

RIPPLE EFFECT

Discover the breathtaking beauty of Italy, from panoramic vistas across the Tyrrhenian Sea to riverside Florentine residences

PHOTOGRAPHS: STEPHEN RINGER, KATE MARTIN, STEFANO SCATÀ, STOCKSY



HOTEL IL PELLICANO TUSCANY

For a lesson in living *la dolce vita*, there's nowhere better than the legendary Hotel Il Pellicano, which sits in a private cove near Porto Ercole on Tuscany's rugged coast. Once photographed by Slim Aarons, the yellow-striped sunbeds by the saltwater pool are the perfect sunny spot to set up camp for the day, fuelled by Aperol spritzes and delicious grilled fish.

And for those who can't make it this year, the hotel's creative director and CEO Marie-Louise Sciò has launched a new lifestyle website, Issimo, so you can recreate the Italian ambience and cuisine at home.

LUCY HALFHEAD

Hotel Il Pellicano (www.hotelilpellicano.com), from about £430 a room a night.



PALAZZO CRISTO VENICE

The unassuming Palazzo Cristo, tucked away on one of Venice's most charming squares, is home to four luxurious self-catered suites. Its interiors are the magical work of the Paris-based designers Anna Covre and Frédéric Tubau, who decided to keep the original ceiling beams and add modern updates including Carrara-marble fireplaces, elegant velvet armchairs and underfloor heating. There's no restaurant, but you'll find the wonderful Rosa Salva bakery just outside your front door, and a recipe book of Venetian dishes so that you can cook up a storm in the state-of-the-art kitchen. KATE MASON

Palazzo Cristo (www.mrandmrsmith.com), from about £400 a room a night.



ESCAPE



THE ST REGIS **VENICE**

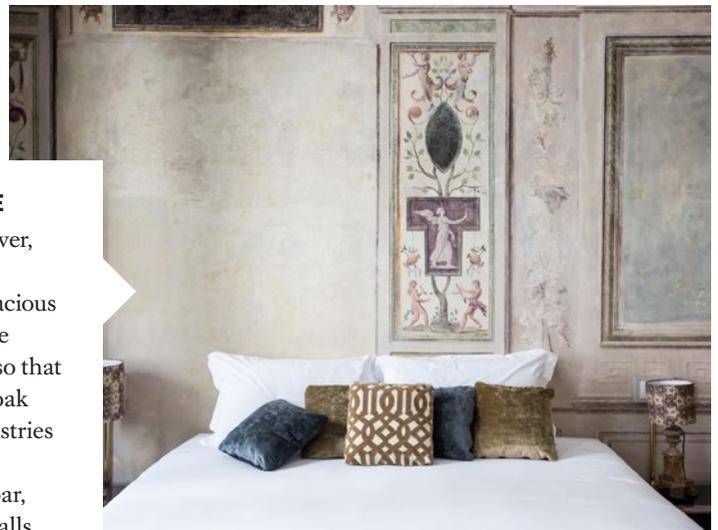
Those who grumble that Venice has lost its romance are clearly not staying at the St Regis. The glamour starts as you step out of your boat onto the staircase of its grand, balconied façade. Main areas are embellished with spectacular flower arrangements and contemporary Venetian artworks, while our art deco-inspired suite had a sleek marble bathroom, soft, jewel-toned furnishings and windows that gave onto the rose garden. Evenings begin on the Italianate terrace with complimentary champagne and canapés; afterwards, Gio's restaurant is a particularly picturesque dining spot, offering the freshest seafood and authentic Italian cuisine with uninterrupted views across the Grand Canal towards the glories of the floodlit Basilica di Santa Maria della Salute. **LYDIA SLATER**
The St Regis Venice (www.marriott.co.uk), from about £580 a room a night.



OLTRARNO SPLENDID **FLORENCE**

Perched on the south side of Florence's Arno river, Oltrarno Splendid is a bohemian B&B bolthole filled with art and plush furnishings. The 14 spacious guest-rooms are individually styled – some have free-standing baths positioned by the window so that you can enjoy views of the Duomo while you soak after a long day's sightseeing. Fresh fruit and pastries are served alongside frothy cappuccinos in the breakfast-room each morning, while the cosy bar, with its terracotta-tiled floors and map-lined walls,

is ideal for enjoying an aperitivo or two before dinner. **KIAAN ORANGE**
Oltrarno Splendid (www.oltrarnosplendid.com), from about £160 a room a night.



PHOTOGRAPHS: NIAL CLUTTON, ILARIA COSTANZO, GETTY IMAGES



FORTE SAN GIORGIO **CAPRAIA**

It's quite a journey to the tiny Tuscan island of Capraia, but once you set foot inside Forte San Giorgio, nestled on a cliffside rich in wild lavender and myrtle bushes, you'll realise that it was worth every minute. The beautifully restored 16th-century fortress, complete with a majestic watchtower, is now available for hire exclusively through the villa-rental company the Thinking Traveller. As well as a fabulous living area featuring frescoes, polished plaster walls and Venetian *briccole* (woodblock) floors, there are 11 bedrooms, two swimming pools and four large terraces with incredible views over the sparkling waters of the Tyrrhenian Sea. **LH** □
Forte San Giorgio (www.thethinkingtraveller.com), from about £21,870 a week (sleeps 21).

