

DF

Destination Florence

FASHION/ CHANEL AND PITTI FILL FLORENCE WITH DAZZLING DESIGNS TRAVEL/ NEW ROUTE BETWEEN PISA AND DUBAI AND EXPERIENTIAL TOURISM SEES BOOST EVENTS/ CONGRESS TOURISM IN FLORENCE CONFIRMS NOTABLE INCREASE

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DESTINATION FLORENCE CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU



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**DESTINATION FLORENCE
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For 20+ years, Destination Florence Convention & Visitors Bureau has been the official association for promoting Florence as a destination. Our mission is to attract quality leisure tourism, MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences, events) and destination weddings.

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cover photo: Marco Badiani



Camera di Commercio
Firenze
dal 1770 la casa delle imprese



**Florence
flourishes with
new energy**



Walking in the city, you can breathe in a sense of exhilaration. Of course, there's the fact that summer has arrived, but there's also something more: a buzzing new enthusiasm, and a feeling of energy as new projects, new openings, and new collaborations flourish in the city. Florence is teeming with life, and not only because international tourists are finally back and filling hotels,

restaurants and museums (not surprisingly, the Uffizi Galleries were the most visited cultural site in Italy in 2021). Despite the uncertainties of the global situation, the city has worked hard in recent years with a clear long-term project in mind, and we are reaping the results.

We are talking about events and congresses, which have always been the soul of Destination Florence CVB: the numbers for 2022 speak for themselves, with 40 million euros generated in the spaces of Firenze Fiera alone. They are proof that teamwork among all operators in the congress sector has never stopped, not even during the most difficult years of the pandemic, and that the path that has been followed is the right one. Let me tell you: I believe in our work and in what the Firenze Convention Bureau has been promoting since 1995 thanks to its collaborations with public and private entities in the city, but this year I believe in it a little more – if possible! The reason is that our work in recent years has received international recognition in the form of the most prestigious award for our sector, which I had the honour of receiving: the Paul Flackett IMEX Academy Awards! An even greater satisfaction is the fact that it's shared with another Italian woman, Patrizia Semprebene Buongiorno, Vice President of Aim Group International.

This summer enthusiasm can also be felt in the wedding world as locations see notable increases with many international weddings celebrated in the city and throughout Tuscany. Above all, I would like to underline the wonderful Thai wedding that we helped become reality in the Tenu-ta di Artimino through our Tuscany for Weddings division: this event is also great recognition for the resilience demonstrated in recent years because it's the result of relationships that Tuscany for Weddings have cultivated with patience and foresight since 2016.

However, let's get back to Florence: the real star. Despite the heat, summer in Florence is pure energy! Come and discover it through the packed programme of Estate Fiorentina, with more than 15 festivals in 14 different spaces in the city, or the many art exhibitions, or simply while sipping a drink on the rooftops of the city.

Remember to bring your DF Magazine with you!

Carlotta Ferrari

Director, Destination Florence
Convention and Visitors Bureau





CHANEL brings Métiers d'Art show to Florence

Florence was chosen for the dazzling runway show of the Métiers d'Art 2021/22 collection with the historical railway station **Stazione Leopolda** hosting the renowned fashion house's looks **on June 7**, attended by **1,000 invited guests**. With 50% of CHANEL's production taking place in Italy, the luxury Parisian brand certainly has its place in Florence, as a capital for fashion itself.

Florence showcased its capability for hosting grand-scale international events and its important role in Italy as a destination for meetings, conferences, exhibitions and leisure. Stazione Leopolda was the aptly chosen venue for the runway, with the extraordinary space reaching 6,000 square metres, having evolved from a 19th century train station into a unique location for events of all sorts.

With 50% of CHANEL's production taking place in Italy, the luxury Parisian brand certainly has its place in Florence, as a capital for fashion itself.

Under the leadership of **creative director Virginie Viard**, the 2021/22 looks first saw the stage last December in Paris at the Le19M, the maison's recently opened building dedicated to their artisan fashionistas, designed by French architect, Rudy Ricciotti. Following their exhibit in Florence, the garments will be available to buy in CHANEL boutiques all over the world from June 2022.

With a single structure under a metal roof separated by two wide arches, as well as a 2-floor former warehouse, the

site was completed in 1848 with rail traffic routed here until 1861.

Viard took over from Karl Lagerfeld following his death in 2019, having started her career as an intern at CHANEL in 1987. Karl fondly referred to his faithful long-term colleague and assistant as "my right arm and my left arm".

The **autumn/winter collection** includes variations on the classic CHANEL suits, with long skirts and dresses, and wool as the favoured fabric. The colour palette is made up of deep rouges and purples, as well as blacks, whites and greys, with pink and silver making an appearance. The designers of the **59 looks** include **Goossens, Lemarié, Lesage, Lognon, Maison Michel, Massaro and Montex**. A DJ added music to the mix, with a French singer and cocktails for the high-profile attendees (including Penelope Cruz and Sofia Coppola) following the show.

In the run-up to the show, a short animated film and set of illustrations created by the **REMEMBERS studio** created anticipation around the event, reminiscent of the ambience created last December for the first presentation of this collection at le19M.



Pitti Uomo 102: Fortezza da Basso fills with flair

Photos by Marco Badiani



The future of fashion is decided during the **international menswear fashion fair** from **June 14-17**, with style spilling over into the streets of Florence as the fashion-forward parade their looks. Guest of honour this year was Belgian designer **Ann Demeulemeester**, with British designer **Grace Wales Bonner** present as guest designer.

This year took a **Pitti Island theme**, under the creative direction of Angelo Figus, with Lucio Aru and Franco Erre responsible for the visual component and Alessandro Moradei as architect for the installations at Fortezza da Basso. With an estimated 10,600 buyers, of which 40% came from abroad, and 16,000 visitors, the figures speak to the fair's success. The number of participating brands went from 300 at last year's edition to almost 700 collections. The foreign markets most present at this edition were from Germany, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Spain, Turkey, France, Switzerland, Belgium and Austria, with almost 200 American buyers, 73 buyers from Japan and 80 from Korea.

640 brands in total were present at the fair, with 38% coming from outside Italy. All participating brands are also viewable via the **Pitti Connect digital platform**. The display was organized into five main areas: Fantastic Classic, Futuro Maschile, Dynamic Attitude, Superstyling and Sustainable style, putting recycling and eco-sustainability to the forefront. 11 Ukrainian designers were also spotlighted in a dedicated showspace.

Pitti Uomo 102 is followed by the child-focused fair, **Pitti Bimbo 95** (June 22-24), and textile-oriented **Pitti Filati** (June 29 to July 1).



