



LA DOLCE VITA!

From the best Barolo to the brightest bling, the most stylish Atlantans live the good life with Italian gusto. On the following pages, you'll find the 51 fab-est imports to feed this particular obsession with all things Italian—plus six guiding principles for doing it in true continental style. Viva Atlanta!

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LOOK A-LIST!

DRESS THE PART

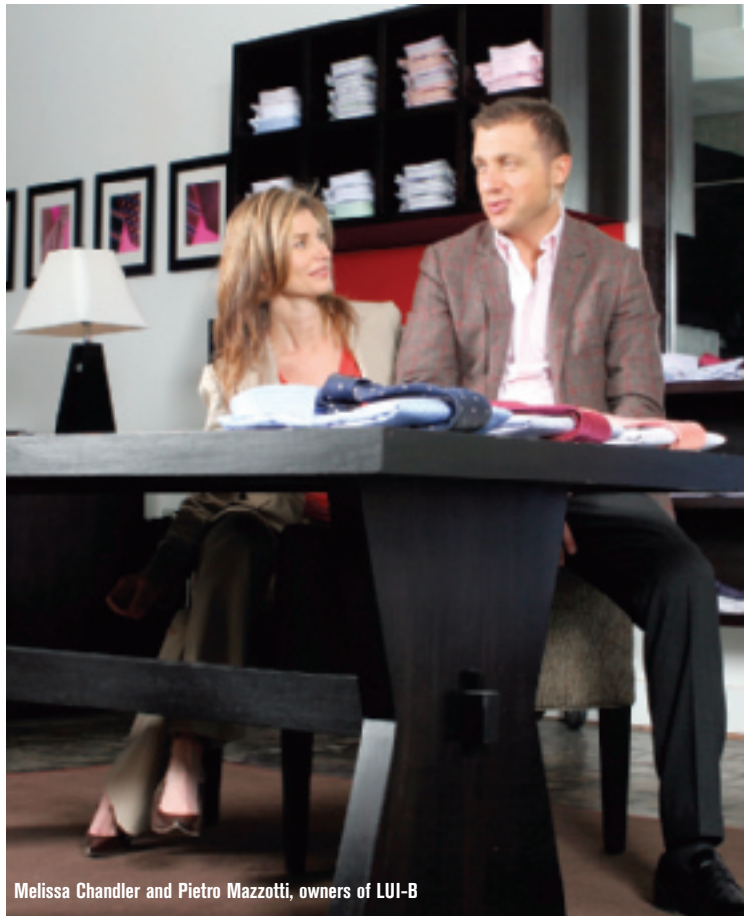
There's no better way than by wearing one of the newest creations from Valentino, Versace and Gucci. For Valentino, head to Jeffrey, where you can also get a glimpse of the store's recent expansion. At Versace, look for matching, orange-and-white men's shoes and women's handbags this spring, to send your couple friends into a jealous rage. If Gucci's your style, try the new print blouses with cap sleeves and girlish dresses cut above the knees. Designed by the brand's 32-year-old creative director, Frida Giannini, they embody youth. *Gucci*, 404.233.4899, www.gucci.com. *Versace*, 404.814.0664, www.versace.com. *Jeffrey*, 404.237.9000, www.jeffreynewyork.com. All at Phipps Plaza, 3500 Peachtree Road.

MAKE THE SHIRT FIT

At LUI-B in Midtown, co-owners Melinda Chandler and Pietro Mazzotti custom design men's shirts, then have them sewn by their team of expert seamstresses at a sewing house near Bologna. French cuffs, barrel cuffs, in-stock or special-order fabrics—you name it, they can make it. LUI-B also stocks a full line of ready-to-wear shirts, and will have a tie custom woven for you in southern Italy, from your choice of 50 to 70 fabrics, which Chandler designs. Prices range from \$165 to \$225 for a ready-to-wear shirt, to \$265 to 325 for a made-to-measure shirt, which takes about four weeks; ties cost around \$105 each. *LUI-B*, 1116 West Peachtree St., 404.810.0031, www.lui-b.com.

