

Keyword: Rimini

Grand Hotel de Rimini

Mention Rimini to most English people and theyll think teenage package holidays or mis-spent nights when the Italian house music scene briefly made it a hot clubbing destination in the early 1990s...

But for Italians, you cant say Rimini without saying Federico Fellini. The great film maker was born in this Adriatic fishing village in 1920 and the mixture of baroque, fantasy and sex that so defines his work really comes from Rimini (as seen in his 1973 movie tribute to the town, *Amarcord*). Its easy to put the baroque and the stylish together as soon as you enter the . It was outside this wedding cake of a hotel that the young Fellini would position himself, drawing cartoon sketches of the wealthy clientele as they strolled about its elegant gardens or clacked across the promenade road to the hotels private beach club. Imagine hard, and you can still see little Fellini, dreaming to himself that one day he would be part of all this glamour and effortless grandeur., gradually being restored and updated, remains coolly restrained. It has a vastness that reminds you of a country mansion as you look out onto the terrace, sip a Dolce Vita cocktail (champagne and crushed strawberry juice) in the Fellini bar, where Nino Rotas jazzy music tinkles in the background. Even the balcony off my airy room is long as a bowling alley.

In the Fellini Dining Room, they serve the sort of food you get at film awards, grand hotel cooking served in huge bowls and a wine list like a book of spells. That said, I couldnt fault the prawn and cherry tomatoes starter, nor the veal and sauted potatoes although the chicken stuffed with asparagus and black truffle was richer than some of the Russians on an adjoining table - direct flights from Riminis Federico Fellini airport to Moscow have opened the place up to a monied new clientele you feel Fellini would have had a lot of fun sketching. If you're feeling energetic, you can hire a tandem bike and whoosh along the front (*lungomare*) to gasp at

the endless line of hotels on one side and the tightly packed beach bars on the other, each with their childrens playgrounds, bouncy castles and crazy golf.

A row of streets, I notice, bears the name of every Fellini film - *Via Satyricon*, *Via le notti di Cabiria* etc.

While much of Rimini was battered in WWII, the old town retains a classically Italian vibrancy, with ice cream parlours, Roman ruins in the middle of piazzas and boys on mopeds, as well as a smattering of smart boutiques. Further along by the marina, theres evidence of hard work amid the holiday making as whiskey fishermen in

Keyword: Rimini

oilskins sell off boxes of fish in the harbour: sole, little tuna, squids and pink crustacea still squirming like pre-historic monsters - these are the local mantis prawns and old ladies shovel them into plastic bags.

Later, we sample more local delicacies at a restaurant chiselled out of an old smugglers cave dating back 500 years. Il Pescato del Canavone has been in the Francioni family since 1871 and the sea food is outstanding - seabass with potatoes, fat strozzapretti pasta with mantis, grey mullet in a red bean stew and piles of calamari tossed in

the lightest batter. Its a pleasant walk back along the cobbled canalside down to the Grand Hotel, where a late nightcap in the bar is a bit of a custom. We were quiet happy to keep the tradition alive before slipping into our rather grand bed, hoping to dream of Fellini - if not here, then where else will the inspiration strike? Rimini is part of the Select Hotels Collection group (www.selecthotels.it). Review by Jason Solomons

Release date: Monday 28 March
2011

<http://www.marieclaire.co.uk/travel/hotel/520528/grand-hotel-de-rimini.html>