

WINE TRAILS: ALTO ADIGE

From snowy peaks and sparkling lakes to some of the world's leading vineyards, Alto Adige is a corner of Italy full of surprises, says Alessandra Piubello



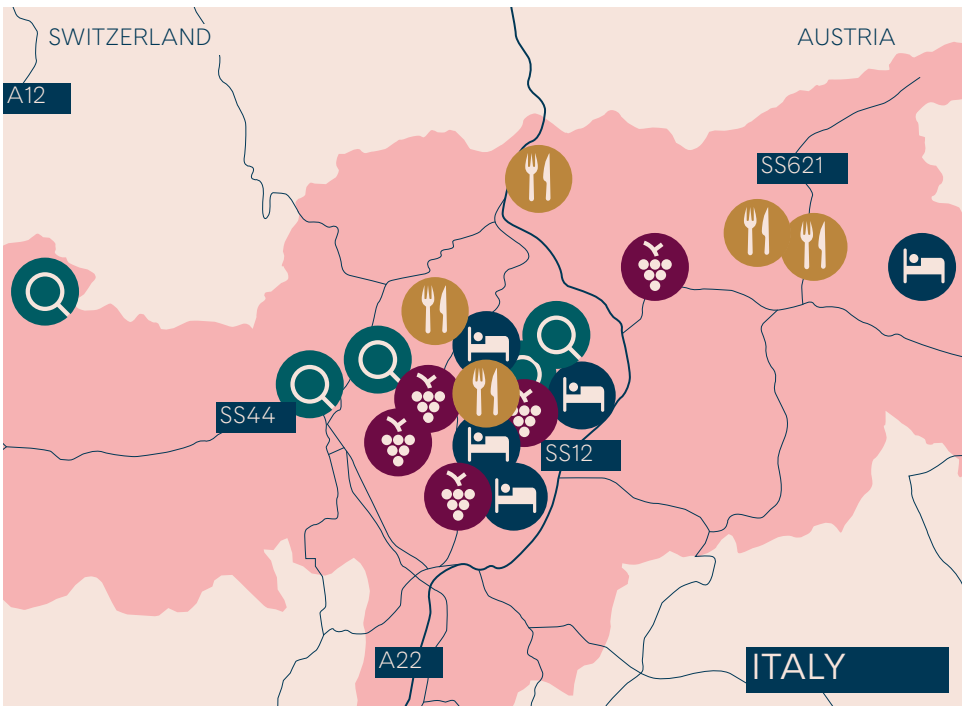
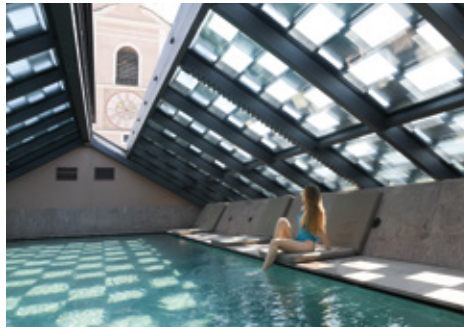


The gateway to the Alps and borderland between Central Europe and the Mediterranean, Alto Adige, also known as South Tyrol, has conserved its natural and charming landscape. In the shadow of the Dolomites, this incomparably beautiful UNESCO World Heritage Site in north-eastern Italy is criss-crossed by enchanting Alpine valleys. The sense of peace and harmony that reigns everywhere in this almost fairytale land makes it an unforgettable destination that regenerates the soul.

Alto Adige has been a center of exchange from every cardinal point and a meeting place for three cultures: German, Italian and Ladin (Romance language). Part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire for more than 550 years, it was annexed to Italy after World War I.

Wine and food have a cultural value in Alto Adige. Among the specialties of the region are large dumplings known as canederli or knödel, the typical smoked ham speck, cheeses such as Graukäse and Zieger and the crispy Schüttelbrot bread. Although wine has accompanied South Tyrolean life for some 2,000 years, it is only in the last few decades that its high quality is gaining world reputation. The reds include the autochthonous Lagrein and Schiava, while the international Pinot Noir is particularly respected. Gewürztraminer is typical among the whites, but there are also excellent interpretations of Pinot Blanc, Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay, with no less than 20 grape varieties.

Surrounded by mountains, the region's capital, Bolzano, is a cultural center to discover and experience – its natural beauty, history and strategic location in the majestic Dolomites are truly enchanting. Piazza Walther, the city's main square, where elegant cafés add to the magical air, is an absolute must for any visitor. Here you will also find Bolzano Cathedral, a jewel of Romanesque and Gothic art, with its multicolored roof and bell tower, considered the most beautiful in the region.



From top, Castel Fragsburg, the swimming pool at Hotel Lamm in Castelrotto, Cantina Giran's vinothèque tasting rooms and a perfectly presented dish at Claudio Melis's restaurant In Viaggio in Bolzano

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WINERIES TO VISIT



Selecting a few from the 150 wineries scattered throughout the area is no easy task. The wine, hospitality and quality are remarkable, so just follow your instincts.

CANTINA GIRLAN

A shining gem of wine production with more than a century of history. Don't miss tasting the Pinot Noir, the winery's pride and joy (available in five versions, two of which are from cru). Take a look at the well-kept vineyards, the barrel cellar and admire the inlay work.

