

TRAVEL

Avoid tourist traps and crammed beaches in these idyllic under-the-radar locations



EUROPE'S MOST WANTED

**KEFALONIA, GREECE**  
Deputy Editor Eille O'Mahoney and husband Mark kicked back on the Greek island of Kefalonia.

**THE PAD** Some villas look amazing on the website and then are a let-down in real life - but not Villa Kamini. The hillside vantage point means that from the pool you have an incredible view of the pristine blue waters of the Ionian sea, as well as the picture-perfect town of Assos with its fortress just 10 minutes' drive away. Although only built in the last 10 years, the three-bedroom villa has classic exposed beams and stone walls, plus the prettiest alfresco dining area. The drive there winds along the coastal road and the views are as awe-inspiring as they are distracting!

**EXPLORE** Visit the jaw-dropping Melissani Lake, hidden inside a beautiful cave. Board the manned rowing boat to marvel at stalactites and stalagmites and the water's brilliant turquoise colour. The best time to go is in the middle of the day, with the sun overhead creating a magical blue light effect. Entry costs €6.50 for adults. Don't forget to check out Antisamos



Cave in and visit Melissani: Ivin's la villa loca at Kamini

Bay, where Captain Corelli's *Mindolin* was filmed. The cove is stunning, but what will keep you there all day is Acron beach bar, which offers free sunloungers and parasols. Lie back and sip on an espresso martini or three (Acronantisamos.com).

**REFUEL** The wonderful Odysseas Taverna on Agia Jerusalem beach couldn't be closer to the sea. Have lunch under the vines before spending the afternoon searching for shells. The freshly fried fish, €21.90, serves two and tastes as if it's swum straight on to your plate, while the olive bread is totally moresish. Don't leave before buying some of the plum jam, €7.40, to take home. Drive down the coast to Alaties beach for a swim in the tiny pebbly cove, before ordering sundowners from the hammocks at Acqua.

**DON'T MISS** Enjoy a massage in the villa's garden to the sound of crickets. €28 for 45 minutes (46spaservices@gmail.com). Bliss.

**BOOK IT** From May 2020, seven nights self-catering at Villa Kamini costs from €752 per person including return flights and car hire. Book before January 31, 2020, to receive 5% off. Call GIC The Villa Collection on 020 8232 9780 (Gicthevillacollection.com).

FABULOUSMAG.CO.UK 42



**FORMENTERA, SPAIN**  
Art Editor Nikki Ackerman and boyfriend Tom got their dose of vitamin sea on the Spanish Isle.

**THE PAD** Formentera's first-ever five-star digs, Five Flowers Hotel & Spa, is located in buzzing Es Pujols on the north of the island. Expect an explosion of colour with its flower-power themed decor and sleek, modern rooms. The serene pool area has a luxury feel, with comfy day beds ideal for couples. For a change of scene there's also a rooftop pool and sky bar made for watching the sunset, plus a peaceful underground spa complete with sauna, steam room and huge Jacuzzi. Family-friendly Hotel Blanco is also just next door, with boho-style interiors and rooms with private outdoor tubs.

**EXPLORE** Known as the Caribbean of the Med, Formentera has some of the best beaches in the Balearics, with the clearest turquoise seas and powdery white sand. Ses Illetes is the most popular on the island and only 15 minutes cycle away from Five Flowers - get there early for that perfect Insta shot! Alternatively, hop on a scooter and head 15 minutes south to Migjorn, a long stretch of beautiful wide beaches, dotted with laid-back bars and snack shacks such as Kikosko 62, where you can grab an ice-cold sangria for €5. Bikes cost from €9 per day and scooters from €28 (Motorentpujols.com).

**REFUEL** Start the day with tropical fruit spreads, mouth-wateringly good local meat and cheese platters and fresh pastries at the hotel buffet. For lunch, you won't need to leave your sunbed - order the croquettes



Clockwise from top: blues for days; Five Flowers is a high five from us; octopus have attitude ... geddit?



with calamari and shrimps, €11, alongside patatas bravas, €8. Dinner at Kokoy on the roof terrace is a treat, with a Michelin-starred chef producing the finest Japanese-Mediterranean fusion delights. The 11-plate tasting menu includes delicious lobster, scallops and Wagyu beef. It's pricey at €82 a head, but worth every penny. Carmen restaurant at Hotel Blanco is equally as impressive, serving up the tastiest octopus, €17, and sirloin steak, €27.

**DON'T MISS** Es Pujols night market lights up the beach promenade, with dozens of stalls selling handmade jewellery, clothing and ceramics from local artists for the perfect holiday memento.

