

21ST - 23RD SEPTEMBER 2026

E C C E L L E N Z E

STARS IN FLORENCE—TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY EVENT



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STARS IN FLORENCE—TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY EVENT

LAST YEAR EDITION

Boutique event gathering luxury travel leaders in Florence
Hosted at Collegio Alla Querce Auberge Resorts Collection





E C C E L L E N Z E

A D R E A M B O R N I N F L O R E N C E



Last year, in 2024, I shared a dream with my best friend and business partner, Luca Perfetto: to bring Florence back under the international spotlight of Luxury. It all began with a simple idea — an elegant evening where friends and leaders from the world of Travel and Hospitality could gather for a memorable toast. A celebration of connection, excellence, and our shared love for this timeless city.

And then came Lorenzo Maraviglia.

A long-time friend and visionary in his own right, Lorenzo called me while I was in New York. His message was simple yet powerful: “Urbano, I’m coming to Florence.”

With that call, something bigger was set in motion. Lorenzo brought not only his passion but a strong commitment to building something

meaningful together — something that would shine a global light on Florence and on this incredible investment: Collegio alla Querce.

A historic jewel, Collegio alla Querce began its story in 1868 as a prestigious boarding school that shaped the minds of future leaders before falling into decades of silence. But today, after years of meticulous restoration, it has been reborn under the vision of Auberge Resorts, a place where history meets contemporary luxury. From the preserved frescoes and coffered ceilings to its refined modern comforts, this iconic property now stands as a shining example of Florentine heritage — transformed into a world-class destination.

Today, in September 2025, we proudly host the first edition of ECCELLENZE together with Lorenzo.

But this is only the beginning.

We’re honored to have the support and shared vision of Destination Florence, as we build not just an event — but a platform. A boutique gathering. A study group. An open conversation about the future of Florence and the evolution of global luxury. Laura Masi has been absolutely key in helping us transform this dream into something tangible.

Eccellenze is born today with a mission:

To celebrate the beauty of Florence.

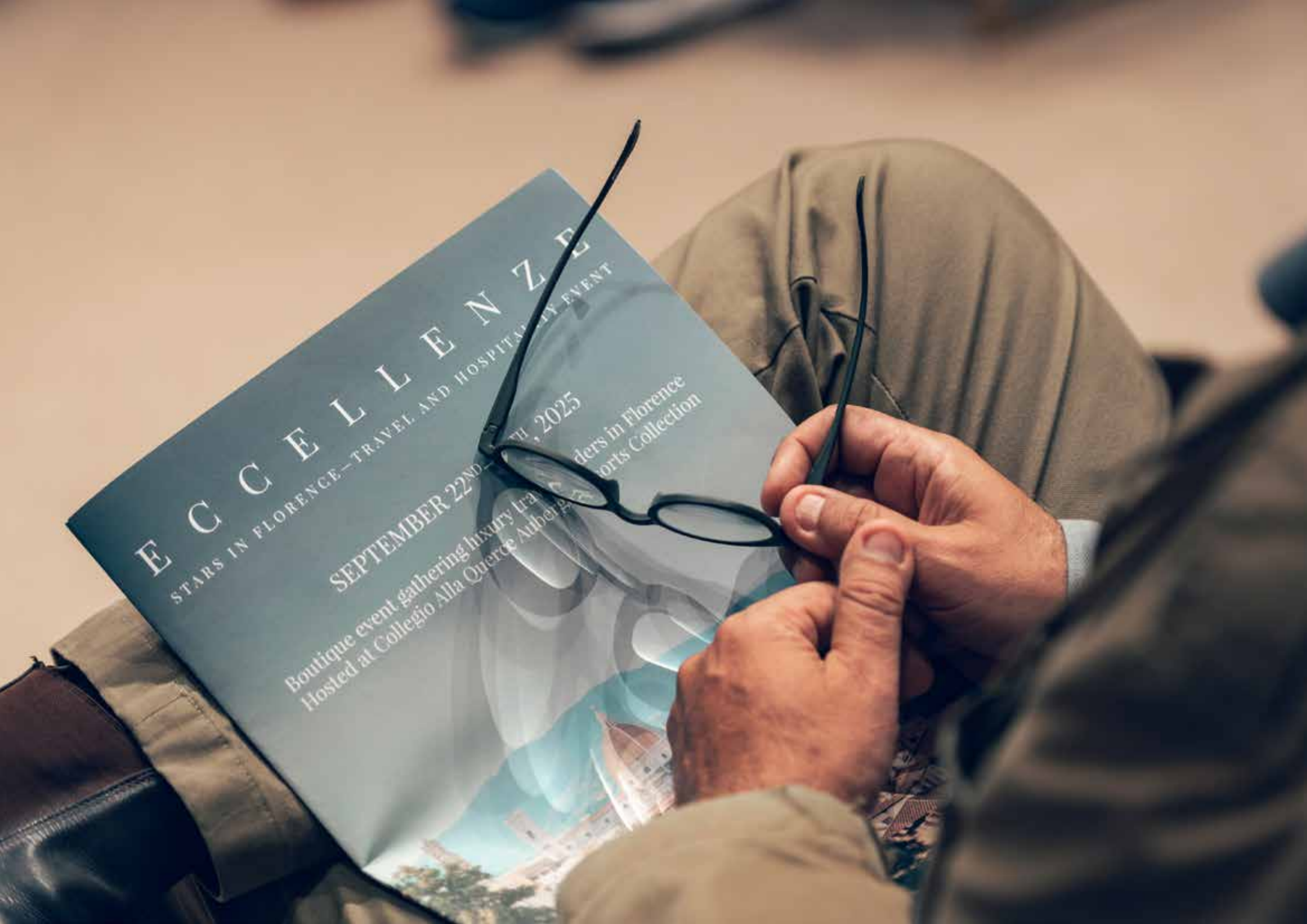
To deepen your cultural connection with this land.

