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**GIADA DE
LAURENTIIS**
TAKES US TO
LAS VEGAS

**FERRAGAMO'S
LATEST
FLORENCE
OUTPOST**



U.S. EDITION

PICTURE PERFECT

JACKIE COOPERMAN CHECKS INTO THE NEW PORTRAIT FIRENZE FOR A TASTE OF LA DOLCE VITA.



Clockwise from above: the rooftops of Florence from a romantic cityscape, a suite at the Portrait Firenze, balconies afford sweeping views of the city.

IMAGES COURTESY OF PORTRAIT FIRENZE

My suite at the Ferragamo family's new all-suite hotel, Portrait Firenze, part of the Lungarno Collection, contained a copy of E. M. Forster's 1908 classic, "A Room with a View." That touch might have appeared twice, playing to the city's every cliché, if the hotel were not so smartly designed and the book had not been sandwiched among tomes on 20th-century fashion, contemporary Italy and modern art.

"It was pleasant to wake up in Florence... to fling wide the windows... to lean out into sunshine with beautiful hills and trees and marble churches opposite, and close below, the Arno, gurgling against the embankment of the road," Forster wrote more than a century ago. Happily for visitors to Portrait Firenze, 23 of the 34 suites do indeed face the Arno and the same landscape that captivated Forster.

What Portrait Firenze does best is marry the city's august history and iconic architecture with its dynamic present. The hotel's windows overlook the medieval Ponte Vecchio and the timeless Arno, but inside, from in-room iPads to Nespresso coffee machines, guests are very much in the present.

Designed by Michele Bonan, the Florence-based architect and designer responsible for all of the Ferragamo hotels, Portrait Firenze opened in May and features a "lifestyle team" dedicated to providing guests intimate glimpses of a city that can be overrun with tourists. Portrait Firenze's staff prides itself on arranging everything from personalized shopping and photography lessons from the nearby Leica boutique to guided visits of artisan workshops, classes in creating fresco paintings, tours of the city's Jewish neighborhood and rides in one of the

city's 12 horse-drawn carriages.

The hotel's pre-arrival questionnaire covers preferences on pillows, flowers and fruit. The staff stocks the attractively designed minibars and Pullman kitchenettes with guests' requests, and each night leaves things like a cheese plate, hot tea or a bottle of chilled wine.

With four hotels in Florence and one in Rome, as well as sister properties in Tuscany and a private yacht available for rent, the Ferragamos are savvy marketers, and Portrait Firenze feels gently but undeniably branded. The luxe and large marble bathrooms hold a half-dozen Ferragamo Tuscan Soul toiletries, and housekeeping leaves Tuscan Soul beauty products at turndown. Most of the lobby and restaurant's midcentury-modern Italian and Scandinavian furniture is for sale.

There are certainly perks to the brand identification, including savvy concierges, free admission to the Ferragamo museum and discounts at the Ferragamo boutique.

Portrait Firenze, along with the other Ferragamo hotels, is centrally located but feels like a haven. The pedestrian walkway between Portrait and its Ferragamo neighbors, Hotel Continentale and Gallery Hotel Art, often hosts art installations. The current installation, Simone D'Auria's "Personal/Unpersonal," a group of 18 human figures with animal heads, remains on view through next spring. D'Auria's white-plaster figures—some suspended in the air, a triad clumped in front of the Continentale and the rest ascending the side of the Gallery Hotel Art—seem the fitting emblems for a city built on tenacity and beauty. Portrait Firenze provides the perfect perch from which to explore it.

Contact your travel agent today to check in at Portrait Firenze.