

FLORENCE FLORENCE

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There are two very special ways to see Florence for the first time — perhaps each time. If you arrive in the evening, savor Florence by twilight: start at the darkly medieval **Palazzo Vecchio**, on the Piazza della Signoria that has been the political heart of the city for seven centuries, then walk the Via dei Calzaiuoli up to the **Piazza del Duomo**. You will flow along in crowds performing the nightly *passeggiata* — the ritual of strolling to see and be seen, as much an Italian art form as the fresco. Take your eyes off the well-dressed couples and grunge-attired teens to shop the sparkling high-end windows, then look up higher, to the spectacularly illuminated facades of 15th-century palazzi. The city at twilight is an ancient, knowing, sophisticated place.

Then there is Florence by morning: rise early and shake off the aches and cramps of travel with a brisk climb up the **Campanile** at the **Duomo (Santa Maria del Fiore)**, the fine-boned bell tower designed by none other than **Giotto**. It is during the day's early blush (around 8:30; 9:00 from November to March) that the cathedral looks its finest.

Ascending, you'll glimpse bits of the church and its baptistry through narrow windows, and the sun-washed pink, green and white marble forms become glittering abstractions that seem to glow on the tower walls. At the top: panoramic views of the waking city in its coat of red tiles — birthplace of the art of our culture — accompanied by the music of pealing church bells. Morning in Florence—eternally youthful, a place to take your breath away.

Youthful, yes, but you don't come to Florence seeking the hip, the now. You come, as did so many expatriates before—Henry James, D.H. Lawrence, E. M. Forster—to find the Renaissance. Still, the Renaissance is continually changing in Florence; a **Lorenzo Ghiberti** bronze of St. John the Baptist is restored, and the saint's eyes stare with a renewed, other-worldly gleam that haunts one for days. **Masaccio** frescoes are cleaned, and the figures leap alive.

The city's changes are not always for the best. Florence's greatest museum, the **Uffizi**, is still recovering from the May 1993 terrorist bombing that ripped its western wall, killing five people and damaging some 32 paintings. Only a few of the ravaged galleries have been reinstalled; key is the **Michelangelo Room**, with the artist's *Tondo Doni*, a muscular Madonna and Child. Room 35 is eerie: it is hung with photographs of 21 paintings just after the explosion, their surfaces pummeled by flying debris, and with the 16th- and 17th-century paintings themselves, now restored. But the museum's Baroque painting rooms—including the **Veronese Room**, which had been slated to reopen last year—remained closed as of January.

Of course, the grand museum does offer a *few* consolations! There is the stunning room of **Botticellis**. And there is the didactic gallery that holds the most basic of art history lessons: a side-by-side comparison of three paintings of the *Maestà*, the Mother of Christ enthroned. **Duccio's Rucellai Madonna**, drawing on **Cimabue's** example, is medieval art at its apex; **Giotto's** rendition steps directly toward the Renaissance. This is a gallery that can be revisited over a lifetime.

Other old haunts to which we return include the **Galleria Dell'Accademia**, where tourists of every stripe come to gawk at **Michelangelo's David**, ignoring the roughly elegant "nonfinito," the unfinished sculptures of **Quattro Prigioni** (the four prisoners) and *Saint Matthew*; the foreboding **Bargello** (Museo Nazionale del Bargello), the

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only museum dedicated to Florentine sculpture of the Renaissance; and the fabulous **Palazzo Pitti** and its **Boboli Gardens** (though the garden's surreal Grotta Grande is currently shuttered for repairs). But why not some smaller museums, too, even if they are a bit off the track? The **Museo dell'Opera di Santa Croce**, right next to **Brunelleschi's** solemnly overpowering **Capella de' Pazzi**, might be overlooked in the heady aftermath of a visit to one of the key Renaissance masterworks of architecture—but it shouldn't be. The little museum collection is one the most carefully displayed in Florence, an example for its somewhat haphazard larger siblings in the city. And, notwithstanding the guidebooks' dismissal of **Casa Buonarroti**, because **Michelangelo** never actually lived in these houses he once owned, his model of a proposal for the facade of **San Lorenzo**, along with several sculptures and an important collection of drawings (shown in rotation in a special gallery designed for the purpose), are well worth repeated visits.

And there are a few "new" sights in Florence. The recently (1989) restored frescoes in the **Brancacci Chapel** at the church of **Santa Maria del Carmine**, the great masterpiece of **Masaccio** and his teacher **Masolino**, are a revelation. Heavily damaged by mold, dirt and censorious scribbling, the paintings had previously served as only a faint reminder of one of the most influential works of the early 15th century—and thus of the entire history of Western art. Now, Adam and Eve suffer again their naked shame, buildings and alleyways recede exuberantly into the depths provided by the new invention of perspective, and such true-to-life details as the initiate, shivering unclothed while he waits to be baptized, are sparkling in their clarity.

At the **Palazzo Medici-Riccardi**, a St. John the Baptist by **Lorenzo Ghiberti** from the facade of the strange, rectangular church of **Orsanmichele** is on long-term exhibition. Painstakingly restored, the larger-than-life bronze gleams magnificently, awesomely. It is one of the masterpieces of sculpture, from anywhere, from any time. All thirteen of the big Orsanmichele sculptures (by the likes of **Donatello** and others) are slated for restoration, after which they will be assembled in a museum specifically designed to house them. (No visit to the Palazzo, certainly, should exclude the short trip upstairs to the little chapel housing **Benozzo Gozzoli's** fresco masterpiece, *The Procession of the Magi to Bethlehem*).

