



# San Domenico, where world leaders soak up some sun

The San Domenico Palace hotel has just hosted the G7 and it's easy to see why...

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Ever wondered where world leaders go to kick-back? Well, the past two days have given us a clue, of sorts. The G7 summit concluded this morning and was hosted at the San Domenico Palace hotel in Taormina, Sicily. The hotel's just undergone a considerable transformation, newly purchased and reopened by Statuto, an Italian real estate group with an enviable portfolio of historical properties.

Perched on cliffs overlooking the Ionian Sea, with views of Mount Etna and the sleepy market town of Taormina at it's feet, it's easy to see why the powers that be should want to meet at San Domenico. It feels private, secluded and a fitting retreat from metropolitan hustle, just the environment you'd imagine suits top-level diplomatic cut and thrust. That said, it's hard not to picture Trump taking the chance for a dip in his budgie-smugglers of an evening. When in Taormina, after all.

Predominantly, Statuto properties are managed by external luxury hotel groups, but San Domenico is run directly by Statuto, with great results. It seems rather low-key looking from the outside in, but once through the old monastic entrance, you find yourself in an enclosed space of considerable grandeur. Verdant gardens have overtaken the cloisters and courtyards, there's a sun kissed pool and terrace and 105 elegant rooms and suites to choose from.



The hotel's entrance, through the former monastic courtyard



The hotel's al-fresco bar



Accommodation is divided between the Monastery Wing (the original 15th century convent) and the Grand Hotel Wing, a liberty-style structure added in 1896. The building's intriguing past is referenced throughout; stay in the monastic part and you'll find traditional mediterranean decor that feels somewhat rustic, in the Grand Hotel things are more modern but no less comfortable. Classic rooms in the monastery are available from €283 per night, with the hotel's Grand Hotel suite weighing in at €908 per night.

There are three restaurants, including the two Michelin-starred Principe Cerami, named after the hotel's founder, Prince Giovanni Rosso di Cerami. Under the patronage of Head Chef Massimo Mantarro it serves elevated Sicilian cuisine overlooking the Ionian sea. Order one of the two expansive set menus for a culinary tour of the region. There's also a gym, wellness centre and refreshing al-fresco cocktail lounge, the Oratorio dei Frati.

Admittedly, the leading powers in attendance may not have had much opportunity to wind-down over the past few days. The hotel is well-placed to cater to business summits thanks to its substantial meeting spaces, but the G7 nonetheless demonstrates the appeal of San Domenico. It lives up to its name as a retreat, a hotel that stays true to its past as an escape from the outside world, a place to think clearly and reflect. It's an enviable destination and one hopes that its calming influence may have helped, at least a little, with this weekend's past discussions.

[san-domenico-palace.com](http://san-domenico-palace.com)



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