



WHEN IN ROME

On the historic Piazza della Repubblica in Italy's ancient capital, a celebrated architect and designer have created the Exedra, a hotel with a vast display of style, says **Berenice Brindley**

It is easy to see why the luxury hotel group Boscolo grabbed the opportunity. Turning an 18th century Palazzo on Rome's Piazza della Repubblica into a luxury hotel that defines style and discretion may not have been an obvious choice to anyone else but it was to this innovative chain. The potential was there to be exploited. They teamed architect Maurizio Papiri with designer Adam D. Tihany and chic happened.

Tihany's vibrant stage sets offer a pulsating affair of drama and art. In the hotel's main restaurant, La Frusta, Tihany was inspired by the black and white atmosphere of Italian director, Federico Fellini's masterpiece 'Otto e Mezzo' and has created a striking eatery with bold geometric patterned black and white marble flooring and matching striped leather banquettes.

Tazio, on the ground floor is a hip and happening restaurant, bar and champagnerie that opens out onto the Piazza della Repubblica. This time, Tihany was inspired by the candid shots of Tazio Secchiaroli, the forefather of paparazzi, with many of his pictures adorning the walls.

The building – a neoclassical Palazzo dating back to the 18th century and built over Diocletian's third century baths – has been brought back to life by Maurizio Papiri, who has incorporated Rome's Imperial past into his design. Down in the basement, Papiri has used glass flooring so that the ancient ruins can be seen beneath.

A revolving glass door opens into a lobby, which exudes luxury and glamour. All the ingredients of Rome's historical legacy are here: marble floors, columns, busts, plinths, statuary, urns, crystal chandeliers and golden fabrics, festooned in eye-catching flower arrangements.

There are superb city-views from the generously sized bedrooms and luxurious suites trimmed in elegant Italian style. From the hide bedheads to the marble in the bathrooms, from the sumptuous curtains draped at the impossibly tall windows

with their breathtaking view onto the Piazza della Repubblica and Michaelangelo's Basilica degli Angeli to the lighting control pads by the bedside, everything reflects a commitment to a consistent and contemporary sense of quality. In order to retain the original double-height windows, Papiri designed the junior suites as duplexes. In these spectacular rooms a polished wooden staircase leads to the bedroom and you get an uninterrupted view of the beautiful Piazza even from the bed. The bathrooms are the perfect combination of Roman and modern with stone floors, marble, plenty of water pressure, light and space.

Anyone with an eye for interior design and architecture could lose themselves for hours in the great attention to detail. But there's more. The sleek rooftop swimming pool is rare in central Rome and is the Exedra's crowning glory as it commands spectacular views across the spires and famous sights of the gleaming Eternal city. The top-floor spa exudes an air of tranquility and understated elegance. Treatments include stone massages, osteopathy, mud treatments, invigorating massages and personalised facials.

Papiri's traditionalism has meant that this original Palazzo has retained its elegant magnificence and Tihany's ultra-modernism has given it a modern and magical edge, it's the city's hottest venue. And rightly so.

Rome's major landmarks and gold-plated shopping streets are a short stroll out the door and the best way to experience the essence of the city is on foot.

With the arrival of the Exedra, the Piazza della Repubblica has become one of the most desirable locations in Rome.

TRAVEL DETAILS

Aer Lingus flies daily from Dublin to Rome. The Exedra Hotel, Piazza della Repubblica 47, 00185 Rome, Italy. Tel 0039 06 489381, fax 0039 06 48938000, reservations@exedra.boscolo.com, room rates from €400, suites from €900. For special promotions visit www.boscolohotels.com

Above The Exedra is housed in a stately white marble palazzo on the magnificent Piazza della Repubblica and the sleek rooftop pool has spectacular views over the city of Rome. **Opposite clockwise from top left** The handsome bedrooms are elegantly decorated to create a luxurious atmosphere; The Adam Tihany designed Tazio Restaurant and bar; Neoclassical opulence in the lobby; The splendid portico of the Exedra

