

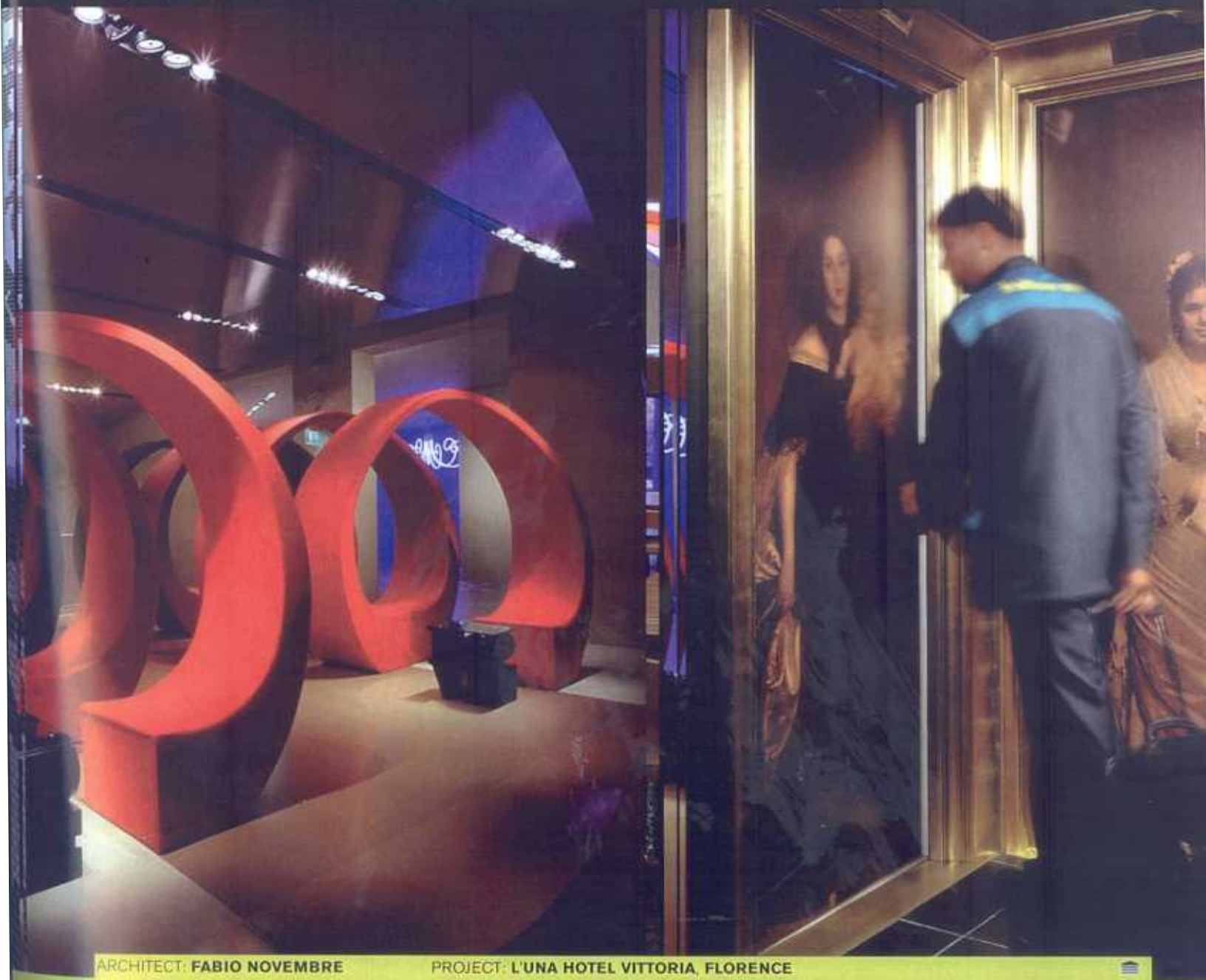


mosaic manufacturer Bisazza is evident in the foyer of L'Una Hotel Vittoria, where a spiralling trail leads the visitor from entrance to reception desk. His communal seating system, 'And', was designed for Cappellini and is used here to promote interaction in the lounge. The doors to the bedrooms are individualized by life-size portraits copied from paintings in the nearby Uffizi Museum.

when you enter you pass thro



a tumbling spiral of floral mosaic



ARCHITECT: FABIO NOVEMBRE

PROJECT: L'UNA HOTEL VITTORIA, FLORENCE

oyant designer Fabio has given design-conscious visitors a destination in the very traditional setting of Florence. The takes advantage of the fact that it is on the edge of the historic centre in San Frediano, one of the more popular quarters of the city. Although working within the limitations of an existing building, Fabio has used the relatively conventional exterior to minimize the turbulent effects inside. When you enter you pass through a tumbling spiral of floral mosaic. Novembre is such a master of mosaic that you sometimes wonder if he has a financial

interest in the material. He has realized that you can use it to combine the traditional imagery of decoration, such as that on fabric and carpet, with a digital twist. He designs the mosaic on a point-by-point basis, and makes it flow over curved surfaces. This entrance spiral joins together a number of diverse conditions. It forms a dynamic threshold, and as it progresses across the room it directs you forward to the reception, which it literally rises over, accentuating the lateral connections between this space and the bar to the left and restaurant to the right.

The private spaces are divided into bathroom, closet and bedroom, the bathroom being the first thing glimpsed when entering from the corridor. The bed (right) is raised on a platform. Square leather panels are surrounded by fibre-optic lighting. Colour-adjustable, this gives the feeling of sleeping within a jewelled box. Laminate cabinets are printed with images of garments.



Once you've checked in, your first stop will be your room, which you will find behind a repro painting on the door. Though identified by number, the experience is of a mysterious gallery of Old Master repros, somewhat incongruously offset by a wobbly, cloud-like installation on the ceiling. The rooms themselves are an odd cross between tomb and playground. Cubic in every respect, the 'bedsits' are contained within a three-dimensional matrix of dark padding that has fibre-optic light points on the crossings. Strangest of all is the personal bar at the



foot of the bed. When you're up for a drink it works fine, but the effect from the bed is somewhat aggressive, especially since you're forced to watch the plasma TV over the top of it. The bathroom next door is almost as big as the rest of the room. It has the only 'his and her' showers I have ever experienced.

Downstairs the bar has more spirals – but this time in red upholstery. The idea is that tables and seats are incorporated into the form as it progresses through the space. This works to a degree, but you have the feeling you want to rough it up. Across the way

in the restaurant, the curving theme gets larger in a huge serpentine table designed by Atelier van Lieshout that occupies the centre of the room. A suspended stained-glass light follows it through the room, giving it a Las Vegas tilt. Though there are no one-armed bandits, there is a series of Internet screens around the periphery. You can sit and surf while having your breakfast.