

# DF

## Destination Florence

DUCO / HIGH-END TOURISM EVENT RETURNS  
TO FLORENCE PITTI / INTERNATIONAL FASHION  
FAIR RESUMES BUSINESS STAY / BE.LONG  
PROJECT GAINS TRACTION

DESTINATION  
FLORENCE  
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BUREAU



MAGAZINE

DESTINATION FLORENCE CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU



**DF**  
Destination  
#Florence

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**DESTINATION FLORENCE  
CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU**

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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

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## Recommencing with Made in Italy



Summer in Florence is beginning in the best possible way with the resumption of events. It's an important signal after such a difficult time. In addition to being a key powerhouse for the economy, events have an extraordinary communicative power. We're very lucky because Florence has a wealth of things to talk about; it's a city that conveys Made in Italy across myriad fields.

Now Italy's events scene is restarting right here, in a city with in-depth knowledge about high fashion, the art of hospitality and the value of scientific research.

There's important news on the conference front, too. In 2022, the 16th Annual Congress of the Open Source Geospatial Foundation (OSGeo) will be held in Florence as the conference comes to Italy for the first time ever. Many local excellences, such as the hospitality industry, benefit from scoring such an event, which will welcome about 1,000 delegates to the city. Teamwork between the GFOSS.it association, the Italian chapter of OSGeo, Firenze Fiera, AIM Group International, the Department of Engineering of the University of Florence and our Firenze Convention Bureau ensured the win.

June brought an important anniversary with the 100th edition of Pitti, which has been the global benchmark for male elegance since the Fifties. Italian fashion started in Florence started in 1951 in Florence, in the Sala Bianca of Palazzo Pitti to be precise, and we celebrate that legacy with the return of the international fair in person. The city is never more elegant than during Pitti Week as it shows its hip side to an international public that, in absolute safety, brings the streets and piazzas to life with the latest fashions.

To symbolize the resumption of tourism and confidence of international travel advisors, we admire the courage and passion of DUCO, which returns in person to showcase the excellence of Italian hospitality, from the Dolomites to Sicily. DUCO chose Florence as its venue in 2018 and decided to adopt the city in its entirety. The quality of Florentine hospitality, with some of the most beautiful five-star hotels in Italy, has enchanted everybody involved in DUCO. The spell remains intact.

**Carlotta Ferrari**

Director, Destination Florence  
Convention and Visitors Bureau



photo: Marco Badiani

# The renaissance of tourism



**Carolina Perez, founder of DUCO, speaks about her Italian roots, what delegates can expect from the return of the top tourism event and future travel trends for the bel Paese.**

entire world, right in the heart of Italy, pleasantly walkable and replenished with beauty. Nothing speaks louder to my heart than art, therefore Firenze, the cradle of Renaissance!

**What is DUCO, how does it work and why has it become so important for the Italian hospitality sector in such a short period of time?**

DUCO is a niche initiative to promote The Best of Italy. While all the most prestigious travel fairs are international and promote the entire world of travel, DUCO follows a different path, focusing on one single destination.

**My aspiration was to bring the world to Italy, as a tribute to the excellence of Italian hospitality.** The essence of DUCO is destination-oriented, which makes it a profound experience of Italy for travel advisors and a reference for the high-end travel community. Beyond the annual summit in Florence, DUCO is a channel for year-round promotion and education, engaging buyers and suppliers through digital platforms.

**What are the challenges and joys of holding a high-end tourism event in Florence, before and especially now in the current climate? In what ways has Destination Florence Visitors & Convention Bureau contributed to the success of DUCO?**

DUCO takes place in unique venues, rather than big convention centers. Each place chosen to host DUCO's events embodies the Italian spirit with history, art and beauty, bringing out emotion, curiosity and enthusiasm for what will come next, as every day there is a new scenario to be discovered. This year in particular, we have the added challenge to reduce people density at every venue and to achieve that we had to create a complex logistics of simultaneous events and ceremonies split in different sessions.

**Your website explains that DUCO was “born out of a passion for cultural exploration and understanding of Italy”. Can you explain further about the origins of DUCO, your Puglian heritage and why you chose Florence as the venue for DUCO Italy?**

I was born into a family of women who loved to travel and explore the world. My mother Teresa inherited her appetite for travelling from her grandmother, and I have never known a different life. That has helped to shape my professional life, which eventually led the way to Italy. I was always

fascinated by my family's Italian roots: my Pugliese great-grandfather Giovanni Falcone married my great-grandmother Catherina Mastracchio from Veneto. They emigrated to Brazil and started a family, where I was born and raised. The connection with Italy has remained strong in the family, inspiring much of my love for *il bel Paese*. The inspiration to create DUCO came on a summer night watching Verdi's *Nabucco* at the Verona Arena, as a “richiamo del sangue” (call of the blood) – the desire to return to my ancestors' land.

I chose Florence to host DUCO as it is one of the most gracious cities in the



Destination Florence Visitors & Convention Bureau has been a very important partner and supporter since 2016, when I first came to Florence to share my idea of DUCO with friend hoteliers and was introduced to Carlotta Ferrari. Carlotta and her team have been fantastic and relentless in finding solutions for DUCO, supporting our relationship with the City of Florence and connecting us with venues and *fiorentini* event suppliers.

**What can attendees expect from this third edition of DUCO? The line-up sounds exciting, from appointments at top hotels to the Lemon Awards.**

I foresee an event with lots of emotional value for everybody and a unique moment to celebrate what Italians are calling “Il Rinascimento del Turismo”. DUCO Italy is the first fair of the high-end travel industry calendar since 2019. The wait has been long and we all have ideas about the new era for travel. **To hold the DUCO Italy 2021 summit in Florence has a unique meaning, as it is like a Renaissance for the sector.**

**How has DUCO focused on the digital side of its operations in recent months?**

At the beginning of 2020, when the world was forced to take a pause, DUCO strived to create different ways to keep the essential bond alive. We wanted to continue to connect the world to Italy with an inspirational and educational approach and this is how DUCO



Parla! webinar series was launched and achieved the impressive mark of 7,000 views and incredibly positive feedback from travel advisors. Then came DUCO Galleria, consolidating DUCO as a year-round channel for the promotion of Italy with dynamic content. DUCO Virtuale, the online one-to-one meeting program, held in April 2021 for the first time, was important to reconnect the community ahead of the summer.