SHOW OFF

For men, that means buying a suit tailored to your bulging biceps and quads. Try a Brioni suit, exclusive in Atlanta to Neiman Marcus. About 900



Melissa Chandler and Pietro Mazzotti, owners of LUI-B



Versace's spring runway collection, for the diva in you

tailors in the Abruzzi factory make the 200 models, of which a quarter are made-to-measure. While there, also inquire about the store's many other exclusive Italian offerings, from Ermenegildo Zegna sportswear to Testoni shoes. For women, it means heading to Peoples, to try on anything by Alessandro Dell'Acqua. His designs are much-loved by Jennifer Lopez and Jessica Simpson. This season, look for his black lace, body-skimming gowns and bustier dresses, an homage to the 1950s. *Neiman Marcus*, 3393 Peachtree Road, 404.266.8200, www.neimanmarcus.com; www.brioni.com. *Peoples*, 3236 Roswell Road, 404.816.7292, www.alessandrodelacqua.com.

BE EXOTIC

From head to toe! For the latter, splurge and head to Ferragamo, to order a pair of custom-made shoes in ostrich or crocodile. The process, called *Tramezza Su Ordinazione*, takes about 12 weeks for exotics, six to eight weeks for regular shoes. You choose from 10 styles and more than 70 types of material. The shoes are individually fit at the Atlanta store, then handmade at the Ferragamo factories in Florence. Each pair costs from \$1,000 to \$5,000. If you can't make up your mind, ask the dashing showroom manager, Mo Akbar, for advice. *Ferragamo*, Lenox Square, 3393 Peachtree Road, 404.467.0986, www.ferragamo.com.

WEAR COLOR BOLDLY

Why be a shrinking violet when you can be a bold primary? For women and men, we love anything from Emilio Pucci, including this spring's ties (\$130), wedge thong sandals (\$250) and printed terry tote (\$495). The new colorful woven, leather handbags from Bottega Veneta are delightful, as are Dolce & Gabbana's floral canvas slingbacks (\$475) and acid green washed leather bag (\$1,350). For a secret that's all yours, buy La Perla's bright yellow Collier bra from the spring Limited Edition collection. Hand-sewn from cotton and silk in Bologna, it features macramé embroidery detailing, for the good girl in you, and rhinestones, for the diva. All Available at Saks Fifth Avenue, 404.261.7234, and Neiman Marcus, 404.266.8200, www.laperla.it.

SPOIL YOURSELF

WEAR ARM CANDY

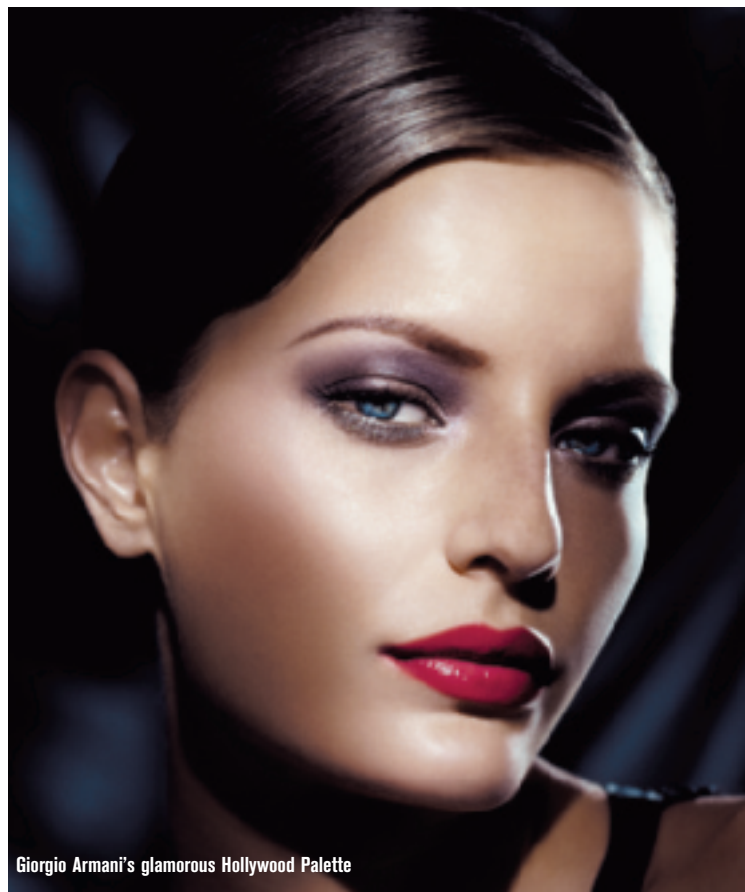
For a real showstopper at your next springtime fete, whip out Fendi's "B Bag" and watch your rivals' jaws drop. It's already achieving cult status, and chances are you'll have it long before your gal pals if you get on the wait list at Saks right now. At presstime, the wait was one month, so hurry, hurry, hurry and call the "B Bag" direct order line (404.812.7372). Utterly feminine, it's available in alligator, patent leather and lambskin decorated with luxurious lace embroidery (\$2,090 for the small version). *Saks Fifth Avenue, 3500 Peachtree Road, 404.261.7234, www.saksfifthavenue.com, www.fendi.com.*