Estate Fiorentina 2022: Tre Passi Avanti

From **June 1 to September 30**, four months of fantastic events and activities ensure a summer to remember, with 15 festivals, 137 projects, 118 widespread events, 3 special projects and 14 summer spaces packing calendars for the foreseeable.

Three steps forward

As every year, the seasonal calendar takes a theme, with this year's edition dedicated to Enrico Greppi (1960-2021), known as **Erriquez**, the Florentine singer-songwriter and musician who co-founded the Bandabardò musical group. Lyrics by the band 'Tre Passi Avanti' (Three steps forward) make up the title of the festival, with **literature** and the **1980s** as the other main themes.

Literary love

'Literature 1922-2022' pays tribute to six of the greatest writers and intellectuals of the Italian twentieth century who were born in 1922: Luigi Meneghello, Beppe Fenoglio, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Raffaele La Capraia, Giorgio Manganelli, and Luciano Bianciardi. You'll be able to spot **book stalls in plenty of piazzas from July 1-10**, with bookstores all over engaged in presentations, debates, readings and literary meetings.

Festivals of all-sorts

All the arts get their time on the stage with music, dance, cinema, theatre and

more filling Florence with a jam-packed calendar made-up of 15 festivals. **MusArt** (www.musartfestival.it), from July 13-26, is set to see top-class performers in piazza Santissima Annunziata with Roberto Bolle, Lp, Goran Bregovic and Rock The Opera among the names that will delight audiences in the stunning setting. **Florence Dance Festival** (June 22-July 24) also forms part of the programme, bringing the best of contemporary dance, while **Italian Brass Week** (July 24-30 and **Florence Folks Festival** (July 21-23) are bound to delight music fans. **Cirk Fantastik** (September 8-18) finishes off the season in style, with circus antics amazing audiences of all ages.

Summer spaces

Sipping an aperitivo somewhere fresh is high on everyone's agendas in the blistering heat of the summer. **Bars and events come to parks and piazzas** in the city, for a cool way to spend an evening, enjoying music and cool drinks as the sun goes down. Check out Giardino dell'Orticultura, Anconella Park, Lungarno del Tempio, Ponte San Niccolò, the Rose Garden, Cascine's Amphitheatre, piazza

San Marco, Fortezza da Basso, Le Murate, Niccolò Galli garden, piazza Tasso, piazza dei Tre Re, and Parterre for a chilled summer evening. You won't want to miss the **Apriti Cinema** (June 27 to August 7) calendar either, with cinema screenings in spots like Piazzale degli Uffizi and Museo Novecento providing a film viewing like no other.

The programme in numbers

15 festivals

137 projects

118 widespread events

3 special projects

14 summer spaces

See the full line-up at
www.estatefiorentina.it

MaggioMusicArt: Opera and Florence meet in exclusive occasions

Destination Florence and **Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino** come together in the creation of themed itineraries coupled with opera in four exclusive cultural experiences. The project was formed to unite the beauty of the city with that of opera, with walking tours through the streets and museums providing fascinating backdrops to the spectacle audiences then enjoy, discovering the surprising links that bind Florence to the operas being performed as part of the 84th edition of the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino festival. Each tour is led by the specialized guides of the **Associazione delle Guide Turistiche di Firenze** (Association of Florentine Tour Guides), guaranteeing expertise in Italian and English so that both Florentines and those visiting can enjoy culture, history and music in the captivating itineraries.

The first of the four took place on **May 15** with **Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*** stunning audiences at Teatro della Pergola. Before audiences took their seats, they were treated to a walking tour of sites linked to the *maestro* led by an expert guide, including the hotel where the young Amadeus stayed with his father and a look at the Camerata de' Bardi, a group of musicians, poets and intellectuals in late Renaissance Florence.

Verdi's *I Due Foscari* followed on **May 31**, with Plácido Domingo in the role of Francesco Foscari at Teatro del Maggio, preceded by a stroll along the streets of Florence and admiring Hayez's *I due Foscari* at the gallery of modern art in Palazzo Pitti.

June 10 saw **Strauss and Hofmannsthal's *Ariadne auf Naxos*** at Teatro della Pergola, with a visit to the National Archaeological Museum guiding guests through the role of women in the ancient world, getting to know the myth of Ariadne.

The final performance will be **Jean-Baptiste Lully's *Acis et Galatée*** at Teatro del Maggio on **July 6**, bringing attendees on



Le nozze di Figaro.
Ph. Michele Monasta,
Maggio Musicale Fiorentino



Ph. Michele Monasta,
Maggio Musicale Fiorentino

a journey down the Arno river aboard a traditional Renai boat in a unique chance to see the city from a different point of view, leaving from near piazza Mentana and heading to Ponte Santa Trinità, passing under Ponte Vecchio. The lapping water serves as the background to the poetic story of the nymph Galatea and her love for the shepherd boy Aci. Ovid's myth tells us that the monstrous cyclops Polyphemus, consumed by jealousy, killed Aci, leading to the desperate crying of Galatea. Taking pity, Neptune transformed him into a small river that flowed from Mount Etna into the arms of the nymph in the sea, based on the libretto by **Jean Galbert de Campistron**.

Coupling the immense cultural heritage of Florence with the magnificence of opera, the occasions are opportunities to embrace many arts in one evening, with literature, art, history, music and more enriching all those engaged in the exclusive events.

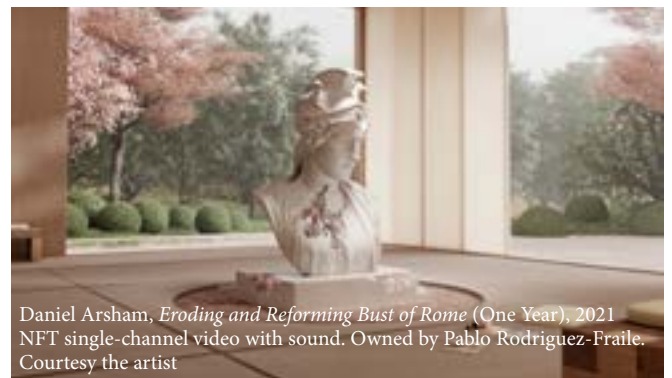
Purchase tickets at www.destinationflorence.com

Events in and around Florence

Summer sees Florence fill with everything from contemporary exhibitions to a newly launched model railway museum, taking in cocktails, photography, crafts and culture to pack your seasonal calendar.



