

PAPER CITY

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HOTEL AS AN ART FORM

THE FERRAGAMO FAMILY PUTS THEIR FINE TOUCH ON FLORENCE'S HOTEL LUNGARNO.

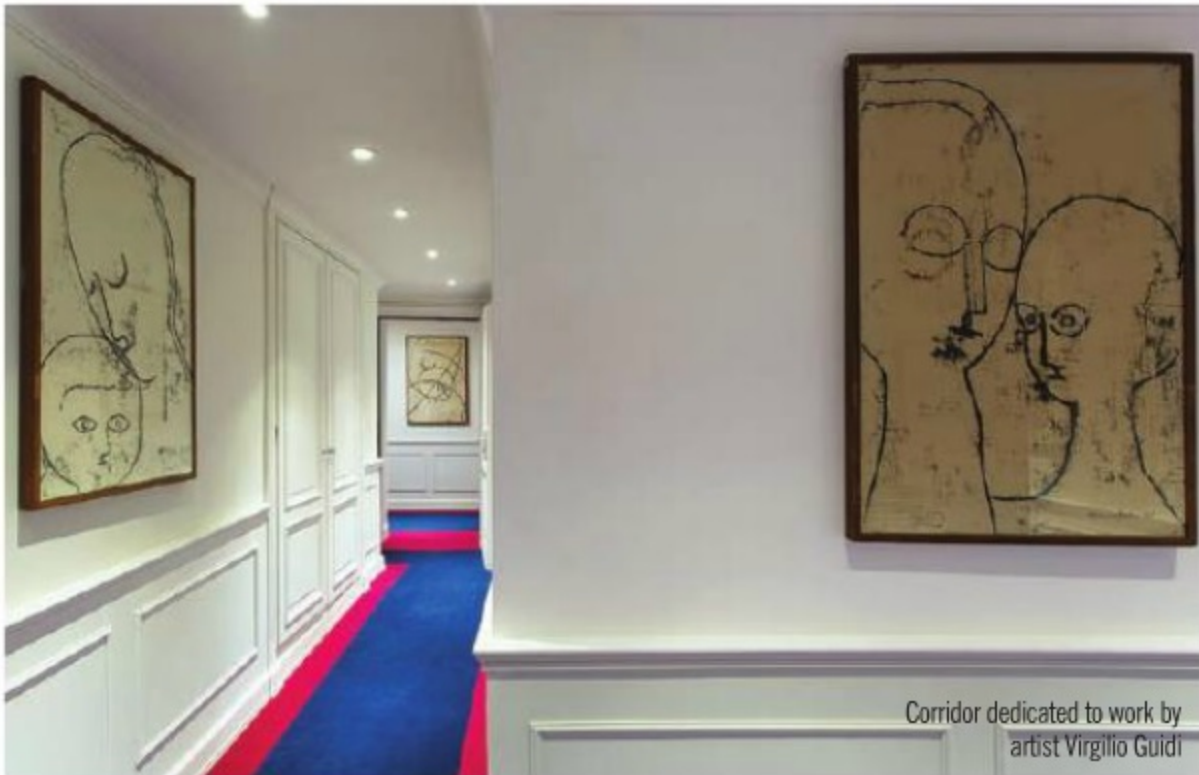
BY CHRISTINA GEYER



View of the Ponte Vecchio from Hotel Lungarno



Borgo San Jacopo



Corridor dedicated to work by artist Virgilio Guidi



Designer Suite

When you realize that the Ferragamo family — the Florentine fine-footwear and fashion dynasty — is behind Florence's Hotel Lungarno, every well-designed detail makes perfect sense.

Last year, the hotel, which is the only Florentine hotel situated on the bank of the Arno River, rang in its 50th anniversary with a significantly expanded art program and renovation led by Italian architect and interior designer Michele Bönan (who designed interiors for J.K. Place Capri, the Heidelberg Suites, and his own Jacdgut Wachtellhof ski-lodge/boutique hotel in the Austrian Alps). The hotel houses one of the largest collections of privately owned 20th-century art, with more than 450 contemporary works by Pablo Picasso, Jean Cocteau, and Antonio Bueno, among others, so it's no surprise that the six-month renovation included a smart reorganization of the art. Now each artist's oeuvre is displayed together, with the hotel's guestrooms and suites, hallways, restaurants, and lobby acting as intimate gallery spaces. Check the iPad in your room, as an Art Itinerary is loaded, providing in-depth information about the works on view throughout the hotel. Don't be surprised if you're sleeping beneath a rare work by Jules Cheret or Pericle Fazzini.

Hotel Lungarno's other shining moments involve details most often appreciated by wealthy vagabonds who have the time and means to explore the world's toniest hotels. New arrivals are seated in a nautical lounge adjacent to the river, which feels akin to a yacht, while check-in is processed. Sip an espresso while your concierge, who's perfectly turned out, head-to-toe, in Ferragamo, checks you

in and offers a full rundown of the hotel, its art collection, restaurants, surrounding neighborhood, and sites of interest. The bed linens are exquisite, by Lavanderia Bini, and beautiful Italian cashmere throws top every bed, chair, and sofa in the guestrooms. Grooming amenities far exceed the typical, with Ferragamo face cream, eye cream, lip balm, and a straightening iron for ladies, plus a full shaving set for gents. Even the simplest rooms are furnished with a walk-in closet, and most rooms face the river, offering unparalleled views of the old city.

Not to be missed is the Michelin-starred Borgo San Jacopo restaurant, led by executive chef Peter Brunel. Open strictly for dinner, Brunel's Italian cuisine is not your standard truffle pasta and pizza margherita. Opt for the Potatoes & Potatoes tasting menu, which won Brunel his first Michelin star in 2016. It offers five inventive spins on the potato, from fingerling potatoes in clay and lovage, served with beetroot mayonnaise, to a flourless yellow-potato spaghetti in carbonara sauce and a brilliant "two colors of the potato" dish of white-potato velouté with caviar and paprika. This is, after all, Italy. *Rooms from \$320. Hotel Lungarno, Borgo San Jacopo, 14, 50125 Florence, lungarnocollection.com.*