

## How Nicolas Party Designed a Swimming Pool for a Glamorous, Art-Filled Amalfi Coast Hotel

The mosaic-tiled pool is one of the many artworks at Le Sirenuse. Its owner, the art collector Antonio Sersale, weighs in on the eclectic majesty of his seaside resort.



Thanks to Nicolas Party, the pool scene beckons at Le Sirenuse. Photo: Brechenmacher & Baumann

by William Van Meter • July 24, 2024 • [Share This Article](#)

Finally, you can swim atop a beguiling Nicolas Party mosaic. The Swiss artist has designed a pool at the iconic luxury hotel Le Sirenuse, in the Italian seaside town of Positano. The hotel's owner Antonio Sersale vividly remembers his first plunge into Party's vision. "It was unbelievable," he said. "Once it had been filled with water, it couldn't be heated for a number of days because the tiles had to adjust. The water was freezing, but we just wanted to swim in it immediately and celebrate this beautiful art."

The project doesn't scream art pool. Rather, it's a timeless study of restraint and subtlety with Party taking in to account the building and the majestic natural surroundings of the Amalfi Coast. The interlocking organic forms heighten Le Sirenuse's rounded architectural elements and highlight the enrapturing views of the Tyrrhenian Sea.

Sersale knew Party was the perfect artist to collaborate with after seeing one of his exhibitions in Los Angeles. "I was so impressed, I thought, 'Wouldn't it be unbelievable to create an underwater world that was almost like a secret place that you would see when you entered the water?'" Le Sirenuse and Party worked with the renowned Italian luxury tile company Bisazza.

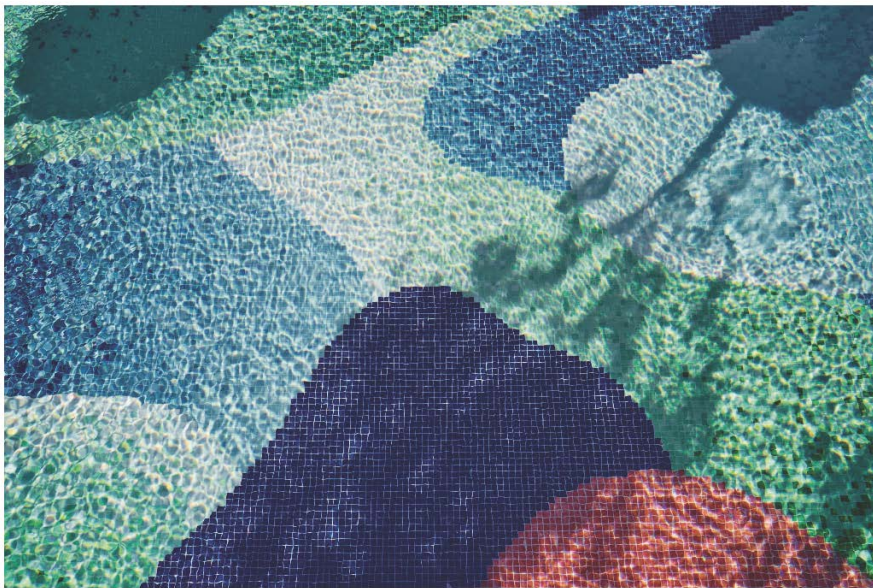
Party had complete artistic freedom. "He presented a drawing to us, and it was love at first sight," Sersale said. "I was totally moved by his interpretation of movement and of the colors. This semicircle is a golden sun. It's just amazing."



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Sersale is also an art collector, and he and his wife Carla have turned the hotel into an evolving art project of sorts. The pool is the latest iteration of the hotel's site-specific art commissions program, Artists at Le Sirenuse. "What I think makes the pool so beautiful is that it's also very discreet," Sersale said. "It's not calling for attention. All the works of art in this hotel are very much to be looked at if you're looking for them." Case in point: Italian sculptor Giuseppe Ducrot's golden mural is a seamless addition to an exterior wall.

Sersale works with the curator and art advisor Silka Rittson Thomas on the program. "The format that we decided to do was to select an artist together that we felt could express the joy and the powerful colors that you find here and that could interpret this and also find a place for the work in the hotel." Other artists who have participated include Alex Israel, Matt Connors, Caragh Thuring, and Stanley Whitney.



A close-up view of the Nicolas Party-designed pool. Photo: Brechenmacher & Baumann

Sersale rechristened one of the hotel's bars the "Don't Worry Bar" after Martin Creed's multicolored, neon script sculpture that conveys the same message. [Rita Ackermann](#) made two paintings that seem to personify the "siren" of the hotel's name.

“Rita was amazing,” Sersale recalled. “She decided that she wanted to take over this room, which had two paintings in it originally. One was a cardinal that belonged to an ancestor of ours. And then there was a painting of a woman who was actually topless, so the cardinal was looking at this woman. This was something that my father found very amusing. But Rita Ackerman came, and she liked the proportions and feeling of this room, and she decided that this was where she was going to create. The cardinal was [eventually] moved to another room and now looks at a Stanley Whitney.”



Giuseppe Ducrot's outdoor installation. Photo: Brechenmacher & Baumann.

The 58-room family-run hotel has been operating since 1951 when Sersale's grandfather converted the family summer house into Le Sirenuse. Franco's Bar is named after Sersale's late father who helmed it before he took the reins. The elder Sersale collected art and antiques, and the contemporary *mélange* of the current epoch has created a singular eclectic environment.

He continued, “Hotels are not museums. Hotels are living organisms, and they have to change and adapt through time.” One of Sersale's sons recently opened a “vinyl bar” within the Don't Worry Bar after he was inspired by a trip to Japan. DJs now play nightly. “It gives it a whole new vibe,” Sersale said.



Martin Creed's neon sculpture presides over the “Don't Worry Bar.” Photo: Brechenmacher & Baumann.

The hotelier embraces change and respects the past. “I’ve built on the foundation that was laid by the previous generation,” Sersale says of the hotel’s evolution. “I am very respectful of everything that was done before. I’m not here to erase the past or to impose my signature or my legacy. I’m here continuing a conversation that I felt was begun before me and I hope will continue after me.”



One of Rita Ackermann's contributions hangs at Le Sirenuse. Photo: Brechenmacher & Baumann.