

# EUROPEAN & ELEGANCE

# AWAITS

BY CAROLYN O'NEIL | PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF ROCCO FORTE HOTELS

## LUXURIOUS LANDMARK HOTELS ARE A FAMILY AFFAIR

Whether it's a vase of pink roses and a platter of fragrant fresh oranges in Rome or whisky-infused chocolates and a tray with the makings of a perfect gin and tonic in Edinburgh, the in-room amenities at Rocco Forte Hotels are perfectly curated to whisper a sophisticated yet sweetly charming welcome.

If you experience just one of their magnificent hotels for a stay, a meal, or a spa visit, you'll be hooked on the personal service, detailed decor, and elegant vibe of Rocco Forte Hotels. Led by an Italian family in the hospitality business for four generations, this collection of fourteen hotels and resorts was established by Sir Rocco Forte and his sister, Olga Polizzi, in 1996.

Each hotel is an architectural landmark, found in historic and new buildings in exceptional locations across Europe and the UK, including Rome, Florence, Munich, Brussels, London, and Edinburgh. For instance, Brown's Hotel lies in the heart of London's tony Mayfair, and the Hotel de Ville in Rome is a short walk from the famed Spanish Steps. At each Rocco Forte hotel, you're somehow centered in a calm oasis and immersed in the action of a bustling city all at once.



Predictable brand decor is one thing you won't find throughout the hotel and resort collection. Instead, each property is uniquely designed to create a sense of home and place. Polizzi, director of design for Rocco Forte Hotels, prioritizes using local artisans to craft fabrics and furniture and choosing antiques to blend in a little history. "It's the same with fashion in a way; a mix of old and new often looks good," she says.

### WISH YOU WERE HERE

Here are a few snapshots highlighting the Rocco Forte Hotels I've had the privilege of visiting recently.

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The tranquil Le Jardin restaurant and terrace at Hotel de Russie, Rome

Opposite top: Views of Rome from a Hotel de la Ville junior suite

Opposite bottom: The Rocco Forte Family (left to right): Lydia Forte, Irene Forte, Charles Forte, Sir Rocco Forte, and Olga Polizzi

Photo by Julian Broad



“IF YOU EXPERIENCE JUST ONE OF THEIR MAGNIFICENT HOTELS FOR A STAY, A MEAL, OR A SPA VISIT, YOU’LL BE HOOKED ON THE PERSONAL SERVICE, DETAILED DECOR, AND ELEGANT VIBE OF ROCCO FORTE HOTELS.”

*This page, clockwise from top left:* Clocktower of the Balmoral Hotel, Edinburgh; Afternoon tea in the Balmoral’s Palm Court; Bar Prince at the Balmoral; Guest suite at the Balmoral

*Opposite, clockwise from top left:* Terrace views from guest suite at Hotel de Russie, Rome; Art abounds at Hotel de Russie; Terraced gardens at the Hotel de Russie; Courtyard dining at the Hotel de la Ville, Rome



### EDINBURGH

The Balmoral Hotel, with its commanding clocktower, Victorian architecture, and sweeping views of Edinburgh’s Castle Rock, is a 1902 landmark in the capital city of Scotland. The name “Balmoral” comes from the Gaelic phrase *baile mhóireil* for “*magnificent dwelling*,” and it’s even more magnificent today as part of the Rocco Forte Hotels collection. A bespoke Balmoral tartan is used to upholster furniture in the rooms, along with touches of velvet and floral fabrics for an elegant Scottish manor house style.

There’s a Whisky Room, of course, where you can sip and sample over five hundred unique varieties of Scottish whisky—or, as Balmoral whisky ambassador Cameron Ewen calls it, “the beautiful water of life.” Prefer a gin and tonic? Good news, lads and lassies, because Balmoral distills its own premium Scottish gin made with botanical notes of rosemary, sage, anise, and lemon verbena.

Brasserie Prince is your go-to for all-day hotel dining with fresh and seasonal French-inspired Scottish bistro fare. Just don’t miss breakfast. It’s an incredible spread of fresh fruit, bread, pastries, oatmeal, several kinds of house-smoked Scottish salmon, eggs to order, potatoes, bacon, and—if you dare—a morning ration of haggis and black pudding. With something for everyone, there’s a menu selection called Nourish featuring vegetarian and plant-forward breakfast dishes.



### ROME

The Eternal City is home to two hotels in the company’s portfolio.

The Hotel de Russie, built in the early 1800s, is near the energetic Piazza del Popolo and dangerously near the high-fashion designer boutiques along Via Condotti. Step inside and make your way to the umbrella-shaded open-air atrium bar, which overlooks the hotel’s Mediterranean-style tiered garden filled with roses, citrus, and pine.