**BOOK IT** Double rooms at Five Flowers Hotel & Spa cost from €113 (Fiveflowershotel.com) and €90 at Hotel Blanco (Blancohotelformentera.com). Flights from London to Ibiza cost from €13 each way (Ryanair.com), and ferries from Ibiza to Formentera cost from €40 return (Trasmap.com).



**UMBRIA, ITALY**  
Writer Emma Ledger and boyfriend Alex soaked up the Italian good life.

**THE PAD** The region of Umbria gets stuck for being the poor man's Tuscany, but anyone who says that hasn't visited Tenuta di Murlo - a sprawling private estate of rolling green hills dotted with villas, cottages and deluxe rooms that sleep from two to 18 people. Just 20 minutes from Perugia airport, you'll feel your shoulders physically drop on arrival, with nothing but the sun-soaked silence of thousands of hectares of vineyards, olive groves and woodland. You can do yoga, horse riding and fishing or just chill by your private pool, but what really sets this place apart is its dedicated staff.

**EXPLORE** You could quite happily spend a week exploring Tenuta di Murlo's estate, but if you fancy a day trip, the hilltop town Assisi is only 15 minutes' drive away. Best known as the birthplace of St Francis, one of Italy's patron saints, it's full of history and offers incredible panoramic views. The Basilica of St Francis is a beautiful, two-level church. Entry is free, but remember to cover your shoulders and knees.

**REFUEL** People travel for miles to visit the estate's restaurant Il Caidaro (ilcaidaro.it). The kitchen prepares



Have a look-see at Assisi, best boudoirs at Tenuta di Murlo



phenomenal breakfast, lunch and evening meals, all served in the expansive gardens brimming with lavender. Brekkie showcases the estate's fruit and honey and home-made cakes. For dinner try the grilled lamb, €12, and the goose ragù, €11, is unbelievable.

**DON'T MISS** In Assisi, don't leave without visiting Buca di San Francesco, a stone-walled restaurant with a pretty garden serving local specialities, such as the freshest tomato bruschetta, €6, and truffle pasta, €10 (Bucaosanfrancesco.it).

**BOOK IT** Flights from London to Perugia San Francesco d'Assisi cost from €40 return (Ryanair.com). A deluxe room at Tenuta di Murlo costs from €105 per night B&B (Murlo.com). Hire a car from Perugia airport from €63 per week (Rentalcars.com) 🚗

FABULOUSMAG.CO.UK 43



**UMBRIA, ITALY**  
**Writer Emma Ledger and boyfriend Alex soaked up the Italian good life.**

**THE PAD** The region of Umbria gets stick for being the poor man's Tuscany, but anyone who says that

hasn't visited Tenuta di Murlo - a sprawling private estate of rolling green hills dotted with villas, cottages and deluxe rooms that sleep from two to 18 people. Just 20 minutes from Perugia airport, you'll feel your shoulders physically drop on arrival, with nothing but the sun-soaked silence of thousands of hectares of vineyards, olive groves and woodland. You can do yoga, horse riding and fishing or just chill by your private pool, but what really sets this place apart is its dedicated staff.

**EXPLORE** You could quite happily spend a week exploring Tenuta di Murlo's estate, but if you fancy a day trip, the hilltop town Assisi is only 15 minutes' drive away. Best known as the birthplace of St Francis, one of Italy's patron saints, it's full of history and offers incredible panoramic views. The Basilica of St Francis is a beautiful, two-level church. Entry is free, but remember to cover your shoulders and knees.

**REFUEL** People travel for miles to visit the estate's restaurant Il Caldaro (lcaldaro.it). The kitchen prepares



Have a look-see at Assisi; beaut boudoirs at Tenuta di Murlo



phenomenal breakfast, lunch and evening meals, all served in the expansive gardens brimming with lavender. Brekkie showcases the estate's fruit and honey and home-made cakes. For dinner try the grilled lamb, £12, and the goose ragu, £11, is unbelievable.

**DON'T MISS** In Assisi, don't leave without visiting Buca di San Francesco, a stone-walled restaurant with a pretty garden serving local specialities, such as the freshest tomato bruschetta, £6, and truffle pasta, £10 (Bucadisanfrancesco.it).

**BOOK IT** Flights from London to Perugia San Francesco d'Assisi cost from £40 return (Ryanair.com). A deluxe room at Tenuta di Murlo costs from £105 per night B&B (Murlo.com). Hire a car from Perugia airport from £63 per week (Rentalcars.com). **F**