

TRAVEL INTEL

LUXURIANT SICILIAN HIDEAWAYS

ITALY

OUR TRAVELLER'S REQUIREMENTS:

ISLAND ROMANCE
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GOOD FOOD & SPA
ONE-IN-A-LIFETIME OCCASION

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A KINGDOM UNTO ITS OWN SICILY

4 NIGHTS

NOTE:
CTA = CATANIA AIRPORT
PMO = PALERMO AIRPORT

Villa Sant'Andrea, Belmond

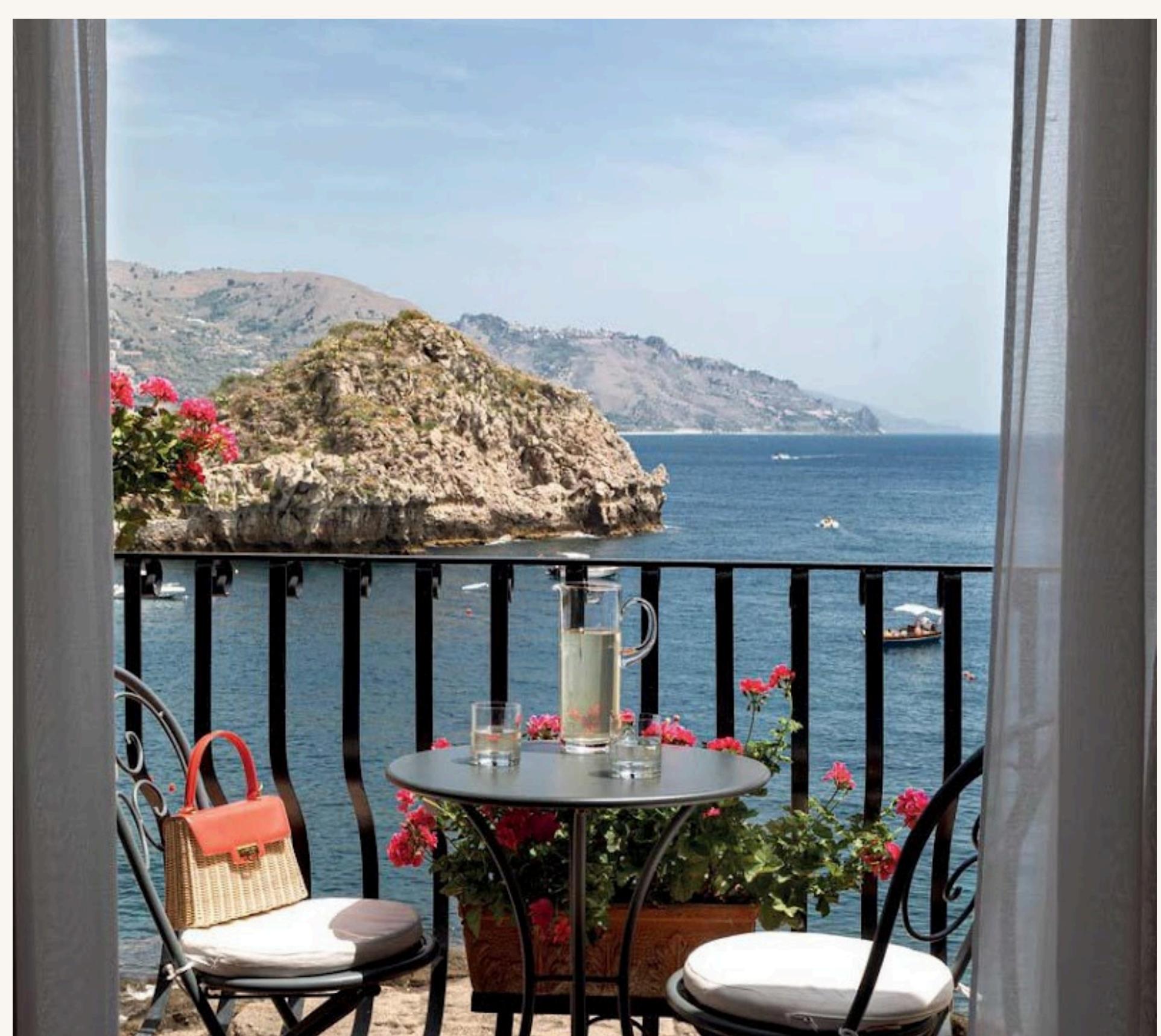
Taormina, Messina

<https://www.belmond.com/hotels/europe/italy/taormina/belmond-villa-sant-andrea/>

