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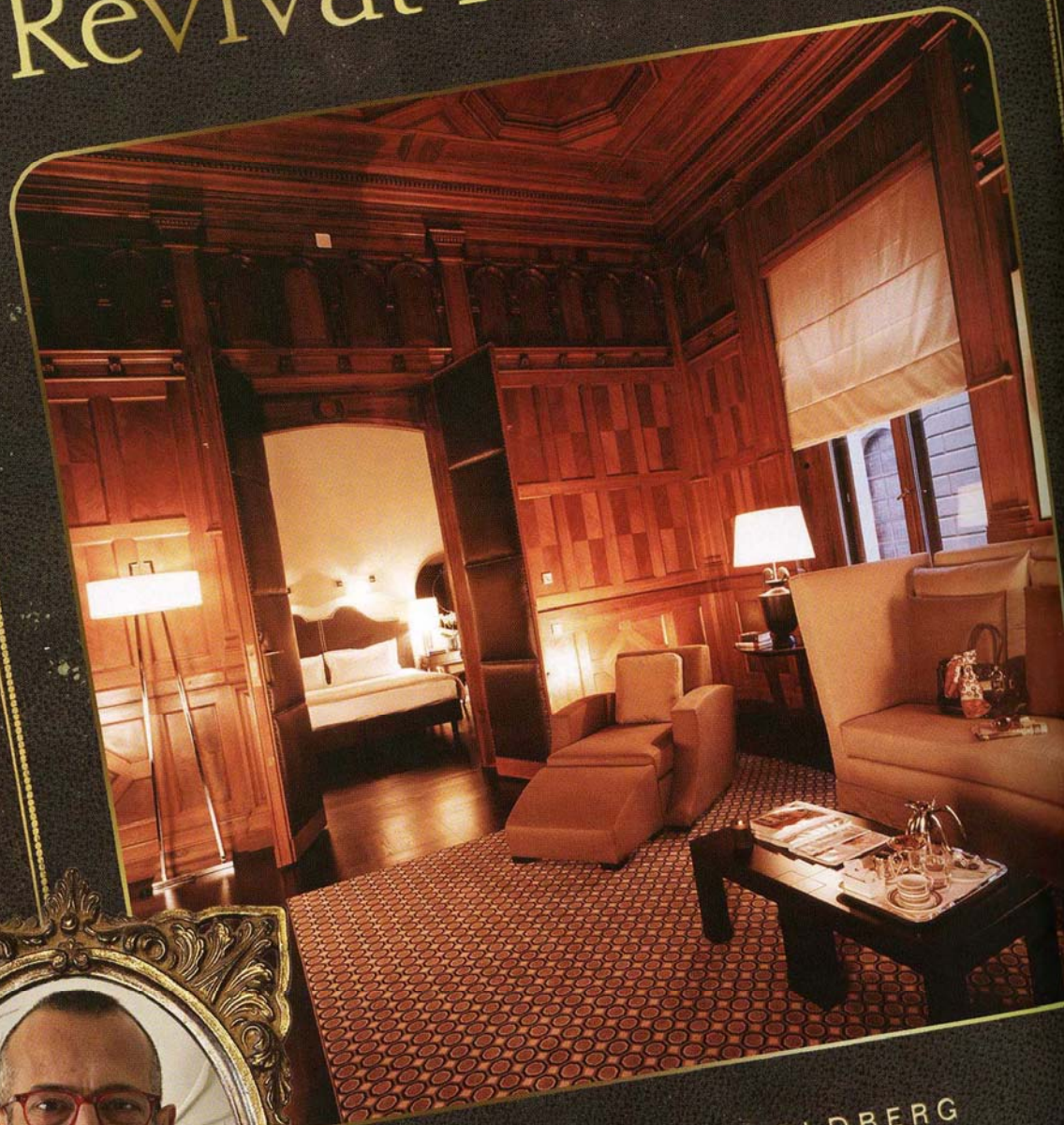
## Clodagh: Diva of Spa Design

“I feel I’ve been driving  
in the same lane all  
my life. I haven’t really  
shifted my beliefs.”

*Clodagh*



# NeoClassical Revival in Berlin



BY REBECCA GOLDBERG

Tommaso Ziffer



## Tommaso Ziffer Designs Rocco Forte's 12<sup>th</sup> Hotel

Faced with a very imposing, classical building that had not been inhabited in 20 years, interior designer Tommaso Ziffer was asked to convert a former bank into Hotel de Rome. And Ziffer's work would be unprecedented in Berlin, as it is starting to emerge as an arts capital in Europe.

He decided to take each of the 146 rooms and give them all a unique flavor. And much of this unique design was born out of awkward spaces—the spa area is located in the former vault—wide marble columns and ceilings that slope inward on the higher floors. In some areas of the property, they have maintained little damage left from bullets shot during World War II.

"About 60 percent of the rooms are different," he said. "The shape of the building changes while going up. It is recessed compared to the lining of the façade. There are quite a lot of differences in shape. Meanwhile, the first two floors have very high ceilings."

This natural division allowed for different room schemes, of which Ziffer worked—both Modern and Pompeian. Each scheme was designed in a variety of colors.

"While the overall shell of both schemes is classic with molding and skirting the doors are classic in the way the paneling is classic," he said.

