

**Client:** Borgo Egnazia  
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## The Cut // Travel

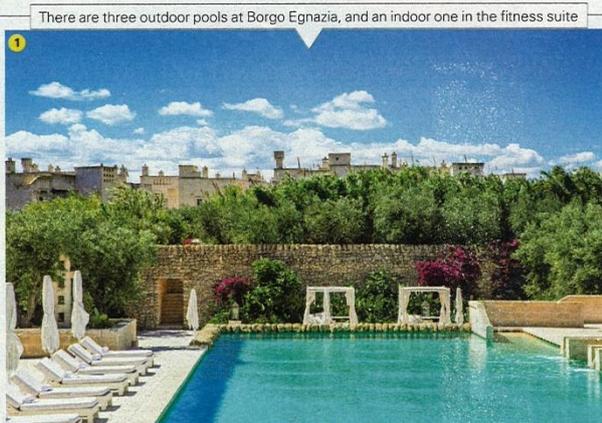


Francesca  
Syz

### 1. BORGO EGNAZIA, SAVELLETRI

Italy is renowned for fashionable exports. Glamour oozes from Milan, down through Rome to Sorrento, Capri and the Amalfi Coast: all hotspots for those accustomed to the best in life. But Puglia, the heel in Italy's boot, offsets this reputation for refinement with its rural charm. The landscape is peppered with rippling olive groves flecked with cacti, and *trulli* – Unesco-protected, cone-shaped farm stores native to the region. This is Italy at its most rustic. Well, almost.

There are three million olive trees here and for thousands of years the regional economy revolved around olives, but between the ancient trees and tracks, a thriving tourist economy has now grown. Borgo Egnazia is like a



There are three outdoor pools at Borgo Egnazia, and an indoor one in the fitness suite

# Paradiso Pugliese

Traditional local culture with added luxury in southern Italy

traditional Puglian village with a Hollywood state of mind. Built from scratch seven years ago – though its winding streets and mellow stone would have you think otherwise – it represents village life with all the mod cons. A small hotel is surrounded by apartments, *casette* and luxury villas, all available to rent individually – or you can take the whole lot, as Justin Timberlake and Jessica Biel did when they chose Borgo for their wedding in 2012.

Everywhere you look, sun-ripened fruit, grain and vegetables sit in artfully curated jute sacks, a cornucopia of fresh harvest offerings spill from

wooden carts, and local experts on pretty much everything – their uniform a chic variation on traditional dress – are always at hand. At the heart of the complex, Borgo Egnazia's restaurant, Due Camini, offers a gourmet menu of local produce inspired by the Puglian *cucina povera*. Below ground is the Vair spa, where the team of therapists includes psychologists and musicians.

While one could happily remain in Borgo's bucolic surroundings, there's a beach club to be explored a five-minute buggy ride away, or a 10-minute stroll along a path across the hotel's 18-hole golf course. Here, you'll find the excellent seafood restaurant Pescheria da Vito, with a menu brimming over with the freshest octopus, langoustine, lobster and sea bass – depending on the day's catch. Like everything else here, it feels like a perfectly considered Puglian idyll has been realised.

—Robbie Hodges

### 2. LA FIERMONTINA URBAN RESORT

The Parisian owner of this lovely hotel within the historic city walls of Lecce was very much inspired by his glamorous grandmother, who came from here and was a muse for two sculptors,



both of whom she married. You'll find their sculptures – and other interesting art – everywhere. Once a 17th-century private home, today La Fiermontina has 18 spacious bedrooms with vaulted ceilings, many of them with terraces or access to the garden, and all soothingly minimalist in a style that is part Paris, part Puglia. Outside, an extensive garden filled with orange trees makes it hard to believe that you're still in the city, while a pool set a little way from the house is a heavenly spot to retreat to. In the dining rooms (or beneath the orange trees in fine weather), the dishes served are traditional Puglian with a modern twist. — FS

#### BORGO EGNAZIA

Black Tomato (blacktomato.com) offers four nights b&b from £1,750 per person including return flights from London Gatwick to Bari. Airport with BA and private transfers. Open all year round (borgoegnazia.com).

#### LA FIERMONTINA

Doubles from about £215 (lafiermontina.com)

