



ATLANTA HOMES™ & LIFESTYLES

**SUBTLE
& SERENE**
beautiful, blissful baths



ITALIAN LUXURY

*Grand Hotel Villa Serbelloni:
The good life on Lake Como*

WRITTEN BY *Ann N. Yungmeyer*

ROMANCE, TRADITION, ELEGANCE.

All tell the story of Grand Hotel Villa Serbelloni, frequented by European nobility, industrial tycoons and countless illustrious guests throughout its colorful history. The 19th-century hotel sits on a lush promontory on Lake Como in northern Italy, with panoramic views and a backdrop of the Swiss Alps. Outside the stately entrance gates, the medieval town of Bellagio oozes charm and beckons one to stroll its storybook cobbled paths.

While Bellagio is the “pearl of Lake Como,” Grand Hotel Villa Serbelloni is a jewel in the realm of elegant retreats and the only five-star hotel in town. Built as a private home for an aristocratic Milanese family, the villa became a luxury hotel in 1873, originally named Grand Hotel Bellagio. Featuring frescoed ceilings, marble staircases and gilded trim, it was a “holiday home” for guests who would arrive by boat with an entourage of servants and friends.

After weathering both world wars (and serving as a barracks, with troops burning parquet floors as firewood), the hotel has been exquisitely restored to its neoclassical glory by its owners of 99 years, the Bucher family. The current proprietor, Gianfranco Bucher, speaks of painstaking



VARENNA, MELZI PHOTOS BY A. YUNGMEYER.
HOTEL PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED BY GHVS



COLORFUL COMO AND LAKE HIGHLIGHTS

Stroll the gardens at Villa Melzi (circa 1810) featuring a lakefront promenade.

Visit Villa del Balbianello, a 1700s hilltop retreat once owned by the Visconti family, now open as a museum and event venue.

Water taxi to the village of Varenna and tour Villa Monastero, a museum with terraced botanical gardens.

Experience true Italian flair at Locanda dell'Isola Comacina—fresh fish and farm cuisine by the charismatic chef/proprietor.



renovations to modernize—without compromising the historical character. “You can’t build history,” he says. “We work on preservation and refurbishment every winter [while closed] to stay current.”

Modern-day comforts magically blend with the Belle Époque atmosphere. Salons are formal yet warmly inviting, adorned with period antiques, original art and Murano crystal chandeliers. Each of the 95 guest rooms and suites is uniquely furnished. Palatial and airy, many have 15- to 18-foot ceilings and views that make one eager to throw open the shutters and sash.

The spa features an indoor waterfall pool, while the fitness center offers Technogym cardio equipment, Pilates, squash, tennis, and a Turkish bath. Hotel restaurant options include casual Italian fare or fine dining at the Michelin-starred Mistral, featuring molecular cuisine by esteemed chef/innovator Ettore Bocchia.

The dolce vita vibe carries on at Grand Hotel Villa Serbelloni. All the while, the Bucher family keeps a personal touch, attending to each guest’s luxury experience. Approaching the 100-year anniversary of ownership, they continue a proud legacy, a gem of timeless appeal.

villaserbelloni.com

clockwise from top Grand Hotel Villa Serbelloni pool. The great marble staircase. A promenade of the plane trees, Villa Melzi. A deluxe lakeview room. *opposite, top to bottom* Picturesque Varenna across Lake Como from Grand Hotel Villa Serbelloni.

