

By DELILAH KHOMO

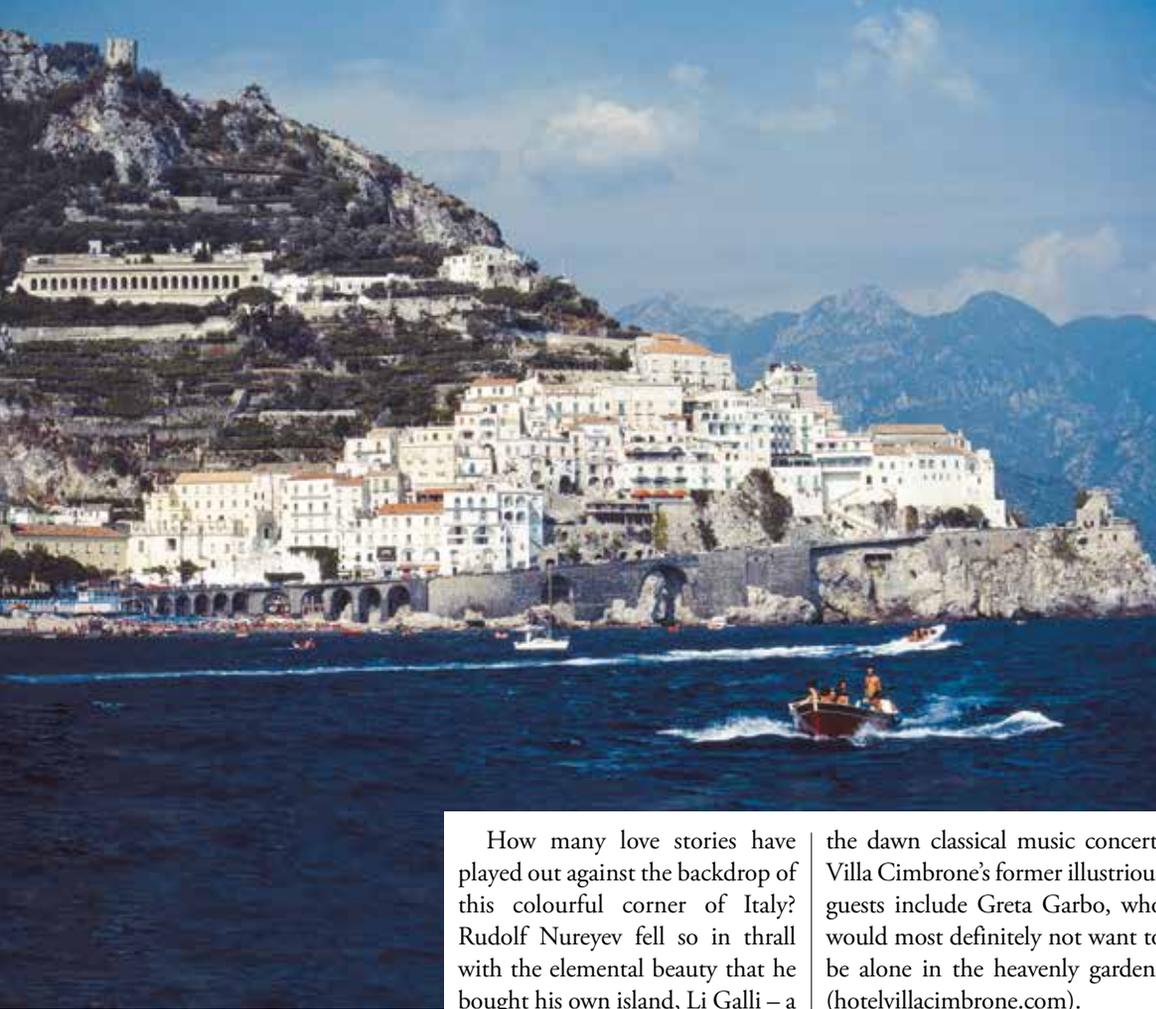
bridal waves

From the sun-drenched Amalfi Coast to the wide Indian Ocean, these are the seductive havens to visit on honeymoon this year