If your interests extend to the history of photography — or simply to wonderful photographs of Florence and Italy in the 1800s — a stop at the **Museo di Storia della Fotografia Alinari** is a must. The Alinari brothers' operation was famous in the 19th century as one of the world's most prolific suppliers of landscape views and photographs of art and architecture. Now housed in one of the few contemporary architectural structures in the city, a bright yellow metal insert in a street level hall of the **Palazzo Rucellai**, Alinari presents well-designed exhibitions on photographic themes, both historical and contemporary. An excellent museum book shop is supplemented by an attractive (if more commercial) gift shop next door, featuring reproductions on everything from posters to jewelry boxes.

The Alinari museum is just off Florence's main shopping drag, **Via dei Tornabuoni** in the Santa Maria Novella neighborhood. The street and its environs may not offer the range of goods found in Milan or Rome, but the selections here are elegantly choice.

Look for **Gucci**; this is the famous fashion house's flagship store,

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From the United States, to access Florence telephone numbers precede each by 011.39.55.

HOTELS

City Center

Hotel Hermitage, Vicolo Marzio 1, Tel. 28.72.16, Fax 21.22.08. The Hermitage's 29 rooms on the top floors of a medieval tower next to the Ponte Vecchio enjoy fabulous views high above the street noise. Breakfast on the rooftop terrace lays the Arno and all of historic Florence out for inspection (moderate).

Hotel Loggiato dei Serviti, Piazza S.S. Annunziata 3, Tel. 28.95.92, Fax 28.95.95.

Grand Hotel Villa Cora, Viale Niccolò Machiavelli 18, Tel. 229.84.51, Fax 22.90.86. A beautiful 19th-century Renaissance-style mansion, Villa Cora is set in a grand formal garden featuring a heated pool. The decor is neo-Classical, including frescoed ceilings in the public rooms overlooking the Oltrarno district. Rooftop terrace views are splendid (very expensive).

Hotel Torre di Bellosquardo, Via Roti Michelozzi 2, Tel. 229.81.45, Fax 22.90.08.

Albergo Albion, Via Il Prato 22r, Tel. 21.41.71. A small family-owned-and-run hotel cared for by Susanna and Massimo Ravalli, who pride themselves on personal service. Mama, the chef, hands down her own mother's recipes; sisters are sous chef and chamber maid, uncle is the waiter, olive oil comes from the family farm — it's definitely a family affair. Located near the Excelsior and the Grand, it is the only neo-Gothic hotel in Florence; three stories, no elevators (moderate). See *Restaurants*.

Hotel Brunelleschi, Piazza Santa Elisabetta 3, Tel. 56.20.68, Fax 21.96.53. Steps from the Duomo, this very elegant 94-room hotel with its own tiny piazza encompasses a 6th-century prison tower and a top terrace with lovely views (very expensive).

Hotel Excelsior, Piazza Ognissanti 3, Tel. 26.42.01, Fax 21.02.78.

Hotel Grand, Piazza Ognissanti 1, Tel. 28.87.81, Fax 21.74.00. Another CIGA hotel just across the piazza from the Excelsior, the Grand is said to have been a noble 15th-century palazzo. Today it has 109 rooms in the Renaissance style (very expensive).

Hotel Helvetia e Bristol, Via de' Pescioni 2, Tel. 28.78.14, Fax 28.83.53. A member of the Relais & Châteaux group, the

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hotel has been restored to its former 19th-century grandeur, when it was Florence's finest. Beautiful antiques grace the 18th-century building close by the Duomo (very expensive).

Outside the City

Villa San Michele, Via Doccia 4, Fiesole (5 miles NE of central Florence), Tel. 594.51, Fax 59.87.34. A truly legendary respite, thought to have been designed in part by Michelangelo (the facade), the villa began as a monastery but, by the time of Napoleon, it had become a private palazzo. It has 28 fabulously appointed rooms, most with Jacuzzis and views; dining in pleasant weather in the lovely open loggia; a renowned Tuscan restaurant; glorious gardens and pool — what can we say! Open mid-March through November (very expensive).

RESTAURANTS

Enoteca Pinchiorri, Via Ghibellina 87, Tel. 24.27.77. Perhaps because it is often said to be among Italy's finest restaurants, with one of the continent's great wine cellars, you pay dearly for Pinchiorri's fame, but the fare here, extraordinarily artful, Michelin-three-star *cucina nuova*, and the setting — the ground floor of the 15th-century Palazzo Ciofi-Iacometti — are equally sublime. There is a fixed-price tasting menu with special wines selected for each course (very expensive).

Alle Murate, Via Ghibellina 52r, Tel. 24.06.18. Italian-Mediterranean cuisine that is innovative and light is served in a cool modern setting punctuated by soft jazz — neither Tuscan nor rustic! Try the wine bar — with a fine selection — for a quick bite (moderate).

Cibrèò, Via de' Macci 118r, Tel. 234.11.00. Not to be confused with **Trattoria del Cibrèò**, Piazza Ghiberti 35 (the back room with a different address, informal atmosphere, and communal seating — but the same kitchen), or **Cibrèò Caffè**, across the street at Via Andrea del Verrocchio 5r, where you can pop in for a glass of wine or an espresso with snacks, Ristorante Cibrèò is a local classic noted for its "Florentine comfort food" (expensive).

Cantinetta di Palazzo Antinori, Piazza de' Antinori 3, Tel. 29.22.34.

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with the status-conscious staff and soaring prices that one would expect. Emilio Pucci's company has headquarters in **Palazzi Pucci**, a grand conglomerate of townhouses where one can buy not only the loud, brash scarves but olive oil and other produce from the Pucci Tuscan estate. Also in the Santa Maria Novella district is **Passamaneria Valmar**, with exquisite needlepoint and brocade fabrics and trimmings, by the piece or done up in throw pillows. And do not miss **Officina Profumo-Farmaceutica di Santa Maria Novella**, a 750-year-old "pharmacy" that must be seen to be believed. Muster your courage and enter a store more like the churches you've been visiting, following a long red carpet through a Renaissance-style hallway to a huge Gothic salesroom. You make your selections of heavenly soaps, perfumes and health elixirs, all manufactured by the Officina, from vitrine displays that will remind you of chapels in the Duomo. Your order is dispensed from a grand altar of carved oak.

