



Rome

AH, SPRINGTIME IN ITALY. Trees are bursting with fresh buds, menus are about to overflow with fava-bean everything, and the most ridiculous election season in memory is coming to a head. On the left, we have Union Party leader Romano Prodi, the avuncular economics professor and former prime minister. And in the far right corner, we have Silvio Berlusconi, the richest man in Italy, who has compared himself to Jesus, Churchill, and Napoleon. Back in January, he vowed to remain celibate until the election (April 9-10). The absurdity is not lost on the Romans. Over dinner, they'll tell you that Rome is not Italy (sound familiar?). And they have a point: Rome itself is enjoying a 7 percent rise in GDP while the rest of the country is sinking faster than Venice. But don't let that fool you. Rome is no booming modern metropolis, either. Romans shun the temptations that cities like Paris, London, and, of course, New York have long embraced—cosmopolitanism, immigration, Starbucks. Instead, they've been concentrating on the things Rome has done best for millennia: art, architecture, fashion, and food. New shops are springing up almost hourly on Governo Vecchio and Via dei Prefetti, the scaffolding is finally coming down on the first new structure to be built inside the Aurelian Wall in 70 years, and Romans have their first set of three Michelin stars for the white-glove restaurant La Pergola (39-06-350-92152). Sometimes, change is good. But don't worry: Some things never change. Like vegetables. And right now is a very critical moment in the Eternal City. The fava beans are coming.



Hotel Finder

If you like the bed-and-breakfast feel of the **Inn at Irving Place**, you'll love the **Hotel Santa Maria**.
If you like the glamour of the **Mercer**, you'll love the **Hotel de Russie**.

If you like the old-school charm of the **St. Regis**, you'll love the **Hassler**.

If you like the style quotient of the **Hotel on Rivington**, you'll love the **Hotel Raphaël**.

BY DANIELLE PERGAMENT

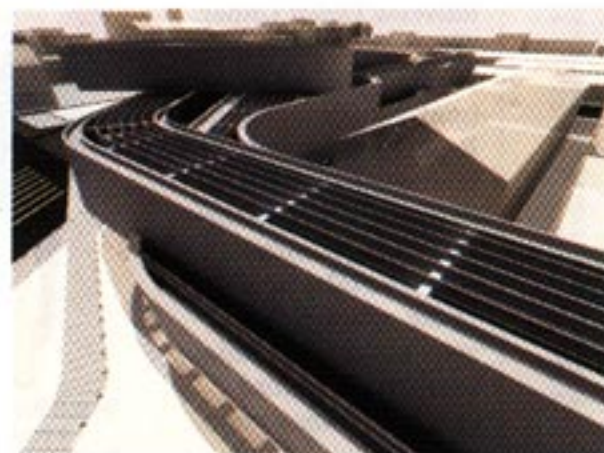


STARARCHITECTURE TOUR

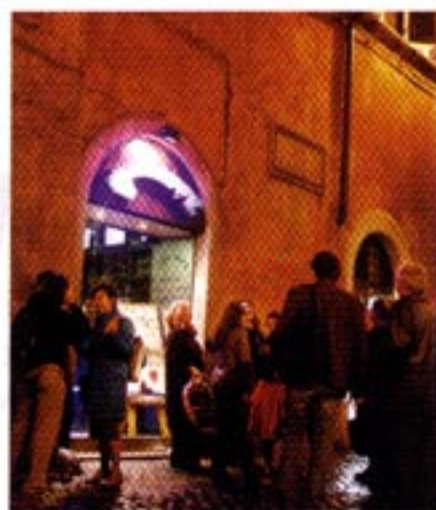


START
at Renzo Piano's **▲ Auditorium-Parco Della Musica**: Completed in 2002, the catchy tortoise-drinking-from-a-water-bowl structure is the oldest of the new.

ACROSS THE STREET
is Zaha Hadid's massive **MAXXI (▼ Museo Nazionale Delle Arti del XXI Secolo)**, which will open any minute now—it's already three years late. Inside, twisty concrete walls reach 46 feet high.



THE BEST . . .