67 rooms, from 1160 eur

Set on a little cliff-side beach cove, just at the foot of Taormina, is this charming luxury villa from the acclaimed Belmond brand. Amenities include 2 restaurants with a seafood focus, spa and fitness, and perks like private movie nights on the beach with champagne. There's also a boat you can charter for a romantic tour of the opulent houses by the shore, and a free shuttle to the center of town. There are shared amenities with the larger Belmond hotel inside town. Reviewers love this hotel, and call it "discreet," yet "a dream come true," and despite the pricey nature of the place, they were "surprised by the number of free activities" on offer, and appreciate the extremely professional and friendly staff, elegant cocktails, and setting.

53 min to CTA.



Grand Hotel Timeo, Belmond

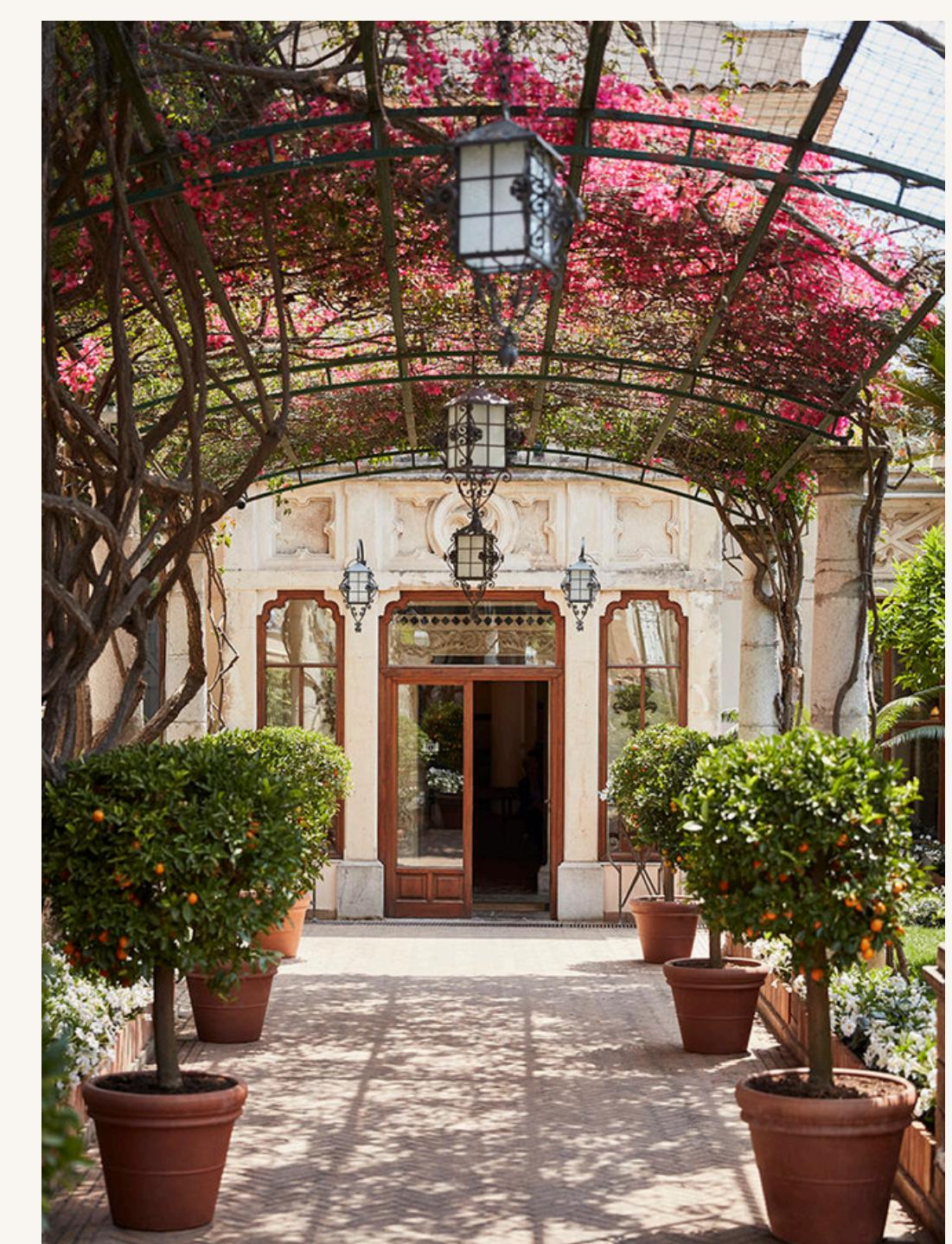
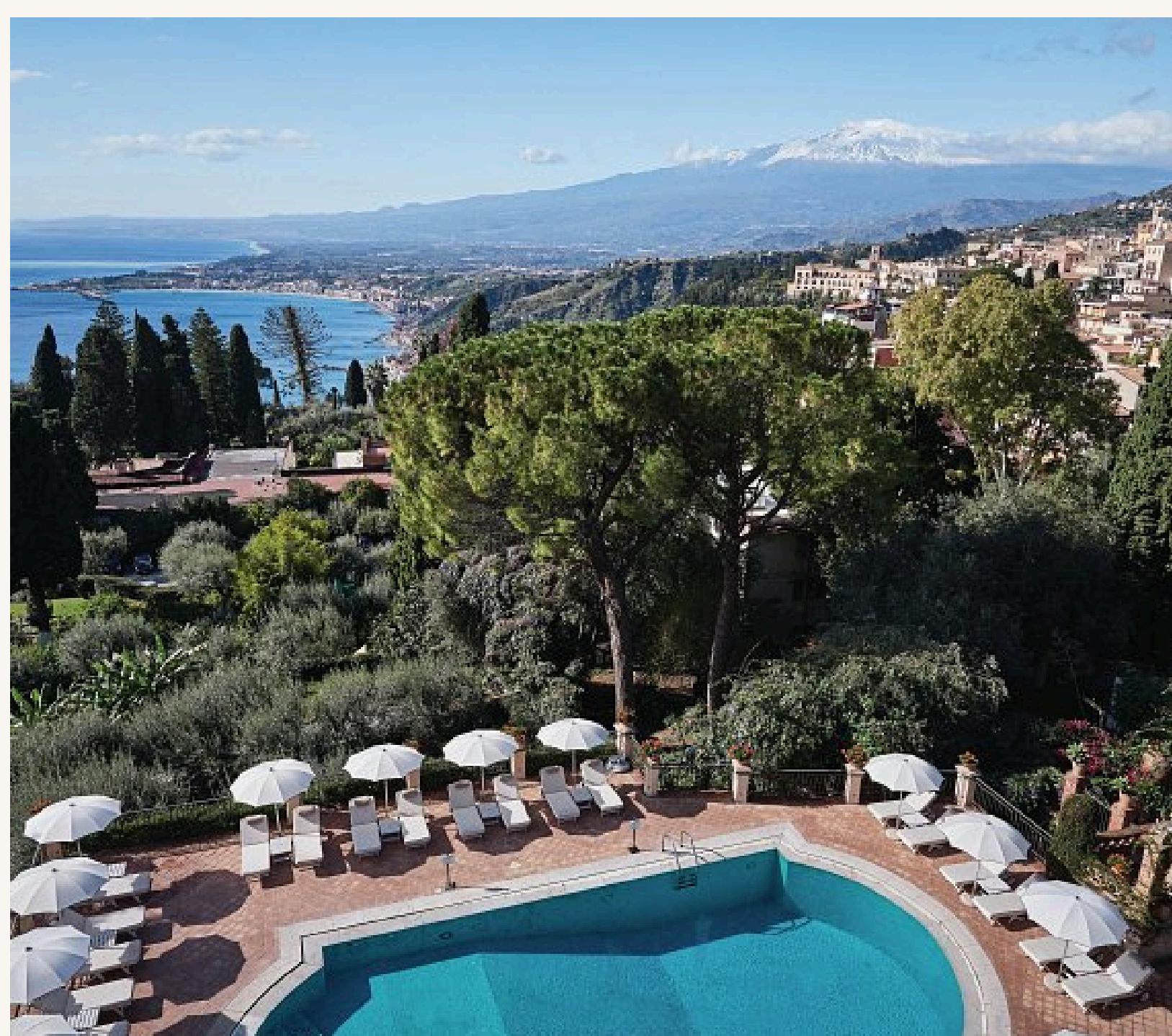
Taormina, Messina