Marion Wulz,
*Portrait of Wanda Wulz in
a motorcyclist outfit*, Alinari Archive



Daniel Arsham, *Eroding and Reforming Bust of Rome (One Year)*, 2021
NFT single-channel video with sound. Owned by Pablo Rodriguez-Fraile.
Courtesy the artist

PHOTOGRAPHY

Fotografe! From the Alinari Archives to today

Works from the Alinari archives weave the 20th century through to today, with different eras, places and social contexts explored in the unique exhibition from June 18 to October 2, on display in the spectacular settings of Villa Bardini and Forte Belvedere. www.alinari.it

SUMMER

Estate Fiorentina

From June 1 to September 30, your summer plans are sorted as Estate Fiorentina packs together four months of activities to see us through the season, with 15 festivals, 137 projects, 118 widespread events, 3 special projects and 14 summer spaces. Featuring Florence Dance Festival from June 22 to July 24 and MusArt from July 16-26, leading performers are spotlighted in the rich cultural programme. www.estatefiorentina.it

COMICS

Bonelli Story

Museo degli Innocenti brings characters Tex Willer, Piccolo Ranger, Zagor, Dylan dog, Nathan Never and Dragonero to its halls from June 1 to September 18, dedicated to the publishing house behind the historic comics. www.museodegliinnocenti.it

FASHION

Vintage Selection + Pitti Filati

Stazione Leopolda (via Fratelli Rosselli 5) fills with nostalgic looks from June 29 to July 1 for the 38th edition of the throwback fashion affair that brings together curators of vintage looks for the quality clothes experience held in conjunction with Pitti Filati at Fortezza da Basso, the fabrics focused component of Pitti Immagine. www.vintageselection.it, www.pittitimmagine.com

CULTURE

MaggioMusicArt

The exclusive events series curated by Destination Florence and Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino blends fascinating walking tours with magnificent opera. The final of the four events takes place on July 6, with Jean Baptiste Lully's *Acis et Galatée* at Teatro del Maggio, preceded by a pleasurable cruise down the Arno river aboard a traditional Renai boat. www.destinationflorence.com

EXHIBITION

Let's Get Digital!

Contemporary centre Palazzo Strozzi embraces NFT art with a digital-only display running until July 31 that immerses visitors into non-fungible tokens in the Renaissance courtyard and the Strozzi halls, with digital installations and multimedia experiences. www.palazzostrozzi.org



HZERO Ph. Juri Ciani



Sammy Baloji, Kongo in Palazzo Pitti



Sofia Uslenghi, ArtNoject



Antonio Mattei Bottega Museum

SIP

Florence Cocktail Week Party

On July 11, the 6 years of the festival will be celebrated at Le Pavoniere in the Cascine park, immersed in the Florentine greenery. Open to the public, bartenders, Djs, pizza makers and more mark the occasion in style.

www.florencecocktailweek.it

LOCOMOTIVES

HZERO

The newly launched museum space centres around its 280 m2 centrepiece, a railway model that began its journey in 1972 thanks to the Marquis Giuseppe Paternò Castello di San Giuliano. The former Ariston Cinema at piazza degli Ottaviani 2 is the home to this fantastical miniature world.

www.hzero.com

MUSIC

Italian Brass Week

The 23rd International Brass Festival brings the best of brass to the city, under the artistic direction of Luca Benucci, Maggio Musicale Fiorentino's principal horn player. Top class concerts and educational opportunities fill Florence from July 24-31.

www.italianbrass.com

CRAFTS

Artigianato e Palazzo

High quality craftsmanship comes to Giardino Corsini from September 16-18, with three days dedicated to carefully curated crafts in the picturesque setting.

www.artigianatoepalazzo.it

NOSTALGIA

Scatole di latta che passione

The **Antonio Mattei Bottega Museum** in via Porta Rossa 76, Florence, houses an intriguing display of fifty tin boxes used to sell tea, biscuits, cocoa and coffee that have now become collectors' items. The museum also details the history of the Pandolfini family which has led the renowned biscuits factory since 1904 when they took over from Antonio Mattei. The colourful tin boxes have been used since 1858, with much-loved biscuit makers Mattei continuing to use the nostalgic style packaging (preferring its reusability and beauty!), presenting two new tin boxes for the occasion, the Amerigo and La Rossa, both containing 125g of Prato's famous almond biscuits, the classic Cantucci or Cantuccini, with dark chocolate options also on offer. The display can be visited from 11am to 7pm, Tues-Sun., until July 9.

www.antoniomattei.it

Inauguration of the newly renovated Palazzo degli Affari

Firenze Fiera launches the newly renovated Palazzo degli Affari on July 11 (invite-only). Having undergone extensive works, the restyling of the space is set to launch this summer, with eco-sustainability at the heart of the refreshed site. The exhibition-congress centre managed by Firenze Fiera will retain the exterior's original aesthetics, with contemporary touches and maximum functionality, featuring a large connecting staircase and a panoramic terrace over-looking the main monuments of the city.

www.firenzefiera.it



Eike Schmidt, Director of the Uffizi Galleries

Uffizi Galleries takes masterpieces across Tuscany to promote the region's heritage

Fondazione CR Firenze and the Uffizi Galleries came together in 2021 to launch Terre degli Uffizi (Lands of the Uffizi), a plan as part of the Piccoli grandi musei and Uffizi Diffusi projects aiming to enrich the territory with the Uffizi's artistic wealth, bringing works to museums outside the city of the Renaissance. The project is also realized thanks to the collaboration with Unicoop Firenze. Kicking off in 2021 in conjunction with the 700th anniversary of Dante Alighieri's death, the calendar launched with five initial exhibitions and is now in its second edition with eight exhibitions planned for 2022: Anghiari, Montespertoli, Poppi, Reggello, Arezzo, San Giovanni Valdarno, San Casciano and San Piero a Sieve.

The goal of the project is to decentralize visitor flows and increase local tourism, collaborating with peripheral museums. The results of the first edition in 2021 speak to the project's success: there was an average increase of 16% in visitors to the museums in Poppi (+18%), Anghiari (+14%) and Castiglion Fiorentino (+18%) compared to the previous year. A total of 36,131 visitors attended the five exhibitions (as of December 2021), with 83% saying it was the first time they had visited the museum, attracted by the ongoing event.

Eike Schmidt, Director of the Uffizi Galleries, details "The excellent start to

The goal of the project is to decentralize visitor flows and increase local tourism.

the project last year is confirmed by the numbers of visitors, convincing us to continue along this path...The initiative, which makes use of new studies and often draws attention to very interesting but lesser known works of the Uffizi Galleries, is aimed at stimulating new research in the local and central area and above all at creating a sense of civic awareness amongst locals".