PIAZZA FOR PICKING UP A ROMAN

PIAZZA DELLE COPPELLE

Two blocks behind the Pantheon, the tiny Piazza Delle Coppelle has three great bars and narrow streets with ivy overhangs—and, at any given moment between 9 P.M. and 3 A.M., an inordinate amount of Italian hotties checking each other out. It's what Campo de' Fiori was years ago, before guidebook overexposure ruined it.

SUBSTITUTE FOR AN H&H BAGEL

CHECCO ER CHARTTIERE

Via Benedetta, 10-13
(39-06-581-7018)

Order a freshly baked cornetto (Italian croissant) with a caffè (which is really espresso); eat your meal standing at the counter alongside grumpy commuters and feel right at home.

REASON TO LEAVE CITY CENTER

RESTAURANT SUD

Via Antonio Bosio, 20a
(39-06-442-02701)

After a few days of cacio this and pepe that, you may well crave some non-Roman fare. At Sud, in the well-appointed Trieste neighborhood, the menu stems from Sicily and Calabria, the room is small and modern, and the clientele is entirely local.

PLACE TO BECOME A CATHOLIC

ST. PETER IN CHAINS

Piazza San Pietro in Vincoli

Built in 431 to honor the chains that bound Peter the Apostle, this is a house of worship we can get with. The main attraction—the chains under glass—impresses even ardent nonbelievers. It's also home to Michelangelo's *Moses*, which is, by any standard, divine.



The Castel Sant'Angelo at dusk.



HAIL A TAXI

to MACRO (▲ Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Roma), Rome's most popular modern-art museum, just off Via Nomentana. It's undergoing a face-lift: Check out the totally transformed main hall.

HIKE WEST

toward the Tiber and Richard Meier's new ▼ Ara Pacis Museum, the first structure built in the *centro storico* in seven decades. The museum, which opens later this month, is a sleek glass-and-travertine hall a decade in the making and houses one lone artifact: the **Altar of Peace**, built for Emperor Augustus in 9 B.C.



FINISH UP

at nearby ▲ Hotel Raphaël (39-06-682-831). Meier also designed its minimalist third floor, with rooms like miniature MoMAs.

Piccolo Versailles

If it weren't for the occasional security guard, you could almost pretend this palazzo was yours alone.

THE GALLERIA DORIA Pamphilj is not a museum so much as it is an extremely nice apartment that's almost always empty—which makes it the perfect antidote to Sistine Chapel burnout. The palazzo's lineage is as tangled as a bowl of spaghetti, but basically it was the family seat for the rich, aristocratic, and extremely connected Doria Pamphilj family (Pope Innocent X was the patriarch of the brood). For 400 years, they amassed a phenomenal collection of paintings. You've got your Berninis, Caravaggios, and Guercinos. There's the famous 1650 portrait of Innocent X by Velázquez and Titian's *Salome With the Head of John the Baptist* from 1515.

The Galleria Degli Specchi (Gallery of Mirrors) seen here is the most stunning room in the whole place. Its resemblance to another famous hall of reflective surfaces is no accident—the family wanted a mini-Versailles. The prerecorded tour, narrated by Jonathan Doria Pamphilj, is worth it simply to hear his accent, which sounds like the Upper East Side by way of European finishing school. But take at least a few minutes off the headset to luxuriate in the blissfully serene surroundings—until some other wandering voyeur disturbs your peace (Piazza del Collegio Romano 2; 39-06-679-7323).

The vaulted ceiling

The frescoes by Italian painter Aureliano Milani tell the story of Hercules.

Chandeliers

They're made of Venetian glass.

The bust at the end of the hall

One of the great masterpieces in the gallery is this bust of Pope Innocent X, done by Gian Lorenzo Bernini in 1650.

Windows on the left

These overlook the courtyard in the center of the Galleria.

The sculptures

The statues lining the hall, in various stages of dismemberment, are all from ancient Rome. Many were restored in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (and are most likely quite different from the original artists' intentions).

Tiny niche at the end of the hall

In a small antechamber, next to a Bernini bust, is the famous portrait of Innocent X by Velázquez.

Windows on the right

These look out on the heavily trafficked Via del Corso.







Don't Leave Rome Without Them

A bottle of Brunello

Enoteca Costantini on the Piazza Cavour makes Sherry-Lehmann look like a bodega. Try the Brunello di Montalcino CastelGiocondo 2000 (33 euros). You're allowed to bring three bottles back to the U.S. Make good use of this rule.