Off a quiet side street in the **Oltarno** (the south bank of the Arno River, where tourists less often venture) is **Antico Setificio Fiorentino**, an ancient silk factory that was, in recent years, revived by that connoisseur of fine fabrics, **Emilio Pucci**. You can make an appointment with the director to see the 17th-century looms in action (Tel. 21.38.61). Or simply stop in the dusky, slightly musty retail outlet, where expert fabric workers can show you gorgeous linens and silks in colors muted and bright—wonderful for unique draperies or upholsteries. (Just ring the bell at the iron gate).

Between the Ponte Vecchio and the Pitti Palace, on the lively Via de' Guicciardini, look for **Freon**. The owner of this small handbag shop creates her own designs. And what designs they are! Long, cylindrical bags in brown suede with little metal "feet"—a bag seemingly made to transport a dachshund. Or a cone-shaped evening bag with a drawstring top and spindly metal tripod legs. Nothing you buy here is sold in the U.S., and the prices (\$100-\$200) are reasonable. Perhaps there have been no great ceramists in Florence since the days of the della Robbia workshops, but **Andreini Antica Bottega Artigiana** must feel something like the Quattrocento studios of that famous family of sculptors. The artist Andreini makes his living doing restoration work and copying—loosely—the more popular works of the masters.

One craft that is going strong in Florence: cooking. The city is filled with good restaurants and several exceptional ones. Always the food harks back to the country; it is hearty and often plain, but always respectful of tradition. With winter comes such seminal Florentine dishes as *ribollita*, a cross between a soup and porridge, that combines bread or cornmeal, white beans (*fagioli*) and the distinctive Tuscan vegetable, *cavolo nero* or black cabbage, a kind of chard. Also be on the lookout for wild game, from hare to boar to quail. And always, always drink the Tuscan wines.

Friends led us to many delicious spots. Among them: **Cantinette** were once but little holes-in-the-wall, the shops where vintners from beyond the city walls sold their wine in town. Today, *le cantinette* can be chic places for lunch, a late afternoon glass of wine or a relatively informal dinner. Lorie and Michael Porter (active at the Newport Harbor Art Museum) recommended **Cantinetta di Antinori**, an elegantly masculine wine bar tucked into the ancient, rugged Palazzo Antinori; the family dates its wine-making business to 1385. Dine on *fettucine di coniglio* (hare) or fabulous *crostini di cavolo nero*. **Cantinetta dei**

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Verranzo is the newest of these wine bars and easily the most casual-yet-upscale. You order slices of freshly-baked *focaccia* or *cecina* (a flat, savory cake made of chickpea flour) at one counter, grab a seat in the next room and order a glass of the house wine.

Among the best of Florence's true restaurants is **Il Cibrèo**, a deceptively informal, trattoria-like place always crowded with foodies, who come for chef-owner Fabio Picchi's innovative, but tradition-based, cuisine. Typical not-so-typical dishes: calf's liver stuffed with strong herbs and slow-cooked for hours, or game hen stuffed with mustard-preserved winter fruits. Pasadena art patrons Sue and Jim Cross recommended **Alla Vecchia Bettola** in the Oltarno—their favorite trattoria, now ours, too. Brisk but cordial service, great Florentine classics and communal seating at marble-topped tables. This is one place the tourists won't be.

Alla Vecchia Bettola also comes highly recommended by the proprietor of **Torre di Belosguardo**, one of the city's truly unique hotel hideaways. This 15th-century villa with a 13th-century tower perches high above the city in the hills south of the Arno, with postcard-perfect views of all Florence's monuments. Ask for the vast room 5, with its small fresco of the Virgin and Child, an 18th-century canopy bed, rich red tile floor, and city views that not even a Merchant-Ivory film can match. The villa is surrounded by gorgeous gardens and olive groves. (One drawback: though Torre is not far from the Pitti Palace and other Florentine sights, the steep, narrow lane up must be navigated by a cab. That can tack on \$12 or more each way—if there isn't a taxi strike).

The center of Florence is filled with small hotels, but a particularly charming one is **Hotel Loggiato dei Serviti**. On the grand Piazza Santissima Annunziata, this mid-priced hotel is freshly redecorated in contemporary villa style.

If grand style is your style, the old and justly famous **Hotel Excelsior**, proudly dominating its neighbors on the bank of the Arno, is worth consideration. You can spend over a million lire for a night of luxury (slightly tattered luxury, to be sure—this is old Florence) in a Royal Suite, but even at 490,000 lire you'll get a grandly canopied bed, perhaps an elaborate art deco bath, and views of the river.

Finally, an art destination on the periphery of Florence: Until a few short years ago, if you took the twenty-minute train ride to Prato it was to visit the 14th-century **Palazzo Datini**, an important example of early Renaissance secular architecture. But in 1988, with the opening of the **Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci** (Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Prato), Prato became home to the most significant contemporary art facility in Tuscany. The Centro is an oasis of good recent art, housed in a striking building designed by architect **Italo Gamberini**. Clearly taking his cue from the light industrial district on the city outskirts where the museum is situated, Gamberini offers us a kind of art factory, in gleaming white enamel framed by primer-red girders, topped by long rows of skylight sheds. A huge **Barbara Kruger** billboard across the street, a fallen column of stainless steel by **Anne and Patrick Poirier** on the lawn and a **Sol LeWitt** wall drawing behind the reception desk announce the concerns of the museum: European and American avant-garde art.

But, Prato aside, for us there is one more Florentine umber dusk, and a brief return to the avant-garde of that art tradition which had its beginning beside the Arno some 600 years ago.

