

# Travel

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**'This hotel, an hour from Shanghai, is surely 2018's most remarkable opening'**

Sean Thomas on China's new Amanyangyun Hotel

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# The 50 best holidays in Italy

MAIN: STEPHEN HUGHES BELOW: ROBERTO CORVAGLIA

**26** Castello di Ugento, Puglia**24 Palazzo Volpi, Venice**

These three gorgeous suites are housed in a newly restored 16th-century palazzo and are the creation of Anna and Fred, designers who have worked for Armani and Yves Saint Laurent. Their top-end credentials are on show throughout the property, with bespoke silk rugs from India, chiaro marble sinks and furniture made by local artisans. One suite sleeps five in three bedrooms, the others have one bedroom that sleeps two. A private chef and tour guide can be arranged. **Details** From £248 a night, room only (00 33 611 286 317, palazzovolpi.com)

**25 Masseria Le Torri, Puglia**

New from Simpson Travel for 2018, Le Torri is an elegant adults-only hotel with nine chic bedrooms in the heart of Puglia. Mimmo and Silvana, the owners, have spent ten years restoring the whitewashed farmhouse that rises out of the surrounding olive groves and have furnished it with antique pieces and crisp white decor. Outside, the pool has a glam, riviera-esque feel and the beach in Polignano is a 15-minute drive away. **Details** A week's B&B costs £651pp, including flights and transfers (simpsontravel.com)

**26 Castello di Ugento, Puglia**

A majestic 17th-century castle in the heart of Puglia, Castello di Ugento opened its doors in September with nine suites, a spa and a beautifully manicured garden. The bedrooms are coolly stylish, with exposed stone and whitewashed walls, antique furniture and private patios or terraces. Il Tempo Nuovo, the hotel's restaurant, serves Puglian specialities. A separate wing of the castle houses the Puglia Culinary Centre, which runs cookery courses and tastings. **Details** Half-board doubles cost from £290 a night (castellodiugento.com)

**Best for families****27 Dolomites ambling**

Inntravel's "wandering" holidays are self-guided walking trips designed with families in mind. Itineraries alternate walking days with time to get under the

skin of the region. This week-long trip includes the chance to go mountain biking and visit local museums and sites of interest, or have a lazy afternoon by the pool. There are two compulsory hotel-to-hotel walking days (luggage is transferred by car).

**Details** A week's B&B costs from £875 an adult and £695 a child, including walking maps, luggage transfers and some meals (01653 617001, inntravel.co.uk)

**28 Boating in Venice**

A fantastic way to discover Venice and the surrounding countryside while keeping the children interested, these self-guided boating holidays are new to Citalia and offer the chance to cruise the city's waterways before heading off to the surrounding lagoons to find your own beach or sandbar. A week on the boat is packaged with five nights at the Cesare Augustus hotel on the beach of the Lido di Jesolo.

**Details** A 12-night Venetian Riviera package costs from £2,289pp, including flights (01293 839366, citalia.com)

**29 Volcanoes of Sicily**

The power and spectacle of volcanoes are a favourite with children, and this new group tour by Families Worldwide makes the most of Italy's volcanic landscapes. The holiday begins in Catania, then transfers to Vulcano island for an ascent of its dramatic crater. The itinerary includes time on Stromboli before heading to Etna National Park. **Details** A week's B&B costs from £1,359 per adult and £1,299 per child, including transfers and activities (01962 302062, familiesworldwide.co.uk)

**30 Sardinia stays**

A great way for children to make friends on holiday, residencias are self-catering mini-villas, or apartments that have a shared pool, and offer an affordable option in some of Sardinia's pricier regions. The Residenza Riva Azzurra consists of 29 traditionally furnished apartments, with two shared pools, a restaurant and pizzeria. In the bustling resort of Cannigione, they are 100 yards from the beach. **Details** A week's self-catering costs

