

Secret gourmet hot spots off TUSCANY & UMBRIA

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Text: Veronika Nováková



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And Simona Kocúrová, a specialist in Italy's luxury adventure experience, provides it through her agency SK-Travel Privé, will take you to such places. Simona has been living in Italy Italy for years, and she built this dream job step dream job step by step on her own. Nowadays, she cooperates with the best hotels, Michelin chefs. Thanks to this cooperation you get to the most exclusive places. Simona is an art lover and, as she claims, she is also a very curious person.

"I consider the pairing of food and wine to be a perfect state of the art. The food as such has always fascinated me, and not just the taste itself. I am mainly interested in the overall impression, where the smell and visual presentation play an important role – based on these elements, I find out the very value of the products. All this must fit perfectly together, like a puzzle. Since this environment is also the place where I live, I can say from my own experience that it is not always a case that you get a culinary experience from an expensive restaurant. The food can be beautiful, but it doesn't have to be so in taste, or vice versa; the food is excellent, but the service is inconsistent."

Smart Slovak professional also completed a special aenogastronomy course, so she is the „creme de la creme“ in this field. Especially for the readers of the Vinotéka, she revealed her secret tips on places that are truly exceptional. Of course, there must also be some special wine producers because this young lady has mastered the culture of wine: "Wine is not just a drink itself, but there is so much into it. Bottle, label, design and, last but not least, the manufacturer himself. "With wine, I look at all aspects, what and how its owner does, whether he is passionate about his work and whether he enjoys it." So now let's talk Simona into revealing her favorite tips.



Entrepreneur and founder of the agency SK Travel Privé, Simona Kocúrová

Enchanting medieval castle Monte Vibiano with a labyrinth garden



Wine and art in Castello di Ama

"Art is part of my „inner me“, so when I visited this wine hacienda for the first time, I was surprised. At first sight, it seems to be a traditional, stone Tuscan farmhouse. Still, after crossing the imaginary boundaries, you enter the world of modern art directly in the wine cellars. "Castello di Ama" is not only a legendary gallery of world artists but also one of the top producers of excellent wines. An interesting rarity is Pinot nero di Toscana, which is not easy to find in Tuscany. I recommend tasting Castello di Ama San Lorenzo for traditional Chianti lovers - the Chianti Classico from a special selection combines the taste of prunes, wild berries, homemade jam, tobacco and fragrant cloves. After the wine tasting, we continue with a panoramic area tour enriched with another piece of art. It is a "mirror alley" by the artist Daniel Buren, which emphasizes the country's beauty in which we find ourselves even more."

In the hands of a creative experimenter

"Sergio Sardelli, the owner of the Cellesse wine bar, is a young and energetic Italian-Spaniard. We know each other personally and I must say that every time we meet, he reveals a new idea or experimental plan to me, and in a few months, I can see the work done. Recently, when I was visiting him, he was busy with prosecco with a drop of Sangiovese. I am very curious about how this wine will taste. His creations are related to wine, wine products and interesting hacienda. I recommend trying his SorBruno Chianti Clasico Gran Selezione wine, which has won the prestigious "Best Italian Wine Award 2019" and is one of the 50 best Italian wines.

Along with excellent grappa and other excellent products, it is delivered in luxurious, leather tailor-made wine safes."

Silvana's cheese factory

"Cheese lovers can also find their cheese heaven in Tuscany. The Val D'Orcia area, in particular, is characterized by the cheese of Pecorino di Pienza (sheep's cheese from Pienza). For passionate cheese geeks, I organize a course during which they make their cheese and continue with tasting. There are several types of Pecorino: fresh, semi-mature and mature. Cheese producers also add some tasty ingredients, for example, truffles, spice mixtures, tomatoes; they even cover it with grape leaves or ash to absorb these unusual aromas. My clients love a cheese picnic; within this, we enjoy cheeses, salami and wines and a beautiful panoramic landscape. I recommend the cheese factory of Silvana Cugusi, a family production of excellent cheeses that have conquered the world, to enjoy this experience.

Truffle hunting with Fausto

"For the first time, I got the invitation from my friend and private chef, Enrico, to enjoy this experience. His brother Fausto and his dog are long-time experts on "black gold", as truffles are called (probably because of the price). The dress code is required as you would go on the hunting trip. If you like forest walks, animals and an adventurous atmosphere, you would probably fall in love with the treasure hunt for this delicacy. It's not an easy task, because you have to be lucky to find this black gold. The interesting thing is that you and Fausto are not so important when looking for truffles, but just the dog. Only he is specially trained to smell the truffle scent underground. Whether



Exclusive wine cellar of young and energetic owner Sergio Sardelli in Chianti



Lorenzo Fasola walking in the oldest vineyard in the world

you succeed or not, after a truffle hunt in the woods, a 5-course truffle-based tasting lunch by the fireplace is ready.”

Panoramic wine tasting in the balloon

“My clients love this experience! Not only do you get beautiful photos during the flight and see Tuscany from a bird’s eye view, but you also taste a selection of the best Tuscan wines. After an attractive flight, we land in the heart of Tuscany; a driver is waiting for us, transporting us to a wine bar in a prestigious castle estate. And this is the second step of our wine journey. One of the oldest Tuscan wine families, Frescobaldi, will prepare a tasting lunch with equivalent wines. The combination of pairing wine and food is a real art. I don’t think I have to introduce “Brunello di Montalcino”. It is a recognized mark of quality all over the world. I recommend “stuffed rooster on wine” which pairs excellently with this wine. “

The oldest grape in the world

“We are located in the neighboring region of Umbria. I have wonderful memories of this region and I like to travel here a lot. Every time I do not miss the town of Assisi, the birthplace of St. Francis, Gubbio - known for truffles and wine, or Perugia, where you can taste the original chocolate candies of fashion designer Luisa Spagnoli. Not far from the mysterious town of Orvieto is the castle winery of Monte Vibiano, a worldwide championship as a hacienda with zero CO2 emissions. Besides, according to legend, its grapes

are considered one of the oldest in the world. Its history dates back to 217 BC. It was also called the “variety of rulers.” The owners are siblings Maria Camilla and Lorenzo Fasola Bologna, who are constantly improving the manor and products. Lorenzo even freezes freshly picked olives at night and only then squeezes olive oil out to retain all its characteristic properties, aromas and vitamins. No wonder, because of this process, his confection of “single-use” olive oils made it to the exclusive private jets of the Arab Emirates. You will not forget the visit to this estate. Olive trees and a vineyard surround a beautiful medieval castle with a labyrinth garden.

Gastronomic specialty „Porchetta“

“Porchetta is a slice of boneless pork with a crunchy crust, roasted for 10 hours, flavored and after cooling, hand-sliced and placed in warm bread. You can also taste it in Tuscany, but it comes from Umbria, specifically from Norcia. If you plan to enjoy it as the traditional way recommends, my suggestion is to visit the “Castello di Spina”, reopened just a few weeks ago. It is a settlement within the medieval walls, consisting of only a few typical streets and stone buildings. Find a local butcher here. No worries to not find it; there is only one. The best! It offers meat products of the highest quality Andrea and his family, renowned owners and lovers of their craft, are proud of. Here you can taste the crunchy porchetta prepared specially. One of the secrets of the preparation process is to let it rest for a day before eating.“



Andrea Lanti a jeho rodina sú uznávaní majitelia mäsiarstva La Carneria.