By **Charles Desmarais & Kitty Morgan**, *Artexpress Florence*

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La Baraonda, Via Ghibellina 67r, Tel. 234.11.71. Hearty Tuscan fare is the rule and the famous dish is *risolata* (risotto cooked with romaine lettuce). *Crostini* with goat cheese or black olive paste are favorite starters and pine nut gelato with rich chocolate sauce is the perfect dessert (moderate).

Cammillo, Borgo San Jacopo 57r, Tel. 21.24.27. An old favorite rustic haunt where, in season, you can dive into pasta with white truffles (moderate).

Trattoria Garga, Via del Moro 48r, Tel. 239.88.98. "New-wave Florentine" with dining rooms presided over by chef Giuliano Gargani and his Canadian wife Sharon, who is the hostess, pastry chef and mural artist. Witty and unconventional, the cuisine is still Tuscan at heart (moderate).

Gauguin, Via degli Alfani 24r, Tel. 234.06.16. Fabulous crêpes (*crepelle*) or ravioli in Gorgonzola sauce at student prices.

Trattoria Bibe, Via delle Bagnese 1r, Tel. 204.90.85. Just outside the city, Bibe is on the pastoral Bagnese River where simple pastas, grilled meats, and tasty desserts are especially nice on the pleasant terrace (expensive).

Alla Vecchia Bettola, Viale Ludovico Ariosto 32-34r, Tel. 22.41.58 (no credit cards).

MUSEUMS & SITES

Museo Alinari, Palazzo Rucellai, Via della Vigna Nuova 16r, Tel. 21.33.70.

Galleria degli Uffizi, Loggiato degli Uffizi 6, Tel. 238.86.51.

Brancacci Chapel, Santa Maria del Carmine, Piazza del Carmine, Tel. 238.21.95.

Palazzo Medici Riccardi, Via Cavour 1, Te. 276.03.40. Home of the Medici for 100 years (1444-1544) and site of Benozzo Gozzoli's *The Procession of the Magi* fresco.

Palazzo Pitti, Piazza Pitti, Tel. 21.03.23.

Santa Maria del Fiore (Duomo, Campanile and Baptistry), Piazza del Duomo, Tel. 29.45.14.

Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Via del Proconsolo 4, Tel. 238.86.06.

Museo dell'Opera di Santa Croce, Piazza di Santa Croce, Tel. 24.46.19, and Capella de' Pazzi.

Casa Buonarroti, Via Ghibellina 70, Tel. 24.17.52.

Galleria dell'Accademia, Via Ricasoli 60, Tel. 238.86.09.

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SHOPPING

Andreini Antica Bottega Artigiana,
Via Borgo degli Albizi 63r.

Antico Setificio Fiorentino, Via L.
Bartolini 4.

**Officina Profumo-Farmaceutica di
Santa Maria Novella**, Via della Scala 16r.

Freon, Via de' Guicciardini 118r.

Gucci, Via dei Tornabuoni 73r

Passamaneria Valmar, Via Porta
Rossa 53r.

Pucci, Via de' Pucci 2-6; also Via
Ricasoli 20r and Via Vigna Nuova 97-99r.

NOT TO BE MISSED

This April's sees the unveiling of the newly-restored 39,000-square-foot fresco spread across the upper vaulted reaches of the Duomo — the grandest scale Renaissance painting of all by **Giorgio Vasari** and **Frederico Zuccari**: *Last Judgement*, 1579.

Villa I Tatti was built in the 16th century, but became a legend in the early part of the 20th century as the home of **Bernard and Mary Berenson**. The great legacy of I Tatti is its library, which is open only to resident scholars of what is now known as the **Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies**. However, upon very special request, it is sometimes possible for groups of 8 or less to see the Berenson living rooms or gardens. Write to Dr. Walter Kaiser, Director, Villa I Tatti, Via di Vincigliata 26, 50135 Firenze, Italia; describe your group (scholars, art patrons, etc.), and, if you have any connection to Harvard, use it.

Maggio Musicale, April 30 - July 4. This fabulous Florentine music festival, spread throughout the city, will include **Zubin Mehta**, festival director, conducting the **Berlin Philharmonic** in both a daytime concert set in **Palazzo Vecchio** and an evening concert at **Teatro Comunale**, April 30; Myung-Whun Chung leading Maggio Musicale Orchestra and Chorus in Beethoven's *Egmont* with Klaus Maria Brandauer as the narrator, May 11; a number of special events and premieres throughout May and June, and a **grand finale in Piazza della Signoria** featuring Seymour Bychkov conducting Tchaikovsky's *Capriccio Italian* and *1812 Overture* and Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* with pianists Katia and Marielle Labeque. For tickets: Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Via Faenza 139r, I-50123 Florence, Italy.

The Artworld Selects

Artexpress friends **Nancy and Robert Lobdell** take a small group of 16 to **Florence** every November on a tour they designed while they were living and studying there. It is a very modestly priced adventure for "people who know a lot about art and want to learn more," who enjoy walking, and who savor the quietude of the off season. Nancy's and Bob's special Florence tips include:

"**Vivoli** (Via Isola delle Stinche 7r) is listed in all the guide books as the most famous gelateria in Florence. However, we prefer the gelato and the service at **Perchè No?** located on Via dei Tavolini 19r, not far from the Duomo.

Armando, Via Borgo Ognissanti 140r, is a moderately priced favorite of the opera stars who perform during the season at the nearby **Teatro Comunale**. Autographed photos line the walls of the tiny restaurant. Anything on the menu is wonderful, but especially recommended is *cervello* (brains) sautéed in butter, Tuscan style. Reservations a must.

Bar Donatello, located in the **Hotel Excelsior**, is one of the great bars of the world. The smart visitor hits the bar after 7 PM, at the end of the tourist hour and the beginning of the Italian cocktail hour. Since 1927, such notables as Orson Wells, Leonard Bernstein, Henry Moore, Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward have sought respite here.

