

SICILIAN SPLENDOURS

Seven nights at the luxurious Belmond Grand Hotel Timeo

9th to 16th April
& 28th October to 4th November 2018



NOBLE CALEDONIA

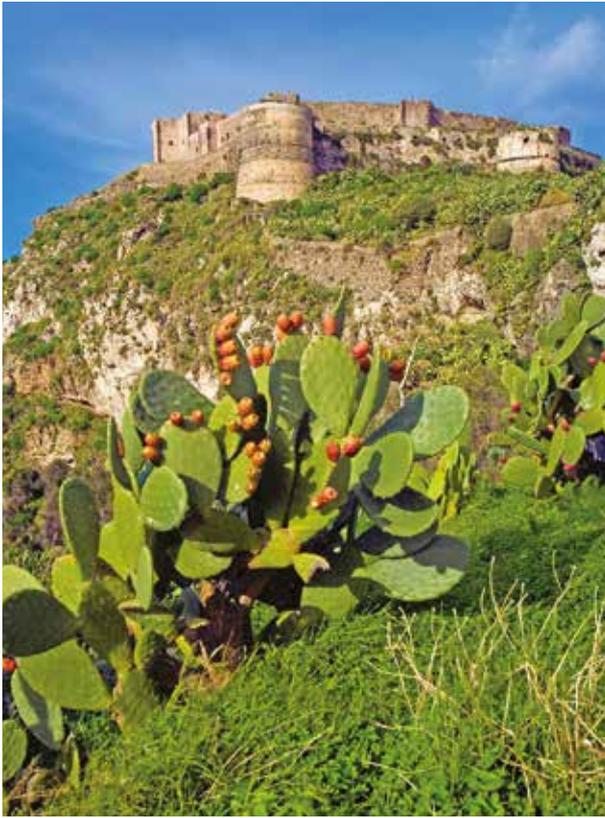
We hope you will join us in this magical corner of Sicily to enjoy a truly great Italian hotel, amazing sea and landscapes, and to explore the wealth of historic and cultural treasures on offer. Idyllically perched on a natural terrace between rocks and water, the small town of Taormina is the perfect spot to relax and enjoy the surrounding scenic and historical wonders and it is easy to see why its beauty has always attracted visitors, from those on the Grand Tour to 19th century writers and modern day filmmakers.

For our visit we have chosen the Belmond Grand Hotel Timeo as our base, one of the world's finest hotels. It would of course be a travesty not to allow time to enjoy the hotel as well as the charm of Taormina itself where you can explore the boutiques and restaurants, particularly at those quiet times in the early morning and evening when the day visitors have yet to arrive or have departed. For a true taste of the Sicilian Dolce Vita, lose yourself wandering along the colourful streets, browsing the craft and antique shops and perhaps stopping for a coffee or Sicilian granita along the way.

This is a wonderful region for a relaxing week and, when you can pull yourself away from the beautiful gardens and magnificent pool at the hotel there is much to explore. We have therefore devised an itinerary which includes ample time to enjoy the hotel's many delights but with the added benefit of guided excursions including Mount Etna and Zafferana Etnea, for a tasting of local delicacies and a winery tour, the ancient city of Tindari and a visit to the incredible Roman mosaics of Villa Romana del Casale.



The stunning gardens of the Belmond Grand Hotel Timeo



Mazzaro Castle



Church of Saint Maria della Provvidenza in Zafferana Etnea



Characteristically decorated balcony, Taormina



Sanctuary of the Madonna Nera and the lagoon

The Itinerary

Day 1 London to Taormina, Sicily. Fly by scheduled flight to Catania airport and transfer to the Belmond Grand Tremeo in Taormina. Enjoy a welcome dinner at the hotel this evening. **(D)**

