



The gardens of Villa La Foce, once the home of writer Iris Origo



Actor Jeremy Strong prepares for a scene

## THE ITALIAN JOB

When HBO asked her to become a consultant on *Succession*, travel specialist Emily FitzRoy of Bellini Travel signed on to create a version of Tuscany for TV's backstabbiest billionaires. Here's how she did it



The drawing room at Villa Cetinale

I have had many clients like the Roy family. Their money is discreet; they don't want it out there for all to see. So when I was first contacted by *Succession* director and executive producer Mark Mylod, who was looking for locations for two big scenes in the third season, my head was full of ideas. There was a large celebration in central Italy and a visit to the villa of a new character up north. I channeled the types of people involved in the show. Lady Caroline is an English aristocrat. She'd accept shabby chic. She'd accept a bad bathroom in a beautiful estate. But the Roy kids are American. They wouldn't. They would want everything to be more sleek, more buttoned-up.

Within a month, we were zipping around Northern Italy in a stream of blacked-out minivans on a madcap scout. We had only five days due to restrictions on British travelers back then, and I wound up leaving Milan Malpensa with only 30 minutes before my time was up. One day we left Florence in blazing spring sunshine and found ourselves waist-deep in snow in the mountains a few hours later. It was during that surreal moment when there was not a soul in Florence or Rome. It did feel a bit like being under the spell of the Roy family or a similar client. The cities were all ours. I joked that I had emptied them for the show.

It worked out. I negotiated our access into the Tuscan estate Villa La Foce. My clients have been renting it privately for years, and it is one of the most magical places in all of Italy. The gardens and some of the surrounding landscape were designed by an Englishman. For a separate scene, another beautiful property, Villa Cetinale, near Siena,



Actors Kieran Culkin and Sarah Snook during a scene at Villa La Foce



Inside the 17th-century Villa Cetinale

was on Mark's radar before I was brought on. Ironically, one of my last projects before COVID-19 hit was organizing a large-scale, high-end celebration there that went till dawn. I encouraged them to move forward with the location. I was flattered but felt immense pressure that the owners of two of the villas said they opened their doors only because I was involved. Location work was a new world to me, and I was blown away by how polite, respectful, and appreciative the crew and cast were everywhere we worked.

On set I was known as the Italian Consultant. After securing the locations, I was invited to stay on through filming in June and July, when Italy had safely reopened to travel in a large way, to hold the hands of the owners and advise on everything from the table decor to the type of Champagne a wealthy Anglo-American family would drink (Bollinger, of course). But we had so much fun off the set too. I became a de facto travel adviser to the cast and

crew, who traveled during their time off after a very long production season under tough conditions, calling in reservations at Roman restaurants and advising one cast member what to do with her boyfriend in Puglia. I even managed to score tickets to England's Euro 2020 quarter-final game in Rome. It was wonderful. One of the great joys of being involved in the show was that after such a horrendous year for tourism, when many hotel owners and restaurateurs were on their knees financially, we arrived and suddenly filled their trattorie and hotels with writers, cast, and crew. It was such a happy, fun group of people, who were as delighted to be in Italy as the Italians were to have them there. The perfect tonic to the year prior. AS TOLD TO ERIN FLORIO

SUCCESSION AIRS ON HBO AND STREAMS ON HBO MAX. CATCH THE ROYS IN ITALY IN EPISODES ON DECEMBER 5 AND DECEMBER 12

## THE CAST AND CREW'S FAVORITE SPOTS

### Grand Hotel Tremezzo, Lombardy

"It was so lovely to wake up here every morning while filming on Lake Como. And commuting to work each morning on the villa's private boat was such a treat."

### La Bandita Townhouse, Tuscany

"This stylish country hotel's owner, Jon Voigtman, was heroic in hosting everyone the first night we got to Tuscany. Its restaurant became one of the places the cast and crew would go back to again and again to watch football and be convivial."

### Osteria del Leone, Tuscany

"This charming spot is run by a couple of formidable women, and the crew would go nearly every night while in Bagno Vignoni. They loved it."

### Osteria Le Logge, Tuscany →

"We were based in Siena for a week, so I wrote a little guide to the city with all my favorite places. Consensus was that the carbonara at this little trattoria was the best the cast and crew had ever had."



Tortelli from Osteria Le Logge