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Destination Florence

TRAVEL/ TOURISM SEES BOOST WITH STRIKING
SUMMER INCREASE SPORT/ THE CITY GEARS UP
FOR HIGH-PROFILE SPORTING EVENTS WINE/
CONNOISSEURS ARRIVE FOR TOP CHARITY EVENT,
THE GOLDEN VINES® AWARDS

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MAGAZINE

DESTINATION FLORENCE CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU



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For 20+ years, Destination Florence Convention & Visitors Bureau has been the official association for promoting Florence as a destination. Our mission is to attract quality leisure tourism, MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences, events) and destination weddings.

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cover photo: Marco Badiani



**Emanuele Giannelli's
Mr Arbitrium lends his
might to the Basilica
of San Lorenzo**



First spring and then summer 2022 returned the city of Florence to the one we recognize. The streets, squares and museums resonate with various languages, populated by faces from the four corners of the world in a restart that's there for all to see.

This is exactly what the city of Florence seeks to represent: a welcoming and inclusive place that extends itself to all those who have shown an overwhelming desire to get back on the road. Among all the possible destinations they could have chosen, they chose Florence, as evidenced in the prestigious Travel and Leisure magazine where the city was voted number one European destination. It's no wonder that it's so attractive. In recent years, it has had the ability to withstand the economic crisis that has hit the cities of art so hard, reinventing itself from new and different points of view.

Our tourists choose to immerse themselves in the Renaissance atmosphere, in the Florence of the Medici, while also discovering how multifaceted the city is, with its hills and hidden masterpieces outside the centre, and the lively cultural, artistic and sporting scenes. Urban regeneration has taken place in a large part of the city, above all in the decentralized areas, creating new metamorphic spaces that are cultural and innovative centres with international scope. Recently, we've seen new forms of art and culture - such as great works of street art - flourish, all located in areas non typically frequented by tourists. Sustainable transport has improved accessibility, thanks to the development of new 'sharing' forms that are favoured by young people.

In terms of sustainable and outdoor tourism, the paths, spiritual and otherwise, have been rediscovered, with Florence as both the destination and the starting point, unfolding all around the rich and varied territory. Renewed attention has been paid to green spaces, villas and gardens hidden inside the cloisters, and to the hilly area that offers great potential in terms of sustainable development, relieving tourist pressure in the historic centre so that it remains a heritage site for the world to enjoy.

Florence must be open to everyone and present itself in new guises to ensure an attractive offering that is at the same time sustainable and respectful of both tourists and citizens: this is the greatest challenge to which we feel we must devote the utmost commitment.

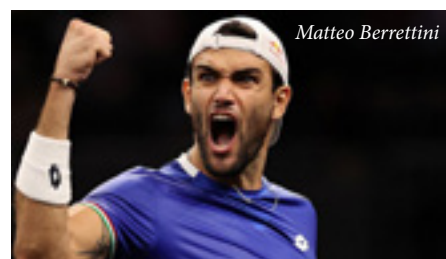
Alessia Bettini

Deputy Mayor of the City of Florence
and Councillor for Culture and Tourism

The new Stadio Franchi project



Florence: city of sport



Matteo Berrettini

MAGAZINE

DESTINATION FLORENCE CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

The Renaissance city known for its rich artistic treasures also extends its talents to the sporting field with an array of high-profile games taking place in the city over the coming months. The new **Palazzo Wanny** in San Bartolo a Cintoia will host the **Unicredit Firenze Open tennis** from October 10-16, returning the ATP tournament back to Florence after 28 years, with **Federtennis** (the Italian Tennis Federation) showing no hesitation in choosing the versatile Palazzo Wanny for the prestigious tournament. Some of the best athletes to wield rackets will bring their skills to the city, with world ranking players including Florence's own **Matteo Berrettini** and **Jannik Sinner**.

Florence shows its potential again only a few weeks later when it will see rugby players take to the field for the **Italy against Australia Autumn Test Match**

on November 12, held at **Stadio Artemio Franchi**, with the stadium designed by architect Pier Luigi Nervi an example of one of the most accomplished sites of 20th century architecture in the city. The season of sport doesn't end there, with the **Florence Marathon** taking place on the last Sunday of November, following a cancelled edition and a limited one due to the health emergency. Runners will take to the streets of the city to display their determination and stamina while surrounded by historic monuments.



Dario Nardella

With an ever-stronger commitment to making Florence a city of sport, the Mayor of Florence **Dario Nardella** and the Councilor for Sport **Cosimo Guccione** share their

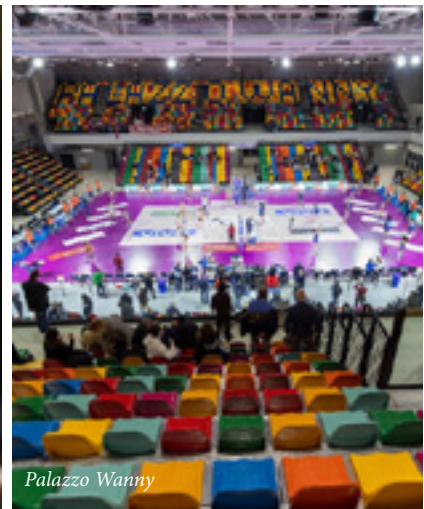
thoughts on the sporty strides the city is making. Nardella comments, "Today, sport represents one of the greatest attractions that has the ability to move people. We had a taste of it after the pandemic with the Golden Gala 2021, and we will gain further evidence with the ATP 250 Tennis and the Italy versus Australia rugby test match. This is all without forgetting that our city hosts one of the most important marathons in Italy that has been taking place for 38 years. Florence is undoubtedly an international reference point for art, culture, landscape, fashion, food and wine, but also for high-level sporting events".



