



# SURRENTUM

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Special for  
WTM 2009

*“Come with me to Sorrento tomorrow...”  
A promise like a prize  
Wind blowing through my hair,  
my heart was alerted,  
the lump of pink hock was beating fast...*

MARIA ORSINI NATALE



# Sorrento Coast

The hotels, holiday villages and campsites belonging to the Federalberghi della Penisola Sorrentina (Association of Hotels on the Sorrento Coast) provide some of the finest accommodation in the Siren Land, for the reason that – regardless of their category – they have all chosen to strive

for excellence.

They all dedicate particular care and attention in offering quality services, a charming ambience, courteous and helpful staff, and the most modern conveniences.

In their pursuit to attain the highest standards, they are all committed to improving and

developing their facilities and services year by year.

Many have been accredited with quality certification.

In addition, members can benefit from being part of one of the foremost organizations in the hotel industry in Italy, receiving practical help and advice from the association's ef-

ficient consultancy service on how to meet the needs of their clientele.

The prestigious offices of the Federalberghi della Penisola Sorrentina are delighted to welcome visitors, tourists and hoteliers, and provide them with information and professional assistance.



*Sorrento Coast*

# Hospitality

The Sorrento Coast has long been famous for its warmth and hospitality.

So long in fact that we can go back many centuries and still find traces of some crowned head, some illustrious guest or just an ordinary visitor who stayed in what for thousands of years has been known as the Siren Land.

With years of experience built up since the age when Sorrento and other towns on the coast were considered an essential stop on the Grand Tour, the local tourist industry has been able to move with the times, modernizing its services and facilities to meet the changing needs of the 21st-century traveller.

The only thing that has not changed is the desire to make each guest feel at home, and to transform their stay into an unforgettable experience.

This must be why every year so many tourists of all ages and all nationalities choose the Sorrento Coast as their ideal holiday destination.



# Art and cultural events



The latest addition to the programme of grand Sorrentine events is the **CARUSO AWARD**, made each year to an international star of song. With the enchanting fishing harbour of Marina Grande as its backdrop, the television broadcast of the same name transmits the voices, music and faces of great international artists as a homage to Sorrento, Land of the mythical Sirens, whose song enchanted navigators into entrapment in a land of grace and beauty such is Sorrento, without equal elsewhere in the world.

Sorrento is also art and culture, which in modern tourism represents the perfect complement to a vacation that cannot only be the enjoyment of material beauty and panoramas, a pleasant climate, blue sea or modern accommodation. Almost all year round, Sorrento is the ideal scenario for artistic and cultural events and for entertainment which, with their international flavour, keep alive the fame of Sorrento as a top class tourism destination.

The acclaim of Sorrento are the **FILM FESTIVALS** held in autumn. Inaugurated in 1963 at the behest of E. Fiore, President of the E.P.T. of Naples, since 1966 under the direction of film critic Gian Luigi Rondi, the festivals have assumed a monographic formula, that is, they present the cinematography of a foreign country with a full picture of its evolution through retrospective production to the more recent.

The most significant cinematography has alternated over the last forty years between: Usa - Russia - Sweden - France - Spain - Australia - Japan - Italy - Britain (present in three editions) and yet others have, year after year, exhibited the best of their cinema productions.

Another important event for Sorrento guests is the **MUSIC, DANCE AND THEATRICAL AWARDS**, from July to September offers a programme worthy of the highest respect with a series of prestigious classical music concerts, dance representations, presenting artists of international fame, and also Jazz and Folk music to continue a longstanding musical tradition that over the years has seen world famous interpreters, and many other names accepting their applause in the superb 14th century cloister of San Francesco, one of the event venue.

The Music, Dance and Theatrical Awards is held also at Villa Fiorentino and Teatro Tasso, during the summer and winter offers the best of Italian theatre production and includes dance and music, especially classic Neapolitan.



