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Word of Mouth: Forte dei Marmi, Tuscany

Venturing from sun-soaked beaches to the heart of Italian craftsmanship in this glamorous seaside town

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When you dream of Tuscany, you might first imagine rolling green hills lined with cypress trees leading toward an old stone farmhouse. However, there's much more to this bountiful region than the countryside. Along the coast, between Pisa and the Liguria region, lies Versilia—an elegant stretch set between the sea and the Apuan Alps. In its middle lies Forte dei Marmi, a glamorous seaside town that originated as a strategic pier for transporting marble. Over time, Forte dei Marmi has evolved into a socially vibrant city, attracting Tuscan nobility in the late 19th century and industrial aristocracy, including the Agnelli family, in the 1920s. Today, it's known for its long, palm-tree lined avenue which counts over 99 beach clubs, designer boutiques and a number of trendy restaurants and bars. Here we've selected five standout venues to experience the social, cultural and craft-led scene of this destination.

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Augustus Hotel Resort

The first five star luxury resort in Versilia is set between the bucolic backdrop of the Apuan Alps and the blue sea. A façade of plant-engulfed balconies welcomes you into a hall that has retained its charm since its first major makeover in the 1950s, when the former proprietor—Augusta Pesenti—commissioned the famed Italian architect Osvaldo Borsani to transform her residence, Villa Pesenti, into a hotel. Over time, seven villas were added, including Villa Agnelli, purchased by Edoardo Agnelli (the son of FIAT founder Senatore Giovanni) in the early '20s and “La Nave,” built as an expression of mid-60s brutalist architecture.

This year, two additional villas have been incorporated into the [Augustus Hotel Resort](#) portfolio, set amid the verdant gardens of the property. These twin villas, in both structure and interior design, were designed to evoke a refreshing, contemporary style while harmonizing with the style of Villa Pesenti. Both are set across two floors featuring three double bedrooms, a living room, kitchenette and spacious garden with a plunge pool. It may be hard to leave the intimacy and comfort of these villas, but a trip to the Augustus Beach Club is certainly worth it. You simply venture through a little underground tunnel that leads you from Villa Agnelli to the club, where 74 tents, a heated swimming pool and the restaurant Bambaissa await.



Baglietto Shipyard

For over a century, Baglietto has been a pioneer in the world of yacht building since its founder, Pietro, began constructing small hulls in his backyard. Today, across two production sites (La Spezia and Carrara), Baglietto constructs customizable yachts ranging from 35 to 65 meters in length, exemplifying Italian craftsmanship from start to finish. Whether you're a boat enthusiast or not, you can arrange a private tour of the shipyard to explore the state-of-the-art facilities where skilled artisans and engineers blend traditional techniques with cutting-edge technology to create bespoke yachts, from the initial design stages to the final touches.



Bagno Piero

What began as a little wooden hut covered in terracotta tiles in the 1930s has become a haunt for jet-setters and discerning travelers seeking to unwind on Forte's sun-drenched coast. You can still breathe the air of tradition at Bagno Piero, but this year, there's a slight shift toward the contemporary. In fact, the beach club has followed the trend of collaborating with a renowned fashion house to redesign their lido for the season. Until 8 September, you can witness the makeover by Loro Piana: chairs, cushions and sunbeds are customized with the iconic Suitcase Stripe, while the exclusive towels are embroidered with the maison's logo. From lounging on the beach to enjoying an aperitif at Bagno Piero's Alle Boe while the little ones take a surf lesson at the WeRide Surf School, there is no better way to immerse in the carefree, Italian summer vacation in style.

**Caffè Principe**

The storied Caffè Principe, acquired by Marchesi 1824 of the Prada Group, has always been a cult destination for sun seekers in Versilia. Its corner location on Via Carducci, amid high-end boutiques and morning markets, makes it the ultimate coffee (and pastry) pit-stop on the way to the beaches. The interiors were designed in collaboration with Florence-based architect Michele Bonan, who focused on sourcing original furnishings from the 1950s, including chandeliers, Formica tables and wicker armchairs, creating a coastal chic aesthetic. The culinary offerings are steeped in tradition, reflecting what you'd expect to find in an Italian café: bombe alla crema (cream-filled donuts), assorted croissants, maritozzi, small tartlets and cakes, as well as savory filled croissants, sandwiches and toasts (not simply toasted bread and butter, but rather toasted sandwiches filled with ham and melting cheese).

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The Ravaccione Quarry

Forte dei Marmi is just thirty minutes away from Carrara, renowned for its prestigious and pristine white marble quarried in the Apuan Alps since ancient Roman times. This particular white stone has adorned some of the world's most iconic sculptures and buildings across different eras, including the Pantheon in Rome, the Cathedral of Pisa, the Cristo Velato by Giuseppe Sammartino in Naples, and, of course, Michelangelo's works. One of the most notable quarries to visit is the Ravaccione Quarry in Fantiscritti; it was here that Michelangelo specifically chose the marble for his sculptures La Pietà and Il Mosé. You can arrange a visit through the Augustus Hotel. It includes a one-hour guided tour around the quarry, learning about the history of marble and its extraction process.