

Grand Movies Made in Grand Sicilian Hotel

The San Domenico Palace Hotel, one of the most famous hotels in the world, is located in the historical citadel of Taormina, in Sicily. Taormina and the San Domenico are a duo of international fame and tradition. The hotel was built on the original structures of a former Dominican monastery dating from the 15th century.



Monastic remains are religiously kept at the San Domenico to testify to a past that makes such a structure unique: the cloister, images of saints, the choir stall, the sacristy, the gorgeous garden, the rooms which used to be silent cells given over to seclusion. Everything in the hotel recalls monastic life, a blatant contrast with the luxury hotel ensconced within these ancient walls. The fascination of the rooms, the cloisters, the flowery terraces, the backdrop of rare beauty that ranges from the ancient Greek theatre to the summit of Mount Etna and the enchantment of the sea, have always attracted poets, writers, film stars, royal families and heads of state who have filled the ancient pages of the jealously guarded Golden Book with their dedications, and have made the San Domenico Palace the ideal set for many films.

To cite some of them, in chronological order:

Tipi da Spiaggia (1959), by Mario Mattoli, with Ugo Tognazzi, Johnny Dorelli and Laetitia Casta; an Italian comedy about four friends that go to Taormina trying to marry the American billionaire Barbara Patton. One of the most interesting scene was shot on the terrace of the Les Bougainvillées Restaurant, the San Domenico Palace restaurant, and represent a typical dinner at that time.

L'Avventura (1960) by Michelangelo Antonioni, with Gabriele Ferzetti, Monica Vitti, Lea Massari and Renzo Ricci. A drama set in Sicily, where the landscape is one of the most important protagonists. In the end of the film there is a beautiful and famous scene on the hotel's terrace, with the peak of Mount Etna visible on the horizon.



Piange il Telefono (1975), by Lucio De Caro, with Yvonne Danaud, Gigi Ballista, Francesca Guadagno, Louis Jourdain and Domenico Modugno. A romantic film based on the exceptional figure of the famous Italian singer Domenico Modugno, who in the film plays the part of an airline pilot who was imprisoned in Africa for many years because of some illicit businesses. When he come back home, he finds his woman with another man. Among the scenes shot at the San Domenico Palace Hotel we remember the one in the cloister, and the one in a room where Modugno speaks with his lover.

La Piovra, an Italian TV series about Italian mafia lasted for years.

Il piccolo Diavolo (1988), by Roberto Benigni; with Benigni, Nicoletta Braschi, Stefania Sandrelli, and Walter Mattau. The film is a comedy run and interpreted by Benigni, in which an American priest who lives in Italy, is called to exorcise a hairdresser possessed by the devil. After the exorcism the little devil decides not to come back to the Hell. In the film it can be seen the hotel's ancient cloister, the stairs and Via Roma, the street which skirts the hotel.

Le Grand Bleu (1988), by Luc Bessone, with Jean Reno, Jean Marc Barrè, Rosanna Arquette and Sergio Castellitto. It is the story of two men that compete to the very last in an under water championship. The film has become so famous, most of all in France and Japan, that many people want to reserve the room in which were shot some of the film's scenes, or take photos of the Ancient Cloister and the gardens.



Grande, Grosso e Verdone (2007), by Carlo Verdone with Carlo Verdone, Claudia Gerini, Roberto Farnesi and Martina Pinto. It is a funny Italian style comedy made of different episodes and one of them is shot in Taormina and at the San Domenico Palace Hotel.

One of the cornerstones of the prestigious Locali Storici d'Italia association, the San Domenico Palace belongs to THI Collection – Luxury Hotels & Resorts since 1999 and from 1976 is a member of the Leadings Hotels of the World.

Photos: R.E.Bright, A.DeCrignis

By Lorena Beccaria

Date: 2009-03-30

Article link:

<http://www.tourism-review.com/travel-tourism-magazine-grand-movies-made-in-grand-sicilian-hotel-article807>