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TRAVEL FOR THE CONNOISSEUR

ART *Express*

FLORENCE ROME FLORENCE

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Suzanne Paulson & Constance Glenn.

Laced constantly through our vision for weeks this spring, pictures of **Rome** in all of its majesty remain, tempting you, tempting me. Perhaps you'll be close by in Venice, taking in the Biennale. Then make time for Rome, and **Florence**, too.

In addition to its many seductive qualities, Rome — at last — is developing a contemporary art scene. Among museums, at the moment, foremost is **MACRO — Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Roma** — the adventuresome city museum, which opened in 2002 in the restored **Peroni brewery**. By 2006, architect **Odile Decq's** stunning addition will triple the museum's space and add a grand public terrace — sure to be an irresistible art gathering place. Throughout the entire 2005 summer, MACRO will host a full-scale retrospective of the work of **Tom Wesselmann**, who, sadly, died in December during its preparation by director and noted curator **Danilo Eccher**. It's a grand show that would have pleased the artist, with a huge catalogue by Eccher, plus other Italian, British (**Marco Livingstone**), and American (**Constance Glenn**) writers. MACRO's mission is to bring world-renowned artists to Rome and to support emerging artists, and there is plenty of success in both arenas. Don't miss **MACRO al Mattatoio**, the annex in the old city slaughterhouse in **Testaccio**, either. It's a lively headquarters for new media experimentation.

For those of us who are acronym-challenged, MACRO is not to be confused with **MAXXI**, the **National Museum of Art of the XXI Century**, **Zaha Hadid's** radical state museum for new art presently under construction (running behind as are most of the new architectural wonders because, of course, this *IS* Rome) in a suburb near the 1960 Olympic stadium by **Pier Luigi Nervi**. It is presently due to debut in 2007, but don't hold your breath. Until then, the project is operating as **DARCO-MAXXI** (Director General's Office for Contemporary Architecture and Art) in an exhibition space carved out of **Building D** of the former **Monello Barracks**, which will be integrated into Hadid's design. Through 2005, *Net Archives: The Pioneers of the Net* will be featured.

While there were major plans for the millennium, it took the arrival — in 2001 — of an aggressive new mayor, **Walter Veltroni**, to implement a new master plan for decentralization. After all, central Rome is a museum of its own sort and the new urban plan recognizes that if Rome is going to catch up to the 21st century, it must be beyond the desperately crowded heart of the city, where virtually every structure is a precious artifact.

In this cultural expansion, count **Renzo Piano's Parco dell Musica**, with four music venues, plus sites for programs in architecture, theater, jazz, and film. Just north of the **Piazza del Popolo**, the center has already been a magnet for more than a million visitors. Also attracting crowds is **Richard Meier's** millennium church, **Dio Padre Misericordioso**, with its three majestic sculptural arcs joined by bridges of glass and steel.

Perhaps the most eagerly awaited suburban expansion project is **Rem Koolhaas's** prize-winning design for the re-creation of the **Mercati Generali** (food market) in the **Ostiense** area, due in 2008, followed

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closely by **Richard Rogers's** (Centre Pompidou) plan for a new residential city near the airport. At last, Rome is emerging from a long architectural sleep!

The growing art scene isn't confined to museums; galleries are flourishing. Don't miss the legendary **Gian Enzo Sperone**; **Valentina Moncada**; **Il Ponte**; **Valentina Bonomo**; the new **Extraspaio**; **Roma Roma Roma**, in which **Gavin Brown** is a partner; **Lorcan O'Neill** (lately from London's **d'Offay**); and many more. Other must-see stops include **Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna** (early 20th-century art); **Temporaneo Contemporaneo** (works by upcoming artists and the Transavanguardia); the new **Palazzo delle Esposizioni** (art and photography exhibitions); and the great sites for Rome's astonishing density of Old Masters and antiquities. I missed one of the richest assemblages of Old Master paintings in private hands — the **Palazzo Doria Pamphilj** — much to my dismay, because I didn't check the eccentric hours carefully enough. **ARTexpress** recommends reserving or purchasing tickets for the Doria Pamphilj, the Borghese Gallery, and other venues on line as far in advance as possible. We used **Weekend a Roma** (and **Weekend a Firenze** in Florence) at www.weekendaroma.com. **Vatican Museums** reservations and tours can also be reserved through this site. Also, please refer to **ARTexpress** January 1999 for additional Vatican guide information. No one could miss seeing **Michelangelo**, **Raphael** and **Bernini** — the glory of the Vatican — at their finest! Consider, too, a tour of the **'Pope's Gardens.'** In fact, these Vatican Gardens — 40 acres of luscious landscape, monuments, medieval fortifications, and buildings dating from the 9th century A.D. — occupy about a third of Vatican City.

Although my usual approach to Rome is to set off with a list of various churches, monuments, and museums I cannot bear to miss — typically headed by the Pantheon, the world's most transcendent enclosed space — this time I thoroughly enjoyed an alternative approach: a series of walks with a local friend, Elizabeth Helman Mincilli, which focused on her knowledge of selected neighborhoods, local cuisine, hidden shops and essential Roman delights. One day we began on **Via del Portico d'Ottavia**, the main street of the old Jewish Ghetto and worked our way slowly to the huge, colorful outdoor market in the **Campo de' Fiori** — stopping often for samples, first at **Dolce Roma**, the legendary traditional bakery; then at **Boccione**, the kosher bakery; next, a break for lunch and then a visit to the wine cellar at **Bleve**; and on to taste goodies behind the classic arched window filled with hanging meats and rows of cheeses at **Roscioli**. Along the way we poked our heads into every interesting doorway. Highlights included **Leone Limentani**, where the rows and rows of discount crystal and china are mind-boggling; a peek in a very old-fashioned specialty chocolate shop where all of the treats are themed by season (we lucked into Easter!); **Spazio Sette**, with contempo housewares and furnishings in a three-story restored palazzo; **Ilaria Miani**, an exceedingly elegant design haven with treasures for every corner of the home; and an enticing new shop, **Gloria Gobbi**, specializing in antique kimono fabrics. Of course, we wandered off the path on our visit to the Pantheon, as well. At **Luna & L'Altra**, we were tempted by **Issey Miyake**, **Jill Sander**

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In Rome

HOTELS

Hotel de Russie, Via del Babuino 9, Tel. 39-06-32-88-81, Fax 39-06-32-88-88-88, www.hotelderussie.it. Perhaps the loveliest hotel in Rome in an absolutely great location between the Spanish Steps and the Piazza del Popolo. Le Jardin du Russie is knock-your-socks-off elegant for romantic dining. A member of The Leading Hotels of the World.