Day 2 Taormina. The picturesque town of Taormina enjoys a magnificent position on a terrace overlooking the Ionian Sea on the eastern coast of Sicily and still retains its Medieval character. In the 1800s, after Goethe praised Taormina's beauty throughout Europe with a mention in his book 'Italian Journey', Taormina became a mandatory stop on the Grand Tour, the long journey made in continental Europe by the young European aristocracy of the time to enrich their own culture. During our morning walking tour we will discover the historical centre of the town including Piazza Vittorio Emanuele and the bustling main street, Corso Umberto overlooked by flower-filled balconies and with wonderful views out to the Gulf of Naxos. We pass Corvaja Palace and then continue to the impressive Greek Theatre which, due to its superb acoustics, is still in use for open-air performances in summer. It is the most important and best preserved ancient monument in Taormina with a capacity of 10,000 and one of the most celebrated ruins in Sicily. The theatre is built most part of brick and is therefore probably of Roman origins although the plan and arrangement are in accordance with those of Greek, rather than Roman, theatres. With a diameter of 109 metres (after an expansion in the 2nd century), the theatre is the second largest of its kind in Sicily. Enjoy an afternoon at leisure, perhaps take a stroll through the centre of Taormina visiting the craft and antique shops and multi-coloured alleys. **(B)**

Day 3 Mount Etna & Zafferana Etnea. Mount Etna, the largest active volcano in Europe currently standing at 3329 metres is in an almost constant state of eruption. The fertile volcanic soils support extensive agriculture, with vineyards and orchards spread across the lower slopes of the mountain and the broad Plain of Catania to the south. Upon arrival at Crateri Silvestri, which is approximately 2000 metres above sea level, we will walk along a comfortable path from which there is a wonderful view of the coast and then take a stroll on the lava stream with our guide. On the way down, we stop at Zafferana Etnea which sits among the green hills that rise up to the heights of Mount Etna but is just minutes to the Ionian Sea. The little town is the centre of Sicilian honey production with flavours including orange blossom and chestnut, which is excellent with pecorino cheese. We will continue inland through the attractive countryside holdings where we can admire the wine cultivations covering the foot of the fertile volcano. The Barone di Villagrande Estate is owned by the Nicolosi family

whose history is traced back to the 18th century when the Roman Emperor Charles VI gave Don Carmelo Nicolosi the title Barone di Villagrande and a series of related privileges. Our visit will include a guided tour of the cellar and winery and a tasting of some of their prestigious wines and fresh local produce. Enjoy some free time before returning to the hotel. **(B, Wine & Food Tasting)**

Day 4 Milazzo & Tindari. After breakfast we head to the province of Messina on the northern coast to Milazzo. Several civilizations settled in Milazzo and left signs of their presence from the Neolithic age. In Homer's Odyssey Milazzo is the place where Ulysses is shipwrecked and meets Polyphemus. A highlight is the Castle of Milazzo which dates from the 1500s and is a unique example of a Sicilian fortified Gothic city. The whole of Milazzo once fitted within its massive walls. Nowadays it is a lovely site full of flowers and crumbling fortifications, with beautiful views of the bay and the Aeolian Islands. We will stroll around the old town and have lunch in a typical Sicilian restaurant before heading to Tindari. Tindari was founded by Syracusan merchants during the war against Carthage in 396 BC, the ruins of the ancient city are relatively well-preserved and the structure that astounds above all others is the Greek Theatre. Dating back as far as the end of the 4th century, the theatre is a marvel of acoustic engineering, and has hosted music, dance and theatre festivals over the last 70 years. Standing next to a promontory, it looks out nobly toward the sea. The Sanctuary of the Madonna Nera, however, is the foremost attraction in Tindari. Inside, the



