



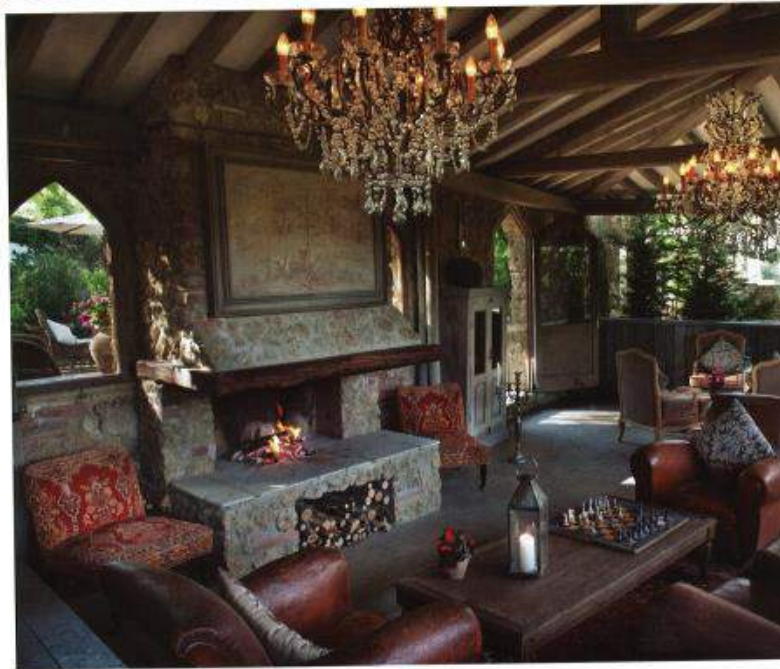
IT IS NOW MORE than 10 years' since I first discovered the amazingly bold and creative Danish couple Jeanette and Klaus Throrstrup.

Then they had just bought and were working feverishly on the refurbishment of an ancient, dilapidated and abandoned Borgo, high in the hills an hour's drive from Florence. It's a most stunning part of Italy.

Then the Borgo was a simple structure of a few rooms, ruined outbuildings to work on, lots of land and some of the best views ever. Their original intention was to use the house as a holiday retreat.

That was then. Ideas and lives change. The decision was soon made to abandon the idea of a holiday home and aim to create one of the more special luxury retreats available not only in Italy but the world. A bold message statement indeed. And it looks like they have succeeded.

I've been back once since those early days, for a rather super lunch with friends which seemed to go on, like all good Italian lunches, till early evening. We were staying at a Castle a couple of hours' drive away but



