

Tumbledown: Marina Corricella in Procida.

# Beautiful movie star

## Great Escape

By Stacey Barnfield

### HERE'S one for the movie buffs among you...

Which Italian beauty has starred in dozens of cinema blockbusters in a film career spanning more than 70 years?

Answer: The quaint Mediterranean island of Procida in the Bay of Naples.

For it's here that Jude Law and Matt Damon filmed many of the scenes that won them rave reviews for their roles in *The Talented Mr Ripley* in 1999.

And it's the place that one of Italy's most celebrated films – *Il Postino* – was shot in 1994.

It's easy to see why movie location experts flock to this lovely little island when searching for rustic Italian scenery and tumbledown architecture because, with its historic pastel-coloured houses and narrow cobbled streets, it's got the lot.

Often overlooked by the tourist hordes who head for the Gucci-lined streets of nearby Capri, or the thermal spa resorts on neighbouring Ischia, Procida has a charm all of its own, with a wonderful mix of working harbours, antique villages and family-friendly beaches.

Our favourite beach was Spiaggia del Pozzovecchio, one of the locations in *Il Postino*.

With its shallow expanse of beautiful blue water and soft sand it was perfect for our playful four-year-old son.

We spent an idyllic morning there watching small boats slowly cruise



Family friendly: Spiaggia del Pozzovecchio beach was one of the locations for the famous Italian film *Il Postino*.

into the bay and drop anchor as the sun rose over the island and focused its gaze on the beach.

A visit there is a good option for anyone on a budget. Unlike many of Italy's beaches, where paying for a sunbed, chair and umbrella are the norm, you have the option of relaxing on the sand for free.

We also spent a day at Ciraccio beach where you can enjoy views of the protected nature reserve of Vivara, which is connected to Procida by a bridge.

Our base in Procida was the sumptuous La Suite Hotel and Spa. Its contemporary design could comfortably grace the pages of a high-class interiors magazine, with stylish oversized lanterns and Buddha statue heads adding a magical feel to the tranquil private gardens, especially at night.

The pool, too, is something else, with its sleek black floor, surrounded by smart loungers and parasols.

The aim of this 15-room boutique hotel is serious relaxation. You can switch off with a good book or magazine on one of the giant day beds or hanging basket chairs dotted around the grounds or your own private patio,

in one of the more expensive rooms.

The hotel also has an adjoining spa offering beauty treatments and relaxation therapies, which you can use at an extra cost.

Our 'standard' room was stylishly-furnished with a generous spa-style shower, although we felt storage was a bit limited for a family with a suitcase full of youngster-clutter.

But its location couldn't have been better. Each room is just a brief walk from the hotel's pool, bar and restaurant.

Worth a mention is the hotel's evening shuttle service to the island's main tourist spots of Marina Corricella, Marina Chiaiolella and Marina Grande.

Procida is just a half-hour hydrofoil crossing from Naples. Arriving at the harbour Marina Grande you'll have the lovely view of fishermen's houses being reflected by the blue water.

A wonderful welcome to a truly charming destination.

## Getting There

**La Suite Hotel & Spa: Via Flavio Gioia, Isola di Procida, Italy. Telephone: +39 081 8101564 or visit [www.lasuiteresort.com](http://www.lasuiteresort.com) for prices and reservations.**

**Snav runs regular ferry crossings to Procida from Naples. The journey takes less than an hour and seating is comfortable with refreshments on board. Prices are around 15 euros per adult (suitcases extra). Visit [www.snav.it](http://www.snav.it) for timetables. Easyjet and Ryanair fly to Naples from several UK airports. Stacey's accommodation in Procida was courtesy of the La Suite Hotel and Spa.**



Tranquil: La Suite Hotel and Spa in Procida.

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