Artisanal prosciutto

See those dried pig legs in the windows of almost every food store? The ones with the hooves and hair? Go inside and ask for half a kilo of their best artisanal (that means good to the land and the pig) prosciutto and have them vacuum-pack it for the flight home.

Dry pasta sauce

The outdoor market at the Campo de' Fiori is more than a flashy photo op. Go to the corner where they sell spices, choose a few dry pasta mixes—puttanesca, pesto, all'arrabbiata—and ask them to seal each in a few plastic bags (we're not sure how happy U.S. Customs will be about this souvenir). When you get home, add water and spaghetti. It'll blow your jar of Rao's sauce off the shelf.



A really, really nice shirt

There are custom-made-shirt stores all over Rome, but the women in the back of Albertelli (Via dei Prefetti, 11) make the nicest ones. The selection of fabrics is impressively edited, and the fit is a lot less boxy and staid than your basic Brooks Brothers button-down.

Secret Spaghetti

HOME COOKING

MEET GIANNI—basketball stomach, basset-hound eyes, and a mustache the size of a small woodland creature—the proprietor of what seems to be a Roman culinary speakeasy. Tonight, Gianni's serving fried zucchini flowers, steaming carbonara, and beef stew—all for next to nothing. We're in his home kitchen—a really big gas stove and three tables all in one room. Look around: dozens of pictures, family heirlooms, and an ancient radio playing tinny Italian pop. Tonight's cast: five locals arguing football, one seedy type smoking cloves, and a drunk Romanian outside playing the accordion. We can't tell you the location (there are license issues), but here's a hint: Start at the Piazza Santa Maria in Trastevere and walk four windy blocks west. Two carafes of wine in, Gianni is bragging about his *bambini*; by the time he sends around a bottle of jet fuel he calls grappa, the arguing locals, the seedy type, even the accordion player, are belting out Italian folk songs. "Gianni! Sing 'That's Amore!'" you beg him. He smiles as if to say, "What the hell are you talking about?" and then it really hits you: It's time to go home.

Chef Gianni.



OPENINGS

IN RECENT MONTHS, thanks to a tradition passed down from Milan, Rome's wine bars have started serving up some of the best (free) food in the city. And we're not just talking about olives the size of golf balls or deliciously salty homemade potato chips, which are standard fare at any self-respecting Roman bar. No. Wine bars offer a ten-course meal for the cost of a drink. Imagine Max Fish with free food from Babbo. Places like Ferrara Enoteca (39-06-583-33920), 'Gusto Wine Bar (30-06-322-6273), and Freni e Frizioni (39-06-583-34210) dish out wheels of Parmigiano, bowls of pasta, platters of lamb chops, and other hearty sustenance for the price of a Nastro Azzurro. Just don't go on your way to dinner—you won't make it.



THE TOP FIVE

TRATTORIAS

IN A BIZARRO WORLD parallel to New York restaurant culture, Romans snub any place deemed "trendy." Instead, old-school trattorias top the food chain. Get the house wine (there's no other kind), don't eat the bread (it's a little stale), bring cash (they don't take plastic), and be careful with the menu (trippa alla Romana, often translated as "typical Roman food," is, more accurately, "boiled cow stomach").

1 Taverna Romana Da Tonino e Lucia (39-06-474-5325). Lucia will send you home, barking that the wait is too long. Politely refuse her advice and stand outside until she relents and shows you in—to a bustling crowd and the best bowl of carbonara in all of Italy.

2 Hosteria Gran Sasso "Da Paolo" (39-06-581-2393). Everyone is "Dottore" whether or not he's a doctor; the bathroom isn't outside to the left, despite the pranks Junior likes to pull on newcomers; and the spaghetti alle vongole is spectacular.

3 Da Tonino al Governo Vecchio (39-333-587-0779). The glass storefront is easy to miss if you're not looking for it. Go during lunch, when Tonino stuffs his patrons full of all'arrabbiata, lamb, and vats of house wine.

4 Hosteria Romana (39-06-474-5284). The owner is as proud of Romana's history as of his fettuccine. Best to let the owner choose your menu: It will start with antipasti misti, end with sips of limoncello, and in between, a blur of funghi porcini and bistecca.