ABBAZIA DI NOVACELLA

Among the oldest wineries in the world, the Abbazia di Novacella (also known as Neustift Abbey) has been producing wine since 1142. Enjoy the atmosphere of this mystical place of rare architectural beauty, surrounded by vineyards.

CANTINA TERLANO

Founded in 1893, Terlano is the most famous cooperative winery in the realm of long-lasting whites due to its oenological archive that houses amazing bottles from 1955 to present day.

GUMP HOF

This winery's terraced vineyards, spread on about 7 hectares on slopes of 50-70 percent gradient, will leave you speechless. Here, you will taste memorable wines by the talented vigneron Markus Prackwieser.

ALOIS LAGEDER

A family-run winery for 200 years, Alois Lageder is a pioneer of applied biodynamics, and a tour here will take you into the team's holistic world. Also worth seeing are the contemporary artworks dotted around the winery.



This page, Cantina Girlan vineyards and visitor center. Opposite, clockwise from top left, Abbazia di Novacella, Terlano cellars, Gump Hof vineyard, and Clemens and Helena Lageder of Alois Lageder



PLACES TO STAY



Whether small or luxury, all types of accommodation pay enormous attention to detail and offer impeccable hospitality.

SKYVIEW CHALETS, LAKE DOBBIACO

Sleeping under the sky in a chalet with a transparent roof and lake view is a breathtaking experience. For sports enthusiasts, the cross-country skiing trail is only a few steps away.

HOTEL TURM, FIÈ ALLO SCILIAR

A stay at this five-towered, 13th-century hotel offering famous works of art and designer objects, as well as wine therapy, spa and sports (try indoor climbing), is well worth the trip.

HOTEL LAMM, CASTELROTTO

A design hotel with every comfort. The rooftop pool, overlooking one of Italy's most beautiful villages and the peaks of the Dolomites, is a truly thrilling experience.

CASTEL FRAGSBURG, MERANO

This medieval castle set in a large garden has a spa and a Michelin-starred restaurant for a wellness experience. Don't miss the course on medicinal herbs.

ADLER LODGE RITTEN, SOPRABOLZANO

An enchanting lodge in the forest, awarded the best wellness hotel in the region. Take yoga classes and bike rides and enjoy the mountain views from the outdoor pool.



Sleeping under the sky in a chalet with a transparent roof and lake view at Skyview Chalets in Lake Dobbiaco



Top, the sauna at Adler Lodge Ritten in Soprabolzano. All other images, Hotel Lamm in Castelrotto

WHERE TO EAT



Traditional country recipes and Mediterranean influence: here Alpine cuisine blends with Italian culinary art.

IN VIAGGIO, BOLZANO

Michelin-starred chef Claudio Melis takes us on a personal and exciting tour of discovery. Just five tables for a total immersion in an exceptional culinary journey.

TERRA, SARENTINO

This two-Michelin star restaurant is Italy's highest-located award-winning venue. It offers harmony with nature, both in the mainly Alpine recipes and its particular atmosphere.

ATELIER MOESSMER BY NORBERT NIEDERKOFER, BRUNECK

Niederkofler is one of the masters of contemporary Italian cuisine, defender of mountain dishes and an ethical approach to food. A unique, not-to-be-missed experience.

PRETZHOF, VAL DI VIZZE

Enjoy home cooking in a tavern that produces its own cured meats and cheeses and grows vegetables for the restaurant for authentic traditional dishes to try and enjoy.

PITZOCK, FUNES

A modern mountain inn whose kitchen keeps faith with tradition and the promotion of local products. Don't miss the famous local lamb dishes.



This page, Pitzock in Funes is a contemporary mountain inn with a kitchen that promotes local products, including the lamb dishes. Opposite, clockwise from top left, Terra in Sarentino, homemade cured meats and cheeses at the Pretzhof tavern, and a unique culinary experience at Atelier Moessmer



THINGS TO DO, PLACES TO DISCOVER



Take in the beauty of the mountains by walking in the pine forests, cycling or skiing in the various well-equipped ski resorts.

RITTEN RAILWAY

A ride on this little narrow-gauge train offers breathtaking views of the Dolomite peaks. Enjoy unforgettable excursions at the various stops along the way.

CASTLE TRAUTTMANSDORFF GARDENS, MERANO

A truly enchanted world, this large park comprises more than 80 botanical settings, paths and streams. Combine with a stroll through romantic Merano, with its medieval arcades and Art Nouveau buildings.

LAKE RESIA

This artificial lake has a solitary submerged bell tower, like something from a fairytale. Ideal for hiking, sailing, kitesurfing, canoeing, kayaking, Nordic walking and, in winter, snowkiting, skating and sailing on the frozen water.

TYROL CASTLE

The history and legends surrounding this medieval manor, a crucial venue in the history of South Tyrol, will take you back in time. Home to the Provincial Cultural History Museum, it also houses various other temporary exhibitions.

EARTH PYRAMIDS, RITTEN

Originating from glacial moraine rocks, this fascinating natural phenomenon creates earthen obelisks with boulders balanced on top. These are the highest in Europe.



Also known as Lake Reschen, Lake Resia is an artificial lake famous for the steeple of a submerged 14th-century church



Clockwise from top, Tyrol Castle, Earth Pyramids in Ritten, Castle Trauttmansdorff Gardens and Ritten Railway



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