<https://www.belmond.com/hotels/europe/italy/taormina/belmond-grand-hotel-timeo/>

71 rooms, from 1638 eur

This grand resort, a sister of Belmond's beachside villa, is perched on the cliffs adjacent to Taormina's lovely village center. As the Four Seasons is overloaded with jockeying influencers trying out their 'White Lotus' experience, this hotel might take a slight backseat from the crowds, and is thus a reason we'd consider it. It was Taormina's first big hotel, and as such, affords 6 acres of lush gardens to surround it. The bar was a heralded hang out of Truman Capote and Tennessee Williams, and the Michelin-starred restaurant only has 16 seats for absolute exclusivity. There's 2 other restaurants and a pool bar if the opulence is too much. Guests have access to the Villa Sant'Andrea's beach club, plus there are cooking classes and private tours on offer. The Palazzo Castellucio opens to Belmond guests before it opens to the public. Reviews call this hotel "a grand experience" and rave about "the best staff in the world," though some note slow service. Others are repeat visitors and call out exceptional staff by name. It's one of Italy's priciest hotels, but the experience is certainly over the top.

Note: one full week is already booked next May. 57 min to CTA.



Hotel Villa Ducale

Taormina, Messina

<https://villaducale.com/>

19 rooms, from 509 eur

A classic, Italian villa perched on the hills overtop of Taormina, it's a steep, scenic walk down to the town center, affording arguably the best views of the sea from your room. While not as opulent as the Belmond properties, it's the more affordable luxury option. This smaller hotel has a gourmet restaurant, bar terrace, swimming pool, and a shuttle to the village. Interiors are bright and colorful. The property gets rave reviews, aside from the views, noting cleanliness, and exceptional staff, called out by name; others use superlatives like "oasis," "perfection," and "heaven." 1 hr to CTA.



