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TravelandLeisure.com AUGUST 2010

# ATLANTIC AVENUE, BROOKLYN

ONCE KNOWN AS ANTIQUES ROW, THIS OLD NEW YORK CITY STREET IS GETTING A STYLE UPDATE. CHRISTINE AJUDUA TAKES A TOUR.



**1 ACORN A BROOKLYN TOY SHOP**

At this fairy tale of a store, you'll find mobiles hand-stitched from Liberty of London fabrics, bamboo model airplanes made in Vietnam, German Waldorf dolls, and embroidered Mexican bibs. 323 Atlantic Ave.; 718/522-3760.

**2 HOLLANDER & LEXER**

Oak floors, lacquered brick walls, and a sound track of gypsy music set the scene for Santa Maria Novella toiletries (originally made by Italian monks) and Borsalino fedoras mixed with Rogan knits, Filson bags,

and Rachel Comey sandals. 358 Atlantic Ave.; 718/797-9190.

**3 THE BANQUET**

When you enter the Banquet you're likely to find the owners—dressmaker Miranda Bennett and accessories designer Pamela Johnston (pictured)—hard at work. The duo, who met at Parsons, make almost everything you see, from the flirty silk dresses to the Frida Kahlo-style hairpieces. 360 Atlantic Ave.; 718/522-6906.

**4 MAFALDA**

Looking for a circa-1970 handmade Mexican wedding gown or a lightly used Bottega Veneta

clutch? Former model and fashion buyer Christina Kolbe sells vintage finds that she picks up on road trips around the United States. 360 Atlantic Ave.; 347/987-3470.

**5 CITY FOUNDRY**

Furniture designer Sohrab Bakhshi packs this space with everything from aluminum World War II military cases to vintage clocks, plus Bakhshi's own creations (chandeliers made from water mains and motor-oil jars). 365-367 Atlantic Ave.; 718/923-1786.

**6 DARR**

Taxidermy heads of South African Cape buffalo and

other animals hang on the walls, before an intriguing array of antiques and found objects (Victorian birdcages and clock bodies; hand-knotted Persian mats). Owners Hicham Benmira and Brian Cousins collect everything for sale here during their travels. 369 Atlantic Ave.; 718/797-9733.

**7 JONATHAN ADLER**

"Your home should be like a good dose of Zoloff" is a witticism that graces the walls of one of the irreverent potter-slash-designer's newest shops. Inside, you'll find groovy textiles (a pillow handwoven with a bright-orange British flag), modern

dog bowls, hashish-scented candles, and more. 378 Atlantic Ave.; 718/855-0017.

**8 EVA GENTRY**

Husband-and-wife team Eva and Gentry Dayton (pictured) added some motorcycle chic to this minimalist, gallery-like boutique. Black and gray garments from Ann Demeulemeester and Rick Owens and leather bags and shoes from Italian labels Guidi and M.A.+ are for sale in this white-on-white shop (there's also a helmet turned handbag by Martin Margiela on display). 389 Atlantic Ave.; 718/260-9033. +