Perched on Via Sistina at the top of the Spanish Steps, the Hotel de la Ville literally overlooks life in Rome. The rooftop bar, Cielo, offers a bird’s-eye view of the city below (which is spectacular at sunset, especially with an Aperol spritz in hand). This eighteenth-century palazzo’s accommodations provide lovely views of the hotel’s tranquil courtyard or the Villa Borghese gardens. All rooms feature generous sizes of Irene Forte Skincare products made from Sicilian botanicals, and there’s an Irene Forte Spa with a full menu of treatments in both hotels.



“THE FORTE FAMILY IS WORKING WELL TOGETHER TO IMPROVE BEAUTY ON ALL FRONTS AS IT BUILDS A HOTEL COLLECTION THAT TREATS GUESTS TO THE BEST THINGS IN LIFE.”



Above: Brown's Hotel entrance in Mayfair

Right: A cozy fire greets guests in the front hall.

Below: Afternoon tea in the Drawing Room of Brown's



### LONDON

Have you read *The Jungle Book* or used a telephone? Then you've already experienced part of the history of Brown's Hotel. Officially known as the oldest luxury hotel in London, Brown's Hotel opened in 1832 and continues to be an epicenter of tradition with a touch of modernity in Mayfair.

Acquired by Rocco Forte Hotels in 2003, Brown's Hotel was the haven of choice for Queen Victoria, President Theodore Roosevelt, and literary greats including Rudyard Kipling, Mark Twain, Agatha Christie, and J. M. Barrie, author of *Peter Pan*.

Brown's is also the site of the first telephone call, made in Great Britain when the young inventor Alexander Graham Bell rigged up a way to phone a friend in 1876. You can take a selfie in the room where it happened, now a little museum on the hotel's ground floor.

The room making news today is the Sir Paul Smith Suite, a recently unveiled collaboration with the British designer noted for his artful sense of whimsy.

The art of fine food and drink has always been front and center at Brown's, so even if you're not a hotel guest, plan to enjoy cocktails at the glamorous Donovan Bar, afternoon tea in the Drawing Room, or Britain's famed Sunday Roast with all the trimmings carved tableside at Charlie's, named after Sir Rocco Forte's father.



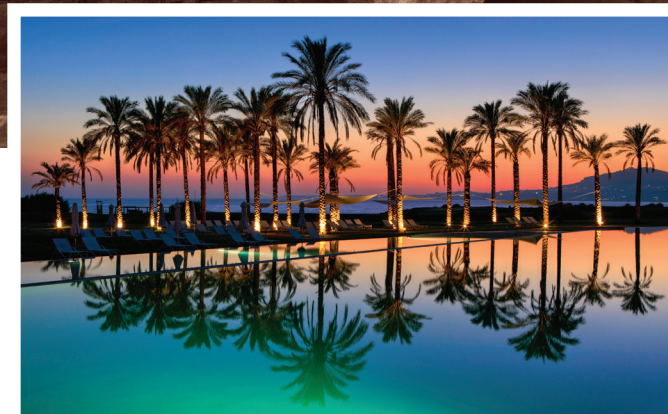
While Brown's is a decidedly distinguished destination, Lydia Forte, group director of food and beverage, acknowledges that guests at all Rocco Forte properties seek a contemporary mix of indulgent and light foods, including vegetarian and gluten-free options. "It's clear that people want to be healthier," she says.

Fancy mixing fitness with your love of food and art? Book a special art walk while at Brown's. Start with coffee and pastries before an extended walking tour of Mayfair's art and fashion galleries. Then, return to Charlie's restaurant for a debrief and delectable two-course lunch.



Charles Forte, Sir Rocco Forte, Olga Polizzi, Irene Forte, and Lydia Forte

Below: The pool and beautiful villa views at Verdura Resort, Sicily



### THE FUTURE OF ROCCO FORTE

New hotels in Milan, Naples, Lisbon, Sardinia, and possibly Miami are planned for 2025 and beyond. Director of development Charles Forte leads the company's hotel expansion and new projects for residences and resort spas with his father and his sister, wellness director Irene Forte.

Verdura Resort in Palermo, southwest Sicily, featured the first Irene Forte Spa, with two stories of indoor and outdoor spaces, treatment suites, a beauty salon, and a fitness center overlooking the sea. Irene Forte Skincare has been awarded a B Corp certification, only given to companies that meet the highest social and environmental sustainability standards.

"My skincare line is based on the natural bounty of the island—a kind of Mediterranean diet for the face," says Irene.

The Forte family is working well together to improve beauty on all fronts, from decor to dining and hospitality to health, as it builds a hotel collection that treats guests to the best things in life. ▣

TO LEARN MORE OR BOOK A STAY, VISIT [ROCCOFORTEHOTELS.COM](http://ROCCOFORTEHOTELS.COM) OR FOLLOW THE BRAND ON INSTAGRAM @ROCCOFORTEHOTELS.