

The Best Hotels in Puglia to Book for an Idyllic Italian Escape

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August 2, 2021



**Vogue US Online (UMV
9,618,360; Points 14) 2nd
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(IMAGE 1 OF 3)



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(IMAGE 2 OF 3)

The bedroom of the flagship Paragon suite at Paragon 700.
Photo: Gregory Venere

Paragon 700 Boutique Hotel & Spa

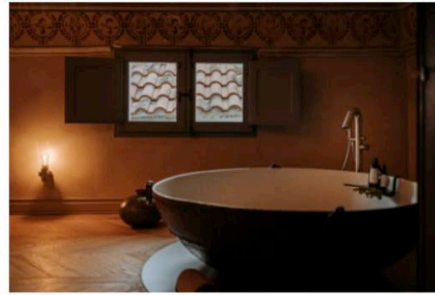
Even from the outside, [Paragon 700](#) is no ordinary Italian palazzo. Its striking facade of red rusticated stone sticks out within the spectacular “white city” of Ostuni, while the restored vintage car that sits outside offers something of a clue to its unconventional mix of the past and present. But stepping inside is to enter another world entirely. The weird and wonderful brainchild of its founders, interior designers and partners Pascale Lauber and Ulrike Bauschke, they clearly saw the restoration of this mysterious building (its exact origins and dates of construction still remain largely unknown) as an opportunity to unleash their wildest design instincts. The property opened last summer with head-spinningly fabulous results.



Paragon 700's vintage car sits on the piazza directly in front of the palazzo. Photo: Gregory Venere



The pool area at Paragon 700. Photo: Gregory Venere



A bespoke bathtub in one of Paragon 700's eleven suites. Photo: Gregory Venere

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The expansive bar area is Baroque by way of Tim Burton: statues of macabre grinning monkeys sit next to defaced reinterpretations of Renaissance paintings, while candelabras dripping with red wax line the tables where artist-designed sofas are upholstered with sewn-together silk ties. The hotel's 11 individually designed rooms are intentionally more relaxed, with frescoed ceilings, offbeat but warm lighting fixtures, and stonewashed linen sheets. Despite the flamboyant trappings of its decor, however, both wellness and sustainability are a priority here. The spa, reached by glass elevator and built into the underground caves that are atmospherically lit with candles, feature a hydromassage basin, a Turkish bath, a Himalayan salt wall, and even a natural whirlpool dug deeper into the ground. Meanwhile, the hotel's commitments to micro-CHP energy, zero plastics, and local construction materials are also notable.

Probably the biggest facet of Paragon 700's appeal, though, is its prime location within Ostuni, one of the most popular tourist destinations in the region, but that somehow manages never to feel wildly overcrowded. Getting lost in the city's labyrinth of alleyways and admiring its Gothic cathedral are unmissable elements of a Puglian vacation all on their own—but knowing you can return to the homely environs of Paragon 700 for a refreshing dip in the pool, a cocktail as delightfully offbeat as the decor, and finally a meal in their gourmet, open-kitchen Restaurant 700 to round off the evening makes the experience all the sweeter.