

## HELVETIA & BRISTOL FIRENZE – STARHOTELS COLLECTION

#### The rebirth of an icon of *hôtellerie* in the heart of Florence

An unprecedented renovation project, combined with the annexation of an adjacent heritage building to add new rooms and common areas, has elevated the Helvetia & Bristol and rewritten the history of this icon of Florentine hospitality, one of its most refined and important residences in the historic heart of the city.







### History



Part of Starhotels Collezione since 2016, Helvetia & Bristol was built in the early nineteenth century as a private residence in the heart of Florence. Transformed into a hotel by Giacomo Mosca of Switzerland in 1885, it became one of the beloved hotels of the international elite on their *Grand Tour*, and was particularly popular with





British travellers for its exquisite furniture, which reflected the atmosphere of the elegant era.

Over the subsequent years, the Helvetia & Bristol has been a gathering place for intellectuals, artists, musicians and scientists, many of whom stayed in the hotel for long periods. Gabriele D'Annunzio, Eugenio Montale, Luigi Pirandello, Eleonora Duse, Giorgio De Chirico, Enrico Fermi, Bertrand Russell and Igor Stravinsky are only a few of the illustrious guests who chose Helvetia & Bristol for their stays.

## Location

The unique location of the Helvetia & Bristol in an elegant street a stone's throw from Palazzo Strozzi, Brunelleschi's Dome and the shops on via de' Tornabuoni, makes the hotel the perfect base for exploring the city on foot or shopping in Florence's boutiques, whilst assuring a stay surrounded by the utmost tranquility. The Uffizi Gallery and Medici Chapels, as well as the Oltrarno, with Santo Spirito and the Boboli Gardens, can all be reached by a short stroll through some of Florence's oldest and most fascinating quarters.

### The rebirth of an icon: the hotel today

Helvetia & Bristol Firenze – Starhotels Collection reopened its doors after a masterful restoration and modernisation project that has preserved the building's original nineteenth-century structure and architectural detail. Precious collections of objects, furniture and furnishings dating from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century have been enhanced with contemporary accents and creations of fine Italian craftsmanship, including wallpaper with original designs, elegant wainscoting, hand-beveled oak floors, Italian silk damask fabrics, precious taffeta curtains and furnishings designed specifically for the hotel's restoration.

Further expansion work completed in 2021 has added the Bristol wing to the hotel. The Bristol wing is located in the building adjacent to the historic palazzo, in what used to be the premises of the Banco di Roma.







Today, the project expresses the authentic soul of the city and a unique 'sense of place', creating an intimate connection with the soul of Firenze, thanks to the precious contribution of the finest Florentine master craftsmen.

The 25 rooms and suites housed in the new 'Bristol' wing are the result of the work of interior designer, Anouska Hempel, who has fulfilled the desire of Starhotel's President, Elisabetta Fabri, to create an unusual, surprising and intriguing hotel - a space intended to be experienced as a second home by guests who, among other things, will be able to enjoy tranquil internal courtyards and terraces overlooking the Florentine rooftops.

All the details of the planning phases for the 'Bristol' wing were tackled with the utmost care: from the splendid herringbone oak flooring to the wainscoting, trimmings, silk and velvet curtains, chandeliers and opaline glass, lanterns and cast-iron canopy beds. These elements were commissioned from and produced by the best Italian artisans, such as Moleria Locchi, the glassmakers of Murano, Rubelli, Antico Setificio Fiorentino, Fiacchini, Anichini and Bronzetto.





The overall effect offers a reference to the warm atmospheres and the 'Great Beauty' that has always been a source of inspiration for Starhotels' all-Italian hospitality.

## The renovation of the historic hotel in detail: the Helvetia wing

**1.** Restoration of the furniture



Starhotels' President, Elisabetta Fabri, personally oversaw the designs for the décor of the Helvetia & Bristol, coordinating all the phases of the project together with a team of interior designers.

