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the world's best wine magazine

Decanter

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BEST WINES 2002

DECANTER REVIEW:
A YEAR'S RECOMMENDED
WINES IN ONE ISSUE

Pack your bags:
10 best wine holiday
destinations in the
Old World

Value Bordeaux:
50 top St-Emilions
that you can
actually afford

New favourite:
Chile – best wines
& regions to watch

Tuscan classic:
102 Brunello di
Montalcinos
put to the
taste test

Plus: GREAT WINE ROUTE – AUSTRALIA'S HUNTER VALLEY

5. Southern Rhône

Spreading out on both sides of the river, the sunny vineyards of the Southern Rhône are hard to beat for a wine holiday. The landscape is enchanting and dramatic, filled with lush vineyards. The wines, though often more than capable of ageing gracefully, are approachable when young. And while Châteauneuf-du-Pape prices are high, appellations like Gigondas, Rasteau, Cairanne and Côtes-du-Rhône-Villages can still offer remarkable value.

TRY TO VISIT

- **Château de Beaucastel**, Courthézon.
Tel: +33 4 90 70 41 00. *Stellar Châteauneuf-du-Pape, succulent Côtes du Rhône.*
- **Domaine de la Soumade**, Rasteau.
Tel: +33 4 90 46 13 63. *Wines with immense polish and depth.*
- **Domaine Saint Gayan**, Gigondas.
Tel: +33 4 90 65 86 33. *Friendly family estate, lipsmacking Gigondas.*
- **Domaine La Réméjeanne**, Sabran.
Tel: +33 4 66 89 44 51. *Vibrant Côtes du Rhône from enthusiastic Rémy Klein.*
- **Domaine de Durban**, Beaumes-de-Venise. Tel: +33 4 90 62 94 26. *Worth steep climb for remarkable views and light, elegant, sweet wines.*

TREATS EN ROUTE

- **Hotel Bellerive**, Rasteau.
Tel: +33 4 90 46 10 20. *Simple country hotel with unbeatable views across vines.*
- **Restaurant Christian Etienne**, Avignon.
Tel: +33 4 90 86 16 50. *Astonishing tomato menu in summer, truffles in winter.*

MORE INFORMATION

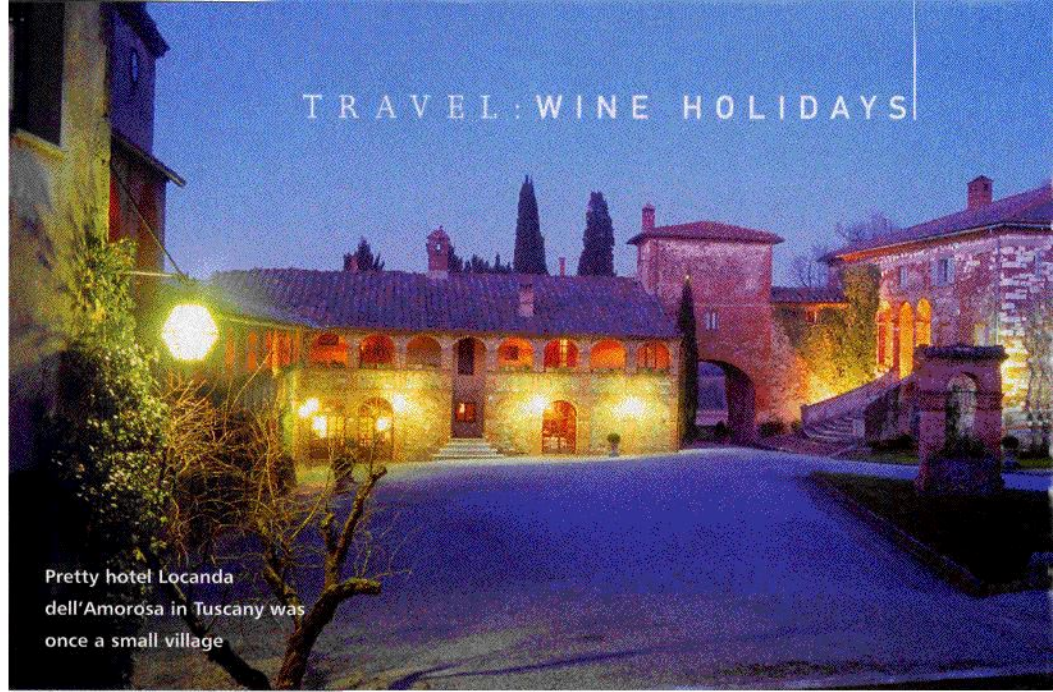
- **Inter Rhône**, Avignon.
Tel: +33 4 90 27 24 00, www.vins-rhone.com