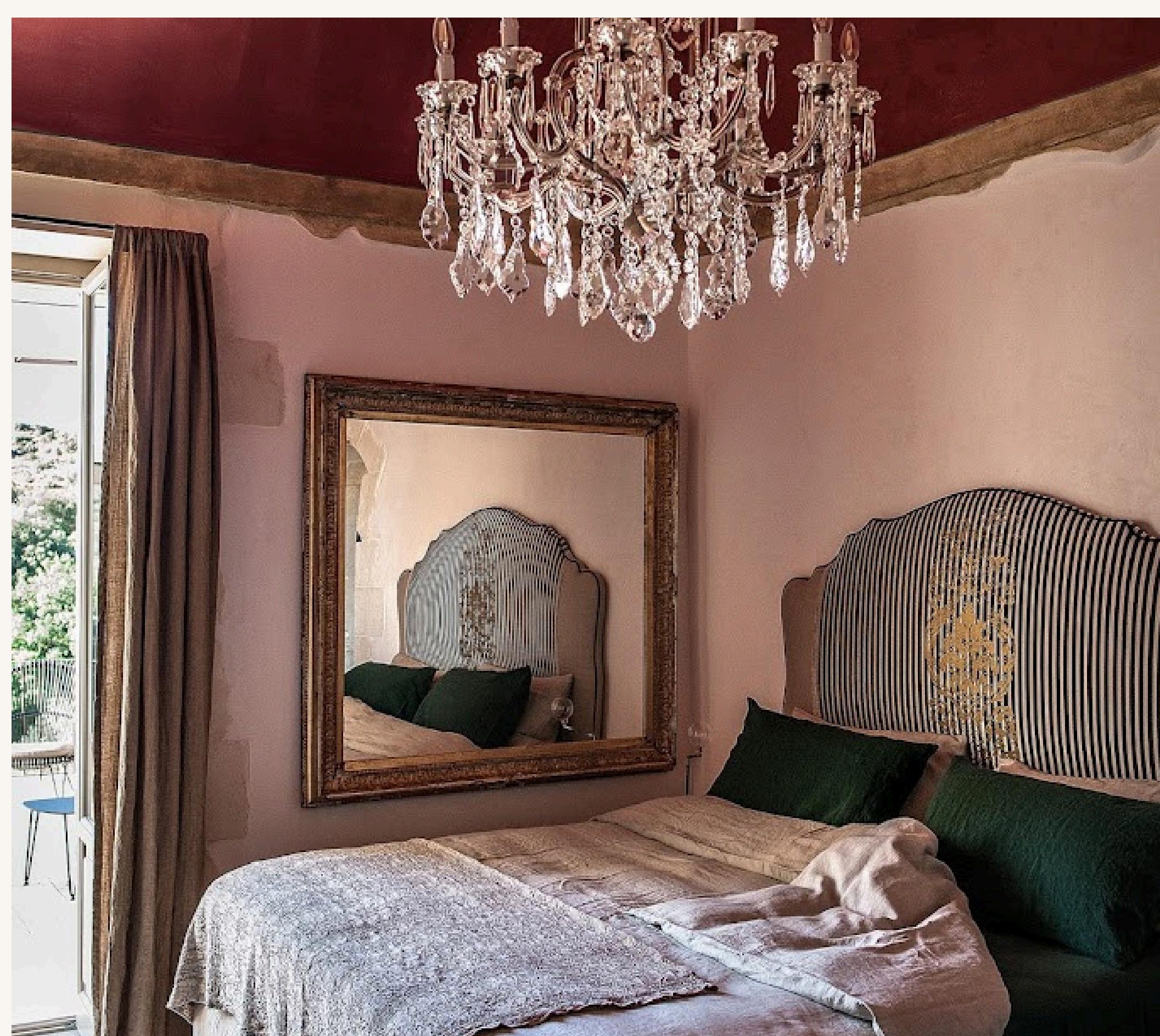
Dimora delle Balze

Nota, Syracuse

<https://dimoradellebalze.com/en/home-en/>

11 rooms, from 860 eur

This is a true rural retreat in Sicily – a hilltop former farm (“masseria”) turned small luxury resort, far from the sea. It’s completely Instagrammable with the crenelated castle tower and magnificent saltwater pool surrounded by landscaped terraces and gardens. Each room is unique—a stunning decor that balances a certain rustic elegance with color and a nod to its history. A restaurant appropriately sources many of its ingredients from the onsite organic gardens. There’s a small spa. And they feature many special offers, like cooking classes, picnics under the orange trees, exclusive tours, and a flower festival each May. Guests fall in love with the romantic setting, and adore the cuisine, and call out staff by name for excellent service. Some note variations in the bathroom and room sizes (small to large, so book your room according to what you like – you can choose it). The hotel website booking engine is a little wonky, so you may want to opt for the Tablet booking site instead, but note that availability for 2025 is not yet listed. 30 min to Syracuse and Noto, 1 hr to CTA.