The Uffizi also celebrated the success of being named the most popular museum in Italy in 2021 in the *Il Giornale dell'Arte* newspaper with 1,721,637 ticket sales, surpassing the Colosseum and the Vatican Museums for the first time. Another commendable figure is that globally, the museum is the twentieth most visited museum in the world. Apollo Magazine declared the Terre degli Uffizi project among the six best exhibition initiatives of the year, with a mention by Lonely Planet owing to the success of the Uffizi Diffusi project as well as the upcoming reopening of the Vasari Corridor.



The eight exhibitions in 2022

Masaccio and the Masters of the Renaissance

Masaccio Museum of Sacred Art in Cascia (Reggello)
April 23 to October 23

Masaccio and Angelico: Dialogue on truth in painting

New Lands Museum and Santa Maria delle Grazie Basilica Museum (San Giovanni Valdarno)
September 17 to January 15, 2023

The Warrior Pope: Giuliano della Rovere and the men at arms of Anghiari

Museum of the Battle of Anghiari (Anghiari)
May 21 to September 25

The Uffizi's Predella at Montegufoni Castle

Museum of Sacred Art (Montespertoli)
May 14 to January 8, 2023

Pietro Benvenuti in the age of Canova

Ivan Bruschi House Museum (Arezzo)
June 17 to October 23

In the signs of life: Women and Madonnas at the time of waiting

Conti Guidi Castle in Poppi (Poppi)
July 8 to November 1

Jacopo Vignali in San Casciano

Giuliano Ghelli Museum (San Casciano)
October 2 to January 8, 2023

A Renaissance masterpiece from France in Bosco ai Frati: the triptych by Nicolas Froment

Convent of San Bonaventura in Bosco ai Frati (San Piero a Sieve)
June 1 to November 6

For more on the art show series see www.uffizi.it



Mike Winkelmann. Ph. Ela Bialkowska
OKNO Studio



Krista Kim, *Mars House* (2020). Courtesy
Krista Kim Studio. Collection AOI Vault

Let's Get Digital! art exhibition at Palazzo Strozzi

Digital art is the focus of Palazzo Strozzi's latest display, with NFT art highlighted in the contemporary arts centre. **From May 18 to July 31**, visitors are immersed in the **non-fungible tokens** (digital data) in the Strozzi halls, as the NFT revolution makes its way in the worlds of art, fashion, music, sport, gaming and beyond.

Organized by the **Palazzo Strozzi Foundation** and the **Hillary Merkus Recordati Foundation**, the exhibition was curated by Arturo Galansino, director general of the Palazzo Strozzi Foundation, and Serena Tabacchi, director of MoCDA, Museum of Contemporary Digital Art. The display sees digital installations and multimedia experiences crafted by artists who communicate the multifaceted study of crypto art, based on the success of NFTs, which are redefining what makes a work of art unique and valuable.

Entering the courtyard, visitors are greeted by **Turkish artist Refik Anadol's** (1985) site-specific installation that focuses on the relationship between digital and physical architecture. The swirling display and dreamy soundtrack captivate all those who pass by, with the mesmerizing large-scale work drawing viewers into its hypnotic spiral. Inside the gallery, viewers take a further deep dive into digital art with immersive rooms created by various artists including **Mike Winkelmann (Beeple)**, looking at politics and pop culture in dystopian scenarios. **Daniel Arsham** reflects on the idea of sculpture through tempo-

"Let's Get Digital is one of the first and most important exhibitions dedicated to the NFT revolution"

ral loops in which materiality and immateriality blend together in continual transformation and destruction, while **Krista Kim's** hallmark minimalist style brings us into an impossible world of geometry and reflection. **Andrés Reisinger** brings poetry, sound and images together in a meditative experience that invites us to reflect on our daily routines and on our use of social media. Finally, live concerts by the **Anyma Collective** add visual performances and music to the enthralling displays.

"Let's Get Digital aims to bring the general public closer to the recent developments in digital art, which is now universally recognized by the contemporary art world," explains **Serena Tabacchi**. "Decentralization, blockchains and NFTs have certified and circulated the work of many artists who weren't considered as such up until a few years ago. This bottom-up movement has made



Refik Anadol, *Machine Hallucinations - Renaissance Dreams* (2022). Ph. Ela Bialkowska OKNO Studio

artists famous who were only appreciated in social media communities until a few months ago... The art of the future meets digital as the preferred medium for creative expression. We can expect an infinite number of possibilities. The best is yet to come."

Arturo Galansino added "This is a unique project in the Italian cultural panorama. Let's Get Digital is one of the first and most important exhibitions dedicated to the NFT revolution...this exhibition stands as a further piece of experimentation and vision on the art of the present and of the future, opening up more and more to new possibilities of artistic production and relationships with the public".

Let's Get Digital!

is on display until July 31 at Palazzo Strozzi. Open daily 10am – 8pm, Thursdays until 11pm - Tickets cost 10 euro; 5 euro for under 18s, 15 euro for combined tickets with *Donatello, the Renaissance*

www.palazzostrozzi.org

FlorenceTown, Arno Travel and ItalyXP present To Italy Group

FlorenceTown, a producer of high-level experiences, **Arno Travel**, an operator in the luxury sector specializing in creating tailor-made experiences, and **ItalyXP**, an online experience marketplace, have come together to create the first group for Italian experiential tourism, **To Italy Group**.



The intent behind the project is to overcome fragmentation that affects experiential tourism in Italy, replicating a high quality tourism model throughout Italy and defining a sustainable return to tourism. Investments by **CDP Capital Venture** and **SMP Holding** gave a sum of 5.5 million to the initiative, enabling the organization to bring their skills to all the main Italian destinations, with a particular focus on the regions of Southern Italy through an acquisition plan of small local entities operating in experiential tourism which will be enhanced with **new jobs created and investments in technology and innovation**.

Their passion for unique experiences and indelible memories for tourists is what drives the project, with the business sector in which the new company operates reaching a global market share of between 15 and 20% of the entire travel sector. **Globally, the demand for experiential tourist services is constantly growing** and TAA (tours, activities and attractions) represents the third most important market today (after flights and hotels).

