



WHEN IN ROME

THE HASSLER HOTEL

Story and Photographs By Bonnie Carroll

Considered one of the most prestigious hotels in the world, this family managed property is beyond words in its elegance and style. Managed by the Wirth family for over a century, the Hassler is a symbol of International hospitality. Situated in the heart of Rome, next to the church of Trinita dei Monti at the top of the steps in Piazza di Spagna, it sits regally on one of the most beautiful hills overlooking the "Eternal City".



Guests enjoying dinner or breakfast from the Hassler Rooftop Restaurant are experiencing the first panoramic restaurant ever built in Rome, and are awed by the breathtaking view of the city from this historic venue, including a view of Vatican City. Artists and poets, including Keats, Shelley, Dickens and Ruskin, as well as an endless number of great Italian artists, have lived near the Trinita dei Monti since its inception in the 18th century. Many of these artists were awarded the coveted Prix de Roma by the French Academy, located nearby.



Executive Chef Francesco Aprea is a master at the preparation and presentation of delicate and bold Italian specialties. His delicate and delicious menu items include warm shrimp salad with cous cous and fennel, Gragnano "Pacheri" with baby octopus and Gaeta black olives, and a delightful sautéed bass fillet with eggplant and ginger sauce. Naturally, the local cheese and wine from the region offer a perfect compliment to every meal. The exquisite Hassler Sunday brunch is new to Rome. The first brunch was served at the hotel only five years ago, and is now extremely popular. The inviting rouge colored "Lounge" at the entrance to the hotel is perfect for afternoon tea or business cocktails before dinner, and in the evening guests are entertained by a talented and personable pianist.



The suites in the Hassler are all uniquely different, and elegant as well as comfortable. Every detail has been attended to, including their lovely Amorvero signature bath products and perfume, which were created by Mrs. Wirth, and named after her twelve year old twins. The hotel staff are respectful, but very efficient, and the consierge at the Hassler may be the best in the world. He gets a 10 plus from this traveler for superb

service and style. During my stay, I spoke with Roberto Wirth, who is from a long line of renowned Swiss hoteliers, and the proud owner/general manager said "We hope our guests will think of the Hassler as their home away from home".

The short walk down the Spanish Steps leads directly to the most exclusive shopping area in the city, and the cobble stone streets are dotted with cozy café's and restaurants that are filled with a history all their own. Every major designer is represented here, and windows display the latest in jewelry, clothing, and leather goods. I am certain this was a city Amelida Marcos frequented in the good old days because the shoes were endless and bella. The tour bus is the best way to quickly see this magnificent city, and unless you are fluent in Italian you will need someone to explain the history of the impressive monuments on the schedule. Walking to points of interest with the guide gives you a great feel for the energy of the people and the city. Did I mention how much I love this city?

The Wirth family, have also added a new and very prestigious venue to their properties in the International Wine Academy of Roma "Il Palazzetto del Vino" housed in an ancient Roman villa, located just next to the Spanish Steps. The renovation of this historic building into a destination for those who love gourmet food and excellent wine, includes a Wine Bar/Restaurant, tasting rooms, guest suites, and a charming terrace that sits suspended above the steps that connect to Trinita dei Monti at Piazza de Spagna, where chef Antonio Martucci carefully prepares traditional Italian food and specialties. Roberto Wirth, owner and general manager is dedicated to promoting and educating guests on the rich and delicious wines of the region.

The "Il Pallazzetto del Vino" property contains a library, furnished with important enogastronomical literature, and hosts up to 20 persons; a perfect place for family or business lunches, and private meetings or wine tasting sessions. The Wine Bar has an inviting fireplace, and guests may choose from over 400 different wine labels combined with select cheese, cold cuts and specialty food items. The Garden is also a pleasant spot for private business events, and the Terrace is ideal for a cocktail party. The Wine Courses include introductory, intermediate and advanced, master in food and wine combinations, and marketing of wine.

The master class events and seminars provide special themes and are held by experts in the field. Visitors in Rome have the opportunity to taste Italian wine and food at a half-day intensive course, wine tours or wine tasting events. The third and fourth floor of the Academy offers four double rooms which can be customized upon request. Room amenities include satellite TV, fridge bar, internet and fax connections, as well as a private bath. These beautifully appointed guest rooms receive 24 hour room and concierge service. To obtain additional information go to www.hotelhasslerrome.com.