# Christmas: Sorrento dresses in festive mood

Every year, during the Christmas period, Sorrento dresses in festive mood to offer its citizens, and the many tourists that choose it for their vacation, an exceptionally beautiful setting and an atmosphere soaked with an impalpable magic that only tradition can provide. The streets and squares are illuminated with lights and decorations, and Christmas songs diffused in the air as background music for pleasant walks along Corso Italia, the main street. Those who care for old traditions linked to the "presepio", can admire in the many churches of the Peninsula, these representations of the Nativity: real works of art, with models dating back to the 1600s learnedly decorated and dressed in completely handmade traditional costume, landscapes reconstructed with careful attention to detail by the expert hands of artists of this centuriesold tradition, their patience and love for this ancient art plainly visible. For art lovers, Villa Fiorentino, as

also the Cloister of San Francesco, are not to be missed. These old, majestic residences are, in fact, the hosts of art exhibitions to be visited to discover works of extraordinary beauty: paintings, miniature presepi, objets d'art of popular Sorrentine tradition. For those who appreciate religious music, the additional Christmas concert is a must, celebrated every year in Sorrento Cathedral. Plus many other concerts organized by individual church choirs during the festive period.

Repeated each year between the 25th and 30th of December, the traditional event "Tavolata e Tombolata" in Via San Cesareo; a much loved tradition and joyous occasion, a gathering not only for those who call Sorrento home, but also for the many tourists visiting our Peninsula for their Christmas vacation. For the occasion, in fact, via San Cesareo is subjected to an astonishing metamorphosis, festively prepared with lights and decorations, the venue

for a very long foodfare table where hosts of locals and tourists from all over the world take a seat, attracted by an irresistible and contagious desire to enjoy themselves and sample the gastronomic delights of Sorrentine cuisine.

It is during this period that Sorrento demonstrates even more than usual its extraordinary capacity to bring together peoples so different in terms of language, customs and traditions, united by a strong desire to celebrate the arrival of a new year. The merry evening is further enlivened by an entertaining game of "tombola", Neapolitan bingo, where many challenge lady luck to win the many prizes offered by event sponsors. The "tavolata" of via San Cesareo does not only symbolize joy and fun, it is also a chance to remember, all together, that there are people less fortunate than ourselves, able to enjoy Christmas thanks to the takings from the sale of gastronomic dishes and the cards for the

"tombolata", all devoted to charity.

Music lovers who would like to end the year with music, in Piazza Tasso, the City Hall every year organizes the "Stella di Natale" concert to celebrate the coming of the New Year.

To "see out the old, and bring in the new", from the jetty of Marina Piccola in Sorrento a breathtaking show of fireworks lights up the skies of our town followed, on the morning of New Year's Day, by the traditional New Year concert in Piazza Tasso.

For the children, the local festivities do not end with the advent of the New Year. On 6th January, for all the children, the "Befana", the old witch of Epiphany, arrives in Piazza Lauro: every year, in fact, the afternoon of 6th January opens with music, animation and games for the youngsters and, as a grand finale, the "Befana" arrives with gifts for all!



# Museo Correale di Terranova



A visit to the Correale Museum arouses great interest and attention in those who are passionate about paintings and those who are lovers of decorative and archaeological objects of art: the museum documents the ancient historical roots of the city of Sorrento. This aside, the collection of pieces of furniture and caskets made from rare and exotic wood, give testimony to the typical local craftsmanship, that, especially in the nineteenth century, reached notable levels of technical virtuosity.

The collection of paintings range from the XV to the XIX centuries, the nucleus constituted by the collection of still life from the Neapolitan school of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries and from the outstanding group of landscapes from the Posillipo school - two irreplaceable sources for the deepening of studies on these splendid moments taken from southern figurative civilization.

But the Correale shines even more because it holds the precious jewels that once adorned the various abodes of noble families: cabinets veneered of ebony or turtle, valuable products of Neapolitan ebony from the seventeenth century, eighteenth century chests enriched with settings of gilded bronze and shelves of marble; pre-

cious pieces of chinoiserie furniture of English manufacture from the first quarter of the eighteenth century, and French, German and Swiss watches mounted in gilded bronze and inlaid with mother of pearl and hard stones; Murano glass, Bohemian crystal, fabrics, majolica and porcelain. The ceramic collection includes a conspicuous sample of rare examples from the best known Italian and foreign factories: from Abruzzesi majolica of Grue to those French from Marseilles, and from the white Chinese porcelains to the blue German ones, amongst which emerge the group manufactured in Meissen, from those French from Saint-Cloud and Sèvres to those English from Bow and Chelsea.

But it is the nucleus of the Neapolitan porcelains that put the flower in the buttonhole of this harvest, in how much it enumerates rare examples from the Capodimonte manufacture and precious articles of porcelain, painted and gilded at the Real Factory of Naples, as well as Giustiniani pottery in earthenware from the first decades of the XIX century.

