

LOS ANGELES

HAUTE LIVING

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2017

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MOTHER-DAUGHTER
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EVA LONGORIA

HOW ONE WOMAN REALLY CAN HAVE IT ALL



SICILIAN ESCAPE

A guide to experiencing the glory of Italy's most charming island



**GLAM
INATIONS**
Look at what's
going on in Sicily,
as Italy's most
charming cities!

"CUNESCIARRINESCI" IN ITALIAN TRANSLATES TO "WHO LEAVES THEIR OWN COMFORT ZONE SUCCEEDS!" FOR THE ADVENTURE and wanderers looking to experience something new in a setting that rivals the beauty of the Amalfi Coast or Lombardy, a trip to Sicily is a must.

The largest island in the Mediterranean Sea is literally a hotbed of activity, thanks to several active volcanoes—including Stromboli, Vulcano, Vulcanello and Lipari, Ferdinandea and, of course, the infamous Mount Etna (which you can also climb if you're into that kind of exploring). The glittering sea is a draw for those who enjoy water sports like kite-surfing, snorkeling and scuba diving, while beach bums will prefer to stretch out and tan up on the beloved picture-perfect sands of San Vito Lo Capo and Mondello, among others.

History buffs will love that Sicily is home to seven UNESCO World Heritage sites—including Etna, the archaeological area surrounding Agrigento; the Aeolian archipelago; the baroque cities of Val di Noto; the island of Pantelleria, home to one of Sicily's great wine regions; as well as the

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Taormina is home to the Bar Vitelli scene where Michael (Al Pacino) meets Apollonia (Simonetta Stefanelli), the village Savoca is the setting for the couple's wedding, and nearby Forza d'Argo is the scene of Michael's death in *Part III*.

Meanwhile, Bagheria (just outside of Palermo) is the setting for Giuseppe Tornatore's *Cinema Paradiso*; Trapani was the beach used in *Ocean's Twelve* (where stars Brad Pitt, George Clooney, Julia Roberts and Andy Garcia unknowingly mingled with the real-life Sicilian Mafioso); Palermo, Catania and Taormina were the settings of acclaimed director Roberto Benigni's 1981 film *Johnny Stecchino*; and the Aeolian Islands were the ethereal setting for Michael Radford's classic 1994 drama, *Il Postino*, about Pablo Neruda's friendship with a local postman.

Hopefully, you too will discover Sicily's magic. Here is a handy guide on where to stay, play, wine and dine.



AGRIGENTO/SCIACCA

Verdura Resort

(S.S. 115, Km 131, 92019, Sciacca)

In the small fishing village of Sciacca, roughly 25 miles from Agrigento on the southwestern coast of Sicily, you can find Rocco Forte's super exclusive Verdura Golf & Spa Resort. Located on almost 600 acres of land, this 203-room behemoth is a pretty unparalleled property. Each Olga Polizzi-designed room has a sea view and a private terrace—meaning, wherever you stay is sublime. However, if you want the crème de la crème of suites, book Villa Mimosa, which offers a double terrace with a hammock, private pool, internal courtyard and stone-finished sunken bathtub. Plus, Villa guests receive return airport transfers, a welcome bottle of champagne, breakfast, unpack-

ing and packing services, garment-pressing, and a Jet Lag Reviver Experience upon arrival in the Verdura Spa, where you can also partake in the four thalassotherapy pools. Beyond that, all of the activities are offered to you: two 18-hole championship golf courses and one 9-hole designed by leading architect Kyle Phillips, six clay tennis courts, a 2.3 mile infinity swimming pool and running trails that meander through the olive and lemon groves.

WHERE TO DINE: There are four restaurants and five bars at Verdura, all of which celebrate Sicilian cuisine. The majestic **Liola** serves up trattoria-style fare and cliff-top views, the lovely **Zagara** offers Mediterranean cuisine, and **Amare** is a relaxed seafood spot on the

beach. Make sure to also grab a cocktail at **Granita** and quietly watch the epic sunset. Another dining option you shouldn't miss in nearby **Agrigento is Re di Girgenti** (Via Panoramica Valle dei Templi, 51, 92100), a country-chic eatery with updated versions of Sicilian classics.

TAORMINA

NH Collection Taormina

(Via Circonvallazione, 11, 98039 Taormina)

The NH Collection Taormina on Sicily's eastern coast will feel like home away from home from the moment you arrive, when you'll be greeted with special, house-made Sicilian pastries and almond milk. This is one of the most idyllic hotels in the region, thanks to its beautiful décor—an elegant blend of 20th century architecture and modern touches—and setting that overlooks the Mediterranean Sea with the top of Mount Etna visible in the distance. Its proximity to the Palacongressi (the venue for the Festival del Cinema) and the ancient Greek theater, as well as the exclusive boutiques of nearby Corso Umberto I (Taormina's famous shopping street) makes

this a prime location for just about everything. While on the property, take advantage of the 7th floor infinity pool where you can soak, sun and sip cocktails such as an Aperol spritz while taking in awe-inspiring views of the Sicilian coastline. Book the hotel's Presidential Suite, which includes private Jacuzzis and a rain effect shower, as well as a picture-perfect view of the ocean from a private terrace.

WHERE TO DINE: The NH Collection's **Zagara** restaurant is a lovely place to start your day or enjoy an evening meal. You should also try the Michelin-starred **La Capinera** (Via Nazionale, 177, 98039) for fresh seafood; **Al Saraceno** (Via Madonna della Rocca, 16/18, 98039), a restaurant built into a mountain below the ancient church of Madonna della Rocca, for wood-fired pizzas and authentic Sicilian fare; and **La Giara** (Vico La Floresta, 1, 98039), a chic eatery beloved by old Hollywood stars, including Elizabeth Taylor, Sophia Loren and Ava Gardner.

HOW TO EXPLORE: Book yourself on exclusive tour



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with **Access Europe** (www.accesseurope.com), a leading travel company that offers excursions such as *The Godfather* tour of Taormina or a private journey around Etna by helicopter.

PALERMO

Grand Hotel Villa Igiea

(Salita Belmonte, 43, 90142 Palermo)
If you want to feel like part of Sicily's history, stay at the stunning Grand Hotel Villa Igiea, a landmark for more than a century since its design by famed architect Ernesto Basile. This Art Nouveau beauty features fragrant terraced garden and panoramic views of the Bay of Palermo and Mount Pellegrino. While all guest rooms are well-appointed with marble bathrooms, we recommend the brand new Terrace Jacuzzi suite, which includes (naturally) an outdoor Jacuzzi in which guests can relax and enjoy views of the sea. The one-bedroom paradise offers a living room, writing desk and French doors that open onto

the private terrace—where you can lie on a sun lounger and dine just steps away from the hotel's manicured gardens. Guests also receive a pillow menu, champagne upon arrival, individually controlled music and laundry service. Plus, should you stay a minimum of three nights, you'll receive a private boat trip along the coast of Palermo, with more champagne and a selection of assorted canapes. Don't miss out on the Greek-style outdoor swimming pool, a match on the tennis courts or a quiet moment in the solarium by the sea, either.

WHERE TO DINE: Enjoy a delicious Mediterranean meal in the sophisticated **Donna Franca Florio** restaurant at the Villa Igiea; **Piccolo Napoli** (Piazzetta Mulino a Vento, 4, 90139), with a seafood-heavy menu of Sicilian and Palermitan fare; and **Osteria dei Vespri** (Piazza Croce dei Vespri, 6, 90133), located in the heart of ancient Palermo with a 350-bottle wine list.

