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have terraces facing the gulf. **Don't Miss** The hotel's Cena con lo Chef cooking course. **Cost** Doubles from \$422. 39-0185/287-013; www.grandhotelmiramare.it ☎ ☎ ☎

SIENA

NEW Hotel Certosa di Magliano (82.58) 14th-century former monastery with bell tower and arched cloisters, 1 mile from downtown. **Stats** 17 rooms; 1 restaurant; 1 bar. **Competitive Edge** A peaceful enclave of olive groves and gardens in the heart of Tuscany, close to major sights. **Best Room** The suite with its own small walled garden. **Don't Miss** Lunch prepared with fresh produce, accompanied by a bottle of Chianti Classico, served on the terrace. **Cost** Doubles from \$515. 82 STRADA DI CERTOSA; 800/735-2478 OR 39-0577/288-180; www.certosadimagliano.com ☎ ☎ ☎

SORRENTO

Grand Hotel Excelsior Vittoria (83.18) Family-run hotel in the center of town—a 19th-century palace built on the ruins of a Roman villa, facing the Bay of Naples and Mount Vesuvius. **Stats** 96 rooms; 3 restaurants; 2 bars. **Competitive Edge** Convenience (close proximity to Naples and Pompeii) coupled with seclusion amid 5 acres of gardens on a sea-facing cliff. **Best Rooms** Nos. 205 (pretty Victorian décor) and 648 (a more modern look). **Don't Miss** The chef's signature risotto made with Sorrento lemons. **Cost** Doubles from \$472. 800/223-6800 OR 39-081/807-1044; www.exvitt.it ☎ ☎ ☎

TAORMINA

San Domenico Palace Hotel (82.63) 15th-century former Dominican monastery with views of Mount Etna, on a hillside 3 minutes from the town center. **Stats** 100 rooms; 3 restaurants; 1 bar. **Competitive Edge** The restful terraced garden, with citrus trees, jasmine, palms, and shaded walking paths—a welcome respite from busy Taormina. **Best Rooms** Convent wing rooms are so close to the garden, you can smell the orange blossoms. **Don't Miss** Pasta alla Norma at the new restaurant, Principe di Cerami. **Cost** Doubles from \$464. 39-0942/613-111; www.thi.it ☎ ☎ ☎

NO. 1 IN VENICE

NEW Bauer Il Palazzo (85.66) 18th-century mansion with a Grand Canal lobby and private boat dock, attached to the modern Bauer Hotel, with which it shares common facilities. **Stats** 76 rooms; 2 restaurants; 2 bars. **Competitive Edge** Personalized service combined with a sense of history. **Best Rooms** Nos. 206 and 209 have beautiful stucco ceilings that look like fine embroidery. **Don't Miss** Have owner Francesca Bortolotto Possati help you secure film-festival tickets or admission to

private antiques auctions. **Cost** Doubles from \$842. 39-041/520-7022; www.ilpalazzovenetia.it ☎ ☎ ☎

VENICE

Hotel Cipriani (83.73) Exclusive, 3-acre property—a 1958 main building and two palazzos (15th and 17th centuries)—on Giudecca Island. **Stats** 104 rooms; 4 restaurants; 3 bars. **Competitive Edge** A destination-resort feel (Olympic-sized swimming pool, extensive gardens) just 4 minutes by boat from Piazzetta San Marco. **Best Rooms** Those in the main building facing the lagoon have the best views; Palazzetto and Palazzo Vendramin have more sumptuous interiors and butler service. **Don't Miss** Seashell treatments in the new spa (a rarity in Venice). **Cost** Doubles from \$1,040. 800/223-6800 OR 39-041/520-7744; www.hotelcipriani.com ☎ ☎ ☎

VENICE

Hotel Danieli (81.31) Sprawling property (a 14th-century Gothic palace and annexes) with Murano chandeliers and frescoed ceilings, on the water, close to Piazza San Marco. **Stats** 233 rooms; 1 restaurant; 2 bars. **Competitive Edge** With different buildings, you can choose your favorite: the Palazzo (more atmosphere), Casa Nuova (bigger rooms), or Daniellino (terraces). **Best Rooms** We like the Palazzo rooms best; No. 10, although smaller than most, has a rare view of the Ponte del Vino. **Don't Miss** A meal in the rooftop restaurant with views of the lagoon. **Cost** Doubles from \$524. 800/325-3589 OR 39-041/522-6480; www.luxurycollection.com ☎ ☎ ☎

VENICE

Hotel Gritti Palace (85.19) Gorgeous Renaissance doge's palace just off Piazza San Marco. Dubbed "the greatest hotel in a city of great hotels" by Ernest Hemingway. **Stats** 91 rooms; 1 restaurant; 1 bar. **Competitive Edge** The most intimate of the city's palace hotels (and perhaps the most opulent). **Best Rooms** The 18 rooms with Grand Canal views (all 4 floors are equally compelling). **Don't Miss** A 3-day cooking course, which also includes museum visits and walking tours. **Cost** Doubles from \$768. 800/325-3589 OR 39-041/794-611; www.starwoodhotels.com ☎ ☎ ☎