6. Tuscany

Villas of crumbling, pink stone flanked by cypresses, olive groves and vineyards are dreamy in the silver haze that settles over the Tuscan hills. Add to that wines which keep getting better – rounder, riper, richer, yet still distinctively Italian. Between Florence and Siena, Chianti Classico is the focal point. But detour to San Gimignano for Vernaccia, and keep an eye out for wines from up-and-coming Bolgheri and Morellino di Scansano near the coast.

TRY TO VISIT

- **Antinori**, Florence,
Tel: +39 055 23 595. *The estates are not*



open to the public but it is possible to taste the wines in the Cantinetta Antinori at the Palazzo Antinori in Florence.

- **Badia a Coltibuono**, Gaiole in Chianti.
Tel: +39 0577 749 498. *Idyllic estate with abbey, restaurant, cookery school, and first-rate wines; don't miss Sangiovetto.*
- **Querciabella**, Ruffoli di Greve.
Tel: +39 055 853 834. *Chianti Classico and majestic Super-Tuscan Camartina.*
- **Selvapiana**, Pontassieve.
Tel: +39 055 836 9848. *Leading Chianti Rufina estate; olive oil as alluring as wines.*
- **Panizzi**, San Gimignano.
Tel: +39 0577 941 576. *Lovely Vernaccia.*

TREATS EN ROUTE

- **Certosa di Maggiano**, Siena.
Tel: +39 0577 288 180. *Romantic hotel in 14th-century monastery on vine-clad hilltop.*
- **Locanda dell'Amorosa**, Sinalunga.
Tel: +39 0577 677 211. *Tiny, reclaimed village, now rambling, likeable hotel.*

MORE INFORMATION

- **Enoteca Italiana**, Siena.
Tel: +39 0577 228 497,
www.enoteca-italiana.it

7. Veneto

To wine lovers who are music lovers, Verona and its opera make Veneto irresistible. Lovers have the Romeo and Juliet balcony to ogle. And the wines are as much the focus of an Italian renaissance as those of Tuscany. Producers are demonstrating the delicious potential of once-despised Soave and Valpolicella, besides breathing new life into Amarone – both the dry version and the sweet recioto. Long-living Amarone is worth buying to lay down, while splendid ripasso wines, between Valpolicella and Amarone in style, offer outstanding value.

TRY TO VISIT

- **Anselmi**, Monteforte d'Alpone.
Tel: +39 045 761 1488. *Full-flavoured Soave and exquisite Recioto I Capitelli.*
- **Allegrini**, Fumane.
Tel: +39 045 683 2011. *Sixth-generation winery blazing quality trail.*
- **Romano dal Forno**, Illasi.
Tel: +39 045 783 4923. *Disciple of famous Quintarelli; concentrated, expensive wines.*
- **Serego Alghieri**, Gargagnago.
Tel: +39 045 770 3622. *Delightful estate with roots back to Dante.*
- **Zenato**, San Benedetto di Lugana.
Tel: +39 045 755 0300. *Dynamic, friendly family firm; luxuriously textured wines.*

TREATS EN ROUTE

- **Bottega del Vino**, Verona.
Tel: +39 045 800 4535. *Renowned wine bar/wine shop; buzzy ambience.*
- **Antica Riseria Ferron**, Isola della Scala.
Tel: +39 045 730 1022. *Fascinating rice mill and restaurant of Gabriele Ferron.*

MORE INFORMATION

- **Unione Vini Veneti**, Verona.
Tel: +39 045 595 750, www.uvive.it

8. Douro

Start in Oporto, drinking in the views across the river to the port shippers' lodges of Vila Nova de Gaia by night and visiting them by day. Then catch a train up the Douro Valley on one of the greatest railway journeys in the world. Terraced vineyards hewn out of schist and slate fall precipitously to either side of the winding river. Dotted among them are white-washed quintas. You don't need to be a port lover to revel in this trip: increasingly, producers are directing grapes traditionally used for port into dense, spicy red wines. →