

ISSUE 1448 • 1 JULY 2024 • £3.99

OK!

KING CHARLES

HAPPY AND AT EASE AS ROYAL ASCOT HELPS PUT HEALTH WORRIES TO THE BACK OF HIS MIND

'He is ready to enjoy a relaxing summer with wife Queen Camilla by his side'

'Ascot is poignant for him as this was one of his late mother Queen Elizabeth's favourite events of the year'

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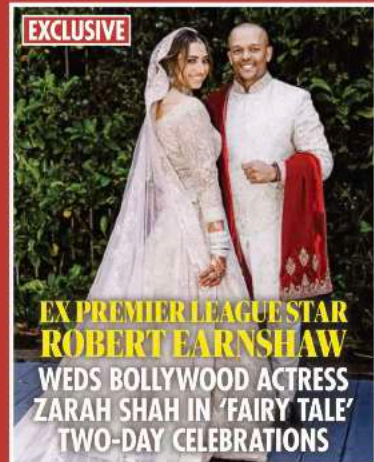
EXCLUSIVE PHOTOS & INTERVIEW



DENISE NOLAN
MARRIES LONG-TERM PARTNER TOM ANDERSON IN AN EMOTIONAL CEREMONY IN BLACKPOOL SUPPORTED BY HER SISTERS

WEDDING SPECIAL

EXCLUSIVE



EX PREMIER LEAGUE STAR ROBERT EARNSHAW
WEDS BOLLYWOOD ACTRESS ZARAH SHAH IN 'FAIRY TALE' TWO-DAY CELEBRATIONS

EXCLUSIVE



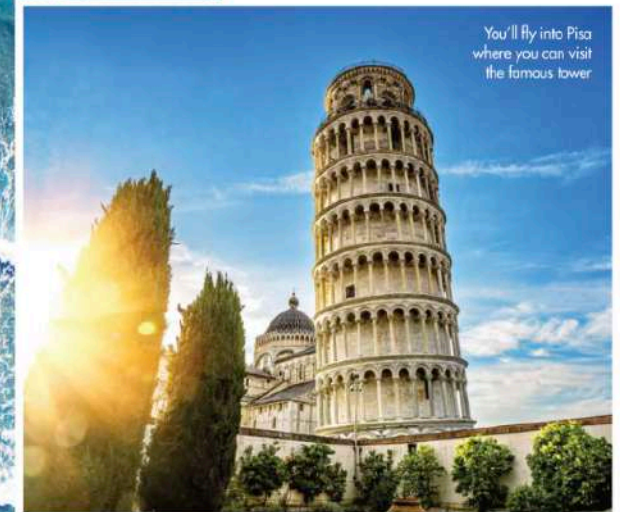
FRAN NEWMAN-YOUNG
TIES THE KNOT WITH PETE CLARKE IN INTIMATE CHELSEA SERVICE 'IT WAS HEAVENLY'

PLUS! DAVID & VICTORIA BECKHAM CELINE DION TIM HENMAN FASHION FOOD & MORE



TUSCANY'S HIDDEN GEM

Discover affordable luxury and authentic experiences in the Italian coastal town of Forte dei Marmi



You'll fly into Pisa where you can visit the famous tower

As a couple in our forties who think of ourselves as foodies and art lovers, but aren't keen on long-haul travel, we couldn't quite believe it had taken us this long to discover Forte dei Marmi in Tuscany, a dreamy destination just a two-hour flight away. After landing in Pisa and picking up our hire car, we couldn't miss out on paying a quick visit to the famous Leaning Tower before setting off to the coast. Any grumbles about our 6am flight were soon forgotten as we managed to nab a parking spot in the city centre, just a two-minute walk from this busy tourist attraction. We captured the iconic "holding up the tower" picture (of course) and grabbed a quick bite to eat in the square before the crowds flooded in.

WHERE TO STAY

We then set off to our accommodation, the trendy La Serena hotel in Forte dei Marmi, a 40-minute drive from Pisa – and a place that was to take us by complete surprise. As you drive into this Tuscan coastal town you're instantly blown away by the stunning views: mountains to one side, a long beachfront to the other and a bustling, upmarket town in the middle. It was like we had stepped into a VIP village; lined with rows of exclusive beach clubs, it had a buzz that oozed glamour. ▶

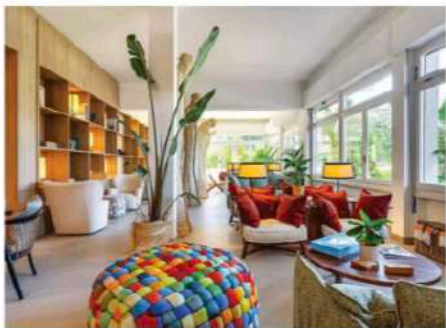




The Forte dei Marmi pier stretches 27.5m out into the Tyrrhenian Sea.

GRAND DESIGNS

One of the highlights of La Serena is the huge range of sculptures and artwork inside; it really is an interior design lover's heaven. These are created by various artists in residence, and sometimes you can even see them in action. From the impressive wine cellar to modern seating areas and gingham umbrellas, there isn't one area that doesn't have an artistic flare. The hotel's stylish vibes continue in the decadent bar and restaurant boasting exquisite dishes, with an irresistible cocktail menu to match.



Above: The hotel lobby is bright and spacious with pops of colour
Below: Cycling is the best way to get around and see the sights



SADDLE UP

Heading out from La Serena to the beach for a sunset stroll one evening, we noticed the cycle path that runs the whole way along the

There is a well-stocked wine cellar at La Serena



With mountains on one side and wide beaches on the other, the views are spectacular



The streets are lined with palm trees and designer boutiques



Gilda is a popular beach club

beachfront; now it became clear that the rows of colourful bikes outside the hotel weren't just for show. The next day, we hired a couple of electric bikes (if you've never had a go on one of these before, they're a total game-changer) and it was one of the highlights. We ended up whizzing everywhere on them. They were especially handy for getting into the town centre, where parking can be a nightmare.

BEACH CLUB BLISS

There's a big choice of beautiful beach clubs to lounge around in, each with stylish sunbathing decks and luxe restaurants. We booked lunch at Gilda one day (the best, in our opinion), and the chic décor and fresh seafood were divine. It's essential to book in advance to get a reservation here, as this is a sought-after spot.



Above: For the best pizza, ask the locals
Below: Explore the town's impressive markets



A SHOPPER'S HEAVEN

A local market comes to Forte dei Marmi every Wednesday and Saturday, and this isn't just any market – think high-quality Italian linens and leathers at affordable prices. The clothing was impeccable and we bagged a few goodies. It's certainly a contrast from the surrounding high-end designer shops, but this market, along with a few more affordable boutiques, means there's something to satisfy any shopper's budget.

WHERE TO EAT

You can't come to Italy and not ask the locals to recommend the best pizza joint, and on their recommendation we took a 15-minute drive to Pizzeria Pizzarda in the neighbouring town, Saravezza. It has a homely, family atmosphere, and you can see the pizzas being made in front of you. The locals weren't wrong; the homemade sauces and dough were on a different level, resulting in the tastiest pizzas we'd ever tried.

HOW TO BOOK

Rooms at La Serena start from €252 based on two adults sharing a double room on a B&B basis. The property is open to guests from 24 April to 26 October. To book, visit loserenahotel.it