

### 4 Sestri Levante

Set in a broad flat valley with a long sandy beach and two sheltered bays, Sestri, as the locals call it, has something of a 1950s feel. This might have something to do with the striped umbrellas that dot the beach, the old-style refreshment kiosks, play areas and amusements along the waterfront and the meandering cycle paths where well-dressed ladies pedal with brightly coloured towels in their baskets. Many of the beachfront apartments are owned by Milanese and Genovese families, so you can be sure of a high standard of restaurants, cafes and ice-cream shops in the densely packed historic centre, which sits squeezed between the **Baia del Silenzio** (Bay of Silence) and the **Baia della Favola** (Bay of Fairy Tales), the latter named after fairy-tale author Hans Christian Andersen, who lived in Sestri in the early 19th century.

Aside from the fabulous beachfront, Sestri is surrounded by olive trees, and family owned **Frantoio Bo** ([www.frantoio-bo.it](http://www.frantoio-bo.it); Via della Chiesa 70; ☎8.30am-6pm Mon-Sat) makes some of the finest oil on the Riviera. The top of the line is called Le Due Baie (The Two Bays) and is composed of handpicked Lavagnina, Razzola and Pignola olives.

 [click here](#)

**The Drive** » From Sestri head southeast onto the A12 autostrada for the 42km drive to the Monterosso al Mare. The first 13km are uneventful, but once you exit onto the SS566dir to Monterosso you descend steeply through the forested mountains along an improbable mountain road. The views, across deep valleys to the sea, are superb. There are two car parks on either side of the village: Fegina (€12 per day) and Loreto (€15 per day).