

Blue Guide: Florence



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The City
Seen from the circle of hills which surrounds the city
Florence gives an impression of completeness of design
its medieval and Renaissance architecture dominated by Brunelleschi's immense terracotta dome
erta sopra e
ciel
ampla da coprire con sua ombra
tutti e popoli toscani
(Soaring above in the sky
large enough to
cover with its shadow all the Tuscan people
as Leon Battista Alberti
described it in his Trattato della Pittura with its celebrated
dedication to Filippo di Ser Brunelleschi . The city is a perfect whole to
which nothing can be added or removed without altering the
harmony which it has been given by man over a span of about eight
centuries. In perhaps no other city are the
intention of man and the
design of nature so bound up together. The city is born
out of the
valley
its monuments enclosed by an amphitheatre of hills. Its

>architecture has been created by the human mind in imitation of its
natural setting¼ and Brunelhischi cemented this relationship for ever
with his great cupolai¼ a poetic masterpiece of engineering.
I advise any visitor¼ before penetrating the streets and piazze of the
city¼ to take himself without the city gates i¼ up onto the circle of hills¼
so as to perceive the physical unity which embraces the spirit of
Florentine arti¼ Probably the most remarkable of all Florentine views
is that from the hillside of Bellosguardo¼ approached by a winding
road from which the natural landscape can be seen blending with
that of thb city. The view from the top of the hill takes in the faqades
of the most important buildings in an almost unconscious summary of
the beauties of Florence¼ to paraphrase one of the oldest guides to the
city. Thousands of modest roofs covered by simple terracotta tiles
remind us of the humble but highly skilled craftsmanship which is
still an important characteristic of daily lre in the city. Above these
rise the principal monuments of the city which testify to the presence
of exceptional artists¼ from the Romanesque period onwards¼ who
made Florence the centre to which the art world looked for inspira-
tion and guidance.

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