Albergo Albion, Via Il Prato 22r, houses a pleasant dining room where five-star Tuscan meals are served at three-star prices. Reservations a must; the dining room is not open on a regular schedule, Tel. 21.41.71.

Procacci, Via de' Tornabuoni 64, is a Florentine cafe favorite famous for its truffle rolls. *Limonata* (lemon soda) and *acqua minerale* are among the cold drinks served.

Cenacolo (Last Supper) **Di Ognissanti** by **Ghirlandaio** is located in the refectory of the parish church of the Vespucci and the family of Botticelli, **Chiesa Di Ognissanti**, Piazza Borgo Ognissanti. It is open 9-12 Monday, Tuesday and Saturday and there is no admission charge.

San Miniato Al Monte, one of the finest Tuscan Romanesque basilicas (1018), is located high on a hill overlooking the Arno and Florence. In addition to viewing the masterworks of art and architectural detail, you can hear the Gregorian chants sung by the monks in the crypt each evening 30 minutes before vespers, which take place at dusk...a special experience.

Chiesa Di Santa Maria Maddalena Dei Pazzi. Borgo Pinti 58. Tucked away in the chapter house of this obscure parish church is the magnificent *Crucifixion and Saints* fresco, 1493-96, by **Perugino**. Ring the doorbell located on the street for the sacristan. Fee L1.000."

For information about the Lobdells' tours, call Nancy at (310) 430-2833.

ART AROUND THE WORLD

News

Art lovers will want to be in **Berlin** in June when **Christo and Jeanne-Claude** will wrap the **Reichstag** — the former and future German parliament building — after a 23-year quest to do so. The unfurling of the fabric and installation of the ropes for the **Wrapped Reichstag, Berlin 1971-95** will start on **June 17**, 1995, weather permitting, with the completion scheduled on or before **June 23**. For a period of 14 days (or until July 7), the richness of the silvery fabric, shaped by blue ropes, will create a sumptuous flow of vertical folds highlighting the features and proportions of the imposing structure, revealing the essence of the Reichstag. Jeanne-Claude advises the best time to arrive is June 19 or 20. Too bad Americans cannot work on the project; it is impossible to get work permits. However, that shouldn't deter art travelers from witnessing the fabulous sight. Jeanne-Claude recommends that Diana Sigwanz from the Reisebüro Travel Agency in Berlin make your hotel reservations. (Tel. 49-30-219-98-901; Fax 49-30-211-81-50). She also says there will be a special restaurant where everyone from the project, including Christo and she, will be dining and willing to share their experiences. To help finance the project, collages and drawings are being offered for sale. Please call Jeanne-Claude for details (212/966-4437). *ARTexpress* recommends the **Brandenburger Hof**, a small, chic hotel near the famous Kurfürstendamm shopping street, and don't miss having lunch at the colorful **Paris-Bar** bistro.

This summer, Berlin is also expected to debut a new contemporary art museum at the **Neue Nationalgalerie's Hamburger Bahnhof** annex. Architect **Josef Paul Kleihues** (also doing MCA Chicago) is preparing the old train station to showcase the collection of local real estate tycoon Erich Marx — **Beuys, Warhol, Twombly, Rauschenberg, Kiefer**, et al. Across town, the renovation of **Museum Island** is finally getting under way, with **Gerhard Merz** and architect **Matthias Ungers** signed on to design a new entrance pavilion.

The **Centenary Exhibition of the Venice Biennale** is definitely going to have a new look under **Jean Clair**, the French Visual Arts Director. Gone is the controversial Aperto where — no matter how misbegotten — over the past decade, many young artists gained international recognition. Clair's 100th anniversary theme is, "a history of the human body, the face in particular, from 1895 to 1995. It starts at the Palazzo Grassi with *Group Portraits* and goes from Maurice Denis' *Omaggio a Cézanne* (1895), to Jorg Immendorf's *Café Deutschland* and Guttuso's *Caffè Greco* (1976). The exhibition [*Identity and Alternity*] will open with works by... **Rodin, Degas, Boccioni, and Eakins**... then conclude at the Giardini with **Louise Bourgeois, Kiki Smith, Antonio Lopez, Maria Lassnig, Marlene Dumas** and video artists, namely **Gary Hill, Bill Viola and Mona Hatoum**," according to Clair. Some seventy "masterpieces" from past Biennales, including works by **Kandinsky, De Chirico, Pollock, Klimt, and Bonnard** will be included, along with a remaining fragment of a destroyed painting by Giacomo Grosso, which caused a great scandal at the first Biennale in 1895 (it shows five women over the coffin of a young man said to be Nietzsche). To beat the public to this orgy of Biennales past, arrive for the Vernissage, June 7,8,9. Participants from the various countries include: **Bill Henson** (Australia); **Coop**

Great Addresses

IN BERLIN

Hotel Brandenburger Hof, Eislebener Strasse 14, Tel. (49 30) 21 40 50. A wonderfully restored mansion located a short, three-minute walk from the famed, elegant shops of the Kurfürstendamm.

Florian, Grolmanstrasse 52, Tel. (49 30) 313-9184. Moderately priced menu that revolves around light, wonderfully fresh renditions of French-Austrian fare. Frequenting by artists and film people, the neighborhood is considered the "in" place.

Paris-Bar, Kanstrasse 152, Tel. (49 30) 313 8052. With colorful surroundings, including the collection of Martin Kippenberger adorning the walls, this traditional bistro is a magnet for intellectuals and artists.

Franck + Schulte, Mommsenstrasse 56. Eric Franck from Geneva and Thomas Schulte from New York came to Berlin in April 1991. Prominent artists featured recently have included Gordon Matta Clark and Markus Raetz.

