

Introducing the Palio Experience at Grand Hotel Continental Siena

For travellers seeking an authentic immersion into the city's cultural soul, Grand Hotel Continental Siena – Starhotels Collezione offers a front-row seat to one of Italy's most extraordinary and emotionally charged events



Siena (ITALY), June 23rd, 2026 - As Siena prepares for its most iconic and emotional tradition, **Grand Hotel Continental Siena - Starhotels Collezione invites guests to experience the city's extraordinary Palio** atmosphere from the heart of the historic centre.

Held twice a year in the magnificent Piazza del Campo, the Palio di Siena will take place on **2 July 2026** and **16 August 2026**. More than a horse race, the Palio is a centuries-old celebration of identity, heritage and community, transforming the city into a vibrant stage of rituals, pageantry and passionate Contrada life.

Located within the historic Contrada del Drago, Grand Hotel Continental offers a privileged gateway into this unique cultural experience. While participation in the Palio rotates among Siena's 17 Contrade and some are selected by lottery, Contrada del Drago has been drawn to participate in the Palio di Provenzano on 2 July 2026, making this year's July race particularly significant for the district in which the hotel is located. The hotel is also surrounded by several neighbouring Contrade, including *Lupa, Bruco, Civetta, Oca* and *Istrice*, allowing visitors to experience the rich diversity of traditions that animate the city during the Palio period.

The connection with its home Contrada is also reflected inside the hotel: in the **Panoramic Suite**, the bathroom features red and green marble with yellow veining, echoing the colours of Drago in a discreet tribute to the hotel's Sienese roots.

A city transformed

The Palio begins long before race day. In the week leading up to each edition, Siena gradually changes rhythm, as rituals, rehearsals and communal gatherings draw the city into a shared state of expectation. The official programme begins on 29 June and 13 August, when the horses are assigned to the competing Contrade and the first trial races take place.

Thanks to its exceptional location just steps from Piazza del Campo, **Grand Hotel Continental Siena - Starhotels Collezione allows guests to fully immerse themselves** in the rhythm of the festivities while enjoying the comfort and flexibility of returning to the hotel at any moment to rest and refresh.

Some of the most evocative moments take place directly outside the hotel. On the day of the Palio, the **Contrade's historic processions**, with flag-bearers and drummers, pass in front of the entrance on their way to nearby Piazza Salimbeni, where they perform the **traditional flag-waving tribute** to Monte dei Paschi di Siena, whose historic headquarters overlook the square.

From the sound of drums approaching through the streets to the colours of the Contrade moving past the hotel entrance, guests can witness the city's traditions as they unfold around them, before continuing towards Piazza del Campo for the Historical Parade and the race itself.

Few experiences capture the spirit of Siena quite like the moments immediately preceding the Palio. During the Historical Parade and the race, an unusual stillness descends upon the hotel. Guests have gathered in the city's streets and squares, while staff members follow events with eager anticipation.

The Palio is so deeply woven into Sienese life that it also touches the rhythm of the hotel itself. When staff schedules are planned, particular attention is paid to employees belonging to Contrade taking part in the race. Should their Contrada win, celebrations are expected to continue well into the following day. It is one of the many ways in which the Palio remains deeply interwoven with everyday life in Siena.

The Palio Breakfast

To deepen guests' connection with local traditions, **Grand Hotel Continental introduces its special Palio Breakfast** on the mornings of 1 and 2 July and 15 and 16 August.

Alongside the regular breakfast offering, guests will be able to sample dishes traditionally enjoyed by Contrada members on Palio mornings, including trippa, pappa al pomodoro, sliced prosciutto, pecorino cheese, bread with butter and anchovies, accompanied by a glass of red wine.

Art and Tradition

Complementing the Palio season, **from 27 June to 23 August 2026, Grand Hotel Continental will host an exhibition by artist Lara Androvandi, creator of the 2024 Masgalano, the prestigious award presented to the Contrada** whose historical appearance and procession display the highest standards of elegance and discipline.

Created using the ancient Ebru marbling technique, Androvandi's works focus on the horse, the central symbol of the Palio, offering guests a contemporary artistic interpretation of one of Siena's most enduring traditions.



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Press Office

Email: pressoffice@starhotels.it

Tel: +39 055 3692251

starhotels.com

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