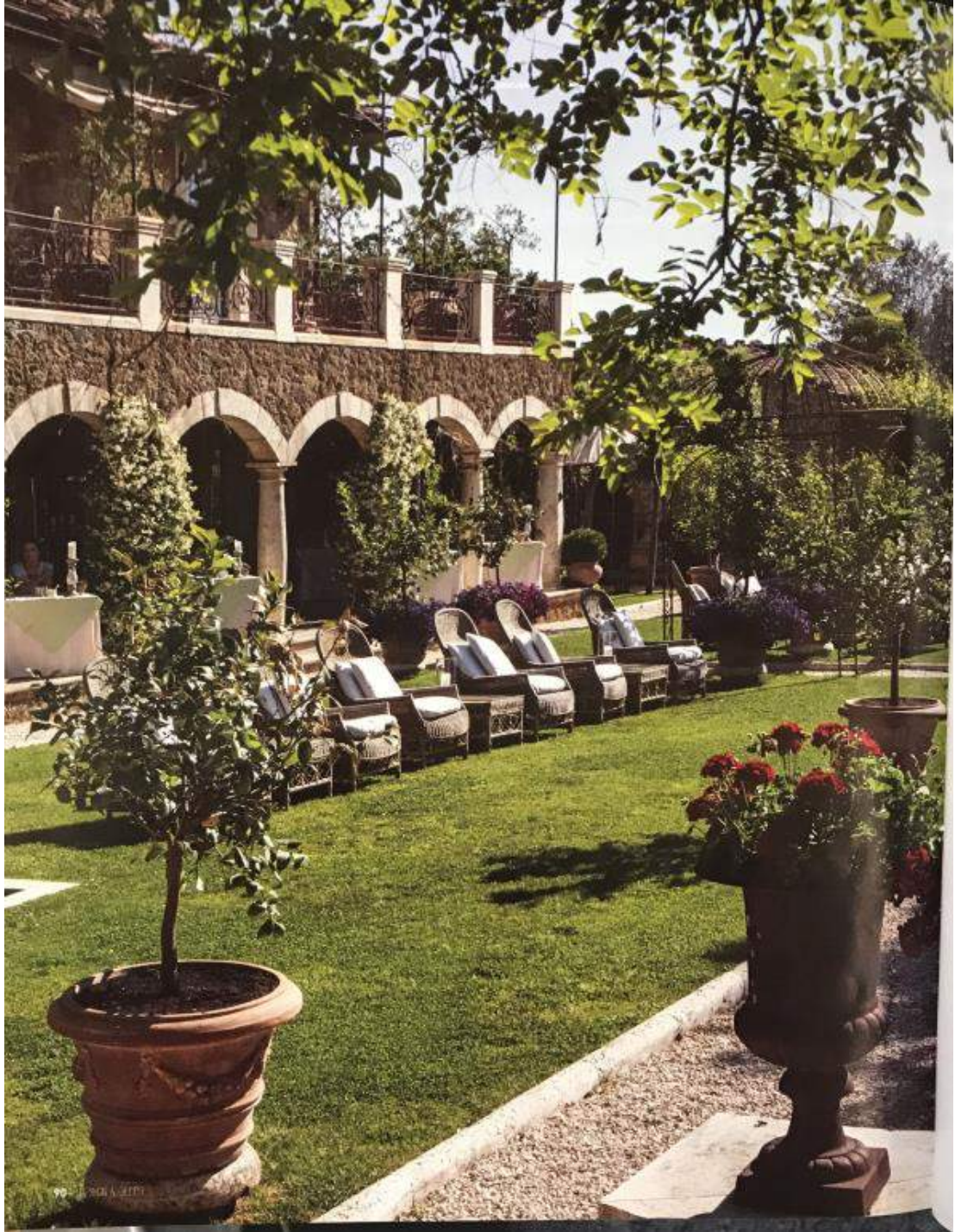


that did not deter us from taking our time and enjoying superb food, service and a host of courses all freshly cooked with local produce. Their Chef Andrea Mattie crafts highly personalised dishes in his Meo Modo restaurant drawing on local produce either from their own farm or others nearby.

Since that visit a great deal has happened to the Borgo. The development has been completed, its looking perfect and along the way I have watched this extremely talented couple and their team win accolades from guests, the media and the hospitality industry.

Now I've been back again for a short stay of a few days to check the latest progress. I was not disappointed. Borgo Sant Pietro www.borgosantpietro.it is looking







impeccable but still that amazing couple continue to add new facilities and comfort for their guests. A Spa has been constructed and there are plans to extend their treatment rooms and Jeanette, as if she didn't have enough to occupy her, has just launched her new range of health products in the Liberty shop in London.

The Borgo, a thirteenth century retreat, is in the heart of rural Tuscany with 20 individually designed suites most of them semi detached and all within a 300 acre estate and a short walk through stunning gardens to the main building. There's a working farm with more than 300 sheep and they now produce their own sheep's cheese. There's two vineyards,



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is of vegetables, 13 acres of carefully tended gardens all growing contentedly around the rooms. A lake, cycle lanes, poultry... ducks, geese and bees. All surrounded by rolling green pastures as far as the eye can see and all with views of the meandering River Arno. Just an hour from the renaissance city of Florence should you feel the need for some hill or museum therapy.

Florence is one of the great cities of Italy and is the capital of Tuscany, 230km northwest of Rome. It's certainly worth a visit in its own right - but from the Borgo you can spend an amazing day exploring this World Heritage site, home to cultural giants Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Dante, Galileo and the renowned Medici family.

The city is surrounded by gently rolling hills covered with villas, farms, vineyards and olive groves. Market day is a Wednesday, parking is a nightmare but well worth the effort and the Borgo concierge will give you directions to an ideal parking area.

If the sea beckons you and your eyes need a rest from those magnificent countryside views, the Borgo Santa Pietra now has a smashing yacht for hire.





TRAVEL AND INTERIORS

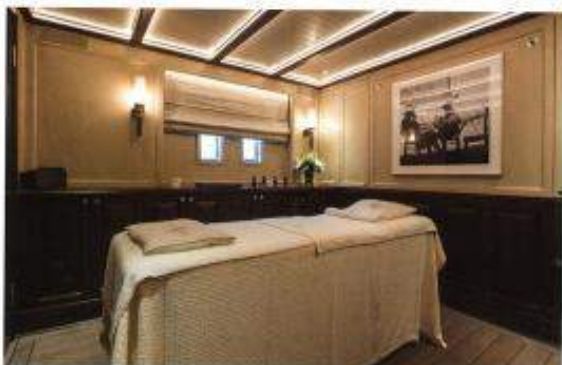


Back at the Borgo, when those huge wrought iron gates at the entrance close behind you, you are in a world of dedication, comfort and peace. With good food and wine. A recent Dinner on the Terrace overlooking the valley as dusk fell was superb. We had seasonal vegetables drenched in local oil, cuttlefish, asparagus risotto, sea bass with fava beans and green peas all grown at the Borgo, their own cheese and wild berries.

The couple make an excellent working team. Klaus is the businessman with architecture and building as his trades and Jeanette is the creative behind the perfect rooms with everything and more that you will need, beautiful fabrics and furniture. They also make a point of employing local people and artisans at all times.

Heading up the in-house team is Scot Patrizia Chiari. She's from good Italian stock in the heart of Scotland... there's been a long tradition of immigration from Italy to Scotland and she's come home. She runs the operation with a firm, no nonsense but amiable hand.

This couple have thought of everything... there's a fleet of Vespas at the front door, you can take one and head off on your own and explore.



If the sea beckons you and your eyes need a rest from those magnificent countryside views, the Borgo Santo Pietro now has a smashing yacht for hire. The Satori can sleep 10, is a world class 5-star yacht which takes with it a Michelin starred Chef from the Borgo who will create your daily menus to your specification as you meander the coast of the Mediterranean.

From the Etruscans to the Romans to the Renaissance, Tuscany is possibly the greatest repository of art in the world, from extraordinary paintings and sculpture to frescoes and architectural masterpieces.

You'll visit Tuscany for all sorts of reasons. Gourmets and wine buffs descend on the region to enjoy great food or a simple plate of home made pasta under the shade of a tree overlooking a village square, a city Piazza or at your own villa or Borgo for a few weeks as night falls. Pasta tastes better in Italy! Walkers take to the hills and the mountain passes, cyclists the rolling hills or like me you may just want to 'mooch' around the cities of art, Siena, Pisa, Arezzo, Cortona San Gimignano and Lucca. ☞