Finally, the Museum exhibits one of the most important specialist libraries of importance.



# Monuments



## THE SORRENTO'S 15th CENTURY CATHEDRAL

In Romanic style it dates back to the 15th century; the side door is from the same period (1474) but in Renaissance style. Amongst other things the church houses paintings by artists from the Neapolitan school of the 1700s, an archbishop's throne in fine marble (1573) and wooden marquetry work of Sorrentine craftsmen from the beginning of the 19th century. Works of art made always using the marquetry technique can be admired inside, such as the pictures of the Stations of the Cross or the wooden panels of the main and side entrance. These are all works of recent young masters of art of marquetry.

A depressed Neapolitan arch with Durazzesque Catalan patterns that was used from the end of the 1300s all through the 1400s.

## HOUSE OF TASSO

On the right-hand side of the road which leads from the F. S. Gargiulo Square to the Vittoria Square is the entrance to the Imperial Tramontano which incorporates two rooms left from the house where Torquato Tasso, author of *Jerusalem Liberated*, was born in 1544.

## HOUSE OF CORNELIA TASSO

At number 11 Via S. Nicola is the Fasulo House once the Sersale House (noteworthy, the

ashlars-work portico and pretty little balcony). Cornelia Tasso, Torquato's sister and Marzio Sersale's wife lived here, and continued to do so after she was widowed with her sons Antonino and Alessandro.

In July 1577 Torquato escaped from the castle of Ferrara and embarked at Gaeta to present himself here disguised as the poet's messenger later revealing his true identity. He stayed with his sister until December, and then left for Rome. In the entrance hall is a vault decorated with stems, military trophies and inscriptions from 1615 in memory of the poet.

## CHURCH OF ST. MARY OF CARMELO

Reconstructed at the end of the 15th century, on the remains of a previous ancient Church dedicated to the sacred Sorrentine Martyrs, the Church of Carmine has only a single nave. At the far end there is an ancient impression of Mary, the Madonna, which is a copy of the Dark skinned Virgin of the Church dedicated to the same Saint in Naples. One can admire paintings of reputable artists of the 16th and 17th centuries, as well as two artistic gilded wooden bone containers of Saints which date back to the 16th century.

## THE OLD WALLS

The only part of the Greek defensive wall still remaining is under the road at the Porta Parsano Nuova (new Parsano Gate) and can be viewed from close to the same place.

Another ruin of the Greek wall other than that of the Marina Grande Gate and very limited in



size is the small tract (just over three metres) of the western end located in Via Sopra Le Mura.

The Roman town was built over the Greek one following the same urban plan with walls of large isonomic blocks. These walls stood to defend Sorrento through the Middle Ages. Rebuilding began in 1551 and was only completed in 1561 after the tragic Turkish invasion.

## PORTA SEAT AND DOMINOVA SEAT

Amongst the best preserved of Sorrento's antique monuments despite age and neglect, the Dominova Seat can be admired in its entirety thanks also to its recent restoration.

Walking along Via S. Cesareo a pleasant shopping street with numerous boutiques, the Dominova Seat stands out, its massive size testifying to its glorious past. Located in the little square called "Schizzariello" a name deriving from the spray of a fountain located there until the last century, the Dominova Seat is now the headquarters of a secular organisation called the Mutual Aid Society, one of the oldest in Italy.

Under the Anjous, Sorrento, like the other towns of the kingdom of Naples, was administered by nobles appointed by the King. The Sorrentine nobles were divided in two seats, that of the "Porta" thus named because it was erected next to the town's main gate (Porta), and that of the "Dominova", perhaps due to its more recent construction (Dominova, in Latin, new house).

The Porta Seat was rebuilt in the XVI century at the corner of the Tasso Square where Via S. Cesareo now begins. Its emblem was a door with three keys on a gold background. When the noble's seats were abolished it

became first a prison and later headquarters of the city's militia. It is now a private club.