Galerie Max Hetzler, Schillerstrasse 94. Hetzler has created a work-of-art gallery designed by Gerhard Merz — an architecturally cool space that may predict the Museum Island project.

IN VENICE, ITALY

Al Cavo, Campiello della Pescaria 3968, Castello, Tel. 39.41.522.3812. Cesare Benelli and his wife Diane Rankin (late of Texas) are making more new friends than ever at their cozy restaurant enroute to the Giardini. Recently they've revived the art of cooking fowl from the lagoon, but of course there are still the terrific pastas and other delicacies from the sea.

Ai Mercanti, Campo delle Beccarie 1588, San Polo, Tel. 39.41.524.0282. If you've had all the seafood you can stand, cheer up. Here you'll find lamb, rabbit and a symphony of mushroom dishes. Look for the intimate, little beamed space just around the corner from the market at the Rialto.

Fiaschetteria Toscana, Salizzada San Giovanni Grisostomo 5719, Canareggio, Tel. 39.41.528.5281. Chef Stefano Busatto serves the most delicate, the freshest fish. Papa Albino presides, and mama is the pastry chef.

Galleria Barnabò, Calle Malipiero 3073. An old favorite of *ARTexpress* readers; if you've not seen the gallery's redesign by Barbara del Vicario, you're in for a pleasant, however subtle, treat. The new Vicenza sandstone floors in a soft buff color, and the large arched window on the calle are elegant elements.

IN VENICE, CALIFORNIA

Joe's, 1023 Abbot Kinney Blvd., Tel. 310/399-5811. Secreted in a small storefront, the surprise here is that chef Joe Miller prepares the most delicious and creative California cuisine. It is a favorite with all the local collectors and artists.

West Beach Cafe, 60 N. Venice Blvd., Tel. 310/823-5396. Located across the street from the beautiful new **L.A. Louver Gallery (designed by Frederick Fisher)**, this restaurant has the best bar in town and, with the new outside dining patio, it is the perfect spot for lunch, especially on Saturdays while gallery hopping.

Great Addresses . . . more

72 Market Street, 72 Market Street, Tel. 310/392-8720. Still a favorite artful restaurant owned by celebrities Tony Bill and Liza Minnelli. Great for traditional American food in beautiful surroundings; in the heart of Venice.

NEAR VENICE IN SANTA MONICA

Shutters on the Beach, One Pico Boulevard, Tel. 310/458-0030. Right on the beach; once you've seen this hotel, you won't want to stay anywhere else. Built to resemble a Long Island-Hamptons beach house, it is beautifully appointed with a contemporary art collection and boasts a very fine gourmet restaurant.

Chinois on Main, 2709 Main Street, Tel. 310/392-9025. Wolfgang Puck's East-meets-West taste sensation is considered by some one of the best restaurants in America.

Zenzero, 1535 Ocean Ave., Tel. 310/451-4455. Minimalist-Zen-Pacific new wave; opened by a former chef from Chinois on Main.

Abiqui, 1413 Fifth St., 310/395-8611. Great Southwestern food by noted chef John Sedlar; artful setting and dinnerware.

Il Moro, 11400 W. Olympic Blvd., West Los Angeles, Tel. 310/575-3530. The new cafe in the Executive Life building — not all *that* far from Venice/Santa Monica — is serving Venetian and Northern Italian food courtesy of the same folks that brought you Locanda Veneta and Ca'Brea. The name refers to Othello, the Moor of Venice, and the popular Italian fare includes paper-thin Carpaccio, pasta e fagioli, and tagliolini, light as air, dressed with mascarpone, Parmigiano and lemon. The garden patio is the place to be.

IN BASIL

Der Teufelhof Basel, Leonhardsgraben 47/Heuberg 30, Tel. 061/261-1010, Fax 061/261-1004. Once again — for the third time — all eight rooms in this artful little hotel have been redecorated — this time by artists from Germany, Austria, Australia, and Switzerland. Owner Dominique Thommy-Kneschaurek first commissioned a series of artists in 1989; they were replaced by a new group in 1991, and, in 1994 **Peter Vogel**, **Peter Rösel**, **Brigitte Kordina**, **Ruth Handschin**, **Simone Mangos**, **Sue Irion**, **Liliane Cuska**, and **Teres Wydlerquelle** created fresh surprises. It's your chance to stay in an installation! The more traditional (and very expensive) gathering place for art fair moguls remains the very-nearly-perfect **Drei Könige am Rhein**, 8 Blumenrain, Tel. 061/261-5252, Fax 061/261-5220.

Confiserie Schiesser, 19 Marketplatz, Tel. 061/261-6077. A visit to Basel is not complete without relaxing over a cappuccino in this legendary Art Nouveau tearoom (upstairs) overlooking the grand City Hall.

Even if you have seen the fabulous **Vitra Design Museum** in Weil am Rhein — a brief drive into Germany from Basel — it is worth going again, not only to revisit **Frank Gehry's** handsome building, but to finally see the stunning realization of **Zaha Hadid's** fire station — making big news throughout the world of architecture.

News...more

Himmelblau (Austria); **Katharina Fritsch**, **Martin Honert**, **Thomas Ruff** (Germany); **César** (France); **Leon Kossoff** (Great Britain); **Takis** (Greece); **Marlene Dumas**, **Maria Roosen**, **Marijke van Warmerdan** (Netherlands); **Roman Opalka** (Poland); **Peter Fischli**, **David Weiss**, **Christian Marclay** (Switzerland); **Bill Viola** (United States). Beyond the visual arts, all of Venice will be a carnivale with the **International Theater Festival** (May 18 - June 21), the **International Festival of Contemporary Music** (July 1 - 30), and the **52nd International Cinema Festival** (August 30 - September 9). The **6th International Architecture Exhibition**, under the direction of **Hans Hollein** of Austria, is scheduled for the Corderie (site of the old Aperto), but not until 1996. From May-July a non-Biennale delight sure to capture Venetians and visitors will be the presentation of **The Glory of Venice** exhibition in the quintessentially perfect location — **Ca' Rezzonico**, the museum of 18th-century Venice, now being restored for the occasion, and for the grand Tiepolo exhibit in 1996.

