

# Exploring Wine

## Exploring Italy – The Roots of Wine JUNE 6-19, 2019

The most beautiful scenery in the world – it's a tall order to choose where that is. But two candidates are surely the multi-colored fields of southern Tuscany and the rolling hills of the Barolo wine district. Nowhere on the planet do breathtaking vistas so completely envelop some of the highest-quality grape vines to be found anywhere. Italy offers a cornucopia for the senses – incredible history and art, sensational food, delicious wines, warm and interesting people, and dazzling scenery. Let's explore it together!



In our small group of twelve wine adventurers, we'll touch on each aspect of Italy's appeal as we visit historical and religious sites, gaze at gorgeous vistas, and taste some of the world's greatest wines.



Our trip begins in Tuscany where we'll stay in historic Siena, which oozes atmosphere. The center of Siena is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and there will be time to explore its winding streets, beautiful cathedral, and the Piazza del Campo, the town square where the Palio, a traditional medieval horse race, is run twice each summer.



We'll explore the beautiful Italian countryside and stroll through quaint villages. We'll visit and taste at Castello di Brolio, birthplace of Chianti, and at Biondi Santi, birthplace of Brunello di Montalcino.



We will spend two nights at the elegant, historical 5\* Tuscan country estate, Castello del Nero, and dine at their fabulous Michelin starred restaurant.

Between Tuscany and Piedmont we visit Volterra, Italy's ancient hilltop center of alabaster sculpture and crafts. We tour the amazing Carrara marble quarry where Michelangelo chose his marble and visit the beautiful walled town of Lucca where you can opt to attend a Puccini operatic aria recital in Puccini's home church.



Then it's on to the spectacular string of Italian Riviera villages known as Cinque Terre, where we take in stunning views of the Mediterranean. You'll have time to explore the elegant seaside resort of Portofino and its neighbor, Santa Margherita Ligure before we drive to Piedmont, where we'll stay at a luxury country hotel in one of the three best vineyards of Barolo. We'll enjoy a vertical cellar tasting of top Barolos made in their vineyard. We spend 3+ days in Piedmont with visits to renowned wine estates such as Aldo Conterno, Luciano Sandrone, and if possible, Gaja.

Our trip winds down with a visit to sparkling wine producers Bellavista and Ca' del Bosco in Franciacorta outside of Milan, where our memorable trip concludes.



Our main mode of transport will be a comfortable coach with a local driver. We'll be busy each day, but not too busy. Every day includes time for personal exploration or relaxation.



**Your guides** for this exceptional experience are *Exploring Wine* founder Charles Bennett, CWP, CSW and his wife, Jill Philipson. Charlie has been a wine lover and collector for more than 30 years. He honeymooned with Jill in Burgundy and once lived on a vineyard in Germany. Charlie speaks French and German and has traveled extensively around the world. He is certified as a wine professional by the Culinary Institute of America and the Society of Wine Educators.

As a board member of the Chaîne des Rôtisseurs, the world's oldest and largest wine and food society, Charlie headed the Chaîne's 2,000+ member association of wine enthusiasts (the Société Mondiale du Vin), ran the Chaîne's national young sommelier competition, and led the Chaîne's national wine programs. Charlie holds degrees from Stanford and Tufts. In years past he won three Emmy awards on public television, was a business strategy consultant to CEOs of several Fortune 500 companies, and was VP of Internet Services for a major computer company. Wine is now his primary passion.

Jill is an experienced events and travel planner and a former television director who is *Exploring Wine's* logistics guru, marketing coordinator, and webmaster. She and Charlie have been married for more than 30 years.



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