



EXPERIENCE THE EXTRAORDINARY SICILY

A Luxury Tour for Lovers of Italian Food, Wine and Culture

May 17TH – 21ST 2027

— Hosted by John Szabo MS —

LADIES ONLY

US \$5,995 *per person*

This is a luxury wine, food and cultural tour to the greatest sites and wineries of North East Sicily. You will explore world renowned historic sites, the remarkable variety of this island's vinous heritage, and the classics of Mount Etna.

Hosted by John Szabo, Master Sommelier, this fun-filled, educational itinerary will bring you privileged access to some of the region's most prized estates. We take a maximum of 20 wine lovers as guests. This is a ladies only tour!

COME AND DISCOVER

MEDITERRANEAN LIFESTYLE IN VIBRANT CATANIA with welcome reception guided visit and dinner at one of Catania's best restaurants.

THE SOUTHERN SLOPES OF THE "MUNTAGNA". A private lunch at the historic **Benanti Viticoltori** winery, A special visit and tasting at **Terra Costantino** plus a guided tour of the **Radicipura Botanic Gardens**.

MAGNIFICENCE OF TAORMINA with its UNESCO listed **Teatro Antico di Taormina** in the shadow of Mount Etna, **lunch "Grand Tour Style" at the exclusive Timeo restaurant**. Time to wander the Corso Umberto and a **fine wine dinner** will be at a storied winery within the Etna Natural Park.

THE VOLCANIC ETNA WINE ROAD with remarkable tastings and visits to century old terraces among the lava flows, private lunch with library wines at **Pietradolce**, a cellar-visit with a difference at **Palmento Costanzo** and dinner with wine pairings at top rated **12 Fontane restaurant**.

PRIVATE VISITS INCLUDING TO ORGANIC PRODUCERS of award-winning wines and olive oils and the source of hand-made Sicilian Amaro where we experience the warmth of true Sicilian hospitality.

FIRST CLASS TREATMENT at our personally selected hotels in the heart of Catania, **Palazzo Sangiorgio** and within the Etna Natural Park at **Villa Neri Etna Resort and Spa**.

UNIQUE WINES, FINE DINING, ORGANIC PRODUCE AND EXPERIENCES TO REMEMBER! All these and more awaits your visit.



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YOUR HOST



John Szabo MS

It was an Etna Rosso that stopped John in his tracks, sometime around 2010, one of the first bottles from the Sicilian volcano that had started trickling into Canada from this then virtually unknown region. A mission crystallized: to explore the fascinating world of volcanic wines from around the globe and shine a spotlight on their unique and inimitable character. The result was a critically acclaimed book, *Volcanic Wines: Salt Grit and Power*, and a lifelong fascination for volcanoes and the things that grow on and around them.

But John is about more than just volcanoes. He comes from literary background, with a double honours degree in Italian and Spanish language and literature from the University of Toronto. This, of course, led seamlessly into cooking. Post-graduation he spent several years in top kitchens in Ontario and in Michelin starred kitchens in France, learning the restaurant trade inside and out.

Yet wine, it turns out, was his real calling. As an inveterate student John completed the Canadian Sommelier Guild diploma, worked his way through the WSET Diploma with honors, and was the first Canadian to add the “MS” – Master Sommelier – after his name in 2004.

John has travelled to virtually every wine producing country on earth, many several times, but he’s especially looking forward to returning to Sicily and sharing his love of the volcanic wines of Etna with you, the “island on the island” as the local’s call it, as well as the glorious foods and the enthralling history of this spellbinding island in the Mediterranean. www.johnszabo.com

PRICE

US\$5,995 (including non-refundable deposit of US\$250)

The cost is per person, based on double occupancy at the hotels. This price includes all accommodation, visits and tastings at wineries, all meals unless during the free time, all wine at meals, local transport, and taxes. Flights and travel arrangements to/from Sicily, items of a personal nature, and travel insurance are not included. We recommend that you contact your travel agent to arrange travel insurance.

If you are travelling by yourself there will be a single supplement of US\$600.

The payment schedule per person is:

At Time of Booking: \$250 non-refundable booking administration fee

120 days before start: Remaining deposits (plus single supplement if applicable)



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ITINERARY | DAY 1

MONDAY, MAY 17TH - WELCOME TO CATANIA

Meet with John and our local partner at 2.00 PM for a sparkling reception and introduction to the varied wine regions of Sicily in the restaurant of the Hotel Palazzo Sangiorgio in Catania. This hotel is an oasis of urban elegance in a quiet square in the heart of an ancient city.

