

INTERIOR DESIGN®

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the stars align





Knowing Florentines and tourists alike, Navone cleverly planned three entrances—one on the piazza and two on the side street—none opening exclusively to reception. One serves the Companion bar, since what, after all, is the first place guests inquire about upon check-in? Outfitted with custom iron-and-brass tables, crimson tufted-leather upholstery, and dark indigo walls, this moody boîte alludes to the first part of Dante's poem, *Inferno*, where drinking was deemed a sin. Not for Navone, who dubs it a "church for alcohol."

The entrance on the piazza leads to I Golosi—an *alimentari*, or food hall, that pays homage to Italy's ubiquitous small grocery markets—its name, which references the sin of gluttony, spelled out large in a wall mosaic. Navone turns that on

its heels, too. "I'm giving people the chance not to feel guilty," she reasons. "Maybe inferno is not as bad as people think." Especially when it's filled with the delicious pasta, bread, and wine that are available to eat here or take away. Supplementing the real thing are faux salami and prosciutti—art objects rendered in crochet, fabric, papier-mâché, and painted plaster—that hang among aluminum pots and pans overhead.

Reception provides an even bigger wow factor. Custom vinyl wallcovering behind the desk flaunts a super-enlarged version of the marbled paper that Florentine stationery and bookbinding are famous for. The check-in counter hosts another witty art installation: Sourced throughout Europe by vintage collectibles dealer Davide Mariani, old suitcases have been painted silver-green and arranged in teetering piles to greet arriving guests suggests the ultimate travel nightmare: a lost-luggage office in hell.

Seemingly alfresco, the adjoining San Paolino restaurant sits beneath an immense steel-and-glass cupola. Vintage chairs and new ones made of recycled plastic and metal surround custom marble tables, which are in turn surrounded by a profusion of plants, some real, some not. The ersatz greenery, which has sound-absorbing leaves of recycled textiles and polymers, was commissioned from Linda Nieuwstad, a Dutch artist. While the restaurant is a study in daylight, the adjacent lobby bar evokes a dusky blue evening. Polyethylene globes, aglow like azure planets thanks to LEDs, give the lounge its name, *Sfere Celesti*.

Other amenities in the historic building include the Sala delle Celesti Armonie, aka, the music room. With walls covered in another marbled super-graphic, backdrop to a portrait gallery of Italian divos and divas, it's for reading or a game of billiards. Guests loath to miss a workout can descend to the basement gym or use the ground-floor sauna and loungelike "relax room." Unable to fill the latter space with real plants, Navone created her own fantastic garden with an effusion of green plastic watering hoses.

Top: Large terra-cotta pots and towering plants, both real and in sound-absorbing recycled textiles and polymers, populate San Paolino. **Center:** A hanging garden of plastic hoses enlivens the sauna lounge. **Bottom:** Overlooked by an installation of artificial salami, I Golosi, the hotel's take-away food hall, is modeled on a classic Italian *alimentari*.

Opposite: The moodier *Inferno* guest rooms feature custom sconces and pendants bearing playing-card motifs.



There are two types of guest room—Inferno and Paradiso—places Dante separates by an immense divide. No so here. Named after good and bad characters in the poem, they are interspersed freely on all floors. “The idea is you can be naughty in the red rooms,” Navone says with a laugh, noting the charred furniture and custom chandeliers with playing card motifs. (Gambling, another sin.) Paradiso rooms are sweetness and light: Floors are creamy resin; azure accents in rugs and fabrics allude to the heavens; and Alexander Calder-esque mobiles overhead suggest the solar system or, in Dante’s sublime final phrase, “the Love that moves the sun and the other stars.” 🍷



PROJECT TEAM

CRISTINA PETTENUZZO; CAMILLA ESCOBAR; DOMENICO DIEGO: OTTO STUDIO. **GENIUS LOCI ARCHITECTURA:** ARCHITECT. **STUDIO MAKIA:** LANDSCAPE CONSULTANT. **FULVIO BALDESCHI:** LIGHTING CONSULTANT. **MILAN INGEGNERIA:** STRUCTURAL ENGINEER. **STIMP:** MEP. **RIABITZ AND PARTNERS:** WOODWORK. **EDILTECNO RESTAURI:** GENERAL CONTRACTOR.

PRODUCT SOURCES

FROM FRONT PRAGOTECNA: FLOOR TILE (COMPANION BAR). **CREATIVE CABLES:** PENDANT FIXTURES (STAIRWAY). **SANTAMARGHERITA:** CUSTOM MARBLE TABLES (RESTAURANT). **MAXIMUM:** SIDE CHAIRS. **GOBBETTO:** RESIN FLOOR (PARADISO ROOM). **SCHOENSTAUB; SELETTI:** CUSTOM RUGS. **RUBELLI:** CHAIR FABRIC. **GERVASONI:** CHAIR (PARADISO ROOM), STOOLS (FOOD HALL). **FLAMINIA LIGHTING:** FLOOR LAMP (PARADISO ROOM), SCONCES (RESTROOM). **VOX POPULI:** PENDANT FIXTURE (PARADISO ROOM, MUSIC ROOM). **FLOS:** PENDANT FIXTURES (SAUNA LOUNGE). **SAMMODE STUDIO:** PENDANT FIXTURES (FOOD HALL). **AUFSCHNITT; MAISON CISSON; SISSI VALASSINA; STEINER & WOLINSKA:** ARTIFICIAL SALAMI. **TARGET CERAMICS:** FLOOR TILE (INFERNO ROOM). **KARMAN:** CUSTOM PENDANT FIXTURES (INFERNO ROOM), SCONCES (INFERNO ROOM, COMPANION BAR). **BAXTER:** SOFAS (LOBBY BAR, MUSIC ROOM). **VICENTINA MARMI:** CUSTOM SINKS (RESTROOM). **MAMOLI:** SINK FITTINGS. **AMURA:** ARMCHAIRS (MUSIC ROOM). **SIRU:** FLOOR LAMPS. **ROGAI BILLARDI:** BILLIARD TABLE, GREEN PENDANT FIXTURES. **INGO MAUER:** SCONCE (PARADISO ROOM). **THROUGHOUT SLIDE:** GLOBE PENDANT FIXTURES. **LA PIETRA COMPATTATA:** COMPOSITE-STONE FLOOR TILE. **VESCOM:** CUSTOM WALLCOVERING.

Top: A custom neon sign points the way to the basement gym. *Bottom, from left:* Walls in Sfere Celesti, the lobby bar, are covered with distressed mirror while Navone designed the sofas and enameled lava-stone tables. She also designed the faucets and sconces in the sauna restroom, with custom marble sinks.

Opposite top: Composite-stone tile flooring, custom vinyl wallcovering, and a hoop-skirt frame used as a pendant fixture join a billiard table and a display of Italian celebrity portraits in the Sala delle Celesti Armonie, or music room. *Opposite bottom, from left:* Ingo Maurer’s feather-winged Lucellino sconce helps set the heavenly tone in a Paradiso room. The Companion bar has basalt tile flooring, leather-upholstered banquettes, and iron-and-brass tables, all custom.

