



**POSITIVELY
GLOWING**
*Oslo and its coolest couple
have their day in the sun*

Summer Travel with stops in the American Southwest, BANGKOK, Brooklyn, Costa Rica, Cyprus, DÜSSELDORF, the French countryside, Guatemala's Lake Atitlán, KERALA, LONDON, Los Angeles, Mississippi and SICILY. PLUS Julie Delpy takes New York, Gotye and Kimbra arrive from Down Under, and THE SELBY visits Majorca.



VILLAGE VANGUARD

Italians from Milan and points north have been quietly discovering Sicily's Ragusa region for the last several years, drawn to towns like Modica and Scicli for their Unesco-protected Baroque architecture, silent stretches of beach and culinary legacy. And now the region is home to stylish inns and Michelin-starred restaurants that blend in with the charmingly crumbling plazas and palazzos.

Hotel La Moresca The Milanese hotel designer Carlomaria Grassi restored the gorgeous stonework and painted tiles in this 18th-century villa. It has 15 guest rooms along with a modern glass atrium Grassi built in the garden. More like a house than a hotel, it's the best place from which to base an exploration of Ragusa. Via Dandolo, 63, Marina di Ragusa; 011-39-0932-239495; lamorescahotel.it; doubles from \$342.

Palazzo Hedone Opened in July 2009, this sprawling 18th-century party house in the hills overlooking Scicli sleeps 24. It has two pools and can be booked with extra services like private chefs and guided excursions around Sicily. Via Loreto 51, Scicli; 011-39-0932-841187; palazzohedone.it; weekly rental from \$16,331.

Ristorante Duomo Behind the walls of a Baroque building, the two-Michelin-starred Ciccio Sultano puts a modern spin on regional seafood dishes (the restaurant is famous for reviving long forgotten recipes) like squid ink pasta in an array of sauces, pairing them with a stellar wine list. Via Capitano Bocchieri, 31, Ragusa Ibla; 011-39-0932-651265; ristoranteduomo.it; entrees \$48 to \$55.

Trattoria di Pesce Donnalina This oceanfront restaurant in Ragusa's marina is referred to by some locals as "fish a hundred ways." The restaurant's glass box interior might be tacky, but the fresh sardines, grouper and tuna baked in lemon or fried in cornmeal are superb and abundant. Via Doria 76; 011-39-0932-239888; trattoriadipeseudonnalina.it; entrees \$16 to \$25.

Antica Dolceria Bonajuto Franco Ruta's ancestors put Modica on the culinary map in 1880 with their chocolate factory and boutique. Today the grainy chocolate is still made using traditional Aztec methods and Ivory Coast cacao. Beside the dozens of different flavors of chocolate in production, Bonajuto also whips up thick chocolate liqueurs spiked with peperoncino. Corso Umberto I, 159, Modica; 011-39-0932-941225; bonajuto.it.

Duomo Di San Giorgio Some travelers hike up to Modica's duomo only for the view of the Lego-stacked houses on the surrounding hillsides. But the 18th-century church itself — with intricate stonework and frescos in a riot of pastels — is a prime specimen of Baroque exuberance. Salita Duomo, Modica; 011-39-0932-220085.

Tasting Notes

Many of the food world's recent obsessions hail from Sicily. But don't stop at arancini, those sauce-filled fried rice balls that are in every Sicilian cafe. Here's how to sample regional specialties at the source.

ALMOND COOKIES ❶ Dainty almond-paste cookies called pasta di mandorle are worth the windy, 45-minute ascent to the ancient Phoenician town of Erice. It was the nuns in nearby convents who perfected the recipe in the 15th century, which eventually made its way to the town pastry shops. **Pasticceria Maria Grammatico** makes the definitive version. Via Vittorio Emanuele, 14; 011-39-0923-869390; mariagrammatico.it.

MARSALA To most people, it's something you splash into a pan with chicken. But **Cantine Florio** ❷, a centuries-old company on the coast of Marsala, wants to rehabilitate the sweet wine's image. The company opened a tasting room in January, where it offers classes on pairing white and red Marsala with cheese and chocolate. Via Vincenzo Florio, 1; 011-39-0923-781111; cantineflorio.it.

MOUNT ETNA WINE Now that the full-bodied reds from Mount Etna are attracting global attention, wineries like **Tasca d'Almerita** ❸ are moving up to the mountain and trying their luck at step-farming vineyards in an unpredictable and often snowy climate. Tours are by appointment. tascadalmerita.it.

SALT ❹ Up and down the Marsala region are antique windmills standing beside checkerboards of salt beds, chunky opalescent crystals harvested into small hills and dried in the sun beneath terra-cotta tiles. You can visit the **Ettore and Infersa Salt Museum** to learn the history of regional salt production and pick up samples in the gift shop. Contrada Ettore e Infersa; 011-39-0923-733003; www.salineettoreinfersa.com.

BLOOD ORANGES ❺ Vineyards may dominate Sicily's western landscape, but in the east it's mile after mile of citrus groves. At the orange farm **La Casa delle Acque**, travelers can partake in the twice yearly harvest and stay in the estate's charming villa. Contrada Costiglie; 011-39-349-145-9072; lacasadelleacque.it.