This year in **Venice, California**, one of the world's highly charged creative communities, the **Venice Art Walk** takes place on **May 20 & 21** to benefit its own **Venice Family Clinic**. All the artists and collectors eagerly support this popular endeavor and energetic chairman **Sheila Goldberg** has assured us that this year's activities will dazzle all art lovers. To kick off the event on Friday, May 20, a music-filled evening will take place in a very special, private art-filled home. On Saturday, in-depth guided visits to five artists' studios and architecturally stunning homes, including **Doumani House** by **Robert Graham**, and **Greenberg House** by **Ricardo Legorreta**, as well as other homes with outstanding art collections, such as the **Einstein House** with its own **James Turrell** installation, will be offered. The art walk, the only tour of its kind, a self-guided walk and dialogue in the private studios and homes of more than 50 noted and emerging artists, happens on Sunday, concluding with an auction of fine and functional art by **Sam Francis**, **David Hockney**, **Ed Ruscha** and **Carlos Almaraz**, among many. Participating artists include **Billy Al Bengston**, **Charles Arnoldi**, **Tony Berlant**, **Gronk**, **Lita Albuquerque**, and **John Okulick**. For information call Sheila Goldberg at 310/392-8630 ext. 342.

Following its jubilee celebration last year, **Art 26 '95** (Basel's international art fair) is initiating even more stringent admission standards, with only one representative per country on the 10-member board which issues the invitations to exhibit. This year, 247 galleries from Europe, America, Asia, and Australia were selected from over 500 applicants. New galleries (twelve) are invited to show "up-to-the-minute projects" and avant-garde work in the "**Young Galleries**" sector. As we go to press, the only Los Angeles gallery going to the fair is **Angles**, Santa Monica. You can expect, however, to see such big names as **Gagosian** (New York), **Bischofberger** (Zürich), **Beyler** (Basel), **D'Offay** (London), **Goodman** (New York), **Hetzler** (Berlin), **Lisson** (London), **PaceWildenstein** (New York), et al.

Travlers to the Windy City for Art **Chicago '95** won't want to miss **Contemporary Prints at the Drake Hotel** — a mini fair presented by Betsy Senior Gallery, Alan Cristea Gallery (London), Brooke Alexander Editions, Edition Schellmann, Gemini G.E.L. at Joni Weyl, Karen McCready Fine Art and Margarete Roeder Gallery.

