

Client: Borgo Egnazia
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WINE HOLIDAYS IN EUROPE

Jada Brookes discovers several places in Europe where lovers of distinctive wines can bask in a fruitful wine holiday.

L'Albereta Relais & Châteaux



Tucked away amongst the rose-bowered vineyards of Franciacorta in the alpine foothills between Po Valley and the southern shore of Lake Iseo in Italy is the beautiful L'Albereta Relais & Châteaux Hotel. The resort rises above rolling hills and vineyard, inviting its guests to live an unforgettable experience as well as having the sublime pleasure of their senses met.

Here you can savour the delights of the palate in the gastronomic restaurant Leonefelice or in the Vistalago Bistrò which has a terrace that provides a view of Lake Iseo. You can also enjoy award-winning pizzas accompanied by excellent wines at La Filiale. Or you can experience a perfect remise-en forme in the Espace Chenot Health Wellness Spa.

Nearby to L'Albereta Relais & Châteaux Hotel is a wonderful park dotted with contemporary art sculptures which you can explore for hours on end. The resort also has five elegant rooms with modular volumes which provide an ideal location for meetings and events. In Lombardy, a few kilometres away, you can travel to Milan, Bergamo and Venice.

The 38 rooms are described as sophisticated secrets that reveal themselves each time a guest crosses the threshold, unveiling precious interiors and bonding with other decorative elements. Each of their 19 suites has its own history, forged by the harmonious silences of nature that envelops the enchanting places of Franciacorta.

For wine lovers, Franciacorta is a rural area with lengthy history and traditions. The name is said to have derived from 'francae curtes' small medieval communities of Benedictine monks who obtained exemption from taxes and duties in exchange for teaching the local inhabitants how to grow vines.

An area renowned for the production of sparkling wines bearing the same name, it is made according to the classic method, with slow fermentation in the bottle. The wine made here is obtained from the grapes grown in this area, which is delimited to the north, east, west and south by Lake Iseo, the Rhaetian Alps, the River Oglio and Mount Orfano.

Various combinations of Chardonnay, Pinot Blanc and Pinot Noir grapes are used to make the wine, fermenting slowly in the bottle for at least 24 months for non-vintage and at 30 months for vintage Franciacorta. One of the best ways to discover which wines the area has to offer is to visit some of the numerous wineries found in Franciacorta.

www.albereta.it/en/franciacorta-relais.htm



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Borgo Egnazia

Founded in the beautiful and unspoiled region of Puglia, in Italy, Borgo Egnazia is the perfect location to learn a new skill. There are a host of different experiences to choose from including learning more about wine with Sommelier Giuseppe Cupertino, head of the Italian Sommelier Foundation.

Their five-day wine course allow guests to acquire a technical understanding of various types of wine and vines, vinification methods as well as wine tasting and food and wine combinations. Each lesson is then followed by a technical wine tasting of three great Apulian national and international wines.

The hotel has three sections: La Corte, Il Borgo and Leville. The main building being La Corte hosts many of the hotel's services, including the Due Camini restaurant and Vair Spa. The rooms here are divided into La Corte Bella, La Corte Splendida, La Corte Magnifica and Suite Egnazia and present a décor that combines Mediterranean tradition with modern design.

Each of these rooms contain either a super king-sized bed or two separate beds, stone bathrooms, and either a balcony or a private garden.

With its central piazza, Il Borgo is declared the heart of the property and has an internal and external architectural design that is reminiscent of a tradition Apulian village. The Borgo hosts many of Borgo Egnazia's services such as La Frasca restaurant and Mia Cucina trattoria as well as their fabulous Trullaleri Kids Club and Fichi d'India Teens Club.

Here you'll find that the small streets and corners are typical of an Apulian village suspended in a timeless tradition that reflects simplicity, elegance and the highest attention to detail. During the summer, the property comes to life at the Borgo's piazza, where events, markets, parties and games go on as late as 11pm.

Leville made up of Il Villino and villas: Bella, Deliziosa, Stupenda, Magnifica, Meravigliosa and Padronale are equipped with every possible comfort and furnished in a style that is more classic yet equally refined. These villas are the perfect choice for enjoying a totally relaxing holiday immersed in a quiet Mediterranean setting.

