

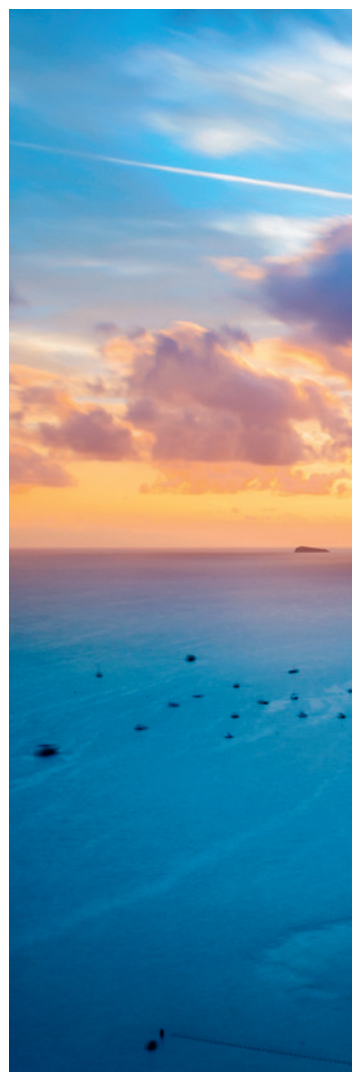




La Dolce Vita

Beautiful and intoxicating, Italy's glamorous **Amalfi Coast** remains as popular as ever. SEA+I seeks out secluded old favourites and the latest hot spots that only the locals know about.

—
by **Miriam Cain**



The Amalfi coastline is full of quaint gems awaiting discovery. From the historical city of Naples, a lively, bustling epicentre, with the chic islands of Capri and Ischia just a short trip across the bay - to Amalfi, Positano and Sorrento further along the coastline. All have a wealth of inlets, coves, viewpoints, and row upon row of vineyards and olive groves - the Amalfi Coast provides the perfect backdrop to a truly indulgent charter.

Step aboard your yacht in the bustling Bay of Naples. With a new, no-nonsense mayor in town, Naples is undergoing a major image revamp, so it is worth spending a day exploring the innumerable treasures of Renaissance palaces, baroque masterpieces and Roman remains.

Lying across the Bay of Naples, Capri is every bit the island for the jet set, but there is also an unassumingly intriguing side that adds to its beauty and charm. From its sapphire blue grottos to its highest peaks, indulge in Capri's rich heritage and culture, and follow in the footsteps of the likes of style icons Sophia Loren and Audrey Hepburn. Visit the famous Blue Grotto after 5pm, when all the day-trippers have returned to Naples. In fact, the island really

comes into its own after dark, and charter guests can stay ashore as long as they wish. The Marina Grande is one of the hardest marinas in which to obtain a berth, especially during the peak summer months, so it is best to organise your charter as early as possible if you are planning to cruise these islands during July and August.

Capri's neighbouring volcanic island of Ischia has been a Mediterranean holiday destination for aristocrats since Roman times. Known as the 'island of wellbeing', Ischia is famous for its thermal springs and therapeutic spas. To experience the thermal springs in their natural, unrefined environment, head to the south of the island where you can lie in pools of thermal water carved out of rock. Step ashore and browse the boutiques of San't Angelo, or anchor in the sun-drenched bay of Punta Molino for an afternoon of watersports.

After a relaxing night aboard, sail back across the Bay of Naples to the mainland. Ravello's romantic views and charming medieval passageways have inspired some of the great figures of literature and classical music across the centuries. It was the awesome vista at Villa Rufolo, perched high on a cliff top above Ravello,

Above left

—
Ravello

Above right

—
Positano



WHERE TO EAT

Aside from the culture and stunning coastline, the other big draw here is the food. The area has one of the highest concentrations of Michelin-starred restaurants in Italy, but some of the best experiences are to be had in authentic trattorias off the beaten path. Seafood is predictably one of the most popular ingredients, from the classic spaghetti alle vongole, to simple whole fish roasted in the oven with lemon and olive oil, and seafood stews.

