

CHRISTOPH BAUER



Jost Deitmar
Hotel Louis C. Jacob, Hamburg



The Louis C. Jacob hotel in Hamburg's distinguished Nienstedten neighborhood is known for its style and understatement. Hotel director Deitmar chats with every guest. High-powered binoculars at the windows enhance the view of the Elbe River, and a carafe of sherry heightens the viewing experience.

DEFINING LUXURY DIFFERENTLY: WHERE EVERY IS A BIG DEAL **DETAIL**

T rue luxury is the antithesis of commotion. The real art of luxury lies in streamlining complicated processes in such a way that the result is extraordinary comfort. At the Louis C. Jacob hotel, that starts the moment guests arrive. Do they go to the reception desk? That's not necessary. A hotel employee leads them straight to their rooms. There they can fill out a prepared registration form at their leisure and return it later.

The hotel itself, a white manor house, is a member of the Leading Hotels of the World organization. It is located in Hamburg—a city whose inhabitants have cultivated their “Hanseatic understatement” for generations. That includes hotel director Jost Deitmar. He prefers practicality to pomp. High-quality binoculars are placed in each of the rooms with

a view of the harbor and the Elbe River. Guests can literally observe the captains at work on the deep-sea vessels cruising past. Would a sherry add to their pleasure? A crystal carafe stands ready. And speaking of views, guests who arrive by car will enjoy superb visibility as well. The hotel has all the windows of the cars in its underground garage washed every night. A business card discreetly attests to this service.

“My employees do not work in the service of strict standards. What's important is that they work independently in the service of the guests,” says hotel director Deitmar. His staff of 140 includes young women and men who themselves would like to direct a hotel somewhere in the world one day. At the “Jacob,” they go through all the departments and acquire the polish that marks true luxury. Without any commotion. ←



Arrival in Positano on the hotel's own boat. Seafood is served on the terrace overlooking the bay (above). Bar manager Robert Wimmer has worked at Le Sirenuse for 25 years. Love was what brought him from Vienna to Positano. He has named a new drink after the town: the “Positano” is a summer variation of the martini.

Positano is a romantic Italian fishing village on the world-famous Amalfi Coast near Naples. If you're not one of its 4,000 inhabitants, you have to be able to afford a visit—for example, to Le Sirenuse, which sits high above the rocky bay. This charming palazzo furnished with antiques was the summer home of the Sersale family until siblings Aldo, Paolo, Anna, and Franco turned it into a hotel in 1951. Today Franco's son Antonio directs the 58-room resort. He has retained the character and family atmosphere of the summer home.

Le Sirenuse lives almost exclusively from regular guests, who have known the staff for many years. And vice versa. Concierge Gennaro Cozzolino, who has been at the hotel for 28 years, practices the art of mind reading every day. “My aim is to know what guests desire before they ask for it,” he says. This is presumably the same approach a butler would take at a private palazzo. “That type of thing can only work if you have a long-term relationship with your employees,” says Antonio Sersale. ←



Antonio Sersale
Hotel Le Sirenuse, Positano

Antonio Sersale is the second generation to head Le Sirenuse. He wants guests to feel like they're coming home to the family's summer residence.

FRANCO CALEGARI, LE SIRENUSE