PRETEND IT'S SUMMER YEAR-ROUND

One look at this spring's jewelry collections from Marco Bicego and you'll want to throw on a string bikini and head to the nearest pool party. Named after hot locales like Madagascar and Acapulco, the jewelry is breezy and light, often featuring delicate strands of precious metals adorned with diamonds and clusters of colored stones. For a springtime soiree in Atlanta, we especially love the Aruba Collection. The pendant earrings (\$3,230) and matching necklace (\$5,900) include diamonds, 18-karat gold, amethyst, aquamarine, and citrine, among others. You can visit Marco Bicego boutiques in Verona, Italy, Moscow and Tokyo; locally you can find the brand at Saks Fifth Avenue and Brown & Company Jewelers. When you're at the latter, also ask about the other Italian brands they carry: Roberto Coin, DiModolo, Chimento, Valente and Luca Carati. *Brown & Company Jewelers, 674 Holcomb Bridge Road, Roswell, 770.993.1080, www.brownjewelers.com. Saks Fifth Avenue, Phipps Plaza, 3440 Peachtree Road, 404.261.7234, saksfifthavenue.com, www.marcobicego.com.*

LOOK GLAMOROUS

Wearing something from the much-coveted Armani Privé haute couture collection, available by special order through the Phipps Plaza store, is definitely going to do the trick. But, why not make glamour part of your daily ritual? This spring, try Giorgio Armani's 2006 Hollywood Collection of beauty products, only available at Saks Fifth Avenue. We



Giorgio Armani's glamorous Hollywood Palette

especially like the limited-edition Hollywood Palette (\$80), which includes eyeshadow in gorgeous shades of violet, mink brown, golden black and lilac, and a soft rose-colored sheer shimmer. To see the entire collection of Armani cosmetics and fragrances, visit the brand's new Web site, www.giorgioarmanibeauty.com. *Giorgio Armani, Phipps Plaza, 404.814.0086, www.armani.com. Saks Fifth Avenue, 3500 Peachtree Road, 404.261.7234, www.saksfifthavenue.com.*

AROUSE YOUR PASSION

If pent-up passion à la Renaissance turns you on, head to Barneys New York Co-Op at Phipps Plaza and get a whiff of I Profumi di Firenze (\$79 for 50 ml) eau de parfum fragrances. They're based on recipes discovered in 1966 by a Florentine perfumer, who rescued them from a flooded apothecary basement. He only later realized they were the original formulas commissioned by Catherine de' Medici, heir to the country's most famous banking family. At Barneys, you can find three of the scents: *Acqua di Firenze*, a blend of honeysuckle and iris; *Melograno Selvatico*, made from wild pomegranate and musk; and *Limone di Sicilia*, a mixture of Sicilian lemons and Bergamot from Calabria. For the other scents—there are dozens—visit the Isabella Imports Web site. *Barneys New York Co-Op, Phipps Plaza, 3500 Peachtree Road, 404.467.1569, www.barneys.com. Isabella Imports, 310.319.1896, www.isabellaimports.com.*

GO NATURAL

Wear a fragrance that embodies spring and makes you feel sexy. For men, Bulgari's new Aqua Pour Homme (\$48 for 1.7 oz. spray, \$68 for 3.4 oz. spray) mixes the scent of *Posidonia*, an aquatic plant, with *Petit Grain*, a combination of orange tree leaves and mandarin. It's also part of a complete bath line that includes after-shave emulsion (\$50 for 3.4 oz.), a deodorant stick (\$22 for 2.7 oz.), and a shampoo and shower gel (\$35 for 6.8 oz.). *Bulgari is available at Saks Fifth Avenue and Neiman Marcus.*



