

## Hotels & Spas

### Rome: First Luxury Art Hotel

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With a clean canvas for its splashes of contemporary art, the First Luxury Art Hotel is a change of pace in central Rome, says Katie Gatens



Splash out on a Jacuzzi terrace with a view of the city rooftops at the First Luxury Hotel Rome

**The lowdown:**

In a city renowned for its Roman, Renaissance and Classical art and architecture, a contemporary art hotel has to make pretty a bold statement to stand out. 'The aim of the hotel is to feel like you're staying in an art gallery,' says marketing manager Daniela Moita. We're skeptical at first, but after sitting in the hotel lobby for 10 minutes, paintings are being removed from the walls and packaged up to be exhibited in Brazil. Rome is famed for its sense of tradition and permanence, but this hotel is certainly not afraid of change. At just three years old, there's still a newness and freshness to it.

Stepping off the central cobbled street of Via Vantaggio and into the clean, minimalist space of the hotel, it feels like a breath of fresh air. A life-size bull sculpture greets you at the entrance and the cool white colour scheme allows the artwork to stand out. The lobby is filled with sculptures, paintings and multimedia light installations. The hotel even employs a culture manager, who curates artwork from the nearby Mucciaccia Gallery.

Art also flows through the bedrooms, which are each decorated with the work of one Italian artist, changed every six months, so no two rooms are the same. Each is decorated simply with calm, neutral hues, plush carpets, crisp white bed linen and marble bathrooms stocked with Sicilian bath products. Our room's tone was set by Simone Baldelli's bold, cartoon-like paintings. Bookcases on either side of the bed are filled with dozens art books for a bit of bedtime reading.

On the roof is a large three-tiered terrace, which sits above the city like a birds nest, where you can sip some of the hotel's unusual signature cocktails (try the peppery Tiny Rocket - citrus, rocket leaves, vodka and ginger) and watch the sun set over the Vatican.

**The good:**

Brilliant service: attentive, knowledgeable and friendly.

The Michelin-starred All'Oro Restaurant in the hotel is well worth a visit.

A great location for sightseeing. The hotel even rents out small electric cars which suit Rome's narrow, busy roads.

**The not so good:**

There's no spa or gym.

**The verdict:**

A contemporary art hotel in the heart of Rome, pared-back but still luxurious with a bar and restaurant to match.

**Book it:**

Doubles from £350 per night. First Luxury Art Hotel Roma is a member of Preferred Hotel Group ([preferredhotelgroup.com](http://preferredhotelgroup.com)). Via del Vantaggio, 14, 00186 Roma, Italy (+39 06 4561 7070; [thefirsthotel.com](http://thefirsthotel.com))

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