The Pitti Palace and Boboli Gardens masterpieces and more
The Pitti Palace,
From Regal Residence to Museum 9
Alessandro Cecchi

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Palatine Gallery and Royal Apartments
Accessible. Closed: Mondays, January 1, May 1, December 25.

Modern Art Gallery
Accessible. Closed: Mondays; January 1, May 1, December 25.

Winter Suite or Apartments of the Duchess of Aosta
Visits by appointment only.

Museum of Costume and Fashion
Accessible. Closed: first and last Monday of each month; January 1, May 1, December 25.

Treasury of the Grand Dukes
Accessible. Closed: first and last Monday of each month; January 1, May 1, December 25.

Boboli Gardens
Accessible. Closed: first and last Monday of each month, January 1, May 1, December 25.

Porcelain Museum
Closed: first and last Monday of each month; January 1, May 1, December 25.

For information and bookings contact Firenze Musei:
tel. (+39) 055.294883-2654321, Monday to Friday 8.30 am-6.30 pm, Saturday 8.30 am-12.30 pm (answer phone operative at other times).
Anyone walking up the forecourt dominated by the grand building that embraces the square may find it hard to believe that the original fifteenth-century core was much smaller, with just seven windows. The lunette by the Flemish artist, Giusto Utens shows the ashlar façade the way it was in the late sixteenth-century, with the early arrangement of the Boboli Gardens and the Forte Belvedere, overlooking the gardens that was commissioned by Ferdinando I de’ Medici and built by Bernardo Buontalenti in the 1490s.

An archive document tells us that the palace was built before 1461, probably by Luca Fancelli who, according to Vasari, worked to plans by Brunelleschi. It was commissioned by Luca Pitti a wealthy banker; but when his descendants ran into financial problems they sold it, and the garden, to Cosimo I de’ Medici’s wife, duchess Eleonora de Toledo in 1550. The Spanish lady must have felt uncomfortable and confined in Palazzo Vecchio: the old palace in the middle of the city, where the couple settled in 1540 just a year after their wedding, had no gardens.

The focus of the initial works, financed by the duchess to designs by Niccolò Tribolo who died shortly after completing the drawings, was the gardens, with the construction of the Grotticina di Madama (Madama Grotto) (1553-1555) and a pond by Vasari, that has since been replaced by the Grotta del Buontalenti (Buontalenti Grotto) (1583-1593).

The first expansion work on the palazzo was begun in 1561, designed and directed by Bartolomeo Ammannati who built the majestic courtyard that opens towards the amphitheatre (inaugurated in 1637) and is named for him. Eleonora could only see the beginnings of the work at Pitti and on the new apartment in Palazzo Vecchio meant for her, because she, and her children Giovanni and Garzia contracted malaria in Pisa and died in 1562.
View of the Room of Giovanni da San Giovanni
The Medici Family Tree, 1699
pen and ink on paper, 152 × 136.6 cm

Venetian Manufacture and Florentine Silver-and-Gold Work (Giusto da Firenze)
Vase, 13th century; mount, 15th century
red jasper, gilded and enamelled silver mount, ht. 27 cm, engraving: “Laur. Med.”
1 Footmen’s Antechamber (Anticamera degli Staffieri)
2 Gallery of the Statues (Galleria delle Statue)
3 Castagnoli Room (Sala Castagnoli)
4 Room of the Allegories (Sala delle Allegorie)
5 Room of the Fine Arts (Sala delle Belle Arti)
6 Hercules Room (Sala di Ercole)
7 Vitrine Room (Sala delle Vetrine)
8 Aurora Room (Sala dell’Aurora)
9 Berenice Room (Sala di Berenice)
10 Psyche Room (Sala di Psiche)
11 Room of Fame (Sala della Fama)
12 Room of the Ark (Sala dell’Arca)
13 Music Room (Sala della Musica)
14 Poccetti Corridor (Corridoio del Poccetti)
15 Prometheus Room (Sala di Prometeo)
16 Corridor of the Columns (Corridoio delle Colonne)
17 Room of Justice (Sala della Giustizia)
18 Flora Room (Sala di Flora)
19 Room of the Cupids (Sala dei Putti)
20 Ulysses Room (Sala di Ulisse)
21 Napoleon’s Bathroom (Bagno di Napoleone)
22 Education of Jupiter Room (Sala dell’Educazione di Giove)
23 Heating Room (Sala della Stufa)
24 Iliad Room (Sala dell’Iliade)
25 Saturn Room (Sala di Saturno)
26 Jupiter Room (Sala di Giove)
27 Mars Room (Sala di Marte)
28 Apollo Room (Sala di Apollo)
29 Venus Room (Sala di Venere)
Roman Art
Aphrodite of Knidos, 1st–2nd century A.D.
marble, ht. 199 cm

Roman Art
Aesculapius, 2nd century A.D.
marble, ht. 201 cm

Roman Art
Athlete, 2nd century A.D.
marble, ht. 66 cm

Roman Art
Hygieia, 2nd century A.D.
marble, ht. 202 cm
Baldassare Franceschini, called Volterranno
One of Parson Arlotto's Tricks, c. 1640
canvas, 107 × 150 cm

Emilio Zocchi
The Young Michelangelo Sculpting the Head of a Faun, 1861
marble, ht. 60 cm
Giambologna
Pietro Tacca
Sebastiano Salvini da Settignano

*Abundance*, 1608, 1636-1637
white marble (bronze stalks), ht. 400 cm

Stoldo Lorenzi

*Neptune Fountain with Naiads and Tritons*, 1565-1568
bronzes, white marble