Bulgari's Aqua Pour Homme fragrance for men

BE CHARMING

Or, buy yourself a charm bracelet, like the new one from Michele della Valle, exclusive in Atlanta to Mayor's. You can pick and choose from a variety of colorful sea creatures to add to the 18-karat white gold bracelet (\$1,395). There's a black-and-white diamond angel fish charm (\$7,500), diamond and ruby squid charm (\$5,000), ruby and onyx "happy" fish charm (\$3,650), and a diamond and pink sapphire star fish charm (\$5,000). Another Italian spring bracelet from the deep sea: the Aegean bracelet, designed by Elsa Peretti exclusively for Tiffany & Co. The open link design is made of 18-karat gold and sterling silver, and is a perfect example of Peretti's timeless, fluid style. *Mayor's*, 3225 Peachtree Road, 404.261.4911 or www.mayors.com. *Tiffany & Co.*, Phipps Plaza, 3500 Peachtree Road, 404.261.0074 or www.tiffany.com.

STEAL AWAY

There's no easier place to buy sexy Italian jewelry on the sly in Atlanta than at Goldwasser. After passing through the nondescript foyer, you emerge into the 350-square-foot shop, where owner Ken Goldwasser will show you his handpicked stock of unique Italian treasures, culled during several trips to Italy each year. Mostly from Vincenza and Arezzo, the pieces are often from lesser-known designers, like Stefan Hafner and Lara Nanis, on the cutting edge of new jewelry trends. This season, look for cuff bracelets by Giuseppe Calgaro. He merges precious metal manufacturing with textiles by permanently mixing colors—pink, yellow, green, blue and orange—with silver and gold. Starting at \$375. "It's like wearing lingerie on your wrist," Goldwasser says. "They're totally cool." 3277-F Roswell Road, 404.869.7858, www.goldwasser.com.

SLOW IT DOWN

Wear a watch by day that reminds you of trips to the theatre and cocktail parties rather than stacks of faxes or laundry waiting for your return. Pippo Italia's colorful collection comes in 10 case shapes and more than 100 color combinations for men and women. Between the Swiss-made movements, sapphire crystals and hand-set, full-cut



Faraone Mennella's Stella necklace and Diamanti ring



Anichini's Ara Stripe hotel collection bedding

diamonds, you can't go wrong. A stellar example this spring: the Evolution, inspired by the 1930's Villa Malaparte in Capri, with a white mother of pearl dial and brown sateen strap (\$3,400). Available at *Bloomingdale's*, Lenox Square, 3393 Peachtree Road, 404.869.7864, www.bloomingdales.com, and at *Bailey Banks & Biddle*, Lenox Square, 404.237.9247, www.baileybanksandbiddlestores.com.

SPARKLE LIKE A STAR

From Scarlett Johansson to *Sex and the City* stars, celebs have gone wild for jewelry by Faraone Mennella. For good reason: It's owned by two Neapolitans, Roberto Faraone Mennella and Amedeo Scognamiglio, whose sexy, laid-back style pervades their designs. Once you try on their gold and onyx earrings, thick gold cuff bracelets or diamond-pavé hoops, you'll be so wooed you won't want to take them off. Available at *Saks Fifth Avenue*, 404.261.7234, and *Neiman Marcus*, 404.266.8200. In New York, book an appointment at their showroom, 5 East 57th St., 212.752.5990, www.faraonemennella.com.

SLEEP LIKE ROYALTY

Italians treat themselves like kings and queens when it comes to bed sheets and you should too. Look for the Ara Stripe hotel collection by Anichini, available through Heirloom Iron Bed Company, or the Tintoretto collection from Bellino Fine Linens, sold at Precious Things. The latter has two-tone embroidery and scalloped edges, and is made by special order only. For a 1,000 thread count sheet, grab an interior designer and head to McGary & Co. at ADAC. Ask for the Sateen 1,000 collection from Lisa Galimberti/Belisari (\$210 for queen-size top sheet), then go home and take a good nap. *Heirloom Iron Bed*, 2140 Peachtree Road, 404.352.3131, www.heirloomironbed.com, www.anichini.com. *Precious Things Ltd.*, 56 East Andrews Drive, 404.233.8617, www.bellinofinelinens.com. *McGary & Co.*, ADAC, 351 Peachtree Hills Ave., Suite 501-B, 404.233.3828, www.mcgaryandco.com. Available to the trade only.

