

BOLD

INSPIRATION FOR TRAVELLERS

THE PLEASURES OF ITALY

The road to zen in *Thailand*

FINDING BALANCE
IN BARBADOS
+
OUR BOLD GUIDE
TO WELLNESS

FORMIDABILE FIRENZE

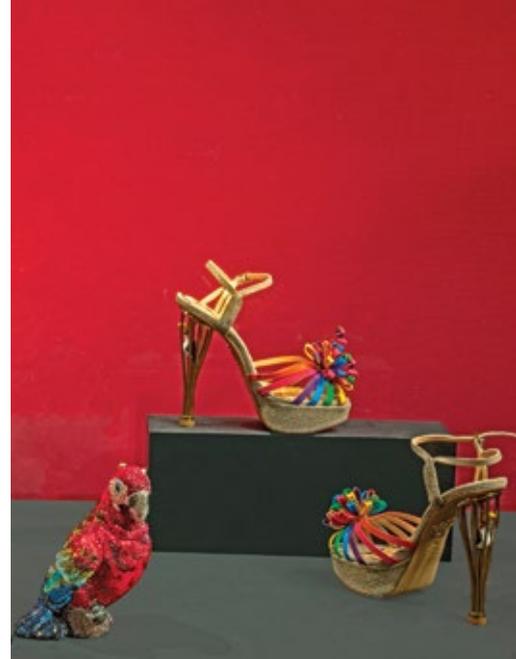




IN THE CITY OF MICHELANGELO AND MEDICI,
THE ART OF STYLE IS ALIVE AND WELL

— by Vawn Himmelsbach —

ON THESE PAGES FROM LEFT:
Florence's famous cathedral,
complete with duomo; style maven
Marquis Antonio Andrea Raffaelli, the
man behind Il Blog Del Marchese,
hangs out with a little pal.



ON THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Ready to hit the town in high fashion with a coat from an exhibition at the Museum of Costume and Fashion in Pitti Palace; fine china from Richard Ginori 1735; hot in heels at Pitti Palace; a clutch from the Pitti Palace exhibition; more shoes from the Pitti Palace archives; Florence street fashion; trying on some new looks; the cathedral's duomo; interior of the new Richard Ginori store.

Florence is known for its medieval architecture, leather shops and Michelangelo's David; it's also home to some of Italy's legendary brands, like Gucci, Salvatore Ferragamo, Emilio Pucci and Roberto Cavalli. While it's long been associated with high fashion, it hasn't always been considered a trendsetter. But that's changing, with *Vogue* suggesting Florence could be the world's fifth fashion capital after New York, Paris, London and Milan, thanks to young designers and concept stores popping up alongside top fashion houses. Here's how to experience the city like a true Florentine fashionista.

GUCCI GARDEN

Gucci opened its first restaurant and retail/exhibition space last year, located inside the 14th-century Palazzo della Mercanzia. The pièce de résistance is Gucci Osteria, a 50-seat restaurant where all the details—from green-hued décor to pink-patterned plates—reflect the Gucci aesthetic. Helmed by Michelin-starred chef Massimo Bottura, it serves up Italian classics such as Parmigiano Reggiano tortellini, alongside dishes inspired by Bottura's travels (think Peruvian tostadas and Asian pork-belly buns). Next to the restaurant, a boutique sells exclusive Gucci goods, including home décor, and the upper floors house an exhibition space dedicated to vintage and modern collections alongside memorabilia and contemporary art. gucci.com

RICHARD GINORI 1735

Florence is known for its artisanship, which often combines traditional methods with contemporary design—such as Richard Ginori 1735, a Florentine maison renowned for its beautifully crafted porcelain tableware. The name refers to its 18th century origins, when Marquis Carlo Andrea Ginori was inspired by his passion for “white gold” to open a porcelain factory. Now considered an icon of style, Richard Ginori tableware continues to be produced by artisans on the outskirts of Florence. You'll find both contemporary and vintage styles, along with cult favourites such as Oriente Italiano, at its flagship showroom in Florence. richardginori1735.com

GALLERIA DEL COSTUME

Florence is home to some of the world's top museums and galleries (like the Accademia Gallery that houses the original sculpture of David). But even if you're not a fashionista,

you don't want to miss the Museo della Moda e del Costume, which traces history through fashion, with a collection of more than 6,000 artefacts from the 18th century to present day. Located in various rooms of the Palazzina della Meridiana inside the Pitti Palace, the collection includes court and gala gowns, haute couture dresses and theatrical costumes. uffizi.it

CASA DELL'ORAFO

Tourists flock to the Ponte Vecchio, a medieval stone arch bridge that has housed shops since the 13th century, where goldsmiths and jewellers now sell their wares. But for a more authentic experience, go where the locals go: across the bridge, to Casa Dell'Orafo, a nondescript stone building tucked away in an alley where the Medici family once brought together Florence's top goldsmiths. Today, it's home to more than 20 Florentine goldsmiths and engravers, such as Nerdì Orafi, a tiny artisan workshop where jewelry is made (and restored) as it was in medieval times. It's hard to resist the Renaissance-style jewelry with a modern twist. nerdiorafifirenze.it

STYLE MAVEN: IL MARCHESE

Style maven Marquis Antonio Andrea Raffaelli, who goes by the name Il Marchese, is the man behind men's fashion blog *Il Blog Del Marchese* (The Italian Gentleman), though he prefers to be thought of as a style observer than a blogger. The Florence-based Il Marchese is known for his refined Italian style, which has caught the attention of *GQ*, *Vanity Fair* and *The New York Times*. His blog has an English version, with style advice and coverage of events such as Florence's Pitti Uomo. ilblogdelmarchese.com