



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.