**Italy will always be a lovemark destination for international travelers, but what changes do you think Italy's hospitality scene will undergo as a result of Covid-19?**

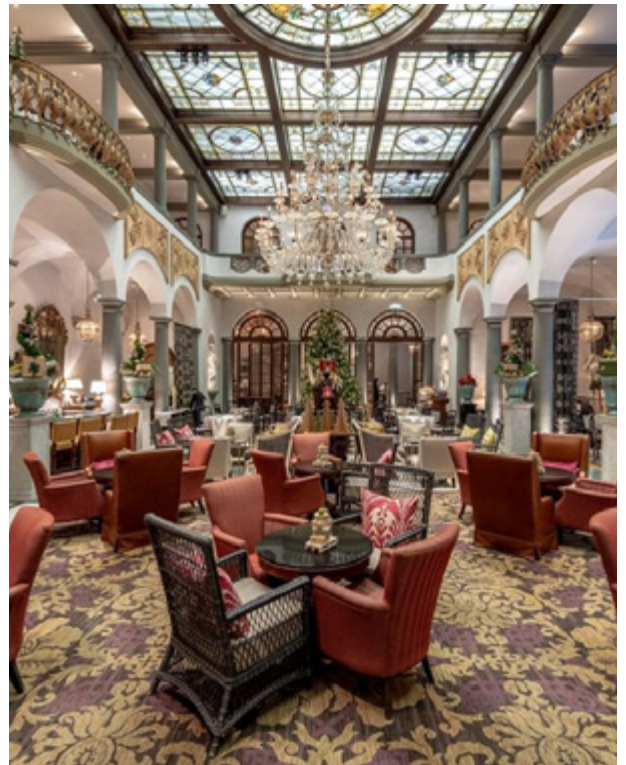
DUCO's commitment to Italy is to support the bounce back and help push travel forward. The tendency is

fewer trips and longer stays, deepening experiences as travelers will seek more meaningful and self-fulfillment moments. And after being celebration-deprived for so long, the comeback certainly brings lots of emotional value. **For Italy, I believe in a more united tourism sector**, with public institutions and private sector joining forces for the continuous and consistent promotion. The key is to work together and not to be isolated. This is a favorable moment for high-end tourism in Italy after such long lasting repressed desire. Travelers are evermore keen to visit, and cities will benefit from **quality over quantity**, without too many crowds and preserving the historic heritage. I trust that the next cycle will be very positive for Italy and for Florence.



*We take a look at the city's finest five-star hotels ahead of the top-tier DUCO Italy tourism event held in Florence from July 19 to 23.*

# The finest of Florence: 5 five-star hotels



**Four Seasons Florence** ([www.fourseasons.com/florence](http://www.fourseasons.com/florence)) is home to the largest private garden in the city. Lined with charming statues, fountains and even a small Ionic temple, the Della Gherardesca gardens were planted in the fifteenth century, though a contemporary swimming pool has been added for all-day relaxation. Guests retire to suites, such as the Della Gherardesca with a Capodimonte-style ceramic floor and the Pool Garden Suite boasting its own private pool, where frescoes line the walls amid original architectural features. The locally inspired spa provides the perfect opportunity to unwind with signature treatment from top beauty brands and Florence's renowned Santa Maria Novella pharmacy founded in 1221. There's an array of dining options, including the Michelin-starred Italian restaurant, Il Palagio, Asian specialties and signature cocktails at Magnolia, and the popular Al Fresco and Pool Tree Bar with its slow-rising pizza and house-made ice cream. In line with the Four Seasons' brand, the hotel's amenities are unparalleled. From wedding planning to business services, 24-hour in-room dining and travel arrangements, every base is covered to perfection.

Situated in piazza Ognissanti beside the Arno River, the scenic **St. Regis Florence** ([www.marriott.com](http://www.marriott.com)) has been the preferred residence of seasoned travelers since the eighteenth century. Steps away from iconic landmarks, the historic hotel is furnished with Florentine aesthetics that stand out alongside modern amenities and services, including a well-appointed business centre. Affixed with rich colors, restored frescoes and sparkling crystal chandeliers, the antique décor pays homage to the city's artistic heritage. The 80 spacious guest rooms and 19 distinctive suites, such as the Bottega Veneta Suite designed by Tomas Maier and the 200 square metre Presidential Da Vinci Suite, provide discreet opulence and refined elegance. Guests staying in Premium Deluxe Arno River View Rooms and all suites enjoy impeccable St. Regis Butler Service any time, day or night. The Winter Garden Restaurant with its Liberty-style glass ceiling takes diners on a journey through the excellence of Italian cuisine with the creations of executive chef Gentian Shehi. Make time for the Signature Afternoon Tea with house-baked pastries and savory bites served with beverages selected and explained by the tea sommelier.

The first luxury hotel in the heart of Florence since 1885, **Helvetia & Bristol Firenze - Starhotels Collezione** ([www.starhotelscollezione.com](http://www.starhotelscollezione.com)) stands a few steps from Palazzo Strozzi contemporary arts center and top-end shopping avenue via Tornabuoni. The historic hotel recently reopened after a restoration of the historic wing and a recent expansion that marks its rebirth. Guests can enjoy 25 charming new rooms and suites styled by the renowned interior designer Anouska Hempel together with exclusive inner courtyards and private terraces. Top Florentine master craftspeople have enriched the hotel with original touches such as fine fabrics, antiques and precious Italian furnishings. It's a refined setting that has been chosen over the centuries by illustrious figures such as Enrico Fermi, Eugenio Montale, Gabriele D'Annunzio, Luigi Pirandello and Eleonora Duse. Dining options include the **Bristol Winter Garden** covered by a Liberty-style glass ceiling, which serves Italian gourmet dishes, and the recently added **Cibrè Caffè** for coffee, lunch, aperitif and special dinners.



