



Promenade du Port's "Piccolo L.A." project

## BUSINESS

# Sardinian Resort Expands Luxury Niche Offering

● Promenade du Port brings L.A.-based labels The Elder Statesman, Nick Fouquet and No.One to Porto Cervo.

BY ALESSANDRA TURRA

**MILAN** — As international brands make significant retail investments to engage with customers also during their summer holidays, Promenade du Port is helping redefine the shopping experience in the most exclusive Sardinian sea resort, Porto Cervo.

Established in 2008, Promenade du Port, a sea front retail complex managed by Milanese entrepreneur Andrea Brugnoli, includes 60 stores spanning more than 183,000 square feet, making it the beating heart of Porto Cervo's social life. Open from June through September, Promenade du Port welcomes mostly international shoppers coming from all over the world, including Central Europe, Russia, the Middle East and South America.

"Promenade du Port was born from a quite straightforward strategy: bringing to Porto Cervo what you couldn't find here, which was actually a wider sense of luxury, less related to established brands and more linked to an idea of lifestyle.

Actually, our main goal was to create multichannel and multisensorial experiences," Brugnoli said. "We kicked off this business in a very difficult moment. On one side the whole world had just been hit by a major financial crisis and on the other end the Costa Smeralda itself was transitioning from being the land of ostentation to what it is today — an international holiday destination defined by a much more low-key luxury lifestyle."

Ten years ago, Brugnoli embraced the challenge and gave his contribution to the definition of a new Costa Smeralda, still populated by very wealthy individuals, but who are not just interested in showing off the biggest yacht, the most expensive watch and the biggest diamond ring.

With a high concentration of luxury labels operating flagships on Porto Cervo's famous Piazzetta, the main square in the village, Brugnoli decided to bank on research and niche products, offering the best quality in the market not only in terms of fashion and accessories, but also food and beverage. Another significant step was to put a strong focus on art. The son of Milan-based design guru Rossana Orlandi, who operates a gallery at Promenade du Port herself, Brugnoli gave space to several art destinations, including the



Andrea Brugnoli

Paci Contemporary gallery, which hosts an exhibition of rare pictures by iconic fashion photographer Horst P. Horst.

"I never wanted to develop a mall; from the beginning, we focused on special projects developed in collaboration with the seasonal tenants," Brugnoli said, mentioning for example an "incredibly successful" partnership with Rolls-Royce Motor Cars Ltd., which at Promenade du Port showcases and sells bespoke, limited-edition cars.

Marking the 10th anniversary of the project, Brugnoli introduced "The Supermarket," a four-story site including a series of white boxlike spaces housing a range of trunk shows and exhibitions. Until Saturday, "The Supermarket" will host "Piccolo Los Angeles," a project aimed at putting the focus on the South Californian craftsmanship. In particular,

Brugnoli selected three high-end Los Angeles-based brands to sell special editions of their products at Promenade du Port, including cool knit specialist The Elder Statesman, hatmaker Nick Fouquet and artisanal sneaker label No.One.

"In terms of creativity and buzz, Los Angeles is a new New York. During a trip there, I was fascinated by its unique vibe, which I wanted to bring to Porto Cervo," said Brugnoli, who revealed he is a fan of No.One handmade bespoke sneakers.

"When Andrea came to L.A., it was clear that he was a wild man with a vision and a plan," said No.One designer and cofounder Mark Gainor. "The opportunity to showcase handmade goods from L.A. and sit next to our Venice neighbor Nick Fouquet and cashmere boss Greg Chait was too good to pass up. Of course, there are worse places in the world to be. Sardinia is stunning."

"Having the opportunity to bring a piece of L.A. culture, craft and fashion to Porto Cervo helps narrate the story of Los Angeles to a diverse and international demographic," Fouquet said. "This makes me feel like we are spreading the L.A. vibe and love."

A focus on artisanal craftsmanship has always been at the core of Promenade du Port, which, along with a selection of global brands, including Balenciaga, Dsquared2, Bulgari and Pomellato — one of the season's new entries with Temperley London and Franco and Giacomo Loro Piana's Sease label — also houses the stores of local manufacturers, such as Sardinian coral specialist Bottega del Corallo.

"Even if the overall goal is to make Promenade du Port a strong brand which can be exported to different destinations in the world, we remain very rooted into the Sardinian territory, which with its beauty and uniqueness is at the base of the project's success," Brugnoli said.