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## TRAVEL ADVISOR

### HOTEL MEDITERRANEO SORRENTO: A HOTEL WITH A VIEW

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# HOTEL MEDITERRANEO SORRENTO

BY PAMELA MCCOURT FRANCESCONE



THE VESUVIO PANORAMIC RESTAURANT is located on the fifth floor of the hotel. Helmed by Chef Giuseppe Saccone, the restaurant offers views of Ischia and Procida islands, Vesuvio Volcano, Naples bay and Sorrento harbor.



Words cannot do justice to the stunning vista from the **Hotel Mediterraneo Sorrento**, the Art Nouveau-style five-star looking out on the Bay of Naples. With one sweep it takes in such iconic sights as Naples with Mount Vesuvius, the sheer cliffs of the rocky Sorrento Coast, the island of Capri and the breathtakingly blue Mediterranean Sea.

It is important to know that the Sorrento Coast is below and looks across the water at Naples, ending at the Sorrentine Peninsula, the headland that forms the southern arm of the beautiful Bay of Naples. And that the Amalfi Coast is a twisting hour's drive further south, tucked behind the peninsula and looking out on the Gulf of Salerno and down towards the toe of Italy. You can get to Sorrento from Naples by helicopter, hydrofoil, car or train in anything from 15 to 35 to 45 minutes or just over an hour, respectively.

In the early 1900s this handsome, dazzlingly white building, high over the sea close to Sorrento's old center, was a private home. Today the boutique property is run by the same Marasca-Monti family who turned it into a hotel and have lovingly and masterfully put it through a top-to-toe makeover, positioning it from the original three, through four, to five stars in 2021.

With the polished high-touch you expect from a grand hotel it has all the welcome and warmth of a private home, and despite its compact feel there is a lot to explore and enjoy. From the garden with swaying palm trees, shaded areas, a large pool and whirlpool corner, to the beach platform with reserved sun loungers and umbrellas for hotel guests which is reached by an internal lift, to the atmospheric spa, the restaurants and bars, and the rooftop Vista Sky Bar.

The 61 rooms are Classic, Romantic and Deluxe, with four Junior Suites and two ground-floor Family Suites with two bathrooms that are suitable also for guests with mobility issues. Many of the rooms on the first three floors have balconies with either sea, or garden and pool views. Our top pick were the Sunset Junior Suite Full Seaview, Nos. 308 and 208, which have double balconies and couches that become a third bed. Nos. 310 and 210 are similar but look out on the garden, though you can see the sea through a side window.

**Top Tip:** For honeymooners, ask for Nos. 202 or 100 which are Deluxe Terrace Suites with terraces, tables and chairs and full bay views. All rooms and suites are charmingly furnished using an endless palette of blues and local touches like the *lampara* — vintage fishing lights — hanging over the Vesuvius lava-stone bedside tables. The hotel opens on April 1 and closes at the end of October. It is wise to book at least three months ahead, and all rooms and suites can be booked over the GDS. Reach out to Francesco Monti (f.monti@mediterraneosorrento.com; +39-081-878-1352), resident manager, for VIP needs.

The LePietre Cozy Spa has vaulted ceilings, two treatment rooms, a sauna, Turkish bath, Jacuzzi, and a soothing relaxation area as well as a salt room, used also for couples' massages. The spa manager, Ylenia Sorrentino (lepietrespa@mediterraneo-sorrento.com), told us the signature Le Pietre ritual uses marine and basalt volcanic stones, and that the Marie Galland eco-luxury products have citrus, peach, mandarin, olive and rose essences. She recommends making bookings before or on arrival.

Lunch is at the Acqua Pool Lounge — think salads, burgers, grills and pizzas, and the must-

try Pizza Mimosa with local cheeses and fresh lemon zest. The Oltremare Lobby Bar is open all day for seafood finger food and drinks, and the rooftop Vista Sky Bar is the Coast's coolest place to catch Sorrento's stunning sunsets, and chill with delicacies and live or DJ music.

The bright fifth-floor Vesuvio Panoramic Restaurant also serves breakfast, and Chef Giuseppe Saccone (chef@mediterraneosorrento.com) uses premium locally sourced ingredients to craft dishes presented on stylish tableware. Our first-course *Tondi Tondi Ravioli* were filled with silky-soft smoked aubergines and local provolone, and the *Rombo con Cicerchie*, turbot with grass peas, was melt-in-the-mouth. Sommelier Olimpia Pastore is an ace at suggesting the perfect wine for each dish. Many of the bottles on the extensive list, she told us, come from small local winemakers, and we were overjoyed with the pairings she picked for us.



HOTEL MEDITERRANEO SORRENTO's Sunset Junior Suite is spread over 485 square feet of space. It has two balconies and a couch that can turn into a bed.

Giuseppina De Feo (guest relations@mediterraneosorrento.com; +39-081-878-1352), the guest relations manager, said guests are often surprised by

how much there is to do and see locally, and recommends booking excursions and guides well ahead. Must-dos, she told us, are day cruises on a private

yacht or a local wooden boat called a *gozzo* along the Coast, to Amalfi and Positano, and to Capri or Ischia. And also private guided tours to Naples, Vesuvius, and Pompeii, the site of the town destroyed by the volcano in 79AD, all of which are only an hour away.