Located south of Florence and famous for being the venue of David Bowie and Imam's wedding reception, **Villa La Massa** ([www.villalamassa.com](http://www.villalamassa.com)) is a verdant five-star getaway for travellers. Now vaunting a stylish new pool that embraces the Tuscan countryside, this splendid thirteenth-century property features 51 luxury rooms, all individually furnished, divided into five classical Tuscan buildings: the Noble Villa, the Villino, The Mill, Casa Colonica and La Limonaia, which opened in 2019. Expect a Renaissance atmosphere with elegant fabrics and frescoed ceilings accompanied by sublime amenities and the very best service from the same owners as the extraordinary Villa D'Este grand hotel on Lake Como. The riverside Il Verrocchio restaurant serves refined Italian dining in a uniquely scenic location on the bend of the Arno River. New for 2021 is the L'Oliveto Summer Lounge for relaxed poolside lunches and gourmet pizza nights. Villa La Massa also provides state-of-the-art technology in meeting rooms bedecked in natural light.

On the other side of piazza Ognissanti, **The Westin Excelsior** ([www.marriott.com](http://www.marriott.com)) has been welcoming guests to Florence for centuries. With piazza della Signoria and the Uffizi a short distance away, guests relive history in the 171 recently renovated elegant guest rooms and suites, including the Belvedere Suite complete with a whirlpool and the Presidential Suite, whose terrace is perfect for candlelit dinner parties. Take in the vibrant flavors and sweeping views at SE-STO on Arno, the hotel's unique rooftop bar and restaurant with breathtaking 360-degree vistas, exquisite cuisine with a Mediterranean tradition and a well-stocked wine cellar. There's a focus on fitness with the in-house gym and specially designed beds to help guests adjust to a new time zone, as well as the option of sleep-enhancing superfoods and the Sleep Well balm to ease tension. Business travellers benefit from the in-house concierge services, plus meetings and conventions are a breeze to organize in The Westin Excelsior's spacious halls equipped with up-to-the-minute technology.





# The scent of Pitti

We speak with **Raffaello Napoleone, Chief Executive of Pitti Immagine**, about the first Pitti Immagine trade fair to be held in Florence since the pandemic struck.

## The streets of the city fill with scent during Pitti...

It's true! During Pitti, Florence emanates a stylish scent, the optimism of an international community that comes together and then waits six months to meet up again. Up until January 2020, it was a phenomenal platform: 1,200 exhibitors with more than 30,000 visitors. To give a better idea, more than 800 Japanese visitors attended each season, making Pitti the most important showcase of Japanese fashion in the world. The "Pitti peacocks" [ed. the flamboyant-dressed men's fashion professionals that appear independently of the fair] bring the piazzas of the Fortezza da Basso trade fair centre and the city to life. Pitti

Uomo has actively participated in the growth and evolution of men's fashion. That's why there's this atmosphere, this special feeling in Florence. Even the walls realize that Pitti is happening. The stones of Palazzo Strozzi and Palazzo Pitti are happy. Yes, Florence has the scent of Pitti!

## What does Florence add to the event?

The city's strongest asset, as well as its weakness in some respect, is that it's small. 360,000 people live within the city walls, which roughly equates to 10 New York blocks. **During Pitti, there's a concentration of professionals, exhibitors, retailers, buyers, agents and journalists that you can't have in any**

**other large city in the world.** When you're walking down the street, it's like being in a big, beautiful, open-air showroom and the city is the right size to socialize easily. Florence's emphatic identity makes it a unique place for fashion. Having the "constraints" of the Fortezza da Basso in terms of size means we have to be selective about the exhibitors, a feat of sorting, setup, and representation that's not possible in other cities. For this very reason, the Fortezza is a magical place. Given the halt on travel in recent months, Florence was in the heads and hearts of people all over the world. Culture, beauty, and history are the ingredients of this city and we've had evidence of just how much Italy, and Florence in particular, are loved.



Even at a national government level, there was a real push for Florence to become the first city to reopen with its iconic trade fair.

Mayor of Florence, Dario Nardella, and the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Luigi Di Maio, have done a phenomenal job. The initial plan was to postpone until September, but if this opportunity had been missed, it would have meant missing three editions. September would have been useless. The collections are already on sale now. The dynamics of fashion, even though there are several collections during the year, teach us that the start of the season remains the key moment, and **Florence has always determined where fashion is heading in the season.** It's an incredible opportunity, but one that also comes at great risk. It's a challenge to be the first to be operational again, with such a tight timeframe and with green pass regulations just being established. We had only 60 working days to prepare this edition when in general it takes at least five months. It's a long job, which starts with samples analyzed by an established and serious organization. This will be a truly special edition.

### Why are trade fairs still important?

What's missed by not having trade fairs is the exchange of ideas and viewpoints between buyers who stay two to three days, but also between exhibitors and among the best manufacturers and industrial brands in terms of contemporary formalwear and sportswear. Despite efforts to maintain relationships with the community and to provide services, digital can't inspire feelings. The trade fair remains an exceptional vehicle for exports and a relationship-based tool that's not replaced by digital showrooms.

Did skipping the last two editions give you a chance to rethink Pitti?

**We have always tried to read the future.** From season to season, we have updated sections, events, and exhibited young talent, such as Virgil Abloh with the live concert with the Maggio orchestra in the Cortile dell'Ammannati outside Palazzo

*During Pitti, there's a concentration of professionals, exhibitors, retailers, buyers, agents and journalists that you can't have in any other large city in the world.*

Pitti. We've achieved credibility over the years by carrying out these projects. We were among the first to talk about sustainability and digital management. Pitti is a fair that has always had a feel of the future, reading opportunities in a timely way and achieving them at a high level during the fair. The Pitti system manages to anticipate the future precisely due to the organizational size and speed of the people who work here in a highly competent environment.

Pitti Immagine 100 and 001 - beginning and end. Have you changed?

First of all, the true celebration of number 100 is deciding to go ahead with the fair! The pandemic isn't over; it will impact fashion for at least another two years. Federmoda has published data that shows nearly 30% of fashion store closures in Italy, which means about 21,000 stores have shuttered. **So, why hold Pitti? It's a statement of confidence in the future of the world that we represent and, more generally, for the international community.**

Stores are an important part of a destination like Florence. How do you see the relationship bearing out with the digital?

As I said, there will be a reaction that will still see plenty of digital development, but I allow myself to think that the physical (retail) has strengthened in some ways. The digital is coming out as a bit tired; we can't take it anymore. Between meetings and making calls, what's the impact? Who wins? Reality wins. Where does e-commerce go if there is no physical contact? It's true that it has given us an opportunity to expand the platform and access more markets, but pre-pandemic Italy saw a percentage of e-commerce sales that is 7% of global fashion turnover. Now, we're talking about 12-18%. Even if we reach 30%, physical retail remains 70%. **Retail is the soul of cities that rely on restaurants and commerce.** So, it's right to invest in digital, but as an integrating part of the entire offering.