Hotel Eden, Via Ludovisi 49, Tel. 39-06-478121, Fax 39-06-4821584, www.hotel-eden.it. The Hotel de Russie's only real competition in the five-star category. La Terrazza dell'Eden, a Michelin-star restaurant on the roof, has unrivalled panoramic views of the Eternal City. Also, a Leading Hotels member. Located above the Spanish Steps not far from the de Russie, but not quite as convenient for walking the Via Condotti or the Via del Babuino.

Exedra Hotel, Piazza Della Repubblica 47, Tel. 39-06-489381, www.boscolhotels.com. A five-star, but a-bit-less-expensive Beaux-Arts palazzo, the Exedra is set on the beautiful Piazza della Repubblica adjacent to the Roman ruins of the Diocletian Baths. We loved it.

Aleph, Via di San Basilio 15, Tel. 39-06-422-901, Fax 39-06-422-900-00, www.boscolhotels.com. Aleph is Rome's other Boscolo Luxury Hotel. Unlike its sister property, it was designed by Adam Tihany and is very contemporary for Rome. It's enjoying quite a buzz right now and happily boasts a central location near the fabled Via Veneto.

RESTAURANTS

La Pergola dell'Hotel Cavalieri Hilton, Via A. Cadlolo 101, Tel. 39-06-35-09-21-52. Said by some to be the best restaurant in Rome, La Pergola is elegant but not pretentious and blessed by spectacular views. Chef Beck's creative take on Roman cuisine is sure to please.

Casa Bleve, Via del Teatro Valle 48, Tel. 39-06-686-59-70. Our lunch at Casa Bleve was a delight — the atmosphere is more private club than public destination and the traditional dishes from various regions are all winners.

Agata e Romeo, Via Carlo Alberto 45, Tel. 39-06-446-61-15. Agata presides over the kitchen, while Romeo is responsible for the guests and their wines — selected from a very extensive list. We've said that this is Rome's top restaurant in the past and it is still impressive.

FOOD SHOPPING

La Dolce Roma, Via del Portico d'Ottavia 206. Stefano Ceccarelli provides traditional Jewish sweets alongside Sachertorte and muffins to die for.

Pasticceria "Boccione" Limentani, Via del Portico d'Ottavia 1. Traditionally known as the

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Jewish Bakery, it is famous for everything from fruitcake and ricotta chocolate tarts to melt-in-your-mouth macaroons.

Roscioli, Via dei Guibbonari 21/23. A deli chock-a-block with great cheeses, hams, wine, olive oils — and a chance to eat a light lunch in the delightful rear of the shop.

Volpetti, Via Marmorata 47. A renowned delicatessen. See volpetti.com for deliveries worldwide.

SHOPPING

Spazio Sette, Via del Barbieri 7. *The* housewares emporium; the last word in international and Italian design.

TAD, Via del Babuino 155a, www.taditaly.com (website in design). A high-concept store that really does capture Roman and international style.

Ilaria Miani Roma, Via Monserrato 35. Exquisite objects for the home.

Leone Limentani, Via de Portico d'Ottavio 47. Looking for Bernardaud or perhaps Baccarat, or a long discontinued pattern, at discount savings: check here.

Luna & L'Altra, Via del Governo Vecchio 105. From Martin Margiela to Dries van Noten, this boutique in a row of 15th- and 16th-century houses, is tiny but full of treasures. The staff is friendly and devoted to its roster of designers.

MUSEUM ADDRESSES

Palazzo Altamps (Museo Nazionale Romano), Piazza Sant'Apollinare 48, Tel. 39-06-683-3566.

Palazzo Massimo alle Terme (Museo Nazionale Romano), Largo di Villa Peretti 1, Tel. 39-06-4890-3501.

The Vatican Museums, Viale del Vaticano, Tel. 39-06-6988-3333.

MACRO, Via Reggia Emilia 54, Tel. 39-06-6710-7900.

MACRO al Mattatoio, Piazza Giustiniani.

MAXXI, Ex-Caserma Montello, Via Guido Reni 10, Tel. 39-06-320-2438 (open during exhibitions only).

Galleria Borghese, Piazzale Scipione Borghese 5, Tel. 39-06-32-810.

Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Viale della Belle Arti 131, Tel. 39-06-322-981.

Galleria Doria Pamphilj, Piazza del Collegio Romano 2, Tel. 39-06-679-7323.