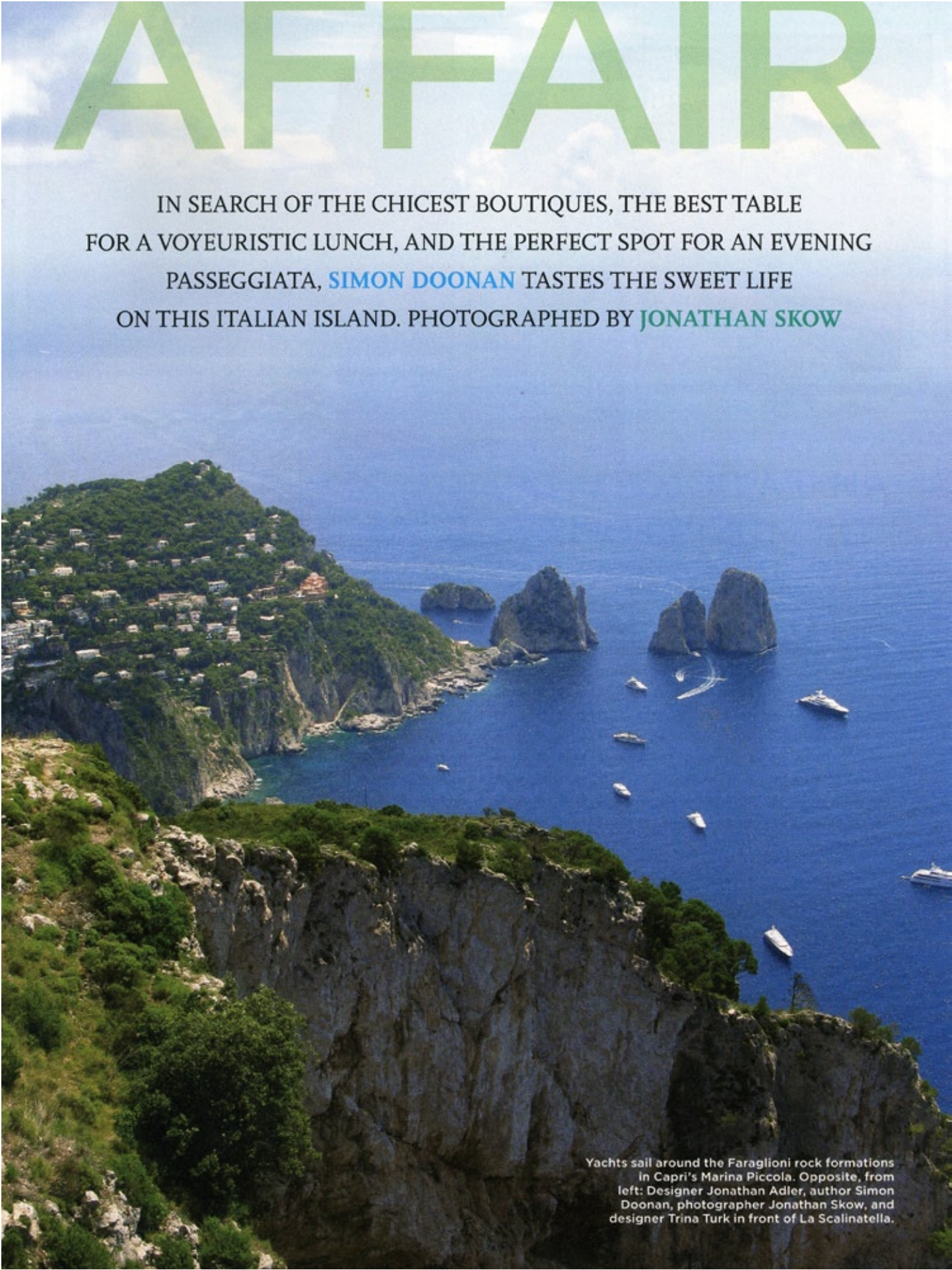
# A CAPRI



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# AFFAIR

IN SEARCH OF THE CHICEST BOUTIQUES, THE BEST TABLE FOR A VOYEURISTIC LUNCH, AND THE PERFECT SPOT FOR AN EVENING PASSEGGIATA, **SIMON DOONAN** TASTES THE SWEET LIFE ON THIS ITALIAN ISLAND. PHOTOGRAPHED BY **JONATHAN SKOW**



Yachts sail around the Faraglioni rock formations in Capri's Marina Piccola. Opposite, from left: Designer Jonathan Adler, author Simon Doonan, photographer Jonathan Skow, and designer Trina Turk in front of La Scalinatella.



## AH, LA DOLCE VITA! FOR MOST PEOPLE, THIS INTOXICATING

phrase is synonymous with Rome. Not for me. Reluctant though I am to irritate the ghost of Federico Fellini, I think the concept finds its fiercest and most fabulous expression on a certain little nugget in the Bay of Naples—Capri.

