

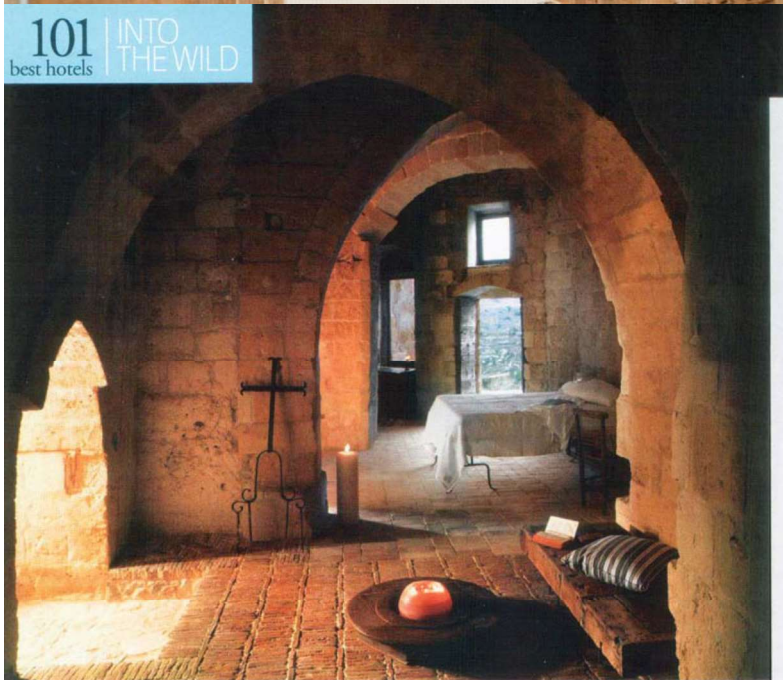
TATLER

Starring
the 101 best
hotels in
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Travel Guide 2010

101
best hotels

INTO
THE WILD



Sassi di Matera

Matera, Italy

For the whole history of mankind this area has been an embarrassment to Italy: a mass of ancient caves filled with the poor and destitute as recently as the Fifties. And then, four years ago, German entrepreneur Margaret Berg came across them and set about changing the 9,000-year-old troglodyte settlement into the most wonderful eco hotel in the world. No flatscreens, no BlackBerry reception, hardly any electric light – frankly there are hardly any windows. This is about an extravagance of experience – you may not have a pillow menu but there are falcons dipping into the ravines outside. It's all very tactile – you find yourself feeling your way around the pockmarked walls – but this is a special place, every linen salvaged from an ancient trousseau, every seat an old milking stool. With the feel of a prehistoric church, it's a hotel as a living history reinvention. **Website** sassidimatera.com. **UK reservations** Bellini Travel (tel: 020 7602 7602). **Rates** Double, from £250, including breakfast.

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