

COAST WITH THE MOST

OK! ENJOYS THE PEACE AND TRANQUILITY OF SORRENTO, ON ITALY'S AMALFI COAST

Below: Relax by the hotel pool or try a treatment in the Grand Hotel Excelsior Vittoria's La Serra Spa (below right). **Right:** Beyoncé and Jay Z visited the Bay Of Naples



around a giant olive tree. It's equipped with three treatment rooms and each has a private changing area, hot tub and manicured garden with sun loungers. Upstairs is a mani/pedi suite stocked with every OPI colour under the sun. OK!'s aches and pains were banished thanks to a celestial 50-minute personalised massage that incorporated hot stone techniques and aromatherapy. Couples can indulge in the La Dolce Vita experience, which includes a full-body Swedish massage using Italian almond oil and the chance to relax in a rose-scented hot tub while enjoying cheese and Italian sparkling wine.

WHICH STARS WILL I SEE?

Once a favourite destination of the Queen's sister Princess Margaret and opera singer Luciano Pavarotti, the owners are naturally tight-lipped about their famous guests. However, celebrities including Pierce Brosnan, Mark Ruffalo, Jessica Lange and Barbra Streisand have all enjoyed the hotel's polished hospitality. The Amalfi Coast is also popular with the yachting set including Beyoncé and Jay Z, who have dropped anchor in the Bay Of Naples.

WHERE CAN I EAT?

Start your evening at the hotel's al fresco La Pergola champagne bar, then enjoy dinner at the Michelin-starred Terrazza Bosquet while you watch the sun set – Sir Rod Stewart enjoyed dinner here earlier this month. OK! loved dining on

Unashamedly beautiful and more than a little tantalising, Sorrento is a slice of Italian heaven. Skirting the Amalfi Coast and keeping proud watch from its cliff-top perch over the Bay Of Naples, it has a tiny beach and a small port from which you sail to either Ischia or Capri. You can see Mount Vesuvius across the bay, as well as the many cruise ships whose eager tourists keep the town busy.

Travelling to Sorrento is not for the faint-hearted. Only an hour from Naples airport, the roads are very twisted, but the views are spectacular. And, as OK!'s Lisa Marks discovered, the people are welcoming, the history captivating and the citrus trees pop with colour, so buckle up and enjoy the ride...

WHERE CAN I STAY?

Founded in 1834, the five-star Grand Hotel Excelsior Vittoria, which sits majestically on the

clifftop, is one of the most luxurious hotels in the world. What's lovely is that it's also a family business, albeit on a grand scale. Like OK!, you'll most likely get the chance to meet its fifth generation president and CEO Guido Fiorentino and, if you're really lucky, his mother Lidia, the hotel matriarch who is always ready with a warm welcome.

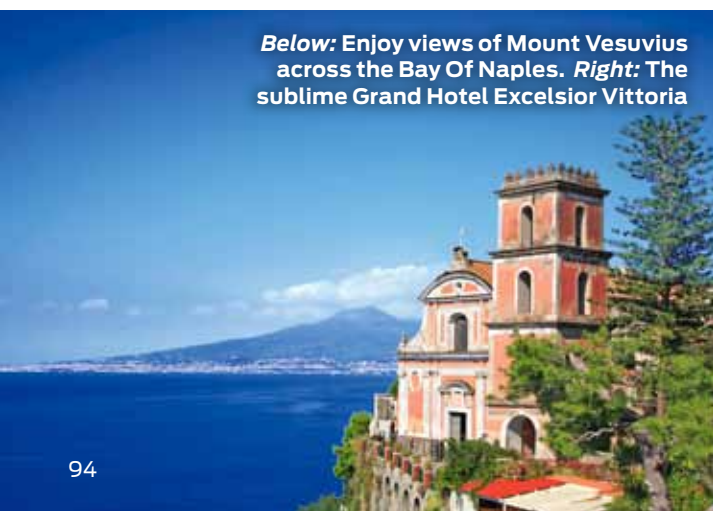
The familiarity doesn't stop there, as their staff are constantly one step ahead of your needs. It has 81 rooms decorated with gorgeous period furniture and the most incredible artworks. There are protected Roman ruins by the swimming pool, a hydro pool and an orangery, plus a gym, boutique and spa. Adding to the exclusivity, OK! loved the private lift that transports you from the hotel's terrace to the beach. Magic moments are also the norm – we were lucky enough to see a fly-past of the Italian military's air display team, who trailed the red, green and white smoke of the Italian flag.

