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## A Florentine dream at Hotel Bernini Palace and ristorante La Chiostrina

written by Joel Berliner

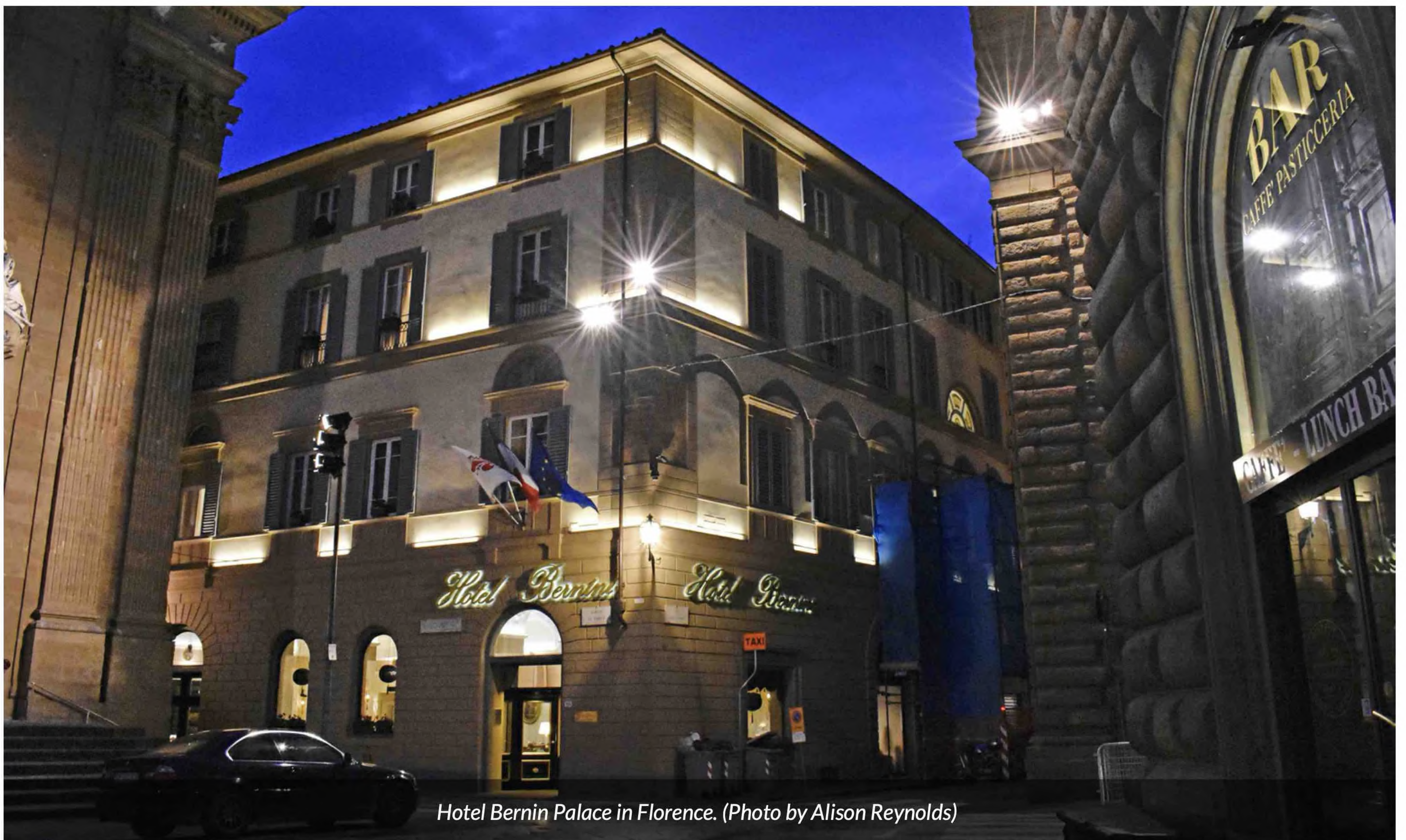
Mar 6, 2020

**FLORENCE, ITALY:** The **Hotel Bernini Palace** is a magnificent five star luxury hotel in the very heart of the center of Florence. Its location is perfect, mere steps from the Uffizi Gallery, the Palazzo Vecchio and the grand Piazza Della Signoria. This Florentine outpost of the **Duetorrihotels group** is a glorious oasis of luxury in the midst of history's greatest monuments to the Renaissance.



### Hotel Bernini Palace: Grandeur, history, and elegant design

The Bernini Palace occupies a building originally built in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The main parts of the current structure were built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It has been a grand hotel of one sort or another since the 1700's. During the kingdom of Italy of the 1860s it was a gathering place for the members of the House of Parliament.



