

# LUXURY

[www.luxurytraveladvisor.com](http://www.luxurytraveladvisor.com)

## TRAVEL ADVISOR



### DESTINATIONS

Italy's Valley of Good Food  
Yangon, Myanmar  
Portland, Maine

### HOTELS

Caribbean Retreats  
Gainsborough Bath Spa


### CRUISE

Delectable Dining

# REID TRAVEL

Lauren Jacob's team guides loyal clients on stellar journeys with knowledge and confidence.

## DESTINATIONS



PORTICI DI BOLOGNA'S Imperial Suite comes with office and kitchen space, as well as a spiral staircase leading to a roof terrace (here).

BOLOGNA (far right) is also known as La Grassa, or the "fat city," because of the abundance and variety of its cuisine.

# Italy's Valley Of Good Food: Emilia-Romagna

BY SHARRI WHITING DE MASI

Italy is many things to many people, but to the majority it's one endless, appetizing menu. The center of this culinary

universe is Emilia-Romagna, especially the towns of Bologna and Parma.

We began our journey in

Parma, the town who gave its name to elevated versions of Italian ham and cheese. It's also the seat of Barilla pasta and the

center of Lambrusco wine production. Throw in some EVOO and you can live there forever.

We stayed at the five-star





**Grand Hotel de la Ville** in Barilla Center, Renzo Piano's repurposing of the original Barilla pasta factory complex. The hotel, at Largo Piero Calamandrei n. 11, is steps away from The Academia Barilla, where visitors from around the world come for cooking classes and food tours, and concerts at the extraordinary Paganini Auditorium, a converted sugar factory.

The contemporary hotel, in keeping the building's industrial history, stretches across three long floors, with 100 rooms (a mix of twin, double and kings)

and 10 suites. All suites and superior rooms are corner rooms. All rooms contain hypoallergenic carpets and linens.

The 850-square-foot Imperial Suite on the third floor (No. 331) features a soundproof window wall, overlooking the park-like setting. The décor is accented by dramatic pieces of Venini glass and silk-lined walls. The marble bath includes both a whirlpool tub and a large shower; there is also a half bath in the suite and a spacious dressing room. For a family traveling together, it's possible

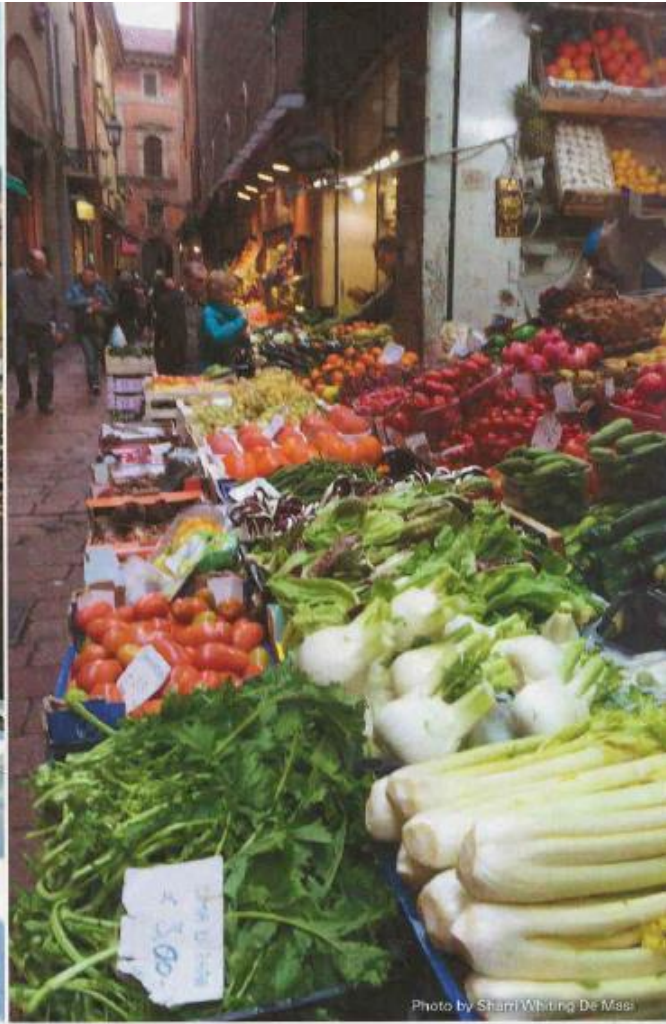


Photo by Shari Whiting De Mas

to add connecting bedrooms to the suite.

Among the big superior corner rooms is No. 333, which is filled with natural light. The green marble bathroom contains a shower. The adjacent twin room, No. 332, can be connected. Superior rooms Nos. 325 and 340 are comfortable and virtually soundproof, as are all rooms in the hotel.

