

How You Can Vacation Like A Mogul At This Italian Seaside Resort



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The beach in Forte dei Marmi. Shutterstock

Italy's famous seaside resorts like Portofino and Capri have long attracted big international names, but for more than a century the country's business elite gathered in the insider haven, Forte Dei Marmi, on Tuscany's northern coast. The glamorous Agnellis, the Fiat heirs, summered here for years rubbing (beautifully tanned) shoulders with other industrialist families, whose ranks included the Pirellis of tire conglomerate fame. Later-day moguls like Luxottica founder Leonardo del Vecchio and Massimo Moratti, the petroleum billionaire, have come to Forte and designer Giorgio Armani built one of (his many) homes here. In the last two decades Russian oligarchs have opted for villas in this tony outpost. Sightings of Roman Abramovich, who has visited with his yacht, make news.



Gianni Agnelli, the late head of Fiat, on his yacht in the Mediterranean. His family vacationed in Forte dei Marmi for many years. (Photo by Patrick SICCOLI/Gamma-Rapho via Getty Images)

While Forte had been an exclusive summer getaway since the 1800s, the Agnelli presence before World War II gave the town a new sheen. Famous personalities outside the business sector like Luchino Visconti and the Belgian royal family also vacationed here. More recently Forte has attracted a wide range of celebrities from Miuccia Prada to Naomi Campbell, along with sports figures and European cinema personalities. What's the attraction? Aside from the posh crowd, there's the wonderful, wide sandy beaches, the hobnobbing at the bagni or summer beach clubs, the beautiful aristocratic villas to rent and luxurious hotels to relax in. And while the streets aren't exactly paved with gold, many of them are made with marble (after all Carrara is nearby). If that's not enough to entice a visitor, add to the mix splendid sea and Alpine views and easy access to Milan and Florence. If you go, here's what to know.

Where to stay: Luxe hotels include the boutique [Hotel Byron](#), with a seafront location. Popular with celebrities, the hotel, built by the Duke of Zoagli in Art Nouveau style, made headlines a few years ago with a ban on selfies.



A suite at the Hotel Byron.



The pool setting and La Magnolia restaurant at the Hotel Byron.

Restaurants: The many offerings include L'Orsa Maggiore, Bistrot and Bruno, all on the beach, and in town Lorenzo, known for its superb seafood.

Nightlife: La Capannina di Franceschi has been a Forte mainstay since 1929 when it was popular with Italian aristos vacationing in the area. Everyone from Edith Piaf to Grace Jones has performed here.

Forte dress code: Formerly Italian preppie. Today, designer labels; haute bohemian beachwear. Big sunglasses; tiny bikinis.



Healthy eating at a bagno in Forte Dei Marmi and a beach club near the Palazzo La Datcha.

The beach clubs: The see-and-be-seen beach scene continues to flourish in Forte. The bagni, or clubs, line the long stretch of coast with color-themed (usually blue or green) umbrellas, chairs and changing cabins. Many of the bagni are private, but some have day or weekly rentals (these can get pricey). Among the most famous clubs are the Bagno Annetta and Bagno Piero. The [Bagno Milano](#) has well-priced high-season rates from €45 daily.