

# Hotel Bernini Palace

Florence

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View from Hotel Bernini Palace

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Hotel Bernini Palace occupies a 15th century classic Florentine palazzo, which originally belonged to the Pera family, presumed ancestors of the Peruzzi family, powerful Florentine financiers. According to old records, in the mid-19th century, it was already a hotel, named Albergo dello Scudo, for the stables it provided below for both horses and carriages. For five years, between 1865 and 1870, the building became the Hotel Columbia Parlamento, hosting Senators and Members of the House when Florence was capital of the young Kingdom of Italy.

Over the years, the name of the hotel has changed several times, and the building, of course, has been restored, undergoing renovations still today, ushering in all the comforts and conveniences that one would expect from a renowned hotel, while preserving the architectural elements that make it so unique. Throughout the hotel, lobbies, corridors and rooms are graced with period antique furnishings. Its best feature, without a doubt, is its proximity to ALL of the key sites of this Renaissance city. Located behind the Signoria, the hotel is within walking distance of the Ponte Vecchio, the Uffizi Galleries, the Duomo and Baptistery, Santa Croce and a few steps farther bring you to the Accademia and San Lorenzo markets.

Our room on the fifth floor offers the ultimate in the pleasure of travel. Small and intimate, elegantly furnished in antiques, the room is restful. Its shutters, when opened, offer an unobstructed view of the Dome of the Cathedral, the spire of the Badia Fiorentina, and the tower of the Bargello – a view to be savored in shifting lights throughout the day and early evening, when it eventually is cloaked in a blue velvet mantle, illuminated by street lights. Night and day, the clamor of San Firenze Square reminds us that this city is very much alive with the activities that fuel this 21st century, a hubbub that is blessedly erased with sound-proof windows, leaving our romantic hearts to imagine the city of Dante, Michelangelo and Brunelleschi.

An ample breakfast buffet is served in a lovely dining room with frescoed ceilings and parquet wood flooring, known as the Sala del Parlamento, so named for the paintings uncovered during the hall's restoration - portraits of the protagonists of Italy's Risorgimento, the movement that led to the unification of Italy. Tables are beautifully set, inviting one to linger over a cappuccino before beginning the business of business or of sightseeing. For guests, who wish to dine at home, La Chiostrina offers light lunches or more substantial dining in an enclosed courtyard setting, minimally decorated, a restraint that is welcomed after feasting one eyes on the abundant visual treasures of the city. A good Chianti Classico paired well with our lunch of *ravioli alla zucca* and *pappardelle con straccetti di vitello e pecorino*. Duck breast with a caramelized orange sauce was an excellent choice for our main entrée, leaving just enough room for a shared ice cream made with vin santo. Oh the pleasures of table in Florence! And what a pleasure it is to dine "in" and simply take the elevator upstairs, close the curtains and take a siesta. A dream within a dream!