Tourists will be offered the opportunity to experience their stay in Italy by immersing themselves in the local culture through deeply engaging and memorable experiences that are professionally created and managed with the highest level of customer care. Quality experiential service such as excursions aboard typical vehicles, visits to exclusive sites, local cooking schools and more will be marketed through digital channels, creating, planning, managing and selling a complete travel itinerary to be merged into a single platform, thus facilitating the experience of customer purchase and at the same time optimizing the work of operators. The experience market is growing rapidly, as confirmed by the recent data on Arival's US tourism, with **71% of active US travellers planning to book at least one tour or experience during their next trip in 2022**, with the figure having been at 47% in 2019.

Saverio Castilletti, President of To Italy Group details "The tourism sector was one of the sectors most impacted by the effects of the pandemic. After two years of great difficulty, we have put together different and complementary skills by combining our groups with the aim of becoming the **reference point for experiential tourism in Italy**. Today, tourists are increasingly 'digital' and when planning their itineraries, the web gives them access to a large amount of information on places to visit; the challenge then shifts to making visitors aware of the culture and typical experiences of our country. Experiential tourism is the answer to the search for details that new visitors to a city recognize from a film or song: the modern tourist leaves home with mainly unconscious ideas associated with that place, belonging to third party experiences but which often become the real reason behind the trip".

Luca Perfetto, CEO of To Italy Group added "This project focuses on the concept of quality, which means professional but authentic offering that is above all 'sustainable', ie aware of all the effects of tourism on the territory and therefore aimed at enhancing and not exploiting our culture and our socio-cultural fabric. We are in a new phase where it's essential to generate a form of tourism that is less impactful and which allows our historic centres to remain alive and inhabited while they are visited and admired, transmitting our culture without distorting it or adapting it to visitors' requests... The goal is better planning of flows, working in terms of the well-being of destinations, and quality and respect for local cultures to encourage tourism that brings positive effects to all parties involved".

Actor, pianist, performer + producer **Hershey Felder** embraces the hills of Florence for his art

Florence and its hills provide Hershey Felder with unending inspiration for his boundless creativity. Having moved to a castle just outside Florence pre-pandemic, the successful Canada-born performer and producer with a European soul has switched from daily matinee and evening shows in front of packed audiences to **independently producing musical films** focusing on the lives of world-renowned composers, such as Verdi, Tchaikovsky and Puccini.

On Florence as home: When I was 17, it was clear that I was going to devote my life to art and music. I came to Florence because I knew that **the piano had been invented here and that the first opera was performed here.** What I love about Florence is that it's when you turn a corner that you find something. It doesn't have the big presentation of a big city; it's all the little reveals. I absolutely fell in love with that. Then something happened over the years. I started to find that things I was collecting from my travels, that the way I was painting my house in America, the décor I was doing was all Florentine. I bought something in upstate New York and at one point everything was painted like Palazzo Pitti. I asked myself, *Why don't I just go there?* It's about finding your artistic soul. For me, your artistic approach is about how you can make the world more beautiful. The truth is, Florence felt like home from first setting foot in town. It's not only the art; it's the people. They're

not easy until they see that you genuinely love Florence and genuinely love them, and then the Florentines will give you everything they have. My friends and I call it a soft city. There's a gentility to it.

On not performing during the pandemic: The pandemic was the longest that I'd not been on stage in my adult life. I've had an opportunity to practise something other than what I'm performing that night, so it's Chopin by day and Beethoven at night, or Rachmaninoff in the afternoon and Chopin at night. **To be able to focus without giving my all at night is a gift that I've not experienced in my grown-up life.** But I do miss being with the audience.

On the Live in Florence production company: I always knew that eventually the art would be produced here in Florence. The plan was that, in 10 or 15 years, I'd relax into life and art here. The pandemic has pushed everything forward. Against my better instinct and out of a responsibility to the company



staff who have been with me for years, I created the Live From Florence brand, and it took off! What we're doing is producing high-quality musical films that are ticketed online and theatres before being viewed online on our website.

On filming in Florence: Florence has provided our films with original historic locations particular to the city, from Tchaikovsky's actual Florentine residence to real places of Dante's Florentine life, to Czarist Russia, Puccini's operatic settings and more. For instance, when we filmed Mozart, Maria Maestrelli de Hagenauer, who owns Palazzo Gianfigliuzzi on lungarno Corsini opened her home to us to serve as the Kaiser's palace. The entirely restored decor is from the late 18th century, Mozart's period, and even more relevantly, the de Hagenauers of Vienna, Maria's family by marriage, were Mozart's landlords for much of their Viennese residency. The wonders of Florence never cease! Point a camera

anywhere in Florence, and whatever will be on your screen will be beautiful. The greatest treat, however, are the living, breathing artists now working in Florence. The **Maggio Musicale Fiorentino** orchestra, the members of which I have had the honor to play with in our films, are a world-class ensemble. As individuals, the musicians are willing to take anything on, including getting dressed up in period garb! The film crew—directors, cinematographers, lighting designers, editors, costume designers, electricians, gaffers, runners—are almost all Florence-born. Besides being immensely gifted, they are a group of kind individuals who will work endless hours to make everything the best that it can be. There is a deep commitment to the best art possible. The goal is to find and illuminate the world-class talents within Florence and our environs, and create stories that we can share that show just how beautiful our city and its people are.

Find out more about Hershey Felder's musical films:
www.hersheyfelder.net



Soaking in the past: LA SPA Helvetia & Bristol

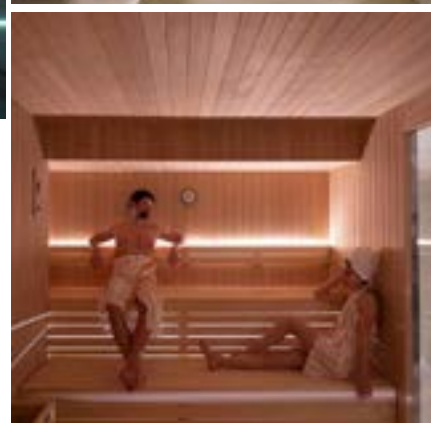
We dive into the finest five-star spa to open recently in central Florence as what was once the city's Ancient Roman baths is given a 21st-century makeover.

The impressive renovation of **Helvetia & Bristol Firenze - Starhotels Collezione** means that hotel guests and city dwellers can now bathe in similar circumstances to the Ancient Romans at LA SPA Helvetia & Bristol.

The history alone would make this spa an exceptional wellness retreat in central Florence, but the contemporary touches raise the experience to sublimity. Two elements impacted the design choices: the drive to integrate the pre-existing archaeology into the wellness centre as well as creating a dreamy ambience, in which the wellbeing of the treatments goes hand in hand with the wellness of the senses. Light, ethereal colors feature throughout LA SPA and travertine covers all the surfaces. A few simple yet striking items of furniture can be found with mirrored surfaces and steel and gold details. Every space wows since it has been exclusively researched and curated. In this way, albeit in a more modern style, LA SPA embraces the philosophy of the Helvetia & Bristol hotel, of which it is an integral part, while also becoming a place dedicated

to the city, nestled in one of its most beautiful piazzas.