Da Adolfo, Positano

Head to Da Adolfo for a relaxed lunch. The shabby-chic restaurant is located on Laurito Beach and serves the freshest fish. www.daadolfo.com

Ristorante Next 2, Positano

A contemporary wine bar and restaurant serving traditional Amalfi cuisine. The terrace, with its cocktail bar and regular live music, is busy on summer evenings. www.next2.it

La Sponda, Positano

One of the top tables on the Amalfi Coast, the Michelin-starred restaurant La Sponda is set within Le Sirenuse hotel. The cuisine is based on fresh local ingredients inspired by classical Mediterranean dishes. www.sirenuse.it

Da Tommaso allo Scoglio, Positano

Accessible by boat, this family-run beachside restaurant serves Mediterranean cuisine that is both traditional and contemporary, using the freshest, local ingredients. www.hotelloscoglio.com

Rossellinis, Ravello

Overlooking the Gulf of Salerno, the two-Michelin-starred Rossellinis serves dishes that are based on the traditional, punchy flavours of the region. www.palazzosasso.com

Ristorante Eolo, Amalfi

The location of Eolo is enough to merit a visit. The beautiful terrace looks out over the Amalfi Coast. Seasonal dishes with a contemporary twist on Mediterranean classic recipes are served with a heavyweight wine list. Book early to reserve a table on the terrace. www.eoloamalfi.it

Trattoria Da Ciccio Cielo Mare e Terra, Amalfi

One of the oldest restaurants on the coast, the Trattoria Da Ciccio Cielo Mare e Terra has built up a network of the best suppliers in the region, and offers a wide range of fresh local fish and shellfish. The restaurant is famous for its spaghetti with clams. www.ristorantedaciccio.com

Ristorante La Caravella, Amalfi

Tucked away behind the tourist hot spots of Amalfi, La Caravella has recently been awarded with a Michelin star and produces some of the finest food in the area. The wine list includes over 1,500 bins. www.ristorantelacaravella.it

Da Giorgio, Capri

A favourite among locals and tourists alike. Da Giorgio's simple dishes are bursting with flavours. www.dagiorgiocapri.com

Fontelina, Capri

Only accessible by sea, Fontelina's seafood dishes are sublime. www.fontelina-capri.com



that Wagner was inspired for the stage design of his opera *Parsifal*. The Romantic poets Shelley, Byron and Keats, also found inspiration from the impeccably preserved backdrop and terrace views. A sense of faded glory remains with the gardens of Villa Rufolo and Villa Cimbrone, and they are worth stepping ashore for, as is the beautiful 11th-century *Duomo di Ravello*.

Allow yourself time to venture inland to the ancient city of Pompeii. Buried under tiny stones and ash from Vesuvius in AD79, excavation of this well-preserved city began in 1763. Much of our knowledge of the Romans and their way of life originated from Pompeii. Ancient alleyways, once fresh with archaeologists' excavation dust, are now well-trodden pathways, yet the sheer magnitude of it remains awe inspiring.

As you cruise towards the sparkling bay and the iconic cliff face of Sorrento, the sea shimmers beneath the dormant yet still formidable Mount Vesuvius in the background. The narrow, winding cobblestoned streets of Sorrento are lined with vendors, but even when packed with tourists Sorrento still retains a certain charm. That said, it is so busy during peak summer that it is best avoided altogether. Embrace the

wraparound views of the Bay of Naples from the cliff-top terraced walkways of the *Museo Correale di Terranova*. For those who have worked up an appetite from walking, take a detour to the *Excelsior Vittoria's 'Bosuet'* terrace and bar, whose guestbook boasts many famous names including Richard Strauss, the Prince of Wales (who later returned as Edward VII), Sophia Loren and Luciano Pavarotti.

