

# Italy

**A Taste of Piedmont, October 12-19, 2013**

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Along with its superb food and wine, Piemonte is the birthplace of the Slow Food Movement and is famous for its white truffles, creamy cheeses, elegant wines and rich chocolates. It also boasts picturesque hill towns, elegant cities and stunning mountain vistas. You'll visit opulent baroque cafés in Turin, bustling produce markets, hunt for truffles in Alba, meet wine makers and make some of the regional specialties such as *vitello tonnato* and *ravioli del Plin*.

Piemonte, which means, foot of the mountain, is rightfully named as many of its premier vine yards are at the foot of the Alps. When you think of Piemonte, several of the most notable and well recognized wines, such as *Barolo*, *Barbaresco* and *Dolcetto*, come to mind. Many of the greatest vineyards (crus) are shared amongst many different families.

Similar to Burgundy, parcels of land are often passed from one generation to the next. In some cases, a family may own only one or two rows of vines of an entire vineyard. This concept results in very small scale productions that yield hand-crafted, unique wines.

## ITINERARY

### Saturday, Oct. 12: Turin

Arrival Turin airport and transfer by private bus to **Turin**, accommodation at the **3\* Hotel Amadeus** in the historic center.

Turin is an elegant and sophisticated city, that was Italy's former capital, and before that, the seat of its Royal Family. The city has preserved its elegant *palazzos* and other attractions from that era. Beautiful shops and miles of *portici* (arcades) make Torino an ideal place for shopping and outdoor meetings before lunch or dinner. Its *Gianduiotto*, a soft paste made of quality cocoa and hazelnuts (another local product) is not to be missed.





*Historic Caffè Platti*

Time at leisure.

Late afternoon: Meeting with the guide at the hotel for a visit of some historic Cafés: **Café Platti** and **Café Mulassano**, stop at **Baratti e Milano** in San Carlo square for a *bicerin* (espresso, chocolate and milk) tasting.

#### **A Short history of Historic Cafés in Turin:**

A large part of the behind-the-scenes business prior to Italy's Unification took place in the historical cafés of Turin.

Famous personalities of the 18th century Unification such as Cavour and Massimo D'Azeglio, or from the world of literature such as Cesare Pavese and Guido Gozzano, could frequently be found at these cafés because they were the cornerstones of social life of the time. The cafes are in the city centre and are still steeped in the atmosphere of the past, as can be seen in the refined interiors.

Turin's *patisserie* art, is known for its delicacy, variety, and the dainty size, made small to ensure that aristocrats could eat them as 'decorously' as possible.

Welcome dinner with wine included, in a typical Piedmontese restaurant.

### **Sunday, Oct 13: Turin - Guided tour of the Historic Center; Egypt Museum & Eataly**

Breakfast at hotel.

This morning, a guided visit of the historic centre of Turin: **Royal Savoia Palace**, **Piazza Castello**, **Piazza Carlo Felice**, and **Mole Antonelliana**.

This afternoon, visit the **Egypt Museum**, which houses the world's second largest collections of Egyptian antiquities after Cairo. Afterwards, transfer to **Eataly** for a tour and time at leisure for dinner (choose from many restaurants and pizzeria there). Eataly is a combination of food market, cooking school and restaurants. It was founded by Oscar Farinetti and opened its doors in Turin in 2007. Eataly was created in Turin, because it is also the birthplace of the Slow Food movement. Slow Food is an organization founded in 1989 in response to the concept of fast food and all it brings with it: fast life, disconnection from the origins of our food supply and disappearance of local food traditions. Instead, Slow Food protects the heritage of food and culture by strengthening the connections between plate and planet. It believes that farmers, producers, cooks and consumers must work together to protect the world's food heritage. Transfer back to the hotel.



*Villa Tiboldi & Malvira Wine Estate*

### **Monday, Oct 14: Contratto Wines, Asti, & Scagliola Wines**

Breakfast at hotel and check out.

