

SUSPENDED BEAUTY

Set along the sheer cliffs of Italy's Amalfi Coast, Casa Angelina offers a spectacular base from which to absorb the region's unforgettable views

TEXT: ROBERTA THATCHER



The Amalfi coastline seen from the hotel's terraced rooms.

There's a reason Italy's Amalfi Coast is on most travellers' bucket lists. Endless views of precarious cliffs, rocky shores, multicoloured towns and terraced vineyards serve as the backdrop to a peaceful locale, where boat rides, fresh seafood, mountain hikes and ocean dips are the order of the day.

It's in this sublime setting that you'll find Casa Angelina boutique hotel. Carved out of the small town of Praiano's dizzyingly steep cliffs, the building's sleek white exterior provides a striking contrast to the region's signature grey dolomite rock.

With a focus on minimalism and contemporary design, the hotel makes for an unexpected change to the traditional aesthetic of the region, and while it's all-white interiors could have erred on the side of clinical, this doesn't happen here. The design thoughtfully sets out to create a soothing, informal yet chic atmosphere.

Whether you're in the glass elevator heading down to the beach, or walking

along the hotel's many passages and terraces, the clean lines and brilliant white of Casa Angelina's design are broken by an impressive and vivid art collection. Works by Etienne Pirot, Patricia Valencia Carstens and Tim Cotterill are dotted throughout the property.

But it is the many gloriously eccentric and brightly coloured glass sculptures that really catch the eye. The works, by Cuban artist Alfredo Sosabravo, are the result of a collaboration between the artist and master glass blowers ARS Murano.

In 1998, the studio was given the opportunity to translate Sosabravo's drawings into glass sculptures – no mean feat, considering the detail and personality inherent in his work. Oddly beautiful and delightfully unexpected, the quirky artworks perfectly embody the friendly and inviting mood of the hotel.

There really is no need to leave Casa Angelina, thanks to its swimming pool set beneath a lemon grove, its beautiful spa and wellness centre, its lounges, cigar bar and two restaurants. Meals are a highlight, enjoyed suspended between sea and sky

on the hotel's rooftop restaurant, where you're treated to views of nearby Positano, and the famous island escape of Capri just across the bay.

Of course, the startlingly clear blue waters of the Mediterranean are too tempting to miss out on, and a trip to the beach below is a must. The elevator takes you partway down, where you're met with a further 200 steps. But once you're bathing in the sea, with the white façade of the hotel looming down from far above, you'll find the stairs were worth it.

Tempted as you might be to spend your days absorbed in the hotel's inspiring designs, you're in the centre of one of Italy's most beautiful regions – and towns such as Ravello, Amalfi and Positano are waiting to be explored.

Be prepared to lose yourself in the area's ancient buildings and narrow roads, surrounded by lush forests and gardens, and where the scent of the sea, as well as the lemons, grapes and flowers growing all around, fills the air.

casangelina.com



The hotel, which is literally built into the cliffs, takes design to dizzy new heights.



Hotel guests have exclusive access to One Fire beach, one of Praiano's most coveted hot spots.

new stuff



SLEEP IN STYLE

We're loving the growing trend of big retailers collaborating with local designers, and @home's Prêt À Vivre collection is a great addition to the movement. The homeware retailer has paired up with fashion designer Gavin Rajah to create a limited-edition collection of hand-crafted linen and scented candles. The French-inspired linen has intricate hand embroidery and fine detailing rich in geometrics, metallics and vintage florals. The candles are inspired by Rajah's love of travel, alternative healing and flowers, and the three variations – Versailles, La Belle Époque and Rajahstan – are made from 100% soy wax and essential oils. Once melted, they can be used as massage oil or moisturiser. "We have created something that inspires the customer's wellbeing, particularly their sleep experience, and the creation of their own sanctuaries where they can relax," says Rajah of the range.

The Prêt À Vivre collaboration is available in @home stores.



A FRESH APPROACH

It's not often an international brand creates a showroom in South Africa, only to have it decked out by local designers. Kohler, the global kitchen and bathroom manufacturer, have done exactly that, showing just how deeply immersed they are in our design industry. The brand-new Kohler Gallery in Bryanston showcases the work of several of our best local designers alongside the brand's own bathroom offerings. Home-grown talent to look out for includes a hand-painted mural by Aureum's Nicky Levenberg, light fittings by Studio 19, wallpaper by Lemon, mirrors by Copperleaf Studio, occasional chairs by The Urbanative, and a glass art installation by Elonah O'Neil. This exceptional display blurs the lines between showroom and gallery, creating a space that's bound to fuel your inspiration for home renovations. — **Roberta Thatcher**

www.africa.kohler.com