*Hotel Bernini Palace in Florence. (Photo by Alison Reynolds)*

The lobby is a gorgeous antechamber of stunning design. Vaulted ceilings set on a series of pillars arch their way across a beautifully appointed sitting area filled with settees and couches. An art deco bar area glimmers in one corner. The ceilings are covered with ornate plaster designs



*The grand lobby of Hotel Bernini Palace. (Photo by Alison Reynolds)*

The remnants of its storied past adorn every corner of the hotel. Large frescoes on the ceiling of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor breakfast room depict the heroes of Italian unification. The breakfast room itself is stunning, with a grand mural covering the vaulted ceiling above the frescoed parade of Italian founding fathers.



*The historic breakfast room at the Hotel Bernini Place. (Photo by Alison Reynolds)*

### **Hotel Bernini Palace: the Junior Suite**

Our 3<sup>rd</sup> floor Junior Suite is an elegant chamber of exquisite design. Set on two levels, it is filled with ornately inlaid antique furniture at every glance. A stirring gilt adorned writing desk with a series of small drawers with golden pulls and a corner table are the centerpiece of the lower level. Twin side tables with intricate inlaid designs and a marble topped corner piece adorn the bedchamber.

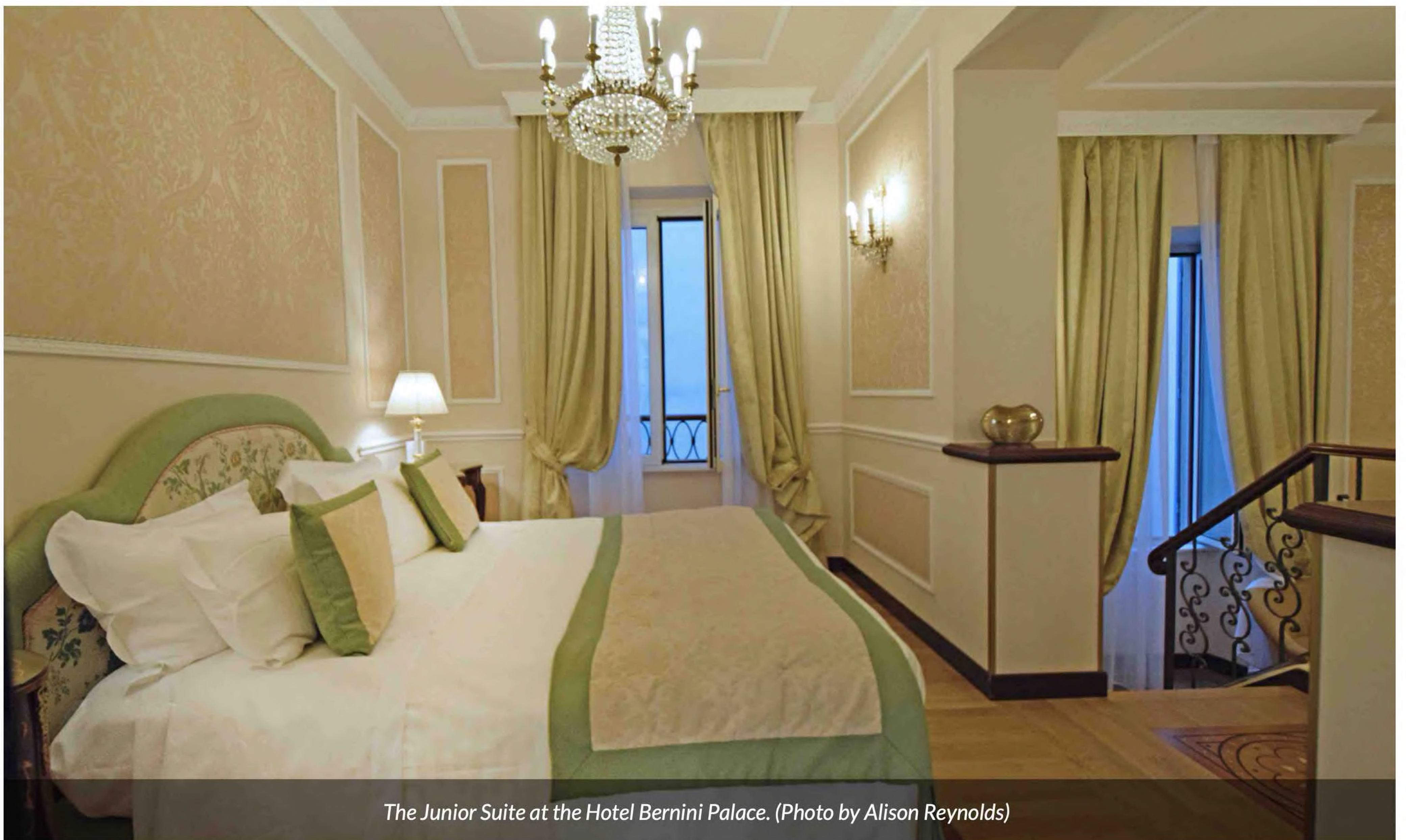
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### **The grand historic Due Torri Hotel in fabulous Verona, Italy**