Each villa consists of three-storey townhouses and are available with three bedrooms, four bathrooms, a fully equipped kitchen, a living area, a basement, a scenic terrace, a garden and a patio as well as a private swimming pool.

www.borgoegnazia.com

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L'Andana Hotel



Just 20 km from Grosseto, in the central Italian region of Tuscany, is L'Andana, an enchanting hotel in Castiglione della Pescaia characterised by a refined and timeless charm. This luxury resort offers its visitors the opportunity to spend special moments surrounded by the evocative beauty of the Natural Park of Maremma in Tuscany.

There are two main buildings, the Villa and Fattoria, which are united by a delightfully informal Winter Garden, where the lobby and reception provide an informal space composed by wide windows from which you can enjoy a stunning view of the Maremma landscape.

Restaurant La Villa located within the facilities of the hotel has all the comforts and informal atmosphere of a cosy, domestic kitchen, along with an intimate dining room that is equipped with a stone fireplace. It also has a charming veranda looking over the park where a small church and the swimming pool are surrounded by cypress trees and maritime pines.



Not only do they offer a spectacular breakfast, but also delicious lunches and dinners, according to a menu that varies with the season. The dishes are prepared by the same chefs as those at La Trattoria Enrico Bartolini which reflect genuine local tradition with ingredients from the sea and land, and the desserts are shamelessly scrumptious.

Built inside an old barn, which used to be the ancient granary of Grand Duke Leopold II of Lorraine, La Trattoria Enrico Bartolini is known as a contemporary restaurant and a simple meeting place, where you can experience the atmosphere and flavours of an exclusive 'trattoria toscana' restaurant.



With vast windows overlooking the Mediterranean shrubland and vineyards, the open kitchen and the wood oven present a menu that brings together the best aspects of the Tuscan culinary tradition. You'll find here that many of the dishes are served in terracotta bowls and clay plates, a respectable nod to local customs of the past.

Wine lovers will be happy to know that the wine cellar has an open view facility, where they can choose from more than 600 labels, including the wines produced by owners of the hotel, the Moretti family's own vineyards – Petra and Tenuta La Badiola – the latter adjacent to La Trattoria Enrico Bartolini on the right

www.andana.it/en/hotel-castiglione-della-pescaia.htm

The Thinking Travelling Villa in Sicily

In Sicily, the vendemmia, otherwise known as the grape harvest takes place from the end of July with Pinot Grigio in the Trapani area to the end of October with Carricante on Mount Etna. It is said to be one of the longest harvest periods in Europe, reflecting the geographic diversity of the island and the wide range of grape varieties cultivated there.

The Thinking Traveller has several villas in Sicily that are rooted in wine country and are happy to arrange for their clients to take part in the vendemmia. For those who prefer to drink wine rather than make it, their series of wine-related Think Experiences include in-villa wine deliveries and wine-tasting at some of the island's most prestigious vineyards.



www.thinkingtraveller.com

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Located in the heart of the prestigious vineyards of the Côteaux Varois, the L'Hostellerie de l'Abbaye de la Celle is a boutique hotel that borders the site of a 12th century Benedictine Abbey. Guests are invited to revel in the tastes and scents of Provence and enjoy the gastronomic highlights of the Michelin-star restaurant under Benoit Witz.

This majestic house has rooms and suites that preserve the authenticity and charm of its past, providing an ideal opportunity for a timeless getaway. The Benedictine Abbey is surrounded by a park with centuries old chestnut trees and has a serenity that will leave you with an unforgettable experience.

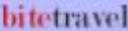
Why not enjoy an awakening sense of stay where you can experience the southern sun and generous cuisine that honours local flavours? You'll find that L'Hostellerie de l'Abbaye de la Celle is a peaceful hotel, placed neatly between vineyards and nature, where your stay will be enhanced by activities around gastronomy, oenology and the art of living in Provence.

On the site, in a cave opposite, is the La Maison des Vins Côteaux Varois which stocks 88 different Provençal rose wines. The hotel's Michelin-starred restaurant offers genuine, seasonal cuisine said to be a far cry from static menus, where you'll discover a choice of dishes that follow the seasons and the market stall.

The restaurant comprises of three delightful rooms: Alsacien de Montpellier, Diane de Caluire and Louise de Castellane. Each one has its own atmosphere such as Moustiers tiles on the walls and wood panelling, sconces in Jean-Claude Novaro blown glass and a dinner service from the Ateliers du Soleil.

And with easy access to Monaco, St. Tropez, Nice and Aix, L'Hostellerie is an invitation to relaxation.

www.abbaye-celle.com/en/home






Images courtesy of Ann Scott Associates