

Which room to book: A Park Deluxe—a mere \$60 more for nearly twice the space of a basic Park double (39-02-874-257; milan.park.hyatt.com; doubles, \$673-\$797; (S). *m* © © ©)

3 Rooms, Milan

Carla Sozzani revolutionized Milanese shopping in 1991 with the opening of 10 Corso Como, a multibrand megaboutique that has evolved to include a bar, a cafe, a gallery, a restaurant, and now a troika of suites. Like the rest of the 10 Corso Como complex, 3 Rooms is a serious sanctuary of style. While each suite is distinctly designed, all three sport Scandinavian-inspired decor, with furniture and artwork from such important midcentury icons as Eames, Jacobsen, Noguchi, and Saarinen. Work areas are complete with full-sized desktop computers; bathrooms stay fresh thanks to chic Diptyque candles; and extras such as 10 Corso Como-brand lotions and perfumes are proffered gratis. A couple of caveats: Room service and business facilities are not 24/7, and the hotel's location is slightly problematic: central, to be sure, but a short cab ride from the best shopping, theater, and banking districts. Still, few other properties offer a complimentary breakfast with your choice of 20-plus fruit juices. **When to go:** December, when opera season begins and the newly renovated La Scala finally reopens. **Which room to book:** Top-floor No. 3 is the best of the bunch (39-02-626-163; www.3rooms-10corsocomo.com; doubles, \$361). ©

Methis Hotel, Padua

 Within walking distance of the city's graceful piazzas, the Giotto I frescoes in the Scrovegni Chapel, and the monumental basilica dedicated to the man whom locals call simply "The Saint" (i.e., Saint Anthony of Padua), the Methis has 59 rooms spread over four floors—each an homage to one of the four elements. Earth, on the second level, has rooms in tones of brown and ochre, and ethnic art, tapestries, and sculpture. The third floor, Fire, is decorated in crimson, scarlet, and burnt sienna, with red-stone bathtubs. Water, on four, is represented by aquamarine and lapis lazuli hues, azure carpets, and wavy-painted walls and floors in the bathrooms. The top floor, Air, has gossamer white drapes over four-poster beds and creamy white carpets. The gimmick—more successful than it deserves to be—has lured the likes of Giorgio Armani, among other luminaries. Amenities include a fitness room, a bar, a library, a breakfast room, and—essential in a region where most visi-

tors require a car-private parking. **When to go:** Skip foggy December and January. **Which room to book:** Any of the five fourth-floor junior suites overlooking the river (39-049-872-5555; www.methishotel.it; doubles, \$175-\$305;E)).

Residenza Napoleone, Rome

The Residenza Napoleone is unique—not least of all because Emperor Napoleon III lived here in 1830. This exquisitely restored suite is in the sixteenth-century Palazzo Ruspoli, at the other end of the Via dei Condotti from the Piazza di Spagna. Coffered wooden ceilings soar, accommodating an immense Gobelin tapestry in the sitting room and six huge landscapes in the bedroom—one the headboard of the sumptuous silk-canopied bed and two others camouflaging doors to a small Siena-marble bath and a walk-in dressing area that leads to a kitchenette. Art, antiques, and the drama of history are as pervasive as the family silver, but the overall effect is remarkably welcoming and unpretentious. The credit goes to owner Princess Letizia Ruspoli, who has stocked it with everything from disposable ear plugs (totally unnecessary) to classical CDs and classic films set in Rome. The unobtrusive butler anticipates every whim, whether lighting a fire in the dining room hearth or providing a delightful surprise at turndown. (Note that the Palazzo Ruspoli also houses a charming modern penthouse flooded with sun from windows on three sides and surrounded by terraces amid the Roman rooftops; its mansard roof makes it cozy but cramped.) **When to go:** Anytime you're celebrating a very special event. **Which room to book:** Need we say it? The Residenza Napoleone (39-347-733-7098; www.prestigiousrome.com; \$1,460).

San Clemente Palace, Venice

The San Clemente Palace was made for visitors who love the city but find no charm in the throngs of tourists clogging La Serenissima's *vias*. Located on its very own island, ten minutes by private launch from St. Mark's Square, this former monastery is anything but ascetic, with four acres of gardens, a pool, two tennis courts, a three-hole golf course, and a spa. Public spaces are opulently decorated—silks, brocades, and Murano-glass chandeliers—and the 205 spacious guest rooms are done in a voluptuously comfortable style that the hotel calls "Venetian classic revisited" (rather than with the museumlike faux-eighteenth-century pieces found in many Venetian hotels). A choice of four restaurants makes the boat trip to St. Mark's itself optional—Intimate it is not: With vast passageways.