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Twin crystal chandeliers hang in the center of each room. The walls are covered with gold damask cloth in large rectangular patterns beautifully framed by white molding. The plaster walls are a light cream color against white plaster crown moldings that ring the ceiling. Crystal sconce lighting fixtures that match the chandeliers adorn the walls.

Wrought iron railings adorn a small double staircase to the bedroom. The dual level gives the room a completely palatial feel. Parquet wood designs cover the floors with a beautifully inlaid crown design at the top of the double staircase.



*The Junior Suite at the Hotel Bernini Palace. (Photo by Alison Reynolds)*

### **Hotel Bernini Palace: Sumptuous rooms in gorgeous surroundings**

A sumptuous king size bed with a green designed needlepoint headboard is the centerpiece of the room. It is a chamber of sheer refined elegance and style. A perfect combination of Florence's glorious past with a grand touch of royal furnishings and design touches.

The bathroom floors and walls are covered with white marble. A large rain shower stall with a hand held spray covers one full wall of the room. A large marble sink adds a regal touch.

The hotel Bernini Palace has a total of 73 rooms with range of 12 suites and junior suites in both the gorgeous classic interior or in a more earthy Tuscan design. Tuscan style rooms have wood beamed ceilings and dark crimson motifs throughout.

### **Hotel Bernini Palace: Ristorante La Chiostrina**

Dinner at the hotel restaurant La Chiostrina is an epic occasion in an opulent dining room. Florence is famous for its culinary treasures. La Chiostrina definitely belongs on the short list of great fine dining experiences in the city, whether staying at the hotel or just visiting.

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### **At Grand Hotel Tremezzo, the legendary La Terrazza Gualtiero Marchesi**

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With just 9 tables overall, La Chiostrina is an intimate, elegant, warmly decorated and exceptionally comfortable space. The room itself is a long chamber of ten arches set apart by bronze sconces under a single domed ceiling. The entryway to the L shaped room is a series of smaller arches under a separate dome.

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*La Chiostrina ristorante at Hotel Bernini Palace. (Photo by Alison Reynolds)*

Exposed crimson industrial piping adds a modernist element to the room. In the elbow of the L, a floor to ceiling glass wall with a sliding door leads to a casual garden filled area with wicker chairs for before dinner drinks.

A series of empty frames adorn the entry wall. A procession of still life's and grand masters fill the long wall at the back of the room. A grandfather clock set for midnight is flanked by two vertical still life's of flower arrangements against the back wall. Regency chairs of red velvet and white wooden trim are both comfortable and set the tone of the room.

### **La Chiostrina: A fabulous evening of exquisite cuisine**

The Matre'd, Franco Crepaldi, is a commanding presence with Italian movie star good looks. Franco has been the captain of La Chiostrina for over 12 years. He guides each table through an exceptional evening like a maestro conducting an orchestra of fine dining.



*Matre'd extraordinaire Franco Crepaldi at La Chiostrina. (Photo by Alison Reynolds)*

Chef Enrico Lo Presti has designed a menu that is an exquisite expression of Haute Cuisine. Though he does not have a Michelin Star he certainly deserves one. Throughout the evening his kitchen sends out amazing dish after dish that take traditional foods and expand the boundaries of what is possible.

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### **The fabulous Hotel du Lac in stunning Bellagio, Lake Como**

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A simple insalade miste is transformed by razor thin sliced pear walnuts, Parmesan cheese slivers and balsamic vinegar. Fresh greens come alive in a combination that is light, refreshing, and far from ordinary.

Sauteed foie gras with star anise compote, coffee powder, and pear is some of the best this writer has ever had. Paired with a yazu sorbet, the combination of ingredients is a culinary surprise with each delectable bite. A slice of foie gras with a touch of anise compote is followed by a spoonful of sorbet for an incredible pas de deux of flavor and taste.

#### **La Chiostrina: Pici and Ravioli Nero**

Pici pastas with smoked duck ragu is extraordinary. Thick noodles of pici sing in a sauce of duck, green apple, orange and capers from Elba. It arrives piping hot and is consumed voraciously. Pici is a classic Tuscan pasta, but here at LA Chiostrina it is transformed into a work of art.