In Florence

HOTELS

Hotel Continentale, Vicolo dell'Oro 6r, Tel. 39-055-27262, www.lungarnohotels.com. A Ferragamo family hotel opened in 2003, this is a favorite with many travelers. The "superior" rooms

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and **Dries van Noten**; and the gift shop **Zoy** by the **Chiesa Nuova**, where, of course, we paused to savor the magnificent alterpieces by **Rubens, Pietro da Cortona's** three glorious works in the vault, the cupola and the apse, and the fine 1575 **Borromini** church itself. The next outing was to the **Testaccio** neighborhood, where we arranged to meet at **Volpetti** — say that in hushed tones; it's a pilgrimage site for foodies. As we entered, we were handed sample wedges of twenty-five-year-old parmigiano cheese — a hard act to follow. Nevertheless, we saved our last wanderlust day for the **Centro Storico** — the City Center that includes the ancient city and virtually everything from the **Campidoglio** to the **Piazza del Popolo**, with great arcs in both directions. We even visited the exquisite galleries of the **Villa Borghese** at 8:30 AM to squeeze every hour out of the day. Our only disappointment as we passed once and again through the **Piazza Di Spagna** was the ugly scaffolding shrouding the **Trinità dei Monti** church atop the majestic Spanish Steps — impassable and impossibly packed with teenage tourists and bikers (same problem at the **Fontana di Trevi** and the **Fountain of the Four Rivers** in the **Piazza Navona**). Don't doubt for a moment that the crowds in Rome are often as dense as those seen on television.

Do save time, as we suggested in our 1999 newsletter, for the **Palazzo Altamps** and **Palazzo Massimo alle Terme**. Not only do they house the greatest treasures of antiquity, they are highly extraordinary architectural adaptations. These magnificently restored villas — the first a Renaissance residence, the second an 1883 neo-Renaissance palace — are dazzling. Remember too, every church in Rome is a museum. It is possible to build an itinerary around your period of choice — I love Baroque Rome — or the artist who captures your heart — **Caravaggio**, perhaps. A Caravaggio discovery tour would take you to the **Doria Pamphilj, Sant'Agostino, Santa Maria del Popolo, San Luigi dei Francesi, Galleria Borghese, the Vatican Museums, Palazzo Barberini, and Palazzo Corsini**; and in the course of your adventure, a re-imagined Rome would emerge in more than one of its many guises.

In **Centro Storico**, it is fair to admit, we also consumed a bit of glamorous Rome. Prada and Gucci are design museums in their own right! Our favorite shop was, and is, **TAD**. The world can be your oyster behind its doors: inventive display, clothing, decorative arts, gifts, household surprises, a restaurant featuring cucina nuova, furnishings by **Philippe Starck** and a lovely interior garden — all in all, a hymn to creativity. Located on **Via del Babuino**, it's in the heart of window-shopping land. If you are not staying at the **Hotel de Russie**, be sure to stop in on your stroll. It is sited on the edge of the **Piazza del Popolo** and has glorious terraced gardens, plus a stunning restaurant for the most pleasurable reward of the day.

Rome and Florence have just been elected the world's most expensive cities, so even reasonable, let alone bargain, hotels and restaurants are few and far between. Our elegant room at the new **Hotel Boscolo Exedra** was judged a bargain at 400 EUR a night — less expensive than some of the other five-star hostleries because of its a-bit-out-of-the-way location, which we enjoyed. The other new Boscolo hotel, the **Aleph**, is also drawing great reviews. The premiere-

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ranked **Eden** (or De Russie) will fall into the 650-750 EUR range. To splurge on a "Roman Holiday" view and a Michelin three-star meal, book at **La Pergola** on top of the **Cavalieri Hilton**. Chef **Heinz Beck** is sure to create just the dish to honor the Eternal City, spread in sparkling patterns below.

Hop on the speedy **Eurostar** non-stop train on a beautiful Roman morning and you'll be in **Florence** in time for lunch. The views will capture your heart as you race through the picturesque Tuscan hills to a destination both near and distant: near in kilometers and distant in ambience. Rome is the sassy, saucy youngster next to the languid Florentine sophisticate. Walking is terror on many Roman streets, while only the narrowest Florentine alleys send motorcycle fear up the spine. The joy of Florence is that its size is consumable almost in its entirety — with ease — on foot. Renaissance palazzi lie cheek by jowl with splendid shops (or, in the case of **Ferragamo**, occupy the same premises) on the fabulous **Via Tornabuoni**. And the romantic squares beg you to observe the sunset ritual of the passeggiata — the leisurely stroll capped by dolci or gelato.

This, above all cities, is the place to steep yourself in the Renaissance. There is very little contemporary art here, unless you're planning on attending the **5th Biennale Internazionale dell'Arte Contemporanea**, December 3-11, 2005, at the **Fortezza Basso**. Two years ago, 890 artists from 72 nations were represented and **David Hockney**, **Christo** and **Jeanne-Claude**, and **Richard Anuszkiewicz** were the honorees. The program for this coming December has not yet been announced, but save the dates if you are planning winter travel. Otherwise, give in to the heady presence of the **Medici**, of **Giotto**, and **Brunelleschi** and his magnificent dome, of **Masaccio** and the matchless **Brancacci Chapel** and **Santa Maria Novella** frescoes, of **Paolo Uccello**, **Fra Angelico**, **Domenico Ghirlandaio**, **Filippo Lippi**, and **Andrea del Verrocchio**, and, without doubt, **Michelangelo**, who left his indelible mark before leaving for Rome in 1534.

I love the orientation ritual of looking out over the city from the crest of the **piazzale Michelangelo** in the heights of the **Altrarno** (literally, beyond the Arno). You can pick out all of the picture-postcard sights of Florence — the whole sliced by the lazy, golden Arno River. This is the spot to make your "cannot miss" list. There is no hope of seeing it all — as in Rome — so play favorites and plan to return. Following number one — which must be the **Uffizi** — make your choices highly personal. Also, make your reservations! At this May writing, the Uffizi is sold out in May and June with the earliest tickets available in July. Also remember that the extraordinary **Vasari Corridor**, which links the **Palazzo Vecchio** and the Uffizi with the **Palazzo Pitti** and the **Boboli Gardens** is accessible only by special appointment. A tour for 1-13 people can be booked at www.florenceart.it for 792 EUR — about \$1,000, or call 011-39-055-265-4321/011-39-055-294-883 for a private reservation (cost to be determined). **The Corridor**, an extraordinary museum in its own right, was closed from the 1993 bombing until 2000 and now occasionally hosts special exhibitions. Traveling over rooftops and the Arno River in a secreted gallery above the shops on the **Ponte Vecchio**, it offers little

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have spectacular views of the Ponte Vecchio and the Arno, plus the roof-top terrace is without parallel.

