

UNDER THE TUSCAN SUN

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Vitigliano Tuscan Relais

If you've been to Tuscany, you know that one word can sum up the experience: magic. Whether you've visited the spectacular Old World city of Florence, ventured off the beaten path to a best-kept-secret provincial hamlet, or vineyard-hopped to soak in the region's namesake wines, you know no Tuscan experience is ordinary.

For luxury travelers, there's good and then there's the best. This summer, *Social Life* sought out the most exclusive properties for the private, elite traveler, and our, um, research turned up two options for exclusivity and opulence.

VITIGLIANO TUSCAN RELAIS VITIGLIANO.COM

Tucked away, but impossible to miss, Vitigliano Tuscan Relais is one of the most exclusive country estates in Tuscany, and is within the former Roman hamlet of Vitigliano. The property, which dates to 1085 (and is the former home of the renowned Verrazano family) has a second-to-none location in the Chianti region, halfway between Florence and Siena, with a unique hilltop setting that offers a breathtaking, unobstructed 360 degree vista. A local said it best: "Somehow, one feels closer to God here than in any other place of the world." We couldn't agree more. And, like your visit to a confessional, privacy is key: Vitigliano Tuscan Relais opens its doors to

only 14 guests at a time. Perhaps it's this level of attention that has garnered the property accolades, such as the 2016 Hideaway of the Year Worldwide, by Hideaways; 2106 Best Luxury Country Hotel Worldwide, by World Luxury Hotel Awards; and the *New York Times* was prompted to declare it a "European Top Destination," in 2015.

The location within a location is a veritable Eden surrounded by tranquil olive groves and oak forests, and landscaping that includes a chapel forecourt, a patio, separate terraces for sunrise and sunset, a yoga plateau, and, last but certainly not least, a regal pool with sensational daybeds.

Vitigliano's buildings are works of art, having recently undergone state-of-the-art renovations. While our advice is to do your best to enjoy this jewel as a duo, it is also well appointed for an event, whether a week away with besties or a high-class destination wedding with the one.

At Vitigliano, it's in the details: Don't miss the parquet flooring handcrafted from old wine barrels. These red wine stains are here to stay . . . and welcome. Each lavish suite features a picture-book view and luxurious appointments, including an open fireplace or bio-ethanol fireplace, local fabrics designed by Tricia Guild and Kenzo, and antique Persian rugs from the owner-family's own priceless collection.

Exposed natural stone walls and Serena stone edging help maintain an inviting climate. Our favorite? Suite Torre, which spans two stories in the Tower Villa. Migrate to the spa for an exquisite experience. From treatments to pools to fitness, there is something for everyone.

This is Italy, so food and wine are essential to any experience. You won't want to leave Vitigliano. From a gourmet breakfast to a four-course dinner, each meal is lovingly crafted from local, sustainable ingredients. Do not miss a tasting. The owners boast exclusive relationships with two blockbusters: Tommaso Cavalli, the son of the fashion designer Roberto Cavalli, and Laura Brunelli, the wife of the deceased Gianni Brunelli and the founder and owner of the famous Osteria Le Logge restaurant in Siena as well as the Brunello vineyard in Montalcino.