

Best-loved hotels: 10 travel writers list special places they long to revisit

Ottantotto Firenze – Florence, Italy

It was not a room with a view. Or at least not the view – the famous Florence tableau with the golden lights of the Ponte Vecchio reflected in the slow-moving Arno River.

What first caught my eye at the [Ottantotto Firenze](#), the hotel to which I now compare others, wasn't a pretty panorama (my second-story room overlooked a street).

Instead, it was a fireplace: a 16th-century stone behemoth, large enough to spit-roast a wild boar, that had been reimagined as an aristocratic-chic headboard for my plush double bed.

This handsome seven-room hotel, which opened in January in the lively Santo Spirito district, brims with evidence of previous occupants: from a Renaissance-era baker who lived above his mill and bakery to 16th-century nobility who climbed the staircases of Pietra serena, the durable Tuscan stone typical of fine Florentine palazzi.

A careful, five-year renovation by Fabrizia Scassellati, a local architect with a talent for historical preservation, introduced modern comforts – bright tiled bathrooms, a tiny elevator, a keypad entry – without disturbing original details, from the wood-beam ceilings to the Cotto tile floors showing centuries of wear.

The final touch was the decor, a mix of fine antiques, oddball objets d'art, colourful textiles and contemporary lighting, which made the hotel feel less like a museum and more like the home of a discerning, long-lost Italian relative. – INGRID K. WILLIAMS

Via dei Serragli 88, Florence. Double rooms from €119 (\$192).



One of just seven rooms in the charming Ottantotto Firenze in Florence. NYT