Antonio Casciani, owner of a historic workshop and a past collaborator of the Uffizi and Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, was entrusted with the restoration of almost 200 pieces of furniture. Chests of drawers, tables, consoles and nightstands were brought back to their original, extraordinary splendour.

The hotel's private antique collection includes sacred and flower paintings, hunting scenes, prints and mirrors, armchairs, antique loveseats, table lamps and Chinese





vases adorn not only the rooms but also the corridors and the lobby that are lined with typical Florentine pietra serena stonework quarried in nearby Fiesole.

## 2. Finishing touches: hardwood floors and exquisite fabrics

The Puglia-based company, **Gravina Parquet**, was tasked with making around 2,300  $m^2$  of herringbone oak flooring with a scalloped border for every room in the Helvetia & Bristol. Every single slat passed through the expert hands of three artisans as they were cut, bevelled and finished with natural oils. The result is a luminous and elegant parquet that creates a harmonious counterpoint with the hotel's furniture.

Many of the damasks, trimmings and velvets in the hotel were made by the **Antico Setificio Fiorentino**, which was originally owned by Emilio Pucci and today by the Ricci family. Known the world over for the quality of its creations, each one woven by hand since 1786 on antique looms originally belonging to noble Florentine families, Antico Setificio produces brocatelle, brocade, ermisino, damask, filoselle, lampas and *saia fiorentina*. It is a painstaking craft (for some fabrics, the daily production averages just 15cm per day) and one of priceless cultural value.

# 3. Winter Garden and Tinello

The **Winter Garden**, historically a cultured gathering place for the hotel's illustrious guests, is illuminated with dappled light that shines in through an Art Deco skylight, reflected by screens and wall mirrors. The Winter Garden wallpaper has been designed by **Ottavia Moschini** and recreates a classic late-eighteenth-century *chinoiserie* motif, bringing to life scenes of Tuscan flora and fauna – pomegranates, olive trees, tendrils and water lilies are interspersed with hoopoes, kingfishers and grey herons.

**The Tinello,** or informal dining room, which leads off from the Winter Garden, is inspired by the convivial heart of a classic Tuscan home and was designed by Riccardo Barthel. The dining room features an unmistakable mix of artisan craftsmanship, antiques and flawless technology that has long characterised the Florentine company's projects.







## The design of the new rooms and suites by Anouska Hempel: the Bristol Wing

Anouska Hempel is a leading name on the international design scene, acclaimed for being the first to launch the "boutique hotel" concept in London in 1978, and recent winner of the prestigious Luxury Lifestyle Award 2021 in the Hotel Interior Design category.

After having worked for Starhotels on the refurbishment of The Franklin in London in 2016, the Helvetia & Bristol project marks Anouska's official debut in the Italian *hôtellerie* sector.

For the creation of the new 25 rooms in the Bristol wing, the designer has given form to new and warm settings, inspired by the seductive atmospheres of the sumptuous Florentine palaces of the past, reinterpreting the style with a contemporary touch.







### **Rooms and suites**

At the Helvetia & Bristol, every detail speaks of Italy's great beauty: it is impossible not to feel inspired, not to experience a profound sense of wonder, and not to let oneself be pampered by the intriguing atmosphere of its 'seductive' rooms & suites.

It is in the **89 recently renovated rooms**, 64 of which are located in the Helvetia Wing and 25 in the hotel's Bristol Wing, that the care and craftsmanship that has restored the hotel to its full splendour has been concentrated.

### **Helvetia Wing**

Refined and elegant rooms with antique furniture and works of art characterise the rooms of the **Helvetia Wing** and create an atmosphere of discreet and warm luxury. From the herringbone oak flooring to the Murano glass chandeliers and original marble in the bathrooms – restored following the pattern of the veining and





recovering almost 100% of the rare polychrome slabs - all are made in Italy, many even in Florence.

Other elements of the renovation of the Helvetia wing included meticulously restored furniture, paintings and other furnishings, each one chosen and carefully placed in the perfect setting. The mix of new elements and restored furniture belonging to the hotel's original collection has created a unique atmosphere of discreet and captivating luxury.