Connect with Pina, and Aniello Somma (conciierge@mediterraneosorrento.com), front desk manager, for transfers, guides and outings as well as for cooking and pizza classes, restaurant bookings and to arrange a personal shopper. The area has many beautiful walking and hiking trails, and the nearby Roman ruins of the Baths of Queen Giovanna are easy to reach on foot, and have a protected bay where you can swim.

Sorrento is five minutes away on the half-hourly hotel shuttle and, like all the little coastal towns is packed with outdoor cafés, restaurants and crowded shopping streets. To see how *limoncello* is made, a visit to I Giardini di Cataldo is a great experience, and for Sorrento's



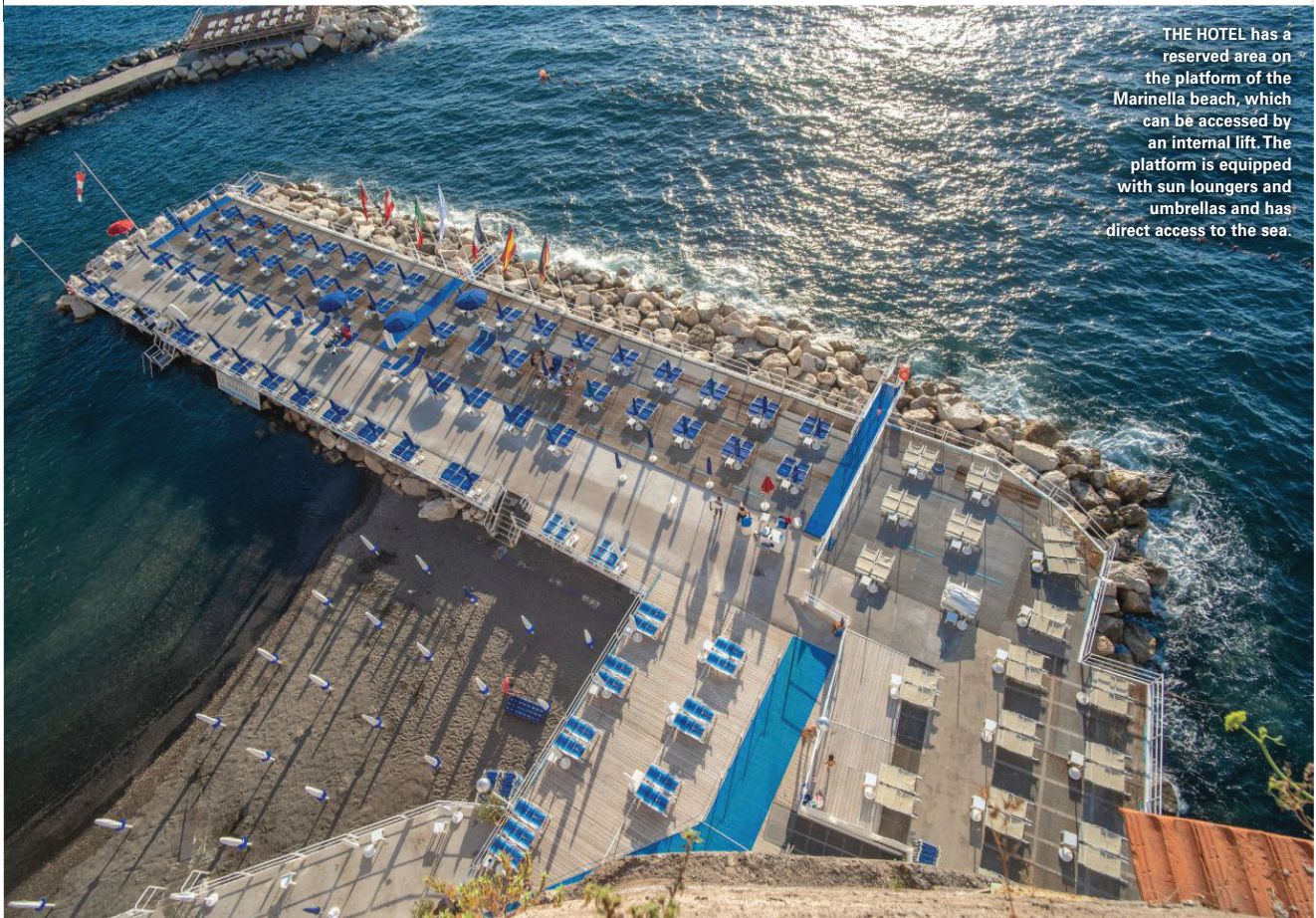
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famous marquetry work, Biagio Barile, in an old deconsecrated church, has a dazzling selection of classical and modern designs.

With an astonishing 13 Michelin-starred restaurants, the Sorrento Coast is a must on every serious gastronome's bucket list. Francesco Monti suggested lunch at Il Buco, one of the first to get a Michelin star, and chef-owner Giuseppe Aversa more than lived up to his stellar reputation. Francesco said another excellent choice is the two-star Don Alfonso 1890, famous for growing its own fruit and vegetables and for its wine cellar of over 25,000 bottles. It is due to reopen next year after renovations. ■



**HOTEL MEDITERRANEO SORRENTO** sits on a cliff overlooking the bay.



**THE HOTEL** has a reserved area on the platform of the Marinella beach, which can be accessed by an internal lift. The platform is equipped with sun loungers and umbrellas and has direct access to the sea.