

buying in areas of the Salento Peninsula rather than looking any further northwest, and in particular many still strongly recommend Upper Salento. Nikki Taylor of HelloApulia says, “Areas that are good value for money include those around Ceglie Messapica, Castellana Grotte and Conversano. These areas have lots of nice rustic properties available at low prices and with great potential, when renovated, to make excellent holiday rentals.”

Johan Zetterberg of CasaPuglia believes the best area for investment is in the triangle roughly formed with Monopoli, San Vito dei Normanni and Martina Franca as its three corners. He adds that “Oria is also a jewel, and you can find great properties here within equal distance of the two coasts.” [Meanwhile, Giuseppe Fanelli of Modern Apulian Style highlights the area around Taranto, from here north to Martina Franca, and also east from Taranto to Manduria, in which large area he says there are many excellent value for money properties.](#)

RESTORE TO ORDER

With its striking traditional buildings and its highly-skilled builders and crafts people, Puglia has always been a very popular place for foreign buyers who want to restore an old property or to design and build one from scratch. There are of course pros and cons with either approach. Maureen McLeod of Elite Puglia says that in the ➤



Damien O'Neill is busy restoring a farmhouse

MY LIFE IN PUGLIA

Damien O'Neill from Cheshire bought one of Puglia's handsome *masserie* mansion-farmhouses in 2017, and hopes to have finished his restoration work on it by the middle of this year. Half of the house is fully habitable already, and Damien and his son Marcus have been enjoying regular trips to Puglia to inspect the building work and explore the seaside.

What drew him to Puglia? “I've been an architect for many years,” Damien explains, “and I became fascinated with Puglian buildings after a series of holidays in southern Italy. I saw some of the restorations and building projects that people had been doing out here, and I just thought, ‘I want to do one of those!’ The idea of having to consider a much warmer climate and the maximising of building efficiency in such a place appealed to me very much.

“My *masseria* is about eight miles from Taranto, in a lovely bit of quiet countryside. It's not one of the great big *masserie* that rise out of olive plantations, but a relatively small one with space for about four bedrooms. It's still extremely beautiful though, with thick walls of local stone and elegant external features. Doing the renovation, and bringing back the full beauty of the building, is proving to be just as satisfying as I was expecting. And I've been quite impressed by the dedication and knowledge of the local builders who've been helping me carry out the work. They seem to care about smartening up this house and its outdoor spaces as much as I do.

“I haven't decided yet what to do with the house when the work is finished. Obviously, I'll be taking some long visits out here and also making the place available to my sister and her family, but then I might consider holiday lets. Many people visiting Puglia like the idea of staying in a real house rather than a hotel, and a handsome building like this one, with all its quiet, privacy and surrounding rural space, is going to hold a lot of appeal.

“I think what I love most about Puglia is the way that the sea is never far away. Where I am, I can visit two different coasts in two different directions. The beaches are clean and lovely. And after a day on the seaside, as the evening comes down, there's always one pretty little town or another to go to dinner in, and then afterwards to join all the people walking around eating ice cream. It's so civilised and convivial. There's a really nice pace of life down here, and people always seem to have time for each other. I'll probably retire to Puglia when that day comes.”



FASANO

Type of property **Villa**

Number of bedrooms **3**

Price **€140,000**

Location **Selva di Fasano**

Contact **Casa Travella Ltd ☎ 01322 660988**

sales@casatravella.com www.casatravella.com

Well-maintained two-bedroom villa with self-contained one-bedroom annex in a residential area five minutes from Fasano. Open-plan living room with kitchen to view, two bedrooms, bathroom, storage room and south-facing covered veranda. 2,500 sqm of terraced land with gated entry, ample parking space, a large terraced area of 300 sqm with trees and plants, and an annex of 14 sqm. This is a lovely little property, with superb views down to the sea, just five minutes from all amenities. Selva itself has a number of restaurants, shops and other facilities as well as a *trullo* church. Excellent value lock up and go property for personal use or even to provide rental income if desired. Ref 4327.