"In the Modern scheme, I chose to replicate an optical carpet from David Hicks while in the furniture there is a great mixture of styles. We have an arm chair that looks like a big lounge car. It reminds me of one of those old cars. The lamps are 70s inspiration; it's eclectic. And we used quilted curtains—to remind you you are in a cold climate—with under curtains in a strong horizontal stripe pattern," he said.

In the historic, or Pompeian room schemes, Ziffer chose softer materials and warmer colors.

"The wood paneling comes from the old meeting rooms in the bank. And the fabrics are all very neutral in linen color," he said. "We used parquet floors in some rooms, while others have geometrical design carpets."

The lobby is a contrast of black and white with a little glimmer of glass and gold. But Ziffer rejects the word modern here.

"It's quite eclectic. The round sofas were oversized to fit in the spaces that were literally huge.

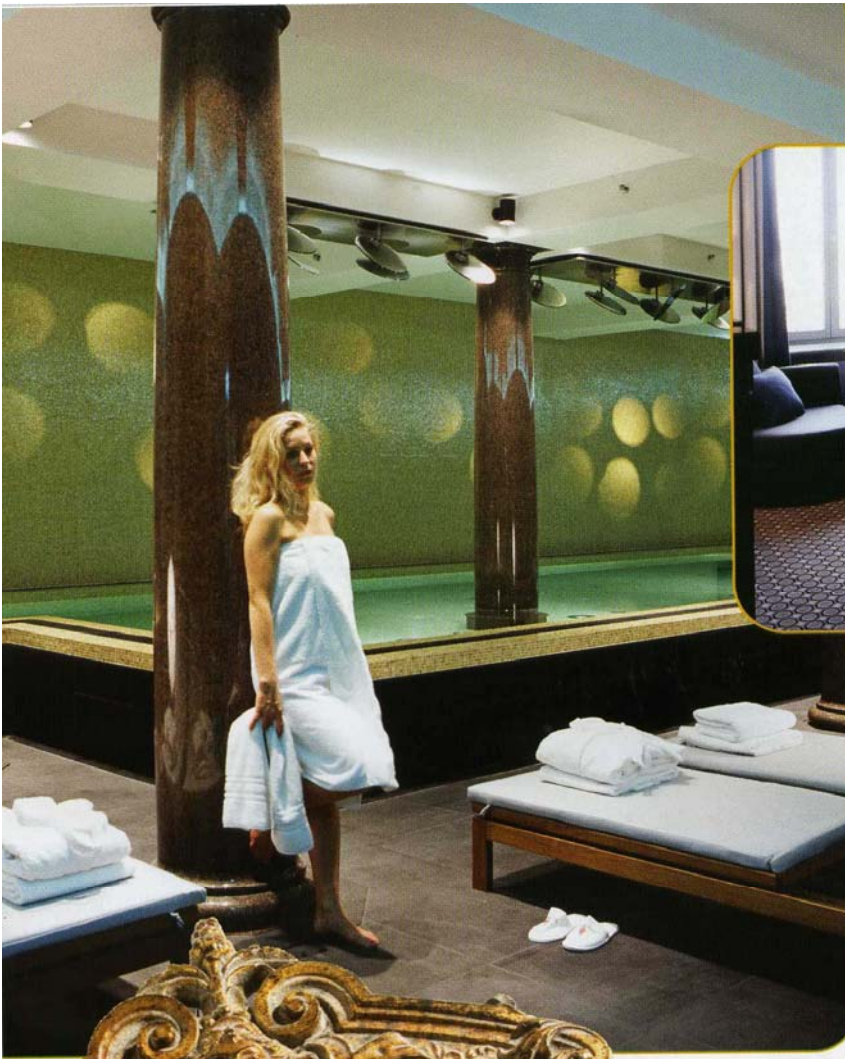
We have four ancient Venetian mirrors. There is a big ball lamp, which is typical of offices of the Bauhaus period in the 1940s. We're talking about mixing the styles. There is a structure coming down from the ceiling. Under that is a big square table. If we did-



Above: Bar area; Below: The lobby has contrasting splashes of black and white and oversized sofas accommodate oversized areas.







## ROCCO FORTE HOTELS

The opening of Hotel de Rome marked Rocco Forte's 12th property, of which he carried the torch of Olga Polizzi's work. Polizzi is responsible for the interior design for the entire group. Ziffer noted, "At the end of the opening, Rocco said 'do you want to do another one?'"

n't create that they would have put big flower arrangements and it would have cut

the view," he said noting that there are courtyards outside of the property. "It's decorative but it doesn't cut your view when you're walking in."

Ziffer is proud of his creation—a hotel that's a first for Berlin. "It is totally different than others in Berlin," he said. "This is our big quality and challenge. Everyone is very excited because it is so different. I spoke a year ago about what happens in Berlin when interior designers try to do classic, ordinary themes. It's easier to do something modern in an old building and remain in good taste. If you try to create a French chateau in a sky scraper, you're going towards Donald Trump's taste. Ours is modern, eclectic, the mixing of styles; plus the location is really extraordinary."

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Clockwise from top left: Lounge pool; a deluxe room in the Hotel de Rome; The reception desk is made of stitched leather and resembles an old suitcase.