

## WHERE TO STAY



### TUSCANY

## VILLA ALA ANITA AND VILLA ALA BIANCA

Forte dei Marmi – the Italian Hamptons – has been stylish and exclusive ever since the Agnelli family built a holiday home there in the 1920s. Prominent among the gated properties is Augustus Hotel & Resort, which evokes such carefree glamour that it would be no surprise if Marcello Mastroianni appeared at the breakfast buffet. In its spacious parkland, 10 villas have been erected beneath the umbrella pines. The latest, Villa Radici, opened in June, but last summer came Villa Ala Anita and Villa Ala Bianca, which combine the feeling of a Tuscan farmhouse with the elegant mid-century vibe of the Augustus.

Stone terraces wound with jasmine overlook gardens and a private pool; interiors are furnished with heated terrazzo floors, lashings of marble and Foscarini lamps. The great delight here is the warm embrace of the hotel, with maid and room service on tap, a spa and a restaurant where waistcoated waiters serve dishes such as sea bass in a salt crust. But the clincher is the beach club, accessed by a tunnel from the grounds of the Agnelli villa (now also part of the hotel). With attendants ferrying drinks to canopied loungers, this is the pampered world of Italian beach clubs at its most sophisticated. Behind the coast are the Apuan Alps, where Michelangelo used to search for marble. He was the first celebrity to swim on these beaches – droves more have followed. STANLEY STEWART

*From about £1,280 per night; augustus-hotel.it*

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## VILLA CACCIARELLA

Set on the northwesterly cliffs of Monte Argentario, the islands of Giglio and Montecristo floating like ghost ships out on the Tyrrhenian below, Villa Cacciarella is unashamedly nostalgic for the era in which it was conceived. The newly redesigned 10-bedroom house was built in 1968, when the Agnellis and Onassis partied at Hortuli Hosiani's vineyards, Liz Taylor and Richard Burton smouldered at Bar Centrale and publishing mogul Giangiacomo Feltrinelli roamed his white castle in the hills beneath Cacciarella's expansive terrace, garden and pool. A 1970s wraparound Morentz sofa reupholstered in grey mohair, vintage brass chandeliers and crystal wall sconces nod to the off-duty urban intellectuals and industrialists of the time, as does the use of marble from Sicily. Beautifully cut slabs swirl like tiramisu, flecked with the negroni reds and sunset pinks that flood the rooms here each evening. The interiors firm responsible, Charles & Co (headed up by Vicky Charles, previously of Soho House), designed each bedroom individually: one is wrapped in Zak+Fox wallpaper inspired by the 16th-century Gardens of Bomarzo in Viterbo, while a two-bedroom apartment is all '70s seaside style, with bamboo beds custom-made by Chelsea Upholstery & Interiors. The marble-clad main kitchen is a showstopper. A cocktail grotto with Murano glasses and walnut furniture built into the granite cliff, it's destined to be the backdrop for many an Argentario sundowner. SR

*From about £14,000 per week; thethinkingtraveller.com*