WHERE CAN I RELAX?

The hotel's divine spa, La Serra, is housed in a converted 19th-century greenhouse and built



Below: Enjoy views of Mount Vesuvius across the Bay Of Naples. **Right:** The sublime Grand Hotel Excelsior Vittoria



Sorrento sits in the heart of the picture-perfect Amalfi Coast



HOW DO I GET THERE?

Classic Collection Holidays (www.classic-collection.co.uk) offers three nights at the five-star Grand Hotel Excelsior Vittoria (www.exvitt.it) from £1,349pp. Price based on two adults sharing a classic room on a bed and breakfast basis and includes return flights from London Gatwick (up to 16 other UK departure airports available) to Naples and private transfers.



Amalfi lemon butter is sublime. The L'Orangerie pool-side bar and restaurant serves lunch and dinner, but *OK!* took a fun pizza-making lesson there, which all guests can sign up for. Their terrace, Bar Vittoria, is one of Sorrento's most desired meeting places, offering light snacks as well as a tempting cocktail menu.

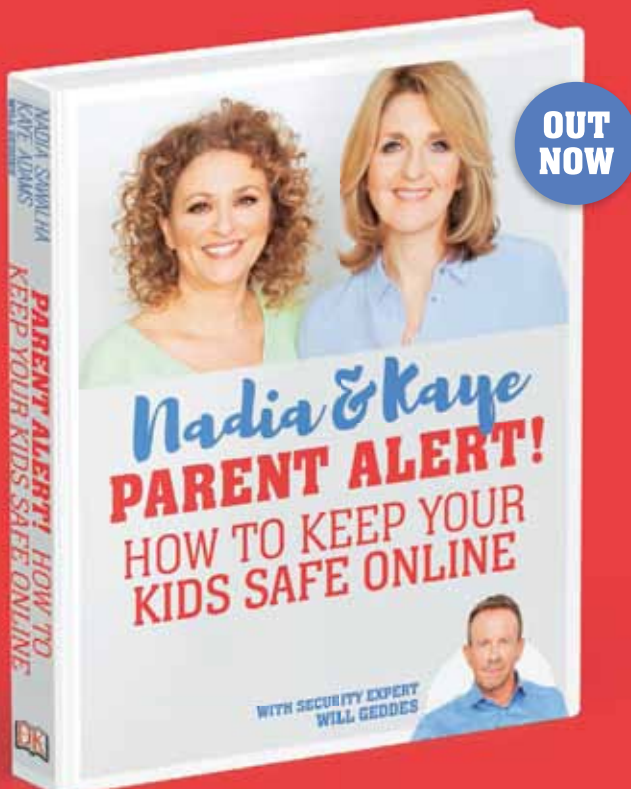
There are many options outside the hotel. *OK!* recommends La Fenice on Via degli Aranci, which is a ten-minute stroll from the hotel and serves pizza and pasta as well as freshly-caught fish.

WHERE CAN I SHOP?

Experience the way the ancient Romans shopped at the ruins of Pompeii. Only an hour from the hotel, Pompeii dates back to the 6th Century BC but was destroyed when Vesuvius erupted in 79 AD. While the only place you can buy souvenirs is the gift shop, it's fascinating to see what's left of their fast food restaurants, amphitheatres and spa baths.

Nearer to home, Sorrento has a lovely array of independent stores. Visit a limoncello shop for a keepsake bottle of the region's most famous liqueur or treat yourself to a piece of intarsio Sorrentino (inlaid wood). And finally, be sure to try their insanely good gelato – Amalfi lemon flavour, of course! **OK!**

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