and fitness offerings?

Most of the clients that visit the hotel come here to relax, which is why they choose Anacapri instead of Capri – we are 300 meters above sea level and they can avoid the crowds in Capri, especially during the high season.

We offer a beauty center – it's not a spa, but a beloved place for our guests to relax. It's an open air space to have massages, facials, and beauty treatments in front of the sea.

We also have a fitness corner nearby, which is facing the sea with great views. Many guests go down when the sun sets and, while they are working out, watch the magnificent views.

What makes a successful GM today? Do you need to be more of a generalist?

I take advantage of my knowledge and firsthand experience in sales and marketing, which helps me attract clients to the hotel.

I also spend 8 to 12 hours each day at the hotel and I try to make the philosophy of Relais & Châteaux mine by taking personal care of the clients, welcoming and greeting them upon arrival, handwriting personal notes for delivery to the room with a welcome amenity, talking to them throughout their stay to ensure their expectations are met, confirming that they feel at home during their stay, and saying goodbye upon departure. This is the Relais & Châteaux concept and I try to make it mine and teach it to the staff members. ●

Caesar Suite living area (left); a bath with a view (right)