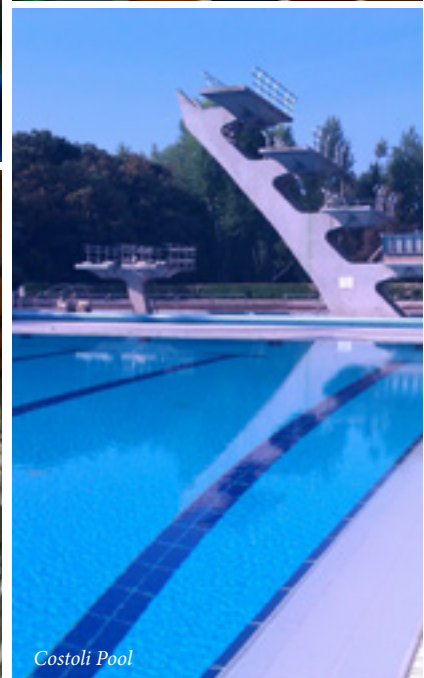
Cosimo Guccione



Italian Rugby team



Palazzo Wanny



Costoli Pool



Ridolfi Stadium

Guccione reflected “Great events attract thousands of spectators, supporters and enthusiasts. In selecting these initiatives, we wanted to restore the image of a Florence that claims its international weight, and that knows how to enhance its territory. **The Franchi Stadium, Ridolfi stadium, Palazzo Wanny, Mandela Forum and the Costoli swimming pool**, in addition to our tourist-hotel infrastructures, are a national unicum that project the city onto a global scale”.

Beyond these exciting events that will draw fans from all over, the city also seeks to improve its sporting infrastructure with the **renovation of the Franchi Stadium** announced in March of this year. Spectators will be brought even closer to the pitch with new position-

ing, and a museum is planned for the Ferrovia end with an auditorium set to be homed in the Fiesole end. The **Campo di Marte** area will also be modified with the creation of a park, hospitality centre and a commercial centre, reaching 5,000 square metres. Sustainability is never neglected, with a new roof for

the stadium with photovoltaic panels providing renewable energy for the sports facility and adjacent buildings. Works are set to start in autumn 2023, with a prospected finish date in 2026, ensuring that Florence’s sporting future is ever-more active.

THE SEASON OF SPORT AHEAD

Unicredit Firenze Open tennis at Palazzo Wanny, October 10-16

Autumn test match, Italy against Australia, at Stadio Artemio Franchi on November 12

38th Florence Marathon held in the centre of Florence, on November 27



Be Travel Onlife: the future of digital tourism

BTO2022 takes place from November 29-30 at Stazione Leopolda, Florence www.bto.travel

Founded in 2008 to offer tour operators innovative approaches to travel, the 14th edition of BTO is finally back in attendance following two years online and a hybrid edition. Formerly Buy Tourism Online, Be Travel Onlife is the reference point in Italy for digital tourism, with the event guaranteeing high-level speakers and an environment where ideas, collaborations and projects are born. Focusing on hospitality, destination, food and wine, and digital strategy and innovation, the international event takes place from November 29-30 at Stazione Leopolda in Florence. Here, we speak to Francesco Tapinassi, the scientific director of BTO and the director of Toscana Promozione Turistica, about what participants can expect.

This year's theme is metatourism. How much do we really know and how much will the metaverse affect the tourism sector?

The metaverse is currently a topic of the moment. Even at last year's hybrid edition we held remote speeches using holograms and we talked about NFT in catering and in the world of wine. BTO is the place to discover the future of tourism. One year later, and this change is becoming even clearer. The metaverses (it's more accurate to refer to them in the plural) constitute a revolution that could change our lives and reference models with reality. As a result, payment methods, the search for information, the relationship with places, and the very concept of hospitality could be changed. Each tour operator is asking themselves to imagine, predict, and understand if and how to act in advance. Therefore, if on the one hand there's a lot of attention being paid and knowledge is still scarce, on the other hand we can't afford to trivialize the matter. At BTO2022, we want to create a real debate, hosting differing

positions, in order to investigate the deeper meaning of change, the future in general, and the implications we can foresee for our sector.

How do you see the future of tourism in Florence and Tuscany from this point of view?

Our region and its main destinations have always been attentive to the development of new technologies. The very choice of hosting BTO in Florence, organized by the Tuscany Region and the Chamber of Commerce, demonstrates how important it is to bring the best knowledge of digital tools and tourism-related technologies to the entire territory. There has always been awareness that the public and private sectors should work together, taking advantage of every opportunity that the digital revolution can offer. Success in facing this challenge is also relying on the skills of the entire supply chain.

Are we ready to face the challenges and seize the opportunities that technology presents?

I'm certain that Tuscany and Florence, together, have all the potential to address innovation and international tourism competitiveness. The enforced hiatus imposed by the pandemic has also increased the demand for digital. This has brought online tools closer and has allowed operators to spend a lot of time changing their organizational models thanks to new technologies. Great destinations like ours cannot fail to seize the extraordinary opportunities of innovation, making the tourist experience ever more seamless for our visitors.

What is the key to BTO's success?

The first key to its success is its vision, the desire to understand and predict the future before it arrives. Every trad-

er knows how important knowledge is to stay competitive in a world that changes so quickly. To translate this vision into an event, we worked on two parallel fronts: training and digital innovation. The recipe is as simple as it is courageous: 1) always choosing stimulating new content; 2) the selection of high-level national and international speakers; 3) an exciting and inspiring atmosphere. At BTO, the informality and palpable enthusiasm have become an integral part of the event. Human relations are always at the centre, even when talking about digital tourism, and this greatly favours networking between operators and companies.

What is your opinion of the summer season that has just ended in Florence and Tuscany, and how can we prepare for the future?

It was a brilliant summer, with really significant numbers and performances in some cases that were higher than in 2019. As the data we are collecting in our digital observatory testifies, the most interesting elements are the great return of international visitors and the flows in the cities of art, in addition to the consolidation of the Italian demand for the coast and countryside. This is a first evaluation that's not yet definitive, but we can confirm the success of Tuscany as a whole. It's difficult to predict what will happen in the coming months. The main unknowns are the regional offering which is forced to face an energy crisis and completely unexpected management costs, and we will then have to evaluate how the higher cost of living and transport will affect future demand.