The seaside pool at the Hotel St. Caterina, Amalfi, in September 1984

PHOTOGRAPH: SLIM AARONS/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

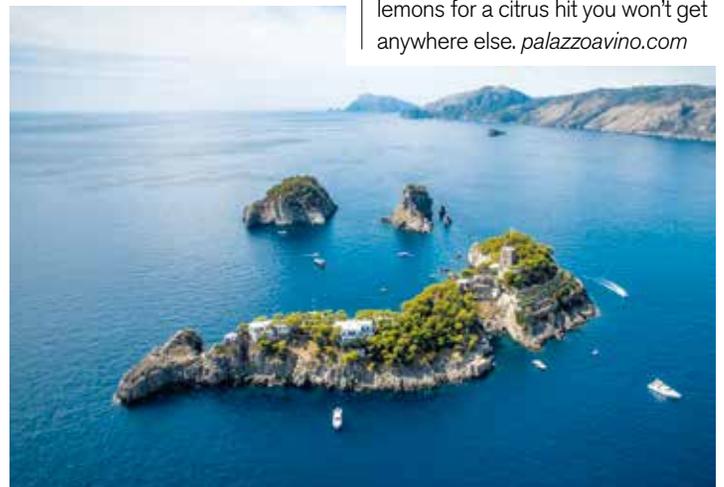


How many love stories have played out against the backdrop of this colourful corner of Italy? Rudolf Nureyev fell so in thrall with the elemental beauty that he bought his own island, Li Galli – a wonderful retreat for those seeking seclusion (bellinitravel.com). Or Franco Zeffirelli, the director whose romantic hideaway Villa Treville (villatreville.com) is still one of the best spots to practise *la dolce far niente*, the sweet art of doing nothing, with days spent lounging by the pool clinking martinis. The magic still lingers under new owner Govind Freidland: the rhythm of a more elegant era is conjured by liveried waiters who waltz across its terraces lighting hundreds of candles as guests sidle into spaces adorned with Yastik's signature ikat cushions for the most perfect aperitivo and view of this glamorous coastline.

Then there is Le Sirenuse (sirenuse.it). Raise a glass at sunset at The Champagne & Oyster Bar and you can't help but fall under the spell of this beguiling place that has topped honeymoon hit lists since 1951. Head further along the coast to the artistic hub of Ravello, a hillside destination with a roll call of the world's finest hotels. Belmond's Caruso (belmond.com) offers the most immersive of cultural fixes, such as

the dawn classical music concert. Villa Cimbrone's former illustrious guests include Greta Garbo, who would most definitely not want to be alone in the heavenly gardens (hotelvillacimbrone.com).

Whereas the height of glamour used to be about an extended sojourn in Capri, it's now all about the newly anointed hotspot of Ischia. The volcanic island is drawing a stylish crowd thanks to the opening of Marie-Louise Scio's reinvention of Il Mezzatorre (mezzatorre.com), another glorious hotel from the creative director of Il Pellicano. A stay here epitomises old-school glamour with a private house-party vibe and sharp aesthetic: the Tower Suite (where that other doyen of cinema, Luchino Visconti, used to stay) offers the most romantic and spacious refuge imaginable for just the two of you.



WHERE TO GO

Bellini Travel can arrange anything you desire for a honeymoon in Amalfi – from the best beachside trattorias, hotels and boats to unique experiences like a stay on Li Galli (*below*). They can organise a photographer to document your honeymoon, and supply you with all you need to know about navigating the coast by boat and avoiding traffic in the summer. bellinitravel.com

Rooms with a view don't come more romantic than at **La Torre Sponda** in Positano. This ancient Saracen tower is surrounded by citrus fruits, olive trees, sun-drenched gardens and terraces, and boasts a private swimming pool and direct access to La Porta beach. Sweeping panoramic views of Positano, Capri and the Amalfi Coast make this a special retreat. torresponda-positano.it

The grand **Villa Margherita** within the glorious Belmond Caruso in Ravello is ideal for high-wattage honeymoon celebrations (such as those enjoyed here by Justin and Hailey Bieber). The concierge team can organise hard-to-get tickets for the Ravello Festival, which runs throughout the summer with a musical pedigree rivalled only by its heavenly location. belmond.com

The **Palazzo Avino** is a wonderful hideaway hotel with a sumptuous honeymoon suite within romantic gardens, with private hot tub and pool. This is a hotel made for a good time, with access to Ravello's only beach club. At the Martini and Lobster Bar they spritz the house cocktail with the peel of local lemons for a citrus hit you won't get anywhere else. palazzoavino.com

Lyrical love stories

This colourful Italian shore remains the ultimate in glamorous holiday romance

Amalfi is home to some of the world's most mythical villas with epic views looking onto vast expanses of deep-blue Tyrrhenian Sea, criss-crossed with yachts and motorboats, framed by cypress trees and soaring goldfinches overhead. Part of the magic is that you return to find it very much as you left it: a dreamy time capsule of a place.



