

TRAVEL BAG

NEWS, TIPS AND TIDBITS FROM THE WORLD OF ARIZONA TRAVEL — AND BEYOND.

JUST BACK FROM...

ITALY & GREECE WITH THE VERZINOS



View of Amalfi from the Verzinis' boat; Marcellino Verzino enjoying his favorite coastal lunch, mussels in white wine (inset)



TO CHEF/RESTAURATEUR Marcellino Verzino and his wife and business partner, Sima Verzino, Italy is more than a vacation destination – it's their home away from home. The owners of Marcellino Ristorante in Old Town Scottsdale take a yearly trip to Rome, where they lived for many years and have property and a second home. For 25 years, they've been following their Roman sojourn with a jaunt to the Greek island of Poros. The couple takes us through their favorite local sights and tastes in both locales.

TEATRO MARCELLO

This Roman open-air theater plays host to many concerts of all genres, holding firm to its ancient origins. "You're sitting in the middle of this 2,000-year-old antique area, with the beautiful columns and just everything," Sima says. The Verzinis hosted a concert at the theater in 2019, and advise visitors to come during July and August to enjoy its summer series of performances. bit.ly/3JHrHbz

IARI

The Verzinis emphasize the importance of traditional Roman food and recommend Iari, their friends' unassuming eatery. The restaurant is a walkable distance from the

Colosseum. "It's set in a little teeny-tiny piazza [plaza], and it's very cozy. You can dine outside or inside," Sima says. You'll find fresh pasta, pizza and meat dishes like pistachio-crusting lamb ribs.

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PALAZZO COLONNA

"One of the most important things other than eating in Rome would be to visit some of the beautiful museums," Marcellino says. In addition to the well-known Vatican Museums, he suggests the Palazzo Colonna, a historic palace that houses an expansive art gallery. Visitors can view pieces dating back hundreds of years, take in the elaborate frescoes, and absorb the historic surroundings.

galleriacolonna.it

TAVERNA APAGIO

The small Greek island of Poros is a favorite of the Verzinis, who hope to retire there. It is home to a few restaurants, and Taverna Apagio is the "hottest," Sima says. The seafood-focused menu includes fresh local catches, from sea bream and samphire (sea beans) to anchovies and tuna.

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— Shradha Krishnamurthy