Junior Suite Helvetia and Junior Suite View Helvetia



The **Junior Suite Helvetia** and the **Junior Suite View Helvetia**, which offer exclusive views of piazza Strozzi, boast an aristocratic elegance. Comprising a sitting room with sofas upholstered in exquisite Italian velvet and a bedroom with a spacious bed with monogrammed sheets, the suites' walls are decorated with wainscoting, mirrors and original or newly made and equally splendid tapestries. Nobilis, Rubelli and Tessiture di Rovezzano have made the fine Italian fabrics. The large bathtubs in





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dual-toned marble all come with toiletries by Terme di Saturnia. In one of these suites in particular, creations by the Antico Setificio Fiorentino reveal themselves to best effect. The tapestries and seating are made with Frescobaldi damask, a magnificent and historic design with a satin background, made *ad hoc* with an impressive matching of cherry red and *Specchio di Venere* purple.

### Heritage Suite Helvetia



In the **Heritage Suite Helvetia**, all the rediscovered charm of the hotel's history shines through amid extraordinary antiques, warmed by the nuances of fine fabrics, precious taffeta curtains, specially created brass and crystal lamps and mirrors with sumptuous carved frames. The antique furniture, the vases and paintings, the trimmings and the refined upholstery reflect the ever-changing light coming in through the large windows, which are themselves original and perfectly restored, framed by curtains in precious silk taffeta, and some of which overlook Piazza Strozzi. In some of these suites, the double beds are surmounted by delicate wrought iron and brass canopies created by Florentine artisans.





### **Panoramic Suite Helvetia**



On the 5th floor of the Helvetia & Bristol, the two **Panoramic Suites Helvetia** perfectly reflect the elegant atmosphere of the historic Florentine building. Both very spacious, measuring 56 square metres, they boast breathtaking views of the Duomo, Giotto's Bell Tower and Palazzo Strozzi and have two Italian marble bathrooms. The furnishings convey a timeless elegance: antique furniture, precious objects and paintings enrich the two rooms of each Panoramic Suite, without sacrificing modern comforts.

### **Bristol Wing**

The 25 elegant rooms and suites in the hotel's Bristol Wing welcome guests into a new dimension of luxury, offering spaciousness with the sophisticated and seductive style that characterises Anouska Hempel's design.





Historic Florentine artisans have contributed to embellish the furnishings with mirrors, crystals, fabrics and lamps made by hand to original designs.

The neutral colour palette perfectly matches the refinement of the furnishing details, including hand-bevelled oak parquet floors, Carrara marble, mirrored furniture and wrought-iron canopy beds made with embroidered fine cotton sheets and comfortable Dorelan mattresses. The large bathrooms, some with Turkish bath and Devon&Devon bathtub, have vast decorated mirrors, some set in splendid white Carrara marble frames, made in one piece by the skillful hands of Florentine craftsmen.

#### **Junior Suite Bristol**







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In the **Junior Suites Bristol**, the atmosphere of the historic Florentine *palazzo* meets a discreet and refined luxury. These elegant and seductive rooms comprise a spacious living room with comfortable and enveloping velvet seats, a bed – sometimes framed by an elegant canopy – and a bathroom in fine Italian marble. Large mirrors adorn the walls enriched by Alinari prints that tell the story of mid-nineteenth-century Florence. Italian-made fabrics embellish the rooms with timeless style and quality.

### **Bristol Suite**



The **Bristol Suites** are particularly spacious and furnished with unique pieces of great value such as Florentine scagliola tables made by hand to an original design by the renowned Florentine craftsman, Bianco Bianchi. These rooms boast two large spaces: a living room with a cosy sofa and a table with 2 or 4 seats, and a sleeping area with a bed, sometimes adorned with a majestic canopy.

Some of the Bristol Suites are on two floors, with the bedroom overlooking the starry Florentine sky. Precious silk shantung and Italian-mde velvet on the walls, brass lamps, antique mirrors and Alinari prints add to Anouska Hempel's warm style.