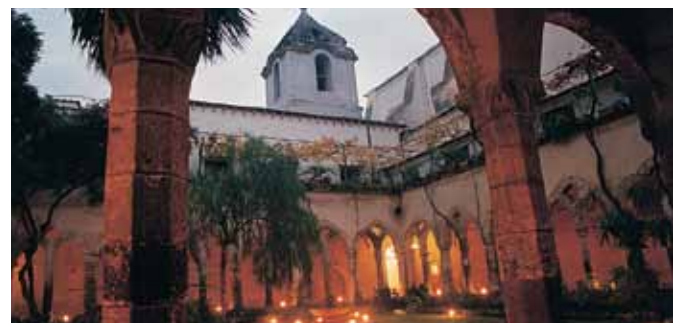
Although the ancient construction has undergone continual changes, the side facing Via S. Cesareo has recently been brought to light. The Dominova Seat, on the other hand, can still be admired in its integrity, the last remaining example in the Campania Region.

Constructed in the 14th century, it is formed by two trachytetufa arches and two marble balustrades. The two other walls are frescoed with columns figures and ornaments.

The dome is made up of yellow and green majolica roof tiles as are the domes of several other Sorrentine churches. Coats of arms of the antique noble families belonging to the seat are represented. The seat's coat-of-arms was a passing she-wolf on a gold background. In the small innerhall the nobles gathered in secret reunions.

## CHURCH AND CLOISTER OF ST. FRANCIS

The monastery's origin dates from the first half of the 7th century. The cloister's architecture presents crossed arches in tufo on two sides of the portico, expressing the style of the late 1300s and substituted on the other two sides by round arches on octagonal pilasters. Various elements of pillage are present as in the three corner columns reutilized functionally after being taken from pagan temples. Next to the convent is the church of St Francis which dates to the 16th century. Inside, in the first of the three chapels on the right a wooden statue depicting the saint with Christ on the cross can be admired. It was donated by the Vulcano family in the 17th century.



# The Sorrento Peninsula



Sorrento already existed when Rome was founded, and gave its name to the peninsula separating the Bay of Naples from the Bay of Salerno and in geographical terms going from Vico Equense to beyond Positano. In Roman times Sorrento was a municipium, the second highest class of city. At the end

of the first millennium it was a duchy, with its own currency, until the Longobard occupation by Prince Guaimario V of Salerno and the establishment of the Norman monarchy. The duchy of Sorrento, initially stretching from the Sarno river to the tip of the peninsula at Punta della Campanella, last-

ed until the Swabian dynasty, when Vico Equense became a Università. Massa Lubrense became independent in 1467 under Ferdinand I of Aragon, Piano by decree signed by Joseph Bonaparte, Meta under the Bourbons on 27 November 1819, and Sant'Agnello by decree issued by the Kingdom of Italy on 10 December 1865.

In ancient times Sorrento had an agricultural and maritime economy, and was also engaged in the manufacture of small glass containers. Wine from Sorrento was considered on a par with Falerno and praised by Horace in his satires. In the second millennium A.D. mulberries were grown (for the production of silk), and later walnuts and citrus fruits. Thanks to its citrus fruits the area came to be known as the "Land where lemon trees blossom", and today the lemons are used to produce the famous "limoncello",

enjoyed in bars and restaurants all over the world.

It is hard to find a family living on the Sorrento Coast that does not have some kind of involvement with the sea: there were once shipyards in Sorrento, Piano, Meta and Vico Equense, and in 1838 no fewer than 216 vessels were launched, 13 in the harbour of Marina Grande in Sorrento. The famous boat from Sorrento called a "gozzo" is still constructed here, built using traditional methods passed down from father to son.

Marina Grande was for centuries a harbour for these boats and for fishermen, while today it is a thriving village where old traditions and tourism live side by side.

Every year Sorrento hosts important events combining culture and tourism, the driving force of its economy.

For over forty years the Siren Land has played an important role in world of cinematography hosting the "Incontri Internazionali del Cinema" and "Giornate Professionali del Cinema". It has also been a promoter of classical music, organizing performances by some of the most prestigious musicians and orchestras in the world in the extraordinary scenario of the Chiostro di San Francesco. Many other sporting, artistic and cultural events attract throngs of visitors to Sorrento, including the Caruso Award, the Festival of Music and Theatre, the Antique Book and Print Fair, the Eduardo De Martino Yachting Prize, the Mid-summer Food Festival, and Christmas in Sorrento with the Nativity Scene Contest.

Musical entertainment is provided by pubs and nightclubs in the style of "Torna a Sorrento". The song has come to symbolize the one hundred years that the people of Sorrento have been welcoming their visitors, and visitors have been falling in love with the Siren Land and its coast stretching from Punta di Scutolo to Capo di Sorrento, where you can still find the ruins of many Roman villas from the Imperial age.

