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36 Hours in Naples, Italy

By INGRID K. WILLIAMS

THE southern Italian city of Naples, capital of the Campania region, has a reputation sullied by corruption and crime, both petty and organized. But change is afoot. A new mayor has ushered in initiatives to clean up the city, beginning with the unclogging of streets by disposing of uncollected trash and redirecting chaotic traffic flows. A thriving contemporary art scene — in museums, galleries, and even metro stations — is propelling the city's cultural revival. Make no mistake: problems persist, but those who remain aware of the vices in this spirited, ancient city will be rewarded by its virtues.

Friday

4 p.m.

1. SEASIDE STROLL

In April, cars were banned from the waterfront streets Via Caracciolo and Via Partenope, officially transforming these traffic-choked arteries into a pleasant pedestrian lungomare, or seaside promenade. Stroll along it to take in the marvelous views of Mount Vesuvius, the island of Capri in the distance, and the splendid sunset-painted sky. Then cut through the Villa Comunale park and ring the buzzer to gain entrance to the inner courtyard where the art gallery Studio Trisorio (Riviera di Chiaia, 215; 39-081-414-306; studiotrisorio.com) is hidden. The gallery, which unveiled a new exhibition space in late 2011, hosts a revolving slate of provocative shows including, currently, a Rebecca Horn exhibition.

8 p.m.

2. CREATIVE PAIRINGS

Some of the most innovative food in town is being served at Squisitezze (Via Costantinopoli, 100; 39-081-401-578; lastanzadelgusto.com), a cheese bar and convivial osteria. The creative menu — drawn from the chef Mario Avallone's upstairs restaurant, the more formal La Stanza del Gusto — is scrawled in pastels across chalkboards on the walls, lending the space a lighthearted vibe that carries onto the plates. Don't miss the delicious arancino di mare, a fried fist-size sphere with a brick-red crust that cracks open to reveal a creamy core of rice and seafood. There's also a fine list of quality craft beers, including many from the Campania-based microbrewery Karma, that will prepare you for the birram reimagining of the classic espresso-fueled dessert. Dinner for two, about 50 at \$1.32 to the euro.



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