#### **Iconic Retreat Suite Bristol**



Entering the **Iconic Retreat Suite Bristol**, one finds oneself bathed in light from the large windows and the private furnished terrace where one can relax during the day. The 70 square metres of the room are harmoniously divided into two areas: on the one hand the living area, where the large fireplace is the protagonist with the comfortable sofas before it, and on the other hand, the bedroom with its spectacular marble mirrors made by Italian craftsmen.

The windows are framed by precious taffeta and velvet curtains. A comfortable bathroom with shower and large bathtub, a corner with desk and a large walk-in wardrobe complete the room.





### **Emerald Patio Suite Bristol**



The **Emerald Patio Suite Bristol** is characterised by its brightness, the emerald colour of its walls and comfortable sofas, its spaciousness  $(70 \text{ m}^2)$  and its private patio. The large windows flood the refined, seductively styled rooms with light. The living room, with comfortable velvet sofas and an imposing fireplace, overlooks the patio, a private green oasis under the open sky.

In the sleeping area, there is a majestic canopy bed made by hand from precious fabrics. Taffeta and velvet curtains at the windows and black and white Alinari prints depicting mid-nineteenth-century Florence embellish the spaces. The suite includes an intimate study overlooking the patio, a bathroom with double washbasin, Turkish bath and shower and a service bathroom with marble shell washbasin. The brass and fabric lamps, handmade to an original design and the Bianco Bianchi scagliola tables add to the refinement of the rooms.





## **Presidental Suite**



It is in the design of the **Presidential Suite** that Anouska Hempel's extraordinary touch emerges fully.

This 100-square-metre, high-ceilinged room consists of two adjoining rooms with a large, dramatic living room featuring fine velvet sofas, marble finishes and a large fireplace. The imposing canopy beds are made by Italian master craftsmen with antique mirror and wrought brass. Fabrics and curtains in precious Italian Shantung silk enhance the refinement of the rooms along with brass lamps made by hand by Bronzetto, Bianco Bianchi scagliola tables, antique mirrors and decorated brass furniture.

The Presidential Suite has three bathrooms with white Carrara marble panelling. The one in the master bedroom has a central Devon & Devon bath in front of the fireplace, Turkish bath and shower.





## Caffè & Restaurant: Cibrèo Firenze



The opening of the **Cibrèo Caffè** in May 2021 marks the start of an exclusive collaboration with an icon of Italian food scene, led by Giulio Picchi. The caffé is intended to enrich and further strengthen the local identity of Helvetia & Bristol and has become the new restaurant reference point in the historic centre of Florence. It provides a happy union between two Italian, Florentine excellences with a 40-year history of success.

The **Cibrèo Caffè**, the first part of the Cibrèo project at Helvetia & Bristol, represents a new Florentine "drawing room" that is welcoming and convivial, where





you can spend the different moments of the day accompanied by the authentic cuisine of Cibrèo.

Cibrèo, opened by Fabio Picchi in the Sant'Ambrogio district of Florence in 1979, is now known worldwide and esteemed by many internationally. It takes its name from one of the poor but tasty dishes of Florentine cuisine, which in the popular language of the past meant "a collection of good things".

Cibrèo's philosophy is to hand down over time the authentic aromas and flavours of the Florentine and Tuscan family tradition, as well as the best products that the Italian territory has to offer, using local, eco-friendly ingredients.



After working side by side for years with Fabio Picchi, Oscar Severini is now responsible for defining and implementing Cibrèo's culinary offerings at the Helvetia & Bristol. Among the iconic dishes he has decided to present at the Cibrèo Caffè at Helvetia & Bristol are: 'Patè del Cibrèo', 'Tagliolini Cacio e Burro' and '40-day aged Steak-cut chop'.





The interiors of the Cibrèo Caffè and its patio, with breathtaking views of the historic façades of Palazzo Strozzi, reflect the warmth and authenticity of Florentine hospitality in an unmistakable atmosphere.



