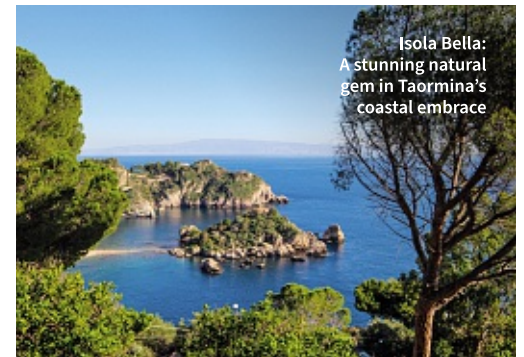




Piazza IX Aprile:
Where history
meets beauty in the
heart of Taormina



CREATIVE TITANS AS DIVERSE AS ERNEST HEMINGWAY AND SALVADOR DALÌ HAVE FOUND SOLACE AND INSPIRATION DURING STAYS THERE



Isola Bella:
A stunning natural
gem in Taormina's
coastal embrace

TAORMINA: THE TINY TOWN THAT BUILT A CULTURAL EMPIRE

From aristocrats on the Grand Tour to avid watchers of 'The White Lotus', Taormina continues to fascinate Mediterranean travellers with an interest in the arts

Certain destinations loom large in our collective imagination. Taormina, a tangle of lemon-scented hilltop streets on Sicily's east coast, is one such place. Despite a population of little over 10,000 its contribution to the arts throughout its 2,000-year history has been colossal.

Creative titans as diverse as Ernest Hemingway, Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dalí, Ezra Pound and Tennessee Williams have found solace and inspiration during stays there – and that's just in a single house (now a museum), Casa Cuseni.

The town remains a reference point in contemporary popular culture. In 2012, Dolce & Gabbana presented its first Alta Moda collection in the echoing cloisters of the former San Domenico convent. In 2022, season two of HBO's hit series 'The White Lotus' attracted 4.1mn viewers as much for its snatches of Sicilian life as the satirical plotlines.

Taormina has always had global allure thanks to its strategic position on Mount Tauro with sweeping views over the Ionian Sea. The world's great conquerors repeatedly snatched it from one another since its founding in 358BC. Greeks, Romans, Saracens, Byzantines, Normans, Swabians, French and Spanish all came, conquered and contributed influences from their own arts scenes.

In the 18th century, Taormina became a must on the Grand Tour thanks to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who visited in 1787. "We are looking down from a small terrace, looking over this beautiful seashore, seeing roses and hearing nightingales," he wrote in his 'Italian Journey'.

In the 19th century, the arrival of Queen Victoria's cousin, Lady Florence Trevelyan, ensured the town remained popular with fashionable writers including Oscar Wilde, and later Truman Capote and D.H. Lawrence.



Summer nights come
alive at the Teatro
Antico of Taormina

The remains of the horseshoe-shaped Greek Theatre have been the lodestar of Taormina's cultural scene since the 2nd century. Having such an extraordinary venue – hewn into the milky limestone of Mount Tauro with staggering views over the smoking spire of Mount Etna – has played a pivotal role in the town's progressive cultural approach.

"The Greek Theatre has been acquiring sediments of art and history for centuries," says Antonella Ferrara, director of local literary festival, TaoBuk. "This magnetic venue is emblematic of Sicily's unique genius loci as well as a shared heritage across many Mediterranean cultures," reflects Ferrara.



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