

RIVISTA INTERNAZIONALE
DI ARREDAMENTO
DESIGN
ARCHITETTURA
EDIZIONE ITALIANA

AD

ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST. LE PIU' BELLE CASE DEL MONDO

AS SEEN IN AD



J.K.
PLACE
FIRENZE

FLORENTINE MICROCOSM

J.K. PLACE HOTEL, CLOSE SANTA MARIA NOVELLA CHURCH,
CONVEYS THE COMFORT OF A PRIVATE ELEGANCE

PROJECT BY MICHELE BÖNAN – TEXT BY CESARE CUNACCIA



In the heart of downtown Florence, in Piazza Santa Maria Novella, just a few steps from the famous church bearing the same name, you can find an extraordinary island: J.K. Place, an absolutely special hotel experience.

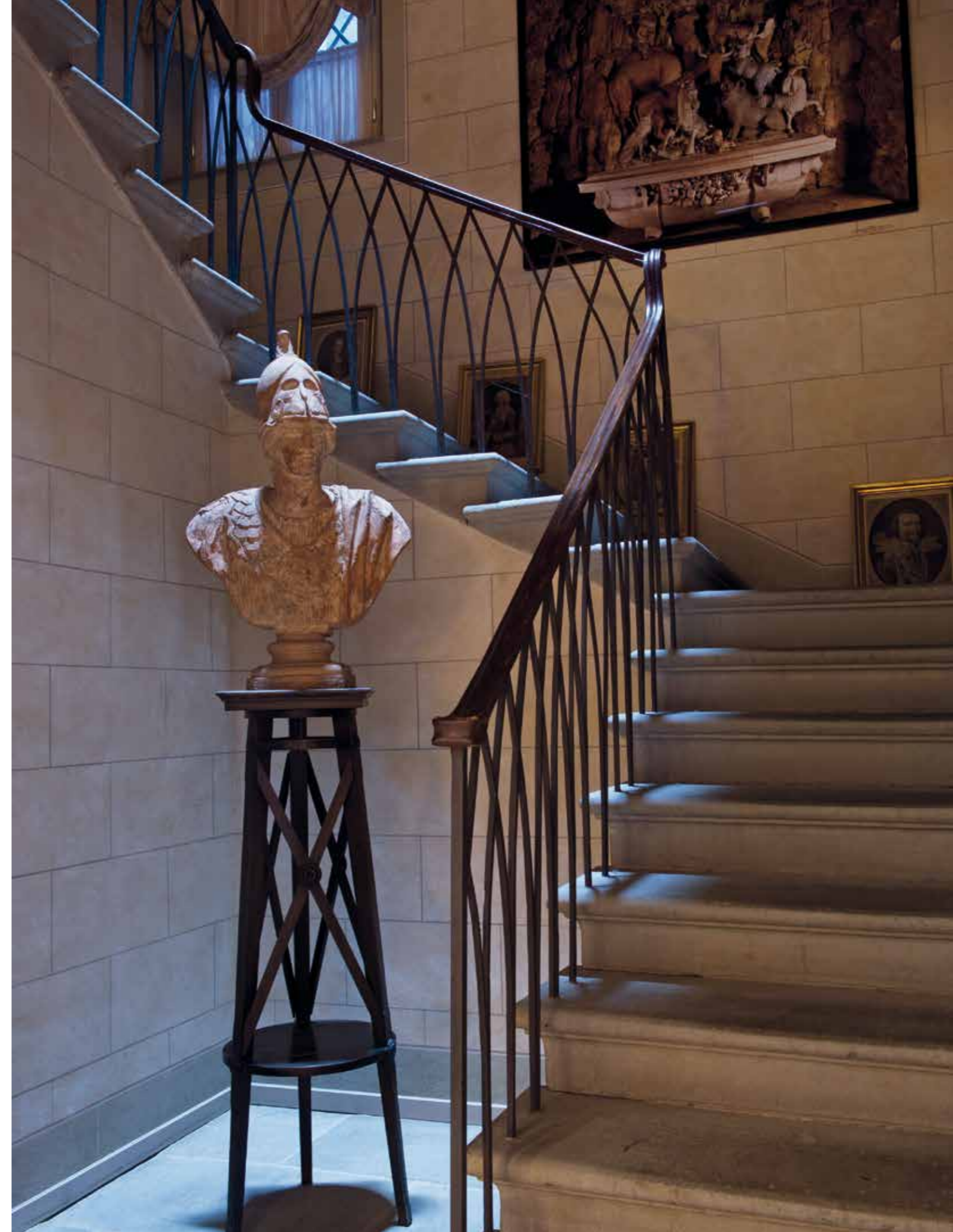
J.K. Place is different, beyond fashion and stereotypes that are already old, immediately dated and dateable. A small, precious hotel that protests its uniqueness, as far from the opulent, useless historical recreations as it is from the de rigueur, one way “penitence” of a sterile and excessive minimalism. A new, impassioned, maxi-minimal frontier, a dedication to quality above all else, the recovery of ancestral cultural roots, unpredictable suggestions, new aesthetic channels, personalized comfort with the highest of standards.

