

# Travel

Page

**'The lack of tourists is blissful; no selfie-stick-wielding hordes, no coaches clogging the roads'**

Ben Clatworthy enjoys a quieter Lanzarote

3 Hotel Les Roches Blanches in Cassis



Look  
ahead  
Trips for  
2021

## 30 romantic hotels in the Med

Sultry Italian island retreats, chic French castles and cosy Cretan cottages — Susan d'Arcy picks the most loved-up places to stay

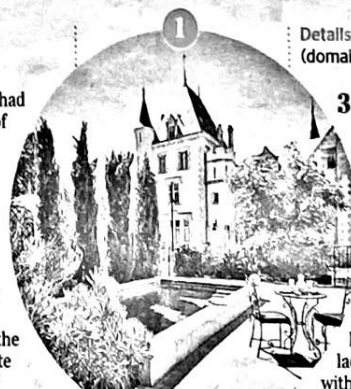
### FRANCE

#### 1 Château Les Carrasses Languedoc

This turreted 19th-century castle sets the right tone for romance. As do its luscious suites: whitewashed beams, dinosaur-egg baths, original fireplaces and elaborate chandeliers. Explore Narbonne and its wide-open coastline (good for windsurfing), or bob about in the hotel's infinity pool overlooking vine-clad hills and let afternoons drift by in its winter-garden library, thought to have been designed by Gustave Eiffel. Details Doubles from £125, room only (lescarrasses.com). Fly to Perpignan or Montpellier

#### 2 Domaine de Biar Montpellier

This wedding-cake château has had a whimsical makeover, worthy of its belle époque architecture. Rooms are named after significant characters in the building's history. The scarlet shades of Henriette are in honour of a former owner's daughter who established the Red Cross in Montpellier, while Taison's lean muscular design was inspired by a stallion from the estate's stable of Camargue white horses. Explore the 125 acres of grounds in the saddle or go a step further with a horse-whispering class.



Château Les Carrasses in Languedoc

Details Doubles from £125, B&B (domainedebiar.com). Fly to Montpellier

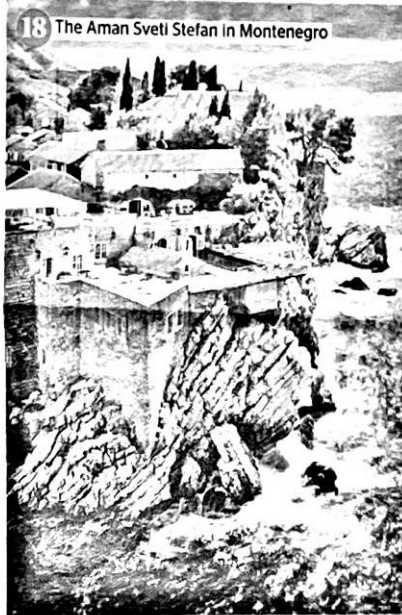
#### 3 Hotel Les Roches Blanches Cassis

In its 1930s heyday this seafront mansion was a favourite hideaway of Edith Piaf, and after a recent meticulous renovation, you will regret rien about a stay here. The updated art deco bedrooms are indecently decadent: eye-catching headboards with brass and black lacquer geometric panels contrast with the tactile taupe velvet furniture. Outdoors is also loaded with wow factor. Terraced gardens studded with ▶





TIAGO DE PAULA CAPYVALHO/ISTO SS



## PORTUGAL

## 11 Grand House

## Algarve

This grande dame was the Algarve's original luxury hotel, and a recent facelift means that it's back to its Roaring Twenties best. Public areas are nautical but nice, its beach club sizzles spectacularly, and its bedrooms are decorated in shades of champagne, with intricate corning and glinting crystal chandeliers. Its location is centre stage in Vila Real de Santo Antonio, a sleepy historic town that overlooks the Guadiana River, which separates Portugal from Spain. Faro is 50 minutes' drive to the west and Seville two hours to the east.

Details Doubles from £175, B&B (grandhousealgarve.com). Fly to Faro

## 12 Fazenda Nova Tavira

Yes, they welcome children here, but only during Easter and July. For the rest of the year this stylish reinvention of a 19th-century farmhouse is strictly for those old enough to appreciate its well-stocked vinyl library, stylish zebra

rugs that swank up its rustic interiors, calm bedrooms and very cool saltwater pool. Tavira, the Algarve's prettiest town, is on your doorstep, as are the biscuity beaches and pink flamingos of Ria Formosa Natural Park. Details Doubles from £195, B&B (fazendanova.eu). Fly to Faro

## ITALY

## 13 Petra Segreta

## Sardinia

The Bergerettos is a marriage made in hospitality heaven. Luigi is an award-winning chef, Rosella a renowned architect, and their conversion of a traditional farmhouse is enchanting. That it is also hidden away in the hills above the Costa Smeralda, arguably the Med's most glamorous coast, gives it extra kudos. The 25 bedrooms are subtly seductive, with lots of billowing muslin and delicately carved woods, and, of course, the dining is top-notch. Details Doubles from £145, B&B (petrasegretaresort.com). Fly to Olbia