Having taken the sleek elevator down into the spotless basement, one surprise turns into another from the cavernous *Calidarium*, whose ceiling resembles a starry sky, to the *Aquamotus*, a Vichy shower that is hard to find in Italy as you stretch out on a mattress while 1,200 jets invigorate the body. The *Tepidarium* combines old and new as the spa goer lies back and gazes at medieval foundations enclosed in a glass floor while buries their toes in the stress-absorbing sea salt. Be revived by the *Frigidarium*, where crushed ice cools down the core temperature. The main draw, however, is the *Lacus Quietis*, where a sunrise entrances on the full-wall screen across the generously sized pool for a city centre space. Devised by local Florentine artist **Felice Limosani**, the video art entices visitors into the waters as the countercurrent and jets relax body and mind. The past is present: an ancient mortar well emerges inside one of the pools.



“The historical research that centered on the Helvetia & Bristol thrilled me,” confirms Elisabetta Fabri, president of Starhotels. “We never talk much about Florentia’s history as a Roman colony. Discovering the remains of the ancient Roman tepidarium beneath the Bristol wing of our hotel moved me so much that I decided to create an extraordinary spa right there.

“The highlight is the water room,” concludes **Elisabetta Fabri**. “You walk in and feel in touch with the element: two large baths, with whirlpools and counter-current, are filled to the surface, lapping the floor and creating a unique environment where the water is everywhere. The result is an original, sensual and enticing space, just as I had imagined it.”

Managed by Snow Group Italia, the massage rooms provide luxury treatments from India, China, Japan, Indonesia and Morocco, and high-end **Cinq Mondes** beauty products.

LA SPA Helvetia & Bristol

Via dei Pescioni 8, Florence

+39 055 2665626

IG: @laspahelvetiabristol



Seafood supper on a Florence rooftop

Florence does summer like nowhere else, especially when it comes to rooftops with fabulous views.

Excitement surrounds the opening of summer space, **Fishing the Roof!**, on the rooftop of four-star hotel **NH Collection Palazzo Gaddi**. Hot on the heels of the success of Steak Home, which was inaugurated on the hotel's ground floor in March, the Bizionaire Group has introduced this new bespoke evening dining concept with exceptional views of Brunelleschi's Dome and the cityscape.

Fishing Lab is famous in Florence for its popular restaurant in via del Proconsolo, where well-prepared seafood is served with a

side of history. Now, on the sixth floor of NH Collection Palazzo Gaddi, which is located in a sixteenth-century palazzo in central Florence, raw fish compositions are crafted as creative solutions on the panoramic terrace that tops the building where London-born author John Milton (*Paradise Lost*) once resided among the noble Baroque-style halls and walked the majestic staircase vaulting the sculpture *Resting Hercules*, attributed to Giocchino Fortini. Marvellous frescoes by famous painters such as Ranieri del Pace and Luca Giordano equally wow. Order a mixed seafood platter or a tuna tartare dotted with olives, or go crispy and contemporary with a sea



bass or salmon taco. Guests also love the pinsa, a take on a thin pizza base, topped with sensual shrimp and seductive burrata cheese. If you're craving a full meal, opt for the saffron risotto with red shrimp carpaccio and courgettes or the very Instagrammable tuna burger sandwiched in a black bun

and lavished with wasabi mayo.

Fishing the Roof! is open from 5pm onwards to hotel guests and external customers, offering an exclusive experience: spectacular views of Florence's skyline among drinks, wines, raw fish and creative recipes.

NH Collection Palazzo Gaddi

Via del Giglio 9, Florence

+39 380 5882157

fishinglab.it/en/fishing-the-roof

IG: @fishinglab_concept



New route between Pisa-Dubai from June 24



Tuscany is ever-more connected as **flydubai announces a new route between Pisa (PSA) and Dubai (DXB)**, connecting the region to Terminal 3 of the Dubai International Airport, where flights depart to all over the world. Pisa reaches an **increasingly international territory**, expanding its services to the United Arab Emirates, with related opportunities arising for Tuscany.

The **low-cost airline flydubai** will operate the **Boeing 737MAX** along this route, with fully reclining seats in business class and ample space also in economy class with RECARO seats, designed to optimize space and comfort. It will be the **first UAE airline to operate this route from Dubai**, at the same time as the airline also resumes flights to Catania, expanding its network to three flights in Italy, including Naples.

There will be **three flights weekly to the international aviation hub**, offering travellers greater connections and bringing an expected increase in visitors from the area to Tuscany, bringing tourism and economic opportunities. Flights will take off on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays.

Hamad Obaidalla, Chief Commercial Officer of flydubai, said: “we look forward to the launch of flights to our third point in Italy this summer. Pisa will be a popular destination for travellers from the UAE and the GCC to discover the beauty of the Tuscany region. We have seen healthy growth in passenger numbers as more countries ease travel restrictions and demand for travel returns to pre-pandemic levels. We look forward to an exceptional summer as we continue to add more destinations to our network and increase the frequency of flights on some of our existing routes”.

Commenting on the launch of flights, **Jeyhun Efendi, Senior Vice President, Commercial Operations and E-commerce**

at flydubai, said: “flydubai’s new three-times weekly service to Pisa, as well as our operations to Catania and Naples, offers passengers from the UAE and the region more options for travel to Europe this summer. Our passengers from Italy will be able to enjoy convenient and direct flights to Dubai throughout the year. Our flights will be operated by our fleet of Boeing 737 MAX aircraft which feature a flatbed in Business Class and additional comfort in Economy Class”.

Marco Carrai, President of Toscana Aeroporti, added “We have started a new connection between Pisa and Dubai, thanks to the collaboration with the Flydubai airline. We are entering into a unique opportunity for the future development of our region. Toscana Aeroporti is proud to contribute to increasing the tourist and economic opportunities for our territory, and to making Tuscany stronger by relaunching and strengthening its airports”.

Destination Florence Convention Bureau support **Toscana Promozione Turistica** in the organization of a press tour in Florence and Tuscany to promote this new route.



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Romance in the region

Tuscany draws couples from all over for the celebration of their love. The enchanting landscape has endlessly beautiful locations for the special occasion, with rolling hills, exceptional food and wine, and culture and heritage at every turn.