Meet at:

Hotel Palazzo Sangiorgio

Piazza Vittorio Pappalardo 1

95100 Catania

Tel: +39 095 16952100

www.palazzosangiorgiocatania.it

GUIDED TOUR OF CATANIA'S HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

This afternoon we will be joined by local specialist guides who will take us along the Via Etnea where ancient history meets modernity with stylish local stores before we are introduced to some of the many architectural examples of the many Sicilian occupations, marvel at the Piazza Duomo's Baroque buildings, Via Crociferi and the Teatro Romano, as we hear about Catania's unique place among Italy's many and varied cityscapes. There will be a little free time this afternoon to further explore as you wish before returning to complete check in procedures if needed and relax before our evening together.

DEPART FOR DINNER

This evening we will stroll for a few minutes through the ancient atmospheric streets of this ancient city, arriving at one of Catania's top-rated restaurants where our welcome dinner awaits us. To conclude our first day wines will be chosen to discover varied and exciting tastes reflecting the different regions and terroirs of the sunniest island in Europe.

RETURN TO HOTEL



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ITINERARY | DAY 2

TUESDAY, MAY 18TH– THE SOUTHEASTERN SLOPES OF THE “MUNTAGNA”

We try to never leave too early allowing for a relaxed breakfast.

10.00 am Depart hotel

VISIT TO THE MINERAL RICH VINEYARDS OF VIAGRANDE

Our luxury bus will take us on a scenic one-hour drive above the shimmering Ionian Sea where a dramatic mix of ancient volcanic terrain and lush vegetation grows among ancient collapsed and eroded lava fields. The fertile soils support citrus and olive groves and of course vineyards. Each slope of the volcano has its own history. It was just a few miles North of here that here in the Bove Valley that the first DOC wine denomination of Sicily was born.

VISIT AND LUNCH AT BENANTI VITICOLTORI

The remarkable family-owned BENANTI estate is located between Catania and Taormina. Caressed by the sea breezes its sandy volcanic soils are some of the oldest in the area still farmed by the Benanti family, whose pioneering work established them in the forefront of Etna wine production. These Contrade wines are very specific to their various vineyard locations and offer a unique insight which we will have the opportunity to share and enjoy over a private lunch at the estate. www.Benanti.it

VISIT AND TASTING AT TERRA COSTANTINO

A short ride from Benanti takes us to the boutique Terra Costantino. This was the very first Organic winery on Etna. The building itself is of Bio-architectural significance constructed under the hillside. A range of expressive Contrade estate wines will be made available for us to taste enabling a fascinating comparison of approach between the two wineries we visit.

CURATED - VISIT TO RADICEPURA BOTANIC GARDENS

Returning to Catania we descend towards the coast where we have arranged for a curated visit to Radicepura Botanic Gardens. This five-hectare estate close to the ancient port of Riposto transcends the notion of time, being a permanent and mesmerising array of over 5000 varieties of plants and 3000 species originally laid out by the Sicilian Faro family. On conclusion of this visit we will return to the hotel in Catania arriving around 6pm. www.radicepura.it

EVENING FREE

Tonight is free to relax at the hotel or revisit the city and its many celebrated local and international restaurants.



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ITINERARY | DAY 3

WEDNESDAY, MAY 19TH – THE MAGNIFICENCE OF TAORMINA

The varied programme of the previous 2 days prompts many reflections at the breakfast table before it's time to check out.

09:45 Porters to collect luggage from the lobby

10:00 am – Depart for Taormina.

TOURING TAORMINA

Taormina is perhaps the most dramatic and beautiful hilltop town on the coast of Sicily. Enjoy the “White Lotus” lifestyle with stunning views of the shimmering sea and Mount Etna. Taormina is most famous for its UNESCO listed ridge topping Greco-Roman Theatre which is still in use today and which has featured in many films. You will be taken on a private tour of the theatre before being treated to a “Grand Tour” experience with a wine paired lunch at the exclusive restaurant Timeo on the cliffside. A little free time is planned for you to wander the fashionable Corso Umberto and explore the narrow stone alleyways and gardens of this city. Around almost every corner the views offer countless photographic opportunities!

