

TRAVEL + LEISURE

THE
EUROPE
ISSUE

TRAVEL SOLUTIONS

AIRFARE
SECRETS
EASY WAYS
TO SAVE

+
BEST NEW
SMALL HOTELS



*ITALY'S
BEST NEW
SMALL
HOTELS*

FROM PIEDMONT TO
SICILY, 10 STYLISH
PROPERTIES—MANY
FAMILY-RUN—
ARE DELIVERING ON
BOTH AUTHENTICITY
AND INTIMACY.
VALERIE WATERHOUSE
CHECKS IN.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY
ANNIE SCHLECHTER



CASA CUSENI

Taormina, Sicily

Yorkshire painter Robert Hawthorn Kitson commissioned Frank Brangwyn, a William Morris protégé, to build this hillside Arts and Crafts villa, which was finished in 1907. During World War II, locals squirreled away Kitson's collections—ranging from ancient Roman vases to Persian carpets—restoring it all upon his return. Today, Cuseni is in the hands of Mimma Cundari, the former custodian's daughter, and her husband, Francesco Spadaro, who run it as a museum and inn. Three of the five modest but tasteful rooms have shared bathrooms—a small price to pay for access to the villa's terraced gardens, with their wisteria-draped pergolas and views of Mount Etna and the Ionian Sea. casacuseni.com. \$

HOTEL MONTEVERDI

Castiglioncello del Trinoro, Tuscany

Not everyone would have the guts or vision to convert part of a crumbling, 12th-century village at the end of a bumpy dirt road into a contemporary Tuscan retreat. But when American lawyer Michael Cioffi discovered Castiglioncello del Trinoro (population 25), just south of Montepulciano, that's exactly what he decided to do. Celebrated Roman interior designer Ilaria Miani brought her rustic-meets-modern aesthetic—reclaimed-wood-beamed ceilings; C&C Milano linens; Carrara-marble bathrooms—to the 10-room hotel and three rental villas. Also in the hamlet: a standout farm-to-table restaurant (order the lavender risotto) and small gallery showing works by artists-in-residence. monteverdituscany.com. \$\$\$

CASTELLO DI CASOLE—A TIMBERS RESORT

Casole d'Elsa, Tuscany

Film director Luchino Visconti once lived in this 10th-century castle—now a luxurious hotel that draws a well-heeled crowd in search of peace and quiet. You won't, however, be short on things to do. The attentive staff can

arrange everything from a guided mountain-bike ride to San Gimignano to a honey-and-olive-oil massage on the 4,200-acre estate, where the old wine cellar is now a spa. The upscale Ristorante Tosca specializes in regional dishes (thick Florentine steak for two), while the more casual trattoria, Pazzia, serves thin-crust pies baked in a 200-year-old wood-fired oven. In a nod to the region, the 41 suites have earthy color schemes, brick arches, and thoughtful details such as alabaster boxes handcrafted in Volterra. castellodicasole.com. \$\$\$\$

1865 RESIDENZA D'EPOCA

Florence, Tuscany

Florentine mezzo-soprano Cinzia Borsotti and her Belgian husband, Michel Sabatino, saw the need for an elegant guesthouse in the Mattonaia zone. The two then set about converting the second floor of an 1865 town house into a chic oasis. Guido Ciompi—who has designed Gucci boutiques across Italy—styled the five rooms, each inspired by an author who once lived in Florence. “Fyodor Dostoyevsky” has a bed swathed in purple velvet; “Henry James” has cream-colored silk curtains and a claw-foot tub. There's no restaurant, but the famous Sant'Ambrogio market is steps away, and drinks are always available in the living room. 1865.it. \$\$\$





Clockwise from top left:
The grounds of Castello di Casole—a Timbers Resort, in Tuscany; spaghetti with veal meatballs at Ristorante, at the Bastianich family's Orsone Ristorante e B&B, in Friuli; an Orsone mixologist; the lobby at Castello di Casole. Opposite: A guest room at Orsone.

