

TRAVEL

# Rome Springs Eternal

A newly hip hotel scene arrives  
in Italy's ancient capital.

Italy is known for many things: architecture, style, epicurean adventures and aggressive taxi drivers among them. Historically, though, timekeeping has not been a strong point, yet this year (should global circumstances allow) it seems that will change, as a number of top hotels hope to debut new or refreshed openings in time for a blockbuster Raphael exhibition, at the Scuderie ➤

A dramatic  
view at  
Chapter Roma

GIULIA VENANZI



del Quirinale gallery, to celebrate the 500-year anniversary of the Renaissance master's passing.

The St. Regis Rome, opened in 1894 by César Ritz himself, recently completed a top-to-bottom reimagining to the tune of \$51.8 million. Masterminded by French designer extraordinaire Pierre-Yves Rochon—of Paris's Four Seasons Georges V and Shanghai's Peninsula, among many others—the new look is lighter and brighter, including the Bottega Veneta suite, freshly updated with direction from the Italian luxury house's creative director, Daniel Lee.

Another new take on a venerable space is Rocco Forte House, unveiled late last year by Rocco Forte, the force behind Rome's beloved Hotel de Russie. Set in an 18th-century palazzo on Piazza di Spagna, the house was conceived in a similar vein to the Ferragamo family's Portrait hotels in Rome and Florence, with ultra-luxe apartment-like accommodations. Its five suites, ranging in size from two to four bedrooms, are

**First Roma Acqua, in a mod 1960s building, features walls of glass and a true Roman rarity: an indoor pool.**



decorated in classic-meets-contemporary style by local designer Tommaso Ziffer, known for his collaborations with Valentino and his work on the homes of Rome's social set. Expect handpicked antiques, undisturbed privacy—including secluded outdoor spaces—and the type of personal service that can stock in-suite

kitchens and bars with favorite food and drink before you arrive.

A cobblestone's throw away at the top of the Spanish Steps is Hotel de la Ville, in another 300-year-old building, which Forte reopened last year after a four-year, \$54 million redesign and renovation. Ziffer once again took on design duties, this time for 104 rooms and suites, with inspiration found in the houses of 18th-century Grand Touring Europeans; the collected and artisanal decor includes fabrics from such famed Italian companies as Rubelli and Dedar. Meanwhile, the hotel's rooftop lounge, Cielo, has become the spot to be seen for locals and visitors alike, including the cast of Quentin Tarantino's Oscar-winning *Once Upon a Time . . . in Hollywood*.

Last spring, Marco Cilia, a Rome native and former general manager of Manhattan's chic gallery-district Hotel Americano, launched Chapter Roma. Cilia tapped young South African designer Tristan du Plessis to mix old and new: The brickwork and soaring arches of the 1880 building are combined with mid-20th-century Italian furniture, contemporary murals and an industrial edge. A six-minute walk from Campo de' Fiori, Chapter Roma will add five rooms this spring, for a total of 47.

The city's highly contemporary First Roma Arte hotel recently opened a satellite on Via del Corso, in a 19th-century palazzo designed by Giuseppe Valadier, the architect who laid out the nearby



VATICAN: EVA-KATALIN/GETTY IMAGES; ST. REGIS: GARRY KAN; ROCCO FORTE HOUSE: JÁNOS GRAPOW; BERLUTI LUGGAGE: JOSHUA SCOTT





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Rome's Via della Conciliazione; Italian opulence in the Medici Suite at Rocco Forte House; the St. Regis Rome's library room.

Piazza del Popolo. As its name suggests, the First Roma Dolce takes dessert as its theme, with sweets served upon arrival and a patisserie-focused restaurant. (As such, we strongly recommend booking a suite with optional in-room Technogym equipment.) Next up for the brand is the equally of-the-moment First Roma Acqua, in a mod 1960s building on the western banks of the Tiber River. Featuring walls of glass with river views and marble-clad bathrooms, the hotel will also boast a true Roman rarity: an indoor pool.

And Spanish hotelier Iberostar will open what will likely be the five-star hotel closest to the Trevi Fountain later this year. Details are short, but the Iberostar Grand Fontana di Trevi's 67 rooms and rooftop terrace will occupy an iconic art nouveau palazzo from 1895.

Year's end will bring the W Rome, the brand's first Italian outpost, occupying two formerly residential 19th-century buildings just off the city's storied Via Veneto, not far from the Spanish Steps. The hotel will include 159 rooms and suites, plus a rooftop the company hopes will become the party-ready, *La Dolce Vita* scene for which W—and Rome—are famous. **Andrew Sessa**



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### LOUIS VUITTON

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### DIOR X RIMOWA

The fashion set went crazy for the Dior x Rimowa metal clutch, but the collab includes more functional (but equally lust-worthy) pieces like the Cabin suitcase, a lockable aluminum spinner finished with the unmistakable Dior Oblique motif. \$4,100, [dior.com](http://dior.com)



### AVITEUR

Patricia Gucci (yes, that Gucci) wanted a carry-on with the charm of an elegant handbag or briefcase. The result: Italian calf leather in a woven cane motif, with a glass-like Lucite handle that extends and retracts with a touch. About \$4,740, [aviteur.com](http://aviteur.com)



### BERLUTI X GLOBE-TROTTER

This roller combines the best of the British luggage maker and the exquisite Venezia leatherwork for which Berluti is renowned, all covered in the Italian brand's "signature canvas" pattern. \$5,300, [berluti.com](http://berluti.com)