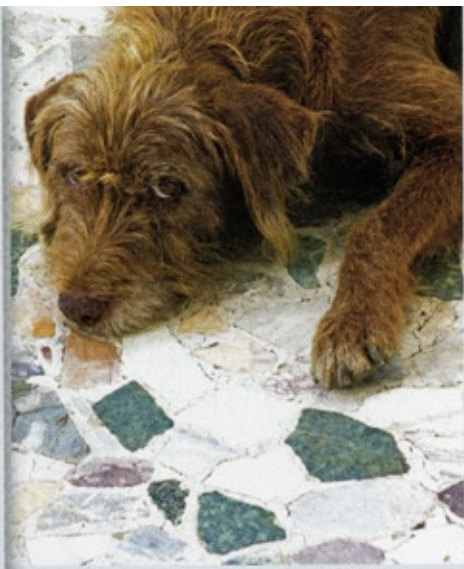
What makes the island so sweet? Just how *dolce* is the *vita*? How *dolce* are the *dolce*? How *dolce* is the Gabbana?

Capri is, first and foremost, a fatally appealing combination of rusticity and glamour. The juxtaposition of simple pleasures—plopping in the Med; hiking deserted cliffs; scarfing down bowls of fresh figs—with a full-throttle commitment to style makes for an extremely *dolce vita*. It also makes for

great creative inspiration. As somebody who spends most of the year whirring like a hamster on the wheel of fashion, I naturally find it necessary to hop off and refuel every so often. Recently, I decided to seek relaxation and inspiration in Capri. My traveling companions are my designer/ceramicist husband, Jonathan Adler, L.A.-based fashion designer Trina Turk, and her photographer husband, Jonathan Skow. (On our trip, we avoid confusion by referring to the latter as Mr. Skow.) We spend a thoroughly *dolce* week at the legendary La Scalinatella. Eccentric and luxurious, “the Scally,” as we affectionately dub it, looks as if it were decorated by Salvador Dalí after dropping acid. With its improbable collection of borderline-kitsch antiques and its stark white architecture, the Scally is the perfect base from which to sally forth and forage for inspiration.

**A CAPRI DAY** This page, clockwise from top left: The author (left) with Turk and Adler; approaching the restaurant Da Luigi al Faraglioni; Turk shopping for handmade sandals; pizza at Trattoria il Solitario; a footpath from Marina Grande to the top of Anacapri.





### LAY OF THE LAND (AND THE SEA)

Jonathan is addicted to blue: baby blue, navy blue, azure blue—he has yet to meet a blue that does not inspire a pot or a pillow for his stores. The blues of the water here—best viewed while swimming in a grotto—are incomparable. Trina is also something of a Med-head. She finds inspiration in every rock and ripple: the coral stripe that runs around the island and pops into view when the water is choppy suggests an entire beige-and-pink resort collection to her.

And then there's the people-watching. On Fontelina Beach—a great place for a voyeuristic lunch—Trina takes further inspiration from the sighting of a bronzed Monica Vitti look-alike in a white cotton lace kurta with long flared sleeves over a teeny bikini. "White lace and a deep tan—a phenomenal combo," says Trina, as if writing the *Women's Wear Daily*

review of her own upcoming show. Mr. Skow photographs the moment and, unsurprisingly, a white lace kurta appears in Trina's spring 2010 collection.

On every descent to the sea, Mr. Skow plays the role of intrepid paparazzo, hanging off cliffs and boat decks to get the perfect shot. He enjoys taking pictures without the usual ramparts of photo equipment, likening it to "swimming without a swimsuit—very liberating." One afternoon, Mr. Skow decides he wants an action shot of Jonathan and me diving off the side of our sailboat. Much to the amusement of Giancarlo, our captain, it takes about 15 tries before Mr. Skow finally gives the thumbs-up.

### SOAKING UP THE DESIGN

From the kitschiest Rococo to the coolest mod minimalism, our trip is a nonstop festival of Italian design. Every jaunt



**ISLAND TIME** Clockwise from top left: Skow on a break from shooting; the beach at Marina Grande; lying low on one of the island's ubiquitous terrazzo floors; sailing to the Blue Grotto; Doonan and Adler taking a dive into the Mediterranean.



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yields distracting visual stimuli. Whenever Jonathan walks through the lobby of our hotel, he gazes at the hallucinogenic blue-and-white floor tiles until he bumps into a fellow guest. And the futuristic, mod lounges that we encounter at the Gio Ponti-designed Hotel Parco dei Principi on a day trip to Sorrento are a personal favorite, as is the funky wall mural—made from shards of groovy Midcentury ceramic tchotchkes—at Buonocore, a gelato shop across the street from Ferragamo back on Capri.

