

10TH
ANNIVERSARY
special issue

A decade of dream trips

MARLON BRANDO'S
SECRET ISLAND

THE ULTIMATE
WINTER THRILLS

&

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HESTON BLUMENTHAL
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The Daily Telegraph

ultratravel

SUPPLEMENT OF THE YEAR

WINTER 2014



Positively palatial
View from the private terrace of the Ponte Vecchio Suite, whose rooms can be joined with three others to create a riverside penthouse

SUITE DREAMS

Ultratravel's guide to the world's most sumptuous new hotel rooms

PONTE VECCHIO SUITE, PORTRAIT FIRENZE

Lungarno degli Acciaiuoli 4, Florence, Italy
(00 39 055 2726 8000, lungarnocollection.com)

Opened 1 May 2014

Price €2,800/£2,205 per night

Size 1,292 sq ft

USP Florence's luxury hotel scene is as crowded as the Uffizi Gallery, but Portrait Firenze has both location and pedigree – it is owned by one of Italy's first families of fashion, the Ferragamos. Set on the sixth floor, the Ponte Vecchio suite is the ultimate Florentine room with a view, with an unimpeded sweep of the city's famed crossing over the River Arno. The suite can also connect

with three adjacent rooms to create a penthouse.

When it comes to service, nothing is too much trouble. Before check-in, guests are sent a questionnaire to determine their preferences – whether that's a specific newspaper or drink in the minibar, or whether they want a private tour of the Vasari corridor, a peek inside someone's palazzo or to flex their credit cards on the Via Tornabuoni with a personal shopper. That is, if they can drag themselves away from the view.

Details The Ferragamos wisely turned to the Florentine architect and designer Michele Bonan. Taking his design cues from Fifties Florence, the look is a sophisticated mingling of mid-century modern and *La Dolce Vita*: more stylish home

than hotel. The suite is a gorgeous, bright space of dove-grey wood-panelled walls, white-beamed ceilings, silvery upholstery, teak floorboards and glamorous flashes of gold. Like the onyx-topped console table flanking one wall, most of the furniture is custom-made, designed by Bonan and inspired by the Fifties and Sixties. Walls are sprinkled with black-and-white photographs dedicated to shoemaker-to-the-stars Salvatore Ferragamo, and scenes of Florence featuring celebrities such as Audrey Hepburn. There are two double bedrooms at each end of the suite, with beds decked out in snow-white Italian linen and houndstooth throws.



In between are an airy living room and a cleverly designed kitchen. Bathrooms are bedecked in Carrara marble, with Salvatore Ferragamo toiletries beside the roll-top bath, and views through huge windows over the rooftops. But the real showstopper is the suite's private terrace, on which guests can breakfast in the morning or sit, glass of Chianti in hand, and watch the sun slip behind the Tuscan hills.

MAPPING YOUR WORLD

Handy if you can't find your way home: luggage labels from Atlas-and-I can be printed with any map – of a local neighbourhood, an ancient woodland or a dream destination. Atlas's Sophie Kirkpatrick can also make matching items, from washbags to passport covers. Right up every traveller's street. atlas-and-i.com



I LIKE MINE RARE

Waris Ahluwalia, the Indian aesthete-cum-philanthropist-cum-actor (who played a concierge in *Hotel Budapest*), is well known among magpies for his exotic collections of jewellery. Since he opened his own Rare boutique in the Explorer's Library of the Gritti Palace in Venice, though, he's also become the go-to man for all things handcrafted. Rarities, made by 40 artisans in 14 countries, range from Haider Ackermann's yak scarves and Venetian glass to rainbow-coloured boules. houseofwaris.com

ULTRA APP



SKI TRACKS

£0.69, iPhone and Android
Even for techno-phobes, this is one of the simplest apps to track

your day's skiing via GPS, without needing a signal or draining too much battery. As well as maps of the resorts, it provides analysis of the day's skiing – from slope angles to speed – via statistics and graphs, all of which can be posted on Facebook, linked to Google Earth and illustrated with geo-tagged photographs for instant bragging.

ROBERT SHADBOLT; ALESSANDRO MOGGI

THE BOOK

UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD: THE ATLAS OF INFOGRAPHICS

is a compendium of the best graphics from publications around the world that illustrate the intricacies of our planet. Topics range from the environment to society and culture, with illustrations depicting such complex subjects as the layout of the universe, the world's tallest mountains and highest rivers, the rights of women in various countries, and the real size of Africa compared with other parts of the world (shown above). £44.99; taschen.com

