



## ITALY & THE PALIO: INSPIRING EXPEDITIONS BY GEOFFREY KENT (2024)

Experience the cultural and culinary marvels of Italy from Verona through Tuscany, Capri and Pompeii on an inspiring itinerary packed with exclusive access and five-star hospitality.

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Inspiring Expeditions by Geoffrey Kent, Private Jet Journeys



Europe, Italy



11 days Call for a quote pp



22 Guests

## Journey Overview

Experience the cultural and culinary marvels of Italy from Verona through Tuscany, Capri and Pompeii on an inspiring itinerary packed with exclusive access and five-star hospitality. Attend the Palio di Siena, Italy's spectacular, carnivalesque horse race, enjoying VIP seating in a balcony overlooking the racecourse. Throughout the journey, enjoy delectable food and wine in restaurants booked just for you, privately explore museums closed to the public and travel in top-shelf style on privately chartered planes and yachts.

### Journey Highlights

- Travel in comfort by chartered flight from Verona to Siena and from Siena to Naples
- Visit a local rice producer for a phenomenal tasting of traditional risotto, accompanied by a performance of local musicians
- Explore the city of Verona, setting for Shakespeare's Romeo & Juliet, and privately visit the Capulet family home with its iconic balcony
- Visit the Castelvecchio Museum, which houses a 14th-century castle, on an exclusive private opening
- Relax on Lake Garda with a private boat cruise
- Enjoy aperitifs and dinner at a 16th-century villa, hosted by Count Bartolomeo Guarienti (schedule permitting) and including a private Three Tenors-themed performance
- Meet privately with a former Palio jockey, who shares why this event is so important to the locals
- Watch the Palio di Siena from a private apartment balcony overlooking the square
- Travel into the Tuscan countryside and the Val d'Orcia, visiting the picturesque town of Montalcino and enjoying wine tastings
- Circle the island of Capri by private yacht, stopping to visit the world-famous Blue Grotto
- Explore fascinating Pompeii with an expert archaeologist and board a helicopter for a flightseeing trip over the site

### Your Co-Host



## **Charles Innes-Ker, 11TH Duke of Roxburghe**

Geoffrey's co-host during your journey is His Grace the Duke of Roxburghe. Born Charles Innes-Ker, he was educated at Eton College and served in the famed Blues and Royals regiment of the British Army alongside his friend Prince Harry.



## Itinerary

### **Day 1: Arrive Verona, Italy**

On arrival in Verona, you are met and transferred to your hotel. Villa Cordevigo Wine Relais, a Relais & Chateaux property, has been booked for your exclusive use. Oseleta, the villa's Michelin starred restaurant, is rated by Forbes as one of the 100 best restaurants in Italy. Gather with your hosts, Geoffrey Kent and His Grace the Duke of Roxburghe, along with your fellow guests for cocktails and a welcome dinner at Oseleta, which is reserved exclusively for your party.

***Villa Cordevigo | Meals: D***

### **Day 2: Valpolicella & Monti Lessini Region**

After breakfast, take part in your choice of Design Your Day activity. You may choose to take a cooking class with Nonna Antonia, try your hand at watercolour painting, check out the beautiful fitness trail on foot or by bicycle or simply relax and enjoy the beautiful surroundings. Enjoy lunch (featuring the products of the morning's cooking lesson) before getting behind the wheel of a vintage Alfa Romeo for the drive to Isola della Scala, home of family-owned Pila Vecia, acclaimed restaurant and one of the region's most renowned rice producers. Settle in for a hearty tasting of risotto prepared according to a traditional recipe, attended by staff in historic costumes and accompanied by local musicians.

***Villa Cordevigo | Meals: BLD***

### **Day 3: Verona & Lake Garda**

Nestled in the heart of northern Italy, Verona was the riverside setting of Shakespeare's iconic tragedy Romeo and Juliet. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is a lovely city of Roman ruins, stone bridges, elegant shops and bustling squares. Your exploration of the city starts at the Arena and then continues to Piazza delle Erbe, the Market Square and Piazza dei Signori. A short distance from Piazza delle Erbe is number 27 Via Cappello, reputed home of the Capuleti (Capulet) family, which is opened exclusively for you. The 14th-century home's small marble balcony was the setting of the most famous verses of Shakespeare's tragedy, in which Romeo declares his love for Juliet as he gazes up at her from below.