Service starts early in the morning with a selection of typical pastries and cakes of the day, accompanied by a rich choice of hot drinks and artfully prepared cappuccinos.

The lunch menu, served from 12 noon to 3 p.m., offers a wide selection of salads, quick dishes, first and second courses, while dinner, served from 7 p.m. to 10.30 p.m., invites you to a full menu, from surprising hors-d'oeuvres to iconic Cibrèo dishes.

From 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., a slightly reduced selection is available, offering quick and tasty choices, such as the Cibrèo Club Sandwich and the Gelatina al Pomodoro, a historical dish of Cibrèo Caffè.

In the afternoon, the Afternoon Tea trolley service has a wide selection of fine teas, homemade cakes and savoury options. The evening begins with an aperitif with a range of traditional and signature cocktails available.





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The wine list pays enormous tribute to Tuscany, but affectionately embraces a wider territory, including a fine selection of the main Italian wine regions, as well as a highly select number of French bubblies.

Every label is a spokesperson for a territory and a grape variety, seeking to offer a wide variety of organoleptic profiles. The list, which is deliberately minimalist, offers a wide range of fragrances, aromas and flavours to match the dishes on the menu.

## The breakfast by Iginio Massari Alta Pasticceria

Every morning Iginio Massari Alta Pasticceria creates a memorable experience for our guests offering a rich but light and well-balanced breakfast, prepared with ingredients of the highest quality, chosen personally by the Maestro and his children, Debora and Nicola.

Our famous morning spread, set up in the timeless surroundings of Il Tinello and Bristol Winter Garden, now includes a rotating selection of pastries, cakes, cookies, sweet and savory croissants baked daily at Galleria Iginio Massari next door.







## Cibrèo Ristorante



With the new **Cibrèo Ristorante**, the iconic Cibrèo doubles its presence in the exclusive location of the historic Helvetia & Bristol Florence, inaugurating in November 2021 a new and innovative dining concept offering an intriguing menu of carefully selected and artfully prepared Italian specialties.

Among the dishes not to be missed are the "Ricotta Crespelle with White Ragù", expression of the generosity of the Cibrèo's cuisine; the "Filet of Fassona Beef", ambassador of the quality and excellence of Italian ingredients, and "L'Abetone", a dessert whose elegant asymmetry plays provocatively with the traditional Mont Blanc and becomes an emblem of the Florentine creativity embodied by Cibrèo.

A gastronomic journey articulated in two macro sections that are updated in response to the natural rhythm of the seasons: "L'Italia in un Boccone", dishes from the Italian peninsula to be enjoyed in company, and "L'Italia da Gustare", à la carte proposals





including vegetarian dishes from the land and sea, designed to pay tribute to the finest delights of our territory.

What makes Cibrèo's opening even more special is the new Cocktail Bar, which dominates the main dining room of the restaurant with its yellow Siena marble bar. A new menu of sophisticated signature cocktails joins the classic selection of international cocktails and a wide range of top-shelf spirits and liqueurs.



Located in the new 'Bristol wing' of the hotel, formerly the spaces of the prestigious Banca di Roma, the concept for the refined decor of the new Cibrèo Ristorante was entrusted to Massimo Adario, award-winning Italian architect of international renown whose Roman studio has been celebrated for numerous architectural and design projects in the pages illustrious publications like *AD*, *Elle Decor*, *Elle Decoration*, and *Real Living*. The spacious veranda on Via del Campidoglio offers the possibility of enjoying an intimate outdoor space in the heart of the city.

With a reserved entrance on Via Dei Vecchietti 5, the restaurant is also connected internally to the hotel. It is open for lunch from 12.30 to 3.00, and guests can drop in





for an apertivo from 6.00 onward. Dinner hours are from 7.00 to 10.30, with afterdinner service till 1.00 am. Closed Sunday and Monday.

# LA SPA ~ HELVETIA & BRISTOL



In April 2022 the renovation of the historic hotel was completed with the opening of LA SPA  $\sim$  Helvetia & Bristol, the new wellness retreat inspired by the ancient Roman Baths that stood on this very spot during the Imperial era.