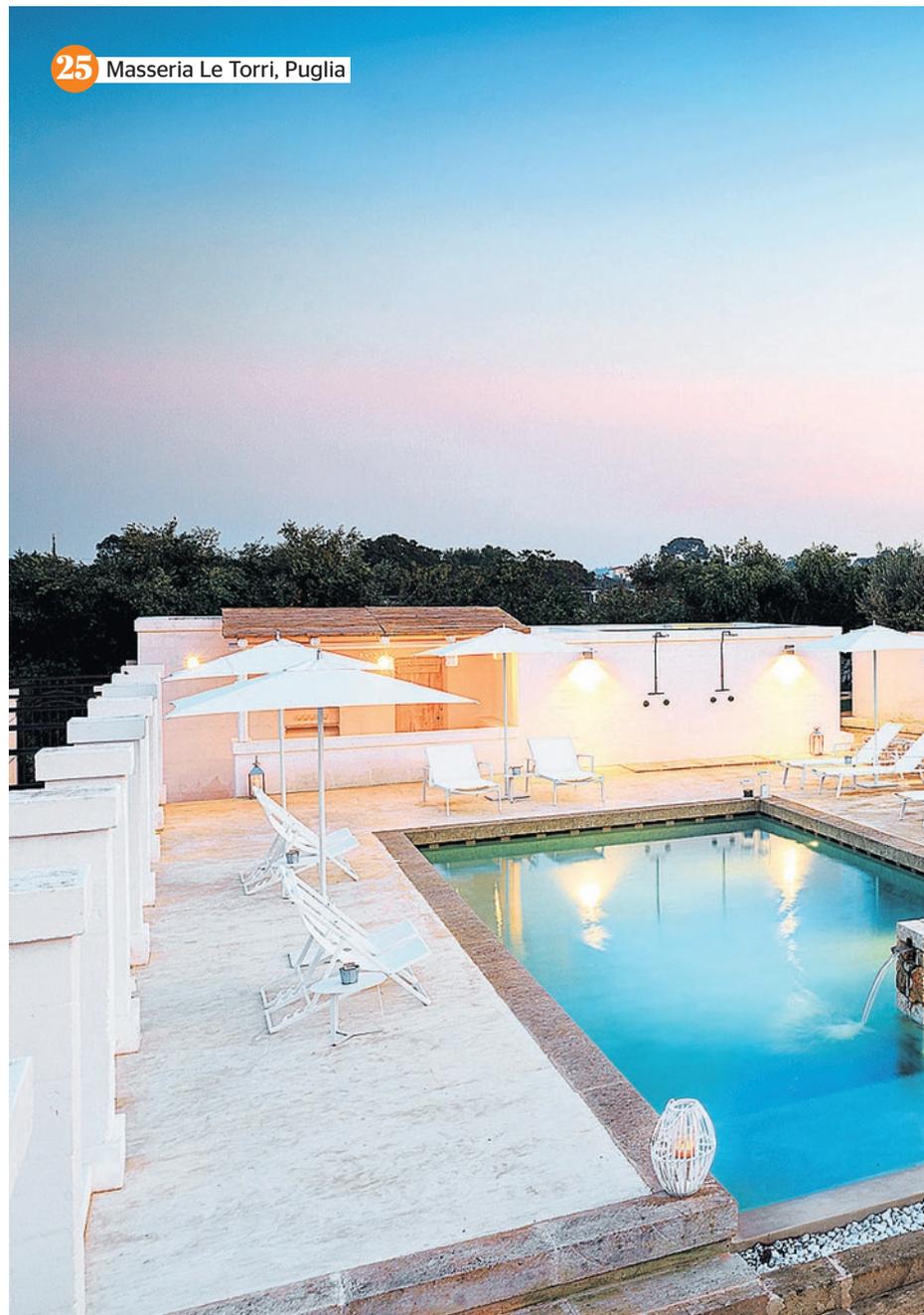
**31**

Cycling from Pisa to Florence

**Russell Norman**  
Restaurateur and writer

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Walking into Rizzardini in Venice is like stepping back in time to when it opened in 1742. It's one of the best pastry and coffee bars in the city and everything is baked by the owner, Paolo, and his daughter, Marta

**25** Masseria Le Torri, Puglia

from £514pp based on four sharing a two-bedroom apartment, including flights and car hire (01489 866959, sardinianplaces.co.uk)

**31 Cycle in Tuscany**

A cycling tour is a great way to get the children into the open air, and on this new self-guided trip from Utracks you set your own pace. The route is from Pisa to Florence, skirting the Arno River and avoiding steep climbs. Visit Vinci, the town where Leonardo da Vinci was born, picnic in vineyards and spot wildlife in the Padule di Fucecchio nature reserve. A day trip to Florence is included. **Details** A week's B&B costs from £820 per adult and £430 per child, including transfers, bike hire and maps (0845 2417599, utracks.com)

**32 Explore Lake Garda**

The Italian Lakes offer a refreshingly different family holiday, with opportunities to get out on the water, along with exploring picturesque villages. Prestige has a new programme to Lake Garda for 2018, and the family-run Hotel San Filis is ideal for those with children; a gorgeous 16th-century villa that doesn't feel intimidatingly smart. The hotel has free bikes for exploring and electric boats to hire. The pebble beach at San Felice is 15-minute walk. **Details** A week's half-board costs from £569pp, including flights and transfers (01425 480400, prestigeholidays.co.uk)

**33 Glamping in Siena**

New to Canopy & Stars for 2018, this collection of ten bell tents (including a two-tent family camp) on an

organic farm is wonderful for children, with a swimming pool among the olive groves. There's no sense of roughing it — tents have proper beds and private bathrooms — and the host, Daniela, is on hand to provide olive oil, wine and vegetables, which are produced on site.

**Details** It costs from £163 a night, sleeping four (0117 204 7830, canopyandstars.co.uk)

**34 River trek in Sicily**

A great choice for older families, this week includes river trekking, which combines walking, climbing and swimming along the Alcantara River. Those in search of serious white-knuckle skills can opt to "body raft" — floating down the river like a human kayak. Back on land the itinerary includes cycling, trekking up Mount Etna and sea kayaking, with a base at the Hotel Arathena Rocks, next to the sea. **Details** A week's B&B costs from £985 per adult and £755 per child, including flights and some meals (01670 789991, activitiesabroad.com)

**35 Active Calabria**

Discover a lesser-known region of Italy with a week at Neilson's Airone Beachclub, a short drive from Sibari, on the Gulf of Taranto. Choose from paddleboarding, dinghy sailing or kayaking on the glittering Ionian Sea, improve your tennis or explore the surrounding countryside on mountain bikes. Children will love the pizza/pasta-focused menus and parents can make use of the three treatment rooms while the little ones are at the kids' club. **Details** A week costs from £659pp, including most meals and flights (0330 0572208, neilson.co.uk)