#### SHOPAHOLICS

We are all inspired by the island's addictive boutiques. Trina can't get enough of the gaudy-but-chic handmade sandals. Jonathan feels a warm kinship with the uninhibited Caprese potters. Wandering around a souvenir shop near the docks, he snags a small abstract raku owl to send to his Peruvian workshop. He is determined to emulate the crackled glaze that garnishes the wings of the little creature.

And I find something else in the tiny stores of Capri—window-display inspiration. There is no space for the kind

of dioramas that I have been installing at Barneys for the past 25 years. The Italians compensate for the absence of attention-getting props or rows of mannequins with something we fashion insiders call “merchandise handling.” This technique reaches a zenith in the dinky window displays here: Malo cashmere sweaters are lusciously folded; Lacoste shirt collars are erect; D&G belts spill from crocodile shoes; perfectly pressed Hermès scarves ripple like the water that laps the side of Valentino's yacht down in the Marina Piccola. In the boutique displays, there is an innate finesse—the same finesse that the cook at Da Giorgio uses to arrange the shrimp and linguine on the plate with effortless panache—which inspires me because it points the spotlight back to what really matters: design and quality.

#### THE PASSEGGIATA

The best part of any Caprese day is the magical passeggiata, the nocturnal stroll. Trina digs her nails into my arm as we watch this fashion spectacle one night: “For the last couple of years, women in the States have been wearing gray anti-fashion thrift-shop grunge,” says Trina, as Mr. Skow snaps shots of long-legged beauties teetering down the cobblestones of the Via Camerelle in their Pucci party frocks and strappy gold Dolce & Gabbana sandals, “and this full-on commitment to adornment and glamour is what fashion is all about.” “Transformation!” says Jonathan. “Exhibitionism!” I say.

Campy revelations aside, we all come away with something else, something pretty major, from our trip—a distinct feeling of optimism. Despite the lousy economy, the Capresi manage to keep an upbeat worldview. This is a reminder that *la dolce vita* is not a luxury destination, but a state of mind. Whether you are on a vacation, a stay-cation, or an inspira-cation, this *dolce* state of mind is yours for the taking. So put down your BlackBerry. What are you waiting for? ➤

## GUIDE TO CAPRI



**STAY** Grand Hotel Quisisana 2 Via Camerelle; 39-081/837-0788; quisisana.com; doubles from \$480. **GREAT VALUE** Hotel Gatto Bianco 32 Via Vittorio Emanuele; 39-081/837-0446; gattobianco-capri.com; doubles from \$255. **J.K. Place Capri** 225 Via Provinciale Marina Grande; 39-081/838-4001; jkcapri.com; doubles from \$734. **La Scalinatella** 8 Via Tragara; 39-081/837-0633; scalinatella.com; doubles from \$514. **Punta Tragara** 57 Via Tragara; 39-081/837-0844; hoteltragara.com; doubles from \$490.

**EAT** Da Giorgio 34 Via Roma; 39-081/837-5777; dinner for two \$100. Da Luigi ai Faraglioni 5 Via Faraglioni; 39-081/837-0591; lunch for two \$98. Faraglioni 75 Via Camerelle; 39-081/837-0320; dinner for two \$132. Gelateria Buonocore 35 Via Vittorio Emanuele; 39-081/837-7826; gelato for two \$10. Ristorante Aurora Via Fuorlovido; 39-081/837-0181; dinner for two \$122. Trattoria il Solitario 96 Giuseppe Orlandi; 39-081/837-1382; dinner for two \$60.

**SHOP** Dsquared 81 Via Camerelle; 39-081/838-8235. Kiton 19 Piazzetta Umberto I; 39-081/838-8229. Malo 11 Via Vittorio Emanuele; 39-081/837-0479. 100% Capri 29 Via Fuorlovido; 39-081/837-7561. Russo Uomo 8 Federico Serena; 39-081/838-8208.

#### T+L'S GUIDE TO THE AMALFI COAST

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Trina Turk en route to Da Luigi  
ai Faraglioni for lunch.

