



Discover all Apulia
has to offer
besides the sea
by staying in the old
masseria farmhouses
converted into elegant
guest houses

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MASSERIE

Hospitality in the charming farmhouses of Apulia

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► Built in the 12th century, when the Normans imposed a feudal order to maintain control of the territory and prevent the feudatories from gaining too much power, for centuries the *masserie* of Apulia were **perfectly self-contained microcosms**. They were protected by high walls, built around a large courtyard, with a **main house, the massaro's house, a small church, water cistern, stable, and haylofts**. Still today they represent the **umbilical cord between land, man and labour**, a combination of functional architecture and farming, which for centuries was totally self-sufficient. It was not until the late 18th century, when the middle class emerged, that the rural *domus* gradually became a **country residence** and, ultimately, in the past thirty years, a **refined maison d'hôtes**, a new evolution in the concept of the guest house and five-star luxury.

Standing a short distance from that sea which bridges West and East, many of the old farmhouses on the Apulian landed estates, gently besieged by **ancient olive trees and vineyards**, have been converted into guest houses. Their shapes, colours and flavours have remained intact, like **their ties to the past**, to their roots, to their agricultural traditions. They are not simply hotels, but a **composite experience made of silence, sensorial exaltation and archaic elements**, in a context that is rural yet chic. A **new concept of relaxation**, born of direct ties with the history, smells, sounds and shapes of unspoilt nature, in which the good food and wine that these *masserie* still produce and offer today, always play an important role.

This is a journey to discover a region, Apulia, that offers much more than the sea: it is an encounter between past and present, tradition and innovation, **rich in awe-inspiring atmospheres**. The *masserie* hotels published in this book are living museums of rural civilisation, and each expresses its own delightful form of hospitality: each with its individual history of architecture, country life and human experience.

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