



Maria Grazia and Chiara and their new monastery plans

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MANDURIA, Apulia — Olive groves stretch beyond the whitewashed walls of Masseria Potenti, a 16th-century fortified farmhouse where terracotta floors and a kind of suspended stillness have made this one of southern Italy's most talked-about slow living destinations. We sat down with mother and daughter Maria Grazia di Lauro and Chiara Tommasino, who told us the place was never meant to be a hotel at all. It began, Chiara said, as her parents' "poor act of love", a holiday home in their native Manduria that guests refused to stop returning to. Now the family is unveiling its next chapter this April, a 16th-century monastery 30 minutes away in Avetrana, six years in restoration, which will operate under a radical new rule. The longer guests stay, the less they pay. Inside, Maria Grazia is preparing a museum of antique linens, her lifelong passion.

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