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Clockwise from left, the Residenza Napoleone III at Palazzo Ruspoli in Rome; Zlatje's penthouse at the Hotel Martinez in Cannes; an ornate ceiling at Emirates Palace in Abu Dhabi; a private tent, with table laid for dinner, at the Rambagh Palace in Jaipur; an atrium of Pura in Palma; a room at Venice's Il Palazzo



The rich list

Live like royalty in a palace hotel. We round up the best, from the fabulous to the funky *By Kate O'Donnell*

Palazzo Ruspoli, Rome, Italy

Just off Via Condotti, Rome's top shopping street, is an exquisitely restored 16th-century private mansion that is probably the most luxurious B&B in Europe. La Residenza Napoleone III (named after its illustrious former resident) is a three-room suite with hand-stencilled walls, a canopied bed and handsome oil paintings – one swings back to reveal a wardrobe; another hides the entrance to a marble bathroom. The smaller, more informal Roof Garden suite in the attic has an adorable lavender-planted terrace overlooking the city.

La Residenza suite from 950 euros (about £654) per night, b&b; Roof Garden suite from 620 euros (about £425) per night, b&b (00 39 347 733 7098; prestigiousrome.com)

Il Palazzo, Venice, Italy

The smart Bauer Hotel has a deluxe 18th-century sibling, Il Palazzo, which is reached

by a discreet jetty on the Grand Canal – ideal for privacy-seeking guests such as **Sting** and **Catherineeneuve**. Its 36 doubles and 40 suites are individually decorated with local treasures, such as Bevilacqua and Rubelli silks, hand-carved stucco and Murano glassware, as well as 11th-century mod cons. Some suites have an open fireplace; all have marble bathrooms. Ask for a room facing the Grand Canal and San Marco – some have a balcony or terrace for extra dreamy views.

Doubles from 726 euros (about £500) per night, room only (00 800 2888 8882; ihw.com)

Emirates Palace, Abu Dhabi, UAE

In the capital of the United Arab Emirates, Emirates Palace takes Dubai-style opulence to the next level. Truly vast (it is 2.45,000sq m), the beachside site was constructed by thousands of artisans to resemble an old

Arabian palace. Oversized plasma TVs, touch-screen control panels, e-books and iPods (even the beach is Wi-Fi'd) are housed in a glowing pink-granite edifice that has more than a hundred domes covered in shimmering glass tesserae, and is surrounded by gardens that rival Versailles. But there's comfort as well as luxury: the pillows have rose- or lavender-scented liners to promote sleep.

Doubles from £350 per night, room only (00 971 2 690 8888; emiratespalace.com)

Hotel Caruso, Ravello, Italy

This palace hotel dates back to the 11th century and remains a house of the grandest order, with 18th-century frescoes, and a 13th-century colonnade giving 360-degree views of its exceptional setting on the Amalfi coast. In the Forties and Fifties, the Caruso was a favourite of screen goddesses **Gina Lollobrigida** and **Greta Garbo**. Now its glamour is back, thanks to

