



Patagonia, Argentina

ULTIMATE WINE TOURS

*Your trip of a lifetime
doesn't need hours of planning.*

BY RISA WYATT

A wine vacation should be 100 percent fun, so skip the logistics hassles, and take a wine tour organized by top professionals. True insiders in their regions, these operators arrange warm welcomes for you at famous wineries not generally open to the public. Itineraries include visits to new cult favorites as well as renowned grand castles. Owners and winemakers bring out “the good stuff”: older vintages, limited-production bottlings and rare vertical tastings. But wait, there’s more: Tour operators arrange to have guests pampered with private guides and luxury hotels, as well as dining at top-rated restaurants and cozy, authentic eateries serving regional specialties. The world’s greatest wines, and some of wine’s most fascinating people and places, are waiting for you.

Piedmont, Italy Barolo, truffles and castles

Surrounded on three sides by the Alps, the Piedmont region is home *terroir* for superstars Barolo and Barbaresco, as well as lavish cuisine that includes truffles, cream sauces and soft-ripened robiola cheese. On the Piedmont Wine Tour, a private, chauffeured Mercedes-Benz shuttles guests on VIP visits to estates that include La Spinetta for tastings of top-ranked Barbaresco and Barolo, and Borgogno (established 1761), where vertical tastings are available. Travelers also discover boutique properties like Gigi Rosso, where Winemaker Maurizio pulls out vintages from his own cellar, and Cordero di Montezemolo, managed by the same family since 1340. Enjoy pampering at accommodations like Castello di Guarene, an 18th-century palace with beautiful gardens. Meals are equally memorable at Piazza Duomo in Alba, where Chef Enrico Crippa brings out the best in seasonal ingredients. Other activities can include tours of royal houses built by the Dukes of Savoy, bicycling excursions or skiing at Sestriere, site of several events during the 2006 Winter Olympics.

Add-On:

The International Alba White Truffle Fair is special fun in late autumn and early winter.

Contact:

Cellar Tours, cellartours.com;
Piedmont Wine Tour:
Nine days/eight nights from \$7,500 per person.



Serralunga d'Alba



Maurizio Rosso of Gigi Rosso



Piazza Duomo



MASSIMO RIPANI / SIMI / ESTOCK PHOTOS