

JANUARY 2015
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ACADEMY AWARDS

Visit one of the city's
gorgeous foreign
academies

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ANNO 21 - N°1 MENSILE POSTE ITALIANE SPA SPEDIZIONE IN A. P. 70% ROMA





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It's Academic

In the mood to get international? Some of the city's most gorgeous palaces and villas are home to Rome's foreign academies. **Tiffany Parks** reviews the best.



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The Dark Side of Baroque Rome

While visiting Villa Medici, don't miss *The Baroque Underworld: Vice and Destitution in Rome*, an exhibit exploring the underbelly of papal Rome. 17th-century Rome was characterized by depravity, destitution, and excess, yet ironically it was the scene of astounding artistic output. Fifty paintings created in Rome around the turn of the 17th century, many by the followers of Caravaggio, reveal the dark side of baroque Rome, its slums, taverns, brothels, and other seedy haunts. Painters from around Europe, including Claude Lorrain, Valentin de Boulogne, Jan Miel, Sébastien Bourdon, Leonaert Bramer, Bartolomeo Manfredi, Jusepe de Ribera, and Pieter van Laer, who had come to Rome to profit from the city's influx of wealth and artistic commissions, ultimately subverted the established order by exposing the ugly realities of life in the corrupt papal city. The exhibit ends on 18 January (see p55).

Vive la France!

Probably topping the list for sheer wow-factor, the French Academy at Villa Medici perches atop the Pincian Hill with all of Rome spread at its feet. Occupying what was originally the Roman residence of the Medici family, the academy is also one of the most artistically rich in the city. While the villa's front façade embodies classical simplicity, the rear façade (pictured left) is lavishly decorated with ancient bas-reliefs taken from various sites around the city, including garlands from the Ara Pacis. The splendorous gardens include ancient sculptures, towering umbrella pine trees, an obelisk, and frescoed pavilions. Regular guided tours of the gardens and select rooms of the villa are offered in various languages. While you're there, don't miss the temporary exhibit *The Baroque Underworld: Vice and Destitution in Rome* (see left). **Viale della Trinità dei Monti, 1. Tel 0667611. www.villamedici.it**

Mein Vaterland

The nation that brought the world the poetry of Goethe and Rilke, the music of Schubert and Brahms, and indeed the entire concept of romanticism, is represented and celebrated at Villa Massimo. The German Academy, located just north of the historic center, off Via Nomentana, was founded with the goal of promoting German art in Italy, offering ten exceptionally gifted German writers, composers, artists, and architects the chance to study at Villa Massimo for a year. In addition, the academy organizes regular exhibitions, concerts, and events that celebrate Germany's contribution to the arts, both today and yesterday. **Largo di Villa Massimo, 1/2. Tel 064425931. www.villamassimo.de**

Hungry for Hungary

Located on Via Giulia, widely considered the most elegant street in Rome, the Hungarian Academy occupies sumptuous Palazzo Falconieri, a palace partially designed by one of history's greatest architects, baroque genius Francesco Borromini. If you've ever dreamed of studying one of the most complex languages in



HUNGARIAN ACADEMY AT PALAZZO FALCONIERI

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the world, deepening your appreciation for great Hungarian composers like Béla Bartók, Franz Liszt, and György Ligeti, or simply exploring one of Europe's richest yet little appreciated cultures, this is the place to do it. With regular film showings, live concerts, exhibitions, and other events, you'll find a world of Hungarian culture just waiting to be discovered. **Via Giulia, 1. Tel 066889671. www.balassiintezet.hu**

Japan-tastic

Unlike many of the city's other foreign academies, the Japanese Institute of Culture does not reside in an earlier structure; rather the building was designed specifically to house it. The institute, designed by Isoya Yoshida, was constructed respecting the architectonic canons of the 10th-century Heian period, and surrounding the building is a traditional Japanese garden, complete with an artificial lake, conceptualized by Ken Nakajima. Inaugurated in 1962, the institute was the first of its kind outside Japan, and offers language lessons, demonstrations of the art of ninja, exhibitions, film festivals, and other opportunities to delve into the extraordinary culture of the Land of the Rising Sun.

Via Antonio Gramsci, 74. Tel 063224794. www.jfroma.it

USA, All the Way

Located on the slopes of the Janiculum Hill, Villa Aurelia was erected in 1650 for the noble Farnese family. It was eventually used by General Garibaldi for defense of the Roman Republic against the French Army in the mid-19th century, when it suffered considerable damage. Painstakingly restored to its former glory, today the villa is the site of the American Academy in Rome. This prestigious academy is the destination for winners of the sought-after Rome Prize, and in addition to exhibitions by some of the most innovative young artists of the moment, the academy also organizes regular cultural conferences, seminars, exhibitions, installations, and musical events open

to the public. The extensive gardens, located on the site of the ancient Horti Caesaris et Getae, boast a host of trees including cypress, cherry, linden, crab apple, plum, olive, apricot, apple, and, of course, Roman pine. **Via Angelo Masina, 5. Tel 0658461. www.aarome.org**

Swiss Miss

Villa Maraini, the site of the Swiss Institute, is a little-known gem only recently opened to the public. The villa, an exquisite example of early 20th-century Liberty architecture, was designed by Swiss architect Otto Maraini, who would go on to build the famed Hotel Excelsior on Via Veneto, one of Rome's most iconic hotels. Inspired by Roman suburban villas of the 16th and 17th centuries, such as Villa Medici and Villa Borghese, the building is surrounded by a lush garden complete with

a nymphaeum, statues, and imported palm trees. But the villa's greatest treasure is no doubt the 26m Belvedere Tower; from its position above the Spanish Steps, it's the 2nd-highest viewpoint in Rome after St. Peter's dome, offering a 360° view of the city. After a visit to the gardens and the tower, be sure to stop by the *Allegro Giusto* exhibition, displaying installations and avant-garde works on loan from the Italian Swiss Bank art collection. **Via Ludovisi, 48. Tel 06420420. www.istitutovizzero.it**



AMERICAN ACADEMY AT VILLA AURELIA