BE INDULGENT

HEAT IT UP

Bring your date night up a notch: Cook a meal you learned from two of the best Italian chefs in town, Mirko di Giacomantonio (of Osteria del Figo and Figo Pasta) and Riccardo Ullio (of Sotto Sotto and Fritti). They often teach at Cook's Warehouse, where classes range from \$35 to \$125 per student. The school also arranges cooking classes at home (\$60 to \$95 per person, minimum 10 to 15 people). Or, sign up for the "Date Night in Sicily" class (\$89 per person) at the Viking Culinary Arts Center, one of many that sell out quickly. *Cook's Warehouse*, 404.815.4993 or www.cookswarehouse.com. *Viking Culinary Arts Center*, 404.745.9065, www.vikinghomechef.com.

GET STEAMY

Remember the scene in *The Godfather, Part III*, when Sofia Coppola and Andy Garcia make gnocchi together? If you don't, rent it on DVD and learn from the pros. Or, head to Via Elisa Fresh Pasta and watch the staff at work. "The sweet potato ravioli is excellent with pork, just drizzle some pan juices on it before serving," says owner Elisa Gambino. The shop also sells premium Italian meats, cheeses, olives, balsamic vinegars and olive oils. 1750 C Howell Mill Road, 404.605.0668, www.vialisa.com.

DINE ON TRUFFLES

For a truly decadent experience, sample truffle cheeses from Savor Specialty Foods. "People show up in droves to buy them," says co-owner January Hodgson. They include Capra Cremosa with black truffle shavings (\$7.50 per slice) and Bianco Sottobosco with black truffle pieces from Alba (\$26 per pound.). The shop also stocks black truffle salt (\$22 for a 3.5 oz jar) and Fondo di Alba white truffle oil (\$40 for 1.86 oz bottle), as well as other gourmet delicacies from around the world. 3187 Roswell Road, 404.869.0070, www.savorjourmet.com.



Pricci's Executive Chef Piero Premoli (second from right) with his culinary team



Pricci salad drenched in imported Italian olive oil

LET LOOSE

That means the three Bs: Barolo, Brunello and Barbaresco. If you don't know what they are, time to sign up for a wine tasting class at the Atlanta Wine School. Better yet, throw a tasting party at your house with one of their wine experts on hand. The school will coordinate food pairings with your caterer, and provide Riedel stemware and tasting sheets. On average, the service costs about \$400 for a party of 12 to 15 people. 770.668.0435 or www.atlantawineschool.com.

BUY ONLY THE BEST OLIVE OIL

It's a staple in healthy Italian cuisine and definitely worth searching out. One of Atlanta's best sources for top-quality imported oils is Pricci restaurant. It's undergone a renaissance thanks to Executive Chef Piero Premoli, who took the helm last May. Originally from Milan, Premoli has retailored the menu and imported some of Italy's most talented young chefs, as well as a huge array of high-quality olive oils. "I sell about 80 bottles a week from about 30 to 35 regions of Italy," says Premoli. Other good sources: Eatzi's and Whole Foods. *Pricci*, 500 Pharr Road, 404.237.2941, www.buckheadrestaurants.com. *Eatzi's*, 404.237.2266, www.eatzis.com. *Whole Foods*, 404.324.4100, www.wholefoods.com.

TAKE A PICNIC

Go barefoot in the grass with gourmet munchies from Bella Cucina Artful Food! You can make your own spread—don't leave out the espresso-infused Dolci Cioccolati, Death by Chocolate cookies (\$19.99 for 3/4 pound box)—or buy the Tuscan Holiday Gift Hamper (\$200). The farmhouse olives, crackers and chocolates will make you forget about the rest of the world. Also worth buying: the pestos and Sicilian Lemon Aromatic Oil (\$25 for 100 ml), from the Abbey of San Giovanni in Abruzzo. 1050 North Highland Ave., 800.580.5674, www.bellacucina.com.