And to inspire new ideas that shape the future — of the city, and of our industry.

Welcome to ECCELLENZE.

Thank you for contributing to the future of this unique city of Florence.

By Urbano Brini, Chief of Luxury at Arno Travel part of Towns of Italy Group



In the city of Firenze, of course.

The home of beauty and the birthplace of Arno Travel—the luxury destination management company facilitating this event. A brand-new, effervescent format that combines the exchange of visions from expert delegates, meaningful engagement among participants and, why not, the joy of experiencing the destination itself. Eccellenze blends dedicated travel and hospitality industry talks with immersive local experiences. Delegates forge lasting relationships while discovering Italy’s cultural richness, authenticity, and elegance first-hand—not from across a table, but side by side through exciting shared memories.

Meet Fondazione Destination Florence



As the Destination Management Organization for Florence and its Metropolitan Area, Fondazione Destination Florence works to ensure a sustainable and welcoming tourism experience, one that honors the city’s identity while benefiting both visitors and locals.

Partnering with institutions and the local business community, the Foundation drives initiatives to diversify and manage tourist flows, attracting high-quality tourism including congress and sports visitors, and creating a more balanced experience across the city.

Proud to be host destination partner of Eccellenze 2025, Fondazione Destination Florence embodies the perfect blend of strategy, sustainability, and love for the city.



E C C E L L E N Z E

A N E W C H A P T E R I N F L O R E N C E



When I returned to Florence to lead the rebirth of Collegio alla Querce, I felt a deep sense of responsibility: to honor a historic institution while opening its doors to the world as a new beacon of hospitality.

For more than a century, this property was an important cultural and educational landmark for Florence. Once a much-loved boarding school run by the Barnabite Fathers, it nurtured generations of students and even hosted pioneering scientific studies, such as a 19th-century observatory that contributed to the development of modern seismology.

Today, after years of meticulous restoration, Collegio alla Querce has been reborn under Auberge Resorts Collection. It stands once again as a place of vision and learning — not through classrooms, but through experiences, encounters, and connections that inspire.

Hosting the first edition of Eccellenze here is not only an honor, but also a statement. Together with Urbano Brini and Laura Masi, we want to celebrate Florence as a capital of excellence, and to offer a platform where leaders in travel, hospitality, and culture can gather, exchange ideas, and inspire each other.

For us at Collegio alla Querce, this event is more than an occasion. It is a promise — to nurture authentic experiences, to elevate our city's global voice, and to continue building bridges between Florence and the international community.

