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2

BORGOSANTO PIETRO, TUSCANY

This 13th-century villa, an hour from Florence, has been lovingly transformed into a luxurious boutique hotel. Our room (one of eight) had extravagant drapes, period furniture and a romantic claw-foot bath. We were tempted to hole up here all weekend, but the grounds are too beautiful to miss. We played tennis, went for languid swims in the free-form pool and borrowed mountain bikes to explore the Tuscan hills. After a couples' shiatsu massage in the tiny spa, we dined on oven-roast pigeon and home-made tortellini on the candlelit terrace.

Borgo Santo Pietro, Valle Serena, Tuscany. Enq (00 39 577) 75 1222; borgosantopietro.com. Doubles from £274, B&B. Easyjet has flights from London Gatwick to Pisa, from around £82 return. Enq easyjet.com. Transfer two hours

hot weekends THE NEW ROMANTICS

All LOVED-UP and nowhere to go? Pack your bags and check into one of these SEDUCTIVE hideaways



1

THE BATH ARMS, WILTSHIRE

This ivy-clad pub is right on the edge of the Longleat Estate (where the bohemian Marquis of Bath, he of the wifelets, holds court) and so close, we're told, that on certain nights you can hear the lions roar. After the grandeur of

Longleat, the welcome is friendly and informal. There are 15 rooms in all, some cosy floral, others vampy (Karma Sutra suite, anyone?). Ours – English Eccentrics – is reached by a creaky, warren-like staircase. It has mother-of-pearl furniture, sloping ceilings and a bathroom papered with pictures of quirky folk, such as Edith Sitwell and Oscar Wilde. Downstairs, a large portrait of the Marquis dominates the dining room, where huge portions of delicious local food (pumpkin soup, saddle of rabbit...) are served up to guests and villagers alike.

The Bath Arms, The Longleat Estate, Horningham, Warminster, Wiltshire. Enq (01985) 844308; batharms.co.uk. Doubles from £80, including English breakfast



3

**BOAT SHED,
ARDANAISEIG
HOTEL, ARGYLL**

A dark, winding lane leads to Ardanaiseig, a remote manor house on the shores of Loch Awe. At the end of its woodland garden, right on the water's edge, is the old boat shed, now converted into a glass-fronted cottage, where, from your mezzanine-level, king-size bed, you can watch the mist drift across the loch. The food (served in the hotel) is so tempting (lobster ravioli, lamb fillet), you'll need to tramp the Ben Cruachan hills a fair bit to work it off.

Ardanaiseig Hotel, Kilchrenan by Taynuilt, Argyll. Enq (01866) 833333; ardanaiseig.com. Doubles from £158, B&B. Easyjet has flights to Glasgow from £125 return. Enq easyjet.com. One week's car hire starts at £16 per day with Holiday Autos. Enq holidayautos.co.uk



4

**HOSPES PALACIO
DEL BAILIO,
CORDOBA**

Tucked away in Córdoba's old quarter, the Palacio del Bailio is a mix of contemporary cool and 16th-century elegance. A beautifully converted mansion house, it's a tranquil space with patios, Moorish carved doors and painted ceilings – mirroring Córdoba's own mix of Arab, Jewish and Christian cultures. Our room had floor-to-ceiling windows and a vast bed with Egyptian cotton sheets. Breakfast is in the airy, glass-roofed central courtyard, while the restaurant and tapas bar serve modern Spanish delicacies. Couples can curl up on a four-poster day bed next to the pool, linger in the Cinq Mondes spa or stroll down to the spectacular Mezquita cathedral. *Palacio del Bailio, Ramírez de las Casas Deza, 10-12, Córdoba. Enq (00 34 957) 498993; hospes.es. Doubles from £210, B&B. Ryanair has flights to Seville from around £60 return. Enq ryanair.com*



5

**CA MARIA ADELE,
VENICE**

If you were going to dream up the perfect romantic weekend, this would be it. First, jump in a water taxi from the airport, which will whisk you – through the vaporetta and gondolas – right to the waterside door of the hotel, idyllically set opposite the white domed church of Santa Maria della Salute. Housed in an historic 16th-century palazzo, the Ca Maria Adele's interior is a sumptuous mix of old-world

damask fabrics and baroque furnishings. The 12 bedrooms (some themed – but in a good way) range from elegant Moroccan splendour to velvet, palazzo-style opulence, and are some of the sexiest in the city. You may be just a few minutes from touristy St Mark's, but once inside, you're in a world of your own. *Ca Maria Adele, Dorsoduro III, Venice. Enq (00 39 41) 520 3078; or book through i-escape.com. Doubles from around £248, B&B. BA has flights from London Gatwick to Venice from £103 return. Enq (0844) 493 0787; ba.com*