How has the Pitti Connect experience gone?

Pitti Connect was the acceleration of a program that was already underway. We realized that the evolution of information and knowledge pushed the most advanced retailers to view collections in advance, exclusively in previews, or to plan ahead. When it was digital-only, we had a performance of 1,600,000 page views with over 15K buyers as unique logins. We already have 60 companies that will not be physically in Florence but will be on Pitti Connect. It's an additional tool that doesn't replace the fair but enhances it.

*Pitti Immagine took place in Florence from June 28 to July 2. Destination Florence Convention & Visitors Bureau proudly provided logistical support to the return of the world's first fashion fair since the start of the pandemic.*

# Pitti Style

*Edition 100 or 001? Whatever way you look at it, this year's Pitti Uomo was a time to reboot. 338 carefully selected exhibitors took to the halls of Florence's Fortezza da Basso in a determined show of courage and optimism. Outside the piazzas might not have been as populated as in pre-pandemic times, yet the sun shone on the bastion of men's fashion with a purposeful focus on sustainable brands.*

*We're looking forward to **11-14 January, 2022**: the next Pitti dates!*

*photos: Marco Badiani*



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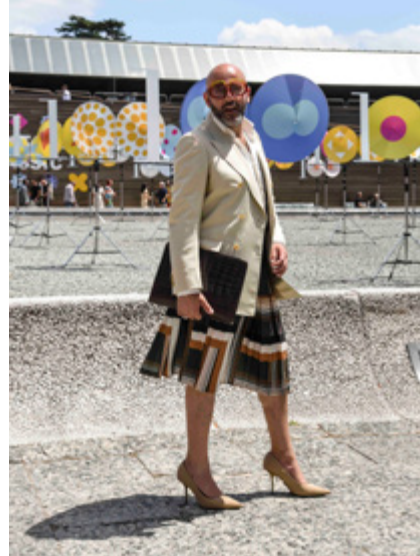
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# Restarting with innovation

The 20th edition of the  
Triple Helix Conference will  
take place in Florence from  
June 27 to 30, 2022.

Florence has won the tender for the **2022 Triple Helix Conference**, an opportunity for businesses, institutions and universities to come together to explore ways to **innovate and restart the city** in the most effective way possible.

The 20th edition of the prestigious international conference is organized by the Triple Helix Association, promoters of the “triple helix” model that focuses on the interactions between academic, industrial and institutional systems as the keys for innovation and economic growth, in collaboration with the Firenze Convention Bureau and the local scientific committee coordinated by **Professor Marco Bellandi** of the University of Florence.

Taking place in Florence from June 27 to 30, 2022 at the Social Sciences Center of the University of Florence, 500 in-person participants are expected, with many more tuning in from all over the world as the events will also be streamed online.

“There will be academics from many places all over Italy, Europe, and even from further afield,” Professor Marco Bellandi elaborates. “Many conferences will be held, featuring representatives from the business world and from various institutions. We will also have local Tuscan professionals involved as well as talks by members of national institutions and those who are involved in innovation in **the technological sector, politics and academia.** The event has received great support from the Destination Florence Convention & Visitors Bureau since the beginning.”

The bringing together of experts, scholars, managers and decision makers is expected to result in exciting and positive plans on how to move forward in synergy.

The planning of the congress is notable in light of the year of organizational difficulties, and it's a strong and positive sign of the restarting of large-scale academic conferences as Florence confirms its role as a city that is actively engaged in the scientific and business sectors.

Professor Bellandi details some of the main focus points. “We will concentrate on **politics, key players, research professors, institutions, and developing projects in the triple helix context.** We will also focus on the type of collaboration



and partnership that is needed for economic recovery following the pandemic, and the specific kind of innovation that is needed, not only technological, but also social and environmental. I maintain that, even as we emerge from this period, the problems have always been many, and so another theme of the conference is to become familiar with the various conflicts of interest and barriers that create obstacles to innovative projects. The triple helix concept created by the founders 20 years ago maintains that the strongest innovative projects derive from the contemporary world, not only from collaborations and contracts and projects or financing, but the routes that lead to the most lasting results are those that come from acknowledging the gaps and then filling them in.”

This spirit of collaboration and cooperation and the strength that lies therein is replicated in the idea of the DNA strand, incorporated in the Triple Helix concept, and assures that the congress in 2022 will see vital discussions on how to overcome post-pandemic challenges, as well as achieve greater prosperity for the city.

## The pinnacle of organization

Founded in Florence in 1975, **OIC Group** is an established leader in event organization operating nationally and internationally. Know-how, **reliability and professionalism as well as the ceaseless pursuit of excellence** are OIC Group's main drivers. OIC's strength is in the great care and attention to detail carried out through the daily work of multidisciplinary and highly skilled teams. **OIC Group** has just under 100 multilingual professionals working to support clients by offering end-to-end tailor-made projects and solutions to respond to all clients' needs and requirements in an impeccable and seamless way.

[www.oic.it](http://www.oic.it)

# Florence secures high-profile conferences



## ***FOSS4G comes to Italy for the first time***

The 16th annual congress of the Open Source Geospatial Foundation (OSGeo), the non-profit organisation that supports and promotes the collaborative development of free and open source geographic technologies and open geospatial data, will be held in Florence at the Palazzo dei Congressi, Palazzo degli Affari and the University of Florence from 22 to 27 August, 2022. **With nearly 1,000 participants, this is the first time that the international congress will be held in Italy.**

The FOSS4G annual congress will address particular issues that the Italian GFOSS.it community has been pursuing since before 2000, but only next year will the international congress make its debut in Italy due to the teamwork carried out by GFOSS.it association, the Italian chapter of OSGeo, the Firenze Convention Bureau, Firenze Fiera, AIM Group International and the Department of Engineering of the University of Florence. The way the congress will be held (fully in-person, hybrid or online) will be decided based on the status of the

global health emergency and possible restrictive measures.

