

Condé Nast Traveller



APRIL 2021 £4.95

DIVE BACK IN

PAROS
SICILY
ANDALUCIA
NAPLES
PARIS
TUSCANY
PORTUGAL

WHERE TO STAY

EBBIO, TUSCANY

In the middle of an evergreen forest, on an extinct volcano that was once sacred to Etruscans, this 13th-century farm is the labour of love of one extremely determined woman. Francesca Bevilacqua bought it in 1989 in a state of total abandonment. After trips to India and a change of diet and lifestyle, she decided in her mid-40s to create a community where people could share her passions. She devoted herself to the study of nutritional science, vegetarianism and alternative healing practices, and the foundations of Ebbio were built. Five years ago her daughter Sibilla untangled herself from a career in fashion and joined the team. She has an intrinsic understanding not only of the essence of her mother's vision, but also of the way in which its values resonate with her own generation. So Ebbio has evolved into one of the most soulful wellness retreats of its kind. The restored house has nine bedrooms, filled with antiques, pieces by upcoming artists and natural fabrics, the earthy palette echoing the rolling Tuscan landscape. The space hosts yoga, meditation and creative workshops. You might eat from exquisite Ginori porcelain, but you're also just as likely to get your hands dirty picking vegetables and tending to the animals. The estate can be foraged for porcini and wild little sprouts, while rich olive oil, fruit and eggs come from the organic farm. Consideration for the surroundings goes without saying here, so composting, greywater reuse and biomass heating are part of the fabric of the place. An authentic agriturismo with sustainable integrity and a big heart. **BENEDETTA ROSSI ALBINI**
BOOK IT Six-night yoga retreats from about £1,330. ebbio.it



PARCO DEI SESI, PANTELLERIA

The island of Pantelleria, about a 50-minute flight from Sicily, merges southern Italian and northern African flavours, colours and influences.

Intrepid international residents cruise around in battered Citroën Méhanis. From almost every point, there are 360-degree sea views, craggy cliffs and domed-roof buildings. Bewitching, filmic, quite unlike any other Mediterranean sun spot. It's this magic that drew Parisian Margot Guelfi and Milanese Sicilian Massimiliano Panseca to drop the city whirl for something more meaningful. The couple set up Parco dei Sesi as an organic farm among the megalithic stone villages of an archaeological park. Traditional dammuso houses have been reimagined with effortless stripped-back style. Thick walls are tactile with bare plaster; vintage furniture from French brocantes decorates bedrooms; in-built stone benches and bed platforms are softened with muted mustard throws; woven lampshades swing in the breeze. Though all of that is really just the backdrop for the food. Chickens scratch around the grounds, and the goats that provide the fresh cheese and milk were a birthday present for ex-model agent Guelfi. Panseca knocks up aperitivos of passito raisin wine, tomatoes from the garden, sardines, capers and rye bread. Don't expect room service or whipper-fast Wi-Fi. Life here is simpler than that. There's yoga to take part in, rocky beaches and sparkling bays to scout out and zero-miles feasts for dinner with the owners and other guests, where talk will inevitably turn to the long-term impact of the place, empowering local businesses and reducing plastic usage. It's an enchanting off-the-map escape where a centuries-old natural way of living is championed as a new adventure. **LAUREN AMANDA TAYLOR**
BOOK IT Doubles from about £115. parcodeisesi.com