ART EXPRESS ART EXPRES

Calendar

Through	Apr. 23	Guggenheim Museum, SoHo, New York	<i>Antoni Tàpies</i>
Through	Apr. 23	National Gallery, Wash., D.C.	<i>The Glory of Venice: Art in the 18th Cent.</i>
Through	Apr. 25	MOMA, New York	<i>Kandinsky: Compositions</i>
Through	Apr. 30	Musée d'Orsay, Paris	<i>James McNeill Whistler</i>
Through	Apr. 30	Museo del Prado, Madrid	<i>Zurbarán</i>
Through	Apr. 30	LACMA, Los Angeles	<i>The Prints of Roy Lichtenstein</i>
Through	Apr. 30	SFMOMA, San Francisco	<i>Public Info.: Desire, Disaster, Document</i>
Through	Apr. 30	Gemeentemuseum, The Hague, Netherlands	<i>Piet Mondrian 1872-1944</i>
Through	May 7	National Gallery, Washington, D.C.	<i>Claes Oldenburg: Anthology</i>
Through	May 7	Tate Gallery, London	<i>Willem de Kooning</i>
Through	May 7	California Center for the Arts, Escondido	<i>Revisiting Landscape</i>
Through	May 14	LACMA, L.A.	<i>Amer. Impres. & Realism: Painting Mdrn Life, 1885-1915</i>
Through	May 14	Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York	<i>R.B. Kitaj: A Retrospective</i>
Through	May 17	Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin	<i>George Grosz</i>
Through	May 21	Royal Academy, London	<i>Odilon Redon</i>
Through	May 23	MOMA, New York	<i>Bruce Nauman</i>
Through	May 26	Boston Museum of Fine Arts	<i>Winslow Homer</i>
Through	May 28	Art Institute of Chicago	<i>Gustave Caillebotte: The Urban Impressionist</i>
Through	May 28	M.H. de Young Museum, San Francisco	<i>Monet: Paintings of Giverny</i>
Through	May 28	San Diego Museum of Art	<i>Rothko: Paintings from the 1930s & 1940s</i>
Through	Jun. 4	MCA, Chicago	<i>Franz Kline: Black and White</i>
Through	Jun. 18	J.P. Getty Museum, Malibu	<i>Hidden Witness: Af. Americans/Early Photos</i>
Through	Jun. 25	Whitney Museum, New York	<i>Biennial Exhibition of American Art</i>
Through	Jul. 26	Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel	<i>Blinky Palermo</i>
Through	Aug. 21	Centre Pompidou, Paris	<i>Constantin Brancusi</i>
Apr. 9 - Jun. 25		MOCA, Los Angeles	<i>Cy Twombly — A Retrospective</i>
Apr. 21 - 25			<i>Foire d'Art Actuel, Brussels (Contemporary Art Fair)</i>
Apr. 21 - 30			<i>Arte BA, Buenos Aires (Contemporary Art Fair)</i>
Apr. 26 - 30			<i>Art Frankfurt (Contemporary Art Fair)</i>
Apr. 27 - May 2			<i>Art New York International '95 (Art Fair)</i>
Apr. 28 - 30			<i>The Gramercy Int. Contemporary Art Exhibition 1995, New York</i>
Apr. 28 - Jul. 30		Bauhaus-Archiv Museum, Berlin	<i>A Slice of Metropolis as Experiment</i>
May 2 - Aug. 13		Met. Museum of Art, New York	<i>Art and Empire: Assyrian Treasures</i>
May 5 - Jun. 25		Whitechapel Art Gallery, London	<i>Guillermo Kuitca: Burning Beds</i>
May 6 - Jul. 9		Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.	<i>Stieglitz's Camera Notes</i>
May 9 - 14			<i>Kunst RAI, Amsterdam (Art Fair)</i>
May 9 - Aug. 13		Guggenheim Museum, SoHo, New York	<i>Gary Hill</i>
May 11 - 16			<i>ART 1995 Chicago, Navy Pier (Art Fair)</i>
May 14 - Sept. 17		National Gallery of Art, Wash., D.C.	<i>Arshile Gorky-Breakthrough Years</i>
May 19 - Aug. 7		Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto	<i>Barbara Hepworth Retrospective</i>
May 20 - Aug. 6		MCA, San Diego	<i>Sleeper: K. Fritsch, R. Gober, G. Kuitca, D. Salcedo</i>
May 24 - Aug. 29		Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid	<i>Yves Klein</i>
May 25 - 28			<i>New Trends '95, Hong Kong (Art Fair)</i>
May 26 - Sept. 10		Guggenheim Museum, New York	<i>Georg Baselitz</i>
May 28 - Aug. 20		National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.	<i>James McNeill Whistler</i>
May 30 - Aug. 29		Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid	<i>Mangold</i>
May 30 - Oct. 1		Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris	<i>British Sculpture</i>
Jun. 1 - Aug. 30		Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels	<i>Roy Lichtenstein</i>
Jun. 1 - Sept. 3		SFMOMA, San Francisco	<i>Japanese Art after '45: Scream Against the Sky</i>
Jun. 2 - Jul. 30		Altesmuseum, Berlin	<i>Christo 1958-1968</i>
Jun. 3 - 24			<i>SoundArt 95 (Festival) Hannover, Germany</i>
Jun. 4 - Sept. 4		National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.	<i>Piet Mondrian - 1884-1944</i>
Jun. 7 - Sept. 17		Guggenheim Museum, New York	<i>Josef Albers: Glass, Color, and Light</i>
Jun. 8 - 12			<i>Art Jonction Cannes, France (Contemporary Art Fair)</i>
Jun. 11 - Oct. 15			<i>Venice Biennale</i>
Jun. 11 - Oct. 15		The Ducal Palace and Ca' Pesaro, Venice	<i>The Biennale and Venice</i>
Jun. 14 - 19			<i>Art 26 '95-Basel (Contemporary Art Fair)</i>
Jun. 17 - Aug. 20		MCA, Chicago	<i>Jeff Wall</i>
Jun. 17 - Sept. 4		Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris	<i>Ilya Kabakov</i>
Jun. 19 - Sept. 17		The National Gallery, London	<i>Frank Auerbach</i>
Jun. 21 - Sept. 12		MOMA, New York	<i>Video Spaces: Eight Installations</i>
Jun. 22 - Sept. 10		Fondation Cartier, Paris	<i>Tom Wesselmann Paintings</i>
Jun. 22 - Oct. 15		Whitney Museum, New York	<i>Ed. Hopper and the American Imagination</i>
Jun. 30 - Sept. 30		Berliner Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin	<i>Käthe Kollwitz</i>

Travel Bookshelf: Florence

Guides

Florence & Tuscany. Eyewitness Travel Guides. London: Dorling Kindersley Ltd., 1994.

Birnbaum's Italy 95.

Eve Borsook. *Companion Guide to Florence.* A longstanding favorite of Florence devotees. Difficult to find in some locales, but always available, in English, in Florence.

John Kent's *Florence and Siena.* London: Viking, c. 1990. Out-of-print; hunt everywhere for this stunning little object that renders every building and every street in luscious watercolor.

Medieval Tuscany & Umbria. Architectural Guides for Travelers. The only series guide focusing exclusively on architecture. May be ordered through one of our favorite newsletters, The Educated Traveler, P.O. Box 220822, Chantilly, VA 22022; \$14.99 + \$3.00 handling.

Henry James on Italy. *Selections from Italian Hours.* New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1988. James' musings on Italy still set the stage!

Art and Architecture

Stephen Fay. "The Uffizi reborn: scarred but brilliant once more," *Condé Nast Traveler*, February, 1994, pp. 120-126, 178-182. The most complete description of the bombing damage and ongoing restoration.

Bernard Berenson. *The Florentine Painters of the Renaissance with an Index to Their Works.* 1896 and subsequent editions.

Meryle Secrest. *Being Bernard Berenson.* Available in a variety of editions including paperback. The most accessible Berenson biography.

Peter and Linda Murray. *The Architecture of the Italian Renaissance.*

Giorgio Vasari. *The Lives of the Artists.* Primary source material on the Renaissance masters.

History & Literature

Harold Acton. *The Last Medici.*

Jacob Burckhardt. *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy.* The classic work.

E.M. Forster. *A Room with a View.*

Mary McCarthy. *The Stones of Florence and Venice Observed.*

And, strictly for fun...

Art Mysteries

Morris West. *Master Class.* A top novel.

Peter Inchbald. *Tondo for Short.*

Carolyn Coker. *The Other David.*

Robert Hellenga. *The Sixteen Pleasures.* Soho

To Join *Artexpress* in a *Pittsburgh Adventure*, November 1-5, 1995 — including exciting visits to the 52nd Carnegie International, the Andy Warhol Museum, the Mattress Factory, the Frick estate, Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater, plus special private collections and events — write to *Artexpress*, P.O. Box 10201, Newport Beach, CA 92660 or call (714)640-1812 to preregister.