

Castelfalfi, Italy: When a Resort Is More Than a Resort

For those that just love to drive, head to and then up the coast from Ragusa to Messina where you'll board a car ferry before continuing your journey. This option does invite a stopover on what will likely be at least a 12-hour journey. E45 (European route 45) takes you right through Naples and is about eight hours into the drive. The train takes a similar route and sees a pretty unique ferry that loads the train carriages onboard.

Flying from Sicily to Florence is obviously the quickest way to get between the two. A short flight (1 hour, 40 minutes) and an even shorter jaunt through the Tuscan countryside will see you arrive at the medieval village of Castelfalfi and at Toscana Resort Castelfalfi. A resort wrapped up in a village, the company actually owns a few thousand acres of Tuscan countryside that includes the resort, the village, various accommodations, a working church and an adventure park.

Where To Stay



Rob McGovern

Sunset from the terrace of Castelfalfi's La Via Del Sale restaurant

Appealing to bon vivants who want a luxurious Tuscan getaway, as well as international pop stars (we can't say exactly who we saw there, but he is a pop phenomenon, Beliebe us) looking for a place where they can be assured of discretion from the staff, Castelfalfi was raised from abandonment by German travel company Tui before being acquired in May 2021 by SP Lohia Family.

An initial investment transformed the lobby, restaurants and guest rooms and gave rise to essentially a new property that is befitting of its place in the incredible Tuscan countryside. And that was just phase one. This season Castelfalfi will undergo further renovations.

Castelfalfi is part of The Hotel Collection, so if you book through Amex travel and you have a qualifying card you can receive \$100 hotel credit and other perks on two night or longer stays.

What To Do



Rob McGovern

Cristiano Savini from Savini Tartufi

With more than 40 experiences, ranging from golf on a 27-hole course, pizza making classes, olive and grape harvesting, horseback riding and even beekeeping, there is enough to keep almost everyone occupied for several days. Don't forget to factor in time to lounge poolside and at least half-a-day in the spa.

The 25 hectares (about 62 acres) of vineyards and more than 40 hectares (about 99 acres) of olive groves—and the facilities to process them—means that Castelfalfi has its own labels with more than half a dozen wines, several oils and even amaro, gin, beer, vermouth and grappa. Tours and tastings are all but required.

Perhaps the most interesting and unique experience at Castelfalfi is truffle hunting. Castelfalfi has a partnership with the Savini family who have been hunting for truffles in the area for more than 100 years.

An early morning walk in the woods of the Castelfalfi estate with staff from Savini Tartufi is a wonderful experience. Of course, the real hunters are the truffle sniffing dogs who survey the landscape and alert when they detect the unmistakable aroma of truffle. September to December is the season for the most prized truffle of them all, the white truffle.

Where To Eat



Rob McGovern

A summer black truffle harvested on the grounds of Castelfalfi

Castelfalfi is self-contained and, as such, has several restaurants and bars including La Via Del Sale, the golf course clubhouse and the informal and lively trattoria, bar and pizzeria, Il Rosmarino. But, it is La Rocca, the gourmet offering, that will likely find itself in the Michelin guide before long. Housed in the castle that gives the resort its name, the food is matched by the incredible sunset views over the Tuscan hills.

For a pre- or post-dinner drink, Ecrù bar and its terrace overlooking the Tuscan hills is ideal. While the Aperol spritz is the drink of summer in Italy, consider a

Calindri spritz. Suggested by a bartender at Ecrù, it is made using the same ratio as the Aperol spritz (3:2:1 Prosecco, Aperol, soda water) but with the more bitter Cynar. Made primarily from artichokes, it was popularized by Italian actor Ernesto Calindri in a series of ads for the company.