Travel by private bus with your guide to the Langhe area. **Contratto Wines** was founded in 1867 by Giuseppe Contratto and the winery is known as the oldest producer of sparkling wine in Italy. In fact, the "Metodo Classico" 1919 Contratto Extra Brut was the first vintage sparkling wine ever made in the country. At the turn of the 20th century, its wines were leaving Canelli for destinations all over the world (predominantly to royal houses), and Contratto was the personal supplier to the Vatican as well as to the Italian Royal Family. Awards and medals from international exhibitions and contests of the time emphasize why the name of Contratto has long been synonymous with prestige and quality in the world of sparkling wine. *Cantratto* also specializes in Vermouth production. We are planning to taste a few of them.

Lunch in the town of **Asti**, the capital of one of the most important wine regions in Italy.

**Scagliola Vini** is recognized regularly by **Wine Spectator** and Parker, and is truly a hidden gem in the heart of Piedmont. The Scagliola estate is located in the town of Calosso in the Barbera d'Asti appellation of Piedmont. The estate is run by two brothers: Maggiorino and Mario Scagliola. Before the two brothers took over the helm, the previous generations at Scagliola were just growers selling their wines in bulk to cantinas around Asti. Since 1980, Maggiorino and Mario have focused their efforts on creating world class wines at the estate. The Scagliola family produces *Dolcetto*, *Cortese*, *Chardonnay*, *Grignolino*, *Monferrato Rosso*, *Brachetto* and *Pinot Nero*, in limited quantities. It's one of Svetlana's favorite producers from Piedmont. "All their wines have amazing texture, elegance, and pure expression of unique terroir" – by Svetlana.

Transfer to **Villa Tiboldi** in **Canale**, Roero.

Welcome drink and dinner at Villa Tiboldi.

### **Tuesday, Oct 15: University of Gastronomy and Wine Bank; Barolo**

Breakfast at hotel.

Meeting with the guide at the hotel and transfer by private bus to the **Agenzia di Pollenzo** for a guided visit of the **Wine Bank**, a workshop and wine tasting. Located in the historical cellars of the Agenzia di Pollenzo, the Wine Bank is a center for the best wines of Italy. It is also a museum of Italian wine, offering visitors the chance to taste the wines from some of the most prestigious wineries.





*Truffle hunter with truffles*

### **Workshop: The Langhe and Her Vines**

Learn your way through one of the finest regions in the world of wine by tasting some of Italy's most authoritative oenological examples: *Barolo* and *Barbaresco*. Includes a degustation of 2 Barolo cru and 2 Barbaresco cru and the book *An Atlas of the Vineyards of Langa*. Transfer back to the hotel

Afternoon at leisure.

### **Wednesday, Oct 16: Cooking Lesson, Lunch & Malvira Winery**

Breakfast at hotel.

This morning, a hands-on cooking lesson with the chef at Villa Tiboldi. You will prepare a complete Piemontese menu. Lunch will follow.

After lunch, a tour of the **Malvira Winery** which is a family owned winery. All their wines are produced from Estate fruit, organically farmed across 104 acres and 6 vineyards. Malvira was one of the first vineyards in Piemonte to recognize the importance of Arneis by creating special Crus for their Arneis vines, identifying and designating the hillsides providing the best growing conditions for this indigenous varietal. Grapes Arneis is an ancient, fragrant and vibrant white-grape variety known the world over as the "little rascal." The Nebbiolo wines produced by Malvira, especially the Superiore, have garnered high praise in the press both in Italy and the US. Basically Barolos from the "wrong side" of the Tanero River have a grace and elegance not always found in their big brothers on the "right" bank.

Transfer to 3\* **Hotel Barolo** in the village of Barolo.

### **Thursday, Oct 17: Truffle Hunt and Visit to a Cheese Producer**

Breakfast at hotel.

Transfer by private bus where you will meet with a *trufalaio* [truffle hunter] for some truffle tasting. Transfer to a truffle field where the truffle hunter will show you how to find them, different techniques, and everything you ever wanted to know about truffles.