BTO2022 in numbers

230 speakers

110 events

15 hours of toolboxes

BTO

**META
TOURISM**

29-30 NOVEMBRE 2022

STAZIONE LEOPOLDA, FIRENZE



WWW.BTO.TRAVEL



Regione Toscana



Camera di Commercio
Firenze
dal 1770 la casa delle imprese



TOSCANA
PROMOZIONE TURISTICA



PromoFirenze
AZIENDA SPECIALE
Camera di Commercio di Firenze



fondazione
sistema toscana

Events in and around Florence

Florence is filled with large-scale sculptures and works by world-renowned artists in a season of artistic displays and cultural events that draw crowds from all over.

INSTALLATION

Mr Arbitrium

Emanuele Giannelli's enormous five-metre sculpture titled *Mr Arbitrium* is positioned powerfully beside the Basilica of San Lorenzo until October 31. Whether you see him as supporting or pushing, the hand-painted marble effect of the binocular figure is undoubtedly a sight to see, having also been shown in Seravezza, Milan, Lucca and Forte dei Marmi. Accompanying artworks are on display in the basilica complex, with the life-sized resin figures, *I Sospesi* (The Suspended), representing the precariousness of present-day society.

SCULPTURE

Henry Moore in Florence

Museo Novecento pays tribute to the popular English artist 50 years after his noted exhibition at Forte Belvedere in 1972. Two of his large-scale sculptures, *Family Group* and *Large Interior Form*, can be found at the San Miniato al Monte Abbey and in Piazza della Signoria until March 31, creating a dialogue between modern art and the historical-artistic heritage of Florence. www.museonovecento.it

EXHIBITION

Tony Cragg

From September 23 to January 29, works by the Liverpoolian sculptor will be shown at Museo Novecento, with a selection of sculptures and drawings by the artist renowned for his

Henry Moore



experimental and innovative techniques on show. Three large-scale works will be exhibited in the cloister of the museum, with rooms dedicated to detailing the artist's creative process. www.museonovecento.it

SPORT

Unicredit Firenze Open

Palazzo Wanny will host international tennis stars such as Aliassime and Monfils, as well as Florence's own Berrettini and Sinner in the high-level tournament that returns to the city after 28 years. See pages 4-5 for a full feature on sport in the city. www.apptour.com

ART

Passione Novecento: from Paul Klee to Damien Hirst

Until January 8, 20th century masterpieces from private Florentine and Tuscan collections bring audiences on a journey through the history of the city and private collecting, with works by Andy Warhol, Paul Klee, Roy Lichtenstein, Giorgio de Chirico and Lucio Fontana on display in the former home of the Medici family, Palazzo Medici Riccardi. www.palazzomediciriccardi.it

DESTINATION FLORENCE

Florence Ambassador Award

On November 4, the sixth edition will take place, with Destination Florence Convention & Visitors Bureau awarding those who promote Florence in the world, officially recognizing their contribution in acquiring the awarding of congresses and events that bring a strong economic impact. Leaders in the fields of excellence, whether it be in the academic, medical, research or other professional fields, will be awarded in the historic Salone di Cinquecento in Palazzo Vecchio, promoted by the Municipality of Florence. www.conventionbureau.it



L'Eredità delle Donne



Tony Cragg

WINE

The Golden Vines® Awards

The Tepidiarium del Roster and Salone dei Cinquecento are the grand venues for the leading industry charity gala and award ceremony that will be held from October 14-17, with the support of Destination Florence Convention & Visitors Bureau. The renowned event will celebrate fine wine with Michelin-starred chefs, VIP entertainment and rare wines and spirits to support the hospitality industry. See more on pages 10-11.

www.liquidicons.com/work/golden-wines-awards

FESTIVAL

L'Eredità delle Donne

Manifattura Tabacchi and various venues in the city take a female-focus for the festival that celebrates women pioneers who have played key roles in Florence's past, present and future. Under the artistic direction of Serena Dandini, guests such as Jill Abramson, the first woman executive editor of the New York times, feature in the busy programme taking place from October 21-23. www.ereditadelledonne.eu

PHOTOGRAPHY

Elliott Erwitt at Villa Bardini

Famous shots by the French-American photographer fill Villa Bardini at its panoramic perch from October 20 to January 22. Celebrating his long professional life, the exhibition consists of 70 photographs curated by Biba Giacchetti, including his well-known *California Kiss* and portraits of Marilyn Monroe. www.villabardini.it

Escher at Museo degli Innocenti

October 20 to March 26 sees over 200 works by the master of illusions fill the spaces of the Innocenti Museum. The most iconic masterpieces by the Dutch painter and mathematician Maurits Cornelis

Escher will be on display, with his hypnotizing pieces appearing both surprising and unsettling while endlessly inspiring. Engravings and lithographs are the artist's medium for his creations that blend art, mathematics, science, physics and design, with the historic venue providing a fascinating backdrop for the artworks.

www.mostraescher.it



Olafur Eliasson at Palazzo Strozzi

Palazzo Strozzi displays unforgettable artworks by the Icelandic-Danish artist Olafur Eliasson that explore the concept of shared experience, on show until January 22. Colour, water and light are used to place visitors at the core of the exhibition, interacting with the senses and engaging with the Renaissance palace in which they are displayed. Over 20 weeks extend through the courtyard, piano nobile and the Strozzi gallery, with works including the *Firefly double-polyhedron sphere experiment* (2020) spiraling two complex polyhedrons above visitors' heads, with dazzling pieces of green, orange, yellow, cyan and pink glass creating a spectacular display.

www.palazzostrozzi.org



THE 2022
GOLDEN
VINES®
AWARDS

The Golden Vines® Awards come to Florence

Wine connoisseurs gather on October 14-17 to support the leading industry charity gala and award ceremony, with the second edition aptly taking place in the rich wine region of Tuscany.

The Golden Vines® Awards, one of the wine industry's renowned charity events, are coming to **Florence** from October 14 to 17. Florence was the natural host with Tuscany's global reputation for excellence in wine making it the perfect fit for the event that celebrates renowned brands.

Following a successful launch last year in London, The Golden Vines® Awards celebrate fine wine with **Michelin-starred chefs, VIP entertainment, and rare wines and spirits** to support the hospitality industry.

