

# Viva Italia

Italy for the Instagram generation? Sarah O'Hegarty discovers that and so much more on a sashay around Tuscany.

## THE BESPOKE BOLTHOLE: VITIGLIANO TUSCAN RELAIS AND SPA

The day consisted of this: go from taxi to airport. Fly two and a half hours. Land. Transfer by car. Travel for another hour or so. Arrive at Vitigliano Tuscan Relais and Spa, legs slightly jellied and become blinded by the sunshine reflecting off the vast, white spaces. Feel like someone has just pressed the 'unmute' button on my senses. It's slightly overwhelming. That is, if spending your day inhaling the delicate aroma of lavender in the air, tasting local wines, and soaking up the Tuscan sun by the pool is overwhelming for you. Unsurprisingly, I was okay with it. After a hurried Dublin summer of rainy days, print deadlines and commutes, I find myself asking, 'Is this even real?'

A Mecca "for those who don't like hotels anymore", Vitigliano is akin to bunking with a Tuscan family for the weekend. That is, a jet-set Tuscan family, in the most amazing house ever. Where wines

come c/o Roberto Cavalli's son, Tommaso, Sting has his holiday digs down the road and *The New York Times* has name-checked it as the place to be. Just your average, right? The first night, we gather around a long table on the terrace, candles burning, chilling with the owners, their children, and other guests to eat our fill of rustic fare, all locally sourced by the in-house chef. I'm aware this sounds next-level, too-good-to-be-true perfect; yes, I was feeling hashtag blessed.

While spa-based farmhouses are a dime a dozen in Tuscany, this Relais and Spa is unique in the sense that it can only house a maximum of 14 guests at any one time. A bold move, which works. I marvel at the intricacy of the building. What's inside is a state-of-the-art renovation that's laden with historic jewels – part of a five-year game plan by owners, Marion Hatter and husband Kiyan Nouchirvani, that has paid off. I have never heard of Mediterranean hygge, but if it does

exist, Hatter has it nailed. I pad around rooms decorated in muted tones, with antique Persian rugs and fresh flowers. The rainwater shower in my bathroom is clad with Carrara marble. It's only when I return home that I read that the parquet floor is lavishly restored from old wine barrels (replete with red wine spills. Preach).

Located in Greve in Chianti, an epicentre of Italian winemaking and a halfway point between Sienna and Florence, the property is a mere 35-minute drive from Florence airport, making it doable for both bucolic minibreaks and indulgently longer stays, of which I would go back for either: race you there.

Rates start from €350-€380 per room, per night; [info@vitigliano.com](mailto:info@vitigliano.com); [vitigliano.com](http://vitigliano.com)



*"I've never heard of Mediterranean hygge, but this place has it nailed"*

*Top Tip:  
Relax in the beautifully appointed Dr Hauschka spa and ask for the full body massage. Bliss.*