KEEP IT MODERN

PUMP UP THE VOLUME!

Judging from the colors of lacquered Italian kitchen and bath cabinetry, you'd think the country was addicted to lollipops. For reds, blues and yellows, pay a visit to Esperia in Midtown. Owned by Luca Trivisonno, it sells sleek lacquered designs, as well as ones in wengé, mahogany, oak, cherry and beech; countertops come in stainless steel, marble, granite and Piedra del Cardoso Italian volcanic stone. The showroom also carries modern furniture, closet shelving and sink hardware. *Esperia, 1431 Dutch Valley Place, 404.829.4700, www.esperiausa.com.*

MAKE IT SLEEK

Another great source for high-end Italian cabinetry in lacquered and natural wooden finishes is Poliform Atlanta. Ask owner Doug Henderson to show you the Varenna collection, produced in the company's Northern Italian factory near Como. Sleek and beautiful, it epitomizes the best in Italian contemporary home design. *Poliform Atlanta, 1198 Howell Mill Road, Suite 112, 404.605.0196, www.poliformatlanta.com.*

SIT ON IT

For a furniture shopping experience similar to touring Milan's best design stores, head to Domus International in Buckhead. Owner Jerry Moskowitz stocks the 34,000-square-foot, multi-level space with well-designed, contemporary furniture mostly from Northern Italy. The selection is top-drawer and, as Moskowitz puts it, "virtually everything we carry is exclusive to Atlanta." Italian brands include Driade, MDF Italia, Ceccotti, Maxalto and B&B Italia, including the orange, 2006 Arne sofa with a tubular steel frame by design guru Antonio Citterio. Domus' inventory changes often, based on Moskowitz's scouting trips to Italy several times per year. *1919 Piedmont Road, 404.872.1050, www.domusinternational.com.*

Pampaloni silver from OwenLawrence



Minotti's Venice Bed, from Space

THINK OUTSIDE OF THE BOX

At Space, owner/interior designer Tim Hobby carries everything from Cassina, Emmemobili and Minotti furniture to Venini glass, much of it exclusive in Atlanta to his store. At presstime, the store also had six, 10-foot-tall vintage Murano glass sculptures (\$3,500 each). The showroom is organized into vignettes, and the knowledgeable staff of designers can help you figure out how to place even a single piece in your existing décor. *800 Peachtree St., 404.228.4600, www.spacemodern.com.*

GET FUNKY

For a change, trash the brass and try sculptural and colored glass light fixtures instead. At C Lighting, the 12,000-square-foot showroom features fixtures from Italian brands such as AV Mazzega, Lumen Center Italia, Terzani, Foscarini and Muranodue; prices range from \$400 to \$18,850. At Retromodern.com, you can find products by Mazzega, O'Luce, Valenti, Foscarini and Artemide. Owner Scott Riley also stocks Italian furniture by designers such as Magis, Mebel and Produzione Privata, as well as Italian tabletop accessories from Alessi in the adjacent flagship boutique. *C Lighting, 333 Buckhead Ave., 404.760.1119, www.lighting.com. Retromodern.com, 805 Peachtree St., 404.724.0093, www.retromodern.com.*

BE SNAZZY

Go over the top when you set the table, even if it's just for you. To really make it shine, head to Beverly Bremer Silver Shop for silverware by Milan-based Buccellati (Empire and Laura, \$659 for a five-piece place setting). Or, go to the OwenLawrence showroom and take a look at the Pampaloni silver flatware, hollowware and candleabra from Florence, like the ones shown here, which you won't find anywhere else in the Southeast. The shop also has exclusives on many other Italian imports. Look for the woven leather furniture and desk accessories by Arte e Cuoio and Triangolo, and Zambaiti 4-ply cashmere and wool blankets and throws. Crystal and glass imports include: Arnolfo di Cambio and Colle Cristalleria crystal stemware from Tuscany; Salviati hand-etched glass; and Venetian blown glass from various makers, with chandeliers to die for. *Beverly Bremer Silver Shop, 3164 Peachtree Road, 404.261.4009, www.beverlybremer.com, www.buccellati.com. OwenLawrence, The Galleries of Peachtree Hills, 425 Peachtree Hills Ave., Suite 25, 404.869.7360, www.owenlawrence.com.*