Lunch of typical local products and wines.

In the afternoon drive to **Azienda Agricola Abate** in Bossolasco for a visit of the cheese factory where typical cheeses are produced such as the D.O.P. Mulassano and Langhe Tuma. These cheeses are made only with raw sheeps milk. A tasting of cheeses, bread and wine, will follow.



*La Spinetta Winery*

## **Friday, Oct 18: Leisure Time, Wine Tastings & Farewell Dinner**

Breakfast at hotel.

Morning at leisure.

Are you a traditionalist or a modernist? Whichever you are, you'll find satisfaction in Italy's famed Barolo wine region. We will visit two unique wineries to taste their traditional and modern-styled wines.

**Traditional Style: Fontanafredda Winery.** Since 1878 Fontanafredda Estate & Winery, located in the heart of Piedmont's Langhe region, has been a benchmark for *Barolo* and *Barbera* wines that deftly balance deep aromas and concentration of fruit with elegance. Among the prized vineyard sites belonging to Fontanafredda are those in the commune of Serralunga d'Alba, a source of some of today's most distinctive and intriguing Barolo wines.

The history of Fontanafredda is a noble one. It began in 1858, when Vittorio Emanuele II, the first king of Italy, purchased the Fontanafredda estate – a former hunting preserve – as a country home. Soon thereafter, he began to produce fine red wines from indigenous grape varieties *dolcetto*, *barbera* and *nebbiolo*. In 1878 King Vittorio II died and his first-born son, Count Emanuele Alberto di Mirafiori, inherited Fontanafredda. Count Mirafiori created the commercial business of wine from the estate and released the estate's first *nebbiolo* labeled as Barolo with the vintage 1878. Beginning in 1932, the estate transferred to Monte dei Paschi di Siena, the world's oldest bank, which retained ownership of Fontanafredda for 76 years. Their philosophy: *Barolo should reveal itself little by little, rather than all at once.* – Danilo Drocco

**Modern Style: La Spinetta Winery.** La Spinetta has become a modern Italian superstar winery, producing some of Piemonte's most delicious wines at their main estate in Castagnole Lanze and their newer 'Campè' estate (acquired in 2000) in Grinzane Cavour. Enologist Stephane Mazzetta settled in at La Spinetta several years ago after working at other top Langhe wineries. Three Barbarescos are produced - Gallina, Valeirano, and Stardi - as well as a single Barolo, a Moscato Passito called 'Oro,' and several others. From Moscato to Nebbiolo to Sangiovese, whatever Giorgio touches turns to gold. His pioneering single-vineyard Barberas and Barbera/Nebbiolo blend Pin are considered to be the best of the Langhe. His Barbarescos and Barolo are at the very top of their category. In fact, his wines are among Italy's most celebrated, as he has attained the coveted "Tre-Bicchieri" award for more than 30 of his wines throughout his relatively short career. Their philosophy: *The secret to making great wine is no secret, it is all about producing great fruit.* – Giorgio Rivetti

Transfer back to the hotel and farewell dinner in a local restaurant.



### **Saturday, Oct 19: Departure**

Pick up from the hotel and transfer to Turin airport.

### **Price**

\$3,597.00 per person, based on double occupancy

### **Inclusions**

2 nights at 3-star **Hotel Amadeus**, Turin

2 nights at **Villa Tiboldi** in Canale, Cuneo

3 nights at 3-star **Hotel Barolo** in Barolo

7 breakfasts

Private transfers and excursions by bus

Private Guide on 3 full days, 2 half days

Welcome dinner, wine included

Guided winery visits and wine tastings: **Scagliola, Contratto, Malvira, La Spinetta, Fontanafredda**

Welcome cocktail and dinner at the Villa, wine included

Wine Bank visit and workshop

1 cooking lesson followed by lunch

Half day truffle hunt, plus lunch in an *agriturismo*

Cheese tasting

Farewell dinner, wine included

Taxes and gratuities