



THE
HOT
LIST
2006
UK &
EUROPE



SEXTANTIO ALBERGO DIFFUSO Abruzzo

UNDER
£150

Sextantio is not the first semi-abandoned hamlet in Italy to convert its houses into guest accommodation, but it is easily the most striking. Santo Stefano di Sassanio is a remarkably intact mountain village, a warren of cobbled lanes and steps. Italian-Swedish entrepreneur Daniele Kihlgren began to buy up houses here in 2000, and now owns a third of the village. But Kihlgren is no crass hotel baron: he reckons that the best tribute to those who eked out a living here

is to leave things exactly as they were. The accommodation currently consists of six rooms in the Renaissance Palazzo delle Logge; others will be ready by summer. With their unwieldy iron keys, smoke-blackened walls, uneven floors and low ceilings, these are not your average luxury suites. The only contemporary design details are the bathroom fittings, under-floor heating and remote-controlled lights. Breakfast includes home-made jams and freshly baked bread; another nice touch is the complimentary

bottle of ratafia (a fruit-spiked liqueur) that awaits guests in their rooms. There's a restaurant and conference centre, and Kihlgren plans to add a spa and a range of craft workshops.

WHEN TO GO In summer for the fresh mountain air; in winter for skiing.

ROOM TO BOOK The top room in Palazzo delle Logge, with its bedroom bathtub.

Santo Stefano di Sassanio, Abruzzo, Italy (00 39 085 497.2324; www.sextantio.it).

Doubles from €140

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