

Win in Rome: An inside guide to the best of Italy's hippest 'hood

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The inviting Fontana dell'Acqua Paola.

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When Rome restaurant [Antica Pesa](#) opened a satellite in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, in 2012, it brought a bit of the Eternal City's atmospheric Trastevere neighborhood with it.

That ancient district sits just south of the Vatican, on the far side of the Tiber River from the historic center (*Trastevere* literally means “across the Tiber” in Italian), where it enjoys a well-deserved reputation as a *caput mundi* for eating, drinking and having a good time.

To help us navigate the area's winding cobblestoned streets and must-visit venues, we turned to local son Francesco Panella, who launched and runs the [Brooklyn Antica Pesa](#), following in the footsteps of his great grandmother, who founded the Trastevere original in 1922.

“From amazing coffee in the morning to great shopping to historical architecture, everything in the neighborhood is a real, authentic experience.

“True Romans have been born and raised here,” Panella says. “It's rare to find a neighborhood that has everything, but this is what makes Trastevere great.”

Here, Panella's picks for a perfect Roman holiday in this historic 'hood.



Antica Pesa's owner, Francesco Panella, loves Trastevere.

Courtesy of Antica Pesa Restaurants

Antica Pesa in Williamsburg.

Bryan Bedder

Where to stay

Donna Camilla Savelli

“This hotel allows you to experience true Roman hospitality,” says Panella, noting that the centrally located 78-room abode, built within a fully restored 17th-century convent, sits just steps from all the neighborhood’s top boutique shopping to great food to ancient historical monuments. “It’s a beautiful way to experience Rome.” *From \$190*

Buonanotte Garibaldi

Inside Rome’s luxe Buonanotte Garibaldi.

Colin Dutton

A former art studio turned into a luxurious B&B, this spot provides guests with “an automatic way to experience the neighborhood’s charm.” It has three beautiful rooms and lies in a part of town that Panella describes as tranquil. “My favorite aspect of the hotel is that it gives you the true character of Trastevere.” *From \$237*

Where to eat

Bar San Calisto

“Known for having the best espresso in the city, this place is fantastic,” Panella says of this 70-year old institution. “Come to hear true Roman dialect and enjoy a morning coffee.” *Piazza San Calisto 3-5*

Caffe Settimiano

“This corner spot with outside seating is perfect for a classic Italian *colazione*” — breakfast — “of a cappuccino and a croissant-like *cornetto* or a *maritozzo*, a cornetto filled with cream.” Panella suggests giving yourself at least half an hour to enjoy the prime people-watching. *Via di Porta Settimiana, 1*

Glass Hostaria

Cristina Bowerman, one of Rome’s most well-known chefs, runs this Michelin-starred restaurant, which Panella notes “is a little bit fancy but definitely a must.” If the mezzaluna amatriciana — half moon-shaped pasta with tomato and guanciale (cured pork jowl) — is on the menu, get it. *Vicolo del Cinque, 58*

A futuristic dish at Glass Hostaria.

Nunzio Gaeta

FishMarket

“As soon as you enter here, you pick your favorite fish and ask for suggestions from the chef about how he should cook it for you. It’s a completely awesome experience, in one of Trastevere’s most beautiful squares.” *Vicolo della Luce, 3/5*

Da Augusto (a k a Augustarello)

This old-school, no-frills, cash-only trattoria romana — where the server will scribble your bill on the paper tablecloth — has all the city’s great dishes, and at wallet-friendly prices. Panella’s favorite is the *involtini*, beef fillets rolled around carrots and celery and cooked in tomato sauce. *Piazza dè Renzi, 15*

Pizzeria Ai Marmi

“The pizza here is classic Roman,” says Panella, “with an incredible thin crust. I suggest you get the marinara, with tomatoes and anchovies.” It stays open till 1 a.m., making it “perfect if you feel hungry around midnight.” *Viale di Trastevere, 53*

Checco er Carettiere

Panella recommends this simple gelateria, especially for his favorite flavors, chocolate and and pistachio. *Via Benedetta, 10*

Where to drink

Pimm’s Good

“This bar has a fantastic selection of Spritz cocktails, making it ideal for an aperitivo or after-dinner drink.” Some nights feature live music. *Via di Santa Dorotea, 8*

Terrazza di San Pancrazio

“The perfect scene for the young Roman crowd, with a great cocktail list,” Panella promises. “This is the right night-out spot if you want to go somewhere not too touristic. To get inside, just say you are friends with me!” *Via Porta di San Pancrazio, 32*

What to see

Fontana dell'Acqua Paola

This soaring 17th-century marble and granite fountain at the end of the Trajan Aqueduct sits in a hilltop piazza where Panella comes to look over the entire city. “In front of you is the beautiful Roman skyline, and behind you is this incredible fountain — a sculptural miracle,” he says. “Standing there, you feel like Julius Caesar.” *Via Garibaldi*

Orto Botanico di Roma

Hit the Orto Botanico.
Shutterstock

This botanical garden is “an oasis of relaxation in the middle of the chaos of the city,” says Panella. “If you travel to Rome to ask the woman you love to marry you, this is location would make her say yes.” *Largo Cristina di Svezia, 24*

Where to shop

Mercato di Porta Portese

“This is a must-see that can’t be missed,” enthuses Panella. “Since Trastevere is something of a fashion capital within Rome, there are many shops, but this vintage street market — which pops up every Sunday morning from about 6am to 1pm — is the place where you can find everything for the price of nothing.” *Via Ippolito Nievo, Via Ettore Rolli and Via Portuense*

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