



Le Mat is the social entrepreneur's tourism brand

Le Mat is a way to travel, and a way to meet other people sharing interesting, inclusive local practices in the development of sustainable tourism

# Le Mat Manifesto

General Quality Orientation and Communications Tool

Every Le Mat is committed to realizing the Le Mat values and objectives, and to sharing experiences with the Le Mat traveller, with all our guests, and with those who would like to know us better.

We want our actions to be traceable, accessible, inclusive, reliable and surprising.

# Le Mat in brief...

Le Mat is a brand and a social franchise system of social entrepreneurs in tourism.

Le Mat stands for sustainable and inclusive small-scale local tourism, and for a special method of managing hospitality, welcoming, support, and care of our travellers, who we would like to be an active part of our community of entrepreneurs working inclusively.

The Le Mat hotels, hostels, B&Bs, the Le Mat hospitality system, and the Le Mat co-operatives act in the general interest of the human community for more sustainable and inclusive development, endeavouring to enhance all the human and environment resources of the local community.

Each Le Mat social franchisee has their own Quality Handbook, which has been developed in conjunction with all workers and members of the team, and with the help of the Le Mat social franchisor. These site-specific Handbooks set down rules of daily work and management.

Each Le Mat social franchisee also has a personalised Le Mat Quality Assurance Card to be offered to our guests for their comment, suggestions, and feedback. We want travellers to be a part of the evaluation and quality development process.

Le Mat welcomes all travellers and guests. With their help, we want to learn how to be more welcoming, and how to deliver a better service: how to surmount all barriers - physical, psychological, sensorial, and cultural - which all too often impede communication and cultural exchange.

**Every Le Mat is special and unique!**

# The Le Mat social entrepreneurs

Le Mat's social franchisees decided to be social entrepreneurs. They became entrepreneurs because they wanted to achieve an optimum quality of service: practical access to the rights of full social citizenship for everyone, and personal, social, cultural, and political empowerment.

Le Mat's enterprises are managed in a collective and democratic way. Workers are also members and owners who co-operate to achieve the best results in their social business. Among the workers and members there are many persons who have experienced social exclusion, unemployment, mental illness, drug addiction, and disabilities. Le Mat appreciates particularly their experiences and competencies.

Le Mat's entrepreneurs and enterprises share planning processes and like democratic decision making: one special person, one special idea, a different point of view, a right, a word, an opinion, a vote to build something richer and more precious through wider participation.

Le Mat doesn't prefer those that have more money. Rather, we appreciate good ideas and the assumption of responsibility: all the good things you may see and take in upon entering a Le Mat venue. Le Mat's social franchising network and Le Mat's brand are invitations to participate.

Every Le Mat is special and unique!

# The Le Mat Traveller

The Le Mat traveller is curious and wants to understand what's going on in the Le Mat community. She / he would like to contribute; to enhance and criticise, thereby becoming an important part of the community and its developing projects.

Every Le Mat traveller is precious, but we particularly appreciate the participation and experiences of travellers with disabilities. They can help us to learn how to become more accessible; our buildings, landscapes, activities and environments more useable and enjoyable for everyone.

Transparency and traceability are the most important rules of Le Mat. We want our prices to be understood, how we choose the materials we use, and also the motivations of our friends and partnerships, and the criteria we use for suppliers. Travellers have the right to know what we want to do and how we do it.

**Every Le Mat Traveller is special and unique!**

# Le Mat for Travellers with special needs

Every traveller has special needs as no traveller is the same. There are travellers who neither understand nor speak the language of the place they want to visit and discover; there are travellers who use wheelchairs - chairs with wheels are also used by children - and these wheels cannot overcome barriers created by architects or others or by rough landscapes; there are travellers who don't hear, don't see with their eyes, who aren't able to speak with their mouths; there are people who cannot eat some foods, who fall ill with some furniture or carpets... There are travellers who use bikes, those who walk, don't want to use the car but appreciate public services. Every traveller is special and has special needs, and every day we discover how many things we still have to learn to become really friendly, receptive, and welcoming - *accoglienti*, as we say in Le Mat's Italian - and to live in a more sustainable environment for all.

But our Le Mat hotels, hostels, and B&Bs too often are not really accessible to all - we didn't build them; they were already there. We took them over - sometimes because nobody wanted them and they were abandoned - we took them with the intention to improve their quality and to act as social entrepreneurs for a more sustainable and open local development in order to create decent work. We need intelligent travellers with special needs because we need their help and consultancy to convince the local community to become more inclusive.

Every Le Mat Traveller is special!

# The Le Mat Hotel, Hostel, or B&B

Le Mat is never *only* a normal hotel with 1,2,3,or 4 stars, a hostel, a traditional B&B, a rural guesthouse, a beach house, a restaurant, pizzeria, or whatever else can be imagined. Every Le Mat is different; and it seems there is nothing they share except the Le Mat sign on the door, until you look closer. On entering, you will feel welcomed by a family a little more numerous than usual. You will find a special place to rest and to remain, a place where you will find special ways to live and to produce. We are different by type of establishment, location, history, service and comfort level, but we have a shared project: we want our travellers to feel well alongside those who work; and we want to add value to the community we live, plan, and act together with.

The Le Mat beds are more comfortable, the Le Mat breakfasts are more tasty, the information about the location and the local communities, the stories Le Mat will tell you and the people you can meet are rich, surprising and special because we know so well the place where we live and work. It matters to us. Ask us. You will be amazed!

Also, the price in every Le Mat is different, but certainly it is the most sustainable, fitting, and agreeable possible. The price is the result of our costs and the investments we have made, and this differs from place to place. You can ask us and we will explain!

Each Le Mat is special!

# Le Mat local infrastructures for sustainable and inclusive tourism

Every Le Mat is an active part of a local system for sustainable, responsible and inclusive tourism - a community of social entrepreneurs.

We are small entrepreneurs but we want to present rich and interesting products and services, to develop an open and welcoming community, and to co-operate with others to become more sustainable and inclusive. Every Le Mat undertakes in its local community the sharing of its values of quality and inclusive practices with the local infrastructure.

Le Mat systems and structures may have different names, but their qualities are universal.

At every reception of a Le Mat establishment you will find the products and presentations of our local partners, and all the information you require.

**Every Le Mat is committed in a local network**

# Le Mat hospitality and affiliation

A Le Mat establishment or franchisee respects a precise quality card and manual which has been discussed, debated, approved, and agreed by every single Le Mat group.

The basic elements of the Le Mat brand (the quality system and standard) are: correct information about the quality of the establishment's equipment, the team working there, the services available, the local partners, and the specific social and business project of that "*unique Le Mat*"!

Every single Le Mat may have its own name, but the name will be followed by the brand "Le Mat Affiliated", which has to be validated every year.

The Le Mat *modus operandi*, or way of operating, is recognizable by the hotel sign, and can be strengthened with Le Mat merchandising of products which can be bought there.

Every Le Mat is unique, but there is a shared Le Mat quality.

This MANIFESTO gives a synthesis of the main elements of Le Mat quality.

The Quality Card of each specific Le Mat locale will be given to you upon your arrival.

