

# Alps to the Adriatic

August 25 – September 07 in 2018

4 countries in one glorious tour.

French Fusion Travel and Colin McLaren from Villa Gusto invite you to join us on this wonderful tour where we travel across the roof of Italy, skirting Switzerland and Austria before dropping down into Slovenia, then on to the Adriatic coast, ending up in opulent Venice.

Travelling with Colin McLaren, this will be a four and five star tour: a celebration marking 20 private small group tours over 14 years for him.

**Colin has a wide network of clients who love his fascinating tours across Europe.** (See his Biography at the end)

We will stay in 5 star castles, villas and hotels and experience the finest white wines on the planet and divine cool climate reds, served with fresh water fish, mountain game and artisan delicacies. This is a tour for those who love food and wine, cooking, fine dining, history and *something special* with wonderful views every day.

To ensure ideal temperatures (late 20s – early 30s) the tour starts on the edge of summer.

For the last few years Colin has been working with French Fusion Travel taking friends and clients on his annual gourmet adventures which are so popular they often sell out within 2 weeks of being showcased.

These tours are top shelf standard with all wines and degustation menus personally chosen by Colin.

Feel free to research the hotels listed; you will agree there is nothing finer in Europe. And the choice of towns and villages, wines and gourmet events will make this an unforgettable tour.

## ITINERARY OVERVIEW

Our tour starts 10 am on 25 August, but you are free to find your own way to Milan in Italy at your leisure. Kate can help you with flights and hotel bookings.

**25 August 2018:** Pick up guests at the **Sheraton Hotel** lobby at **Milan – Malpensa – Airport** at **10.00am**. We head by private coach straight for the beautiful lakeside village of **Lugano, Switzerland**. (1.5 hour travel). A stroll along the esplanade as you take in the sights before a 1.00pm light lunch on the waterfront. Then we head off to **Bellagio**, voted Europe's prettiest village & check into the **Borgo Le Terraze**. This rare gem is blessed with large balconies, a pool and vistas of Switzerland (**3 nights**)



The next day, a leisurely stroll to explore **Bellagio** before semi-circumnavigating **Lake Como** in search of George Clooney before a visit to the famous **Villa Carlotta**, built 1690. (considered Italy's best Villa) Then a classic dinner at 'della Marianna' restaurant before a ferry back to our hotel. The following day we drive to the absolute roof top of Italy, at the Swiss border town of **Montespluga** to partake in an Italo/Swiss lunch at a tiny Swiss stone chalet. Once we've eaten we drive back to the northern point of Lake Como, then take the ferry home, stopping at the cutest village (your choice) for an after lunch *aperitivo*.



**Aug 28:** We cross the roof of Italy (in our bus), making our way to **Bolzano**, once an Austrian village, now Italian where they speak a mix of German, Italian and Ladin (a local language). This is the gateway to the scenic **Dolomite Mountains**. We check into **Hotel Greif**, a 5 star hotel where each room has been personalised by famous artists, from Europe to Japan. **(3 nights)** A degustation dinner. The **Alps to the Adriatic** tour is different, not only because of the stunning mountainous scenery but also the unique food inspired by the organic alpine produce, matched to lean, world class wines.



In **Bolzano** we ride on the **world's oldest cable car** to the top of the summit, visit ultra-modern Otzi Museum dedicated to the discovery of **OTZI, a 5,300 year old mummified glacial man** found in the snow in 1991.

We visit the fortress **Castel Rondolo** for wonderful frescoes and drinks.

**Bolzano** enjoys the reputation as Europe's wealthiest community, the capitol of the **Austrian Tyrol region**; it's riddled with scrumptious eateries and breath-taking architecture. Prepare to be gobsmacked.



**Aug 31:** We head across the Alps, travelling into **Austria** towards **Villache** before dropping down to the picturesque city of **Bled, in Slovenia**, where we take an easy stroll with a light lunch. Then, off to a hotel that you will never forget: the 5 star 600 year old castle, (now hotel) **Grad Otocec**, located in a forest on a miniature island. The best Slovenia has to offer! We take it slow and dine in the award winning restaurant. **(2 nights)** Later the next day we visit the nearby beautiful city of **Ljubljana** and walk its manicured medieval streets laced with ornate bridges before dining with a gourmet lunch.



Photos: Beautiful **Bled**. (below), with the equally beautiful **Hotel Castel Otocec** on the right.



**02 Sept:** We head away from the technicolour green fields of **Slovenia** and hit the blue of the Adriatic coast at **Trieste** (below) staying at the 5 star **Hotel Savoia Excelsior**, on the water's edge. Yes, another opulent experience! You won't believe the interiors of this once grand Palace. **(2 nights)**



We dine *ala Italiano* in a wonderful *osteria*. Free time to shop and explore this gorgeous seaside locale. The next day we drive 45 minutes, back into **Slovenia** to spend the day in one of the best villages on the coast; **Piran**, below right. On a clear day you can see Venice, but today we take a long lunch at a seaside trattoria.

Below, Grande Piazza of Trieste Centrale and the circular town square of Piran.



**04 Sept:** At 11.00 am we head off to **Venice**, a mere 1.5 hours drive away, and then say goodbye to our private bus, leap into water taxis and speed cross the spectacular Venetian lagoon to the legendary 5 star **Hotel Danieli** on **Grand Canal**, 5 minutes from **San Marco Square**. **(3 nights)**

Three palaces in one, Hotel Danieli was home to four Doges (Grand Mayors) of Venice dating back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. It has been an opulent hotel since 1822.



We take afternoon tea at the c1720 **Caffe' Florian**, what a bloody hoot! and listen to live chamber music in the awesome beauty of the Piazza San Marco.

Our morning walks explore the network of tiny laneways and canals, we take a privately led walking tour through the city to an ideal lunch location.

We'll take drinks at **Harry's Bar** as well as a grand finale degustation dinner at the stupendous **Quadri** restaurant.

Colin's second novel **On the Run** tells the exploits of Cole Goodwin, McLaren's real-life Mafia alias, who escapes a hit and goes 'on the run' with the assassin in pursuit; through South America, New York and eventually throughout Italy. We get to visit the spots in Venice where Colin describes how Cole evaded his nemeses in this book.

**07 Sept.** Tour ends. Private water taxis through the lagoon to the Venice Airport.

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#### **Inclusions:**

All breakfasts, 10 dinners with **exceptional** wines included, 5 lunches with wines included, all transport whilst on tour, all accommodation for 14 days, any entries, your tour manager and your tour host.

Cost: \$10,500 AUD per person based on twin sharing a room

Single supplement upon request

#### **Numbers strictly limited to 16 people**

- Deposit of \$2,500 AUD pp required to secure your place (50% refundable only up until 1 December 2017)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> deposit of \$4,000 AUD pp due 1 December 2017
- Final payment of \$4,000 AUD pp due: 1 April 2018