On the second floor, Junior Suite No. 214 is decorated in relaxing muted colors. There's a sitting area, as well as a pearl-colored marble bathroom with

a special whirlpool tub, though no shower.

Downstairs, the main floor is a parqueted expanse, with lobby seating, a bar and the excellent Ristorante Vivande, where diners will find inventive dishes celebrating local ingredients. Hotel CEO Cesare Mora says his goal is to maintain a very high quality restaurant so that guests may experience the best that Parma has to offer while staying in this historic culinary setting. (For a quick and good lunch, try MisterLino next door to the hotel in Barilla Center).





THE FRATELLI GALLONI PROSCIUTTO'S drying facility hung with thousands of aromatic Parma hams.

Vice Director Daniela Scita ([vicedirezione@grandhoteldelaville.it](mailto:vicedirezione@grandhoteldelaville.it); 011-390-521-0304; fax 011-390-521-030-303) stands ready to accomplish any task, from the mundane to the miraculous. For more information, visit [www.grandhoteldelaville.it](http://www.grandhoteldelaville.it).

A visit to a Parmigiano-Reggiano factory is a must in Parma. Guide Elena Zanlari ([elena.zanlari@libero.it](mailto:elena.zanlari@libero.it); 011-393-392-240-028) joined Giuseppe Scarica, director of his family's company, to show us the ropes at **Caseifici Maghenzani Cav. Guido & Figli** ([www.maghenzani.net](http://www.maghenzani.net)). Of course, we were able to taste the extraordinary aged Parmigiano afterwards.

Next we visited the **Fratelli**

**Galloni prosciutto** ([www.galloni-prosciutto.it](http://www.galloni-prosciutto.it)). Third generation director, Mirella Galloni, guided us through vast natural drying facilities hung with thousands of aromatic Parma hams. At the end of the tour, we were led into a softly lit drying room, where delicately flavored prosciutto and chilled prosecco awaited.

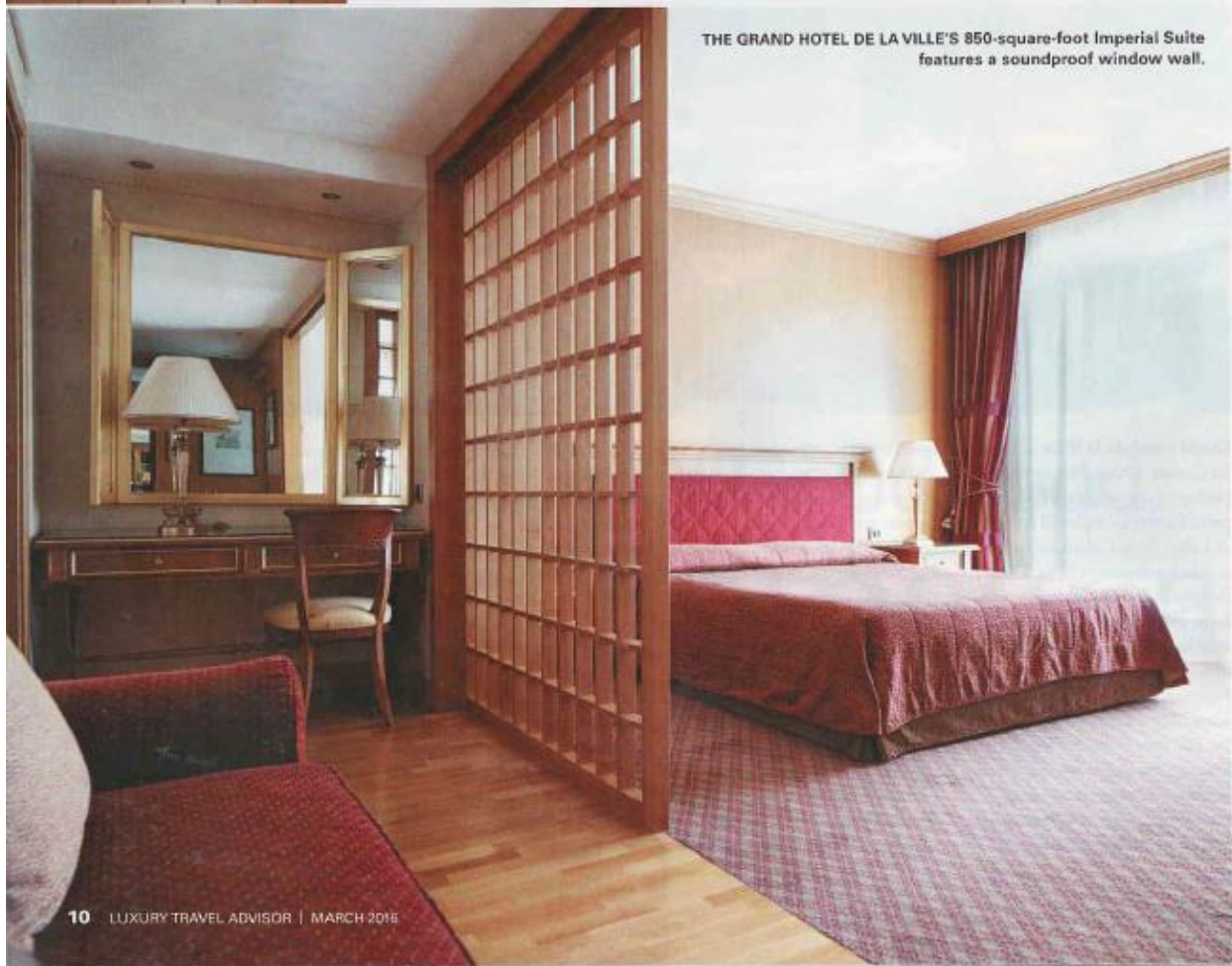
Later, we stopped by **Accademia Barilla**, where Martina Sibio ([martina.sibio@barilla.com](mailto:martina.sibio@barilla.com)) showed us around the 16 professional kitchens, auditorium, the culinary library and the Barilla products store. **The Accademia** ([www.academia-barilla.com](http://www.academia-barilla.com); 011-390-521-264-060; fax 011-390-521-264-050) offers cooking classes, as well as culinary tours of the region.

