



MALTA

**NO ONE EVER
CONQUERED US**

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Mdina, wedding guests wait for the bride at the entrance to St. Paul's Cathedral.

Knights, businesspeople and artists: a journey through the lives of the well-to-do in the EU's smallest country

Malta is not only Europe's bank. Four years on from the murder of journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia, if you dig a little deeper, beyond the corruption and property speculation, another country can be found. A country that is more honest, populated by a lively and cosmopolitan polite society, composed of aristocrats, artists, architects and business people. These are the heirs of the knights who, following their arrival from the Old Continent, have ruled over this rock that is little larger than the island of Elba (but with half a million inhabitants) for almost three centuries. They built their capital Valetta from nothing as "a city created by gentlemen for gentlemen".

Today that rock located sixty miles from Sicily is a member of the European Union and in recent years has achieved record growth, thanks to an advantageous tax system and numerous businesses located in the country. "We don't have natural resources, we are tiny" explains architect Konrad Buhagiar, "and political decisions have always been made very quickly. Also with questionable ethics." The island had been intended to become the Singapore of the Mediterranean, but many compare it more to Beirut in Lebanon. "The Phoenicians were, in fact, the first to colonise Malta," explains marquis Nicholas De Piro, "followed by the Romans, then the Arabs, the Spanish and the English. They all passed here but the truth is that no one truly conquered us. And today not even we know who we really are."



St. Julian's, youngsters play basketball on a court overlooking St. George's Bay.



Gozo, artist SJ Fuerst in her studio. Originally from the US, SJ has lived for years with her partner on the island of Gozo.



Valletta, friends enjoy a dinner together on the terrace of the home of well-known architect Konrad Buhagiar (centre, wearing a checked shirt).



Bugibba, St. Paul's Bay: legend has it that it was here that Paul the Apostle was shipwrecked on his way from the Holy Land to Rome.



Mriehel, Louis A. Farrugia at the premises of the Farsons brewery, which produces the local beer Cisk. The portrait depicts his father Lewis V. Farrugia, who founded the company at the end of the 1920s.



Valletta, men transport a statue of St. Dominic, which was not used in 2020 because of the Covid-19 emergency (the much loved feast of St. Dominic is usually held on 30 July).



Sliema, a young couple relax on the dockside while fireworks explode over Valetta.



Marfa Bay, friends chat during a Sunday lunch at the Hola Beach Club.



Gozo, lawyer Giannella de Marco in her seaside home. Gianella is the daughter of Guido de Marco, who served as President of the Republic from 1999 to 2004.



Bugibba, old and new buildings face onto St. Paul's Bay, where legend has it Paul the Apostle was shipwrecked on his way from the Holy Land to Rome.



Naxxar, Justine Pergola checks her phone in a room of Palazzo Parisio, which she owns together with her mother, Baroness Christiane Ramsay Scicluna.



Mđina, wedding guests leave St. Pauls' Cathedral at the end of the ceremony.



Mdina, a horse-drawn carriage travels through the streets of the historic centre.



St. Julian's, the Westin Dragonara Resort, businessman Claude Zammit Trevisan chats with two friends (on his left, Vanessa Frazier, Malta's ambassador to the UN).



Valletta, a couple walk along the streets of the historic centre in the evening. In the background is the dome of the Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.



St. Julian's, two ladies chat at the exclusive Reef Club.



Valletta, an employee checks the books at the National Library of Malta.



St. Julian's, the entrance to Palazzo Dragonara. Once the residence of the Scicluna family, it has now been transformed into a casino.



Valletta, personal photographs at the Casa Rocca Piccola: the picture on the right shows marquis Nicholas De Piro, a member of the Knights of Malta.



Sliema, a view of Balluta Bay, in the background is the Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.



Kalkara, a young woman works in an office in the SmartCity Malta complex.



Valletta, after an evening event, two friends walk along Liesse Street.



Attard, Jasper de Trafford plays with one of his dogs in the garden of his residence, Villa Bologna, built in 1745.



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