

ragazzi & palazzi

Lydia Bell surveys the boot and finds 10 luxe new places to stay with friends or la famiglia, from palatial opulence to hilltown simplicity.

MOVING MOUNTAIN

San Lorenzo Mountain Lodge, Dolomites.

Opposite top: rooms at the Aman Canal Grande Venice feature frescoed ceilings and guests enter from the canal through water gates.

Bottom: JK Place Roma.





the granddaughter of Gaetano Savini, the founder of the Brioni fashion house.
 We love: The goat-stable-turned-wine-cellar with a 300-year-old key and 1500 bottles of mainly regional wine. From \$3680 per day for two people, \$154 per additional adult, \$77 per additional child; includes breakfast, afternoon tea, dinner and non-alcoholic drinks. Sleeps 10. Località Elle 23, San Lorenzo di Sebato, Bolzano, sanlorenzomountainlodge.com

MONTEVERDI, TUSCANY

Best for: Cultural immersion. Monteverdi comprises three villas and a bijou, seven-room hotel perched on a hill in the village of Castiglioncello del Trinoro, in a Siennese landscape immortalised in generations of Renaissance paintings. Nostalgic Italian-American lawyer Michael Cioffi has spent 12 years raising

this hamlet from the dead, including the restoration of a 12th-century chapel. His aim was to create a "cultural sanctuary", and it's a surprisingly busy place. There's the Caffè Monteverdi with a farm-to-table menu under the direction of Locanda Locatelli-trained chef, Paolo Coluccio, and the fine-dining restaurant, Oreade, which opened late last year. Former Frieze Art Fair curator, Sarah McCrory, runs an artists and scholars-in-residence program here; the inaugural exhibition at the Monteverdi Gallery held in September exhibited works by Turner Prize nominee Marvin Gaye Chetwynd. And the University of Siena is working on an Etruscan and Siennese archaeological dig nearby. We love: Dinner at Oreade features the likes of antipasti, wild boar ragù pappardelle, pistachio-crusted tenderloin pork and lavender ice-cream. Hotel rooms from \$575

per night, villas from \$9,200 per week, including breakfast. Via di Mezzo, Castiglioncello del Trinoro, Sarteano, Siena, monteverdituscany.com

JK PLACE ROMA, ROME

Best for: Big-city sophistication. New hotels are rare in the Eternal City, so last year's opening of JK Place Roma, just off the Via Condotti, turned heads. It has the same DNA as its sultry sister hotels in Capri and Florence, imparted by architect Michele Bönan, who has created a classically beautiful bolthole behind a 17th-century façade. Thirty rooms and suites in kingfisher green and charcoal grey have fireplaces, wood panelling and Carrara marble bathrooms, with a mix of antiques and bespoke furniture and extras include in-room massages and a personal trainer. The JK Café Bar pays homage to Roman classics such as spaghetti alla carbonara. We love: The rooftop bar and lounge garden with views is open to locals and screens Fellini classics. Rooms from \$1,071 per night including breakfast. Via di Monted'Oro, Rome; jkroma.com

AZZURRA, SICILY

Best for: Island exploration. This elegant stone villa in a secluded spot on Sicily's east coast was built in the 1970s by the Benanti family, who make wine near Mount Etna. They decided to lease their home for holiday rental last year, making this a perfect base from which to stroll to cafés and the 15th-century fortress of Brucoli. There are beaches and grottos nearby, and it's a 30-minute drive north to Syracuse and its buzzing island centre, Ortygia. The villa sleeps six and has a sea-view terrace, shaded pergolas, a lawned garden and a stone jacuzzi overlooking the Bay of Brucoli and Etna. Swim in the Med from a private jetty. We love: I Rizzari fish restaurant in Brucoli will deliver and collect diners by boat for lunch and dinner. From \$5,866 per week. Azzurra, Brucoli, thethinkingtraveller.com

ST REGIS FLORENCE

Best for: Interiors aesthetes. Every palazzo has a story and this one is exceptional. Formerly the Grand Hotel Florence, the first luxury hotel in Florence, it was designed in 1432 by Filippo Brunelleschi, best known as the architect of the city's remarkable cathedral. After a major overhaul to restore its grandeur, the hotel reopened a few years ago as the St Regis, full of frescoes and glass chandeliers, ornate fabrics and custom-designed furniture. The 81 rooms and 19 suites overlook the fabled Arno River and Florentine hills, and its restaurant, Etichetta Pinchiorri, is an offshoot of the famed fine-diner Enoteca Pinchiorri. Downtime between gallery viewings can be snatched at the Iridium Spa Suites featuring grey Florentine marble and mosaics. We love: The Art Unveiled program where guests get behind-the-scenes access to top cultural sites and elite events not available to the public – that's us at the Uffizi's back door. Rooms from \$460 per night. Piazza Ognissanti, Florence; stregisflorence.com

LA BANDITA TOWNHOUSE, TUSCANY

Best for: A Tuscan idyll. This pied-à-terre is the sister property to La Bandita Countryhouse, aboutique hotel that was an instant hit when it opened seven years ago in a nature reserve in Val D'Orcia. Last year, owner John Voigtman opened a centro storico version of his Tuscan dream in a former palazzo and convent in Pienza, one of the region's most beautiful hill towns. Within stone walls and under beamed ceilings are 12 rooms styled with Busatti linen, Ortigia bath products, flatscreen TVs and Riccardo Barthel distressed-leather armchairs. The onsite Townhouse Caffè serves favourites such as pea and burrata bruschetta, and ricotta-stuffed zucchini flowers, and kids under five eat for free. We love: The honesty bar operates all hours and laundry is gratis for stays of three nights or longer. From \$300 per night including breakfast. 111 Corso Rossellino, Pienza, Tuscany, labanditatownhouse.com