The awards were created by **Lewis Chester** DipWSET and the Liquid Icons team to honour the legacy of Chester's business partner, Gérard Basset OBE MW MS, who passed away in January 2019. When Basset discovered that he had terminal cancer, the yen to create something enduring that would help create a

lasting legacy for his lifetime achievements became a goal. In 2020, following the *Gérard Basset Global Fine Wine Report* results, which ensue an annual survey completed by top international fine wine professionals, Chester decided to establish The Golden Vines® Awards, celebrating the best in the industry. The awards now run as a **not-for-profit event** with proceeds going to the Gérard Basset Foundation.

"The Golden Vines® Awards are delighted to be hosting our second edition in the beautiful and magical city of Florence," comments **Lewis Chester**, Co-Founder and Director of Liquid Icons. "Although an awards show celebrating the world's best fine wine estates (as voted by 943 fine wine professionals globally this year), we also raise money for the Gérard Basset Foundation to fund **educational programmes for diversity and inclusivity** in the wine, spirits and hos-

pitality sectors. **We cannot thank Destination Florence Convention & Visitors Bureau enough for their hard work and dedication in helping to make this year's edition the world's premium fine wine event**, as well as Mayor Dario Nardella and his team for their considerable generosity of enthusiasm and assistance for hosting us at both the Tepidarium del Roster for our charity gala on Saturday 15 October and the incredible Salone dei Cinquecento at the Palazzo Vecchio for The Golden Vines® Awards Ceremony & Dinner on Sunday October 16. Thank you, Florence!"

With ticket prices starting at £6,000, the celebrations begin on October 15 with the Dress to Party gala dinner at Tepidarium del Roster, where guests can savour dishes from Davide Oldani, chef patron of two Michelin star restaurant D'O, near Milan, and Matteo Lorenzini, executive chef of Tuscany's Osteria di



Gérard Basset



Massimo Bottura



Egon Müller



Matteo Lorenzini

The Golden Vines® Awards October 14-17

Tepidarium del Roster +
Salone dei Cinquecento
Auction of 100 lots of fine
wine
£6,000 per ticket
Raising £1.2 million for wine
education



Charles Lachaux



The 2021 Golden Vines® Awards Trophy in Making

Passignano. Legendary group Alessandro Ristori & The Portofinos will take to the stage.

The awards ceremony will take place on October 16 in the Salone dei Cinquecento at the Palazzo Vecchio. Phenomenal three-Michelin star chef **Massimo Bottura** of **Osteria Francescana** will curate the gala dinner. Marc Almert, the 2019 ASI Best Sommelier of the World as well as the 2020 Michelin Sommelier of the Year has chosen the wine pairings, which will include Dom Pérignon Rosé 2008, Dom Pérignon P2 2004, Krug Grande Cuvée, Krug Vintage, Dom Ruinart, Trimbach Clos Sainte Hune 2012, Emidio Pepe Trebbiano d'Abruzzo 2004, Château Cheval Blanc 2005 in magnum, Solaia, Château d'Yquem and Taylor's Port 1970 in magnum. Guests can enjoy live entertainment from **Celeste**, who has received accolades such as the Brit's Rising Star Award 2020 and the BBC's

Introducing Artist of the Year 2019. Joining Celeste is **Sekou Sylla**, a rising musician who has performed on BBC Music's Introducing stage at Glastonbury and was handpicked to perform at Brooklyn Beckham's wedding.

Another highlight of the night will be the **auction of 100 lots**, including large formats and old vintages of the world's most prestigious wines and exclusive tastings and stays in chateaux and his-

toric cellars. The goal is to raise over £1.2 million to finance wine education programs related to diversity and involvement, such as Taylor's Port Golden Vines® Diversity Scholarship, Internship & Mentorship Programs, Dom Pérignon Golden Vines® Master of Wine & Master Sommelier Scholarships, Hennessy Golden Vines® Diversity Scholarship in Spirits, and other scholarships for education programs, curated by Golden Vines®.

For more information, see liquidicons.com/work/golden-vines-awards.



Castello di Albola

Wine resorts in Tuscany

If there's one experience that visitors to Tuscany simply have to include, it's an overnight stay or two at a wine resort. Here are some of the most historic and luxurious options.

Poggio Casciano, Ruffino's hospitality hub and seven-room boutique hotel (ruffino.it) stands majestically in the Chianti Classico countryside just 30 minutes from Florence. Reflecting the Tuscan identity and Renaissance charm, the country chic rooms have vineyard views, look out over the Italian gardens or the enticing infinity pool. Tasting tours are available and the on-site Le Tre Rane restaurant serves up innovative Tuscan dishes that encapsulate beauty and goodness. The generous halls and attractive outdoor areas ensure countless options for business and incentive events, as well as celebrations.

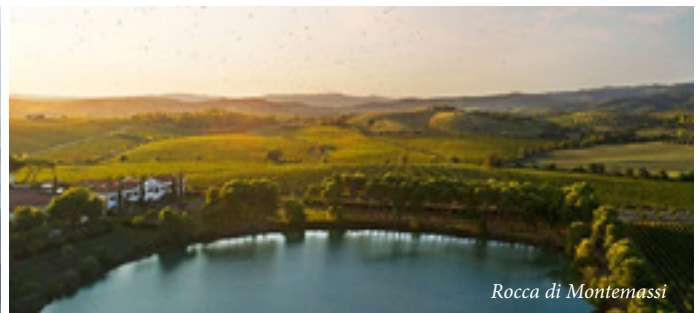
Near Radda in Chianti, staying at **Castello di Albola** (albola.it) gives you the option of choosing between two breathtaking villas: the beautiful 18th-century Villa Le Marangole, a place of boundless charm and rural elegance that consists of 6 double bedrooms, sleeping up to

12 as a full villa rental, and the smaller 15th-century Villa Crognole with a panoramic terrace and three doubles. A tour of the verdant vineyards, historic cellars and Chianti Classico wine tasting is all part of the experience.

Further south, **Relais Il Falconiere & Spa** (ilfalconiere.it) is a feast for the senses with views of *Under the Tuscan Sun's* picturesque Cortona as its backdrop. There's something ethereal about the property owned by the Baracchi family since the mid-19th century: from the glittering bottles in the riddling station to the quietude of the spa and its wine-based treatments. The overriding feeling at Il Falconiere is passion, which is embodied by Silvia Regi Baracchi's ever-evolving Michelin-starred cuisine. The rooms are elegantly rustic with thoughtful touches, while weddings, celebrations and teambuilding events are a guaranteed success.

