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REVIEW:

## Hotel Lungarno

The Hotel Lungarno is set on prime real estate right on the south bank of the River Arno and steps from the Ponte Vecchio, yet it still makes you feel you've escaped the hectic life of the city

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Courtesy Hotel Lungarno



### AMENITIES

Bar Urban  
Free Wifi

### ROOMS

65

Reviewed by NICKY SWALLOW

### Why book?

For Ferragamo-style luxury in the Oltrarno, the sleek flagship hotel of Leonardo Ferragamo's Lungarno Collection lies on the south bank of the river Arno, a stone's throw from the Ponte Vecchio, close to many of Florence's prime sights yet removed from the worst of the crowds.

### Set the scene

This area of the city around the south bank of the Arno and just west of the Ponte Vecchio suffered bad damage from allied bombing during World War II and so the tall Medieval buildings that survived stand alongside non-descript blocks from the 1960s; the Hotel Lungarno incorporates both. If you want a room right on the water, this is the place; no other hotel in central Florence stands right on the river bank and the close-up views of the Ponte Vecchio are an added bonus. This area of the Oltrarno is one of huge contrasts where artisan workshops stand meters from the grand palazzi whose aristocratic owners once employed cabinet makers, picture framers, furniture painters, and upholsterers to decorate their opulent homes.

### The backstory

The Hotel Lungarno has long been a favourite with sophisticated international travellers, but in 1995 Leonardo Ferragamo bought the hotel and created his 'Lungarno Collection' which owns four hotels in Florence (all clustered around the same stretch of the River Arno) plus properties in Rome and Milan. This is the most classic in feel of the group, and in spite of the sleek interiors (and a recent update) by Florentine design whizz Michele Bonan, it still retains a glamorous, vaguely retro vibe.

### The rooms

Of the 65 rooms and suites spread over eight floors, roughly two-thirds have river views; don't even consider a room without. Ferragamo interior design-darling Michele Bonan has gone for an fresh yet elegant mod-nautilus look for the rooms; blue and white striped carpeting, cream headboards, curtains, and bedspreads trimmed in snappy navy, jazzy blue, and white checked chair coverings. The best rooms are the ones with terraces on the river from where you can watch the early-morning scudders gliding up and down the Arno. In-room goodies include Alessi kettles and Nespresso machines, mini iPads, and Bose sound systems. Sleek marble bathrooms come with generous amounts of Tuscan Soul, the in-house toiletries.

### Food and drink

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### LOCATION MAP



### CONTACT

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<https://www.lungarnocollection.com/it/hotel-lungarno/>

Bribe the maître for a coveted terrace table at sophisticated BSJ (the hotel's gourmet restaurant) for in-your-face views of the Ponte Vecchio, a fabulously romantic backdrop for Claudio Mengoni's assured cooking which features the sunny flavours of southern Italy thanks to a long stint working in Capri. There is an outstanding wine list, and sommelier Salvatore Biscotti can be trusted to give excellent advice.

Riverside Picteau Bistrot is more relaxed and serves an all-day menu of salads, club sandwiches, burgers plus the odd pasta dish. The retro American bar – with its picture windows right on the river – is a wonderful spot for a glass of fizz or a vintage Negroni. Breakfast comes with more river views.

#### The spa

There is no spa but in-room massages and treatments are available and you can have a yoga mat and weights delivered to your room.

#### The neighbourhood

The boho-chic Oltrarno neighbourhood is an eclectic mix of imposing palazzi, elegant antique shops, quirky boutiques and a plethora of cafes, bars, and restaurants. Cobble lanes and tiny pizzerias are home to artisan workshops and artists' studios, and there is a daily produce market in the lovely Piazza Santo Spirito.

#### The service

As you would expect from the Ferragamo brand, highly professional, discreet, perfectly-pitched with some members of staff in service for years. Exclusive guest activities include the 'Leica Experience', a walking tour of Florence in the company of a pro photographer and his Leica cameras, and hot air balloon trips over the city.

#### For families

Ferragamo hotels always make an effort to keep children entertained, and the Lungarno is no exception; tailor-made activities include child-friendly museum visits and shopping trips and even visits to the football ground. There are interconnecting rooms and family suites and the Picteau Lounge has a children's menu.

#### Accessibility

There are several adapted rooms and the hotel is fully accessible.

#### Anything left to mention?

The hotel houses a magnificent collection of 20<sup>th</sup>-century prints and drawings which hang throughout the bedrooms and public spaces; spot the Picasso and the Cocteau in the Picteau Lounge Bar.

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