



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT: GRILLED FISH WITH LEMON AND FENNEL (RECIPE ON PAGE 146).
 ♦ LA PIAZZETTA, THE MAIN SQUARE IN CAPRI TOWN. ♦ ICE CREAM AND LIMONCELLO FOR SALE IN
 THE TOWN OF ANACAPRI. ♦ CAREFREE DINING AT CAPRI TOWN'S LA FONTELINA.



rated bedrooms that are nicely secluded with private terraces. A few steps up from the villa is a pretty restaurant where you will find the best cheese crêpes and *ravioli caprese* (ravioli stuffed with cheese, eggs, and herbs) on the island.

One can pursue Via Tragara to its almost conclusion at winding flights led to Punta Tragara and LA ristorante bagni, probably a popular bathing spot. Boats at Marina Piccola, across the bay, can be collected from the shore. One of the greatest frustrations must be the water, water everywhere, difficult to reach, but here, at Punta Tragara, an imaginative arrangement of concrete terraces dotted among steps and ladders descend into deep clear water. The result is no more than a rush of warm sunbathers. The open kitchen is filled with cauldrons full of pasta, and on the windowsill is a tray of marinated anchovies, *calamaretti*, asparagus, and mushrooms, as well as myriad salads and scarlet lobster. To add to the meal, one can watch the boats chugging by in their blue

boats heaped with nets and multicolored floats. Very likely, they have just delivered the catch.

An alternative restaurant in the same area is DA LUIGI, also with sun terraces and swimming from the rocks but quieter and somewhat more formal than La Fontelina. Although we didn't eat there, a reliable source says Da Luigi serves excellent fish and wonderful pasta.

A trip around the island by boat is ideally accomplished on a yacht equipped with a dinghy. The public sightseeing boats are something of a hazard, packed as they are to capacity, and the private motorboats sufficiently powerful to make the journey in comfort tend to be too big to get inside the grottoes. From our motorboat we caught but a tantalizing glimpse of the Grotta Verde, one of the loveliest of them all. I would, in fact, urge you not to circle the island in any vessel but to visit the best of the coast at your leisure by renting a small motorized rubber boat or kayak from the offices of Bagni le Sirene, at Marina Piccola. (The telephone number is 83.70.221.) The most spectacular portion of Capri's coast stretches from Marina Piccola toward the island's extreme southwestern tip at Punta Carena: an unforgettable fantasy of crags, crowns, horns, heads, and steeples, all rising into the sky like the crest of a petrified wave.

After such a sight, the Grotta Azzurra, on the tamer north coast, is a devastating anticlimax. Visitors are unloaded into small manned boats, which are rowed up to the pay desk. Once we were inside, our skipper regaled us with "O Sole Mio," and then his colleague, another Caruso in those acoustics, gave voice to "Santa Lucia"—while a bobbing mass of boats awaited admission at the mouth of the cave and a cruise ship basked at anchor. If you feel you haven't seen Capri without visiting the Grotta Azzurra, the best solution is to get to it overland, and early in the day.

The art of enjoying Capri is essentially one of timing. Staying on the island—out-

side of July and August, which must be avoided—one can easily gauge the hour at which to visit the best of the sites and take in the best of the views. Early and late in the day, early and late in the season are the crowd-dodger's watchwords. Most of the hotels open for Easter and stay open into October, and those times of year are ideal for realizing the therapeutic joy of walking on Capri. Still, nobody could expect this island to be deserted. People have always been a part of Capri, and this famous beauty continues to welcome all comers.

Hotels

Grand Hotel Quisisana
Via Camerelle, 2
80073 Capri
Tel. (081) 83.70.788

Hotel Gatto Bianco
Via Vittorio Emanuele, 32
80073 Capri
Tel. (081) 83.70.446

Hotel La Brunella
Via Tragara, 24
80073 Capri
Tel. (081) 83.70.122

Hotel La Scalinatella
Via Tragara, 10
80073 Capri
Tel. (081) 83.70.633

Restaurants

Al Grotino
Via Longano, 27
Tel. 83.70.584

Da Gemma
Via Madre Serafina, 6
Tel. 83.77.113

Da Luigi
Strada ai Faraglioni, 2
Tel. 83.70.591

La Capannina
Via Le Botteghe, 14
Tel. 83.70.732

La Fontelina
Località Fontelina
Tel. 83.70.845

Ristorante Casanova
Via Le Botteghe, 46
Tel. 83.77.642 ♦



Doone Beal writes frequently about island destinations for GOURMET. An Englishwoman, she has a particular fondness for islands, believing that their isolation lends them a special character all their own.