

## A POSTCARD FROM

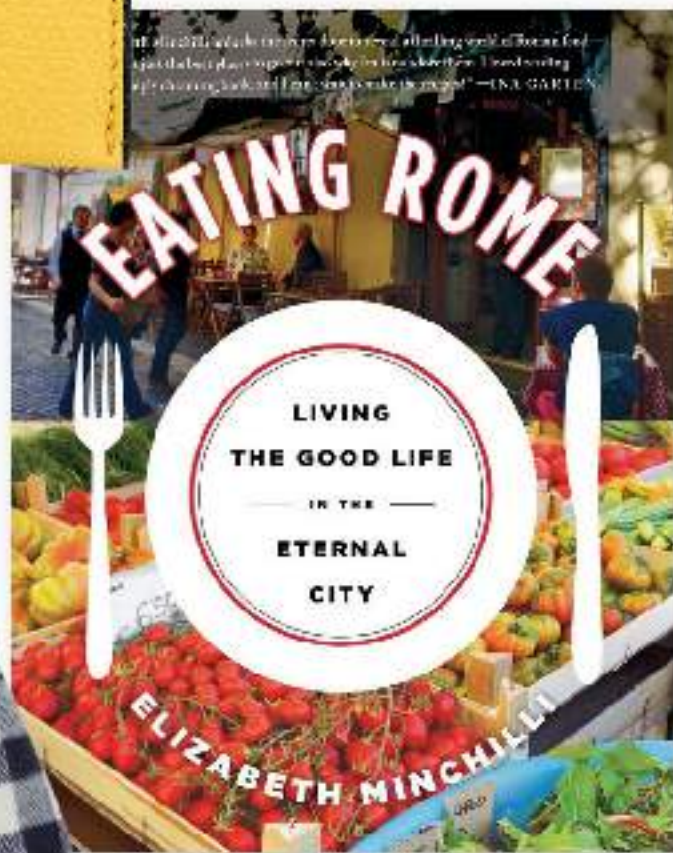
# Rome

BY DAVID ANNAND

It's 6pm. My wife is luxuriating in the bath. I am pounding the pavements, annotated map in hand, scouting out the concierge's list of local restaurant recommendations.

I reach the fourth and concede that none of them does small plates. They all have cutlery that matches. None of the menus seem to be informed by the latest offal micro-trend.

Most of the time I am absurdly and paranoically obsessed with presenting myself as outside my exemplary generational grouping – tattoos, Twitter feeds and transitional neighbourhoods – but I can tell already that this is one of those moments when I'm forced to confront how much I conform to the stereotype. Despite the knowledge scrawled on my map, I realise I'm not after a genuine Tridante-district experience. I want a Roman version of a restaurant I'd go to at home, something that authenticates the way I live my life. We end up in the concierge's first suggestion. The walls are dark wood. The waiters wear those white smock jackets that make them look vaguely like butchers. It's all very 'When in Rome...'. The meal is, you know, fine. Pasta. Fish. Meat. Classic Italian food unchanged for, I don't know, millennia. It's exactly the kind of place people like me pretend to like because it supposedly represents the eternal virtues supposedly lacking in our contemporary cohort. Back in London we go to Lardo in Hackney, with its exposed industrial light fittings and heavily inked waitresses. We eat sprout tops with *pangritata* and polenta with fried eggs. I savour a pistachio panna cotta, conscious that for however much I tell myself I travel to expand my horizons, what I really want is an affirmation of my own self-image, East End affectations and all.



From top: Tangomat GMT watch, £3,100, **Nomos Glashütte** (nomos-glashuette.com). Coat, £1,320, **Neil Barrett** (brownsfashion.com). Holdall, £1,470, **Berluti** (berluti.com). Card-holder, £175, **Valextra** (matches fashion.com). *Eating Rome*, £12.99, published by **St Martin's Griffin** (amazon.co.uk). Scarf, £140, **Acne Studios** (mrporter.com). Boots, £395, **O'Keeffe** (mrporter.com). Sunglasses, £260, **Garrett Leight California Optical** (brownsfashion.com)

