



Whenever I think of Rome, it's never the winding streets, crowded museum tours or touristic trattorias that really stay with me. Instead it's that strange sense of then and now, past and future, that is evident as I turn the corner of any modern building to find myself opposite marble columns from ancient Rome, part of an original aqueduct, or a Renaissance palazzo that's still in use today. There's a sense of living history that's hard to find in other modern cities, where the need to be taller, faster, sleeker and richer often drives out the half-ruined remnants of past innovations.

There are drawbacks too, of course. While Rome is the capital of Italy, its infrastructure leaves much to be desired, and the impossible saturation of tourists from all parts of the world means it can be difficult to retain your sense of zen amid the city's calamitous energy (find yourself near the Trevi Fountain any time after dawn and you'll know exactly what I mean). Unless, of course, you quite literally head above it all.

Set within a 15-acre private park atop Monte Mario, the highest hill in Rome, is the five-star Rome Cavalieri, a Waldorf-Astoria Resort, a corner of tranquility that embodies the very best of Italy's Eternal City. A feast for all the senses, Rome Cavalieri has astonishing views across the Vatican and Rome, boasts the city's only three-star Michelin restaurant in La Pergola by Chef Heinz Beck, and has also quietly become home to the largest private art collection in Europe.

Entering the lobby reveals an antique centerpiece that will immediately delight art connoisseurs – an antique commode owned by Augustus III of Poland and dating back to 1745. While checking in, another treat: a unique series of Giuseppe Zais landscape paintings look down on you from above the concierge desk, which itself is accented by antique marble.

The lobby alone brings together a mixed collection of Old Master paintings, rare tapestries, bronze sculptures, and furniture once owned by Louis XV of France that somehow work seamlessly together – and are all available to admire up close and personal. In fact, the only piece of art that hangs behind protective glass is the most precious piece in the 1,000-strong collection, a 1725 triptych (three panel painting) by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo that was acquired by the hotel's curators on the condition that it be displayed for the Italian public. The trio of perfectly preserved »



From top left, clockwise: La Pergola by Heinz Beck; Grand Spa Club's indoor pool; The King of Poland's Commode; the Andol Warhol Suite

canvases depicts mythological scenes including Odysseus discovering Achilles, the flaying of Marsyas and Hercules' defeat of Antaeus.

Opposite Tiepolos masterwork hangs a tapestry from the famously complex 'L'Histoire de l'Empereur de Chine' series, as well as one of its equally impressive replicas – if more proof was needed as to the quality of these works, the remaining replicas hang in the Metropolitan Museum in New York, J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, Louvre in Paris, Munich's Alte Residenz, and in San Francisco's M. H. de Young Museum.

But unlike those prestigious museums, here guests can get close to these tapestries and explore other artworks by touch, such as Antonio Tantarini's 1861 marble sculpture 'The Kiss', which is depicted with such accuracy that the brocade of Faust's jacket somehow looks like velvet to the eye. Other works on display include pieces by Giuseppe Bazzani, Joseph Heintz, as well as a more contemporary – but no less impressive – collection by Andy Warhol that hangs in the luxurious Penthouse Suite.

That artistic theme is featured throughout the rooms as well as in the Imperial Club, a complimentary lounge for guests of imperial and penthouse rooms, where a private collection of ballet maestro

Nureyev's costumes is displayed amid chandeliers and sculptures.

But, however impressive, this hotel is not just about the visual arts. The resort serves up fresh contemporary dining at its L'Uliveto restaurant, including a pan-European Sunday brunch where we enjoy fresh caprese salad, a choice of meats and pastas, and pastries including a seven-tiered take on the Waldorf Astoria's signature red velvet cake. On the rooftop terrace, Heinz Beck's La Pergola offers a panoramic view of the Eternal City as it serves up a 10-course gourmet experience for those savvy enough to book well in advance. Beck's dishes – favoured by former US First Lady Michelle Obama – feature such textural treats as foie gras prepared in three ways, red mullet with celery and caper sauce, and "stressed oyster" served with apple and pea foam.

La Pergola has retained its three-star rating for 13 years, as well as gaining numerous awards for its wine selection, curated by gifted sommelier Marco Reitano. Rarities on his wine lists (one is Italian while the other is made up of international bottles) include a 1922 Château Lafite Rothschild and 1945 Pétrus, and 34 wines from the revolutionary Italian wine producer Gaja Barbaresco. The dinner is further enhanced by a 45-label water menu,

besides myriad selections of Italian bread, international salts, and teas.

Another thoroughly decadent experience with a more contemporary twist is the Cavalieri Grand Spa Club, where fitness, nutrition and beauty combine in a members' club atmosphere. Try the soothing full body caviar massage after a busy day of exploring, or reenergise with an Aromatherapy Associates facial.

Adding to the decadent hotel's endless list of advantages is its commitment to total privacy – as such it's often the chosen venue for A-listers such as Catherine Zeta Jones and George Clooney.

For those who can bear to leave the hotel, the knowledgeable concierge team offers a range of private experiences and tours to help you continue your artistic education of Roman history, whether that's a bespoke tour of some of the city's ancient landmarks or traditional artisanal experiences such as a sandal-making masterclass.

Whether your Roman holiday involves Vespa tours or supercar trips, what Rome Cavalieri really offers is a glimpse at the soul of the city, where modern amenities and ancient masterpieces complement each other beautifully. ①

romecavalieri.com



Views of Rome from the penthouse suites