The five-star **Toscana Resort Castelfalfi** (castelfalfi.com) is a haven of wellbeing 90 minutes southwest of Florence. 25 hectares under vine produce Chianti and Chianti Riserva DOCG, which can be tasted at the estate's cellar door, perhaps after a game of golf on the 27-hole course or a morning at the contemporary spa. Staying at Castelfalfi offers a variety of exquisitely appointed rooms, suites, villas and apartments, all with a focus on sustainability and slow living in a natural setting. The array of indoor and outdoor spaces makes Castelfalfi versatile for private parties and memorable weddings. Plus, there's more in the works with major investments by the new owners in the real estate, winery and agricultural activities.

Get away from it all at **Rocca di Montemassi** (roccadimontemassi.it) in Maremma, Tuscany's deep south. Self-described as a wine farm, the



rooms embrace a modern Tuscan vibe with natural linens and palettes. Purposely promoting integrated agriculture and the Maremma, the scenic property seamlessly arranges business meetings, teambuilding days, weddings and more in between sips of the estate's own red, white and rosé wine and a walk around the on-site farming museum.

A short distance from Monte Amiata and the stunning scenery of the Val d'Orcia, **Colle Massari** (collemassari-hospitality.it) consists of four agriturismos: Tenuta di Montecucco full wine relais, Le Scuole bed and breakfast, Pec-

ora Vecchia, a secluded retreat, and the exclusive luxury villa Case Nuove. **The Montecucco estate** is a popular destination wedding venue with its breathtaking gardens, views and church, as well as on-site restaurant and spa facilities. The estate also boasts a 300-seater auditorium equipped with top-of-the-range audio-video system for conferences and major events. That's not all: the historic cellars and expansive vineyards provide the perfect introduction to Montecucco wines.

Other wineries with rooms worthy of an overnight stay in Tuscany include **Villa Mangiacane** (mangiacane.com), with 10 luxurious suites set in 600 acres of Chianti Classico vineyards; the well-appointed apartments at bucolic **Le Filigare** (lefiligare.it), near San Donato in Poggio; the elegant accommodation with earthy tones at **Borgo di Pietrafitta** (borgopietrafitta.com), close to picturesque Castellina in Chianti; and Impruneta's charming **Relais Villa Olmo** (relaisvillaoilmo.com), complete with Diadema wine and a gourmet restaurant.

Tourism in Florence: tour operators give their take on the season gone by and the ones to come

With **49 million arrivals and 198 million overnight stays** in Italy across summer 2022, the return of tourists on a grand-scale has characterized the season in a positive sign for the sector (as revealed by the Centro Studi Turistici of Florence for Assoturismo Confesercenti). With growth equal to **+15.5% over 2021**, it's heartening to hear that Florence is topping the polls, having been voted **the best city in Europe according to the prestigious Travel + Leisure Magazine**. Here, tour operators in the sector share their thoughts.



The strong desire to travel again and the beauty of our city and country have certainly played an essential role in the resumption of work for specialized tour operators like us. Despite the pandemic, we have maintained contact with customers (mostly Americans), by listening to and anticipating their wishes.

Therefore, we were ready with new ideas, new proposals, and a strong response when this long-awaited restart came about. We understand that the luxury customers we cater to seek the guarantee that comes from our experience and reliability. We have learned to respond by offering authentic experiences in charming historic places with particular attention to the desires and requests of customers who look to experience something out of the ordinary. We will continue to maintain the very high level of professionalism offered to an increasingly demanding clientele in order to guarantee Florence, and our country, the cultural respect it has earned globally.

Exclusive Connection, Lucia Montuschi



The season that's about to come to an end has been full of challenges while at the same time has been one of the most stimulating for us operators. The sector is changing profoundly and all those involved along with it. We are getting used to being more responsive, working with increasingly demanding

customers, and exploring new areas of business since pre-pandemic. To be successful in this, we must focus on training, creating specialized professionals for our sector. This is key in building a solid image for our brands: offering quality to our customers. Despite the difficulties experienced over the last two years, we have never stopped investing in the future and now that the restart has finally taken place, we look towards the next season stronger and more aware than before.

Caf Tour & Travel, Guido Barocchi



The current season finally marks the long-awaited "restart". Tourists from the USA, the main market, have returned to fill hotels, museums, tours and the streets of Florence. However, it was an atypical season that presented both problems and questions for the future. On the one hand, the entire hospitality

sector has suffered from the limitations linked to internal organization and the shortage of qualified personnel, both due to professional relocation over the two years of the pandemic and the unwillingness to work in a sector that requires many sacrifices during the season. I believe that this problem can only be solved with greater attention to human resources: career paths, training, economic and welfare incentives to compensate for the efforts required in an undoubtedly demanding sector. The paradigm of the "summer job in tourism" must leave space for well-paid and motivated professionals towards a career in tourism. On the other hand, uncertainty remains: will it continue at these levels or was it a "rebound effect"? We have no answer



as of yet, but if we wanted to try to predict 2023, we could not ignore some elements that impacted the market this year: the particularly favourable dollar/euro exchange rate; the partial closure or riskiness of some destinations such as China or India that narrowed the range of travel choices, and last but not least, the bookings related to COVID vouchers issued in 2020 which increased demand. What's certain is that Florence is increasingly sought after by international travellers, and will always be one of the most beautiful cities in the world.

