

The
Insider's
Guide to
ROME



WHERE TO STAY,
WHAT TO DO, AND
WHAT NOT TO MISS.
THE FIFTH-GENERA-
TION OWNER OF ONE
OF ITALY'S LARGEST
FAMILY RUN HOTEL
GROUPS LEADS THE
WAY. By Judy Alexandra DiEdwardo



Don't bother asking hotelier Maurizio Bettoja for his top picks of what to see in Rome. "It would be like choosing your favorite child," says the elegant, self-styled great, great grandson of the man who built the Bettoja Hotel Group. The Bettoja family's hotel lineage dates back to the 19th century when a shortage of city hotels prompted Maurizio's great, great grandfather and namesake to open the Hotel Massimo D'Azeglio in 1875. A wine merchant from Piedmonte he first opened its restaurant, but later bought the entire building and transformed it into its present form. The group now includes Rome's Hotel Mediterraneo, Hotel Massimo D'Azeglio, Hotel Atlantico and Hotel Nord, each of which is a short walk from the main train station. In 1988, the Relais Certosa in Florence was added. Maurizio is joined at the helm by his father, Angelo, and his brother, Roberto, who guide the hotel group's operations and development.

From the enchanting entryway lounge of the Hotel Massimo D'Azeglio where the group's operations are headquartered, he gestures toward the bustling Via Cavour outside. "Out there," he smiles. "The churches, the museums, the city. It's all quite wonderful." Indeed. An easy, five-minute walk from where we are sitting are several of the city's most important and precious landmarks: the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, the city's largest church built in circa 432 AD; the National Museum of Rome, which houses one of the world's most important archaeological collections; and the world-famous Teatro dell'Opera. Rome's beauty is everywhere, in the floors, walls, streets, museums, stores, restaurants and villas—even seen on the profile of the Roman faces. So, put on your most comfortable shoes and start walking for an unforgettable stroll through time.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ITALIAN TOURIST BOARD & BETTOJA HOTEL GROUP



What to see & do:

COLOSSEUM Arguably one of the city's most compelling attractions is the Colosseum, which was the most important amphitheater in the Roman world. Built in 72 AD as a horse racing circuit, it grew to become the home for gladiators to do combat in this massive stadium that seated 55,000 people. It was only used until the 15th century, but the mysterious and imposing fascination of this striking edifice has endured.



ROMAN FORUM

Adjacent to the Colosseum, the Roman Forum was the center of the economic, political and social life of the city. Thanks to its central position, the Palatine Hill overlooking the Roman Forum, was the most suitable place for the first urban settlement. Next to it is the Arch of Constantine, the biggest and best preserved ancient arch.



light. It was then turned into a church in the 7th century by Pope Boniface IV.

TREVI FOUNTAIN This is the world-famous landmark that will ensure your future return to the city by tossing a coin



over your shoulder into the fountain. The magnificent alabaster sculpture is highlighted by statues of Neptune at the center supported by Tritons on either side.

Clockwise from top left: Colosseum, Pantheon, Roman Forum, Trevi Fountain

CAPITOLINE MUSEUM

This stunning museum was designed by Michaelangelo and houses one of Europe's most important sculpture exhibits.

VILLA BORGHESE

Located at the northern end of Via Veneto, this massive, 17-acre landscape garden is



Rome's second largest park. Here, you will find the magnificent Galleria Borghese—20 rooms and two floors of Roman antiquities of the first to third centuries AD—as well as an impressive Bernini collection highlighted by Bernini's most famous masterpiece "Apollo and Daphne," "Pluto and PersePhone," and "David."

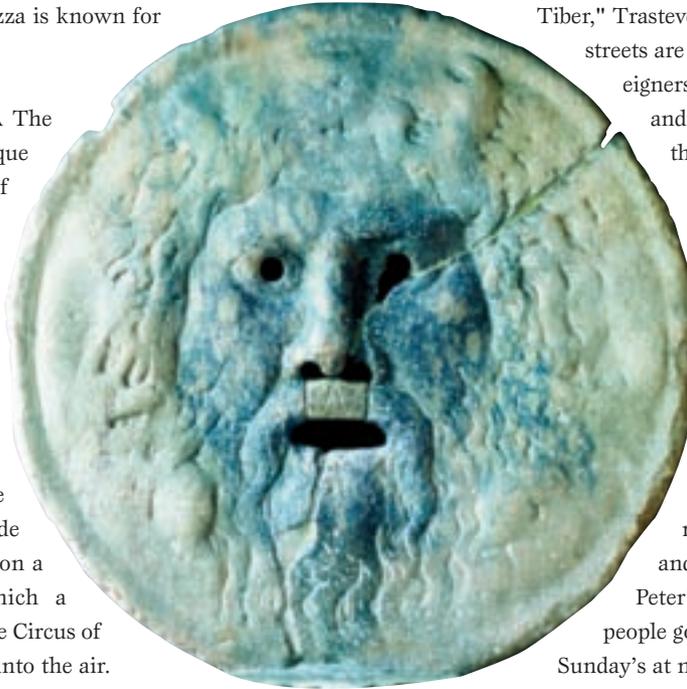
CAMPO DE' FIORI Meaning "field of flowers," which harkens back to its roots in the Middle Ages as a grassy field, this popular piazza is known for its food and flower markets.

