

ForbesLife

EXECUTIVE WOMAN

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a black and white vertically striped, long-sleeved, knee-length dress and black high-heeled shoes, is walking down a red-carpeted staircase. She is smiling and looking back over her shoulder. She is carrying a black handbag. The background shows an ornate building entrance with gold stanchions and a decorative column.

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SPECIAL
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ISSUE

On the road with ABC's Kate Snow,
Good Morning America weekend co-anchor

Grand style on a small scale

BY VALERIE WATERHOUSE

Last fall, when we surveyed 50 C-level executives about their lodging preferences, the luxury boutique hotel was high on the wish list, for both business and pleasure. This summer, with the euro trouncing the dollar, savvy travelers are discovering that these cosseting, smaller properties—located in and around art and business cities or deeper into the countryside—can be less costly than Europe's brand-name hotels. Indeed, bookings at more compact luxury hotels are starting to reflect the renewed interest in them. "We've seen the preference for smaller properties really take off since 2005," says Francesca della Torre di Lavagna, executive marketing director at Relais La Suvera, a 36-room villa hotel in the Tuscan hills. The countrified atmosphere of such properties means more freedom to dress up or down during your stay. Since Italy and France appeared in our survey as top destinations despite the exchange rate, we focused on some of the finest boutique hotels there—all with origins as private villas, and many with women at the helm. (Note: Prices accurate as of press time.)

Villa San Carlo Borromeo



