

TRAVEL

Sicily’s Finest

JANUARY 22, 2016 · 4 MINUTE READ



Fattoria Corleonese, Sicily.

The Fattoria Corleonese is heaven on earth in the heart of a bustling working estate. (Think parfaito homemade cheese, olive oil and luscious tomatoes which the owners leave you as a welcome.) It’s in the middle of the Sicilian countryside – near Corleone – with views of hills, meadows and avenues of pines and eucalyptus trees from the house to eternity. And gardens of walnut, cherry and apple trees. The estate dates back to 1873 and the accommodation is in part of a bougainvillea-covered manor house – built around a cobble courtyard – that’s still a family home. It’s chokka with antiques and family heirlooms. If you can tear yourself away from a table groaning with home-made bread, local fruit and your host’s incredible cheese, it’s close enough to the bustling city of Palermo with its Baroque architecture and street food. (For those who like entrails and horse meat!) You can also visit nearby hilltop villages – like Caltabellotta which clings to the top of rocks. Go too for a drop of wine tasting at Cantina Donnafugata – they make a cracking sweet drink, Bon Rye. Or zip across to the Godfather’s hill town – Corleone, a place recognised the world over thanks to Mario Puzi’s fictional Godfather – which is nearby. There you can buy a coppola – a kind of hat – and see around a zillion churches. (Bring on *i turisti*. The Mafia are leaving.) Strike out further to Agrigento with its Greek ruins of Valley of the Temples. Then drive back past peaks and rocks that jut out of arid plains, the hot air from Africa blowing in your face. Or just stay at ‘home’ perfecting your tan and lying around the pool set in an olive grove beyond a secret garden. Then go up again to the terrace outside your apartment to watch the sun set while downing homemade limoncello.

Fattoria Corleonese starts from £952 per week for six guests. Visit www.solosicily.com or call +44(0)20 7097 1413 for details.

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— Casalnuovo, Sicily

Casalnuovo is the sort of villa that makes you want to party. Or at least to get together a band of friends to holiday together. After all, it sleeps 15. It's in Tindari, Sicily – within spitting distance of the Nebrodi Mountains and with views of the oooh-ah Bay of Tindari, the Tyrrhenian Sea and the Aeolian Islands. Enough gorgeous outlooks to make even the most seasoned traveller's heart soar. (Think majestic 360-degree views.) It's also set in 15 acres of organic estate – think blushing tomatoes, extensive lawns and olive groves – with horse riding a mere few clip clops from the front door. (The villa's perched on a hill 500 metres above sea level and there's superb horse trekking nearby.) If you want to chillax, you can loll by the enormous pool. Or bake pizza in the wood-fired oven (the owners will send a chef, Carlo, to help you if you're not a dab hand with dough and he'll soon have you flipping pizza in the air and popping delicious mozzarella and anchovies on top). Or just shade in the villa out of the noonday sun. There are enough toys inside the house to keep any Lusso man happy: an enormous flat screen and PS3 and Apple TV to a games room with pool and table tennis and table football. If you go out sightseeing, you won't be disappointed either. Cefalu boasts some tip-top food – go for still flapping fresh fish – and a Norman cathedral. If you want a day trip to Vulcano or Stromboli, these islands and their volcanic activity are a Sunseeker ride away across the bobbing waves. And lava is not the only thing flowing around Mt Etna – sommeliers are now beating a path to its palmenti who are producing notable wines. Bliss indeed.

Casalnuovo starts from £1,542 per week for seven guests/£2,267 per week for 15 guests (full occupancy). Visit www.solosicily.com or call +44(0)20 7097 1413 for details.

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Caroline Phillips (www.carolinephillips.net) is an award-winning journalist who has written for the Financial Times, Sunday Times, The Times, Observer, Guardian, Independent, Mail on Sunday, Daily Mail and Evening Standard. Additionally she has been published in a variety of magazines, from the colour supplements to Tatler, Harpers Bazaar and Vanity Fair. She is a consultant for Globalista – website for the discerning traveller – and contributing editor of Country & Town House. She is also contributing editor of Spear's and co-editor of their Spa Guide.

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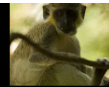
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