

TRAVEL+ LEISURE

THE HOTELS ISSUE


Insider's Rome
Stay, Eat, Shop, Stroll

IT
LIST

T+L Picks Our
Favorite New Hotels

5600

456
338
322

A photograph of a modern interior staircase. The stairs are made of light-colored stone or concrete. The railings are made of dark metal with ornate, scrolled designs. A large, glowing, textured pendant light hangs from the ceiling. The walls are a light, neutral color. The lighting is warm and ambient.

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Via dei Fori Imperiali, in the *centro storico*. Opposite: The iron staircase at Hotel San Anselmo.

alleyways, from such places as Freni e Frizioni and Bir & Fud, as well as the neighborhood's other excellent bars and unpretentious trattorias. Or one can savor an entirely different version of it on a weekday afternoon, when the *chiusura* (closing hour) drops a hush over the low rooftops, the birds on Gianicolo Hill can be heard along the Via della Lungara, and there are walk-in tables for the taking at the old standby, Trattoria da Lucia.

Luisa Longo, the owner of Buonanotte Garibaldi, is a genuine Trastevere-dwelling artist; her three-room B&B, hidden behind a green gate in a wall of ivy on the Via Garibaldi, was her parents' home. Past the entrance is a fragrant courtyard shaded by palm and orange trees; Longo's Airedale terrier, Tinto, bounds about in greeting before disappearing, but Longo or one of her multinational staff remains available—though remarkably privacy-respecting, considering you're in her house (the handsome boy I asked to fix my remote control turned out to be her son). The rooms are a unique mix of 19th- and 20th-century antiques, along with textiles designed by Longo herself. The Blue Room has a 645-square-foot terrace; the Chocolate Room, with its elegant Indian dhurrie and hand-painted headboard, has its own entrance off the

courtyard. Breakfast is house-made tarts and jams served in the airy white dining room; evenings are about drinks in the garden, with Bach or Handel faintly audible through the French doors leading to the sitting room. In few hotels does the fantasy of being in one's own house—one's very chic bohemian bolt-hole, more like—shimmer so close to reality.

83 Via Garibaldi; buonanottegaribaldi.com. \$\$

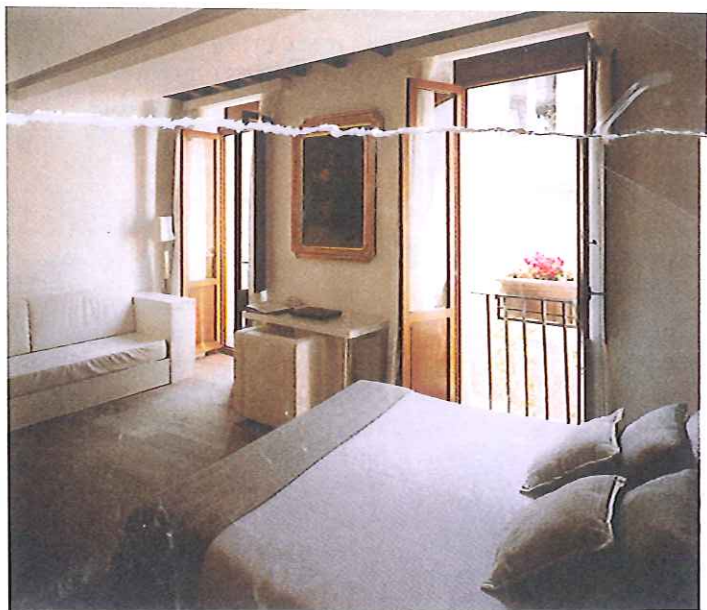
Testaccio

Hotel San Anselmo

Testaccio's designation as a district is new by Roman standards (it dates from 1921), but the area's roots stretch back two thousand years, when millions of discarded clay amphorae used to transport foodstuffs from outlying regions of the empire formed the enormous mountain of waste known as Monte Testaccio. In the late 19th century, the surrounding pasturelands were built up in a grid of new streets, and modern-day Testaccio was born. Its working-class roots abide, though today the ranks of butchers, laborers, and tradesmen are joined by artists, students, and young families priced out of irretrievably gentrified Trastevere across the river.