HONOR TRADITION

ROMANCE LIKE ROMEO

Sorry technophiles, but E-mail missives just ain't as hot as a note in your own handwriting. Instead, head to one of Paper Affair's six locations and ask for Arturo Fine Stationery, made by Pescia-based Cartiere Magnani. It's the same brand that Italy's most famous lover, poet Gabriele D'Annunzio, used for printing his books. "Cartiere Magnani has been making fine art paper since 1404," says store co-owner, Tracy Wegener. Made of 100 percent cotton with deckled edging, it comes in natural white, white, celadon and—for the teenager in you—blush pink and baby blue. *Multiple locations, 2385 Peachtree Road, 404.237.2164, www.paperaffair.com.*

DECORATE LIKE A PRINCE OR PRINCESS

That means shopping for sumptuous fabrics and hand-crafted furniture with your lady-in-waiting—or your interior decorator. Great trade-only textiles include luxurious Coraggio fabrics (\$98 to \$595 per yard, MSRP), made in Italian mills from Como to Naples, and sold at Ainsworth-Noah in the Atlanta Decorative Arts Center. "They use a lot of mohair and cotton velvet. The colorations are wonderful because of the quality of the yarns," says Hal Ainsworth. While at ADAC, stop off at Smith Grubbs & Associates, to take a look at the imported Artitalia furniture from Venice. The limited-production Vere Antichità collection is hand-crafted from a combination of original 17th-century wooden panels from Italian villas and palaces, as well as reclaimed walnut, cherry and cypress wood. *Available to the trade only. Ainsworth-Noah, ADAC, 351 Peachtree Hills Avenue, Suite 518, 404.231.8787, www.ainsworth-noah.com. Smith Grubbs & Associates, ADAC, Suite 303, 404.239.9206, www.smithgrubbs.com.*



Madonna and Child by Giovanni Bellini, ca. 1510, at the High Museum of Art



Renzo Piano's High Museum of Art addition

INVEST IN ANTIQUES

Escape from everyone and make a day of antique hunting on your own. Excellent sources of 17th- to 19th-century Italian antiques include: Regalo Antiques, which carries hand-painted Italian furniture from Parma and Genoa, plus gilded wood and crystal chandeliers ranging from \$2,900 to \$30,000; Jeff Littrell Antiques, where almost everything is Italian, from tapestries to 400-year-old birdbaths; and Laura Walker Antiques, which sells Italian furniture and accessories, including handbags and vintage furs, from 1690 to 1940. *Regalo Antiques, 351 Peachtree Hills Ave., Suite 137, 404.237.4899, www.regaloantiques.com. Jeff Littrell Antiques, 178 Peachtree Hills Ave., 404.231.8662. Laura Walker Antiques, 404.467.4209 (please call for the new address, which was not available at presstime).*

LEARN FROM THE MASTERS

The Old Master paintings, that is. A reliable source of museum-quality Italian paintings from the 17th to 18th centuries is Spalding Nix Fine Art gallery. At presstime, it was selling "Dog with Game" (\$16,500), an oil on canvas painted by Giacomo Nani (ca. 1698 to 1770). To learn about the Old Masters, go to the High Museum of Art, which has a large collection from the 14th through 18th centuries, acquired through a Samuel H. Kress Foundation bequest. You can find works by Giovanni Bellini (ca. 1430 to 1516) and Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (ca. 1696 to 1770), among many others. Several are on display through March and April, including "Madonna and Child" (shown here) by Giovanni Bellini (ca. 1510). While there, make sure to tour the newly expanded areas of the museum, designed by Italian architect Renzo Piano. The museum has educational architecture workshops on Piano's work for children ages 10 to 14 on March 18 and 25, as well. *Spalding Nix Fine Art, The Galleries of Peachtree Hills, 425 Peachtree Hills Ave., Suite 30A, 404.844.7777, www.spaldingnixfineart.com. The High Museum of Art, 1280 Peachtree St., 404.733.4444, www.high.org.*