To Italy Group, Luca Perfetto



The past season confirms the recovery of the tourism sector, and although it's still far from the levels reached in pre-pandemic years, our tourist destination has regained competitiveness in national and international tourism. International visitors increased, mainly thanks to the German, French and Spanish

markets, as well as the return of the US market. The Italian component has also noted a positive trend at a time when local tourism has become a new way of understanding tourism, in fact, many Italians continue to opt for this choice. Expectations for the recent summer season exceeded forecasts from the beginning of the year; presences in April marked a steady recovery which was then confirmed in the following four months. These satisfying numbers not only indicate that the desire to travel has returned, but also that in this new travel context, cities of art such as Florence are certainly among the major destinations chosen by travellers. The increasing tourist flows are heartening and suggest a return to pre-covid numbers as early as 2024. However, to recover the lost ground and become even more attractive it's necessary to think of an increasingly experiential tourism, where places are not only to be visited but to be experienced. The countless curiosities and once-in-a-lifetime opportunities in Florence give both national and international visitors something out-of-the-ordinary. To improve the quality of tourism, we need to increase the average stay of visitors in the Florentine area, favour the seasonal adjustment of tourist flows, and promote sustainable tourism that's attentive to our territory's rich artistic-cultural

heritage. A key role is certainly played by the Information and Tourist Reception Offices of the Municipality of Florence where the front desk operators reveal the territory's history, art, culture, landscape and food and wine offering, embracing a much broader concept of hospitality that extends to the entire territory. Tourist offices are the places where every "citizen of the world" encounters the real destination for the first time and where the sense of welcome represents the destination.

The Plus Planet



With the season having gone well and having presented interesting numbers, the hope is that there will continue to be an increase. We are noticing that the type of client is different than pre-pandemic. With a large portion of the demographic represented by those in retirement, we are noticing

that tourists are increasingly using their mobile phones and are very digital. They seek professional touristic services and a new type of tourism. We have always believed in the potential of digital tourism, and this is most certainly going to be a type of tourism that uses technology a lot.

Slow Tour, Annalisa Menconi



The tourism sector has a new optimism and the professionalism of agencies and tour operators has proved essential for those who left this summer to experience travel without worries. Undoubtedly, we are faced with something new. Tour operators are attentive to these changes and we are

flexible. The first opportunity is for travelers: finally we can start again and a booking boom is taking place. Agencies that have had the opportunity to continue their work can now meet the new travel demand and also look at their profession in a different way, with new tools explored through a new light. Our mission is to rebuild the market and interpret its changes in order to promote new travel experiences and realize people's travel dreams. The summer also presented challenges, in the form of the ongoing conflict, the increased expense of energy that has affected many flights, and above all the effects following the two years of closure that have created gaps in many tourist facilities. For us tour operators, it's essential to take these factors into account when planning an itinerary or a destination, providing tourists with the security that they will find everything they need. Now that we are officially in the fall, we are looking towards a future that we would never have imagined before. We are developing new travel experiences and reconstructing travel in a better way. What really happened this summer is that we started dreaming again.

Giancarlo de Leo, BAIANA Tour Operator

Niccolò de Riu, the Executive Chef at **Relais Santa Croce Baglioni Hotels**, explains his culinary approach to the **Guelfi e Ghibellini Restaurant**, one of the city's top dining experiences.

Tuscan tastes in historic surroundings



At the **Guelfi e Ghibellini Restaurant** at **Relais Santa Croce Baglioni Hotels**, the cuisine blends traditional local recipes and the modern touches of Executive Chef **Niccolò de Riu**. It's hard to imagine a more striking space than the Music Room that once belonged to Marquis Baldinucci, the first owner of the 18th-century palace that now hosts refined private events with musical entertainment and theatre performances. One of the most popular amusements is currently the possibility to enjoy a private concert with a pianist and soprano, which pairs perfectly with a dinner cooked by the chef and a deep dive into the wooden trusses that hold up the ceiling in the music hall, an astonishing masterpiece based on Leonardo's designs.

Tell us your background. Where do you come from and where have you worked in the past?

I started my career in 1996 and had the opportunity to work in several Michelin-starred restaurants and prestigious establishments. The places where I've worked the longest were Grand Hotel Luxury Collection (six years) and the last five years here helming the kitchen at Relais Santa Croce Baglioni Hotels.

For a chef, does working for an international luxury hotel place limitations on your creativity? Or does it help your originality?

Originality underpins everything, especially when you have to manage all the catering needs of a hotel. I feel lucky to work in a place that encourages you to create something memorable and unique every day.

Explain the cuisine at Relais Santa Croce and what diners can expect from your restaurant.

At Relais Santa Croce, you can expect modern creative cuisine based on very local ingredients, experimentation and sustainability.

Do you have a signature dish and how will the menu change as we move into the autumn?

I've created many different dishes over the years, but if I had to choose one it would be my duck tortelli in *dolceforte* (a sort of Renaissance sweet and savoury sauce) with Jerusalem artichoke prepared two ways and raspberry dust. With cooler

weather on the way, I'll add seasonal vegetables like artichokes, pumpkin and celeriac to the menu as well as two game dishes.

What culinary trends are you seeing among guests who are travelling to Italy in this post-pandemic time?

From what I'm seeing, many people have a renewed yearning to eat well and eat more original dishes and less quick bites.

Recipe

Valdarno lardaia pumpkin with blue cheese and spumante

90 g Carnaroli Acquerello rice
200 g lardaia pumpkin from the Valdarno
40 g blue goat's cheese from Montecristo dairy
30 g 40-month Parmigiano Reggiano Riserva
20 g butter
150 ml Spumante Brut Toscano

Clean the pumpkin to obtain 200 g. Remove 50 g and cut into small cubes. Blanch for 2 minutes in salted boiling water and set aside to cool in ice water. Keep the cooking water to use for the rice. Saute a shallot in a little olive oil over low heat and add the remaining pumpkin, chopped coarsely. Add the water to cover, season with salt and cook until the pumpkin has broken down. Use a handheld blender to make a smooth puree.

Toast the rice in a small pan for 2 minutes over low heat without adding any oil. Turn up the heat, pour in 80 ml of the spumante and let it evaporate. Cook the rice for about 7 minutes, adding the pumpkin cooking water (or use vegetable broth). Stir in the pumpkin puree and add another 40 ml of spumante. Season with salt to taste. Add the pumpkin cubes 2 minutes before the end of the cooking time. Turn off the heat and stir in the butter, Parmesan, blue goat's cheese and the remaining wine until creamy. Garnish with borage flowers and sprouts.