Eccellenze begins here, but its vision belongs to all of us.

By Lorenzo Maraviglia, General Manager, Collegio alla Querce

E C C E L L E N Z E

COLLEGIO ALLA QUERCE
AUBERGE RESORTS COLLECTION
FIRENZE ITALIA



E C C E L L E N Z E

THE PROGRAMME



Monday September 22nd 2025

- Arrival of guests in Florence
- Private transfer from Florence Airport/Santa Maria Novella Train Station
- Check-in and Welcome Light Lunch at Collegio Alla Querce
- 02.30 pm - 05.00 pm Official Presentation and Eccellenze Small Talks
- 06.00 pm Arno Travel Florence Dinner Experience

Tuesday September 23rd 2025

- Breakfast at leisure
- 8.30 am Yoga Class
- 11.00 am Departure for Arno Travel Tuscan Lunch
- 05.00 pm Back to Hotel - Relax
- 08.00 pm Stars Gala Dinner Night at Collegio Alla Querce co-hosted by Florentine Stars

Wednesday September 24th 2025

- Breakfast at leisure
- 8.00 am Sound Bath
- Check-out
- Private transfer to Florence Airport/Santa Maria Novella Train Station



E C C E L L E N Z E



Welcome to Eccellenze 2025, celebrating its first edition.

Eccellenze aspires to become the annual boutique event that brings together up to 30 handpicked global luxury travel agency owners and experts alongside exceptional Italian partners representing the very best in bespoke hospitality. Eccellenze is where travel and hospitality stars meet Florence and Italy's finest. The event is hosted in a carefully selected prime venue: Collegio alla Querce, Auberge Resorts Collection newly opened in Spring 2025 and masterfully orchestrated by General Manager Lorenzo Maraviglia.



E C C E L L E N Z E

ARNO TRAVEL
PART OF TOWNS OF ITALY GROUP

Founded in 1969, Arno Travel is one of Italy's most renowned onsite travel planners, a name synonymous with authenticity, expertise, and tailor-made experiences.

With a deep knowledge of the country and a passion for excellence, Arno Travel curates exceptional journeys by handpicking remarkable properties, designing unforgettable experiences, and collaborating with inspiring local experts.

As co-creator of Eccellenze 2025, Arno Travel brings its signature vision: showcasing the very best of Italy while crafting moments that guests will carry with them long after their stay.

E C C E L L E N Z E

A T T E N D E E S

INTERNATIONAL STARS



Carolina Perez
Founder of DUCO (ITA)



Camille Cutrone Holubar
President & Co-Owner Vista Travel Consultants Inc (USA)



Albert M. Herrera
Executive Vice President Partner Relations Internova Travel Group



Annie Fitzimmons
Editor in Chief EMBARK Beyond (USA)



David Lowy
President Renshaw Travel (CA)



Evan Upchurch
Storyteller, Copywriter & Content Strategist Studio Cadenza (MEX)



Federico Von Sanden
Founder and CEO, Fvs Travel Group (UK)



Gina Gabbard
Chief Of Strategy Officer, First In Service (USA)



Kristin Chambers
Founder and CEO, Travellustre (USA)



Lance Stamps
Vp, Marketing at Classic Travel Service (USA)



Sarah Groen
Owner and CEO, Bell And Bly (USA)



Shelby Donley
General Manager Ultra High Net Worth Business Division Virtuoso Ltd (USA)



Tony Shepard
CEO and Partner Four Hundred By Design (USA)



Yuriy Horovyy
Founder and CEO Almont Travel (UK)