Gallery Art Hotel, Vicolo dell'Oro 2, Tel. 39-055-27263, Fax 39-055-268 557, www.lungarno-hotels.com. Just across the piazzetta from the Continentale, this is the more hip of the two; the ground-floor public rooms double as art exhibition spaces and there is a trendy bar/restaurant with live music.

J K Place, Piazza di Santa Maria Novella 7, Tel. 39-055-2645181, www.jkplace.com. In a lovely old townhouse, this is a new design by the same architect — Michele Bonan — who did the Continentale and the Gallery. Although it is very popular, the location is not particularly attractive from our point of view.

Lungarno, Borgo San Jacopo 14, Tel. 39-055-27261, Fax 39-055-268437, www.lungarnohotels.com. A bit more toned down than the other Ferragamo hotels, the Lungarno is a stylish classic in the Oltrarno. Its riverside setting is a beautiful part of the public rooms. Not far from the hotel is a somewhat inconspicuous but attractive shop that sells selected objects and linens from the Ferragamo hotels: Lungarno Details, Lungarno Acciaiuoli 4.

The Savoy, **The Excelsior**, **The Grand**, and the **Helvetia & Bristol**: the formidable old quartet of luxurious Florentine palaces concludes the list, with the addition of the sublime **Villa San Michele** in Fiesole.

RESTAURANTS

Cibrèò, Via Andrea del Verrocchio 8r, Tel. 39-055-2341100. Perhaps Florence's most famous restaurant, Cibrèò (and its less expensive osteria Cibreno) is a destination that doesn't disappoint. It was founded by chef Fabio Picchi (with his then-wife Benedetta Vitali) to showcase traditional Tuscan cuisine, which it does with great panache and creativity. The only complaint is that fame has made it too popular, "too touristy." Yet, when Picchi is at the top of his form you can't beat his delights.

Zibibbo, Via di Terzollina 3r, Tel. 39-055-433383. Book a table and take a cab ride to the suburbs to enjoy the finest, freshest, most innovative Tuscan cuisine.

Beccofino, Piazza degli Scarlatti 1r, Tel. 39-055-290076. Chef Francesco Berardinelli is a Tuscan star and, since this restaurant opened in 1999, it has been a hit. The décor is no great shakes, but the food is. This restaurant is a nominee for best-in-town.

Cantinetta Antinori, Piazza degli Antinori 3, Tel. 39-055-292234. Yes, this is the famous wine family. The Cantinetta is a tradition in Florence. In the heart of the serious shopping neighborhood, it offers the classic informal break — everyone drops in, as well they should. This is an **ARTexpress** favorite and lunch is a great treat.

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13 Gobbi, Via de Porcellana 9r, Tel. 39-055-284015. Just behind the Excelsior Hotel hides one of the most delightful outdoor dining spots — perfect for a summer evening. Classical Tuscan dishes are complimented by a great Tuscan wine list. This is also a wonderful place to sample "little plates" and enjoy the enoteca atmosphere.

SHOPPING

Giuggiu di Angela Caputi, Borgo SS. Apostoli 44r, Tel. 39-055-292993. "Giuggiu" was my favorite find in Florence and I brought home more than one of Angela's little green polka-dotted bags with her flamboyant, high-design, very Italian costume jewelry in a modern-day version of Bakelite. The store has a small selection of creative clothing as well (www.angelacaputi.com).

Officina Profumo-Farmaceutica di Santa Maria Novella, Via della Scala 16, Tel. 39-055-216276. Even though there is now a branch in Beverly Hills, there is nothing quite like the experience of visiting one of the world's oldest pharmacies. Founded by Dominican friars in 1612, it purveys its soaps, perfumes and potions in a church that dates to 1135, transformed into the farmacia in 1848.

FMR, Via della Belle Donne 41r. Home to the world's most exquisitely produced art books, FMR also offers handmade papers and small works on paper — all from the genius of Franco Maria Ricci.

Pineider, Piazza della Signoria 13r, Tel. 39-055-284655. You can't go home without heavenly Florentine papers, so consider the selection at this most noted maker. With shops throughout the world, Florence is still the primary location.

Fratelli Alinari, Largo Fratelli Alinari 15, Tel. 39-055-23951. Here you will find the Alinari photographic archive, a museum of photography, exhibitions, and a shop where photographs, posters, books and gifts are all related to the early history of photography in Italy (from 1852) as created so magnificently by the brothers Alinari.

MUSEUM ADDRESSES

Uffizi Gallery, Loggiato degli Uffizi 6, Tel. 39-055-2388638.

The Accademia, Via Ricasoli 58-60, Tel. 39-055-2388609.

Il Bargello, Via del Proconsolo 4, Tel. 39-055-2388606.

Museo San Marco, Piazza San Marco 3, Tel. 39-055-2388608.

Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Piazza Duomo, Tel. 39-055-2302885.

Pitti Palace, Piazza Pitti 1, Tel. 39-055-2388614.

Palazzo Vecchio, Piazza della Signoria, Tel. 39-055-2768325.

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known and dazzling views of the city.

