

boats decorated with multicoloured lights in the Baia del Silenzio which is followed by fireworks.

## WHERE TO STAY


 **Grand Hotel dei Castelli** (50 rooms) Via Peninsula 26; ☎ 0185 487020; e info@hoteldeicastelli.it; www.hoteldeicastelli.it. Riccardo & Cesarina Gualino, wealthy industrialists from Turin, built their villa on the site of the original castle in 1925. They were friends of Marconi who did many of his radio experiments in the garden. It's a fairy-tale setting but be sure to ask for a room in the old castle. There's a good restaurant & a seawater pool cut into the rock. There's also a beautiful sheltered cove. €€€€

 **Helvetia** (21 rooms) Via Cappuccini 43; ☎ 0185 41175; e helvetia@hotelhelvetia.it; www.hotelhelvetia.it. Excellent family-run hotel that opened in 1925 with a swimming pool. Be sure


to ask for a room with a sea view & a balcony. The hotel overlooks the Baia di Silenzio. €€€€

 **Grand Hotel Villa Balbi** (99 rooms) Viale Rimembranza 1; ☎ 0185 42941; e villabalbi@villabalbi.it; www.villabalbi.it. Built in the 17th century, this hotel has a wonderful frescoed reception. It's on the western side of town with a lovely garden & a very good b/fast. It's popular with tourist groups who get a considerable discount so don't take the price quoted on their website as given & be sure to check out internet prices. €€€


 **Camping Fondeghino** Località Villa La Rocca 59; ☎ 0185 409209. Clean & peaceful tent pitches. €

 **WHERE TO EAT** All along the Riviera di Levante they make a special pasta called *corzetti*, sometimes also called *croxetti*, little disks stamped with designs, often the coat of arms of a noble family. They are a good example of just how localised food in Liguria is as they are rarely seen west of Genoa. Look out for *bianchetti*, little anchovies, wonderful simply fried with oil and lemon. The local dish is *bagnun*, an anchovy soup, and it has its own festival at the end of July. Traditionally, it was eaten by sailors on board ship.

The best ice cream is at **Gelateria Baciollo**, Piazza Matteotti 55. **Panificio Tosi**, Via XXV Aprile 132, makes the best *focaccia*. **Gran Caffè Tritone**, Piazza Bo 1, is the place for a coffee or a drink.

 **Polpo Mario** Via XXV Aprile 163; ☎ 0185 480203; e info@polpomario.com; www.polpomario.com; ⌚ closed Mon. The owner owns his own fishing boat & his is the best fish in town.

It's very popular; many stars inc Brigitte Bardot have eaten here, so book a table. €€€

 **Pizzeria I Due Forni** Viale Dante 73; ☎ 0185 42398. The best pizza in town. €

**SHOPPING** **Balletin Pescheria**, Via Palestro 7-8, salts its own anchovies and sells amazingly fresh fish. **Pasticceria Rossignotti**, Viale Dante 2, is run by the pastry and chocolate kings the Rossignotti who opened here in 1840. Buy their nougat, *torrone*, which is best in the autumn.

Sestri Levante is surrounded by olive trees and the mill **Frantoio Bo** (Via della Chiusa 70; ☎ 0185 481605; www.frantoio-bo.it) makes the best local olive oil. Locals also bring their olives here to be pressed.

**OTHER PRACTICALITIES** There is a **cashpoint** at Via XXV Aprile 176. The **post office** is at Via Fascie 31. There's a **pharmacy** at Viale Roma 76, and the **hospital** is at Via Amaldo Terzi 43a (☎ 0185 4881).

**WHAT TO SEE AND DO** Sestri is really all about enjoying the beach and relaxing. The columned **Basilica di Santa Maria di Nazareth** was designed by Gio Batta Carbone in the early 17th century. Its classical design is unusual for Liguria, and