



In the sixties all Italy swooned when Peppino di Capri (left), the Frank Sinatra of Capri, crooned "Let's Twist Again," "Forever," and "Diana." A native caprese, Peppino lives in a hilltop villa with his wife, Giuliana, and their children, Edoardo, 8, and Dario, 2.



Formerly a private villa, La Scalinatella (center) is one of Capri's smaller deluxe hotels; the poolside grill is a peaceful lunchtime spot in the shade of the pinote. Left: Elizabeth Samner, a Colombian visitor, cools off in the surf at La Sementella, Capri's only sand beach.

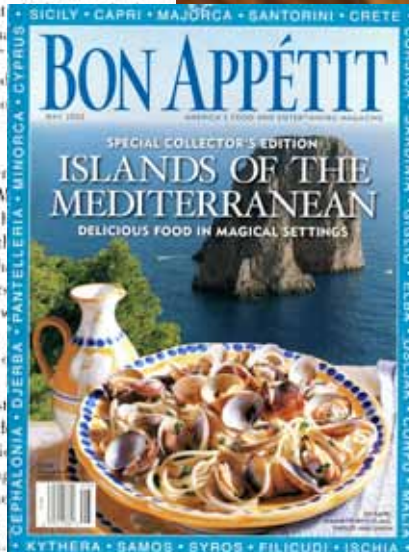
ward. "It's like painting the Swiss Alps—they look like the cover of a chocolate box you're not careful." The distinctive texture her paintings captures Capri unmistakably perfectly, with that light. She gets the light with a palette knife, in her studio at Ca' Palazzo Ignazio Gerio Capri, named for father.

Had Countess Gerio when Douglas and Mher canvases might lush, siren place as it would probably not be the piazza. She abhors You might meet up 11 a.m. on her way from the sea to Ca' choose Capri, if you appreciate it best early and late; I go down and come back up mid one else is just going crowds. Anyway, the you stupid, I think, evenings before dark. siders her words carefully here, "it used to more elegant and interesting. In the days Axel Munthe and Somerset Maugham a Hayworth and Garbo and Gable. . . ."

In the thirties, caprese society took on decidedly glamorous, international air. Capri Italian aristocrats and American actors join the intellectual crowd, and the place became enlivened with "a touch of madness," Countess Gerio says. "The piazza was incredibly elegant. People would come down the steps and make their entrée. They were wonderfully eccentric, but not tacky, you know good original people."

After the Second World War, the glamour revived. In the fifties, Sophia Loren at Clark Gable filmed *It Started in Naples* and romanticized Capri for the rest of the world.

"People come here to disappear, not to be seen like in St. Tropez," says Michael Milstein, an Australian attorney who has been coming to Capri since he was a boy. "I always associate the South of France with *Catch a Thief*, but in reality, the place is totally different now. The Côte d'Azur ruined, it's a farce," he grumbles. "On the other hand, when I sit on the rocks at La Fontelina and look out on this sea and the Faraglioni, I see the fifties; I see Marcel Mastroianni films. You can't find this ambience anywhere else, and you can't mistake for any place in the world." Indeed, in many ways, Capri of the late eighties looks as if it feels like Capri of the fifties: those taxis, ar-



ITALY CAPRI

In this jet-set capital of glamour, and romance, lemons are the real stars. You'll find them appearing in dishes savory and sweet—and even in the local liqueur.

TEXT, RECIPES AND STORY PRODUCTION BY LORI DE MORI PHOTOGRAPHY BY WYATT COUNTS

