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Roma Nuova

Rome's New Scene: The Most Happening Neighborhoods

[Maria Shollenbarger](#) uncovers an electrifying new scene in some of Rome's most happening neighborhoods.



The view from the

Hotel Eden

[Gentl & Hyers](#) By [Maria Shollenbarger](#)

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[Photos: Rome's Electrifying New Scene](#)

Testaccio and Ostiense

Baroque domes, pastel frescoes, wisteria-draped *piazzette*: You'll find none of the quintessential Roman sights in Testaccio and Ostiense, which abut each other along the silver-brown stretch of the Tiber below Trastevere. Dirt and industry are deeply embedded in their DNA: Testaccio's late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century grid of middle-class apartment buildings rests on ancient Roman landfill, comprising tens of thousands of terra-cotta urns abandoned millennia ago after being off-loaded from ships bearing supplies from the imperial provinces. Ostiense's skyline is characterized as much by steel bridges and graffitied warehouses as by the famous Pyramid of Cestius; its premier museum, the Centrale Montemartini, is housed in a decommissioned power station.

But what these two neighborhoods lack in camera-readiness they make up for in genuine urban buzz-and for food lovers, they are Rome's place to be. Make a pilgrimage to the **Testaccio Market**, which still retains its special Roman brand of industrious cacophony, to stock up on prosciutto, fresh chicory, and just about everything in between, with a side trip to the 150-year-old delicatessen **Volpetti**, a must for hand-cut pasta, anchovies in Sicilian olive oil, or any one of the seven different preparations of artichokes.

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A new gastro-hub in the Ostiense area

The new gastronomic nexus here is **Porto Fluviale**, a dining-drinking-snacking mecca spread across a 10,000-square-foot warehouse that was formerly part of the Magazzini Generali, Rome's principal wholesale market. Now it's a cavernous series of spaces finished with pale-brick walls, industrial work lamps, and reclaimed-wood shelves offering a staggering bounty of Italian *gastronomia*. There's a bar that hums from late morning to the wee hours-the place for both a perfect espresso and a Campari spritz-along with a pizzeria centered around two massive wood ovens, one for thin-crust *pizze romane*, the other for the pillowy Neapolitan version. Elsewhere there's a tapas bar, a patisserie/tearoom, and a lounge stocked with leather club chairs and chesterfield sofas.

Due northeast of Porto Fluviale is the former Ostiense Air Terminal, home since June 2012 to **Eataly**, a four-story hymn to all that is superlative in Italian gastronomy and viticulture (it has a sister location in New York). The country's finest chefs make regular guest appearances in its show kitchens, and some of its best-loved niche food specialists-Teo Musso for beer, Roberto Battaglia for *mozzarella di bufala*, Alessandro Frassica for panini, and Slow Food master Sergio Capaldo for meat-have dedicated premises here.