On day four or five, cruise across the Gulf of Salerno to the charming town of Positano. At the peak of the *Dolce Vita* era, Positano rivalled Capri for jet-set glamour and the town is still popular. Drink in the views or simply watch the passing parade of jet setters striding through the cobblestoned streets. The buzz centres around the *Marina Grande*, where restaurants and bars line the curve of grey shingle sand.

For the best anchorage around Positano, head to *Li Galli*, an archipelago of three small islets just off the coast where, according to Greek mythology, the Sirens attempted to lure Ulysses to his death. Enjoy the last rays of the evening sun on board – bliss on this convoluted stretch of coast. Early evening, step ashore to *Il San Pietro di Positano* and dine at the hotel's Michelin-

Above

— Faraglioni Rocks, Capri

Above right

— The Blue Grotto, Capri

Right

— Pompeii



Right

—

- 1- Naples
- 2- Ischia
- 3- Capri
- 4- Sorrento
- 5- Positano
- 6- Amalfi



starred restaurant. The famous terrace is one of the best places for a sunset aperitivo. Another prime aperitivo spot can be found at Le Sirenuse's Champagne & Oyster Bar.

A gentle cruise eastwards towards Amalfi takes you passed some impressive scenery. The coastline is dominated by stunning villas and Saracen defence towers that speak of the coastlines' grand maritime past. Here you will also see the Monastero Santa Rosa. After more than 10 years' restoration work, the 17th-century former monastery has opened as a luxurious hotel with a stunning spa. Step ashore for a treatment in the stained-glass ice cave with Santa Maria Novella products.

In its heyday Amalfi was a major seaport, a great prize for the Saracen and Norman invaders whose influences are reflected in its food as well as its architecture. The town is no larger in size than neighbouring Positano or Ravello, but the whole coastline was named after it because of its history. Home to wealthy Italian merchants, sacked by Pisans and destroyed by an earthquake, Amalfi was a maritime republic rivalling Pisa, Genoa and Venice. At its core is Piazza Duomo, from which a flight of stairs sweeps to an immense cathedral whose façade overlooks the stunning coastline below. Stretch your sea legs and take the stepped footpath that leads over the hill to Atrani, a fishing village from where you can take the tender back to your anchorage.

Further south lie the Aeolian Islands and Sicily, ideal for an extended charter. They can easily be combined with an Amalfi coast itinerary and accessed during an overnight crossing from Amalfi to Stromboli. Created by volcanoes, two of which are still active (Stromboli and Vulcana), the Aeolian Islands have been inhabited since the fifth millennium BC. The islands have the air of a place where time has stood still, which, combined with a glittering nightlife, attracts the Milanese yachting crowd. Sicily itself lies across the Messina Straits and is the ideal place to disembark and spend a few days ashore exploring the island's beautiful temples, colourful mosaics, vast archaeological remains, historic buildings and, of course, Mount Etna and its natural park.

Camper & Nicholson's can create a unique charter along the Amalfi Coast and through the Aeolian Islands. For more information, contact your nearest charter broker. See page 6.

WHERE TO SHOP

La Parisienne, Capri

La Parisienne is the best place for Capri pants. You can purchase a made-to-measure pair and have them delivered to wear the next day.
www.laparisienne-capri.it

Safari, Positano

For handmade sandals head to Positano's Safari.
www.safari-positano.com

3 Denari, Positano

For the softest moccasins in every colour imaginable, browse the shelves at 3 Denari.

Maria Lampo, Positano

For made-to-measure pieces for men and women in linen and cotton, Maria Lampo is the place to go.
www.marialampo.it

Ceramica Assunta, Positano

For colourful Solimene ceramics, check out Ceramica Assunta. The shop will pack and ship to anywhere in the world.
www.ceramicassunta.it

Lo Scigno di Brunella, Positano

For top quality linen, jersey, cotton, chiffon and silk garments, nip along to Brunella Mandara's stylish Positano boutique.





Top left

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Palermo, Sicily

This page

—
Temple of Concordia.
Valley of the Temples
in Agrigento, Sicily

—
Cefalu harbour at dusk

—
Traditional
ceramic bowls