“The organising committee, which I represent, is very happy with the result obtained, that repays us for the efforts made in recent years,” comments Luca Delucchi, FOSS4G 2022 chair. “This is a gift that we want to give to the entire Italian community, which has always been very active in the contribution and dissemination of free geographic software. We are happy that the candidacy of Florence and the collaboration with other players in the city, such as the Firenze Convention Bureau, Firenze Fiera, AIM Group International and the University of Florence, has allowed us to win and finally succeed in bringing the international congress to Italy. Now we have to roll up our sleeves and work hard to organise the conference and all related activities in the best possible way: we are confident of making the 2022 congress a memorable experience.”

## ***FADOI National Congress takes place this October 2021***



Florence has also secured the next national congress of the FADOI (Federation of Associations of Hospital Doctors on Internal Medicine) in 2021. Four hundred delegates will meet at the Palazzo dei Congressi from October 2 to 5, 2021, compared to 2,000 participants pre-pandemic with the reduced number necessary to comply with Covid restrictions.

“We are proud and honored to have secured this important congress,” comments the DFCVB team. “It’s the result of an intense synergy developed in recent months by Destination Florence Convention & Visitors Bureau professionals with hoteliers and marks an important sign of recovery for the congress sector and for the entire city.”

### **National FADOI Congress**

October 2-5, 2021

Palazzo dei Congressi

### **FOSS4G**

August 22-27, 2022

Palazzo dei Congressi,  
Palazzo degli Affari  
+ the University of  
Florence

# Sophia Loren receives the Keys to the City



**Sophia Loren** recently received the keys to the city of Florence on a visit to celebrate the inauguration of a restaurant brand bearing the movie star's name.

On June 5, the 86-year-old Roman legend with a Neapolitan soul spent an entire day in the Tuscan capital, a city she has visited rarely during her stellar career. At 1pm, Loren was handed the Freedom of the City in the Palazzo Vecchio's Michelozzo courtyard by Mayor Dario Nardella. The recognition is reserved for dignitaries who have distinguished themselves in the arts. The institutional acknowledgement was followed by a ribbon cutting ceremony

at the recently opened restaurant in piazza della Repubblica, much to the delight of the actress' fans who turned out to welcome the icon.

Destination Florence Visitors & Convention Bureau was delighted to welcome Sophia Loren to the city, **arranging accommodation for the star and her staff at Hotel Helvetia & Bristol.**

During her long and distinguished career, Sophia Loren has received two Academy Awards: one for Best Actress in 1962 for *La Ciociara* and in 1991 for her illustrious career. She also recently obtained the David di Donatello 2021 as Best Actress for the film *La vita davanti a sè*.

## Foto Archivio Locchi

The Foto Locchi photographic archives are considered one of the most important internationally for their artistic and historic value, to the extent that the collection is protected by the Italian Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities. Vaunting more than five million photographs showing the history of Florence and Tuscany from the 1930s to the present day, the ever-increasing archive includes images from the sporting, fashion and entertainment worlds as well as everyday life. The aim of Archivio Foto Locchi is to serve as a source of inspiration for anyone wishing to capture Florence and Tuscany through enticing images, in addition to preserving a legacy that acts as a reference for all those interested in the history of Florence.

In 1924, Tullio Locchi, a former war reporter and official photographer for the royal family, decided to open his own studio in piazza Vittorio, now piazza della Repubblica. Following his untimely death in 1926, the business was continued by his wife and the Moscato-Corcros family.

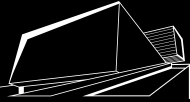


Silvano Corcos, a photographer and entrepreneur, was responsible for making Foto Locchi one of the most important and renowned studios in Florence. Erika Ghilardi, Silvano's granddaughter, now runs the archive, which furthers its cultural purpose today.

[fotolocchi.it](http://fotolocchi.it)

DFCVB extends its gratitude to Foto Locchi for the gift of this iconic photograph of Sophia Loren for publication in *DF Magazine*.

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An interview with **Alessandro Sordi**, co-founder and CEO, Nana Bianca

# “We try to build the future.”



We often hear about Nana Bianca as a creative think tank in Florence, but perhaps we don't really understand what you do. Tell us more.

We've changed our communications to “We try to build the future” to show that we're working... Alongside friends and entrepreneurs Paolo Barberis and Jacopo Marelli, we came up with the idea for Nana Bianca as a start-up studio, a company that's able to attract human talent, developers, engineers, creatives and designers, people with whom we can build new company financed by us that grasp market trends. We work on the business model, namely defining the product or service, and then on every aspect of marketing, acquisition and customer care. The difference between the success and the failure of a digital product is all about the execution.

This formula is unique in Italy and has a strong social impact on the local area's ability to attract investments and create new business. We've established 70 companies since 2012 and created about 500 jobs, from coworkers to employees.

Beneath all this are acceleration programs, a big gym or a school, where we offer a short program to assist independent business plans for companies that we select and finance. The acceleration takes place through being inserted into our company ecosystem at various levels

of maturity. The one thing they have in common is that they all work on digital technologies that facilitate their model.

Nana Bianca recently moved into the renovated Granaio dell'Abbondanza in lungarno Soderini. Are the new offices inspiring you?

The new headquarters is the result of four years of work with the Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Firenze, which decided to invest heavily in an important piece of real estate to give young people a vision of the work of the future. Inside, there are 400 people in the co-working space, there's a 220-seat auditorium, a gorgeous restaurant and social café, with free cultural events every day. In September, an area dedicated to training will be inaugurated: Up Academy. What's new about it is that Nana Bianca opens its doors to the city. Citizens, tourists and craftspeople can all step inside and enjoy a coffee with an artificial intelligence engineer. And anyone can book a meeting room for just 30 euro to feel part of the buzz!

Tell us about your work on the new Be.Long website with Destination Florence Visitors & Convention Bureau. What's your role in the project and how do you see the future for digital natives?

We believe that Florence should be promoted internationally as a city where it's possible to go and do business. From the universities to the quality of life, Florence has everything going for it as a marketplace and places like Nana Bianca are part of this new chapter in the city's history. Of course, Florence's beauty is also a competitive resource for companies that attract workers who are willing to earn less in exchange for a better life.

How do you see the future of coworking spaces after the pandemic?

I think there will be plenty more co-working spaces in the future. International multinationals specialized in this model have already invested in Florence. My computer is my office; not a locked room. If you start with the premise that you're competing with the world, you've got to be ready to gain the skills where and when the market requires them, so you've got to remain open.