VENICE

Hotel Monaco & Grand Canal (81.09) 1638 building, owned by the Benetton family and fully renovated last year, steps from Piazza San Marco. **Stats** 135 rooms; 1 restaurant; 1 bar. **Competitive Edge** Simple, streamlined interiors make this an alternative to Venice's more formal hotels. **Best Rooms** Those in the Palazzo Selvadego annex 3 blocks away are less expensive, have kitchenettes in suites, terraces on the upper floors, and their own concierge. **Don't Miss** A peek at the hotel's frescoed old gambling hall,

restored to its former glory. **Cost** Doubles from \$236. 39-041/520-0211; www.hotelmonaco.it

VENICE

Luna Hotel Baglioni (80.79) Venice's oldest hotel (12th century), with a deeply traditional feel, near Piazza San Marco. **Stats** 108 rooms; 1 restaurant; 1 bar. **Competitive Edge** A historic Grand Canal experience at a more affordable price. **Best Rooms** Standards overlooking the canal, and suites with views of Piazza San Marco. **Don't Miss** Fresh croissants and chocolate muffins at breakfast in the Salone Marco Polo. **Cost** Doubles from \$442. 39-041/528-9840; www.baglionihotels.com

LUXEMBOURG

LUXEMBOURG CITY

NEW Hôtel Le Royal (81.90) Residential-style hotel with modern interiors, in the Old Town near shopping and businesses. **Stats** 210 rooms; 2 restaurants; 1 bar. **Competitive Edge** A super-convenient location near the financial district. **Best Rooms** Those in the Royal Club wing, which have extra workspaces and high-speed Internet, are great for business travelers. **Don't Miss** A Mediterranean dinner on Le Jardin's pretty terrace. **Cost** Doubles from \$438. 800/223-6800 OR 011-352/241-6161; www.hotelroyal.lu ☎ ☎ ☎

MONACO

MONTE CARLO

Hôtel de Paris (90.78) Belle Époque palace in the center of the Place du Casino. **Stats** 191 rooms; 3 restaurants; 1 bar. **Competitive Edge** An extensive renovation last year restored one of the world's most glamorous hotels to its full glory. **Best Rooms** For a perfect view of both the ocean and casino, ask for No. 320, 420, or 520. **Don't Miss** A tour of the hotel's world-class 16,000-square-foot wine cellar, where 450,000 amazing vintages await uncorking. **Cost** Doubles from \$630. 800/223-6800 OR 377/92-16-30-00; www.montecarloresort.com ☎ ☎ ☎

MONTE CARLO

Hôtel Hermitage (87.31) Belle Époque hotel with a wedding-cake

façade overlooking the harbor. **Stats** 290 rooms; 1 restaurant; 2 bars. **Competitive Edge** One of Europe's biggest spas, the 71,000-square-foot Les Thermes Marins—try the signature diamond massage. **Best Rooms** Those on the top 2 floors of the Princes and Beaumarchais wings (new in 2004), many of which have balconies overlooking the sea. **Don't Miss** Tea in the winter garden with stained-glass windows designed by Alexandre-Gustave Eiffel. **Cost** Doubles from \$570. SQUARE BEAUMARCHAIS; 800/223-6800 OR 377/92-16-40-40; www.montecarloresort.com ☎ ☎ ☎

MONTE CARLO

Monte Carlo Grand Hotel (81.33) Contemporary low-rise hugging the water below the Monte Carlo Casino. **Stats** 619 rooms; 3 restaurants; 3 bars. **Competitive Edge** The only in-town hotel with the feel of a resort. **Best Rooms** We like those that overlook the ocean or the attractive gardens. **Don't Miss** The rooftop pool—there's no better spot in town to sunbathe and watch the Formula One Grand Prix car race. **Cost** Doubles from \$410. 12 AVE. DES SPELUGUES; 377/93-50-65-00; www.montecarlograndhotel.com ☎ ☎ ☎

POLAND

WARSAW

NEW Le Royal Mériidien Bristol (87.06) Turn-of-the-20th-century hotel with Art Nouveau details, near the royal castle and Old Town. **Stats** 205 rooms; 3 restaurants; 1 bar. **Competitive Edge** The most luxurious of the city's hotels, in a convenient location. **Best Rooms** For \$64 more than Superiors, Executives are 350 square feet larger. No. 210 has a courtyard view, high ceilings, and a small living room. **Don't Miss** The lavish Sunday brunch with caviar and champagne. **Cost** Doubles from \$486. 800/543-4300 OR 48-22/551-1000; www.warsaw.lemeridien.com ☎ ☎ ☎

PORTUGAL

ALGARVE

Hotel Quinta do Lago & Spa (85.58) Family-friendly golf and beach resort along 1,700 acres on the southern coast. **Stats** 141 rooms; 2 ☎



Rome's Hotel de Russie.

