



► Casa Angelina, a boutique hotel on the Amalfi coast, offers fine-dining at its restaurant Un Piano Nel Cielo and, below right, the view from the restaurant. PHOTOS: CONTRIBUTED

Amalfi coast

Sky high and floored

Casa Angelina’s clifftop restaurant is a gasp out loud experience



TRAVEL
with Ann Rickard

UN PIANO Nel Cielo – the name of the restaurant at Casa Angelina, a boutique hotel on Italy’s Amalfi coast – translates as “a floor in the sky”.
Now, doesn’t that tell you it will be quite the dining experience? Especially given that all of the Amalfi coast is one continuous spectacular view.
Hovering on rocky mountains that soar from the Mediterranean, every section of the winding Amalfi coastal road from Sorrento to Salerno offers views that have sent shivers down myriad spines for decades and attract the masses every summer.
In the small village of Praiano between Amalfi and Positano, Casa Angelina floats serenely above the tourism phenomenon of the Amalfi coast, and cossets a limited number of fortunate guests in its 32 rooms and suites.
The hotel is reached by a steep, twisting and narrow path that leads you past cliff-hanging homes and gravity-defying gardens.
It was hard to find the hotel, but the reward once you have traversed a hundred or more stone steps is a sweeping view that takes in Positano, Capri and the Li Galli islands.

There is a lot of gasping once inside the hotel’s doors.
The all-white palette is in pleasing contrast to the glittering blue of the Mediterranean below, and acts as a calm backdrop for a striking Murano glass art collection dotted around the lounges.
While a stay at Casa Angelina is desirable, and a special treat, the next best thing is a dining experience at Un Piano Nel Cielo, that floor in the sky.
It is certainly fine-dining, but there is nothing starchy here. It is about hospitality and a friendliness as you ease into your chair and are handed a water menu.
We were dazzled, but composed ourselves and were soon sipping San Pellegrino and reading the food menu with small, slim torches, necessary when the only light was the flickering candles on the table, the glimmering lights of Positano and the blush of the moon.
If we thought the water menu daunting, there was no hope of navigating the overwhelming wine menu. But after a glass of pink bubbles, produced in France exclusively for Casa Angelina, we were not shy about calling for help from the sommelier, just a footstep away. He graciously guided us to a reasonably priced local red.
The menu follows the seasons and relies on local produce and culture, although it certainly gives tradition a culinary makeover. The antipasti course begins the epicurean expedition: sauteed



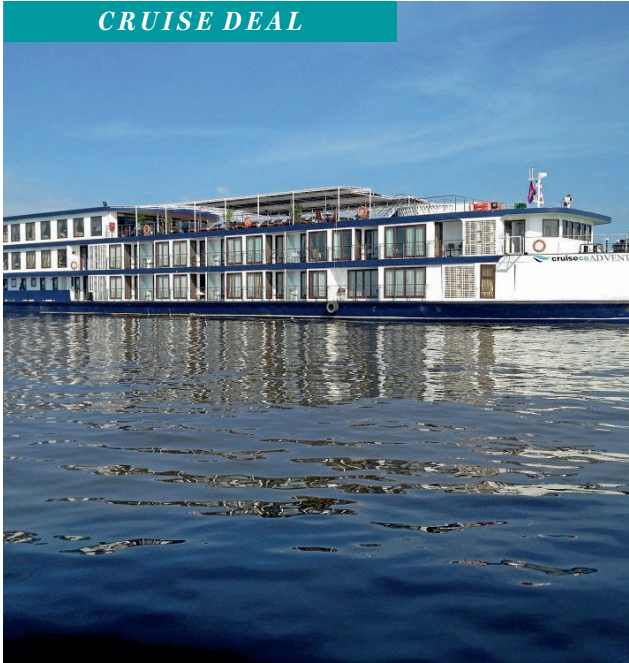
DETAILS:

- Casa Angelina, 84010 Praiano, Amalfi Coast, Italy.
- casangelina.com

squid with orange-flavoured potato cream, juicy roasted scallops with apple on walnut sauce. Then, as is traditional with Italian menus, the pasta course follows. We skipped it despite the temptation of spaghetti with cacio cheese and pink pepper seafood truffles, because the “carne” course (meat) beckoned.
Beef pizzaiola with a delicate potato mille-feuille, and tender pistachio-crust lamb were chosen, perhaps sacrilege considering Praiano was a modest fishing village not so long ago and the caper-crust sea bass would have no doubt been delicious.
For a big finish, dessert. We had spied a trolley coming out onto the floor in the sky bearing giant pyramids and thick slabs of multi-layered chocolate. The trolley was wheeled to each table where the waiter carefully scraped and chopped curls and chunks of chocolate onto small plates. A sweet and decadent finish to a magical evening of unforgettable dining.

The writer was a dinner guest at Casa Angelina.

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