Photos by Giulio Ghirardi

Il Salviatino: *a villa* *of delights*

Just 10 minutes from central Florence by car, a winding wooded country road leads up to the grandiose Villa **Il Salviatino** set in five hectares of private grounds. Once home to the noble Rucellai and Salviati families, art critic Ugo Ojetti, and even the headquarters of Stanford University in the Eighties, the 15th-century Il Salviatino has resurfaced from a two-year makeover that has brought the striking edifice up to contemporary five-star standards without losing any of its inherent charm.

The historic **library** lined with old books is said to be where Salvador Dalí and Gabriele D'Annunzio held their cultural salons, while the frescoed **ballroom** boasts a

vermilion and gold canopy, plus an outdoors-indoors theme that is a hallmark of the **Tearose Group**, helmed by art director Alessandra Rovati Vitali.

Former owner Ojetti had the original Italian gardens replanted in the 19th century and they still beguile today. Breakfast and dinner at the Giacomo al Salviatino restaurant are served on the pebbly terrace above the symmetrical rose beds, terracotta jars and pietra serena fountains. At night, renowned Milanese restaurateur **Giacomo Milano** serves flawless cuisine focused on the freshest fish in a joyful addition to Florence's food scene. Down the steps, the **pool area** offers welcome solace on hot summer days,

Contemporary artist Michelangelo Pistoletto has installed a unique piece of land art for Autumn 2022 at Il Salviatino. Titled *Third Paradise*, it is part of the Tearose Group's Cultivating Art project aimed at promoting creativity focused on regenerating and preserving nature.



while work is in progress on a brand-new **spa and wellness centre** for ultimate relaxation in the hills of the Tuscan city.

All **rooms and suites** combine sumptuous comfort with individual décor out of respect for the villa's original structure in a refined blend of artisanship and up-to-the-minute technologies. In addition to a complimentary shuttle bus that runs into town every hour, amenities include a complimentary soft drinks minibar; a top-tier espresso machine; high

speed wi-fi and 24-hour room service. Those wishing to reconnect with nature can choose the newly added **Greenhouse Suites**, while history lovers will enjoy the **superior, deluxe and suites** in the main villa.

Il Salviatino is a sought-after location for **weddings and special occasions** as well as **business events, product launches and fashion shows**. From intimate gatherings to exclusive events for large groups, the skilled staff ensure that nothing is left to chance.

Il Salviatino

Via del Salviatino 21, Florence
+39 055 9041111 - salviatino.com



Wedding plans made perfect

Tuscany draws couples from all over the world, seeking to celebrate the most memorable day of their life somewhere truly special. We asked several wedding planners for their opinion on why Tuscany is considered a top international wedding destination, and how **Tuscany for Weddings** has accompanied them in their tireless work to make lovers' dreams come true.



From the very beginning of the planning, the experience with all suppliers was incredible, also in comparison to other countries (we have worked in 13 countries all over Europe and North Africa). The vendors were fast, polite and always gave time to carry out our wishes. We only had three months to organize the wedding, trying to find a weekend date in the high season following two years of pandemic postponements. Without the reliable communication of the partners, it wouldn't have been possible. The high flexibility of vendors and venues

meant that we could arrange all site inspections within two weeks, that we then carried out over the course of three days. Thankfully, the clients were very decisive. The support offered by Tuscany for Weddings was hugely important and saved a lot of time for us as we got ideal recommendations such as a list of venues that matched our needs perfectly. Knowing that we were sent from Tuscany for Weddings put us in yet another position for a beneficial and fruitful cooperation. It was a real win-win situation for everybody. Chiara from Tuscany for Weddings followed up in person on the planning process, and was always at our side for the smallest issue. It was an amazing planning process carried out under time pressure and with a very exigent client. Together, we created a wonderful and successful wedding in the heart of historic Florence as well as in the romantic Florentine countryside. It was truly unique and unforgettable and one

of the best experiences for our bride and groom and all their international guests. We will be back with new clients for sure!

Monsieur Fronck



As a UK based wedding planning company specializing in luxurious Indian weddings, we have seen the growing demand for destination weddings in recent years. We receive countless enquiries for weddings in Italy, particularly Tuscany, and



Monsieur Froomck



Matthew Oliver Weddings



Vivah Weddings

it is easy to see why. Tuscany offers a variety of breathtaking landscapes making it the perfect picturesque location for weddings. The peace and tranquility of the countryside creates a romantic and fairytale atmosphere for couples, surrounded by luxurious and exclusive venues for both intimate and large scale weddings. Tuscany for Weddings are essential in supporting our work in Tuscany and they now feel like an extension to our team. They help us in understanding the local Italian traditions and how this can complement the many Indian wedding traditions. Tuscany for Weddings have introduced us to a portfolio of stunning Tuscany based venues that we can confidently recommend to our couples for their dream wedding.

Destination Snob



For me personally, Tuscany is a very easy sell: the climate, the abundance of cultural offerings, the food, the wine and the variety of first-class accommodation. There's also the fact that there's so much to see and do, making it a perfect destination wedding location. Quite honestly, we could not have asked for a better partner in Tuscany for Weddings, they have always been willing to go the extra mile at every point of the way. It can be quite hard to persuade a couple to choose a destination where the planner is not based so it is vital to be able to demonstrate that the team you are working with at the location have and hold the same values as we do. By responding promptly to initial and sometimes multiple enquiries has certainly helped our couples see that we can deliver and helped us close the deal. When arranging a recce trip, nothing has been too much trouble and all venues and vendors have been fully briefed, very much impressing our clients. Being on hand during the actual event has ensured everything has gone smoothly and even any last-

minute hiccups are quietly and quickly resolved, with the couples none the wiser.

Vivah Weddings



Tuscany is by far one of my favourite destinations to plan weddings, not only does it provide top locations, it is supported by some of the world's best suppliers. I have been very lucky to have planned a few weddings there, and each wedding has been super successful because I have had the help and support of fellow locals. I'll continue to support Tuscany as it's rich with options, and locations for my couples. Tuscany for Weddings have been super helpful as they provide locations Google or other resources cannot show us. They have a wealth of knowledge of the area and showcase everything for every brief possible, a huge help for us wedding planners. On numerous occasions, they have shown us something which was perfect for us that we would not have found on our own.

