

# Capri Sun

## Crystal heiress Fiona Swarovski's Art Deco retreat overlooks one of the island's loveliest bays

By Claire Coleman

**D**ESIGNER Fiona Swarovski, heiress to the iconic crystal company, was just 18 when she visited Capri for the first time. She walked up the steep Via Tragara leading to the terrace overlooking the famous jagged Faraglioni rocks, and immediately declared: 'This is where I want to live.'

She's not the only one. The island of Capri has seduced countless visitors over the years. Every summer, the place is besieged by tourists, all vowing that one day, one day, they'll move to this little enclave off Italy's Amalfi coast.

For most of them, their dreams remain just that — dreams. But for Fiona it became a reality.

Her home is now the beautiful Art Deco mansion that was once owned by Gracie Fields.

But the stunning property, with its huge veranda and garden, did not come without a fight. Eleven years after she first fell in love with Capri, she came back to the island and ended up in a bidding war over the house with Leonardo Mondadori, an Italian publishing magnate. They cut a deal. Mondadori would have it for the first five years — and then it was all hers.

'After five years, I wanted this house desperately because there was so much love in Capri, and this is the best spot in the island.'

Once she got her hands on



Iron lady: The dining table and chairs are Fiona's own design

the property, Fiona was able to concentrate on the interior. She kept the original green Vietri floor tiles and, using pigmented plaster, painted the walls coral.

The vaulted ceilings and cool walls provide a simple backdrop to an eclectic collection of pieces: 19th-century chairs inlaid with shells sit alongside an antique iron and glass coffee table topped with a collection of 18th-century silver.

Elsewhere, there are chinoiserie vases, her collection of Murano glass and a quirky mirror in the 'grotesque' style. Fiona has also had a hand in designing some of



the furniture. The wrought-iron table and chairs in the dining room were her own designs, as were the iron daybed-cum-sofas that grace the stunning terrace.

Just one look at this spacious 'outdoor room' and it's easy to understand why Fiona professes that her favourite place in the house is the terrace, with its

amazing vistas over the Bay of Naples and those Faraglioni rocks.

It is, she says, 'one of the most beautiful terraces in the world', and when the sun goes down, it provides a wonderful setting for a candlelit dinner and the perfect vantage point from which to gaze at the moon. 'The moon from Capri is absolutely amazing,' enthuses

Fiona. 'When it comes up, it looks like an orange. Then it turns silver and creates a road of diamonds on the sea. You have to see it to believe it.'

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