“Tuscany and the United States’ close friendship spans a breadth of sectors and has been going strong for more than two hundred years. Education is an arena of significant collaboration. Over 50 U.S. universities have established study programs in Florence alone, attracting students from across the United States who are drawn to the culture, history, art and beauty of the region. Thousands of American students and scholars normally study and teach in Florence each year and many university programs are reopening this summer. American investors and businesses also feel at home in Tuscany owing to a favorable business climate and a sizable talent pool. Not only do American companies make initial investments, but they keep on investing, as in the case of Baker Hughes, Eli Lilly, and many others. And of course, there’s also investment in the other direction, as many Florence and Tuscany-based companies have made important investments in the U.S. Tuscany typically attracts over a million American tourists a year. While the tourism sector has been severely affected by the pandemic, the Be.Long project seeks to enhance tourism in the city by attracting those interested in a longer term stay. In this way, Be.Long intersects with the Consulate’s mission of keeping the U.S.-Tuscany relationship strong by fostering more people to people connections between the U.S. and Tuscany. The bonds and friendships created by those who come here to work or study often last a lifetime. I’ve experienced this myself, having come to Italy for the first time with a backpack on my back, and now having returned as the American Consul General with a mission to sustain and deepen the U.S.-Italy partnership.”



**Ragini Gupta**  
U.S. Consul General  
in Florence

## **BE.LONG** *is online!*

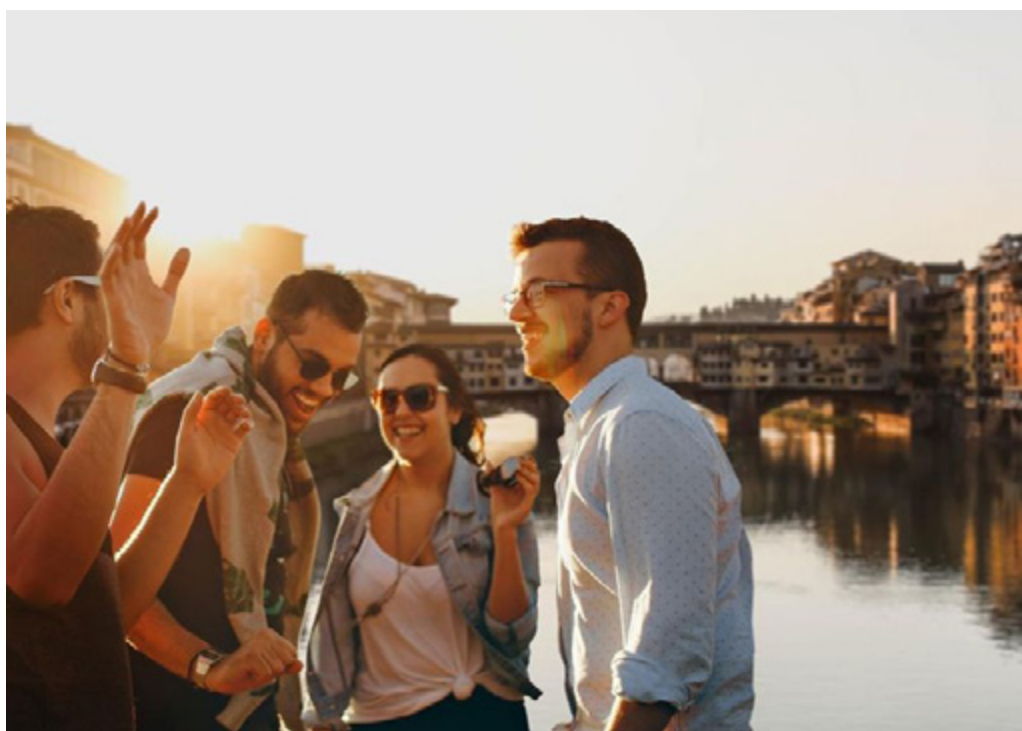


Be.Long is now online **with comprehensive information** for the city’s temporary citizens, such as students, startupper and digital nomads, which provides useful tips to live Florence to the fullest.

If you’ve moving to Florence soon, **check out the housing section:** <https://housing.destinationflorence.com>. All the apartments have been carefully selected and our team checks every single accommodation, which is why you will only find reliable and top-quality owners on the Be.long website.

It’s time to become a Be.Longer! By signing up to Be.Long, you gain access to amazing deals, discounts and affiliations for co-working spaces, hotels, tours, amenities and much more.

Florence’s schools, businesses, coworking spaces and innovative institutions are involved in the project as Be.Long becomes increasingly established.



Check out the Be.Long website: <https://belong.destinationflorence.com>

## Be.modern

*Modern art isn't the first thing that comes to mind about Florence. Yet despite the medieval and Renaissance splendors, the Tuscan capital vaunts art galleries and contemporary spaces that merge Florence's past with its forward-thinking present.*



# American art at Palazzo Strozzi

Until 29 August, **American Art 1961-2001** at contemporary arts space Palazzo Strozzi is a journey through a multitude of artistic expressions—painting, photography, video, sculpture and installations—that reveal 40 years of American art, featuring Rothko, Warhol, Oldenburg, Lichtenstein, Levine, Opie, Kara Walker, and many more. Many of these works by famous artists are exhibited for the first time in Italy thanks to the collaboration with the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis.

The exhibition presents an extraordinary journey through 53 iconic pieces by noted figures and from movements that have marked American art between two decisive historical moments, the beginning of the Vietnam War and the September 11, 2001 attacks. From Pop Art and Minimalism to Conceptual Art and the Pictures Generation, up to the most recent research of the 1990s and 2000s, central themes include the struggle for civil rights, discrimination, homophobia and feminism. Admiring the works at Palazzo Strozzi, we find ourselves reflecting on issues that are still current and of fundamental importance today.

The itinerary is divided into nine thematic sections, with particular



attention given to key figures. In the first section, where Mark Rothko's work titled No.2 invites observers to participate in visual and emotional contemplation, we immediately find one of the works featured on the exhibition posters: Andy Warhol's renowned Sixteen Jackies dedicated to First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy after JFK's assassination.