Because my spring idyll turned into an April deluge, I had to give up my Roman-style walks for a new strategy. I did, in fact, list seven visits I wished to make in one day and then asked the hotel's concierge to find me a knowledgeable driver who spoke English and would be inventive about getting close to certain piazzas where cars are not allowed. Having visited, if not conquered, the Uffizi, I began at tiny **San Miniato al Monte**, with its 13th-century green and white marble/mosaic façade and lovely Tuscan interior distinguished by the remarkable nave mosaics inlaid with the signs of the zodiac (this is where the Benedictine monks sing Gregorian chants every day at 4:30 in winter and 5:30 in summer). Next, it was on to **Santa Maria del Carmine** and the matchless **Brancacci Chapel** by **Masaccio** and his teacher, **Masolino**. Restored in the 1980s, each visit is now limited to 15 minutes — hardly adequate for Masaccio's world-renowned, early-15th-century *Expulsion from Paradise*. Destination three was **Santo Spirito**, called a "perfect temple of Christianity" and one of Brunelleschi's most extraordinary structures; **Santa Croce**, stop four — what could be as memorable as frescoes by **Giotto**, the **tombs of Dante**, **Michelangelo** and **Galileo**, fabulous stained glass by **Agnolo Gaddi**, and more? It is the Pantheon of Florence. After a brief view of the crenelated **Palazzo Vecchio** with a promise to return, numbers five and six had to be the **Baptistery and Museo dell'Opera del Duomo**, to see **Lorenzo Ghiberti's** original gilt-bronze (8 of 10 east Baptistery door panels) *Gates of Paradise* — the Ghiberti doors you see outdoors on the Baptistery itself are copies. At last, the day concluded with visit seven — **Santa Maria Novella**, behind **Alberti's** breathtaking 1465 façade, **Masaccio's Trinità** frescos of 1427, **Ghirlandaio's 1485 Tornabuoni Chapel** with scenes from the life of John the Baptist (here is where he trained Michelangelo), **Giotto's** simple wooden cross, **Paolo Uccello's Chiostrò Verde** (green cloister), and **Eleanore di Toledo's Cappella degli Spagnoli** (Spanish Chapel). Gasp! This kind of incomplete but intense immersion is only one way to begin a lifetime study of the umber city on the Arno. And, of course, we had to track down the hedonistic pleasures as well!

Our favorite Florentine/Tuscan meal was in a simple trattoria (no grand décor) set on a great lawn in suburban Florence. The thing that wasn't simple was the fabulous, but always unpretentious, food. We were lucky enough to be dining at **Benedetta Vitali's Zibibbo**. One of the city's most renowned chefs (a founder of **Cibrèò**), Benedetta is known for classic Tuscan cuisine prepared from only the freshest ingredients — those she can find at the market each morning. After a long (some four hours) tasting meal of her choice, I gladly carried home one of her special jars of pumpkin and orange-peel mustard/marmalade, hoping to transport her talents to California.

Finally, whether you stay in one of the splendid **Ferragamo** family hotels like the **Continente**, the **Lungarno**, or the **Gallery Art Hotel**; the very grand **Grand** or its larger sister, the **Excelsior**; the oh-so trendy **J K Place**; the suburban, and rightfully legendary, **Villa San Michele**; or simply "a room with a view," they all share the legacy of the divine geniuses and the golden glow in which their works are bathed. They are all, after all, in incomparable Florence.

ART AROUND THE WORLD

News

All eyes are on **San Francisco** as the city gears up for its grand opening of the new **de Young Museum**, located on the site of the old Spanish-style M.H. de Young Memorial Museum in the very heart of Golden Gate Park. Inspired by the weather-worn copper and wood windmill near Ocean Beach, noted Swiss architects **Jacques Herzog** and **Pierre de Meuron** designed the new building with thousands of copper panels — dimpled and perforated in patterns, based on digital photographs of the park's canopy, which have been draped over the hulking frame. Then there is a twisted 144-foot-tall tower, said to be a contemporary nod to the signature tower of the old de Young, which contains classrooms and affords sweeping views of the park and city. The anticipation is so great in the city that a "Soft Opening" has been scheduled for August 15 and 16 for members only, followed on August 17th by the opening of the museum store and the **de Young Cafe** (a Wolfgang Puck/Bon Appetit enterprise). This will afford the public a sneak peek of the building, but brace yourselves for the grand opening, an event starting at noon on October 15 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, followed by the opening, free of charge, for 32 hours straight until 5 PM on Sunday. Visitors will have access to the museum's remarkable collection of Mesoamerican, Oceanic, and African tribal art, as well as galleries of 19th- and 20th-century American art and a growing collection of contemporary works. The new building also features a number of site-specific commissions by artists such as **Andy Goldsworthy**, **Ed Ruscha**, **Kiki Smith**, **James Turrell** and **Gerhard Richter**, plus the de Young will be hosting a special inaugural exhibition of Egyptian artifacts, *Daughter of Re: Hatshepsut, King of Egypt*, which includes over 100 artifacts from the reign of Hatshepsut, Egypt's only female pharaoh. Also in the city this summer, the 6th annual *San Francisco Photographic Art Exposition*, held at the historic Festival Pavilion at the Ft. Mason Center, will take place from July 21-24. Over 80 galleries from around the world will be exhibiting and selling the finest photographic art, ranging from rare 19th-century works to current digital art. The \$50-a-person opening celebration will be July 21 from 6 to 9 PM. A fun diversion from the art scene is the newly inaugurated **Ferry Building Marketplace**, where **ARTexpress** suggests several spots worth a visit: **Mijita**, where celebrated chef **Traci Des Jardins** serves sophisticated Mexican food; **Slanted Door**, featuring Vietnamese food with unbeatable views of the bay; **Boulette's Larder**, where the fare is French nibbles; **Cowgirl Creamery**, offering fabulous cheeses and dairy products; and **Michael Recchiuti**, who sells hard-to-beat handmade chocolates. For special tours of the market, book a room at the **Four Seasons San Francisco**, where an epicurean concierge will guide you through the market.