ENJOY THE RIDE

RACE LIKE THE WIND

If you're a cycling fanatic who loves braving Atlanta traffic with a bunch of buddies in tight clothes, Le Roi is the bike for you. Made by Wilier Triestina in Northern Italy, the super-light and super-stiff carbon fiber frame is the same one that the Italian racing team Lampré rides in the Tour de France. If the \$10,000 price tag at Atlanta Cycling is daunting, visit RealityBikes.com in Cumming, and purchase a ready-to-ride Colnago C40 Dura Ace (\$4,799) or Colnago Dream Plus (\$2,699). The expert staff can also custom-build a Colnago bike for you from imported parts. *Atlanta Cycling, 1860 Piedmont Ave., 404.873.2451, and 4335 Cobb Parkway, 770.952.7731, www.atlantacycling.com. RealityBikes.com, 20 Tri County Plaza, Cumming, 770.886.1175, www.realitybikes.com.*

GET CLOSER

Springtime dates in Italy aren't complete without a sunrise scooter ride for two to the neighborhood bakery, to taste the day's first steaming hot pastries. In Atlanta, you may have to settle for Krispy Kreme, but you can still get there in style with the newest Vespa GTS250. It comes in metallic black, Excalibur gray and dragon red (\$5,799). If the look is too mod squad, try the sleek Piaggio X9 Evolution (\$6,299) in imperial blue or steel gray, also available at the certified Vespa dealers listed here. *Vespa Atlanta, 3175 Pleasant Hill Road, Duluth, 678.417.6447, www.vespaatlanta.com. Vespa Marietta, 1750 Cobb Parkway South, Marietta, 770.984.9844, www.vespamarietta.com.*

LOOK COOL

Be a real road racer with the sporty new 2006 Ducati 99R Xerox, a limited edition of 300. "The Italians have a certain flair for styling," says Mason Orr, general manager of Atlanta Triumph Ducati. "They don't copy other motorcycles; they're known for their unique design and performance." At presstime, Orr's showroom had two in stock, plus a full line of other Ducatis starting at around \$7,000. It also stocks Italian-manufactured MV Augusta and Moto Guzzi, made in a factory on the shores of Lake Como. Of course, being extra-special has a price: in the case of the 99R Xerox, it's \$33,000. *1907-B Piedmont Road, 678.904.1414, www.atlantatriumphducati.com.*

BE A SPEED DEMON

Yes, Ferraris are hot. But, our Italian ride of choice this season is the Maserati Quattroporte Executive GT or Sport GT. Launched last



The new Vespa GTS250



Maserati's Quattroporte Executive GT

month in Detroit, the Quattroporte is considered by many experts the best car of the year. It comes with more than 4 million combinations and Poltrona Frau leather seats, and it can go from 0 to 60 in 5.2 seconds. There's a four-month wait list at Maserati of Atlanta, so get your name on the list now if you're willing to pay the \$102,000-plus price tag. If you can't wait to experience it, you can always fly to Parma, for a two-day Master GT Maserati 2006 driving class. They take place at the Autodromo Paletti di Varano de' Melegari, and are designed to let Maserati fans test the full line of cars, from the Coupé and Spyder to the Quattroporte. Ten instructors, headed up by Formula 1 pro Ivan Capelli, will put your skills to the test under all sorts of simulated hellish weather conditions, and keep track of it lap by lap via on-board telemetry. Hotel and dining are included in the 3,500-euro class fee (about \$4,173 at presstime). *For information on Maserati cars and classes, contact Maserati of Atlanta, 11875 Alpharetta Highway, Roswell, 678.802.5010 or www.maseratioatlanta.com.*

JUST TAKE OFF!

There's no better way to end your journey through the philosophies of *la dolce vita* than by taking a trip to Venice. Luckily for you, Delta Airlines is introducing a new direct Atlanta-Venice flight starting June 6. (This is its third direct flight in addition to its direct Atlanta to Milan and Rome flights.) Book a ticket in the Business Elite class, Delta's top class on international flights, and recline the seat to 160 degrees. Dine on the five-course menu and taste the award-winning in-flight wines. And by the way, *buon viaggio!* Delta Airlines, 800.221.1212, www.delta.com.

Travis Neighbor Ward is the editor-in-chief of The Atlantan and co-author of Living, Studying, and Working in Italy: Everything You Need to Know to Live La Dolce Vita (Henry Holt).