It was during the era of the Grand Tour in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that







Sorrento began to attract a huge number of visitors, including political figures, members of the establishment, as well as the many authors and artists who immortalized it in words and pictures. In his "Travels in Two Sicilies", written towards the end of the eighteenth century, the Englishman Henry Swinburne described the enchanting scenery and artistic treasures of Sorrento. The German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche found the town beneficial to his health, and it was in Sorrento that Richard Wagner completed his "Parsifal". The greatest Russian artist of the nineteenth century, Silvester Shchedrin, whose paintings of the land and sea around Sorrento can be found in some of the most prestigious museums in the world, died and was buried in Sorrento in 1830. During his second stay in the birthplace of poet Torquato Tasso in November 1932, Maxim Gorky founded nothing less than a Russian colony. The Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen sojourned here twice and this year sees the celebration (in conjunction with Norway) of the centenary of his death. So many painters found inspiration for their masterpieces on the Sorrento Coast, just as the works of so many writers and poets were inspired by the beauty of the landscape.

Today Sorrento can provide accommodation for eleven

thousand people in over one hundred hotels, holiday villages, campsites and self-catering apartments. There are no fewer than four five-star establishments and just as many "historic hotels", a conference centre (one of the best in Italy) and many venues offering conference facilities.

The Siren Land also has a special place in the history of Neapolitan music, with approximately one hundred songs dedicated to Sorrento. The town's theme tune is obviously none other than the one-hundred-year-old "Torna a Surriento", sung by all the greats both in Italy and abroad, but many other songs have been composed by great poets and musicians, including Lucio Dalla's "Caruso". The poet Aniello Califano ("Serenata a Surriento", "O surdato nnamurato") was from Sorrento, as was the musician Salo d'Esposito ("Anema e core", "Me so' mbriacato 'e sole"). The tra-

dition of the Tarantella is also still very much alive.

The great Enrico Caruso came to Sorrento in search of peace to regain his strength, and stayed until just a few hours before he died.

If tourism is the mainstay of Sorrento's economy, the role of the craft industry, particularly marquetry and lace making,

also has a long history. The origins of woodworking in Sorrento date back to the first half of the nineteenth century, when in 1830 Antonino Damora and Luigi Gargiulo introduced the art of marquetry and brought it popularity, making desk articles, pictures, trays and miniature chests of drawers in the early workshops.



# Folklore

Sorrento doesn't offer just art and culture but also folklore, with its traditional festivities on the beaches and in the hills, its songs and Tarantella dance. Without a doubt one of the images of Sorrento which the tourist takes away, together with a joy for life kindness and harmony, is that of the Tarantella. The origins of the dance are uncertain as it is not clear whether it was named after the city of Taranto or the poisonous spider, the tarantola, whose bite is said to cause the dance's movements. What is certain is that the character of the Tarantella is decidedly rustic as it was once used to celebrate important moments of country life. In our friendly countryside, in particular it was used to celebrate the vine harvest whose inebriating atmosphere was an invitation to joy and gaiety, almost an act of liberation. Although the Tarantella was diffuse throughout southern Italy its greatest fame was attained in Sorrento where it is still important, not as ethnological evidence or as a recovery of the past but as a sign of the uninterrupted tradition of a popular custom. In its steps, in the costumes worn by the dancers, so

cheerful and vibrant in colour, the fresh grace of a popular, but not common, dance is revived which with exquisite gracefulness exalts the charms of our area. The rhythm of the Tarantella is always lively and the words, whether common or refined, are always accompanied by typical instruments like the mandolin, the guitar and the violin with the rhythm beaten on tambourines and castanets by the dancers. The particular charm of the Tarantella has always held an attraction for poets and writers such as Goethe, Lamartine, Stendhal, De Boucard, the De Gouncourt brothers; for musicians such as Rossini, Liszt, Mendelssohn; for artists like Pinelli, Vemet, Lindstrom, each of whom, in their own field, left an everlasting memory of this dance. Not to mention the dozens of songs written to its rhythm. What does the Tarantella represent? The most sublime and natural of sentiments combined: it's Love - "It's a story, a love poem" - as E. Bidera wrote in 1844; "every glance has an amorous meaning. The first loving look, the declaration, the shy refusal, consent, jealousy, making up and tender looks, the



