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October 11, 2016



Opened early this year, Masseria Trapanà is a new development in Italy's fortified farmhouse scene. The mediaeval masserias of Puglia were built like little castles to stop pirates carrying off all that valuable fruit and olive oil. Over the centuries, many fell apart, but in the 1990s they became trendy places for wealthy Italians to hide themselves away and soak up summer sunshine.



Trapana has been a labour of love for Australian hotelier Rob Potter-Sanders. He kept the farm's 522 orange and lemon trees and created nine luxury suites from the buildings.



Guests now enjoy al fresco baths and showers (above) in their own walled courtyards or communal swimming in a new pool in the olive groves.



Bedrooms are dark and cavernous, carved out of limestone tufa with huge modern metal beds (above) when you want to just curl up with a book.



It used to be fashionable to decorate masserias with old agricultural implements and bundles of herbs, but Rob's gone radically international with a Buddha's head (above left), north African lanterns, piles of cushions and an easy-listening music track that plays all day long.

Masseria Trapana

Strada Provinciale 236 Lecce - 73100 Puglia

Rooms from €375 per night

For reservations: 39 0832 1832101

More info: trapana.com