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## Hotel Bernini Palace in Florence: Fit for Royalty

TRAVEL

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BY TUCKER BUELLER



When traveling in Italy's best cities, there are a number of splurges that are simply indisputable.

- **Skip the Line.**

Thinking of winging it? Think again. You need only to spend your entire day in line at the Duomo in Florence or the Vatican in Rome to know that getting to the front of the line is an absolute must. Be sure to

get an audio tour as well. If you can, go private. Whichever your poison, go with *viator.com* for reliable tours and good-as-gold skip the line passes.

- **Go big on wine.**

Just because you're in the homeland doesn't mean that every bottle will be a blockbuster. Indulge in a choice Brunello or Barolo.

- **Dress to the nines.**

Italians do, especially the men. It's part of the culture to be polished, often at the cost of other worldly goods. The exception is sensible shoes, which are advised for daytime meandering.

- **Choose your digs carefully.**

With a dearth of reliable websites that give an insider's view of how and where to stay, you could find yourself stuck in what may be a new level of Dante's hell.

While small, Florence is patently Italian, read: challenging to navigate. The best bet for this seat of the Italian Renaissance is something central, elegant, and relaxing.

Overlooking Palazzo Vecchio, at the center of Florence, and just a stone's throw from the Arno River, the **Bernini Palace Hotel** has become one of the most exclusive destinations in the city. A renowned five-star accommodation, the Bernini Palace Hotel is situated just behind Piazza della Signoria and the famed Uffizi Gallery.

Ancient and evocative (it was the first building in Florence to be equipped with running water and a stable — off to a good start). In the late 19-century for the few years that Florence was the capital of Italy, it was the Columbia Parlamento Hotel, a meeting and dining place for members of Parliament, and a residence for some government officials. Of course, the politics of Italy have been the stuff of intrigue for centuries, and that aura endures in this stately, historic property.



The Duomo from Hotel Bernini Palace



Old World suites

First things first: belonging to the international association of Les Clefs d'Or, the staff is well equipped to manage any wish —or trouble — that guests may have. Luggage lost somewhere between JFK and FCO? The concierge can track it down adroitly — true story. Lighter lifts include expert advice on what to see and where to eat in a city of overwhelming options.

All 74 rooms are spacious, opulently decorated, and equipped with sinfully soft linens, exclusive Simmons mattresses; anti-allergy duvets; and soft, cotton-satin duvet covers. Some views are better than others, and many

rooms offer a spectacular view of the Duomo — ask for this feature. If privacy is a concern, the Tuscan Junior Suites offer exceptional space and historic elegance. Regardless of the which room you choose, the

generously sized, and perfectly perfumed Lorenzo Villoresi Firenze bath products are a significant extravagance.

Upon waking and after bathing in a spacious lav, make your way to Sala delle Colazioni (breakfast hall) which was once called Buvette del Parlamento (Parliament's restaurant). The buffet offers an exceptional selection of homemade, organic, and natural foods as well as baked products. There is even a dedicated area with gluten-free products. The freshly squeezed juice is perfect with a splash (or generous pour) of prosecco.

Speaking of eating, later in the day the recently restored restaurant, La Chiostrina, is perfect for dinners, business meetings, or light lunches. Located near the lobby under a 16th-century colonnade at the ground floor, La Chiostrina features Tuscan-typical cuisine from a menu that changes seasonally.

The Lounge Bar, which evokes the Belle Epoque (this hotel was once the Shield of France Hotel), is perfect for a romantic rendezvous. Get the Negroni, which was created in Florence by Count Camillo Negroni in 1919. The Golden Martini, enriched with real gold powder, will make you feel shiny. The whiskey selection includes at least 50 fine blends.



The Lounge Bar

The Garden Terrace, with bar service, is located on Bernini's rooftop, overlooks the Palazzo Vecchio, and features gazebos, pavilions, and a solarium. This is the perfect locale for an iconic Aperol spritz.



David

The Bernini Palace Hotel is also a great option for conventions or weddings. The Sala Corsini can accommodate up to 45 people, which is just about the max you'd want for perfect European nuptials. The abutting squares make for perfect photo ops — though, beware the sea of selfie-sticks.

For fashionistas, a walk through the most exclusive of Florence's boutiques and ateliers with a personal shopper is available. The hotel also offers shuttle service to and from The Mall, a luxury outlet where the most famous Italian and international fashion brands can be found.

Last but certainly not least, a wine and food tour from Florence to the Chianti region can be organized for Bernini's oenophile-gourmet guests, with visits to selected wineries guided by a professional sommelier.

[hotelbernini.duetorrihotels.com](http://hotelbernini.duetorrihotels.com)

By Anthony Giampetrucci  
[anthony.giampetrucci@sociallifemagazine.com](mailto:anthony.giampetrucci@sociallifemagazine.com)