



01



GETTY IMAGES

02



WORDS: DAVID MEAGHER; STEPHEN BROOK

03

**02 Made in Rome**

Silvia Venturini Fendi, the creative director of accessories at the label started by her grandparents as a leather and fur good shop in Rome in 1925, is a passionate supporter of her “irresistible” home town. The designer, instrumental in the creation of the famous It Bag, the Fendi baguette, is president of Altaroma, the local fashion body charged with boosting the capital’s fashion vibe.

“Rome is my home city; I was born and grew up here. You see, Rome is an emotional experience. The city encompasses you with its immeasurable cultural heritage; it’s like walking through traces of history — its appeal is irresistible,” Venturini Fendi says.

“This Roman lure can be sensed through the air, through the light, that very special hue which tinges the ruins you find ‘scattered’ along the streets, along the palazzi, like a magic ‘hummus’ which conditions and shapes silhouettes and decorations, making them unique.”

Altaroma, which held its fashion week just last month, is attempting to plug Rome firmly into the fashion consciousness alongside the more famous Italian cities. “At present Rome is increasingly considered as an additional point of reference in the scenery of the new Italian artistic and creative vibe,” she says. “More specifically, Altaroma is ‘the new Italian landmark’, a definition which embodies the sense of its new direction.

“Rome has never attacked Milan and never will. I believe the three Italian fashion capitals coexist with different roles. Milan is the city of ready-to-wear, Florence of menswear and Rome is the centre for international scouting, high fashion and high craftsmanship in every sense as a fundamental component of the Made-in-Italy concept.”

**01 The place to be**

When it opens in July, the J.K. Place Rome should bring a new level of luxury to the Eternal City, if it lives up to its uber-cool sister hotels, the family-owned J.K. Florence and J.K. Capri (pictured). Expect a Neoclassical design in a restored historic building with a cosy ambience and warm and attentive service situated just a short walk from the Spanish Steps, the Pantheon and the main shopping district of Rome. The lobby will feature a glass ceiling, affording internal views of the hotel facade. Furniture in the lobby and library will mix refurbished vintage furniture and contemporary style. Samuel Porrecca, who formerly ran the wildly popular J.K. Capri, has been brought in as general manager, giving the new hotel a great chance of being an instant hit. It will have just 30 rooms, including some suites over three floors, and a high staff-to-guest ratio. Rates will start from €700 (\$913) including VAT, breakfast, soft drinks and all service charges. J.K. Place Rome is in Via Monte d’Oro 30. [jkroma.com](http://jkroma.com).

**03 WISH likes ...**

Rome’s war on the sandwich. The city has dubbed the tourist practice of picnicking on public monuments unacceptable and indecent. Local authorities feel so strongly that they passed laws in October outlawing the practice and have deployed “sandwich police” to patrol the Colosseum, Spanish Steps, Pantheon, Trinita dei Monte and other city highlights to shoo away al fresco eaters. Or, if that fails, to fine them. Local officers in navy blue uniforms and peaked caps have the power to levy instant fines of €25 to €500. Eating while on the move is acceptable, but once you sit down and risk dirtying a historical monument, you’re toast.

**Fashion forum**

**04** This month *WISH* will again host the L’Oreal Melbourne Fashion Festival’s Business Seminar on March 21. The line-up of speakers includes the Greek-born London-based Mary Katrantzou, whose spring/summer 2013 collection was described by *Style.com* as “pure poetry”. Other speakers include Marc Worth, chairman and chief executive of research and analytics company Stylus Media Group, fashion illustrator Bill Donovan, who has worked with clients such as Christian Dior, Neiman Marcus and Saks Fifth Avenue, and then there’s retail designer Ron Pompei. The seminar also includes a form on user-generated content within the fashion industry. Tickets to the seminar are \$450, to book visit [ticketek.com](http://ticketek.com).

**L’ORÉAL MELBOURNE FASHION FESTIVAL**

**05** In a sign of the continued strength of the luxury market in Australia, a new conference will be held in Sydney at the Art Gallery of NSW on March 18 to address the opportunities and challenges in the premium sector here as well as look at issues affecting Australian businesses operating in global markets. Speakers at Delux13 come from a range of industries. As well as the local heads of brands such as Louis Vuitton and Hermes, Delux13 will present speakers from brands including Emirates, Nespresso, Amex and Penfolds Wines. To book your place at the conference visit [deluxforum.com](http://deluxforum.com).

