

# What's Hot Florence

Funky lamps, natural scents, lacy frills, custom kitchens and a new Tuscan eatery



## Luxury Lace

Loretta Caponi does hand-embroidered nightgowns for the likes of Barbra Streisand and Blaine Trump, and there's a reason why. Caponi, embroidering from the age of nine, has one of the finest artisan operations in the realm of hand-made lace and embroidery. Her new shop houses everything from her nightgowns, velvet robes, satin pillows trimmed with antique lace (above), embroidered tablecloths and napkins to darling children's clothes and men's pajamas and robes.

**Piazza Antinori, 4r. Tel: (39-55) 213-668.**

## Florentine Souk

There are Indian raw silk lanterns, glittering mosaic table tops, futons and more at Giraffa, which Fabrizio Bitossi opened earlier this year to give Florentines an eclectic mix of functional, moderately priced goods for the home from around the world. "Everyone from countesses to university students shops here, and that's very satisfying for me," said Bitossi. One of the most expensive—and impressive—items in the store is a recycled iron and wooden gong made by a sculptor in Washington state that goes for \$1,670 (2.7 million lire). **Via de' Ginori 20r. Tel: (39-55) 283-652.**



## Kitchens That Count

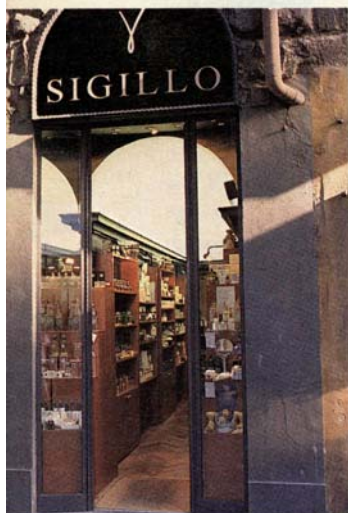
Riccardo Barthel and his wife have what it takes to create exquisite custom kitchens and baths that make "rustic" living elegant. The Barthels, who work regularly with architect Renzo Mongiardino, recently transferred their workshop and showrooms to a lovely courtyard, where their hand-painted tiles,

restored cabinets, marble-

topped sinks, baths and fixtures of all kinds are displayed to best effect. They did Valentino's kitchen in London, kitchens for the Agnellis in Corsica and the complete interior for the Cucina and Company restaurant in New York. "We aren't antique dealers; the things we find are rarely more than 100 years old, but it's the way we put things together that's special," Barthel explains. **Via dei Serragli, 234r. Tel: (39-55) 228-0721.**

## Special Scents

Cecilia Nelli had been importing natural fragrances for years when she decided to open her own shop (left). Her products (none animal-tested) include Neal's Yard products for body and home and perfumes by Tuscan fragrance designer Lorenzo Villaresi, E. Coudrey, Cole Bastide, Le Jardin Retrouvé and Etro fragrances. **Via Porta Rossa, 23r. Tel: (39-55) 287-732.**



## Tuscan Treats

Even a promising dental career couldn't keep Nicola Schioppo (standing) out of the kitchen—he has a passion for cooking. So he opened Osteria dei Benci with Marco Meneghini. The atmosphere is traditional Tuscan with a modern twist. Try the barley and legume soup with a flask of Chianti and thick slices of fresh Tuscan bread. **Via de' Benci, 13r. Tel: (39-55) 234-4923.**