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POOLS AND
WELLNESS FACILITIES



LUXURY ON THE ADRIATIC COAST

SPA OF PORTOPICCOLO ON THE SHORES OF THE GULF OF TRIESTE

On three levels, and nestling into the cliffs overlooking the sea, the project enriches the luxurious offering of the elegant seaside village of Portopiccò located a few kilometres from Trieste. Studio Alberto Apostoli has managed the concept design and final design development of the spa with a variety of pools, hammam, biosauna and Finnish sauna, steam bath, gym, bar and meeting rooms.

Location
Sistiana, Italy

Client/operator
Rizzani de Eccher (Client)
Bakel (Operator)

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Official opening
April 2017

Portopiccò is an ambitious and wide-ranging project: an eco-sustainable village built in the heart of the Gulf of Trieste, conforming to an environmental rehabilitation and urban regeneration project which led to the complete recovery of the former Sistiana Bay quarry abandoned in the seventies of the last century.

Architectural concept

The concept is spread over three levels, plus a basement floor dedicated to parking and service spaces, and covers a total area of 3,600 m². The design idea was to follow the genius loci of the cliffs overlooking the sea, alternating natural-coloured stone with the transparency of glass,

making it possible to lighten the structure, merge it with the context of the adjacent gulf and open up breath-taking views for its guests. The focus on wellness permeates the whole structure, starting from a more collective and choral dimension on the ground floor, and tending increasingly towards intimacy and privacy as you ascend to the floors above.

The ground floor houses the reception, children's room, conference rooms, hairstyling studio, the training pool and all the changing rooms dedicated to the ground-floor pool, the facilities for the upper floors and the external pool system already in operation. The «fan» shape of the colon-

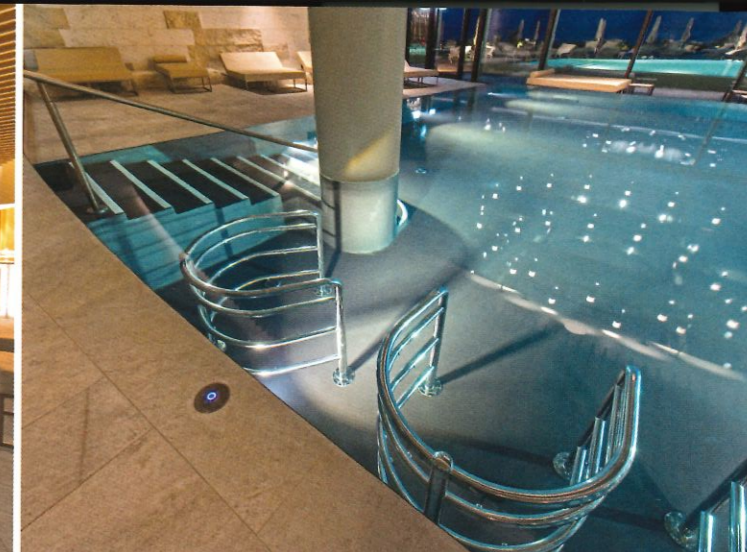
nade structure is very striking, underlined by contrasting stoneware floor strips, while the imposing corten portals frame and define the entrance and the reception areas.

The entrance features an imposing covered porch, which welcomes customers and leads them inside. The building is fully glazed, providing interconnections between the interior and exterior. The reception itself is conceived as a single continuous element between inside and outside. In this way, customers who only use the outside pools can buy a ticket without having to enter the facility, being then directed to a specific changing room. At peak times, flows can be managed differently.

Blending in with the exterior and the bay

On the first floor there is a relaxation area dominated by the in-out pool that blends in with the exterior and the bay, thanks to the huge windows. Through an opening in the window itself, guests can go out into the outdoor pool without leaving the water. Both indoor and outdoor pools are equipped with different kinds of water features.

The area is equipped with fun showers, a Kneipp path, hammam (tepidarium, calidarium and frigidarium), biosauna and Finnish sauna, as well as a salt cave where guests can inhale micronised iodine or bathe in the salt



tub. The floor also includes the gym, the personal trainer studio and the Cocoon bar serving the wellness area, the adjacent restaurant-bar-banqueting area and the conference room. This room, extending indoors and outdoors, applies the same concept as the meeting rooms: modulation and variability based on opening glass walls, so the area can be used alternatively as a single space or several dedicated environments.

The last floor is entirely devoted to the beauty spa and the waiting lounge, with a breath-taking view over the sea, a private spa and numerous cabins that offer a wide variety of beauty treatments.

The spa area, slightly secluded for greater tranquillity, develops around a column which becomes the fulcrum for this space. Around this column we find the Kneipp path and an ice cascade, while on the perimeter, in a single glazed curved wall, faced with the same slats seen in the main halls, there are a sauna, a steam bath, fun showers, relaxation room and a cold water tub. An area for iodine cures completes the offer. A naturally shaped pool of saline water gently laps against the «shores» of a salt-covered environment for all-round immersion into the element.

Balancing the technical and aesthetics

The spa complex is one of the last structures of considerable size in this village, and stands, due to the type of equipment used, as an extremely “energetic” element that insists on a network of sub-services already heavily burdened by the existing buildings.

The mechanical, electrical and plumbing design had to pursue the efficiency and reliability of the solutions chosen, with particular attention to rationalising traditional energy sources and their ease of management and maintenance. It was therefore decided, wherever possible, to equip the complex with solutions which pay particular attention to reducing energy consumption by using renewable sources.

At the same time, the architectural project had to refine and enrich the concept design, focusing in particular on the management of technical aspects and the insertion of extremely complex wellness facilities and water systems which are positioned inside an existing building to which the project had to be adapted.

The study of water baths, diversified between hot, cold, fresh and salty water and placed on different levels, was the starting point for the architectural design that harmonises the predominantly technical aspect with high-impact and luxurious aesthetics.

