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48 Hours in Rome: How the Rich and Famous Experience the Eternal City



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I write about *Ultimate Luxury Experiences: People, Places and Things*. [FULL BIO](#) 
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The terrace of the Royal Suite at the Palazzo Donna Hotel.

The afternoon sun gently illuminated the changing colors of the Tuscan valley as we sped through historical villages, rambling rivers and plump vineyards. Trains remain one of the easiest ways to travel within Italy and we were fortunate to experience luxurious and fast Frecciarossa 1000 train from our departure in Milan.



Executive Class service aboard the Frecciarossa 1000 train (photo credit: Trenitalia)

The comfort of the Executive class cabin is really the way to go with only 10 passengers seated on soft champagne colored leather seats. The Trenitalia staff provided three different menus and our personal waiter attended to our every need for the easy trip to Rome's Termini station.

I purchased an ItaliaPass through ItaliaRail, which gave me access to the new VIP Lounge at Roma Termini as well as a private Fast Track VIP Welcome service including personal assistant and dedicated porter as you walk off the train. The lounge is secluded away from the hustle of this major station and is a blissful retreat offering wines and food as you await your train departure. The lounge even has underground access for your car pickup, away from the crowds of arriving passengers. Perfect opportunity to hide from the paparazzi.



L'Autre Dame restaurant in the Palazzo Donna Hotel (photo by Jim Dobson)

Rome has always been one of my favorite cities in the world, but I constantly find myself limited to only a few days enroute to another destination. I have found that the best way to truly experience Rome is to actually become Rome. I have seen the monuments, the tourist attractions, walked the Colosseum, marveled at the Pantheon, and had emotional journeys through the Vatican. I have always found that sitting at a cafe or wandering the side streets away from the throngs of tourists with their flag toting leaders and experiencing real life in Rome is the best way to soak it all in. The woman hanging freshly washed clothing outside her window ledge, the groups of Italian boys flirting with American girls, the overly animated conversations and the very public display of love and romance are all what make up this amazing city. It is more than just the remarkable history and the stunning architecture, it is the people who have truly mastered the art of living. Family, food, wine and great conversation.



Falling in Love With Rome Every Time I Visit (Photo by Jim Dobson)

I was met at the train stations VIP lounge by my driver, sent from my base in the city, the spectacular Palazzo Dama Hotel. The 19th century Palazzo is a remarkable addition to this eternal city. Constructed near the banks of the Tiber River and steps from Piazza del Popolo, the Palazzo, owned by the Malaspina family was recently turned into a five-star luxury 30 room and suite hotel. With an outdoor pool surrounded by lemon trees and intimate lounge as well as an exclusive subterranean nightclub, this property has quickly become one of the most exclusive addresses in the city.



Antonio Girardi at the Palazzo Dama Hotel

I met with the hotel's handsome and charming architect Antonio Girardi over drinks, he is also known for the ultra-popular D.O.M Hotel in Rome. Beyond the remarkable interior design are Girardi's personal signatures including Venini glass fixtures, mid-century style furniture and an eccentric contemporary art collection.



Palazzo Dama Bar

We sat in the Palazzo's stunning L'Autre Dame restaurant, which serves a healthy menu in a decadent white room surrounded by tall palms. Crystal chandeliers imported from the Plaza Hotel in New York added to the elegance. Feeling more like a private residence than a hotel, the Palazzo's marble floors, Ralph Lauren curtains and art Nouveau doors welcome you while intoxicating you with Girardi's love for using mirrors to create space.



Royal Suite at the Palazzo Dama Hotel

I stayed in the beautiful and private Royal Suite featuring a large Terrace that overlooks the outdoor Garden and pool. The suite features high-ceilings, exquisite vintage design art sourced from collections throughout the world, glossy coffee table books and a collection of photographs by various renowned artists.

The surprise attraction in the Palazzo is the very exclusive underground Raspoutine nightclub. Girardi created a design from the 20's with theatrical details and velvet upholstery. With a special wink to Russian nobility, the rich red lampshades accent the Soviet architectural domes. The resident DJ, Lorenzo Rumi attracts the most famous and stylish faces in the city every weekend.

Continuing his quest for health conscious food, Girardi and his wife Morgan Witkin recently opened Biolosophy; the first luxury Organic Eatery in Rome. A two-minute walk from Piazza Navona, Biolosophy offers the highest quality organic cuisine while you recline on the cozy white velvet couches.