Testaccio is not terrifically picturesque; its oblong Piazza di Santa Maria Liberatrice lacks the rose-saffron palette and crooked harmony of, say, the Piazza della Rotonda, near the Pantheon. But the Aventine, by contrast, is a verdant and eye-pleasing pocket of turn-of-the-last-century villas, located just across the Via Marmorata—a world apart from Testaccio's coarse bustle. Here, on the tiny square of Sant'Anselmo, is the Hotel San Anselmo. It is a hotel of significant charms, though (or perhaps because?) it is neither new nor aggressively chic. The garden is lush with orange trees and dotted with green iron tables; also delightful is the lounge, with its low-sloping ceiling and long glass wall facing the garden. Room 829 has limed parquet floors and a romantically curtained bed; both it and No. 830 open onto private terraces. The rest skew flamboyant, not always with complete success. (Sigh-inducing or cringe-inducing? A few of the whimsies on display—amateur frescoes; the baldachin-style bed in No. 832—might force the polemic.) But the charms win the day, and are greatly enhanced by the competence of the staff. Guests benefit from the access the hotel affords to Testaccio's authentic pleasures: a perfect *ristretto* at Pasticceria Linari, drunk squeezed between students from the nearby music school and a tiny old gentleman in threadbare jacket and impeccably clipped whiskers; or a turn through Volpetti, where jams made by Trappist nuns are arranged like jewels above a selection of artichokes prepared in half a dozen local styles. And at day's end, visitors can ascend the leafy Via di Porta Lavernale to the tranquil square and appreciate the genteel foil the San Anselmo provides to Testaccio's edge.

2 Piazza di Sant'Anselmo; aventinohotels.com. \$\$\$



A room at Gigli d'Oro Suite, in the *centro storico*.

Centro Storico

Gigli d'Oro Suite

The eminently wanderable alleyways of Rome's historic center owe much of their appeal to resourceful reinterpretations of ancient structures; to calculated, eye-pleasing layering of the new-and-cool onto the very old. Gigli d'Oro Suite, a spare and contemporary retrofit of a building dating back to the 14th century, manifests this aesthetic to near perfection. Its modest three-story, two-window-wide façade—painted a cheery shell pink and profuse with cyclamens spilling out of window boxes—fronts a tiny but very cleverly organized hotel. There are just six rooms and a bright, compact breakfast lounge that, dimmed in the evening, has a complimentary cocktail bar laid out for guests to enjoy against the background of good jazz. The rooms themselves each harbor at least one original architectural detail, whether it be massive beams glimpsed in the Stelletta Suite or a granite fireplace in the rooftop Maschera d'Oro Suite. But all share a base code of white walls, oak wide-plank floors, and baths clad in biscuit-colored stone. Space (especially in closets and the bathrooms) has been ingeniously exploited; light floods the rooms at the front of the building, graced with slender French windows, and the two top-floor rooms.

Rarely do such modernizations occur without some loss of innate warmth; Gigli d'Oro Suite has retained a laudable amount—but then, there's the contribution of the brisk and sunny service to factor in. The hotel's ultra-solicitous management dispenses counsel on everything from purchasing exhibition tickets to the city's best *polpette*.

Exit the hotel, and accidental beauty surrounds you. A stroll in any direction traces a route of faded and repainted colors and twisting half-shadowed cobblestones that lead to the splendid light of the Piazza Farnese or the half-mile-long stretch of the 504-year-old Via Giulia, with its ivy-covered arch designed by Michelangelo. But photogenic good looks are hardly this area's only unique selling point; the Via del Governo Vecchio has for years had the city's best independent fashion and design boutiques (Delfina Delettrez, the jewelry designer and daughter of Silvia Venturini Fendi, rates it highly enough to have relocated her shop there). Another street worth strolling: the Via del Pellegrino, across the Corso Vittorio Emanuele II, where Patrizia Pieroni chose to open her namesake atelier in April 2011. And with at least three of Rome's best *enoteche* within a half-mile radius, you won't drink or snack poorly, either.

12 Via dei Gigli d'Oro; gigliorosuite.com. \$\$\$

Maria Shollenbarger is the deputy editor of *How to Spend It* at the Financial Times.