Black ravioli, or Ravioli Nero, stuffed with cod, pine nuts, and vanilla is a revelation. Eight gorgeous ravioli are served on a donut shaped ceramic plate, each placed on a small island of organic lemon cream and celeriac, smattered with taglia olives and chili peppers.

Franco gingerly adds a layer of black pepper at tableside. Each incredible morsel is an amazing burst of perfection, the ravioli tender and succulent, the stuffing bursting across the palette.

The evening is accompanied by a magnificent Gavi de Gavi from Piemonte. Rich and creamy, but deliciously dry, its is a perfect complement to a culinary tour de force.

#### **La Chiostrina: The main courses**

Sea bass cooked in Tuscan olive oil on a bed of celeriac, kumquat and fennel puree further explores the talents of Chef Enrico Lo

Presti. Sea bass is on every menu throughout Italy, but it has never tasted like this. Beautifully cooked, firm on the outside and flaky and tender on the inside, it combines with the ingredients to create a wholly new and wonderful sea bass culinary experience.

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### Hotel Suisse Bellagio: History, charm, and fine dining in Lake Como

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Grilled Chianina beef fillet is a sumptuously fabulous grand finale that shows the glory of locally sourced Tuscan beef. The fillet is like butter, tenderly rich, succulent and possessing its own solar system of exquisite tastes.

Franco serves an excellent glass of Brunello di Montalcino with the fillet, as he insists it must be tasted with a full bodied red wine. He is more than correct. The wine becomes a fifth element in an outstanding display of Chef Lo Presti's talents.

Dessert takes what has come before and puts an exclamation point on it. A grue of Madagascar chocolate with mango and a soft beetroot compote with cocoa butter is an explosion of flavor and rich taste. It is a signature dessert of La Chiostrina.

#### **La Chiostrina: A meal to remember**

It is the perfect accompaniment to a trio of special sorbets that are as different as they are particularly fabulous. Served on the donut shaped ceramic plate, Avocado sorbet is next to a peach ginger rosemary sorbet, accompanied by a taro and rose sorbet. Each is as amazing as the next.

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### Elegance and class at Vista Palazzo Lago di Como in Como, Italy

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Like the soft beetroot compote in the chocolate dish, Chef Lo Presti takes a playful approach to create a wonderland of flavors and desserts that would seem out of the ordinary if not impossible. It is a triumph of the imagination, and a delicately wonderful taste experience.

Lingering over a pot of fresh coffee, three hours have passed like a fever dream of revelatory cuisine. La Chiostrina takes its place as one of the truly great restaurants of Florence, and a landmark part of the Bernini Palace experience. It should be added to every foodies list of where to have that special meal during a stay in Florence. A triumph of Haute Cuisine that is comparable to the best the city has to offer.

#### **Hotel Bernini Palace: Luxury in the heart of Florence**

Over the next two days the elegance and sheer grandness of a stay at the Bernini Palace stands out in the mind. Breakfast under the domed ceiling and the painted Frescoes of the Italian founding fathers is an eloquently grand experience. Every detail of the hotel is meticulous and exceptional.

Wandering out across the landscape of Florence in the morning, it is a wondrous experience to be mere yards from the grandness of the Palazzo Vecchio. A ten minute walk to the Academia and Michelangelo's David. Just down the street from the Bertolucci's Duomo. Around the corner from the Arno River and the Ponte Vecchio. Literally yards from the Uffizzi Museum.

In the midst of it all stands the Hotel Bernini Palace. More than a 5 star luxury hotel, it is a grand experience unto itself. A fitting companion to the greatness of the Renaissance all around it. A magnificent part of the Duetorrihotels group, it is transformative and exhilarating.

From the lobby, to the elegance of its rooms, to the superlative fine dining experience at La Chiostrina. Bernini Palace is the Florentine destination luxury hotel of a lifetime in a city filled with the dreams of the Renaissance brought to life.

[Hotel Bernini Palace](http://hotelbernini.duetorrihotels.com/en) [hotelbernini.duetorrihotels.com/en](http://hotelbernini.duetorrihotels.com/en)

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**J O E L  
B E R L I N E R**

Joel Berliner is a travel writer based in Los Angeles who has written for The Washington Times, Dallas Morning News, New York Newsday, Chicago Tribune, Honolulu Advertiser, El Paso Times, and the Minneapolis Star Tribune, among many other publications. He is excited to be here at CDN, where along with his wife, photographer extraordinaire Alison Reynolds, they will travel the globe in order to bring you The Good Life.

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