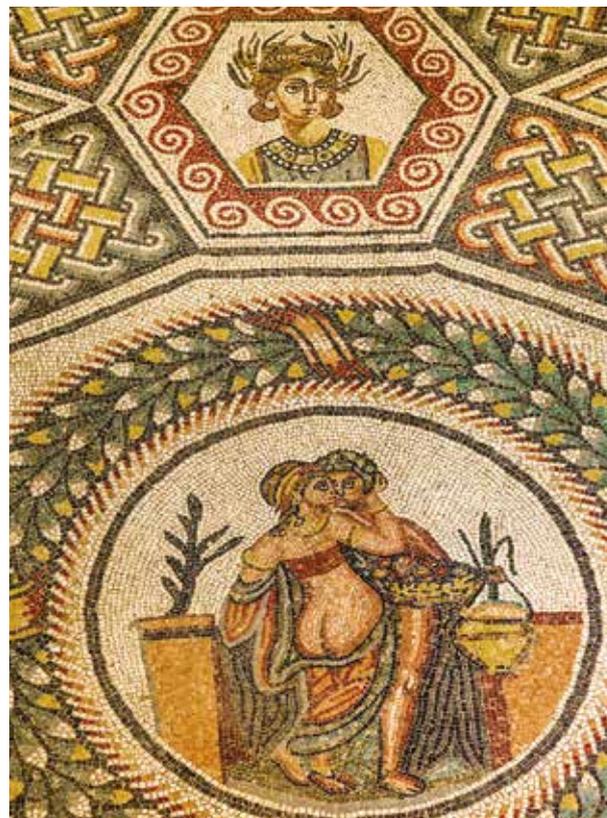
Crateri Silvestri at Mount Etna



Mosaic from the Sanctuary of the Madonna Nera



at Tindari



Mosaic floor from Villa Romana del Casale at Piazza Armerina

sculpture of the Virgin and Child, in citron wood, is said to have reached Tindari in an attempt by the faithful to keep it safe from the 8th century Byzantine Iconoclast movement. According to legend, the statue was abandoned by the sailors of a ship moored under the promontory; otherwise they feared that to take it with them would go against divine will and prevent them from setting sail anew. Today, the Black Madonna is venerated every September 7th. Beneath the promontory lies the Tindari Lagoon, a small strait of water of exceptional beauty that today is a nature reserve characterised by alternating beaches, dunes, lagoons and reefs. (B, L)

Day 5 Savoca. Enjoy a morning at leisure. This afternoon we take a tour of Savoca, a small Medieval village perched on a rocky hill, surrounded by citrus groves, vineyards and olive groves. Considered among the most beautiful Italian villages, here time seems to have stopped with a feeling of being catapulted into the past. Savoca has plenty of charms of its own including the catacombs at the Capuchin monastery (Convento dei Cappuccini), the crypt here houses a collection of mummified corpses, plus an assortment of skulls in niches. Dating to the 18th century, and dressed in their best clothes, these past citizens of Savoca are a creepy reminder of the past. Notable also is the village's connection with Francis Ford Coppola's film *The Godfather*. Scenes for the movie were shot at Bar Vitelli, on the village's little square. (B)



sculpture at Tindari



The picturesque hill-top village of Savoca

Day 6 Piazza Armerina. This morning we drive to Piazza Armerina where the Villa Romana del Casale, a UNESCO World Heritage Site is situated. The Villa was built during the end of the 3rd and beginning of the 4th century AD. Although the owner of the villa is not known for certain, he must have been someone of great wealth and importance. A leading theory is that this was the country retreat of Maximianus Hercules, who was Emperor of the western part of the Roman Empire between 285 and 305 AD. It is especially noteworthy for the richness and quality of the mosaics which decorate almost every room; they are the finest mosaics in situ anywhere in the Roman world. We will have lunch close to Lake Pergusa, the only natural lake in central Sicily. It is famous because of the mythological legend that this lake was an entrance to the underworld – probably because of the reddish colour that the lake water has during certain periods of the year. It is a vital stop in the migratory trajectory of a great number of birds. In addition to birds, which are by far the main inhabitants of the Pergusa nature reserve, there are also interesting species of mammals, reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates found here. (B, L)

Day 7 At leisure. The final full day is at leisure for you to enjoy the facilities of the hotel or to explore further afield. This evening we re-group for a farewell dinner at the hotel. (B, D)