Clockwise from bottom left, Cheval Blanc Randheli; Singita Serengeti House; the Venice-Simplon-Orient-Express; COMO Shambhala Estate



dream escapes

Maximise glamour with beachside bliss, safari adventure, rural seclusion or an epic train journey

Singita Serengeti House, Grumeti Game Reserve, Tanzania

The absolute tops in super-luxury safaridom, Singita, the pioneering conservation travel company, offers a unique bush experience. Surrounded by 350,000 acres of grass plains, newlyweds will marvel at the perfection of the natural world and the level of glamour in the bush house, with butlers on hand, a tented spa and access to one of Africa's largest wine cellars. The food is fabulous, as is Bernard, one of the guides, who imparts fascinating knowledge while tracking leopards or pouring sundowners surrounded by grazing zebras. There is a helipad and air strip nearby, in case you fancy flitting to the Mara River to watch the great wildebeest migration. Or you can admire the abundant wildlife as you swim in the spectacular 25-metre infinity pool, like Justin Timberlake and Jessica Biel, who had the pleasure of honeymooning at Serengeti House. [singita.com](#)

Cheval Blanc Randheli, Maldives

If your greatest desire is to laze on the most perfect stretch of beach,

LVMH's stylish property in Noonu Atoll can't be beaten. The service is impeccable, naturally, as is Jean-Michel Gathy's minimal architectural style; a symphony of marble and polished wood. You can forget anything as clichéd as petal-dusted beds; instead, Cheval Blanc's slick concierge team of 'alchemists' whip up plates of salted caramels and leave daily gifts, such as a chic leather-bound backgammon set for you to play in your vast, loft-style Water Villa. Bridezilla stress levels fall away when you sail by dhoni to the Guerlain spa island, with its hammam, overwater Pilates pavilions and signature Orchidée Imperiale treatments. For the most magical spectacle, experience a phantasmagoric night dive and discover the biofluorescence of sea organisms in the house reef. [chevalblanc.com](#)

Belmond Cipriani & Venice Simplon-Orient-Express

The Cipriani, Venice's most celebrated grand dame, was George and Amal Clooney's choice of venue for their wedding reception. With its Casanova Gardens, where the author

is said to have wooed his lovers, and its insanely elegant bedrooms, all Murano chandeliers and sumptuous Fortuny furnishings, you can't help but fall in love – with the hotel, Venice, and your partner, of course. Excitement levels will continue to soar as you speed off in the Cipriani's original 1950s wooden Riva to continue the adventure on board the Venice-Simplon-Orient-Express, where the mood is old-world without



COMO Shambhala Estate, Ubud, Bali

Buried deep in lush jungle, COMO Shambhala Estate feels far from the well-trodden path – and for honeymooners seeking seclusion after the stress of the big day, nothing beats it. The private villas are unsurpassed, with their thatched roofs and muslin-swathed four-poster beds, not to mention those teak verandas with canopy views. But so too is the setting: over 20 acres of silent, spiritual grounds, which you can soak up on a sunrise hike, passing ancient shrines and endless watery rice paddies.

YOUR HONEYMOON WILL PASS IN A BELLINI-INDUCED HAZE OF HAPPINESS

being old-fashioned, especially in the new Grand Suites with their gargantuan double beds and marble bathrooms. Two stewards oversee each carriage; they will fulfill every whim – from packing up Lalique glassware to take home to bringing you scrambled eggs and caviar at midnight. As you chug through the Alps, your honeymoon will pass in a Bellini-induced haze of happiness. [belmond.com](#)

Then, back at the estate, learn to cook traditional Indonesian dishes with the head chef (for sheer romance, ask to dine in the Tea House restaurant). And don't overlook the spa to treat and cleanse the mind and soul – though it is just as spiritually fortifying to wallow in your private pool or hot tub, with tealights flickering and rain pitter-pattering overhead. [comohotels.com](#) □