In case you haven't heard, **Las Vegas**, known as an architectural world unto itself with its theme-inspired hotels — the Venetian, Paris Las Vegas, and Luxor, to name a few — has

Great Addresses

IN SAN FRANCISCO

▼ **Four Seasons San Francisco**, 757 Market Street, Tel. 415- 633-3000. For luxury in the heart of the city complete with an epicurean concierge to guide guests through the Ferry Building Marketplace.

▼ **W San Francisco**, 181 Third Street, Tel. 415-777-5300. A hip hotel located South of Market Street. Great tour of the marketplace by the hotel's executive chef, Paul Piscopo, which culminates in an elaborate feast.

▼ **Mijita**, Ferry Building Marketplace, One Ferry Building along the Embarcadero, Tel. 415-399-0814. Sophisticated Mexican food concocted by celebrity chef Traci Des Jardins.

▼ **Slanted Door**, Ferry Building Marketplace, One Ferry Building along the Embarcadero, Tel. 415-861-8031. Delicious Vietnamese cuisine served with a killer view of San Francisco Bay.

▼ **Boulette's Larder**, Ferry Building Marketplace, One Ferry Building along the Embarcadero, Tel. 415-399-1155. Special French cuisine made from what is fresh from the marketplace—great place for breakfast or lunch.

▼ **Michael Mina**, Westin St. Francis Hotel, 334 Powell Street, Tel. 415-397-9222. For that very special dinner in San Francisco you cannot beat the magic of Chef Michael Mina's creations. A second location in the Bellagio Hotel in Las Vegas.

▼ **Acquerello**, 1722 Sacramento Street, Tel. 415-567-5432. Acquerello means watercolor in Italian, and entering the restaurant's dining room is like stepping into a painting. The Italian cuisine and service are unbeatable.

▼ Recommended by de Young staff:

▼ **First Crush**, 101 Cyril Magnin St. (Union Square), A wine bar and lounge serving American fusion food.

▼ **Destino**, 1815 Market Street, Tel. 415-552-4451, A new Latin bistro serving great tapas. Destino also caters wonderful box lunches.

▼ **Chaya Brasserie**, 132 The Embarcadero, Tel. 415-777-8688. Excellent Franco-Japanese fusion cuisine. **Q**, 225 Clement Street, Tel. 415-752-2298.

▼ Located near the de Young Museum in the Richmond district, **Q** serves "funky American comfort food" and extensive vegetarian offerings.

▼ **Aziza**, 5800 Geary Blvd., Tel. 415-752-2222. This is a great place for the young set if you like Moroccan ambience and food.

▼ **Levende**, 1710 Mission Street, Tel. 415-864-5585. A lounge-bar in the Mission District serving world fusion cuisine.

▼ **Belden Place**, Montgomery Street between Bush and Pine. A collection of European-style sidewalk restaurants in the Financial District.

IN LAS VEGAS

▼ **Wynn Las Vegas**, 3131 Las Vegas Blvd. South, Tel. 702-770-7000. Steve Wynn's much anticipated high-rise, 50-story copper beacon on the north end of the strip.

▼ **THEhotel at Mandalay Bay**, 3950 Las Vegas Blvd. South, Tel. 877-632-7800. A design oasis behind the golden wings of the Mandalay Bay casino, THEhotel is far enough from all the neon to project a relative rarified air.

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Great Addresses...more

Mix in Las Vegas, THEhotel, Tel. 702-632-7777. The restaurant features contemporary and classic French dishes from Alain Ducasse—a perfect combination of culinary art, cutting edge interior design and ambiance, and astounding vistas of Las Vegas.

Daniel Boulud Brasserie, Wynn Las Vegas Hotel, Tel. 702-770-3310. Boulud has modeled this upscale modern brasserie after his New York flagship, serving caviar, champagne and French fare.

Okada, Wynn Las Vegas Hotel, Tel. 702-770-7000. Takashi Yagahashi, winner of the James Beard Foundation's Best American Chef-Midwest award, serves sushi, teppanyaki and robata fare with dramatic views of a series of waterfalls that pour down the mountainside.

Guggenheim Hermitage Museum, The Venetian hotel, 3355 Las Vegas Blvd. South, Tel. 702-414-2440. The 7,660-square-foot jewel box houses selected works from the collections of the two museums and special exhibitions, including *The Quest for Immortality: Treasures of Ancient Egypt* presently on view.

Las Vegas Art Museum, 9600 West Sahara Avenue, Summerlin, Tel. 702-360-8000. Occupies 30,000 square feet within the Clark County Library complex and is a Smithsonian partner with works from the institution on loan at various times.

IN MADRID

Hotel Puerta América, Avenida de America 41, Tel. (reservations) 34-902-363-600. This newly opened hotel, designed by Jean Nouvel, is the perfect choice for the art crowd. With every floor designed by a name-brand, including Zaha Hadid, Arata Isozaki, Norman Foster and Richard Gluckman, to name a few, you can experience firsthand the work of famous architects.

La Broche, Calle Miguel Angel 29, Tel. 34-91-399-9437. Catalan chef Sergi Arola, who trained under the famous Ferran Adria of El Bulli, creates his own magic and imaginative dishes.

Restaurant Arce, Augusto Figueroa 32, Tel. 34-91-522-5913. Located in the trendy Chueca section, Arce has brought some of the best modern interpretations of Basque cuisine to Madrid, thanks to chef Iñaki Camba. Perfect spot for a power lunch of tapas.

Dassa Bassa, Villalar 7, Tel. 34-91-576-7397. The young chef Darió Barrio, who also worked at El Bulli under Mr. Adriá, recently won the Metropoli Best New Restaurant of the Year. The cuisine is divine, but be prepared to pay heavily for it.

IN VALENCIA

IVAM (Institut Valencia d'Art Modern), Guillem de Castro, 118, Tel. 34-96-386-3000. Offers exhibitions of modern and contemporary art and the permanent collection.