E C C E L L E N Z E

A T T E N D E E S

I T A L I A N S T A R S



Antonio
Sersale

Owner
Le Sirenuse Positano



Crescenzo
Gargano

Owner
Santa Caterina Amalfi



Ester
Montilyo

Managing Director
Boutique Travel



Giuseppe
De Martino

St. Regis Lead
Ambassador Europe
St. Regis Hotels & Resorts



Hugo
Pizzinini

Owner - Managing Director
Aman Rosa Alpina



Luca
Perfetto

CEO and Founder
Towns Of Italy Group



Maria
Strati

General Manager
JK Place Roma



Martino
Acampora

General Manager
Villa Tre Ville Positano



Maurizio
Orlacchio

General Manager
Borgo Sant'Andrea Amalfi



Simone
Giorgi

General Manager
Orient Express La Minerva Roma



Valentina
De Santis

CEO and Owner
Grand Hotel Tremezzo &
Passalacqua Lago Di Como



Valeriano
Antonioli

CEO of Lungarno Collection



Vincenzo
Falcone

General Manager
Bulgari Hotel Roma



Vito
Mollica

Director of Culinary
ATTO di Vito Mollica Firenze

E C C E L L E N Z E

A T T E N D E E S

FLORENTINE STARS
CO-HOST OF THE
GALA DINNER



Ariela
Duina

General Manager
Villa Cora



Domenico
Colella

Multi Property General Manager
The St. Regis Florence
The Excelsior, a Luxury Collection
Hotel Florence



Doris
Hecht

General Manager
W Florence



Elisa
Peroli

General Manager
Villa La Massa Firenze



Federico
Versari

General Manager
Helvetia & Bristol Firenze



Fernando
Pane

General Manager
Sina Villa Medici Firenze



Flora
Grillo

General Manager
Palazzo Firenze
by Baglioni Hotels & Resorts



Francesco
Roccato

Managing Director
Northern Italy
at Rocco Forte Hotels



Massimo
De Venuto

General Manager
Portrait Firenze
Lungarno Collection



Max
Musto

General Manager
Four Seasons Hotel Firenze



Nicola
Migheli

Managing Director
Rosewood Castiglion Del Bosco



Piero
Magrino

General Manager
Borgo Pignano Florence



Salvatore
Madonna

General Manager
Hotel Byron Forte Dei Marmi



Sofia
Peluso

General Manager
Villa San Michele
A Belmond Hotel Florence

E C C E L L E N Z E

A T T E N D E E S

H O S T I N G S T A R S



Laura Masi

President Destination Florence

The Destination Florence Foundation co-hosts the first edition of Eccellenze, highlighting Florence as a hub for international luxury travel. Created with Arno and supported by the Auberge Group, the event fosters connections, strengthens the city's positioning, and generates new opportunities for the territory.



Lorenzo Maraviglia

General Manager
Collegio Alla Querce Firenze

We are proud to host the first edition of Eccellenze at Collegio alla Querce, Auberge: a celebration of the art of Italian hospitality and of the international community that brings it to life. Florence, with its timeless beauty and energy, is the perfect setting to bring together the stars of our industry and inspire new collaborations for the future of luxury travel.



Urbano Brini

Chief Of Luxury
Travel Arno Part Of Towns Of Italy Group

For us, it is an honor to contribute to an event that brings to Florence such a high-level dialogue among the leading figures of luxury travel worldwide. Taking part in the birth of Eccellenze means believing in the future of our sector, with a format capable of blending professional exchange, new perspectives, creativity, expertise, and an international vision.

E C C E L L E N Z E

M O D E R A T O R



Helen Farrell is editor-in-chief of *The Florentine*, the English magazine for Florence lovers, a role she has held since 2013.

Born in Stoke-on-Trent in central England, she graduated from the University of York before moving to Italy in 2002, working for international publishing companies. She also contributes to *Decanter* and *Italy Magazine*, and has provided on-the-ground support to journalists from the BBC, CNN, the *New York Times* and the *Guardian*. She's been featured in *Italian Vanity Fair* and *F* magazine in addition to being interviewed about current affairs in Italy on BBC Radio. Aside from journalism, she consults for Ornellaia, Palazzo Tornabuoni, Belmond Tuscany, Ruffino, the Villa d'Este group and other luxury clients.

When she's not working, you'll find her on a tennis court somewhere in Tuscany.



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STARS IN FLORENCE, 22ND - 24TH SEPTEMBER 2025

COLLEGIO ALLA QUERCE
AUBERGE RESORTS COLLECTION
FIRENZE ITALIA



Once a year, Eccellenze comes to life in Florence—where beauty naturally belongs, where trust is nurtured, and where the journey of l'Eccellenza Italiana begins.

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eccellenze@arnotravel.com

DOWNLOAD



INSTAGRAM
[eccellenze.florence](https://www.instagram.com/eccellenze.florence)