You then pay an exclusive visit to the Castelvecchio Museum, which houses the castle built by the Scala family in the mid-1300s. Here you can see medieval and renaissance sculptures as well as a rich art gallery and displays of jewellery, weapons and armours. Pause for a gourmet lunch at Restaurant Maffei, featuring local specialties and wines. After lunch, proceed to Lake Garda, one of most beautiful and fascinating places in Italy, full of history, art, traditions and stories. The romantic atmosphere of the lake has inspired poets and artists down the ages. Travel by private boat past charming and picturesque medieval villages still surrounded by their original walls.

Upon arrival at Punta San Vigilio, pearl of the lake, enjoy aperitifs and dinner. Your visit is hosted by Count Bartolomeo Guarienti (subject to availability), who was among the few Italians invited to the wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton. Dinner culminates with a private Three Tenors-themed performance, featuring some of the most famous opera arias.

***Villa Cordevigo | Meals: BLD***

## **Day 4: Siena**

Bid farewell to Verona this morning as you transfer to the airport to board a charter flight bound for Siena and Villa Cetinale, an architectural marvel built in the Roman Baroque style. Surrounded by beautiful gardens, it is overlooked by a hermitage known as the Romitorio that was once inhabited by monks, and forms the northern end of a long straight line that bisects the villa before reaching a monumental statue of Hercules at the southern end of the estate. The park contains seven votive chapels, sixteen full-length statues and 29 busts, as well as many stone animals and monsters. What makes it unique, however, is its position as a centre for horse racing, hunting, sacred pilgrimages, and lavish entertaining, a combination that can be found nowhere else. Villa Centinale is reserved exclusively for this journey.

***Villa Cetinale / Meals: BLD***

## **Day 5: Siena**

Today, set out to explore Siena, an eminent medieval city surrounded by a well-preserved 14th-century wall and with a UNESCO-listed historic centre containing several buildings from the 13th and 14th centuries. Wander through the winding streets and visit the Piazza del Campo, one of the finest main squares in Italy, and see the Palazzo Pubblico, which has served as Siena's Town Hall since the 1300s. Siena's Duomo is one of the finest Gothic cathedrals in Italy and well worth a visit; here you can see the brilliant frescoes by Pinturicchio that adorn the Piccolomini Library. Enjoy a private visit to a district, or contrada, one of the 17 areas within the city whose representatives race on horseback in the Palio di Siena. Each district is named after an animal or symbol with a long history and complicated semi-mythological associations. Learn more about the Palio during a private meeting with a former jockey, or fantino, who shares why this event is so important to the locals.

***Villa Cetinale / Meals: BLD***

## **Day 6: Montalcino & The Tuscan Countryside**

From the towering medieval fortifications of Siena to the quaint hillside vineyards, the charming region of Tuscany captures the very essence of the Italian heartland. Renowned for their art, wine, history and evocative landscapes, the cities, towns and hamlets of Tuscany dot winding roads flanked by vineyards, olive groves, farmhouses, Etruscan walls and slender cypress trees. Once a hotbed of conflict in the Middle Ages, today's Tuscany embraces the relaxed pace of the good life. Experience a taste of that good life as you embark on a full-day excursion into the Val d'Orcia and one of Tuscany's most picturesque towns Montalcino, where you visit the winery and enjoy wine tastings. Montalcino, famous for Brunello wine, is everything you could hope for in a Tuscan hilltop town: winding narrow streets lined with charming, flower-covered houses. Take in the breathtaking landscapes of the Val d'Orcia, many of which have been depicted in works of art from Renaissance painting to modern photography. Dine this evening in one of the districts in Siena which supports one of the ten horses who will be competing in the Palio, and experience the anticipation in the air for tomorrow's big race.

