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Italian hotels for food lovers: four of the best



Relais San Maurizio
Piedmont

In a converted 17th-century Franciscan monastery on a hill surrounded by vineyards, overlooking the village of San Stefano Belbo, Relais San Maurizio is a gourmet spa resort with 31 rooms fashioned from the original monks' cells. The family-run Michelin-starred Da Guido restaurant is located in the barrel-vaulted cellars of the former monastery and specialises in regional dishes such as veal and rabbit. The agnolotti (a kind of ravioli), which features both these ingredients plus pork, onions, carrots and rosemary, is legendary. The hotel also has the less formal Bistro Bar & Restaurant in a fresco-covered room with an outdoor terrace, a bar and cigar room in a flower-decked winter garden, in- and outdoor pools and the new La Via del Sale ('the Salt Path') Medical and Beauty Spa, which specialises in salt-based anti-ageing and skin-renewal thalassotherapy treatments. Truffle fans take note: Piedmont's truffle season runs from September to December and the International White Truffle Fair takes place in the medieval town of Alba (a 15-minute drive from the hotel) from October 9-November 14.

- Doubles from £246; closed from December to March (00 39 0141 843 833; relaissanmaurizio.it).