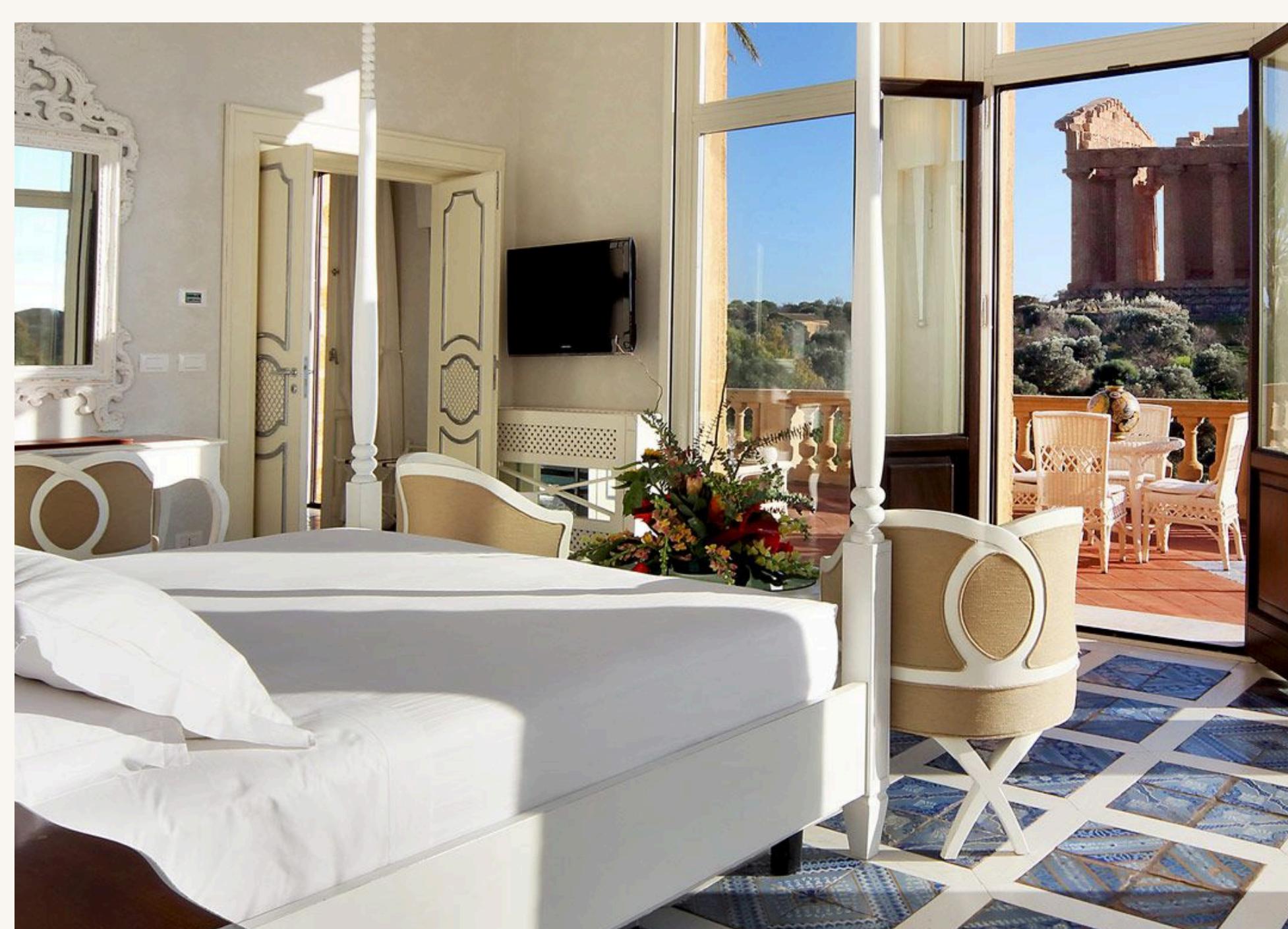
Villa Athena Resort

Agrigento

<https://www.hotelvillaathena.it/en/index>

27 rooms, from 768 eur

In the shadow of Agrigento's classical ruins – you literally have an ancient temple towering over the pool – this agricultural estate feels far from anything, yet it is so close to historical sights and the ocean that it is a perfect offer (8 min drive to the beach), slightly away from the normal crowds of Sicily. Located inside the Valley of the Temples archeological park, rooms are lofty, spacious, and light-filled. There's a restaurant, bar, and full service spa (built around an ancient Greek cistern), plus unique offerings like picnics in the olive grove, cooking classes, private temple access, and excursions to nearby beaches and museums. Reviews praise the “dreamlike” hotel and most absolutely love their experience, noting the staff and the amenities. A few find the service slow and abrupt (they are in the minority), and some recommend opting for a bigger room, as the entry-level accommodations can be small. A member of Luxury Small Hotels of the World. 2 hr to PMO.





HAPPY TRAVELS!

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