



# ROMEO ROMA

Ancient history combines with cutting-edge design to create a surprising haven in the centre of the Eternal City.

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Gliding through the Romeo Roma (theromeocollection.com), where wood, stone, marble, steel and brass blend harmoniously from floor to ceiling, it's impossible not to feel Zaha Hadid's presence. Every one of the 74 rooms and suites, with their undulating walls, wavy bed frames, futuristic couches and ultra-modern fireplaces, bears the late award-winning Iraqi-British architect's touch. But one peek at the vaulted ceiling over the main staircase and display cases of relics discovered during the property's excavation and the storied space returns you to the ancient city.

More than a decade in the making, this fusion of the contemporary and the past has become a tribute to Hadid without losing the Roman soul of the 16th-century Palazzo Capponi. The hotel is just steps away from the public square of Piazza del Popolo, where the likes of cinema greats Federico Fellini and Marcello Mastroianni regularly met at Bar Rosati. The neighborhood's significance is not lost on Neapolitan real-estate entrepreneur Alfredo Romeo,

the founder of the Romeo Collection hospitality group. He chose this iconic location for his second hotel, following the success of Romeo Napoli in the Bay of Naples, designed by Japanese architect Kenzō Tange.

A seat at the sleek new Il Ristorante Alain Ducasse Roma is sought after by the well-heeled set and merits a six- or nine-course deep-dive into the French master's culinary genius – the charred gambero rosso with spaghettone is a sea-scented highlight. Return for breakfast and enjoy Ducasse's signature cookpot di uovo (cookpot of egg as a carbonara) or the French toast with whipped cream and tonka bean.

A scenic pool connects the interior with the outside – guests can wade in for a closer look at ruins that are more than 2000 years old through the pool's glass floor. Upstairs on the *piano nobile* or main floor, the bi-level Fresco Suites (left) are decorated with the palazzo's preserved original frescoes and ornamental ceilings, further defining this living museum. ↘