

La Dolce Vita Wine Tours

DAY TOURS



Only have time for a short visit to the vineyards? We offer private day trips to two popular destinations: Tuscany and Piedmont. Take the stress out of your vacation planning, and let us guide you through the wine country of Italy.

TUSCANY

A Day in Chianti

If you're staying in Florence, Chianti Classico is the closest of Tuscany's premiere wine zones. It's also the largest, stretching from Florence to Siena. Chianti was a contested land, and the centuries of war between these two city states left behind a legacy of fortified castles and bristling fortresses that gives Chianti its distinctive character. So, too, do the stone farmsteads that once housed sharecroppers who served the feudal lords, which now are frequently occupied by prestigious wineries.

We'll visit some of these historic sites on tour. After a 9:00 A.M. pick-up at your hotel, we'll drive to the DOCG wine region (approx. one hour). During the course of the day, we'll visit three estates, carefully selected to illustrate the diversity of wineries in Chianti. We'll certainly want to include the birthplace of Chianti, **Castello Brolio**. Owned by the Ricasoli family since 1141, this crenellated castle has seen its share of wars. You can visit its magnificent gardens and walk along the ramparts, then hear about Chianti's creation by the "Iron Baron" Bettino Ricasoli, and finally taste their highly regarded Chianti Classicos and Super Tuscan, Casalferro. Tasting can continue over lunch at the winery's fine restaurant, *Osteria del Castello*. Then after lunch, we'll visit two more wine estates representing the smaller, boutique side of Chianti production. These might include the charming **Casa Emma**, situated in an historic farmhouse, which works with traditional grapes for its Chianti and Vin Santo, and also makes extra virgin olive oil. And **Caparsa**, among the new generation of Chianti wineries founded in the 1980s; they now follow a *terroir*-driven, minimal interventionist philosophy of winemaking. We'll wrap up the day around 6 P.M. and have you back to Florence by dinnertime.

PRICE: 250 Euros/person; 2-person minimum. Discounts for groups of 4 or more.

Included: 3 wine tastings, roundtrip transportation, English-language guide with wine expertise

Not included: Lunch, gratuity

DAY TOURS

A Day in Montalcino

Brunello never tasted better! Spend the day in one of Tuscany's most beautiful regions, the Val d'Orcia, a UNESCO World Heritage site, and get acquainted with one of Italy's most coveted wines: Brunello di Montalcino, and its little brother, Rosso di Montalcino. Montalcino lies 30 miles south of Siena. Thus Siena is the ideal base for a day trip. However, we can also run this tour from Florence. (Please note: From Florence, it's a long day, with a two-hour drive each way.)



Our choice of three wineries will reflect the different styles of winemaking and different microclimates within Montalcino. Brunello is made from sangiovese, a site-sensitive grape, so we'll visit wineries on the north and south sides of the DOCG zone, comparing Brunellos from different microclimates. One estate might be **Donatella Cinelli Colombini, aka Casato Prime Donne**, on the cooler northern fringe. Its founder, Donatella Cinelli Colombini, is a powerhouse among female winery owners and was the first Italian to hire an all-female winery staff. Her cellar is arrayed with paintings depicting historical turning points in Montalcino, so our hostess will provide an entertaining history as we tour the cellars.

Lunch is in the medieval town of Montalcino. You'll have the option of dining at a charming wine bar that's owned and run by a Brunello winery. After lunch, we'll head to the Sant' Antimo zone on Montalcino's warmer south side. Here we'll find more structured Brunellos as well as a new style of blended reds under the Sant' Antimo denomination. We might visit **Ciacci Piccolomini di Aragona**, a winery with ties to the Renaissance Humanist Pope Pius II—and a Cinderella story behind its current ownership. Nearby is **Fanti**, an old farm turned modernist winery with absolutely scrumptious, cult-status Brunellos. Though they began bottling in the 1970s, Fanti's property also has a long history, having belonged to the monks who constructed the abbey of Sant' Antimo. We'll leave Montalcino, well sated, around 6 P.M.

PRICE: 280 Euros/person; 2-person minimum. Discounts for groups of 4 or more.

Included: 3 wine tastings, roundtrip transportation, English-language guide with wine expertise

Not included: Lunch, gratuity

PIEDMONT

A Day in the Langhe Hills

Piedmont, located between the Italian Alps and the Riviera, is a wine-lover's mecca. The heart of Piedmont is the Langhe, south of the Tanaro River. With its twisting hills blanketed by vineyards and hillcrests crowned with medieval forts and castles, it's a land of spectacular beauty. It's also home to some pretty spectacular wine. There's Barolo, appropriately known as "the king of wines and the wine of kings," as well as Barbaresco, Dolcetto, Barbera, and Moscato. But the list goes on: Freisa, Pelaverga, Ruché, Brachetto, Cortese... In fact, Piedmont has more classified wines than any other region of Italy.

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From your base in Alba, Asti, Turin, or another location nearby, we'll shuttle into the Langhe hills and visit three wineries during the course of the day. These will be carefully chosen to showcase the diversity of winemaking styles and winery histories in the Langhe. An apt place to begin is the **Marchesi di Barolo**, whose namesake "invented" Barolo wine in the mid 19th century. Located in the eponymous village, this winery still holds the 150-year-old casks that were used to age the first Barolos when the French noblewoman, Giulietta Colbert Trancredi, changed the game entirely in the mid-1800s. Next, you'll have the opportunity to enjoy an unforgettable lunch in town, where a parade of classic *piemontese* appetizers and *primi* will convince you that, yes, Piedmont has the very best food in Italy!



Our two afternoon wineries present another side of Barolo. **Silvio Grasso** is illustrative of the boutique, family-run wineries that opened up in the 1980s, when Barolo underwent a radical makeover and grape-growers became winemakers. Here we'll enjoy Italian-style hospitality as one of the Grasso family members pours an array of Barolos and gives us the chance to compare single-vineyard *cru* side by side and see what a difference *terroir* makes. Our third winery will be either Fratelli Oddero or Da Milano. Founded in 1878, the winery of **Fratelli Oddero** is among the oldest in Barolo, but it still is in family hands. Oddero owns parcels in some of the most historic vineyards in the Langhe, both in the Barolo zone (Brunate in La Morra, Vigna Rionda in Serralunga, among others) and in Barbaresco (Gallina in Neive), so you'll be able to sample from a wide swath of *terroir*. **Da Milano** controls over half of the historic Cannubi vineyard and has parcels in other prized sites, such as Liste. Yet while aiming for quality, Paolo Damilano and enologist Beppe Caviola have also prioritized value. As a result, theirs are among the best price-value Barolos around. The day wraps up around 6 P.M.

PRICE: 250 Euros/person; 2-person minimum. Discounts for groups of 4 or more.

Included: 3 wine tastings, roundtrip transportation, English-language guide with wine expertise

Not included: Lunch, gratuity

TO BOOK:

- 1) Fill out the on-line reservation form: <http://www.dolcetours.com/reservations.htm>
- 2) Send in a deposit of \$120/person, payable to La Dolce Vita Wine Tours (address below). The balance is due 60 days prior to departure.