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In September, we took a group of travel advisors to see the best of Tuscany and Florence while squeezing in one last week of summer. Tuscany enjoys perfect weather this time of year with lots of sun, warm temperatures and with less crowds than peak season; it's a great time of year to visit! With **ITM Journey's** expertly taking care of our transportation, tours & activities, we partnered with our amazing properties **Villa Roma Imperiale** and the **Grand Hotel Minerva**, which was recently **voted #3 hotel in Florence by the Condé Nast Traveler Readers' Choice Award**, to ensure our group would have a perfect Italian experience!

Our trip started in Rome with a drive out of the city and to the lovely small town of Montepulciano. This is an ancient town where it seems that time has stood still for hundreds of years and the vineyards might outnumber the people. Located in the heart of Tuscany, this area has vast rolling hills dotted with historic villas, long unobstructed views, neat rows of grapes + olive trees and of course plenty of the region's famous tall Cyprus trees. When we arrived in town, we stumbled on hundreds of college age kids, dressed in Medieval times regalia – apparently celebrating regional victory in a local wine barrel hill climbing race. The outfits further reinforced the ancient medieval history of this town and was truly a site to see. We enjoyed a wine tasting in historic wine cellar caves, located beneath the middle of the town of Montepulciano. After sampling incredible traditional Tuscan and Super Tuscan wines, we spent our first night out amongst the peaceful vineyards and fields in the countryside, at a charming family owned and run property (a renovated castle) called Villa Armena.

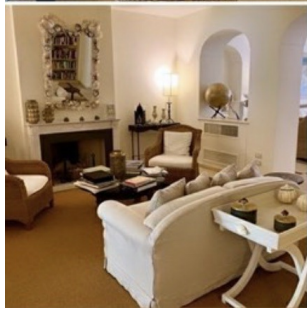
The next day, before heading to the beach town of Forte dei Marmi (accurately and lovingly described as the Hamptons of Tuscany) – we learned to make a traditional homemade pasta + sauce. Luckily, we had great teachers, as the fruits of our labor was the only option on the menu for lunch. Fortunately, our cooking school was located in a vineyard, and the amazing wine produced by the owners would have easily masked any of our rookie cooking mistakes. A quick nap in our Mercedes van was all it took to arrive on the coast of Tuscany, where we were greeted with more perfect weather. We began our tour of Forte dei Marmi with cocktails in the garden courtyard of **Villa Roma Imperiale** and watched the sun gently dip in the sky while the birds delivered one of nature's most relaxing mix tapes in the background. Villa Roma Imperiale has the feel of a grand family beach villa – which puts you right in the spirit of Forte, wrapped in a warm embrace by lush grounds, thoughtful décor + styling, and with truly Italian hospitality. We toured the property and headed to the beach for a traditional Forte dei Marmi dinner, fresh seafood with a very Italian flair.

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Congratulations Grand Hotel Minerva
Voted #3 hotel in Florence (and the first 4-star hotel)
by the 2019 Condé Nast Traveler Readers' Choice Award!





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*If you would like to join WanderLuxe Destinations on an exciting and informative trip like this, **please reach out** to make sure you are on our list and please don't forget to cc our team on your bookings, so that we can assist with special requests, VIP your clients and add exclusive amenities. We are always available to help! Advisors who interact with the WanderLuxe Destinations team will be given priority to visit properties and locations that are aligned with their business focus.*



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