Palau de les Arts Opera House. Designed by Santiago Calatrava; is due to open in autumn 2005.

News...more

recently welcomed the **Wynn Las Vegas**, the latest \$2.7-billion, 50-story, copper-colored behemoth hotel venture of Steve Wynn. If you will remember, it was going to be named *Le Réve*, the title of a 1932 Picasso portrait that Wynn owns, but he changed his mind. The hotel doesn't appear to have a theme, but Christopher Hawthorne describes it in his *Los Angeles Times* architectural review, as "mid-rise office tower in Houston, circa 1983." Step inside and you find the kitsch, only-in-Las Vegas garden filled with mostly fake flowers, the grotesque ceilings of raised-ornament coverings, marble floors inlaid with homage-to-Matisse mosaics and a hideous color scheme of brown and cinnamon. Guests have a choice of 18 different restaurants, each with chefs (with the exception of **Daniel Boulud**, whose brasserie was still in the opening stage when we visited) required by Wynn to be onsite, unlike the absentee celebrity chefs at other resorts. Our favorite was **Okada**, with superb food and service by Takashi Yagahashi. If shopping is your wish, the high-end, brand-name retailers such as Cartier, Chanel, Dior, Judith Lieber and Manolo Blahnik, plus others, are there for you. If you need a car, there's Ferrari Maserati (they also have a \$9,000 children's model)! But, oh yes, back in Wynn's early Bellagio days, we were lured to spend time in the gallery featuring his magnificent collection of masters or wandering in the public spaces admiring the Chihuly ceiling or the Rauschenbergs at reception. Here we must be content with Robert Graham-style figures in the reflecting pool outside or pay \$15 to see Wynn's Picasso along with several other paintings from his collection in the Wynn Las Vegas small gallery — I should mention a Vermeer and Rembrandt are included. If it is luxury you want on the strip, **ARTexpress** recommends you stay at **THEhotel at Mandalay Bay**, with artworks by **Richard Serra**, handsome valets and a restaurant by **Alain Ducasse** — but the best element of all is what is missing: slot machines!

Speaking of unique hotels, **Madrid** recently opened the **Puerta América**, where every floor has been designed by a different name-brand architect, and even the underground parking garage has been equipped with **Dan Flavinesque** lighting. You can check into a **Jean Nouvel** suite where the ceilings are printed with erotic Japanese photographs, or take a dip in a **Zaha Hadid** sculptured tub. The bar is a seven-ton slab of marble imported by **Marc Newsome**, while the desks are designed by **Arata Isozaki**. The hotel is the work of Jean Nouvel and the lineup includes **Norman Foster**, **John Pawson**, **David Chipperfield**, **Ron Arad**, **Richard Gluckman**, **Plasma Studio**, **Christian Liaigre**, and others. The 12-story 360 room building sits right on the highway within 10 minutes of the airport making it a great place for jet-lagged visitors to sleep off their fatigue. Meanwhile in **Valencia**, Spain's third city, **Santiago Calatrava's** new **Palau de les Arts** opera house will open this fall.