The era of the Sixties is witnessed through works by masters such as

Donald Judd, Bruce Nauman and John Baldessari, who became reference points for subsequent generations of artists to redefine the possibilities of art. Later artists continued to address topics such as the reframing of the male gaze in the work of Cindy Sherman; the appropriation of mass-media images by artists Richard Prince and Barbara Kruger; the denunciation of the stigma of AIDS in the work of Félix González-Torres; or the disquieting narratives of Matthew Barney, whose 1999 video



installation *Cremaster 2* is shown in an original setting for the first time in Italy.

A special focus in the exhibition is dedicated to artistic developments of the 1990s and 2000s interrogating American identity and featuring the work of such artists as Kerry James Marshall and Kara Walker.

The exhibition is curated by Vincenzo Bellis (Curator and Associate Director of Programs, Visual Arts, Walker Art Center) and Arturo Galansino (General Director of the Palazzo Strozzi Foundation).

**Tickets can be purchased directly on [DestinationFlorence.com](http://DestinationFlorence.com), with full-price, reduced and tickets with audio guide available. Reservation is not mandatory. Guided tours are free for individual visitors every Thursday at 6pm and every Sunday at 3pm.**



The **Museo Novecento**, in piazza Santa Maria Novella, features pieces ranging from neon-light installations and acoustic experiments to Fontana's famous slashed canvases, not to mention works by Vedova, Rosai, De Chirico, Casorati, De Pisis, Morandi and Sironi. The pieces are viewed in a radical environment, propelling visitors backwards through time from the nineties to the beginning of the 20th century. Boasting 300 works divided among 15 exhibition rooms, you'll also find a studio, a cabinet of drawings and prints, and a conference hall. Multimedia stations, sound devices and video rooms accompany the many artworks, offering visitors a multi-sensory experience. A visit to the Museo Novecento concludes in a space that explores the image of Florence in international cinema.

The **Marino Marini Museum**, tucked away in the former San Pancrazio Church, is home to 180-plus sculptures, paintings, drawings and engravings by the Pistoia-born artist. While drawing up a restoration project for the renovation of the church, architects and the city's administration decided to allocate the structure to cultural and social activities. The lofty spaces, the way the light falls and the impressive arches formed the perfect backdrop for the dynamism of Marini's works: his riders, Etruscan goddesses, bronzes, concrete pieces, paintings and portraits.

**Galleria Frittelli** is one of Florence's largest contemporary art spaces. Founders Carlo and Simone Frittelli opted for a Brooklyn mentality, setting up shop in the suburban Novoli district. Here, you'll find Italian abstract art from the post-war era, analytical paintings, visual poetry and works by emerging artists. The gallery is also home to archives containing works by Pino Pascali, Gianni Bertini and Vinicio Berti.

Back in central Florence, **Eduardo Secci Contemporary**, founded in 2013, links Florence's old and modern worlds in evermore innovative exhibitions. Besides showing emerging and established contemporary artists, the gallery focuses on artists that employ numerous mediums for their work. The bright rooms are located a few steps away from the Arno.

**Street Levels Gallery**, in via Palazzuolo, is an urban gallery that explores the relationship between street art and the public. A meeting point for young creative talent, the space brings this underrepresented art form to the mainstream gallery world, creating a fascinating and stimulating dialogue between alternative art and the city's history.

A former prison is now one of Florence's most happening arts spaces. **Murate Art District - MAD** hosts temporary art shows, site-specific installations and artist residences, not to mention conferences, workshops and an array of outdoor concerts.

Staying in Florence has never been so advantageous: **hotels, tours and experiences are now available at unique prices** until December 31, 2021. Make the most of the Destination Florence Plus promotional campaign and treat yourself to Florence as you've never seen it before.

[http://bit.ly/DestinationFlorencePlus\\_Hotels](http://bit.ly/DestinationFlorencePlus_Hotels)



Richard Masquelier\_Unsplash

# Choosing the best place in Tuscany for your wedding

*When hovering over a map of Tuscany trying to decide on the perfect place to say 'I do,' the endless number of idyllic venues and spectacular beauty of the entire region mean it can be hard to select from the many, many options. From stately villas to picturesque castles, taking in agritourisms and vineyards, there are truly any number of ways to spend your special day in Tuscany, and each of them is bound to be stunning whether you choose north, south, east or west.*

## Timeless Florence

The Renaissance city sits at the top of many couples' lists, and for good reason. Nestled in its valley that's embraced by the hills, it's a paradise for culture lovers, and indeed lovers. Bring your nearest and dearest here for a memorable celebration in the city of Michelangelo, Galileo Galilei and Leonardo da Vinci, where every direction you look you're presented with a gallery, museum, centuries-old monument or architectural treasure like Palazzo Vecchio, Ponte Vecchio, and of course the Brunelleschi's Duomo. History walks hand in hand with you here as you start your life together.

## Sieneese style

Head to the heights of the Sieneese hills to elevate your love. Toast to each other in the vineyards as the sun sets on your most perfect day with breathtaking views on all sides. Culinary delights are bound to delight all in attendance, with typical treats like *pici*, *pecorino* and *budino di riso* a must-try while in the

area. Dating back to Etruscan times, this historic city now has a medieval feel as the narrow streets lead you from one magnificent piazza to another, making sure not to miss the world-renowned Piazza del Campo. As another historic city of art, the backdrop to your vows is undoubtedly going to be spectacular from whichever angle you choose.

## Historic San Gimignano

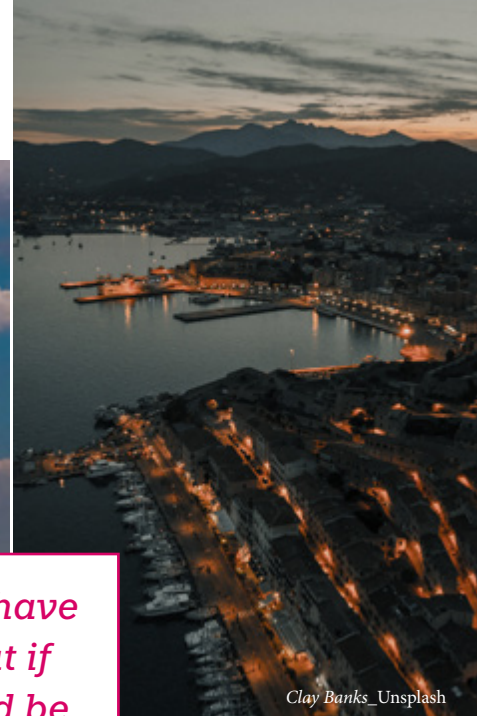
The 13 proud towers of San Gimignano herald your new beginnings powerfully. Known as the Manhattan of Tuscany, its dramatic impact made it the setting for famous films by the likes of Zeffirelli and the Taviani brothers. Well-worth choosing even just for the top-quality food and wine, the delectable bites will be savoured all the more in the hilltop town that's a UNESCO World Heritage site. Your eyes will be drawn to the architectural treasures such as Palazzo del Popolo and the Cathedral and the countryside is dotted with villas and other venues that are the things of dreams.

