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HOTEL CASTELLO DI RESCHIO **UMBRIA**

Some 20 years in the making, the recently unveiled Hotel Castello di Reschio in Umbria is a true labour of love. The property's owner, Count Benedikt Bolza, has created 36 individually decorated rooms inside the shell of a mediaeval castle that sits on a 3,750-acre estate; inside, bold paint colours mix effortlessly with de Gournay wallpaper, mirror-topped coffee tables and objets d'art including vintage oil presses sourced from the local antique market. The grounds are a bucolic paradise of olive groves, vineyards, beehives and an organic kitchen garden, whose produce features on the menu at Ristorante Al Castello, alongside delicious homemade pastas. Don't miss the chance to join the chef on a foraging mission in the ancient woodland, head out on a ride from the equestrian centre or indulge in a treatment at the Roman bathhouse-inspired spa. **LUCY HALFHEAD**

Hotel Castello di Reschio (www.reschio.com), from about £670 a room a night.



COUNTRY PURSUITS

From Saxon residences in Transylvania's mountains to a 13th-century Italian farmhouse, enjoy bucolic bliss at these rural retreats



BETHLEN ESTATES **TRANSYLVANIA**

Despite what Bram Stoker's *Dracula* might suggest, you won't find any vampires in Transylvania – just Romania's latest luxury lair, Bethlen Estates, set against a backdrop of the Carpathian Mountains. The family-run hospitality project is rooted in the preservation of local heritage: sleep in one of the restored Saxon houses that juxtapose wood-burning stoves, reclaimed beams and kilim rugs with chic linens and Tom Dixon lighting. Staff are hired from the surrounding area where possible, including the head chef, who

sources ingredients from within 10 miles. Fill your days with picnics in meadows, bike rides and long walks through what is often described as one of Europe's last great wildernesses. **LH** *Bethlen Estates (www.bethlenestates.com), from about £260 a room a night.*