An elegant and exquisitely intimate habitat combines a lost atmosphere with scents from the

ABOVE: stunning view from J.K. Panoramic Loft of historic Santa Maria Novella square and its homonymous church.

RIGHT: the main stairway, with banisters in iron and steps in grey sandstone. 18th century etchings in gold-leaf frames decorate the steps. A 19th century bust of the Goddess Minerva.

COPERTINA: detail of J.K. Master Room





ABOVE: Michele Bónan, the architect who oversaw hotel restoration.
RIGHT: the salon with sofas upholstered in cream and grey-ivory fabrics. On the Charles X fireplace the feathered headdress of a chief tribesman, from Zaire. On the panel a 60's artwork. Art Déco pouf in zebra skin and a lamp from the nineteen fifties.





past, offering a decidedly contemporary comfort at the same time. J.K. Place pursues a philosophy of hospitality that is truly different, creating a peculiar microcosm which is far from overused clichés and easy fascinations. J.K. does not in fact seem to be a hotel. It is a real house, with fireplaces burning, meaningful contemporary flavours and objects maintaining their poetical time patina, happy memories and a refined approach, which is never intrusive.

Behind the plain main entrance a corridor with black wooden flooring gives a sense of unity to the different common areas of the ground floor. Exquisitely masculine, British suggestions are immediately clear, as well as the rarefied, discreet décor, based on harmonious contrasts. It is obvious that this place could never be ordinary, as the sounds of the city fade away and a slower, more thoughtful rhythm prevails. The demiurge of the radical architectural remodelling, the laborious restoration, intertwined with the creation of an important texture of signs and memories, as well as the admirable intervention as interior designer, is Michele Bönan. Bönan is a young, Florentine professional architect, well-known at an international level and director of many extraordinary hotel projects. At J.K. he has given life to a sophisticated and timeless play about the

ABOVE: ground floor lounge with tables designed by Michele Bönan and furniture from the 40'. Prestigious, limited edition, Helmut Newton Sumo book on an easel, designed by Philippe Starck.

BELOW: J.K. Terrace in Piazza Santa Maria Novella, open all day to enjoy food and drinks, overlooking the stunning Church.

RIGHT: detail of J.K. Master Room's living area.





The reception has been put in the library which has an extensive number of books available to Guests. Plaster casts representing famous writers from the 1800's are from a well established plaster casts gallery. Right the Regency fireplace, a painting from the 80's.



The breakfast room, furnished by a large unique table in walnut from the 1800's and Chinese style chairs designed by Michele Bönan and produced by Chelini. Lanterns in copper from the 1800's.