Wedding planners from [The Wedding Bliss Thailand](#), recently organized a destination wedding at the stunning [Tenuta di Artimino Melià Collection](#) in the hills of the Carmignano area just 20 kilometres from Florence, thanks to the collaboration with [Tuscany for Weddings](#) (www.tuscanyforweddings.com), the dedicated division of Destination Florence CVB operating on behalf of Toscana Promozione Turistica. The historic villa of Medici origins was the jaw-dropping setting chosen by the planners with their high-profile clients, Lena and Charyl, who are well-known in Thailand and their wedding was even featured in Vogue Thailand. We spoke with Jess, the executive director of the renowned wedding planning team that's led alongside her sister, Nanya, to discuss the process.

Why did you decide on Tuscany for this important wedding?

Firstly, we discussed with our clients about the location and venue. Most of our couples would like to host their wedding in our country, Thailand, however, some ask if we can help them have a wedding elsewhere, and Italy is number one on their minds when it comes to destination weddings. Our clients always sent us reference photos of weddings in Tuscany, so we confirmed with them that we have very good contacts with venues and vendors in Tuscany, and that was it! Once they explored the options with us, they set their heart on a Tuscan wedding.

What was important for you in terms of choice of location? How did Tuscany deliver?

Of course, the beauty of the location was first and secondly, the functionality of the space. We have to check all the spaces that each venue offers. We need to know that there are the right spots to host a wedding ceremony, cocktail hours, dinner reception, and the after party, in keeping with our clients' visions. Tuscany has everything our clients dreamed: the natural beauty which is almost surreal, the historical venues, and the qualified vendors.

What were the benefits in terms of arranging a wedding in Tuscany?

We are very grateful to expand our portfolio to Tuscany as one of the world's top wedding destinations. The vendors there are very experienced and understand the assignment. Even though they are new to us in terms of collaboration, we worked very well together. It's such a good experience for all of us and we are looking forward to coming back again in the near future.

How did you find the collaboration with Tuscany for Weddings and how did you come to know about them?

[We got to know Tuscany for Weddings at the Destination Wedding Planners Congress \(DWP 2016\) hosted in Florence.](#) At that time, I was attending the congress with Nanya, my sister who is the wedding planning director of the company, and we were impressed by how excellently the congress was executed; everything seemed impeccable. We got to know Chiara from Tuscany for Weddings and when our company got a chance to host DWP



Congress 2017 in Phuket as an event partner the next year, we got in touch again with Chiara and asked for her advice. We have been in quite close contact since then. Chiara has always sent us positive vibes and assured us that if we one day hosted weddings in Tuscany, her team would be there for the support. We are so grateful to get to know Tuscany for Weddings. Arranging a wedding far away from home has never been this easy and pleasant!

Linda Rossi, Sales Manager at Tenuta di Artimino Melià Collection, commented “Tenuta di Artimino and Tuscany for Weddings have been collaborating for years and it’s also thanks to this type of relationship

that we are able to reach a large international public. We are proud to be able to represent this authentic corner of Tuscany with its past that’s packed with history and culture, without forgetting the extraordinary landscape that surrounds us. The context in which the estate is located was in fact one of the strengths for which the couple chose us months ago, together with the possibility of being able to let all the guests stay overnight on site between the hotel and the Borgo lodges. Lena and Charyl and the wedding planners from The Wedding Bliss Thailand immediately conveyed their desire to create a wedding in which the element of nature was present and evocative.

The ceremony was set up among the olive trees, right next to the garden of the Villa, and it was magical, as was the dinner at the foot of the steps with a view of the village and the hills. We love our work thanks to events and weddings like these which make great use of strengths and careful planning to create special memories for couples, guests, and also for us”.

The event was organized with the involvement of our members Galateo Ricevimenti, Alma Project and BL Hairdressing.



Carlotta Ferrari with Ray Bloom

Director of Destination Florence CVB Carlotta Ferrari wins “Oscar” in congress tourism

On June 7, 2022, **Carlotta Ferrari** was the first Italian woman to be awarded (together with Patrizia Semprebene Buongiorno) the **Paul Flackett IMEX Academy Award** during the IMEX 2022 gala dinner at the Sheraton Airport Hotel in Frankfurt, the city hosting the most important fair in the world dedicated to the events and congress industry, having been stopped since 2020. It's the first time in the history of the awards that an Italian has received the “Oscar” in the sector.

The organizers explained, the award is “for long-term commitment, professionalism, dedication and for pushing innovation beyond borders”. Ferrari, who was also vice president of Federcongressi & eventi from 2013 to 2017, achieved significant success first in Florence, and then on an Italian level. Since 2010, she has transformed **Firenze**

Convention Bureau from a small consortium with a few partners to a private consortium with over 300 entrepreneurs in the sector and with strong support from local institutions.

In 2015, the new division dedicated to international weddings, **Tuscany for Weddings** was launched, remaining unique on the national and international scene, and in 2018 **Destination Florence** joined the fold, expanding to general tourism.

In 2013, supported by large national associations

(**Federcongressi, Confindustria, Confcommercio and Confesercenti**), Ferrari decided to found the **Convention Bureau Italia**, the first network of companies in tourism. Today, Convention Bureau Italia has become the operational arm of Enit, has over 130 members and represents 3,500 companies, making it a point of reference for the entire national industry and international customers.

Commenting on the award, Ferrari said “On stage I

was truly speechless from how happy and grateful I was for this recognition. In front of me I had the best professionals in the business events and congress industry, as part of a fair with thousands of colleagues and companies from all over the world. **I love my job and believe in what I do, which is why such a prestigious international recognition fills my heart with joy and is the best possible result for all that we have achieved together in recent years.**

There are two other aspects that make me proud. The first is that among the various reasons this award was given is due to resilience during the period of Covid, which is really complicated for our sector. There's also the fact that it's named after **Paul Flackett**, co-founder of the IMEX fair together with **Ray Bloom**, an icon of our world who is sadly no longer with us. Finally, I want to congratulate **Patrizia Semprebene Buongiorno**: being rewarded together with her is an honour, especially for me given the professional results she has achieved as Vice President of AIM Group International. I am particularly satisfied also because we are the first Italian women to receive an Imex Award and the road to inclusiveness also passes through here”.

The DFCVB team wishes happy retirement to Gianna Francini

Gianna was the backbone of the convention bureau, having been part of the team since the dawn of the company and having seen all phases of the convention bureau. Known for her laugh and dedication, she is much-loved by all who worked with her. The whole DFCVB team (past and present) wishes her the very best wishes upon her well-deserved retirement!



