

From Luxe to Budget: Places To Call Home in Rome

Hotels in Rome tend to be expensive and much less modern than comparably priced accommodations in other European or American cities. But these all have the minimum comforts, such as air conditioning and satellite television, and the more costly among them have sufficient charm to guarantee a memorable experience.

■ **Hotel Hassler** (Villa Medici, Trinita dei Monti 6, telephone 011-39-06-699340, fax 011-39-06-6789991). With a spectacular view from atop the Spanish Steps and close proximity to shopping and sightseeing, the Hassler is a top choice for travelers with a big budget. It's the last of the family-owned grand hotels in Rome, and luxury abounds in the rooftop restaurant, courtyard bar and the decoration of its 100 rooms and suites. Bill Gates prefers the penthouse with an enormous terrace overlooking central Rome; Richard Gere was a recent guest in the suite just below. Madonna takes up the better part of a floor when she comes. A standard double room is about \$400 a night.

■ **Hotel Locarno** (Via della Penna 22, telephone 011-39-06-3610841, fax 011-39-06-3215249). This art deco hideaway on a quiet street behind the Piazza del Popolo is for travelers who are looking for something unusual, historic and slightly offbeat. The vestibule, the original cast-iron elevator (used in several films) and a bar with art deco tables and fixtures all seem unchanged since the hotel was built in 1925. Rooms are small and decorated with period furniture. The rooftop terrace offers wonderful views. Priced moderately at \$165 for a double.

■ **Hotel Britannia** (Via Napoli 64, telephone 011-39-06-4883153, fax 011-39-06-4882343). The Britannia is a clean and pleasant hotel near the Termini train station. Recently renovated, the 33 rooms are colorfully decorated and bathrooms are in marble. Some have small terraces, some have whirlpool baths. Halls and bedrooms have painted murals with a de Chirico touch, just to remind you where you are. Doubles start at \$180.

■ **Hotel Nerva** (Via Tor de Conti 3, telephone 011-39-06-6781835, fax 011-39-06-69922204). On a winding street behind some of Rome's most important archaeological sites from the imperial era, the Nerva is run by two brothers who like to chat. The rooms are simple and pleasant with modern if small bathrooms, most with showers instead of tubs. The forums of the emperors Augustus and Nerva are to the left, the market of Trajan up the hill to the right, and the massive wall Augustus built to block out the Suburra, then a tenement-ridden section of Rome, is right in front of your window. Prices appear to be negotiable, with doubles beginning at \$115 in low season.

■ **Hotel Lancelot** (Via Capo d'Africa 47, telephone 011-39-06-

70450615, fax 011-39-06-70450640). This hotel—away from the crowded center, but a quick walk to the Colosseum, Domus Aurea and Imperial Fora—is a family-owned gem on a quiet street. The 61 rooms are elegantly spare with antique furniture and modern baths; seven have terraces, a few others have balconies. The eclectically decorated sitting room and bar are lively places in the evening. A plus for families: The English-speaking owners are used to children and their finicky eating habits. Doubles with breakfast are \$140.

■ **Hotel Navona** (Via dei Sediari 8, telephone 011-39-06-6864203, fax 011-39-06-6880-3802). The Hotel Navona is in the heart of old Rome, a stone's throw from Piazza Navona, the Pantheon and Campo de' Fiori and a quick walk to St. Peter's. The whole establishment has been revamped, and its 31 rooms now all have baths, terra-cotta floors and Versace decor. Three generations of the Natale family, the owners, can be seen around the friendly public spaces, as can a lot of art and architecture students. Prices for a double, which include breakfast, are \$115 with air conditioning, \$95 without.

■ **Hotel Cisterna** (Via della Cisterna 7-8-9, telephone 011-39-06-5817212, fax 011-39-06-5810091). It's a little oasis of calm in the funky Trastevere neighborhood, which is characterized by noisy pubs, lively restaurants and chattering revelers by night, and an interesting mix of grandmothers, kids and fringe types by day. The small hotel retains some of the charm of the 18th-century palazzo it's housed in; rooms are clean and pleasant with bath, satellite TV and telephone. Doubles are \$105, breakfast included.

For travelers who love to feel as if they're really getting the flavor of a neighborhood, Rome's fledgling bed-and-breakfast industry is worth a try. Many Roman B&Bs are actually in private homes, so you get a full immersion into family life, Italian mamma and all. Visitors can call the Roman tourist board at 011-39-06-488991 (hang on for the English recording) for lists and telephone numbers of the many agencies and individuals that offer lodging.

Good English is spoken at **Bed & Breakfast Reservations** (telephone 011-39-06-7689222). Ditto the **Bed & Breakfast Association of Rome** (telephone 011-39-06-6877348, fax 011-39-06-68195821, www.b-b.rom.it), an agency with a great number of both family living and apartment rentals in all neighborhoods and price ranges. The Web site offers good descriptions of available lodgings, and good English is spoken in the office.

—Sarah Delaney