theme of classic. Michele Bönan wanted to underline a breathy, understated, yet very real, deep, unquestionable luxury. Sunk in a comfortable bergère in the lounge, where different stylistic philosophies are harmoniously joined together, a Charles X fireplace and objects from the 1970's, a stately neoclassical bookcase, animalier armchairs, 1950's lamps, a rigorous play on black and white and the wooden panelled ceiling ornamented with pale-coloured grotesque figures. Thoughts run to Albany, the legendary London residence, and to one of its most famous inhabitants, David Hicks, the favourite interior designer of high society during the 1960's and 1970's. A reverie about the perfect combination of typically British decorations and the rigorous, geometric Florentine spirit. But surprises don't end here. The reception is located in a splendid library of geometrical black woodwork, again masculine in tone, engrossing, perhaps inspired by the 16th century panelling in the Long Gallery of Ham House, aristocratic British country residence. Breakfast may be eaten in what was once the internal courtyard, paved with grey sandstone, of the original building, now covered with a glass structure that shows off the clear form and structure of the ancient architecture. Here, in the heart of the "House" is, in fact, the large central table and the buffet always at the ready: exquisite desserts, wine, bread and traditional Tuscan oil. Grey sand stone also for the wide, airy stairway in neoclassical taste, where a classical bust and the neo-gothic handrail are the focusing elements. They mingle with the almost imperceptible Directoire style decorations used by Michele Bönan, who is inspired here by another historic milieu: the Florence under the Lorraine family between the 1700's and the 1800's. The original lapidary galleries lead to some of the 20 rooms. Here the colours soften. Cream along with brilliant and light greys come on the scene, defined and differentiated spaces, marble Louis XVI fireplaces, wengé wood and polished steel, China highlights, stylised design lamps, ultra-modern technology. In the penthouse there is a play on the presence and absence of Florence, sometimes letting in marvellously foreshortened urban vistas, sometimes revealing emblematic symbolic details, sometimes denying the prevailing character of the city using different references and inspirations, throwing down the ultimate challenge. The excitement of one panoramic view after another without the question of continuity. From the bathtub of one of the rooms a mirror gives a breathtaking, even unreal, panorama of the Brunelleschi cupola of Santa Maria del Fiore, high above the wave of terracotta roofs and terraces. Still on the top floor, there is a relaxing terrace hidden in the structural fabric, wide open and searching for the sky with its nautical teak planking and long benches modelled after Mediterranean and North African examples.

Outstanding view from J.K. Penthouse' private terrace towards the majestic dome of the Cathedral, Giotto's bell-tower and over the typical red-tiled roofs of Florence.





