

# the aesthete

Olga Polizzi has been Rocco Forte Hotels' director of design since 1996. Her sleekly opulent style defines properties from Munich to Mayfair.

**My personal style signifier** is big, brazen necklaces by Fabio Salini. He's quite adventurous – he puts leather with diamonds, titanium with semiprecious stones. But I've got literally hundreds of necklaces; they jolly anything up. *Via di Monserrato 18, Rome 00186 (+3906-6830 1172; www.fabiosalini.com).*

**An unforgettable place I've travelled to in the past year** is Sicily. Its long, rich history offers an inimitable culture. I also love the combination of the rugged landscapes and turquoise seas – not to mention the excellent fish and wine.

**The last item I added to my wardrobe** is an outfit by [German designer] Annette Görtz, who's so original; it's a pair of three-quarter-length trousers and a jacket – simple, and a bit odd. *www.annettegoertz.com.*

**The books on my bedside table** include *The Leopard* by Lampedusa, which I'm rereading as I'm immersed in all things Sicilian right now; it's quite a melancholy book. I've also got *Dancing to the Precipice* by Caroline Moorehead.

**The grooming staples I'm never without** are Inlight skincare products – completely natural, organic products made in Cornwall by an Italian homeopathic doctor called Mariano Spiezia. They feel lovely on my skin. My hairdryer is an absolute must, to tame my frizz. And I wear a Mac lipstick in a shade called Plum. *Inlight, 01326-281 114; www.inlight-online.co.uk. Mac, 0800-074 6905; www.maccosmetics.co.uk.*

**The last music I bought** was Handel's *Theodora*. I was never that keen on him but we live very near Glyndebourne, and a few years ago saw it performed there. It's a wonderful, moving libretto in English with some marvellous words. With opera, the more you listen to things, the more you like them. My father loved Verdi but thought Britten was ghastly, and I took it as received wisdom until I started listening to his work myself. Now I love him.

and moving object. I love the Madonna and Child as an image; I'm a Catholic and, I suppose, relatively religious, so it's got quite a bit of meaning for me. I believe it's Flemish. I'm not even sure what the wood is; I just know I love it.

**A recent "find"** is Morgan Le Fay, in New York. It has the most wonderful women's clothes – incredibly feminine, a bit quirky but so flattering, made with flowing voiles,

cottons and linens. And it's quite unusual to find something that's not ubiquitous. *67 Wooster Street, New York 10012 (+1212-219 7672; www.morganelefay.com).*

**The best souvenir I've brought home recently** is olive oil. I brought back three different tins, all from boutique producers in western Sicily. They're the best presents – you could be visiting a dear friend or someone you barely know, but few people wouldn't be delighted by really good, first-press olive oil.

**The last thing I bought and loved** was a new sofa from Meridiani. It's simple, classical modern; a big, comfortable, grey sofa. Buying a sofa is quite a big step, and it's easy to get it not quite right – too wide, too soft, too hard, too bulky for the room. But I think this one's good. *01797-270 149; www.meridianicollections.it.*

**And the thing I'm eyeing next** is a pair of matching metal tables at Guinevere Antiques on King's Road. They've been made into dining tables from coffee tables, and are sleek but serviceable. And virtually indestructible. *574-580 King's Road, London SW6 (020-7736 2917; www.guinevere.co.uk).*

**The people I depend on for grooming and style** are Kevin, at Michaeljohn, for my thrice-yearly hair cut. I can wash and dry it quickly, and it just sits perfectly, for weeks. And Frances Hall – she does the best manicure and pedicure in London. *Michaeljohn, 25 Albemarle Street, London W1 (020-7629 7259; www.michaeljohn.co.uk). Frances Hall, 42 Conduit Street, London W1 (020-7287 3453).*

**If I had to limit my shopping to one neighbourhood in one city, I'd choose** the Sablon in Brussels. It has the best antiques and design shopping in Europe – I buy quite a lot for the hotels there. Michel Lambrecht in particular is fantastic; mainly 20th century but he makes a lot of his own things; he'll buy old railings and turn them into lamps. There's a handful of fromageries and patisseries, some of the best chocolatiers, and nice clothes on Avenue Louise just around the corner. You can get it all.

*Michel Lambrecht, Watteusstraat 18, B-1000 Brussels (+322-502 2729; www.michel-lambrecht.be)*

