



Amore
IN APULIA

Dreaming of an Italian soirée for your big day? Join Callum Topazio as he spills all on his trip to Southern Italy for all things sun, sea and good food at a 16th century Palazzo...

AN APULIAN ADVENTURE

The sound of lapping azure waves along the shore, the heady fragrance of citrus and sweet aromas of bougainvillea blooms and the delicious tastes of delectable Italian classics on your tongue, these were the lasting memories I took from Apulia and so could you for your wedding celebrations. My stay at the Palazzo Ducale Venturi was one-of-a-kind, a luxury 5-star boutique hotel restored from an aristocratic palace from the 16th century in the quaint village of Minervino di Lecce, the hotel was the perfect mix of culture, history and luxury.

From the moment I stepped through the historic doors of the Italian palace, I felt so welcomed by the attentive staff and general manager, Martina, who saw to our every need. A tour of the venue proved the rich culture of the hotel as we were whisked around winding stone staircases, floor to ceiling windows beaming with Apulian sunshine, a gleaming blue outdoor pool and cool stone rooms providing an oasis from the heat. As we ventured outside, the dappled sunlight gleamed through a decadent flower covered archway and I was transported into a photographer's dream as I imagined the



stunning wedding pictures that could be captured among the pillars and blooms at the Palazzo's gardens. I couldn't imagine a more perfect wedding aisle to start out your Mediterranean celebrations and step into married life.

After a peaceful night in the lovingly restored rooms, complete with authentic sage shutters and historic Salento wall paintings, we were greeted by a luxurious breakfast spread that was a treat for all of our senses! Overflowing with juicy cherries, melons and peaches on one table and fresh pastries and cakes on another, we were spoiled for choice. The easiest decision for me was my drink of choice, I still dream of their freshly squeezed pear juice and enjoyed it every morning of the trip. With a belly full of fuel, we travelled to the local town of Otranto for a hike along the southern Adria coast and even took a dip in the sea to cool off halfway along. To the thanks of our feet, we rode motorised rickshaws back to the hotel and felt the wind in our hair as we travelled through the gorgeous town of Lecce.

One of the highlights of my trip to Southern Italy has to be the delicious Apulian cuisine we were treated to throughout our trip. Everything chef Antonio Russo created was magical, from guided cooking classes making our own pizza and pasta using traditional techniques in their ancient salt ovens to sampling the produce of Salento's seas in gastronomic combinations at evening dinners. The hotel even offers a whisky pairing dinner where dishes like blue fish turban and saffron pecorino sauce and Pasticciotto with candied orange custard are paired with whiskies from Ireland, Scotland, USA and even Asia, perfect for an intimate dinner for you and your loved ones throughout your wedding celebrations.