***Villa Cetinale | Meals: BLD***

## **Day 7: The Palio Di Siena**

Today is the day: Ten horses and riders, bareback and dressed in the appropriate colours, represent ten of the seventeen contrade, or city districts in the semi-annual Palio di Siena. Today's race is known as Palio dell'Assunta, dedicated to the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin. The Piazza del Campo is covered with a thick layer of earth in preparation for this exciting and unforgettable event. A mid-afternoon parade kicks off the festivities, with representatives from each contrada dressed up in traditional gear. After a leisurely morning, you are transferred into Siena where you watch the race from the comfortable vantage point of a private apartment with a balcony offering extraordinary views of the square. The atmosphere builds and builds until 7 p.m., when the race begins. With only three laps of the piazza required, the Palio usually lasts no more than 90 seconds, yet each instant packs a thrill: Jockeys are commonly thrown off their horses while navigating the piazza's treacherous curves, and indeed, it is not unusual to see riderless horses crossing the finish line; a horse is not required to have a rider to win the Palio. After cheering the victorious horse (with or without its rider), repair to the nearby Osteria Le Logge for dinner.

***Villa Cetinale | Meals: BLD***

## **Day 8: Capri**

After breakfast this morning, transfer to the airport for your charter flight to Naples.

On arrival, learn the art of pizza-making from a local master and then enjoy the results for lunch. Enjoy a leisurely cruise by private yacht to the island of Capri, located in the Tyrrhenian Sea off the Sorrento Peninsula. The island's main town, also named Capri, has been a resort since the time of the Roman Republic. Transfer to the Caesar Augustus, once an ancient private villa, today a luxurious and secluded hotel perched on the island's most panoramic rocky outcrop. Enjoy some down time to relax and take in the scenery from your premium accommodations before gathering for dinner on a private terrace of the hotel.

From Capri the options are endless, from a helicopter excursion around Mount Vesuvius and Pompeii to a boat outing to Conca del Sogno or a shopping expedition to Positano. As always, you may wish to simply relax and enjoy the amenities on offer at your beautiful hotel.

***Hotel Caesar Augustus / Meals: BLD***

## **Day 9: Capri & The Amalfi Coast by Private Yacht**

Today you view Capri from an irresistible perspective: directly from the water on your private yacht. As you circle this magnificent island, you have the opportunity to stop at Marina Piccola, a delightful, picturesque inlet with a gorgeous beach for sunbathing and swimming. After passing Punta Gradola, reach the Blue Grotto, where you board smaller boats to visit the famous blue water cave. Enjoy time at leisure or perhaps a lazy swim from the boat before cruising to Conca del Sogno restaurant, where you enjoy a nice lunch on a private terrace overlooking the sea.

This afternoon, take in some breathtaking village views of Amalfi, Positano, Maiori, Praiano, Marina di Praia and the legendary Li Galli Islands. You may disembark in some of these delightful towns for exploration on foot. Tonight's dinner is held at a spectacular garden villa, where you enjoy produce straight from the villa's garden along with a wine tasting in the company of your gracious local hosts.

***Hotel Caesar Augustus / Meals: BLD***



## **Day 10: Pompeii & Vesuvius**

Return by private yacht this morning to the mainland and then drive to Pompeii for an archaeologist-hosted visit. Buried by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in the year AD 79, Pompeii was frozen in time and then forgotten for centuries. Excavations began in the 18th century and continue to this day, revealing ever more insights into daily life in the Roman Empire at the dawn of the first millennium. Your archaeology expert takes you through some of the ancient streets of Pompei where you can see the baths, forums and villas built by the prosperous Romans. Marvel at the fabulously preserved frescoes which adorn the walls and floors of the villas, and then take in bird's-eye views of the site from a private helicopter.

From Pompeii, continue to the nearby village of Gragnano. Gragnano's unique pasta can only be produced in this small area in the Province of Naples, as it achieves its distinctive flavour thanks to the water from the local aquifers. Visit a pasta factory for a cooking demonstration and lunch prepared by a Michelin-starred chef. Return to Capri by private yacht, with time at leisure to freshen up before your extravagant farewell dinner. Drive to gorgeous Villa San Michele, former residence of author Axel Munthe, which is reserved exclusively for your evening. Recount your incredible adventure over cocktails and a gala dinner, with local musicians providing accompaniment.

***Hotel Caesar Augustus / Meals: BLD***

## **Day 11: Depart Naples**

Return to Naples by private yacht in time to connect with your homebound flights.

***Meals: B***

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## Map



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