placid and tranquil repulses, all resolved with energetic and noisy dashes like two pigeons who bend, touch and then take flight, to return more amorous than before". The great simplicity of theme can be seen, natural and effective with its music and songs. The dance conspires, in some way, to take the spectator to an unreal and magical world, carrying him back to the dimension of the simple, honest, carefree life of the "good old days" when so little was necessary to have fun and be happy: just a joy for life. Speaking of songs, who isn't familiar with "Torna a Surriento"? A great deal of the fame which Sorrento has acquired throughout the world is due to this song which has carried Sorrento's name to every corner of the earth for over 80 years. The birth of this

fortunate song is tied to an episode which could pass for an anecdote, but in fact, really occurred. Perhaps not everyone knows the story, which is worth telling. In September of 1902 the Italian Premier Giuseppe Zanardelli spent a vacation in Sorrento, at the Hotel Tramontano. The proprietor of the Hotel, Guglielmo Tramontano, was also the mayor of the city and in this capacity, and with great discretion, informed the Premier of the needs of Sorrento, above all a Post Office. Mayor Tramontano's complaints were received coolly by this illustrious guest.

Then the painter G. B. de Curtis tutor in the Tramontano household, had the idea of writing a song in honour of Zanardelli and said: "I'm certain that, after listening to my song, he won't forget to give Sorrento a Post Office". G.B. de Curtis wrote the words and had then set to music by his brother, Ernesto.

The evening prior to Zanardelli's departure a small orchestra said goodbye with the notes of "Torna a Surriento" and thus Sorrento acquired a Post Office. Since then this song has become the emblem of Sorrento exalting the beauty of its sea, the perfume of its gardens, its orange blossoms, the spell of the Sirens.

This song has become the official ambassador of Sorrento and its natural beauty which no-one can resist. "Torna a Surriento" does not only welcome the visitor but expresses the desire for him to return, not a "farewell" but a "see you soon"



# Gastronomy

Aligned with the mild climate, the suggestive panoramic views, the traditional hospitality, one of the most important focal points, must be the local gastronomy.

Some recipes, already in use in Roman times, thanks to the times and to the abundance of locally grown products, have now become the most traditional dishes of this area satisfying even the most hard to please of this area.

Who truly prevails in the preparation of the dishes from the hors d'oeuvres to the famous pizza "Margherita" is the mozzarella with its typical expression displayed in the characteristic form of a "plait" among the hors d'oeuvres, you can try little balls of fresh cream cheese, marinated anchovies, artichokes and aubergines in oil and vinegar, mixed shell fish, "caprese" salad which is just tomatoes and mozzarella cheese. A typical element in the mediterranean diet is of course the pasta, which can be served up in hundreds of ways.

To remain within our local theme, we can't do less than mention the "maccheroni alla



sorrentina", or else the gnocchi or cannelloni, always sorrentine style using tomato sauce with mozzarella. For the main dishes, the chefs dedicate a lot of attention to various meats cooked "pizzaiola" style - tomatoes, oregan and garlic, creating a really delicious combi-

nation. More refined palates, might demand an escalope "sorrentine" style, once again using mozzarella, a dominating and unreplaceable ingredient used in the fantasy of local cooking.

The sea, with its transparent depths, today still offers

an abundance of fish, such as rock cod, bass, sea bream, gilt bream, saraghi and mackerel. However, the recipes that are more typical, very often are the ones that are the simplest. When it comes to serving fried red mullet and squid, "fravagliuzzi", "rutunnielli" and stewed octopus.

The temptations don't finish here; even cakes and desserts reflect the seasons and the influx of tourists. Next to the classical cakes, you can also find a rich "sfogliatella alla St. Rosa" a kind of neapolitan puff pastry cake, lemon delights and profiteroles, sorrentine cake - a type of tart filled with white and chocolate blanchmange, garnished with cherries and various tarts having a fruit filling according to the season. A meal cannot be eaten without finishing off by tasting one of the local liqueurs using recipes that, until a few years ago, could not be found commercially.

These liqueurs include: lemon, walnut, wild strawberry, bilberry; all professing to have digestive qualities.



