



## MONTEVERDI

TUSCANY, ITALY

It doesn't get much more dolce vita than this sleek hilltop village. It's Tuscany on a turbo trip – a tumbledown hamlet bought up and lavishly converted into to-die-for restored villas and a seven-bedroom hotel. Ilaria Miani, the doyenne of rural chic, has triumphed with reclaimed 13th-century beams alongside showers so cool they should be in a gallery, underfloor heating and plasma screens set inside thick antique walls. There's a café with food by a chef hot from Locanda Locatelli – he'll whip up an alfresco Italian feast for you to eat as you bliss out at the view over the Unesco-protected Val d'Orcia. There's an 11th-century church converted for concerts with state-of-the-art acoustic soundboards, and a summer jazz and blues festival. And Monteverdi has even got its own Etruscan dig. Swim, sleep, eat, read, go for walks among wild boar or, if that's all too bucolic and you can't ignore the siren call, you can nip off to the Prada outlet an hour away. **Website** [monteverdituscany.com](http://monteverdituscany.com) **Tel** 00 39 057 826 8146 **Book it** Double, from £200, including breakfast.

## OTAHUNA LODGE

CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND

Even though it's deeply, overwhelmingly, plush inside – silk carpets, Japanese wallpaper, shadowy passages, secret doors, a magnificent curving staircase and fireplaces in the bedrooms for comfort hounds – it's the wandering grounds that make Otahuna sing. So after you've had fresh-from-the-coop eggs, hand-cut bacon, coffee and whatever else Jimmy the cheeky chef can get down you, head outside for a deep draught of the air that Kiwis really ought to bottle and sell. As you mosey through the potager garden and down snaking pathways to find yourself around the back, near the wine cellar (of course), look down. What you are walking on is the chimneys. What the...? The bricks are from the smoke stacks (now rebuilt) that were severely damaged during the earthquake in 2010. This grand old girl, built in 1895, took a Richter-scale hit, but you'd never know it. Like those oak trees found around the wild south island of New Zealand, it'll take more than a tremor to fell her. **Website** [otahuna.co.nz](http://otahuna.co.nz) **Book it** Bridge & Wickers (020 7386 4610) offers seven nights from £5,445, half board, including flights and transfers.



## FAZENDA NOVA

TAVIRA, PORTUGAL

Wrapped in acres of orchards and olive trees, with rosemary and lemongrass bursting from the flowerbeds, Fazenda Nova is a crazily pretty bolthole. And, even though it's only 25 minutes from Faro airport (so close – what joy!), it feels properly out there, a million miles from the ice-cream-and-lilos hum of the Algarve. The landscape is wild but the house is reassuringly refined. Painstakingly restored from an original 19th-century country home, it has blissfully cool stone-walled rooms with green-shuttered windows, pummelling rain showers and dreamy Balinese-style beds. There's a clever mix of the quirky and the traditional – a mash-up of Portuguese knick-knacks, memorabilia and local antiques. If you want to explore, owners Hallie and Tim will help you plot mini road trips to local flea markets and secluded beaches in a flash. But back at the ranch, white-towelled beds hug the awesome infinity pool and, when the sun sets, it's just you, the stars and the crickets crooning. **Website** [fazendanova.eu](http://fazendanova.eu) **Tel** 00 351 281 961 913 **Book it** Double, from £135, including breakfast.