5 Da Lucia (39-06-580-3601). The spaghetti alla gricia (cheese, olive oil, pancetta) will make you weep with joy.

MAPPA NO. 5: SAN LORENZO



Enoteca Ferrazza

1. POMMIDORO
Piazza dei Sanniti, 44
At lunch, you'll be surrounded by old Italian men who look like they walked off the Godfather set; order what they're having—bistecca and vino rosso della casa.

2. UNO E BINO
Via degli Equi, 58
Imagine Craft, just a little cheaper, and more Italian. Try the ricotta-and-spinach-filled phyllos, or the tagliatelle tossed with sea bass.

3. ENOTECA FERRAZZA
Via dei Volsci, 59
Its central location and remarkably flattering lighting make Enoteca Ferrazza the favored destination of San Lorenzo's beautiful people.

4. RIVE GAUCHE 2
Via dei Sabelli, 43
It's the closest thing to a Roman beer hall—tightly packed tables, loud music, and a variety of ales served in foot-tall glasses.

5. VINARIUM
Via dei Volsci, 103-107
We like this sophisticated spot for its candlelight, delicious antipasti, and selection of 350 wines. Okay, maybe we like the light jazz, too.

6. CLAUDIO SANO
Largo degli Osci, 67a
Watch as Claudio cuts and sews funky handbags in the shape of lips, or stiff leather briefcases with giant keyhole cutouts.

7. L'ANATRA ALL'ARANCIA
Via Tiburtina, 103-109
The newest shop for style-conscious locals is well stocked with Camper shoes and Paul Smith clothes.

8. ENOTECA BOTTEGA 74
Via degli Umbri, 25
The best cheap wine in town: Buy an empty bottle for 1 euro and have them fill it from one of their steel vats for another 1.90 euros.

9. ARANCIA BLU
Via dei Latini, 55-65
At this vegetarian eatery, the food is so good, the room so intimate, and the walls so amply stacked with wine, you don't even notice the lack of bistecca on the menu.

10. GIUFÀ LIBRERIA CAFFÈ
Via degli Aurunci, 38
No self-respecting college town can be without a socialist-leaning bookshop. Giufà specializes in foreign fiction, art and cinema books, and, of course, Che Guevara.



Enoteca Bottega 74

Buon Giorno, Hipsters

Rome's next cool neighborhood is here.





JUST PAST THE Aurelian Wall on the eastern edge of Rome is San Lorenzo, a neighborhood that's been deemed the next cool area—for about a decade. (Things take time here.) But now it seems the up-and-coming is finally up and here. The neighborhood borders one of the largest universities in Europe, and houses struggling artists and students, plus a handful of Italian B-list celebrities, attracted to the gritty glam. With its narrow streets and dearth of landmarks, San Lorenzo can take a few tries to find, but it's worth the effort for the Williamsburgian mix of cafés, bookstores, and cheap, funky restaurants. You'll



Arancia Blu

know you're there when jeans ride lower on the hips, sunglasses become more reflective, and the median age drops twenty years.

SALES & BARGAINS

ITEM	WHAT TO GET	WHERE TO GET IT	WHAT YOU'LL SAVE
 Oil and Vinegar	A bottle of first-press olive oil or aged balsamic vinegar.	Roscioli, the Zabar's of Rome. Via dei Giubbonari, 21-23; 39-06-687-5287.	20% to 40% Anywhere from \$5 to \$50. That is, if they even sell the brand you're after at Zabar's.
 Leather	Handmade accessories without fancy labels.	The briefcases and belts at Alfonsi Dario (Via dei Chiavari, 40-41) are made on the premises, and the proprietor is open to suggestions if you can't find one you like.	N/A You can't find this stuff in New York.
 Clothing	Anything from the heavy hitters—Prada, Gucci, Fendi, Armani.	Unfortunately, you'll have to brave the hordes on Via Condotti.	20% A Prada suit for 1,300 euros (or \$1,560) is \$1,700 on Fifth Avenue. On top of that, you get an additional refund when you send in your VAT form.
 Furniture	A hundred-year-old Tuscan canopy bed or dining-room table and chairs.	At any of a dozen antique-furniture stores on Via Giulia or Via dei Coronari.	10% to 30% Even including the 500 euros it will cost to ship it back, the furniture will run 10 to 30 percent cheaper than similar stuff at ABC Carpet & Home.