PIAZZA NAVONA The most famous square of Baroque Rome, the real attraction of the square is the famous "Fountain of the Four Rivers" (1651) by Gian Lorenzo Bernini, and thanks to which the artist gained the admiration and protection of the Pope. The rivers represented in the fountain are the Danube, the Ganges, the Nile and the Rio de la Plata. They are arranged on a steep rocky reef from which a Roman obelisk taken from the Circus of Maxentius daringly rises up into the air.

TRASTEVERE Well worth the extra time to hop a cab

across the Tiber, Trastevere is prized for its narrow streets and original medieval popular houses. Meaning "beyond the Tiber," Trastevere comes alive at night when the streets are crowded by both Italians and foreigners who come for the many pubs and restaurants. However, much of the original character of Trastevere remains. Be sure to visit the basilica of Santa Maria; one of the oldest churches in Rome.

VATICAN CITY (Vatican, Museum and St. Peter's Square) A short cab or subway ride away is one of the world's most famous sites. Home to the Pope and one of the most important historical sites and museums in the world, St. Peter's Square is where millions of people go to receive the Pope's blessing on Sunday's at noon. Access to the Sistine Chapel is gained after walking the massive Vatican museum's miles of hallways that are adorned with exquisite works of art.



Piazza Navona



RESERVATIONS/INFORMATION:

BETTOJA HOTELS, VIA CAVOUR 18, ROME (011) 39 064814798; 800-783-6904 IN THE UNITED STATES; WWW.BETTOJAHOTELS.IT; HB@BETTOJAHOTELS.IT

Atlantico Hotel, Via Cavour 23, Rome (011) 39 06485951

Massimo D'Azeglio Hotel, Via Cavour 18, Rome (011) 39 064870270

Mediterraneo Hotel, Via Cavour 15, Rome (011) 39 064884051

Nord Hotel, Via Amendola 3, Rome (011) 39 064885441

Relais Certosa, Via Di Collee Ramole 2, Florence (011) 39 0552047171

GETTING THERE:

Rome Airport: The fastest, cheapest and most convenient transportation into Rome's city center is by the train located inside the Fiumicino Airport. The direct non-stop service to Roma Termini station, located one block from the Bettoja Hotels, takes about 32 minutes and runs every half hour.

THE BETTOJA HOTEL COLLECTION LOCATED ONE BLOCK FROM THE ROMA TERMINI STATION, WHICH LINKS DIRECTLY TO THE AIRPORT, THE BETTOJA HOTEL GROUP HAS FOUR STELLAR OFFERINGS IN THE ETERNAL CITY.

MASSIMO D'AZEGLIO HOTEL This landmark, four-star hotel began in 1875 when Maurizio Bettoja bought the ground floor of the building, which housed his long-established restaurant. The main façade has kept the same look as it had under King Umberto, while its interiors have undergone many changes. Guests have included Benito Mussolini and Louis Armstrong, among others. An important collection of prints and paintings representing those people who were so important during the Italian unification movement hang in the lobby, conference rooms, bar and restaurant. Near the bar, in the spacious ground floor lobby, there is an autograph of Cavour and a self-portrait of D'Azeglio along with three of his other drawings. Built on five floors, its 197 rooms are all tastefully decorated in traditional style. The Hotel Massimo D'Azeglio also offers a Restaurant and a Wine Cellar, renown in Rome.

MEDITERRANEO HOTEL Dominated by fine woods and marble, this four-star hotel is one of the best examples of Art Deco in Rome. Ten floors of understated classical rationalism feature marble and fine woodwork like the grand marble staircase with steps and landings built with solid pieces of marble suspended in air. It is the highest building in the historical center, which was built on the highest of Rome's seven hills, and features 266 rooms on 10 floors.

ATLANTICO HOTEL In spite of its many restorations, the four-star Hotel Atlantico has held on to its 1930's Art Deco design, which includes floors in precious woods and marble. Built on five floors, its 69 rooms, bar and conference rooms. Guests use the restaurant in the Mediterraneo, which is connected to the Atlantico.

NORD HOTEL This three-star hotel built in 1935 features an elegant lobby with a glass elevator connecting its 155 rooms on seven floors. The hotel has preserved its unique 1930's-era style with marble and hardwood flooring and its many art deco and classical art prints. ^{stb}

Author's Dedication: *In honor of my amazing mother, mentor, friend, Alberta Rachela Colonna (3/10/29-10/29/06), who, joined by grandsons Jacob and Troy, led this return visit to her native city. Her indefatigable humor, wit and enthusiasm as vibrant as ever, beneath the magical March skies of the Eternal City we had the time of our lives.*