A new resource for planning visits and special events in Italy is [italianspecialoccasions.com](http://italianspecialoccasions.com). Contact Italy expert Maria Chiara Picardi ([mariachiara@italianspecialoccasions.com](mailto:mariachiara@italianspecialoccasions.com)), director of operations.

After immersing ourselves in the addictive sensory experiences brought on by sampling Parmigiano-Reggiano and Prosciutto d'Parma, washed down with rich and sparkling Lambrusco, we moved on to Bologna, La Grassa (the Fat City).

We checked into the charming **I Portici Hotel Bologna** ([www.iporticihotel.com](http://www.iporticihotel.com)) at via Indipendenza 69 and set to work, that is, eating.

A historic palazzo on one of Bologna's fabled portico-ed



THE GRAND HOTEL DE LA VILLE'S 850-square-foot Imperial Suite features a soundproof window wall.



PRIVATE DINING can be arranged in the underground tunnel at I Portici Hotel Bologna.

streets, the hotel is charming and light-filled. There are 42 rooms in the older part of the building and another 42 in the new section; there are three suites. Director Riccardo Bacchi Reggiani's staff ([guest.relation@iportici.com](mailto:guest.relation@iportici.com)) was helpful and knowledgeable.

The largest suite in Bologna, the Imperial Suite (No. 511) is 1,300 square feet of contemporary Italian design. There is office and kitchen space, as well as a spiral staircase leading to a roof terrace. Skylights add light and whitewashed ceilings reveal the original rooflines. In addition to the living room, there are two bedrooms and two bathrooms, plus a dining room. The space is open and airy.

Suite 580 is located on the fifth floor of the palazzo. The master bedroom has an en suite bath with a huge shower and big closet, but that's only part of the story. The huge bathtub sits within its own glass-walled space, framed by the building's steel roof girders. The suite sleeps four in one bedroom and a double sofa bed; there is an additional bed available for a child.

Other rooms to consider are Deluxe Double No. 404, with a view of the nearby park and via Indipendenza, as well as a decorative ceiling, Room No. 412 is for those seeking peace and quiet, away from the street. Three Deluxe Rooms — Nos. 319a, 319b and 315 —

offer private terraces overlooking the park. Room Nos. 324 and 302b have terraces overlooking the street.

Ristorante I Portici and Chef Agostino Iacobucci have been awarded a Michelin star; the chef also supervises the sophisticated menu in the more informal lounge/bar. For wine and history lovers, there is the 14th c. tunnel complex, where for centuries ice was kept frozen under coved brick ceilings. Today, there are tables for tastings, dinners and private parties in the evocative space.

Many restaurants in Emilia-Romagna celebrate their region's foodie reputation by adding the word "gold" to their names. Three of our favorites are:

**Ristorante Angiol D'Or** (at Via Scutellari, 1, Parma; 011-39-052-128-2632; [www.angioldor.it](http://www.angioldor.it)): Start with a bottle of local Lambrusco and torte fritte (puffy bread) with Parma ham.

**Ristorante Uva d'Oro** (Piazza Mazzini 38, Modena; 011-390-592-3971; [www.ristoranteuvadoro.it](http://www.ristoranteuvadoro.it)): This is a good place for lunch when traveling between Parma and Bologna. Modena is the home of balsamic vinegar, so stop off to buy some.

**Caminetto d'Oro** (via de'Falegnami 4, Bologna; 011-39-051-263-494; [www.caminettodoro.it](http://www.caminettodoro.it)): Originally a bakery, hence the name, the restaurant is known for pastas and breads made with organic flours. ■