ART EXPRESS ART EXPRESS

Calendar

Through	Jul. 17	PHOTOESPANA2005 (Intl. Festival of Photographs and Visual Arts), Madrid
Through	Jul. 24	Palazzo Pitti, Florence <i>From Parmigianino to Tiepolo</i>
Through	Jul. 31	Colosseum, Rome <i>Gary Hill (video installations)</i>
Through	Jul. 31	Guggenheim Hermitage Museum, Las Vegas <i>Treasures of Ancient Egypt</i>
Through	Aug. 7	Metropolitan Museum, New York <i>Chanel</i>
Through	Aug. 10	Guggenheim Museum, New York <i>Art of Tomorrow: H. Rebay & S. Guggenheim</i>
Through	Aug. 21	Fundació "la Caixa" Barcelona <i>Rineke Dijkstra</i>
Through	Aug. 27	Blaffer Gallery, University of Texas, Houston <i>POPulence</i>
Through	Aug. 28	LACMA, Los Angeles <i>Tim Hawkinson</i>
Through	Aug. 28	Haus der Kunst, Munich <i>Paul McCarthy</i>
Through	Aug. 29	Hayward Gallery, London <i>Rebecca Horn</i>
Through	Aug. 29	Des Moines Art Center <i>Christian Jankowski</i>
Through	Aug. 29	MOMA, New York <i>Lee Friedlander</i>
Through	Aug. 29	BALTIC, Gateshead, England <i>Kienholz</i>
Through	Sept. 4	Guggenheim, Bilbao <i>The Aztec Empire</i>
Through	Sept. 4	Palazzo Pitti, Florence <i>Maria de' Medici</i>
Through	Sept. 4	Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence <i>Forms for David: Contemporary Art</i>
Through	Sept. 4	Kimbell Museum, Fort Worth <i>Islamic Art from the Victoria & Albert Museum</i>
Through	Sept. 4	J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles <i>Three Roads: Photographs of Paul Strand</i>
Through	Sept. 4	Berkeley Art Museum, University of California <i>Matrix 217: Haim Steinbach</i>
Through	Sept. 5	Vancouver Art Gallery <i>Franz West</i>
Through	Sept. 5	National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa <i>da Vinci, Michelangelo & Renaissance Florence</i>
Through	Sept. 6	SFMOMA, San Francisco <i>Taking Place: Photographs from the Sack Collection</i>
Through	Sept. 10	Braccio, St. Peter's Square, Rome <i>Sun, Book, Lily: The Language of Mystery</i>
Through	Sept. 11	Asian Art Museum, San Francisco <i>Tibet: Treasures from the Roof of the World</i>
Through	Sept. 12	Casa Buonarroti, Florence <i>Vittoria Colonna and Michelangelo</i>
Through	Sept. 12	MOMA, New York <i>Pioneering Modern Painting: Cézanne and Pissarro, 1865-85</i>
Through	Sept. 18	Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice <i>Jackson Pollock</i>
Through	Sept. 18	Tate Modern, London <i>Open Systems: Rethinking Art c. 1970</i>
Through	Sept. 18	LACMA, Los Angeles <i>Jacob van Ruisdael: Master of Landscape</i>
Through	Sept. 18	Jeu de Paume, Paris <i>Chaplin in Pictures</i>
Through	Sept. 18	Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Roma (MACRO) <i>Tom Wesselmann</i>
Through	Sept. 18	Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Roma (MACRO) <i>Alfredo Jaar</i>
Through	Sept. 18	Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Roma (MACRO) <i>Stefania Galegati</i>
Through	Sep 23	Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow <i>Barbara Kruger</i>
Through	Sep 25	Palazzo Venezia, Rome <i>Fernando Botero</i>
Through	Sep 25	Schaulager, Basel <i>Jeff Wall</i>
Through	Sep 25	Tate, St Ives, Cornwall <i>Richard Deacon</i>
Through	Sep 26	P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, Long Island <i>Greater New York 2005</i>
Through	Oct. 2	National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. <i>Irving Penn: Platinum Prints</i>
Through	Oct. 9	Whitney Museum of American Art, New York <i>Invented Worlds in Painting & Drawing</i>
Through	Oct. 9	Tate Modern, London <i>Frida Kahlo</i>
Through	Oct. 16	UCLA Hammer Museum, Los Angeles <i>Stephen Shore</i>
Through	Oct. 30	The Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco <i>Artwear: Fashion and Anti-fashion</i>
Through	Oct. 30	Museo Correr, Venice <i>Lucien Freud</i>
Through	Nov. 6	The 51st Venice Biennale
Through	Nov. 15	LACMA, Los Angeles <i>Tutankhamun and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs</i>
Through	Jan. 8	Bellagio Gallery of Fine Art, Las Vegas <i>Impressionist Landscape Corot to Van Gogh</i>
Jul. 2 -	Oct. 16	SFMOMA, San Francisco <i>The Art of Richard Tuttle</i>
Jul. 2 -	Oct. 30	Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth <i>Dan Flavin</i>
Jul. 14 -	17	Art Santa Fe (Modern and Contemporary Art Fair)
Jul. 17 -	Oct. 10	MOCA, Los Angeles <i>Jean-Michel Basquiat</i>
Jul. 21 -	24	Photo San Francisco (Photography Art Fair)
Jul. 24 -	Oct. 16	Walker Art Center, Minneapolis <i>Chuck Close</i>
Aug. 12 -	Dec. 4	Louisiana Museum, Humlebaek <i>Henri Matisse</i>
Aug. 20 -	Oct. 30	GL Strand, Copenhagen <i>Per Kirkrby</i>
Sept. 10 -	Nov. 27	Philadelphia Museum of Art <i>Looking at Atget</i>
Sept. 14 -	18	British Art Fair (Modern and Contemporary Art fair), London
Sept. 15 -	18	The LA Art Show (Fine Art, Antiques and Contemporary Art Fair)
Sept. 22 -	25	100% Design (Design Fair), London
Sept. 29 -	Oct. 3	Art Forum Berlin (Contemporary Art Fair)
Oct. 6 -	10	FIAC (Contemporary Art Fair), Paris
Oct. 15 -	Feb. 5	de Young Museum, San Francisco <i>Daughter of Re: Hatshepsut, King of Egypt</i>

Travel Bookshelf: Rome/Florence

Guides

Time Out Rome, Penguin Books.
Time Out Florence & the Best of Tuscany, Penguin Books
Rome (Eyewitness Travel Guides).
Florence & Tuscany (Eyewitness Travel Guides).
Rome Venice Florence, 5th Cadogan Guide.
Robert Kahn (ed). *City Secrets: Rome*.
Robert Kahn (ed.). *City Secrets: Florence, Venice, and the Towns of Italy*.

Art and Architecture

Ann S. Brandon. *Artful Italy: The Hidden Treasures*.
 Giorgio Vasari. *Lives of the Painters*, Glenn Andres, et al. *The Art of Florence* (2 vols.)
 Richard A. Turner. *Renaissance Florence: The Invention of a New Art*.
 Richard Goy. *Florence: The City and Its Architecture*.
 Ross King. *Brunelleschi's Dome: How a Renaissance Genius Reinvented Architecture*.
 Mario Rivoecchi. *Art in Rome from Borromini to Canova; also Art in Rome from Michelangelo to Bramante*.
 Mortimer Wheeler. *Roman Art and Architecture*.

History and Literature

Michael Levey. *Florence: A Portrait*.
 Christopher Hibbert. *The House of Medici: Its Rise and Fall*.
 Mary McCarthy. *The Stones of Florence*.
 John Varriano. *A Literary Companion to Rome* (James, Ibsen, Dickens, Goethe, Woolf, Wilde, more).
 Willaim Weaver. *A Legacy of Excellence: The Story of Villa I Tatti*.
 Bernard Berenson. *The Passionate Sightseer: From the Diaries 1947-1956*.
 Luigi Barzini. *The Italians*.

Fiction

E.M. Forster. *A Room with a View*.
 Sarah Dunant. *The Birth of Venus*.
 Umberto Eco. *The Name of the Rose*.
 Frances Mayes. *Under the Tuscan Sun*.
 Henry James. *Daisy Miller*.
 Italo Calvino. *The Florentine*.
 Robert Hellenga. *Sixteen Pleasures*.
 Michael Ondaatje. *The English Patient*.

And... strictly for fun

Art Mysteries

Iain Pears. *Giotto's Hand*, and all of his
 Jonathan Argyll mysteries set in Rome.
 Magdalen Nabb. *Death in Autumn* (in Florence).