Matthew Oliver Weddings



Florence favoured for noted congresses

Firenze Convention Bureau strengthens its commitment to the city with numerous congresses won this summer, developed in collaboration with **Firenze Fiera**. The coming months and years are set to see several high-calibre events hosted in Florence, with the city having been awarded prestigious conventions across several fields.

ESSO 42, the **42nd European Society of Surgical Oncology Congress** was awarded to Florence thanks to the business development carried out with the EU Convention Bureau network. Hosted in Valencia in 2012 and Rotterdam in 2019, Florence is next to host the delegates in 2023, held in the spaces of Firenze Fiera. Another congress awarded thanks to the efforts of the convention bureau is **EBMT 2025, the Annual Meeting of the European Society for Blood and Marrow Transplantation**, a significant medical-scientific congress that was already hosted in Florence in 2008 with a record 4,713 participants. Firenze Convention Bureau,

Firenze Fiera, and Dr. Saccardi, the local host (director of the Cell Therapy and Transfusion Medicine Unit at Careggi University Hospital) presented a joint candidacy campaign on January 22, 2022. The success of the venture was announced on January 24, also thanks to an incentive plan of 20,000 euros implemented by Firenze Fiera and the Firenze Convention Bureau towards the congress that will take place in 2025. An expected 4,000-6,500 participants will come to the city, with an **estimated economic impact of 9 million euros**.

The World Space Research Committee also chose Florence, 62 years after

its last edition in the Renaissance city, having hosted the event in 1961 and 1964. The **46th COSPAR Assembly** will take place at Fortezza da Basso from August 1-9, 2026, with 3,000 delegates from all over the world arriving in the Tuscan capital. Historically, only London and Washington have hosted the assembly twice, and **Florence is the only city in the world to win a third edition**. Promoted by INAF (National Institute of Astrophysics), the candidacy was developed and won thanks to teamwork coordinated by Professor Pietro Ubertini and Professor Sofia Randich of the Arcetri Astrophysical Observatory,

and by the scientific committee supervised by Professor Tomaso Belloni and Dr Francesca Altieri. The support of **Firenze Convention Bureau, Firenze Fiera, AIM Group International** and the **University of Florence** as well as local institutions led to the honour in what marks a very positive period for the Florentine meeting industry. The summer saw not only these victories, but also the awarding of the **IEEE Vehicular Technology Society** that will bring 600 scientists, engineers and students to the city for their annual international conference, set to be held at **Palazzo dei Congressi and Palazzo Degli Affari**



from June 18-21, 2023. Firenze Convention Bureau, Firenze Fiera and Kenes group collaborated to bring the **International Union of Microbiological Societies (IUMS)** to the same venues from October 21-25, 2024, with 500 delegates expected. The same number of delegates are set to arrive from June 18-July 2, 2025, for the Annual Congress of Computational Neuroscience (OCNS), a candidacy won thanks to collaboration with **MCR Conference**.

These are successes for the entire Florence meeting

industry, which has confronted the challenges and opportunities of the period with resilience and foresight. The support of the **Municipality of Florence, the Florentine Chamber of Commerce and Fondazione CR Firenze** now see excellent rewards with the constantly fruitful relationship between the University of Florence, Firenze Convention Bureau and Firenze Fiera flourishing as evidenced in the many congresses won.

Upcoming congresses awarded to Florence

42nd European Society of Surgical Oncology Congress. October 11-13, 2023

IEEE Vehicular Technology Society. June 18-21, 2023

International Union of Microbiological Societies. October 21-25, 2024

Annual Congress of Computational Neuroscience (OCNS). June 18-July 2, 2025

Annual Meeting of the European Society for Blood and Marrow Transplantation. March 30-April 2, 2025

46th COSPAR Assembly. August 1-9, 2026



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Palazzo degli Affari renewed

Firenze Fiera's newly restored venue generates a space for new ideas



The venue for congresses, conferences, conventions, exhibitions and cultural events launched its redeveloped space on July 11, following 17 months of renovations. Its strategic position right beside Florence's main station, Santa Maria Novella, is a unique selling point for the city in terms of events of this kind, with the carefully restyled building adding to its attractiveness.

The original twentieth-century features were retained, with large windows allowing the city's monuments to stand out. The works were carried out by Firenze Fiera in collaboration with Politecnica, with Elio Di Franco responsible for the architectural project, Consilium for the plant engineering, and engineer Riccardo Chiti for all energy aspects.

At over 4,000 square metres, the building is equipped with 15 large and adaptable rooms arranged over 6 levels, with sustainable materials used throughout. Eco-chic furnishings and new generation smart technologies are combined with natural light filters through the large windows to optimize every inch. The new spaces can accommodate up to 1,500 guests, with 46% of the energy produced deriving from renewable sources. Additional touches include the reduction of indoor electromagnetic pollution, 100% soundproofed rooms, and the renovation of the panoramic terrace on the top floor with a new lounge area.

The inauguration was introduced and coordinated by the president of Firenze Fiera, Lorenzo Becattini, with talks by the mayor of

Florence Dario Nardella, the president of the Tuscan Regional Council Eugenio Giani, president of the Chamber of Commerce Leonardo Bassilichi, and president of Fondazione CR Firenze Luigi Salvadori.

The architect Pierluigi Spadolini was celebrated 100 years after his birth with the screening of a short film by Felice Limosani, with gratitude expressed to the Spadolini family for their contribution to the redevelopment along with Fondazione CR Firenze. The screening was followed with speeches by the president of the University of Florence Alessandra Petrucchi, the president of the Architects Foundation

of Florence Massimo Ruffilli, UniFi professor Mariella Zoppi, and UniFi professor emerita and architect Elio Di Franco.

President of Firenze Fiera, Lorenzo Becattini commented, "We are returning Palazzo degli Affari to the city and the world of events in an important step for growth in the sector and for the economic activities of Florence and the territory, as well as for the relaunch of Firenze Fiera". Since its reopening, the space has welcomed a steady stream of events, with the enhanced Palazzo proving a popular point for events in the sector.

Find out more about the space at www.firenzefiera.it



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