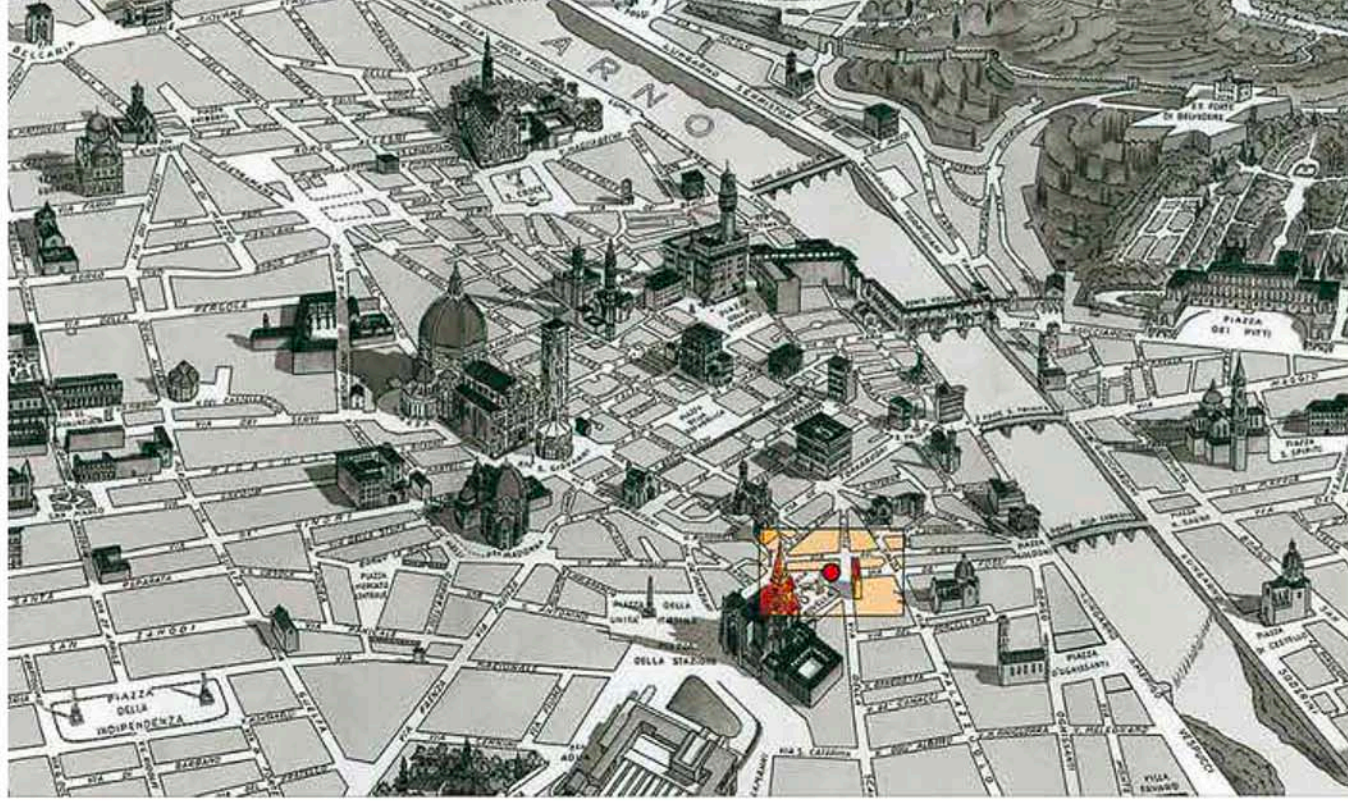
J.K. Lounge is a new and exciting space recently incorporated into the hotel, a kind of multifaceted and charming club which attracts a cross range of society, from businessmen to ineffable beauties, glamorous international stars and elegantly dressed local ladies. One can stop by for a quick luncheon, take tea in the afternoon, or enjoy the decadent pleasures of an aperitif followed by a delightful dinner. Quite often many choose to reserve the Lounge for a private dinner evening, or a working lunch, as well as for celebrating a special birthday in the magical "townhouse" atmosphere that distinguishes this boutique hotel. J.K.Lounge also carries the signature of Michele Bönan who has reinvented the rules for a contemporary classicism which combines the seductive atmosphere of the 50's in an overall masculine tone with touches of "Animalier" and modern photographic works, together with flashes of ethnicity and ironic references to the 70's. This a true form of sophisticated comedy which plays out while one savours a delicious Club Sandwich, an expertly made Martini cocktail, or a glass of fine wine taken by the black neo-classical fireplace which finds its counterpoint in the fireplace in white marble on the opposite side of the wall in the lobby of J.K. Place. The colourful juxtaposition of ivory white and both polished and opaque black colours, wengé, as well as the comforting Georgian-style grey-green panelling, together with architectural prints and a décor that is both reassuring and subtly chic, give the lounge that perfect "déjeuner de ville" feel.

The downstairs of the lounge is immediately and strikingly different. Michele Bönan has conceived a before and after dinner setting completely in white, furnished with long sofas stretching uninterrupted along each side wall, lending themselves to reinvention through the enchanting play of chromatic lighting. Here we find ourselves in the seductiveness of the underground, pop-art style, a space that is at once unexpected and inviting. If, on the ground floor, we can imagine ourselves seated in the company of the Dukes of Windsor, the sublime Audrey Hepburn, a stylized Capucine in Chanel, Fiona Thyssen or listening to the sarcastic wit of a Truman Capote, downstairs we are immersed in a revocation of the roaring New York parties of the Seventies and Eighties à la Studio 54, the lost golden era of disco music, the exciting composite work of Warhol's "factory" mingling with Halston and Bianca Jagger, Liza Minnelli and Francesco Clemente, charmed by the time-less allure of Nan Kempner or accosted by the sensuous glitter of the feline Grace Jones.

Detail of J.K. Fireplace Room.
By the wall, an oriental table
in black varnish with a plaster
cast horse.
The lantern of Moroccan
manufacture is in silver-plated
brass. The refined glass door
leads towards the Hotel main
entrance.



Architectural etchings from 18th century decorate the room. Flooring in black varnished Iroko wood. Original panelled ceiling.