## 14 Le Sirenuse

## Amalfi Coast

This Positano landmark is so full of Italian exuberance that even the most uptight Brits enjoy being serenaded by the band of old-timer musicians shamelessly hamming it up every night in the hotel's candlelit restaurant. Bedrooms share that carefree joy, with dazzling white walls, handmade Vietri tiles, antique furniture and elegant wrought-iron balconies that overlook the town's pastel-coloured houses and photogenic duomo. As Dean Martin might have said back in the day, that's amore. Details Doubles from £395, B&B (sirenuse.it). Fly to Naples

## 15 Palazzo Presta

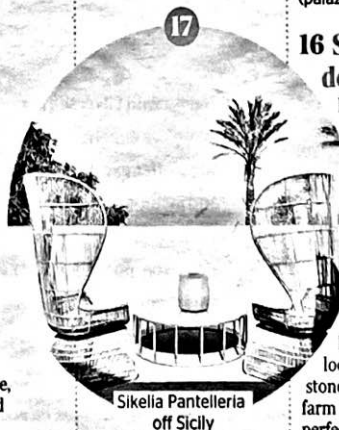
## Puglia

Unlucky thirteen? Not in the least at this under-the-radar gem in Gallipoli, where the ten rooms in the 17th-century palazzo and three in a nearby annexe are as over-the-top as an Italian starlet. Decorated in rich reds and moody blues, they are fairy-dusted with quirky ornaments collected from across the globe. After lazy breakfasts on the roof terrace, days are spent sunbathing on the town's golden beaches and nights whiled away in the hotel's speakeasy-style library bar. Details Doubles from £90, B&B (palazzopresta.it). Fly to Brindisi

## 16 Sextantio Le Grotte

## della Civita Puglia

Matera is a Unesco-protected settlement dating from the Stone Age and famous for its "sassi" (atmospheric cave dwellings). Many have been transformed into upmarket restaurants, boutique shops and hotels, including this authentically upgraded bolt hole. Each room is lit by candles, beds are rustic wooden numbers, linens are handmade on traditional looms, and bathrooms have upcycled stone troughs as basins and rickety farm ladders as towel racks. The perfect setting to release your inner caveman (or woman). Details Doubles from £200, B&B (sextantio.it). Fly to Bari



## 17 Sikellia Pantelleria

## Sicily

Giorgio Armani has a home on starkly beautiful Pantelleria, the volcanic island that belongs to Sicily but lies closer to the Tunisian coast. It is an intriguing mix of European, Arabic and African influences, so Sikellia's 20 suites — converted from ancient domed stone houses — look more Moroccan than European, but their dimly lit, dramatic interiors exude understated Italian chic. The wellness offering is a suitably sensual experience: hot springs, mud baths and caves upcycled as natural saunas.

Details Doubles from £315, B&B (sikelliapantelleria.com). Fly to Trapani

## MONTENEGRO

## 18 Aman Sveti Stefan

## Budva

The tiny fortified island village of Sveti Stefan rises off the Montenegrin coast just along from Kotor. It's a dreamy pink confection, with 50 exquisite rooms and suites in 15th-century fishermen's cottages that have been renovated by the master of understated luxury, Aman. It's shockingly expensive, but such a rare and special place that, if you can afford it, you won't be disappointed.

Details Doubles from £900, B&B (aman.com). Fly to Tivat

## MALTA

## 19 Iniala Harbour

## House Valletta

This is one of 2020's most eagerly awaited new hotels, and when it opens this month it will set a new benchmark for Malta. Its 23 box-fresh bedrooms are spread across four 17th-century townhouses and cater for all tastes, from low-key minimalist to lavishly maximalist. It has a very cool pool in a restored vault and expertly crafted cocktails at its rooftop bar, with views over Valletta's Grand Harbour. Details Doubles from £302, B&B (iniala.com). Fly to Valletta

## GREECE

## 20 Soho Roc House

## Mykonos

Soho House's laid-back luxe is completely in sync with the island's fun-loving boho vibe. So decor manages a sexy pas de deux between organic purity (warm-toned plaster walls, sensuous drapes of linen and tasselled hammocks) and barefoot hedonism, courtesy of DJ sets celebrating the transcendental power of music, alfresco massages and moreish cocktails at its beach bar. The bar is also, happily, the best spot to soak up the island's glorious sunsets. Details Doubles from £190, B&B (sohohouse.com). Fly to Mykonos

## 21 Kapsaliana

## Village Hotel Crete

Abandoned in the 1950s, this soulful 17th-century hilltop hamlet has been rescued and revived in consummate style. The 22 rooms fashioned from crumbling cottages retain their craggy charm, with chunky walls, wood-beamed ceilings and open fireplaces, although

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