

The Three Cities

delicious dishes that perfectly fit the bill. The menu changes daily but some stalwarts usually remain (if the ingredients can be freshly sourced) such as the char-grilled whole local mackerel with Maltese orange and shaved fennel or the bruschetta of field mushrooms sautéed with thyme. The hand-made chicken tortellini in brodo are also delicious, followed by the grilled seafood platter with local swordfish, octopus, king prawns and grilled vegetables. For afters we recommend the cheese served with Maltese honey and local grapes or the home-made strawberry and almond tart.

→ 1 Wilga Street, Marsaxlokk (2704 2656, www.terrone.com.mt). Open 10am-11pm Tue-Sat. Main courses €20-€26. Credit AmEx, DC, JCB, MC, V.

WHERE TO DRINK

For an alternative evening out that really embraces the best of the Mediterranean, it's hard to beat the romantic allure of the Three Cities. Wander the narrow streets, explore at your own pace and discover the charming wine bars that typify this unique destination.

Del Borgo Wine Bar

This is easily one of the most popular wine bars on the island. Traditional in style but with a modern take, the mood set by candlelight and the atmosphere are wonderful. The menu offers simple-but-delicious fare, including local goats' cheese with sun-dried tomatoes, grilled aubergines and shrimp tempura, as well as heartier platters, pasta dishes and mains. The well-stocked bar serves over 400 local and international wines, as well as beers and spirits, and you can enjoy them on a comfortable sofa or at the bar. For a tasty souvenir visit the *enoteca*, which displays a variety of quality olive oils, wines and other Mediterranean treats. Note that children under 16 are not allowed in the evening.
→ St Dominic Street, Vittoriosa (2180 3710, www.delborgomalta.com). Open 5pm-1am daily. Credit AmEx, DC, JCB, MC, V.



Locanda la Gelsomina

Il-Forn Art Gallery & Wine Bar

Part of the fun of Il-Forn is finding it, tucked away on one of Vittoriosa's quaint backstreets. This popular spot combines art with great food and an excellent selection of over 80 wines, as well as beers, spirits, cocktails and non-alcoholic options. The cuisine is eclectic as, aside from the delicious platters of dips, meats and cheeses, Il-Forn also offers traditional Austrian fare, such as the 'mega' schnitzel burger, and Asian treats like curry prawns served with coconut rice. Take a seat in the delightful courtyard and enjoy a bite and a drink under the stars. Plus, don't miss the selection of often-racy art, crafted by owner Clemens Hasenschwandtner. If you get chatting, ask him to show you the 'secret' collection!
→ 27 North Street, Vittoriosa (7982 0379, www.ilforn.com). Open 7pm-1am Wed-Sat. Credit AmEx, MC, V.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

This part of Malta provides a completely different sort of entertainment, away from the main hotspots and busy clubs. You may enjoy the excellent facilities at the island's largest sports club and only golf course.

SPORTS & LEISURE

Marsa Sports Club

Open since 1902, the Marsa Sports Club is the largest sports complex on the island, housing Malta's sole golf course, 19 tennis courts (including two indoor courts and two clay courts – the only ones on the island), five fully air-conditioned squash courts, an open-air swimming pool, a cricket pitch and a gym studio. The club hosts over 2,500 members as well as numerous visitors, and has facilities for no less than eight sports disciplines. Day memberships are available from €10, and the website provides information on the latest classes and competitions.

→ Off Aldo Moro Street, Marsa (2123 3851, www.marsasportsclub.com). Open 8.30am-10.30pm daily.

Royal Malta Golf Club

Celebrating 128 years of golf in Malta, the Royal Malta Golf Club is a staple for sports lovers. The clubhouse is a destination in its own right thanks to its well-stocked golf shop, terrace bar and restaurant, as well as its lovely views. This 18-hole course offers both seasoned and new golfers exciting and demanding experiences, and you can play while enjoying unique historical landmarks, including a 500-year-old chapel

near the tenth green and the ruins of the servants' quarters, which date back to the time when British servicemen played here. Day memberships are available, and competitions are held every Saturday.

→ Aldo Moro Street, Marsa (2122 7019, www.royalmaltagolfclub.com). Open 7.30am-5pm daily.

WHERE TO STAY

While there are no large hotels in this part of Malta, one small, boutique property does stand out, both for its style and decor.

EXPENSIVE

Locanda la Gelsomina

Family-run and located in a property dating back to the 16th century, this is a truly unique accommodation option in Malta. This tiny boutique hotel may only have four suites, but each promises nothing but luxury and is completely individual – from the choice of colours to the antique pieces of furniture. The property is also home to a teahouse (open to the public in autumn and spring), boutique and a pretty rooftop terrace.

→ 3 Kunsill Popolari Street, Vittoriosa (2180 7897, www.locandalagelsomina.com). Bus 2. Rates (incl breakfast) €200 double. Credit AmEx, DC, JCB, MC, V.