### The philosophy of LA SPA, a union of history and contemporary

LA SPA is a welcoming and gracious space, inspired by the principle of *mens sana in corpore sano* and by the desire to recreate the experience of a Roman bath in a contemporary setting.





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#### Spaces



The spaces are suffused with a dreamlike atmosphere dominated by soft colors. Travertine marble covers all the surfaces, accentuated by a sophisticated play of light and shadow. The decor is clean and pure, without compromising comfort and conviviality.





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LA SPA features an articulated wet area that opens onto the Calidarium (hammam) and continues with the Aquamotus (Vichy shower), the emotional showers, the Sudatorium (Finnish sauna), the Frigidarium and the Tepidarium (salt room), which rests on a glass floor through which you can admire foundations from the medieval era.

The use of the Roman names reflects the correspondence of the present-day rooms to those of the original complex.

LA SPA replicates the ancient concept of the Roman baths based on the alternation of hot and cold. Then there is the Lacus Quietis, the area dedicated to the pools – plural because LA SPA is the only facility in the center of Florence that can boast two.

From the wet area, the circuit leads on one side to the gym, on the other to the upper floor with the rooms for individual treatments, including the Wellness Suite, equipped with a private Turkish bath, ideal for couples.

#### Felice Limosani: a video installation for a complete multisensory experience

Built in the space that once served as the vault of the Banco di Roma, the pools offer different depths and water features. Here the artist Felice Limosani has created a mesmerizing video installation to be enjoyed while immersed in the warmth of water: a sequence of digital landscapes and sinuous animations that are reflected on the mirrors and walls, generating a multisensory experience for the body and mind.







### Wellness experience and rituals of LA SPA

"The right treatment for every type of skin" is the mantra that underlies the spa menu and the selection of Cinq Mondes, exclusive brand of cosmetic products. Drawing inspiration from the "Five Worlds" of India, China, Japan, Indonesia, and Morocco, LA SPA's treatments include the best beauty rituals from these exotic lands known for their centuries-old skincare and wellness traditions.

It is also possible to enjoy the LA SPA experience by reserving the entire area for private events.

LA SPA is open to overnight guests of the Helvetia, while a range of membership options allow others to enjoy the facilities for the day or through exclusive long-term plans.





#### **ROOF TOP TERRACE**

Located in the Bristol Wing, a splendid rooftop terrace is available to guests, overlooking the dome of the Duomo with a breathtaking view of the city's historic centre. Here, you can relax after a day discovering the wonders of Florence, organise special events and exclusive private dinners.

Helvetia & Bristol Firenze – Starhotels Collection is a member of **The Leading Hotels** of the World and Altagamma.

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#### Starhotels

Starhotels, a private, Italian hotel company operating in the upscale and upper scale & luxury sectors, is a market leader in the hospitality industry. The Group vaunts 30 hotels located in the heart of the top Italian destinations, London, Paris and New York, for more than 4,200 rooms.

Starhotels aims to be synonymous with the excellence of Italian hospitality, offering an impeccable service that excels at anticipating the guests' wishes and exceeding their expectations.

The prestigious *Starhotels Collezione* – icons of style in the most beautiful destinations in the world – stand out for their strategic positions, sophisticated design and bespoke services. Starhotels Collezione properties are located in Florence, London, Milan, New York, Paris, Rome, Saturnia, Siena, Trieste, Venice and Vicenza. In January 2020, Terme di Saturnia Natural SPA & Golf Resort became part of Starhotels Collezione, joining the twelve fascinating historical residences already present.

The *Starhotels Premium*, located in the heart of the most beautiful Italian cities, Bergamo, Bologna, Florence, Genoa, Milan, Naples, Parma, Rome, Saronno and Turin, stand out for their contemporary style, perfect combination of elegance and comfort, and are able to provide an intangible sense of well-being through an excellent and welcoming service.

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