

Selin Yeninci’s Terra Amara Italian love affair

Posted on May 12, 2026 by Angelica Peruzzi

CANNES, France — Selin Yeninci did not set out to become a recognised face on Italian television. The acclaimed Turkish actress and film producer, best known internationally for her role as Saniye in the hit drama *Terra Amara* (Bitter Land), arrived in Italy as a fan and left as a phenomenon. Twice invited onto Mediaset’s *Verissimo*, she was received with a warmth that surprised even her. Italy Now spoke to her at the World Woman Foundation in Cannes, where she reflected on Mediterranean kinship and why she is already dreaming of an Italian co-production.

Q. Tell us about *Terra Amara*.

“*Terra Amara* is a hit Turkish TV drama that I starred in between 2018 and 2023. The character I played, Saniye, became quite iconic globally. Italian audiences loved her so much. I appeared in 121 episodes of the show. It was an enormous amount of work and dedication. I was working in a very intense and highly disciplined way during that time. I think that’s also why Italian audiences connected with it so deeply, because our cultures are actually very similar.”

Q. What surprised you the most about how much acclaim *Terra Amara* received in Italy?

“There were some moments in Italy that really surprised me as an actress. The first one happened while I was jogging along the Amalfi Coast around 6:30 in the morning. A mother and daughter started running after me, screaming with excitement. I stopped in panic and I asked if they needed help with something, but they just wanted to take a photo. That was the moment I realized how popular *Terra Amara* really is in Italy.

The second moment happened during an evening I spent in Naples. The owner of a local cafe bar

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recognized me and immediately FaceTimed his mother. She was a huge fan of mine and loved the series. Within 20 minutes both his mother and grandmother came to see me in person. The owner turned to me and said, ‘my grandmother has never come to my cafe before. So I’m very happy because she finally came thanks to you’ “.

Q. What was the question that most surprised you when you were being asked questions by Italians at Mediaset?

“Italian television surprised me in this regard. They had done one of the most detailed research about me that anyone has ever done. They had prepared nearly 40 questions and when I saw them, I realised how much they knew about my life, even from my childhood. Honestly, I don’t think most of that information exists on the internet. I felt very emotional because I come from a more humble background. I built my entire career through hard work, discipline, and by protecting my dignity and values. The questions I asked, everything from my mother being a single mom to personal ethical values, deeply touched me.”



Selin on the Terra Amara set (*Credits: Selin Yenincı*)

Q. You spent some time on the ground really soaking up the culture, traveling around Italy. What did

you do?

“I’m a huge fan of Italy. I visited Rome and absolutely fell in love with it. I also saw Milan, Florence and Venice and once again, I was deeply impressed, especially by Florence because I’m passionate about museums and arts.

Italy gave me so much inspiration. I hope that one day I will create a project that can become a hit in Italy as well, maybe it could be an international co-production between Italy and Turkey, but I would love to be the creator of such a beautiful project and bring even more meaningful stories to Italian audiences.”



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