## Lovely Lucca

The Tuscan gem protected within its walls offers a safe and welcoming shelter to share your vows. The intimate feeling is ideal for gatherings of your closest loved ones to create unforgettable memories in an equally unforgettable setting. Known as the town of 100 churches, it's a historic fort and sits within a breathtaking landscape run through by the river Serchio and peppered with medieval towns. A Roman amphitheatre will thrill history buffs and nature fans will want to walk the magnificent gardens for hours and hours.

## Romantic Elba

Equipped with some of the most stunning beaches in Italy, a dazzling ceremony in front of the sea is the pique of romance. With incredible history, utterly delicious food and wine (Pliny called it "the island of good wine") and views that take your breath away, it's no wonder that this island is steeped in mythology and history, having attracted



*Love doesn't have a location, but if it did, it would be Tuscan.*



people all throughout the centuries. It's interestingly the place where Virgil's Jason stopped in his search for the Golden Fleece, making it perfect for an immense celebration of your love.

### **Etruscan Coastal charms**

The dramatic and charming landscape that stretches from Rosignano Marittimo to Piombino in the province of Livorno gifts views of the glittering sea that contrast with the colours of the Mediterranean scrub. The ancient Etruscan civilization chose to settle in this site for many reasons that become clear when you visit. Fashion and style were fundamentally important to the Etruscans, handed down through the

generations to the elegance you see all around you. They were also noted for their marriages, as Etruscans famously focused on equal rights between husband and wife, with elaborate ceremonies that had a banquet among relatives and friends as its centre point. The wonderful sea of the Gulf of Baratti provides the perfect backdrop for photos as a romantic and peaceful atmosphere pervades.

### **Massa Marittima magic**

Positioned on a high and isolated hill 380 meters above sea level, the historic center of Massa Marittima stands enclosed within a well-preserved city wall, a remnant of its medieval past. Sunris-

es, sunsets and surprises await in this magical land that is linked to precious metals. Incredible sights and sounds surround you, and your guests will be reaching for the cameras all day long.

### **Certaldo's cuisine**

Certaldo is a name familiar to any food lover its onion is a prime ingredient in many typically Tuscan dishes. Those more literarily-inclined will know it for Giovanni Boccaccio and his masterpiece The Decameron. For whichever reason you know it, its atmosphere is what will make your wedding day an absolute joy, as history is imprinted in every brick and the tranquil way of life means relaxation is inevitable.



Clay Banks\_Unsplash

## Be yourself in Florence

Florence has a long history of equality and civil rights. A pioneer in the fight against discrimination since 1853 when **Grand Duke Leopold II decriminalized homosexuality**, today's city welcomes all travellers in a proud continuum of openness.



This easy embrace dates all the way back to the Renaissance as a time of expressive freedom for artists believed to be gay, such as the unmarried Michelangelo Buonarroti and Leonardo da Vinci. The close "friendship" between philosopher Marsilio Ficino and poet Giovanni Cavalcanti was highlighted in letters exchanged between the couple. It wasn't always plain sailing, of course, and several Renaissance artists were accused of sodomy, most famously sculptor Benvenuto Cellini, who was forced to pay sizeable fines, often in the form of sacks of flour.

While it's practically impossible to establish the sexual orientation of past figures, championing Tuscany's, and more specifically Florence's liberal history, is certainly merited. Grand Duke of Tuscany, Leopoldo I was the first to decriminalize homosexuality

in 1853. Indeed, three of the Medici dynasty, Pope Leo X, Ferdinand II, and Giovanni Gastone, were almost certainly gay or bisexual, and the ruling family generally turned a blind eye to their citizens' sexual preferences, especially when artists, writers and thinkers were involved. Although Savonarola threatened to undermine this tolerance in the late 1400s, the status quo was swiftly restored with the first gay revolution in history. On August 13, 1512, the Compagnacci, a group of 30 or so nobles stormed the Florentine seat of power, demanding that all punishments ceased against the homosexual community. Just one month later, the Medici returned to Florence and approved the request. Tuscany's historic openness is also revealed linguistically: the word for "homosexual" in Germanic countries at the time was Florenzen and the

French referred to sodomy as *le vice florentin* ("the Florentine vice").

Florence in 2021 is a place of phenomenal diversity, a meeting place for art lovers and culture connoisseurs from all backgrounds. With a population of world travelers, the Florentine atmosphere ensures that all visitors can truly be themselves. Florence was at the forefront of openness in 1974, opening Italy's first gay bar, Tabasco, just steps from the Palazzo Vecchio. Although the bar's no longer open, the city's LGBTQ+ scene is alive and well with leading events, such as **Florence Queer Festival**, a celebration of queer culture through art, cinema, theatre and photography that's held every September, **regional pride parades** every June and **LGBTQ+ walking tours** complete with lunch and wine tastings.

Florence also has a plethora of associations, such as **IREOS**, which promotes acceptance of diversity through understanding, encouraging intercultural exchange among the city's queer community and the rest of the city; **Arcigay**, which recently opened new headquarters in the Novoli area; and **Azione Gay e Lesbica Firenze**, a non-profit that's been around for more than 30 years and helps to organize Toscana Pride.

With all this past, it's no wonder that **Florence is popular for destination same-sex weddings**. From stylish rooftops overlooking the cityscape to picturesque villas in the Tuscan countryside, saying yes is both the next chapter in your relationship and in Florence's endless, all-embracing history.



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it's not  
only our  
business...

It's our  
passion.

Can you imagine a  
better place to say yes?  
We're here to help  
you make a lifetime of  
memories in Tuscany.



TUSCANY  
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