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## History Meets Refinement at this South Italian Hidden Gem: Sextantio Le Grotte della Civita

Sextantio Le Grotte della Civita: A Timeless Escape into Elegance and History



Sextantio Le Grotte della Civita, UNESCO site Photo: Neysa Callas



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captivating hotspot for hospitality in Southern Italy. Most noteworthy of Matera's accommodation is Sextantio Le Grotte della Civita, a sanctuary nestled amidst the storied caves of the city, offering a remarkable blend of dedicated preservation and understated luxury.







Residing in a desolate part of Italy's Basilicata, rarely visited and even less understood, Matera is truly *the forgotten city.* Centuries ago, its intricate cave system served as housing for the city's inhabitants - before being riddled with poverty and later completely abandoned on government orders. In the 1950s, it became a lawless land of ancient superstitions. Locals described the caves as dark holes marked by tragic beauty and decay. This was Matera's era as the disgrace of the nation. Now, it signifies the city's resilience in the face of adversity.



Perched on the edge of the Murgia plateau, with a striking view of *Vesper's tomb* from the iconic Bond film "No Time To Die," Sextantio Le Grotte della Civita is a testament to dedicated preservation. Comprised of 18 cave suites — once, ancient dwellings — each room has been renovated to retain its original features, with the addition of modern-day luxuries like heated stone floors and bottles of fine local vintage. The restoration project used exclusively centuries-old, salvaged materials down to the linens which were sourced from antique wedding dowries. Dedication is the true magic at work here and it was so meticulously enforced that to install under-floor heating, each stone was removed, numbered and hand-placed back in its exact spot.



Also worth noting is the exquisite taste in the hotel's finishings — your room may play tribute to its origins with the absence of a television, but it was not crafted without style. In fact, the suites include design bathtubs that lay beautifully against their rock-hewn backdrops and plush king-sized beds that were selected with absolute luxury in mind. In simple terms, it's no secret that Sextantio's owner is Milanese...



gifted a visit from the hotel's cat Rocco. While the accommodation itself does not have a restaurant, it does feature a striking ancient church-turned-breakfast hall accompanied by a fresh and expansive morning spread. Also available is a light evening menu and a highly recommended cliff-side aperitif. Just next door to the hotel sits a renowned Michelin restaurant, Ristorante Vitantonio Lombardo, offering a mouth-watering tasting menu. Thoroughly delicious as well is Ristorante Oi Mari, just a short walk away.



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captivation and appreciation for its history. Here, amidst the ancient caves and suntissed valleys, Sextantio Le Grotte della Civita shines as a true testament to the enduring allure of the city and the timeless elegance of Italian hospitality.	
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