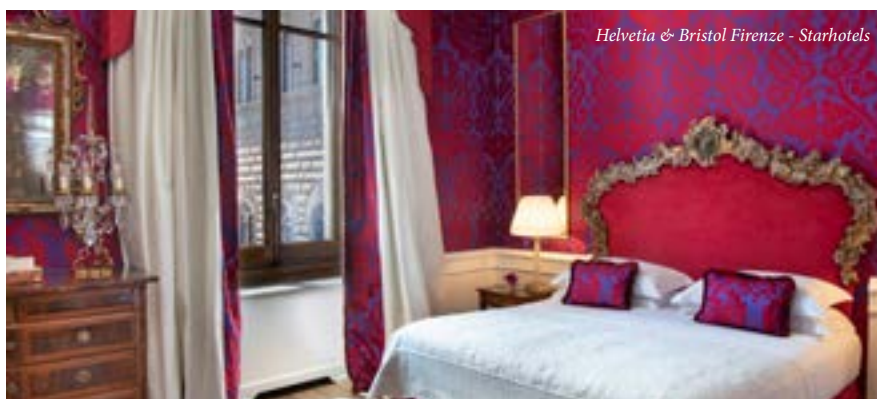


The CEO of Starhotels, **Elisabetta Fabri**, was recently nominated president of **AICA** (Associazione Italiana Confindustria Alberghi), the federation for the hotel industry.

We discuss her career in hospitality and the state of tourism in Florence, a city where the tourism sector generates an income of 5 billion euros, equal to 12% of the city's GDP, employing over 30 thousand people across related industries. Starhotels is a Promoter Member of Fondazione Destination Florence.



Starhotels was founded in Florence, the only Italian hotel company with an international presence. What were the advantages and challenges in founding a chain of this level in the Tuscan capital?

The idea of creating Starhotels in Florence was thanks to the vision of my father, **Ferruccio Fabri**, who perceived the potential of the hotel sector in a city that's so rich in history and art. The enhancement of beauty, which is part of Italian culture, and even more so in the case of Florence, characterizes Starhotels: the group has grown thanks to important investments in renovations and strategic acquisitions that have enriched it in terms of quality and variety, reaching a portfolio of **30 hotels and luxury residences in the most beautiful destinations in Italy, Europe and the United States.**

Florence, your hometown, has played a key role in your professional career. How has the Florentine culture, history and environment influenced your approach to hospitality?

I started my journey when I was only 17 years old, right here, in Florence, where I grew up breathing the beauty and culture that characterizes our city. As a Florentine, I appreciate things done in a workmanlike manner, a principle that I always follow even in hotels, with the attention of a Renaissance artisan workshop that has profoundly influenced one of my dearest initiatives: **La Grande Bellezza - The Dream Factory.** This contemporary patronage project,

promoted and conceived by Starhotels with the support of two important institutions in the protection of Italian craftsmanship of excellence, the OMA Association (Observatory of the Métiers d'Art) of Florence and the Cologni Foundation of the Métiers d'Art, as well as Gruppo Editoriale, aims to support the sector by employing artisans in the renovations of our hotels. For example, for the renovation of the recently reopened Hotel d'Inghilterra, we involved renowned artisan brands such as Dedar, Rubelli and Il Bronzetto, a prestigious workshop in the Florentine Oltrarno, and have also organized immersive experiences in the artisan workshops of various Italian cities.

Made in Italy is a brand recognized worldwide for its excellence and Starhotels contributes to strengthening and promoting this value in the hotel sector in New York, Paris, London. What are the strategies that the group intends to adapt to future trends and global challenges, while always maintaining the link with Italian hospitality and style?

Our identity is one hundred percent Italian, and our payoff "L'Italia nel cuore" (Italy in the heart) is the great responsibility that shapes our corporate identity and guides our work: the promise to be ambassadors of **Made in Italy** and to represent Italy in the best possible way, especially in our foreign structures. We want our hotels to reflect the love for our country and its



riches, inspired by the recognized values of Italianness: attention to beauty, attention to detail, friendliness and courtesy, as well as quality food and wine. It was during the first national lockdown that I decided to make "Made in Italy" no longer a choice but "the choice". Starhotels is committed to purchasing almost exclusively products manufactured in Italy, with preference for artisan companies. In 2023, we invested about 112 million a year in Made in Italy products and services for our hotels – about 90% of total spending.

In a sector traditionally dominated by men, how do you assess the evolution of the role of women in the hotel industry?

The environment in which I grew up has shaped my belief: a place where talent has always come first, without gender stereotypes, and where the female contribution to hospitality has been recognized as fundamental. I am very proud of the project we have created at Starhotels "A future as a STAR for female managers" launched in 2021, which has already brought several results in terms of female employment: in the two-year period 2022-2023, 30 promotions and hires were made on managerial roles. This has meant that today **almost 60% of the management is made up of women.**

You were recently appointed president of the Italian Association of Confindustria Alberghi: what are your main objectives, and what challenges await you in facing this role?

The presidency of Confindustria Alberghi represents an immense privilege and an extraordinary responsibility. One of my goals is to work in synergy with all the members of the association to face the challenges that await us, hoping for a political and economic context that is favourable to us. Tourism is the new manufacturing of Italy, it must be recognized and supported, starting from the development of human resources to attract young workers and give growth opportunities to those employed in hotels. In this ever-changing market, I feel that it is my task to focus on **key issues such as the evolution of tourism profiles, promotion of the off-season, sustainable management of tourism flows and the adoption of ESG models.** Added to this is the impact of new technologies, with particular attention to the growing role of artificial intelligence in redefining the dynamics and strategies of the sector.