

Tuscan Food and Wine Tour

Friday, October 8 to Saturday, October 16, 2010

Chef Stev George and Private Wine Importer Rob Elvy are excited to present an 8-day food and wine tour of Tuscany. The tour is designed to give you a “sense of place” in Tuscany by exposing the varied locales, tastes and flavours. Through food demonstrations, winery and vineyard visits, tutored wine and olive oil tasting, and visits to historical sites and towns, your exploration of Tuscany will highlight the diversity and richness of the region.

We will be based in the northern region of Chianti Rufina at the historical Villa di Colognole operated by the Countess Gabriella Spalletti only 20 minutes from Florence. Our group of ten guests will stay in the “Villa di Fattoria” a restored stone farmhouse on the Estate with each room offering a double bed and private bath. Breakfast will be served daily. Trekking and mountain bikes are also available.

DAY 1: Arrival in Florence and Orientation at Villa di Colognole (Friday)



Guests are asked to arrive in Florence where they will be met and transferred to Rufina for a late afternoon orientation at Villa di Colognole. This historical estate rests on Mount Giovi over 990 metres in altitude and spread over 700 hectares of forests, vineyards producing Chianti Rufina, and olive groves. The view is breath-taking and the environment serene – a perfect spot to relax after a day of food and wine! Your first Tuscan dinner will be enjoyed at the Villa.

DAY 2: Castello di Verrazzano (Saturday)



Our first full day is spent heading south into the Chianti Classico region with a visit to the historic and beautiful Castello di Verrazzano (www.verrazzano.com) established 1192. This visit starts with a private tour of the castle gardens and the historical ageing cellars of the Castello. It is then followed by an extensive traditional lunch combined with a tasting of Verrazzano’s wines. We relax after lunch, taking in the glorious views from the hillside patio before heading back north to Colognole. A light dinner will be enjoyed back at the Villa accompanied by a few bottles of the Chianti Classico tasted earlier in the day!

DAY 3: Olive oil and Wine Tasting at Colognole (Sunday)

Sunday will be spent at Colognole. We will begin our day with a late morning seminar and tasting of the estate's olive oil – Colognole produces some of the most sought after olive oil in Tuscany. We will enjoy a light lunch while tasting various vintages of the estate's Chianti Rufina – learning about the specific styles and traditions of this rarest of Chiantis. To better understand Chianti Rufina an optional tour of the vineyards will be offered after our tasting. Dinner will be enjoyed at a hidden restaurant high in hills surrounding the estate.

DAY 4 – Montalcino (Monday)

Home to the classic Tuscan red wine, Brunello di Montalcino, our first stop takes us to Armilia, the smallest Brunello producer in the region with a mere 500 cases a year. Here we will have a chance to walk in the family fields, learn about the specific characteristics of the appellation and enjoy a tasting in the family tasting room. At mid-day we head to Montalcino where you will enjoy a free afternoon to enjoy this historical town. Dinner, highlighting dishes of Montalcino, will be prepared back at Colognole paired with wines from the day of tasting.

DAY 5 – Scarperia (Tuesday)

Built in the 14th century, Scarperia is located at the foot of the Apennines on what was the main trade route from Florence to Bologna. Known for its knife and agricultural tool production for six centuries, a 1908 law prohibiting the trade of blades longer than a palm's length practically decimated the blade craftsmanship industry. Few remain - we will visit the Saladini showroom where you may purchase beautiful hand-made traditional knives of the region. You are free to enjoy lunch in the town before we head back to Colognole in the afternoon. Dinner, highlighting the dishes of Scarperia and the Mugello region, will be served in the evening.

DAY 6 – San Gimignano (Wednesday)

We travel south to begin our day with a tasting and tour at Azienda Agricola Le Rote – who specializes in Chianti Colli Senesi as well as the famed white Tuscan wine Vernaccia di San Gimignano. Our afternoon will take us to the historical “town of towers” San Gimignano for a light lunch and a photo opportunity in this Medieval town. Dinner, highlighting San Gimignano dishes will be prepared back at the Villa, once again paired with wines enjoyed that day.

DAY 7 – A Day in Florence (Thursday)

Our morning begins with a Florentine food market walk with Stev where he will pick out our evening ingredients. An optional lunch can be enjoyed at the Verrazzano wine bar and bakery. Guests will then have free time to explore Florence for the afternoon. A Florentine meal will be served in the evening back at the Villa.

DAY 8 – Siena (Friday)

It seems fitting to finish our tour in the city of Siena. Siena embodies the classic medieval city, encircled by massive ramparts the city extends over three converging clay hills at the very heart of the high Tuscan plateau. Our final dinner will be enjoyed at the Villa.

DAY 9 – Departure

A shuttle will transport you to the Florence airport for the flight home.

Tour Cost - \$3450 per person (based on double occupancy)

Inclusions:

8 nights accommodation – rooms all have private baths

Transportation and transfers (Florence arrival only)*

Orientation and Prosecco Tasting

All breakfasts, three lunches and all dinners including wine **

All wine tastings, winery tours and seminars

Olive oil tasting

All cooking demonstrations and food seminars

Exclusions

Any extra alcohol beverages above and beyond wine provided with the meal

Airfare to and from Florence, Italy

Flight / tour cancellation insurance

Travel medical insurance

Applicable taxes (will be added to the above cost)

* Transportation to and from Florence airport on Day 1 and Day 9. Does not include transfers when flights are missed or alternative schedules are arranged.

** Wine: we will include wine with all dinners – any other alcohol beverages will be the responsibility of the guest.