

# ANoble Invitation

WHILE THE SEASONAL CROWDS MAY BE CLAMORING TO CATCH THE LATEST OPENING AT THE GALLERIA BORGHESI OR PALAZZO BARBERINI THIS SUMMER, ART HISTORIAN COUNT STEFANO ALUFFI-PENTINI, FOUNDER OF A PRIVATE VIEW OF ITALY OPENS THE DOORS TO ITALY'S MOST EXCLUSIVE HAVENS OF HIGH ART AND MARVELS OF AGE-OLD ARCHITECTURE.





THE GALLERY OF ROME'S PALAZZO COLONNA, A FAVORITE AMONG CLIENTS

With a wealth of history stretching back to the 8th century B.C., Rome is filled with cavernous catacombs, stunning ancient architecture and exceptional palazzi, handed down through generations along patrician bloodlines. As a native Roman – tracing his noble heritage as far back as the early 14th century – the art historian Count Stefano Aluffi-Pentini and his learned team offer an unrivalled knowledge of the city, which they are more than willing to share.

While back in the days of the grand tour, letters of recommendation were obligatory for gaining entry to the city's most private palatial properties, today, the Count's number is all you need for exclusive access. In 1996, he put his inherent insight into Italy's rich historical heritage and a network of blue-blooded connections to use, founding A Private View of Italy, a cultural tour service and corporate event service for inquisitive art votaries, offering open house invitations to the most private art collections in the country, as well as organizing tailor made tours and vacations. With meticulous attention to detail, customized itineraries have been known to include an authentic 18th century orchestra recital in its original setting, and dining with aristocracy.

Among the most popular with his cultivated clientele are the famed Palazzo Colonna, a 14th century Roman palace belonging to one of the city's most influential families, and the Castello di Vignanello in nearby Viterbo, boasting one of finest gardens in Italy.





## Aluffi-Pentini's definition of luxury:

"To feel extremely well and comfortable, in beautiful yet simple surroundings, with the feeling that nothing needs to be done to improve them."

If luxury were ...

**An object.**

A library – a room in your own home, surrounded only by ancient books. I have the privilege of having inherited one.

**A moment.**

Arriving in Naples at sunset, after a day of sailing.

**A person.**

To meet a person happy with their life, with no regrets and trust in the future. To meet this person is a real luxury.

**A place.**

The dining room of a Roman palace, where the table is still set with ancient porcelain, a family heirloom, inherited from a princess in the 18th century.





THE VILLA OF COUNT EMO CAPODILISTA IN NORTHERN ITALY'S VENETO REGION  
© GIORDANO EMO CAPODILISTA

However, the Count's knowledge and noble network reaches far beyond the city's seven hills. As well as covering the breathtaking sights to be beheld in Italy - such as Villa di Montecchia, set within the picturesque surroundings of Count Emo Capodilista's renowned vineyard in Northern Italy's Veneto region - he extends the hand of hospitality throughout Europe. "We have organized interesting tours in many countries, such as Germany, Spain, France, Austria and Sweden, always discovering private historical places. It is amazing to discover how well preserved the historical and private houses are in Sweden, so elegant and welcoming; the Turkish private residences on the Bosphorus, called Yali, which hark back to the splendor of the Ottoman Empire, or the austere castles of the nobility of the Austro-Hungarian Empire," he explains. Plans are afoot to add accommodation to the erudite aristocrat's offering, allowing guests to experience first-hand the rarified world of Europe's plutocracy.





SICILY'S PALAZZO BISCARI FEATURES OPULENT 18TH CENTURY ORNAMENTATION  
© STEFANO ALUFFI-PENTINI

**Which are the most impressive properties in your itinerary?**

I think that the owners of the most luxurious properties may be too modest to be mentioned, but the two most grand and private palaces are in Genoa and Rome. Thanks to the generosity of the owner, we have been received in the Roman Palazzo several times, to see the collection, which includes Rubens, Van Dyck, Botticelli and Velázquez. However, one of the most luxurious houses in terms of a modern standard of luxury is Il Pizzo, a historical residence in Sorrento, surrounded by nature, with private access to the Mediterranean Sea. The terrace looks out over the entire bay of Naples. That, in my opinion, is the most beautiful in the world.

**Many of the properties you represent boast prominent art collections. Which do you believe is the most impressive?**

I consider the collection at the Palazzo Doria Pamphilj to be one of the most impressive. There is a famous portrait by Velázquez of Innocenzo X (the pope of their family), as well as works by Caravaggio, Raphael and Carracci. The collection is outstanding. Princess Orietta Doria Pamphilj began the generous tradition of opening the gallery to the public, a practice which her children have continued, while also studying and restoring the works.





THE GALLERY OF ROMES PALAZZO COLONNA



LEFT, RIGHT: Palazzo BISCARI, CATANIA  
© STÉFANO ALUFFI-PENTINI





THE STUNNING ARCHITECTURE OF PALAZZO BISCARI IN CATANIA, SICILY  
© STEFANO ALUFFI-PENTINI

**As an art historian, which is your favorite period?**

The end of the 18th century; the last period of the grand papal or aristocratic Roman patronage.

**And what are your personal favorite oeuvres?**

I love all the portraits, including the Cavaliere Rosa by Moroni, which you can admire in a private collection in Bergamo; the portrait of Galeazzo Sanvitale by Parmigianino at the Museo di Capodimonte in Naples; the already mentioned Innocenzo X by Velázquez, which anyone can see at the Palazzo Doria Pamphilj in Rome; and the portrait of Angela Mignanelli by Benefial at the Galleria Spada in Rome.





VILLA SEGHETTI PANICHI, NEAR THE ADRIATIC COAST  
© STEFANIA PIGNATELLI ARAGONA CORTES

**Although you cover Europe, you are famed for your expertise on Italy in particular. Which region do you find the most popular?**

Our guests come mainly to Florence, Rome, Naples and Sicily, as there are so many beautiful residences and so many masterworks that are open to the public. Rome and Florence are also very easy destinations for meetings, whereas Naples and Palermo are more new, and therefore desirable to people who are looking for something fresh, with beautiful weather.

**What attracts so many visitors to delve deeper into Italy's incredible art and architectural history?**

It is one of the European countries where a substantial part of the artistic heritage is still in private hands, kept with love and shown only on very special occasions, for very special people. There are not many other places like Rome and Florence, where so many palaces are still private and boast such amazing collections.





THE GALLERY OF ROME'S PALAZZO COLONNA





VILLA COUNT EMO CAPODILISTA, MONTECCHIA  
© STEFANO ALUFFI-PENTINI



THE TEAM OF A PRIVATE VIEW OF ITALY.  
© PIETRO JOVANE

**What is the main quality your erudite clients seek in a tour?**

They love to be considered as invited guests in each place they visit, and it is truly so.

**Are there many cultural differences between nationalities in terms of the kind of tours and events your international clients request?**

It's difficult to generalize, but I would say that the North Americans can be distinguished by their energy and enthusiasm; the Germans by a very serious choice of itineraries; the French by their love of the "sister country"; and the British by their interest in the relationship between architecture and interior decoration. ■

**For more information:**

<mailto:apvoi@tin.it>  
[www.apvoi.com](http://www.apvoi.com)