



The Palazzo Colonna in Rome.

INSIDE ITALY'S TREASURES

Given the Italian aristocracy's centuries-long tradition of personal patronage, there's probably more great art in private hands in Italy than in museums and galleries—but the public rarely gets to see it. Now, a new tour company, A Private View of Italy, can unlock

to the sumptuous Palazzo Colonna, which contains works by Poussin, Tintoretto and Carracci. In the Veneto region, the company can arrange an insider's tour of Palladian villas. Clients also meet the owners for drinks or a meal. "The Private View staff are friends, as well as being from old families," he adds. "We visit a network of aunts, uncles and cousins." *A Private View of Italy, offering a comprehensive service that includes flights and hotel reservations, can be reached at via della Polveriera, 40, 00184 Rome; (011-39-6) 4741985; fax: 4742033. ROLAND FLAMINI*

When in... SANTA BARBARA: Stay at the new luxury cottage at San Ysidro Ranch, whose cottages have been world-renowned romantic getaways since Jackie and JFK spent their honeymoon there. The new Eucalyptus Cottage has a private butler, a huge stone patio with a private pool, and views of the Pacific. \$3,000 per night. (800) 368-6788. PHILADELPHIA: Secure tickets for the much-talked-about Delacroix exhibition at the Philadelphia Museum of Art (through January 3, 1999) by staying at the Four Seasons. VIP tickets and a one-night stay, which includes parking and breakfast, begin at \$285. (800) 332-3442. THE COTSWOLDS: Take a drive through the rolling green hills in a chauffeur-driven Rolls-Royce from 1924—or an Austin Healey, or a Morris Minor from the 1960s—when you stay at the Lygon Arms, which has a special arrangement with the Heritage Motor Centre. (011-44-1386) 852255.

the doors to magnificent villas and palazzi that house these hidden treasures.

"The idea is to revive the spirit of the grand tour," says Count Stefano Aluffi-Pentini, the well-connected young Italian who started the company. Taking as his guide this 18th-century institution, when English aristocrats toured the Continent in great style and were received by the most important families, he arranges intimate visits to beautiful ancestral homes, some of which have been lived in by the same families for centuries. In Rome, for example, he offers rare access

REGENCY STYLE

The Regency Hotel on Park Avenue has always been a little different than New York's other luxury hotels; not only does it quietly blend in with the stately prewar apartment houses that surround it, but, like its neighbors, the Regency is also permanent home to some of the city's most prominent citizens (among them George Steinbrenner and Preston Robert Tisch, a founder of the Regency's parent company, Loews Hotels). Now, the hotel will seem more like home even to its overnight guests as it wraps up a \$25 million renovation—the restaurant and lobby were finished last spring; the rooms, just completed, have been made over in muted palettes and such rich materials as velvet and silk; crisp cotton sheets and goose-down duvets now cover the beds. Perhaps the most striking new appointment: sleekly ergonomic leather desk chairs that roll up to marble-topped work stations (complete with fax machines and designed to accommodate laptops). After all, what self-respecting home away from home would be complete without a home office? *The Regency Hotel, 540 Park Avenue; (212) 759-4100. Rooms: \$335-\$415 per night. A.B.F.*



The Regency's modern polish.