# The Bagni of Regina Giovanna

On the outskirts of Sorrento's walls, it is possible to rediscover historic memories; archaeological finds and the clear uncontaminated beauty that is a mysterious mythological earth legend. One of the places rich in magical stories and soaked with fascination of another time unlike any other is 'The Bagni of Regina Giovanna'. From the head of Sorrento there is a narrow road with walls covered in ivy, go along the path in the shade of the of grapevines and orange trees you approach a slope which goes down towards the sea, reaching the baths of Queen Giovanna. The eyes of the visitor are presented with a spectacle of exceptional beauty: A large natural basin connected to the sea by a narrow fissure in the rocks. The space in front

of the headland is occupied by the ruins of a majestic Roman Villa, built at the time of the Emperor Domiziano (81 – 96 AD) and belonged to Pollio Fellice. The spectacle offered is splendid and it is possible to see the entire coast from Punta Scutolo to the other Roman Villa at the top of Massa Lubrense. If you continue to look you can see La Solara, an expanse of cliffs kissed by the sun in a blue sea, an uncontaminated environment. It is possible to enjoy an unforgettable rest. On the cliffs that define the basin of Queen Giovanna, you can admire the ruins of the majestic roman construction, furnished with landing points, terraces and cisterns ascribed by the Latin poet Stazio and the historic Pollio Fellice. Adjacent to this villa is the outline of a natural

swimming pool, which you approach through a natural arch. Ex Roman nymphaeum (Baths of Diana). According to the legend it was here that they frequently came away from indiscreet eyes. Giovanna II D'Angio Durazzo, Hungarian by birth lived from 1371 to 1435, one of the most scandalous sovereigns to ever sit on the throne of Naples.

These ruins are one of the most charming features of the Sorrento Peninsula, uncovered in 1624 by Giovanni Vinaccia, they are what remains of the splendid villa built by Pollio Fellice. A partially uncovered underground conduit links the annexe with the villa rising above. No other villa of this period has been described in such detail as this of Pollio Felice in Sorrento; which we can find in

verses sung by Stazio.

Like the other maritime Roman villas, the villa of Pollio Felice has a landing place by the sea. The fishermen brought up fish for the banquets and a nymphaeum, drawn from the sheet of internal water, communicating with the open sea through the fissure in the rocks. How grand were parts of this noble villa. The villa of Pollio Felice was immense with pavilions sunk into the gardens, thermal baths, rustic pavilions for the production of oil and wine. A deep cistern fed the fountains in the park through a siphon. The system Domus; the principle entrance to the villa was a complex of monumental structures, long and sinuous steps permitted you to reach the various seashore landings.

From the top of the villa there is a long passage above the rocks which passes a bathing place on the side of the cliffs outside the top of Sorrento, between these rocks it is possible to bathe in the clear crystal water. The sheet of water closes in the arch of the Bagno della Regina Giovanna, and divides the point of the headland from the ground. A path winds round the sidewall of the natural basin and unites the extremities of the Punta del Capo di Sorrento – similar to an island – the territory. On the headland lie the ruins of the ancient Roman villa; the sea almost seems to watch.

When the day declines in silence and the clouds are still in the sky, fix your eye on the small movement of a wave, you can imagine ...a Greek ship ploughing through the seas, gladdened by the song of the Sirens and a fissure of light reveals through the Roman lattice work the Angovin profile of Giovanna II D'Angiò.

The magic gone, leaving the intense perfume of the broom bush which colours the passage yellow and the gentle breaking of the waves on the cliffs.



# The sea of Sorrento

For the first time, the Sorrento council has decided to create a department known as "Risorsa Mare" (sea resources).

The idea of this is for the local administrators to focus on the sea not as an element to be exploited, but as a common heritage to be safeguarded, protected and used economically with regulations and respect. Sorrento is the end sector of the Punta Campanella Marine Reserve, but Sorrento is also where expansion of nautical services and upgrading of the shoreline areas is already under way.

New marine routes for tourism will be created around these infrastructures, therefore not only place-to-place connections but also emotions to be experienced, perhaps in a traditional "gozzo", still constructed in the Sorrentine dockyards, combining traditional and modern with respect to our vocation and ambition. Fishing also resists among our traditions, and to this we will pay due attention, since it forms part of our collective cultural heritage. The sea, therefore, an opportunity of life and development.



