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WORDS
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COVER IMAGE
BORGO EGNAZIA –
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CATEGORY
LIBRARY, ROOMS, TRAVELER

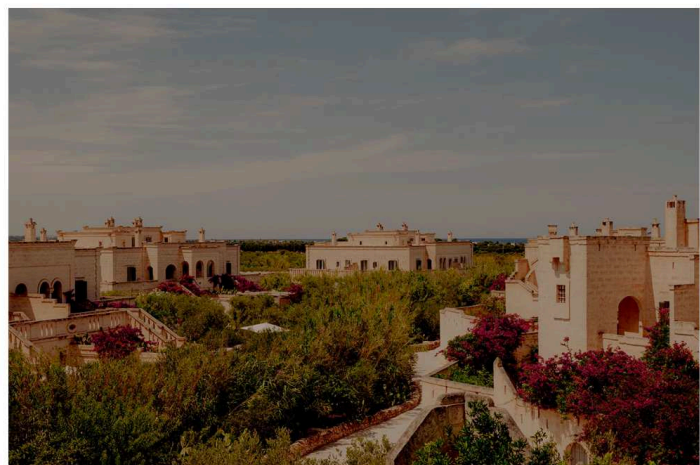
TAG
APULIA

Borgo Egnazia, Apulia. Restoring the dignity and tipycality of the landscape

Architectural designer Pino Brescia's dispersed hotel Borgo Egnazia, in Apulia, minimizes environmental damage and relies on a close circuit of manufacturers and materials

Borgo Egnazia is a dispersed hotel set in the ecosystem of the Apulian countryside and takes its name from the archaeological site of Gnatia, an Ancient Roman town surrounding the port on one end of the Via Egnatia, a commercial road. During the twentieth century, the ancient walls were almost entirely destroyed to provide building material for the construction of the surrounding towns, creating continuity between the historic site and the new landscape.

The structures of Borgo Egnazia are built on a deforested area that had been transformed by time into what Gilles Clément calls the "third landscape", a place modified and then abandoned by man. Brought to completion in 2010, the project was commissioned by the Melpignano family and carried out by architectural designer Pino Brescia.



PH. GIUSEPPE CARDONE

The construction relied on local materials and manufactures, both for the structure and for the furnishings. «*The village stands on an esplanade built during the Second World War,*» explains Pino Brescia. «*The British had deforested the area to create an airbase. The war ended before completion and the only thing left were four olive trees. All the greenery is a work of landscape reconstruction achieved with indigenous plants such as olive trees, figs, prickly pears, and vines. During the design phase, I was asked by the client to plant palm trees. I refused, because they are not part of the Apulian landscape, and because of the danger of introducing a non-native species.*»

«The red awl infestation then killed most of the palms in Puglia. My goal was to respect and enhance the landscape and the typicality of the place. While realizing this project, I thought about the impact it would have on the guests. I didn't want to use aesthetic solutions that could be replicated or seen elsewhere. I wanted an unprecedented effect for those who come from far away and expect something that represents the territory. That's why I worked with shapes, colors, fragments of history, materials, and vegetation of the place».

The structure is in Apulian tuff, a stone of soft sedimentary origin. For the floors, Brescia used the classic *chianche*, blocks of harder white limestone. *«Before the construction of the village the use of these types of stone had decreased and some quarries were close to closure. The farms in the surrounding area are built with stone often coming from quarries attached to the property. The tuff was plastered and covered with white lime while for the village — I chose not to treat it in order to restore the dignity of the material and make sure that time could leave its marks on it».*

«During the construction phase, we used the first volumes made as workshops to produce the furniture. This minimized transport and further reduced environmental impact. When the production could not be carried out in the village, we designed prototypes in our workshops and then assigned the production to local manufactures. Even today, we keep the workshops inside the village for repairs and restyling of the furniture. These choices have allowed us to form a close circuit that works, and to reduce the environmental damage that, even if minimized, cannot be avoided».

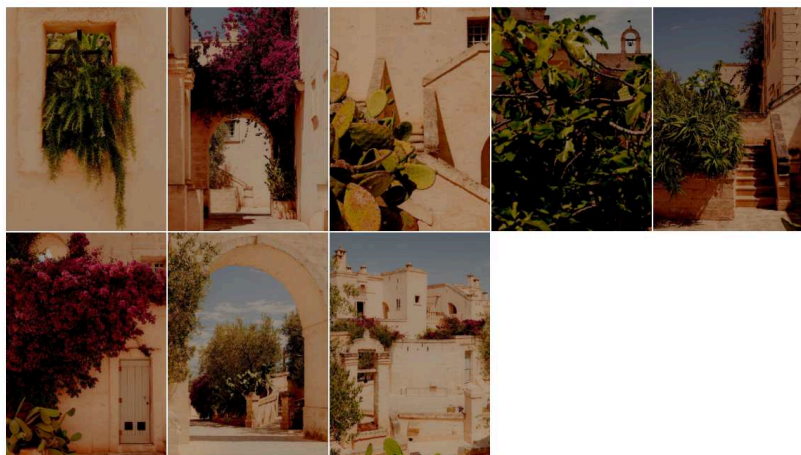


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While on the one hand Borgo Egnazia is tailored on creating a symbiosis with the environment, on the other it strives to offer guests an environment they can enter into symbiosis with, focusing on their well-being and need for quiet. Borgo Egnazia offers a range of rooms and suites varying in spaciousness and disposition in the main building of the resort, surrounded by private houses and villas with gardens and terraces.

Scattered around the property are seven restaurants, each with its own specialties — the Michelin-starred Due Camini, the sea-front Cala Masciola for fish and seafood, La Frasca with buffets, stations for live cooking and barbecues in the central square of the village. On the side of the resort is the San Domenico Golf course, where some major national and international tournaments have been held.

The Bottega showcases clothes, jewelry, and home accessories that have been handmade by local manufacturers. The hotel also created Blue Zones, a project based on a study on the areas of the world where a peak of longevity can be found. The research detected nine elements that recur among these cultures — physical activity, a plant-based diet, a sense of purpose — that have been adopted as the nine principles of the Blue Zones retreat and channeled in the spa, restaurants, and fitness classes at Borgo Egnazia.



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