Day 8 Taormina to London. Transfer to Catania airport for the return scheduled flight to London. (B)

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

ROOM CATEGORY	DOUBLE OCCUPANCY	SINGLE OCCUPANCY
Classic Room at Villa Flora	£2695	£3895
Superior Sea View Room at Villa Flora	£3195	£4495
Gallery Room at Villa Flora	£2995	N/A
Gallery Room with Partial Sea View at Villa Flora	£3095	N/A
Family Room at Villa Flora	£5695	N/A

Price Includes: Economy class scheduled air travel, seven nights hotel accommodation, meals as indicated (B-Breakfast, L-Lunch, D-Dinner), excursions with local guide, entrance fees, gratuities, Tour Manager, transfers, airport taxes.

Not Included: Travel insurance.



The Greek Theatre overlooking the Belmont Grand Hotel Timeo

BELMOND GRAND HOTEL TIMEO



We are delighted to be working with our associates at Belmond and offering another of their iconic hotels as we know them to be a company of the most exacting standards. Set high in the rocky hills on the east coast of the island, with Mount Etna as a dramatic backdrop, Belmont Grand Hotel Timeo was the first hotel built in Taormina and has been the destination of choice for glamorous European and Hollywood stars since its opening in 1873. Located directly opposite the Greek Theatre, and a short stroll from Corso Umberto, the hotel benefits from a fantastic location and is surrounded by a six-acre park with magnificent gardens encircling its panoramic pool. It is famed for its Literary Terrace, a favourite meeting point of distinguished guests through the decades, and also offers an excellent restaurant and spa facilities. The hotel features 45 rooms and 26 suites, most with terraces or balconies affording captivating views over the bay. Each room's decor evokes traditional Sicilian style combining beauty, elegance and comfort.

Your Accommodation

All of our rooms are located in Villa Flora, a charming country house which is just 50 metres away from the main Timeo building. The elegant rooms all feature a spacious marble bathroom, writing desk, widescreen LCD HDTV, climate control, Wi-Fi and a safe. They have either a king-size bed or twin beds and there is a twice-daily housekeeping service with evening turndown.

Classic Rooms: These offer an average size of 20 to 25 square metres. The rooms enjoy views over the attractive courtyard and are elegantly furnished and decorated with Italian flair. Bathrooms have either a bathtub or separate shower.

Superior Rooms: These offer an average size of 30 square metres. Each room boasts a private terrace furnished with table and chairs, perfect for breakfasting outside while admiring the views of the Bay of Naxos in the distance. All bathrooms have a bathtub.

Gallery Rooms: These offer an average size of 45 square metres. Set over two levels in Villa Flora, with a sitting area on the ground floor and a bedroom on the upper level, these charming rooms enjoy partial sea views or village views. All feature two bathrooms, one with a bathtub and the other with a shower.

Family Rooms: These offer an average size 50 square metres. These rooms include a living area, sitting room, and a marble bathroom with a bathtub.



Family Room



Superior Room



Classic Room



The Terrace Restaurant overlooking Mount Etna

Your Space

The Restaurant serves delicious Sicilian and Mediterranean cuisine, with dishes created using the best seasonal produce available, and boasts a spectacular terrace with views over Mount Etna and the sea. There is also an intimate indoor bar that evokes the magical atmosphere of a 19th century winter garden and The Literary Terrace where you can enjoy a cocktail whilst admiring the breathtaking views. The hotel facilities also include a Wellness Centre, nestled in five acres of colourful gardens with massage rooms, a sauna, steam bath, hairdresser's parlour and a heated outdoor swimming pool.



Swimming Pool



Gallery Room



Massage at the Wellness Centre



Indoor Bar



The Literary Terrace and Bar

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All special offers are subject to availability. Our current booking conditions apply to all reservations and are available on request.

Cover image: The Greek Theatre at Taormina with Mount Etna in the background