**HOTEL CODES
PER CHANNEL**

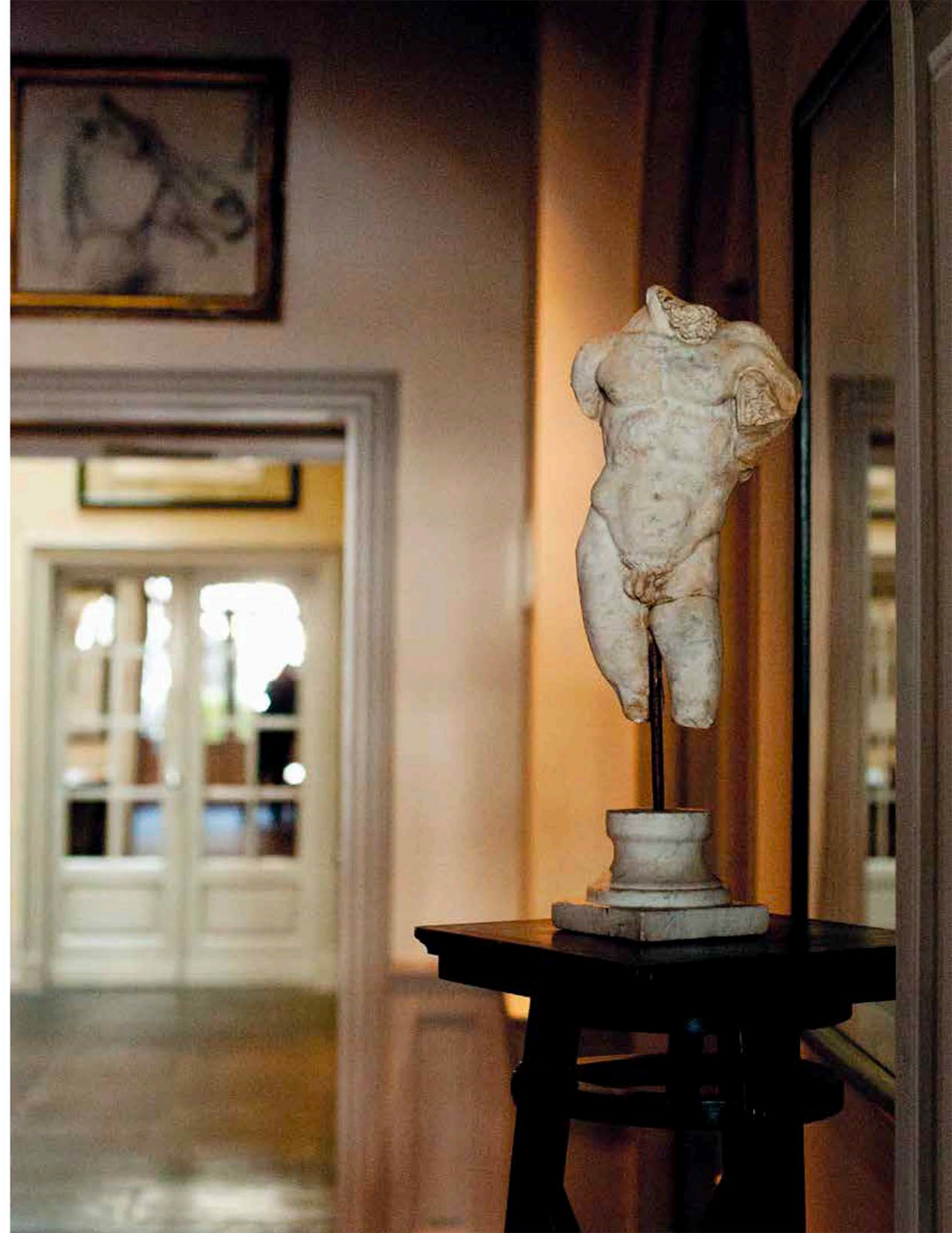
1A: LW FLR196 - AMADEUS

UA: LW 58138 - GALILEO

TW: LW 2196 - WORLDSPAN

AA: LW 40303 - SABRE

LEFT: view from the Roof-top Terrace with teak flooring and sofas in black canvas. The tables are in black varnished steel; the lanterns to the left are of Moroccan manufacture.
RIGHT: detail of Hotel entrance with a sculpture of Classic age.





Armchair in natural leather with a loom-made, J.K. branded cashmere plaid from a local manufacture.

J.K.

PLACE
FIRENZE

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