Our bus will depart from Porta Messina in Taormina at 3.30 pm

DESTINATION ETNA NATURAL PARK

CHECK-IN AT THE VILLA NERI RESORT AND SPA

We climb towards Etna National Park witnessing amazing views of unique landscapes including active and older craters, Diverse volcanic landscapes which over centuries have lent themselves to the production of fine Etna wines. Our home for the next two nights is the Villa Neri Etna Resort and Spa. This luxury Sicilian country house hotel, set within Etna Natural Park, offers refined elegance and contemporary comforts in an area of outstanding natural beauty, serenity, vineyards, and olives. www.hotelvillanerietna.com

This evening we depart for a very special wine tasting dinner at Tenuta Fessina in Rovitello just a short drive away. Here, at a restored ancient lava stone vineyard wine room situated between two ancient lava flows the owners have pioneered organic viticulture and renowned hospitality. Our visit will explore the story of the “Muntagna” as we enjoy dinner accompanied by a wine selection including those from original ungrafted vineyards. www.tenutadifessina.com



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ITINERARY | DAY 4

THURSDAY, MAY 20TH - WINERIES OF THE NORTH ETNA WINE ROAD

After all the excitement of Taormina and a late dinner our schedule is easier this morning. The focus today is on the unique terroir and wineries of Etna's famed wine road.

11:30 am – Depart hotel

PRIVATE VISIT AND LUNCH AT PIETRADOLCE

Our bus now takes us to Solicchiata, a hamlet on the northern slopes of Mount Etna where Pietradolce is located. The ultra-modern winery and re-modeled vineyard terraces make for a fascinating comparison with the ancient Palmentos but underneath the more modern exterior lies a very similar and deep attachment to the sense of place in this very special environment. We visit the terraced vineyards with our host before heading back to the winery for a delicious home prepared lunch. Their range of wine styles are all clearly "Etna DOC." It is said that for other winemakers when not drinking their own production this the "go-to" winery! High praise indeed! With lunch we are very much looking forward to tasting some rare Pietradolce library wines from their cellar. www.pietradolce.com

VISIT AND TASTING AT PALMENTO COSTANZO

The most difficult decision on our tours is always when to leave! But leave we must as our next visit is to another spectacular winery just along the North Slope wine road where the original Palmento gravity flow lava stone winery has been the subject of one of the most significant examples of conservative restoration on the island. Here as we stand in the original treading floor, suitably refreshed, glass in hand we will experience what it was like to make individual wines from the Contrada and how the techniques have been surprisingly upgraded to produce these wines today.

RETURN TO THE HOTEL

Freshen up and prepare for dinner at 12 Fontane restaurant

We are in for another treat as our last dinner together is at this highly rated restaurant within our hotel which also produces small quantities of their own wine just to accompany their very creative natural gourmet dishes. www.12fontane.com



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ITINERARY | DAY 5

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 21ST – VINO, OLIO EXTRA VERGINE AND AMARO

Breakfast at leisure and check out

09:45 Porters take our luggage to the bus.

10.00 am – Depart from the Hotel.

PRIVATE VISITS TO PRODUCERS OF LOCAL SPECIALITIES

We have arrived at our final day together after four days of “la dolce vita” but there is still much more to enjoy. Wine, food, and a digestif are integral parts of Italian daily life. Today we head to Viverra Estate where the owner welcomes us into her home for a vertical selection of her wines PLUS a comparative tasting of organic olive oils. Today our lunch is at AMARA, one of the very best hand-made Sicilian aperitivos. Family style in keeping with Sicilian tradition, with local specialities and of course Etna wines. A fitting finale as we discover an ancient world of tradition immersed in the Sicilian countryside.

After lunch, we really do have to head back into Catania and say our arrivedercis at the conclusion of our tour.

4:00 pm – Guest drop-off at the airport and then on to the UNA Palace Hotel on Via Etnea in Catania.

Price: \$5,995 US including tax per person based on double occupancy.

There is a \$600 US per person single supplement.

Space is limited to 20.

This is a luxurious trip, hosted by local and international wine experts, visiting the great estates with a small group of about 20 like-minded fun-loving people. It's suited to all wine lovers. It's a bucket list trip. If you have any questions, please email us at info@finevintageltd.com.