## Surroundings

The Sorrento Coast can be considered not only as your destination but also as your starting point. Thanks to its extraordinary geographical location, other Campania pearls such as Capri, Ravello, Amalfi and Positano can easily be reached not to mention Ischia, Naples and Caserta with its famous palace and San Leucio's silk factory. And finally Pompei, known all over the world, unique for its ruins, as well as Oplonti, Ercolano and Paestum too. All of these towns are destinations for archeological tourism which definitely cannot be missed; well-known places, but nonetheless unique.



Capri



Positano



Napoli



Amalfi



Ravello



Ercolano



Caserta



Pompei

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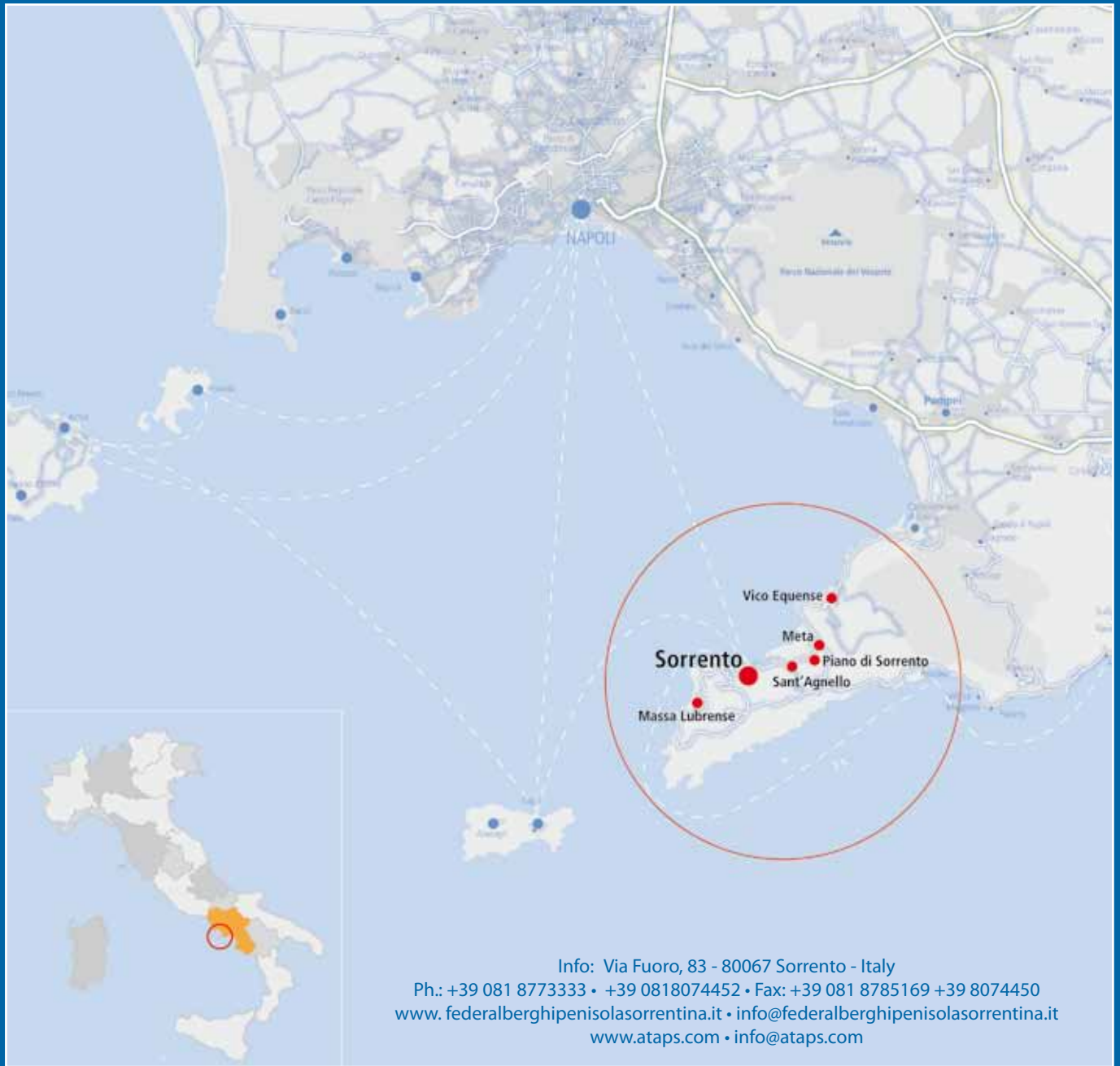
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