



# South of France and Northern Italy

4 TO 27 SEPTEMBER 2017





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## Tour Outline

In September 2017 I am going to be escorting a very special tour which will offer surprising contrasts, from the kaleidoscope of the French Riviera, to the rural picturesque countryside of Chianti, to the elegance of Verona, through to the craziness and beauty of Venice. At the same time we will make visits to places that most tourists never knew existed and well off their normal check lists, seeing sights and sites that only the lucky few end up experiencing.

My speciality and passion over the last twenty five years has been guiding in France and Europe, getting to know its people, culture, history, food, wines, festivals and its unique regions better than most. Each tour encompasses many different experiences. I want people to understand the country they are travelling through, to understand the people, and at the same time to be inspired and moved by what they see. But most importantly I want you to have a holiday – I take the angst out of travelling! I see my role as an educator, an entertainer, and a friend! Please let me know if you might be interested in joining me for this journey.



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## French Riviera

**4 to 7 September**

Our tour will begin by spending three glorious nights in the fabulous four star Hotel Welcome right on the waterfront in the fishing village of Villefranche sur Mer, not far out of Nice. From here we will explore nearby Cap Ferrat visiting the private home of Jean Cocteau and one of the most beautiful gardens on the Riviera. We will also visit the perched village of Eze sur Mer once the tourists have gone home as well as exploring the rabbit warren of streets in the Old Town of Nice. You will be treated to a special dinner out at a restaurant which has just won its first Michelin star! Our days will start at a pace which will allow an early morning swim in the sea (temps of 28 degrees!) and at the end of your short stay here you will definitely want to stay here for the rest of the month, but sadly we have to move on to see equally beautiful places!



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## Riviera Hinterland

**7 to 10 September**

From the coast we will proceed in our mini-bus to our charming hotel overlooking the appealing village of St Paul de Vence, only a 40 minute drive from the busy-ness of the Cote d'Azur. For the next three full days I will introduce you to a world that most tourists would never know existed. We will spend one day dedicated to the Grasse perfume industry and have timed our visit especially for the jasmine harvest (dependant on

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season), ending that day by making our own batch of “eau de toilette”! We will also visit the impressive Maeght Foundation, one of the greatest galleries of modern art. You will experience as well the opposite of the “Riviera” life by visiting remote hill towns seldom seen by tourists, and take in some of the most attractive markets in France. This week in the south of France will offer you a most exciting clash of colours and experiences, from the mountains to the sea, and leave you breathless for more! There will also be plenty of time to just enjoy the peaceful surrounds of our pool, with breath-taking views over St Paul and the countryside.

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## **Santa Margherita, Liguria Coast, Italy**

**10 to 13 September**

Today you will be driven for three hours through to the Ligurian Coast to the town of Santa Margherita in Italy. For our time here we will explore one of the most beautiful port villages in the world, Portofino, with its exclusive boats, sensitively colourful and beautiful houses, and exquisite people! This coastline is magical. As well as exploring the nearby town of Santa Margherita, one day you will take a day cruise to explore the Cinque Terre. The best way to see the Cinque Terre is definitely from a boat, and on this day we will stop at three of the villages, and have plenty of free time for walking, dining or swimming before returning to our four star waterfront hotel (with pool and private beach!).

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## **Lucca**

**13 to 16 September**

Today we will drive the short distance through to Lucca, just out of Pisa. During our time here we will explore this beautiful town, and make a visit to one of the leading gardens of the area. As well we will make a visit to the Marble Quarries in Carrara which have been used for the last two millennium – product that now graces Art Galleries and smart bathrooms around the world!

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## **Chianti**

**16 to 21 September**

We will base ourselves for the next five nights in the heart of Chianti, mid-way between Florence and Siena. Our three star hotel, with a pool, in Chianti will be in the heart of a small village, allowing time to potter around the streets at all times of the day and night! During our time here we will visit all the attractive towns such as Greve in Chianti, Radda in Chianti, San Gimignano, Castellina and Siena. One day we will have a walking tour of Florence including visiting the Accademia to see Michelangelo’s David – and a chance to see what can be done with all that marble we’d just seen near Lucca! One morning I’m going to take you to learn to prepare pasta, which we can share for dinner that evening! We will have time to relax and experience beautiful villages and picture postcard perfect views of rolling hills and cypresses.



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## **Venice, Italy**

**21 to 24 September**

Today we will travel to Venice. Along the way we are going to make a visit to the town of Ravenna. This is not your usual stopping off place for tourists, but I have a special reason for coming here! In the centre of this town is the Basilica di San Vitale. Here is one of the earliest Christian churches from the 6th century, and a trip here is like stepping in to paradise! You will also be charmed by the absolute localness of this town, where you will have time to stroll along the shopping streets and to sit at café bars on the town square.

In Venice we are going to stay in one of the most charming hotels in the world (!! ) right near St Mark's square. While here we will tour on foot the island, as well as be taken by private boat around the network of canals that make up this "floating" town. You will visit the Ducal Palace on St Mark's Square, as well as seeing the Bridge of Sighs. There will also be free time to explore such places as Peggy Guggenheim's Gallery or the Gallerie dell'Accademia. Venice is one of those places that surprises you – the days are busy, the nights peaceful, and every view is an emotional overdose.

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## Lake Como, Italy

### 24 to 27 September

Today we are driving through to Lake Como. On our way here we are going to make a diversion to see the impressive Scrovegni Chapel, in Padua, which features the extraordinary work of the Master of Modern Art as we know it, Giotto. Here we will see his works that were completed in the early 1300s. We will then drive through to the lake. We will have three nights on the lake staying in the beautiful Bellagio. Our hotel here looks right over the lake, and aperitifs looking over the lake will be a truly wonderful experience for you. While here we will go for an impressive boat trip on the lake, as well as visiting villas including the impressive Villa Balbianello, seeing glorious views and gardens. I could think of worse things to do than spending time sitting on the edge of this lake sipping a Prosecco!

We will have some free time here to allow for personal whims and requests! The Villa Carlotta should be a destination for you to explore its beautiful garden and to stroll through the villa. Also walking from the hotel to Villa Melzi is wonderful. Some may like to join me for a bit of a hike!?!? (Boat transfers on lake not included).

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## End of Tour

### 27 September

Today our tour formally ends. From here it is possible for you to fly out of the Milan Airport to an international departure airport such as Paris, Vienna, Frankfurt or Rome. You may consider flying through to these destinations after a few days of exploring Milan prior to your homeward travel?



## Costings

The price for this tour will be 9,950 Euros (approx. NZ\$15,000) per person. My prices include all transportation, guiding, accommodation, visits (unless mentioned otherwise), and many special meals are included.

Please note that I like walking, and in some situations I have planned that we walk between sights (for example in Sta Margherita) and if people prefer not to walk (i.e. too hot, too tired, too hard!!) then I will help arrange a taxi or public bus transfer (not included in this price).

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## Interested?

To confirm a place on this tour a deposit of 1,000€ is required (approx. \$NZ1,500). The final payment is due 8 weeks before the start of the tour.

Please contact me if you have any questions or queries:

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