

Sicily

Karen Swann - Travel Consultant - May 2024

Thanks to an agents' trip hosted by **Classic Collection Holidays**, I was lucky enough to have had the pleasure of experiencing this beautiful Mediterranean gem firsthand.



Vally of the Temples

We flew from London Luton with EasyJet, and after a smooth take-off under bright blue skies, things got a little dramatic upon arrival. Due to torrential rain at Palermo airport, our landing was aborted! Thankfully, the second attempt was successful, and we touched down safely. Our adventure had begun!

Upon arrival, we were greeted by a representative from the Mangia Hotel chain and whisked off to our first stop, **Selinunte Resort**. Nestled in the heart of Selinunte, the resort treated us to a delicious four-course lunch. While the hotel is somewhat secluded, there's a shuttle train to the coast (just a five-minute ride), followed by a peaceful ten-minute stroll down a footpath through a grassy area to the beach. The sun even made a special appearance, gracing us with perfect weather for the rest of our stay!

Our first night was spent at **Torre Del Barone Resort** in Sciacca, an equally tranquil setting. The majority of rooms offer stunning sea views, and for those who don't fancy the short walk, there's another shuttle train service to a private beach. Sciacca itself is a picturesque port town, just 6km away and worth a visit. The resort is perched on a hillside, which made the diagonal motion of the lift a quirky experience—more like an underground train!

Day two brought us to the awe-inspiring **Valley of the Temples** in Agrigento, around a 45-minute drive from the resort. Contrary to the name, this UNESCO World Heritage site isn't a valley at all, but a hill adorned with eight magnificent temples. These Doric structures, built between 510 BC and 430 BC, remain one of Sicily's most iconic and captivating archaeological treasures.

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Pollina Resort

Our journey continued to Pollina Resort, where we spent our second night. This hotel has a large variety of room types, some situated in the main building and others in two storey blocks around the grounds. Many of the rooms just had a window rather than a balcony or terrace. Spread across 40 hectares of natural parkland, this cliff-top hotel offers panoramic views that take your breath away. While the private beach is accessible by lift, it's the stunning vistas that truly make this spot unforgettable. Situated 20 minutes from Cefalù, a picture-perfect coastal town, you'll find quaint houses perched on the sea's edge, a beautiful cathedral, and a small, inviting beach.

Pollina Resort also excels when it comes to activities. Whether you're into **tennis (four courts!), padel, football, water sports, or simply want to relax with live music and shows** in the evening, there's plenty to do. For families, the kids club is a huge bonus, ensuring the little ones are entertained throughout their stay. I'll admit, sipping a cocktail at one of the bars, during sunset, as the sky blazed with colour was a definite treat! Out of all the hotels I visited, this one offers the most entertainment and activities with plenty to occupy the little ones.



Sunset

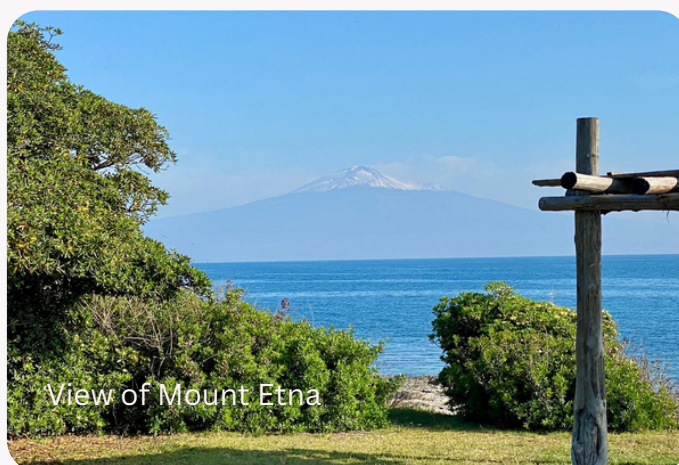


View of Beach at Pollina



Cefalu

Brucoli Resort



View of Mount Etna

Our final stop was Brucoli Resort, another delightful property offering a range of activities such as **yoga, painting classes, and even pirate-themed fun for the kids. Live music** also takes centre stage here, with performances three times a week. Brucoli village, just 1.6km away, boasts a charming castle, lighthouse, and several quaint bars and restaurants. From the hotel, on a clear day, you can even catch a glimpse of the majestic Mount Etna!

Brucoli's prime location also puts you just 45 minutes from **Syracuse**. This historic city is a must-see, with its spectacular cathedral and impressive architecture. Don't miss the chance to hop over to the island of **Ortigia**, another day trip destination packed with charm.

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Syracuse



To round off this incredible trip, we indulged in a wine-tasting evening, where I was introduced to orange wine for the first time—an interesting / palatable experience, though I'll be sticking to my preferred white!

Reflecting on my time in Sicily, it was nothing short of unforgettable. With its rich history, breathtaking landscapes, and warm hospitality, this island is a true Mediterranean treasure.

Many thanks to **Classic Collection Holidays** and **Mangia Resorts** for the opportunity to explore such a magical destination. I'll certainly be back for more!