

HOTEL

An Encore for Florence's Historic Opera Theater—as a Grand Hotel

For Teatro Apartments, Star Hotels channeled Art Deco splendor in tandem with a masterful restoration of the 164-year-old landmark.

BY VIVIEN LEE
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All images courtesy of Teatro Luxury Apartments

With the splendor of its Renaissance roots on full display, Florence shines as one of Italy's crown jewels. Whether strolling through ancient silk factories and the *Gucci Garden*, or wandering from the *Santa Maria del Fiore* to the *KAWS* installation at *Palazzo Strozzi*, the Tuscan city is layered through time.

On Via Magenta, a short walk from Florence's scenic riverfront promenade, just along the Arno, is *Teatro Luxury Apartments*, a new apartment-style hotel operated by the private Italian hospitality group *Starhotels*. Thoughtfully redeveloped on the grounds of the former opera theater known as *Teatro Comunale* (officially inaugurated in 1862 as the *Politeama Fiorentino*), the site had been a fixture of the city's social and cultural scene throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, hosting legends such as *Maria Callas* and *Franco Zeffirelli*. In 2014, the theatre was relocated to another venue, the *Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino*.

After an ambitious urban regeneration project over the past decade, the complex now stands restored. Since its reopening this fall, the property services 156 residential-style units spanning three buildings named for the Italian composers *Giuseppe Verdi*, *Gioacchino Rossini*, and *Giacomo Puccini*. Connecting them is the *Piazza Maria Callas*, an open courtyard designed as a public space for both residents and tourists. In typical Florentine fashion, its architectural impression strikes a perfect balance of old and new.



"The original façade was preserved in honor of the theatre's legacy, as it was one of Florence's most significant cultural landmarks," says *Barbara Bini*, the designer at *Starhotels* who worked on the meticulous restoration alongside *Vittorio Grassi Architects*. The moment you step onto the fine marble floors of the lobby, you feel as if you're entering a historic treasure, one that's far from antiquated.

"We wanted to reinterpret its elegance through a contemporary and sophisticated design language, deeply rooted in the Florentine context," adds *Bini*. With an emphasis on classic Italian mastery, the in-house design team had brought its philosophy to life under the supervision and artistic direction of *Elisabetta Fabri*, *Starhotels*'s President and CEO. Much of the property's furnishings are custom-designed by Italian brands: *Vasari* for consoles, *Rubelli* for cushions, *Meridiani* for chairs and sofas.



Drawing inspiration from Italy's great opera houses, its spatially opulent interiors combine Art Deco grandeur with rich, tactile craftsmanship. Think velvet draperies, gleaming brass accents and sweeping layouts. Fully equipped kitchens spill out into the common areas, designed with sleek *calacatta vagli* porcelain stoneware and *Saint Laurent* black surfaces. Light oak parquet floors and soft pastel palettes define the intimate studio flats, while *Canaletto* walnut and shades of peacock blue accent the more expansive dwellings, including four-bedroom apartments fit to comfortably host a dinner party for ten. Those even come complete with private Turkish steam rooms for some post-hosting R&R.

Generous floor-to-ceiling windows flood each room with natural light, framing an exclusive view over the heart of Florence. Guests can leisurely sip on morning macchiatos from their balconies, overlooking the distinct terracotta rooftops that color the city, with *Filippo Brunelleschi's* *Dome* beaming in sight. And for all of the city's splendor, it would be a shame to miss the onsite and well-appointed private pool and spa, along with the Michelin fare at *J Restaurant* and the adjoining cafe, *Ditta Artigianale*.

Between the residential accommodations and ample amenities of the Teatro Apartments—including a convenient location near the lush shopping streets of *Via Roma*, authentic food markets like the *Mercato di Sant'Ambrogio*, and the world's oldest pharmacy (the renowned *Santa Maria Novella*)—visitors may find themselves tempted and well-equipped to extend their stay.



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