SAN VITO DEI NORMANNI

Type of property **Villa**

Number of bedrooms **3**

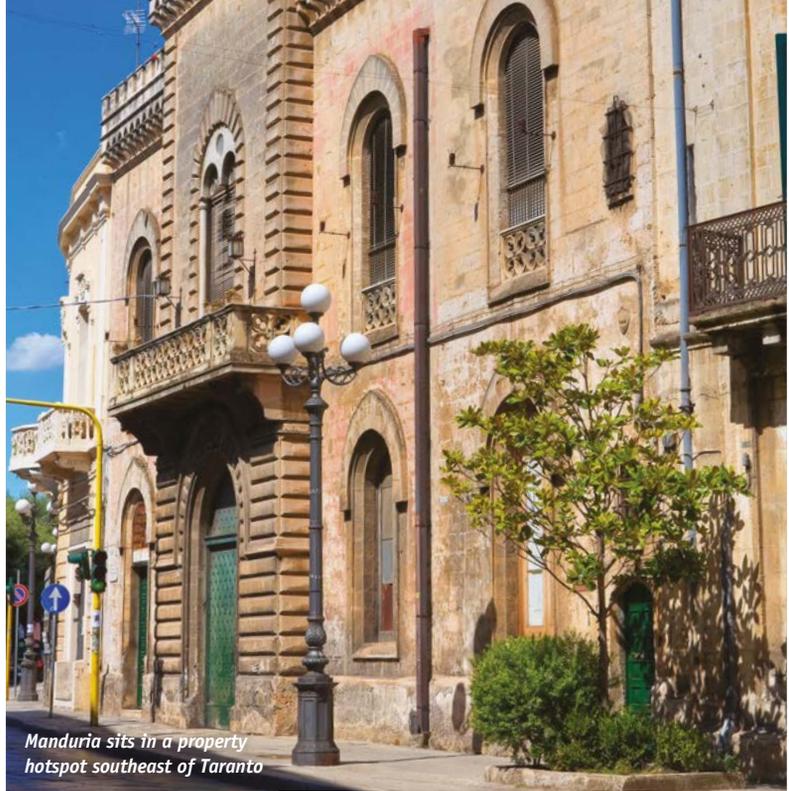
Price **€320,000**

Location **San Vito dei Normanni**

Contact **Casa Travella Ltd ☎ 01322 660988**

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Three-bedroom detached villa with pool and detached garage in an acre of extremely well laid out gardens 3km east of San Vito dei Normanni. The property provides spacious accommodation and has been designed in a very modern way, yet blending in with Puglian traditions. Entering the villa, the lounge with oval shaped walls and built-in fireplace leads to the raised open-plan kitchen dining area with direct access to the west facing rear terrace. Upstairs there are two double bedrooms and two bathrooms. Downstairs, there is a further lounge, double bedroom, bathroom and kitchenette. This is a beautifully designed and maintained villa in a private and secluded road with similar high-quality villas. Ref 4341



Manduria sits in a property hotspot southeast of Taranto

beautiful area around Ostuni in which she specialises, “The best investment is still to buy a plot of land and build your house, but the downside of this is the time it takes to build and the waiting for planning permissions. It’s quicker to buy and renovate a traditional villa, and there are many which are good value at around €60,000-€80,000. You are allowed to extend such a property by up to 20 per cent, and you can build a swimming pool.”

Giuseppe Fanelli of Modern Apulian Style believes that restoring an old property is always a good

As you'd expect, there are strong holiday rental prospects on properties in Puglia

idea, especially a building with historical value. He says, “The prices of masserie and historic houses to restore in Puglia are still very good. Additionally, Regione Puglia provides investment aid for those who intend to restore such buildings and bring them back to life as accommodation or tourist facilities. You can also find land to build on in excellent areas, and my advice is always to design in accordance with Mediterranean tradition: a compact building with a few calibrated openings and light colours, plus the presence of fountains, pools and vegetation to give a building with high energy performance.”

As you’d expect in a region whose visitor popularity just keeps growing, there are strong holiday rental prospects on properties in Puglia. Summers are long and the rentals season lasts from around May to October. Key areas for holiday rentals include the coast, the countryside (with the Itria Valley area of Upper Salento holding particular appeal), and any of the many little towns loved by tourists – Ostuni, Alberobello, Locorotondo, Oria, Lecce, Otranto and Taranto, to name but a few. All the usual advantages apply: rental clients like

properties with easy access to the sea or a pool, they love landscape views, and they like having an outdoor space such as a balcony, patio, terrace or garden. None of these attributes is hard to find in Puglia, where the sea is never far away, the landscape is lovely, and there’s lots of space for spilling outdoors. ■

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