Congress tourism in Florence confirms notable increase



As pandemic-induced restrictions have eased, congress tourism has seen a rise in events planned in a positive sign for the sector. 48 events are scheduled between now and the end of the year in Firenze Fiera's spaces, totaling 40 million euro and 23,270 attendees, with a forecast of over 600 million euros and up to 400,000 congress attendees by the end of 2027, thanks to the teamwork between **Firenze Convention Bureau, Firenze Fiera, the Municipality of Florence, the University of Florence**, and other partners involved, reconfirming Florence as one of the most sought-after and requested destinations for the congress and corporate sector in Italy.

In recent months, the enthusiasm to return to meet in presence, exchanging know-how and creating business, is tangible among professionals and participants in events. Congresses take place across various venues such as Fortezza da Basso and Palazzo dei Congressi, with the **new Palazzo degli Affari set to be inaugurated in July**, completely renovated according to eco-sustainable and energy efficient principles.

Councilor for tourism, fairs and congresses, **Cecilia Del Re** commented, "If the pandemic has changed many aspects of daily life, from smart working to new organizational models, the congress sector has not lost its centrality and it's for this reason it's necessary to continue with the promotional action already undertaken before the pandemic. The strategy is giving concrete results, as demonstrated by the many events scheduled, based on a strong network between public and private entities who care about the promotion of Florence as a quality conference destination".

"The events scheduled between now and the end of 2022 and the awarding of major international congresses over the next five years are the result of a great team effort between Firenze Fiera, Firenze Convention Bureau, the Municipality of Florence and all the other institutions and operator, involved" says **Lorenzo Becattini**, president of Firenze Fiera, "reconfirming the role of our company as a strategic driver for the economy of Florence and Tuscany".

Federico Barraco, president of Destination Florence Convention & Visitors Bureau stated, "To understand the profound importance of the congress tourism sector, it's enough to analyze the 2022 numbers. Added to the significant figures that revolve around the Firenze Fiera offices are the events confirmed in other locations in the city by the business development activities of the Firenze Convention Bureau, with a further 5 and a half million euros and 3,050 participants".

The programme in numbers

48 events planned for Firenze Fiera's spaces between now and the end of the year, totaling **40** million and **23,270** attendees

A further **5.5** million and **3,700** attendees in congresses elsewhere in Florence in **2022**

Over **600** million euro and **400,000** attendees by the end of **2027**



UIA – Union of International Associations 2024 set to take place in Florence

Confirming fruitful teamwork, another important milestone has been reached: the **UIA Round Table (www.uia.org) is confirmed in Italy for the first time, set to be hosted in Florence from November 14-15, 2024**. The event provides an opportunity to learn through networking and through practice, and to meet international associations, sharing experience and knowledge to help organizations work better. The candidacy was jointly presented by **Firenze Convention Bureau, Firenze Fiera** and the **OIC Group**, with the occasion undoubtedly presenting an optimal opportunity to promote Florence, both as a destination and as a location for congresses.



Florence lands in the US to welcome new temporary citizens with the Be.Long project

From **May 31 to June 3**, the Be.Long project was presented at **NAFSA, the world's leading trade fair in the field of foreign studies**, with great success and an enthusiastic response for the destination of Florence. **The Be.Long project** (www.belong.destinationflorence.com), the online service to make staying longer in Florence easier, was developed by **Destination Florence** in partnership with the **City of Florence**. The project was formed in 2021 to support students and startups, as well as being a useful tool for universities and study-abroad programmes, and has now grown to provide information on bureaucracy, transport, health, lifestyle, accommodation, community service activities and more, enabling students, digital nomads and others to integrate within the community.

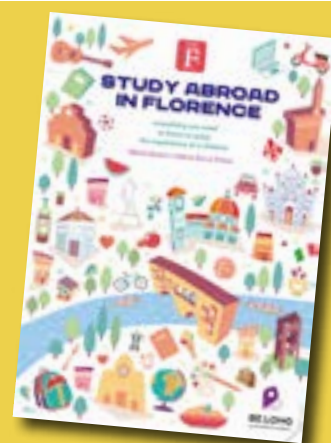
The trip to the USA sought to welcome new flows of international students through the Be.Long project. The city currently sees an average of **35,000 foreign students per year**, of which 15,000 were Americans by 2022, with ever-increasing numbers since the lifting of the pandemic-imposed restrictions. **Florence was the only Italian city to present itself autonomously in Denver for NAFSA**, a non-profit association of international educators with over 10,000 members and educators, and 3,500 institutions to its credit. **More than 200 exhibitors and 150 countries** from around the world were present at the annual convention.

The initiative was also presented on May 9 at Palazzo Vecchio by the Tourism Councilor **Cecilia Del Re**, the University and Research Councilor **Titta**

Meucci, the Consul General of the United States of America in Florence **Ragni Gupta**, the President of Destination Florence Convention & Visitors Bureau **Federico Barraco** and the external relations manager of Unicoop Firenze **Claudio Vanni** (Unicoop Firenze is now the main sponsor of the Be.Long project). With **Unicoop Firenze**, projects dedicated to students are further developed with visits to local production companies for an education in sustainable, zero-kilometer and healthy food consumption, promoting the territory.

As part of the presentation, the **Study Abroad in Florence** guide was presented, ahead of its preview at NAFSA. Councilor Del Re commented "The Be.Long project is growing and is making its debut in the United States to attract a target other than mass tourism to Florence... a project that aims to make Florence more and more the city of training and innovation, creating favourable conditions for the many students and aspiring entrepreneurs who every year come to attend foreign schools, incubators and universities that are active in the area, to which smart workers are added, ready for a new approach to the world of work and living even after the pandemic. It's also a way to lower the average age in Florence, welcoming a younger segment of the population".

The following partners supported participation in NAFSA: The Student Hotel Florence, Centro Italiano Firenze, In Florence Academy, Tuscan Committee for Italian Language and Culture Schools, Italian Me, and Lingua Viva Educational Group.



Study Abroad in Florence. Everything You Need to Know to Enjoy the Experience of a Lifetime

is the new guide written by **Marco Bracci** and **Marco De La Pierre** and published by **The Florentine Press**, which allows students to reflect on the unique study abroad experience that can have a positive impact on a student's future.

The publication gives prospective students the chance to find out about **what awaits them in Florence**, so that they are better prepared to appreciate the myriad opportunities for personal and professional growth. This guide also provides **practical information** to ensure that these "temporary" residents make the most of daily life in the city, featuring messages from many leading figures in the city.

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