

TOWN & COUNTRY

TRAVEL

SPRING/SUMMER 2015

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ANCIENT ABODE

Clockwise from right: A room with timbered ceilings at Sextantio; the hotel's chef makes pasta; local olive oil from Borgo Egnazia.

CALM AND COLLECTED

Borgo Egnazia's pool, surrounded by lemon trees and herbs. Below: Su Gologone's Bar Magico Tablao.



Italian RENAISSANCE

Certain areas of Italy attract mobs who return year after year, but a slew of boutique hotels in lesser-known provinces are luring visitors with a hyperlocal charm of their own. BY ADAM BAER

SEXTANTIO ALBERGO DIFFUSO Abruzzo

Italian cement scion Daniele Kihlgrén has repurposed an almost abandoned hillside town and turned it into a meandering hotel. At Sextantio, medieval houses are now cozy rooms, stone paths serve as hallways, and ancient archways decorate the restaurant. Some residents remain, and shop proprietors are eager to reminisce about the village's woolmaking days. (Tourism is now the town's main source of income.) But the best thing about being in Italy's Apennine Mountains—part of one of Europe's largest protected areas—is that the local fare includes lamb and wild game like hare, Italy's best saffron, and actual Montepulciano d'Abruzzo. Rooms from \$174, sextantio.it

RELAIS BLU Campania

Perched above Punta Campanella, the tip of the Sorrento Peninsula,

this midcentury complex is the former home of an architect who wanted to enjoy Amalfi Coast views without the crowds. Sorrento limoncello and Negronis are must-orders here, and they're even better at the figure eight-shaped pool, which sits on a promontory with drop-dead views of the Bay of Naples. Lounging here, you'll see why Homer chose this picturesque part of Italy for Odysseus's encounter with the Sirens. Rooms from \$226, relaisblu.com

SU GOLOGONE Sardinia

The best feature of this hidden country mansion is the *agriturismo*-style restaurant, which serves meals of spit-roasted pig, sharp pecorino, and fried ravioli with honey, accompanied by Cannonau wine and myrtleberry

liqueur. Explorers should take the short drive to the hiking-friendly Sardinian shore, where you can also rent boats to go to the white sand beaches near Cala Gonone, the setting for Guy Ritchie's *Sweet Away*. Rooms from \$197, sugologone.it

BORGO EGNAZIA Puglia

On a quieter stretch of the popular Adriatic seaside, this white-on-white resort is beloved for its privacy. (Justin Timberlake and

Jessica Biel wed here.) With 184 rooms and 28 villas, it's particularly well suited for larger broods; children can learn how to make pasta at the kids club while their overworked parents head for the tremendous spa, with its lemon-and-olive-oil treatments and Roman-style baths. Rooms from \$254, borgoegnazia.com

SANTAVENERE Basilicata

Italy's former royals love this intimate resort, located in a southern Italian region known for rich burrata. Now they have two more reasons to come back: a new spa with gazebos and Turkish baths, and updated rooms, each with a balcony facing the mountains or sea. The area is full of gems: hidden caves, a crumbling temple, and a village with a Rio-esque statue of Christ the Redeemer. Rooms from \$150, hotelsantavenere.com

