

Gran Fondo della Vernaccia

... a classic Tuscan riding experience



What is a Gran Fondo?

The Gran Fondo is a great tradition in Italy. Held throughout the year, Gran Fondo's attract thousands of riders from both Italy and around the world. Many participants belong to highly tuned teams, as there is enormous prestige for those that excel in these events. For amateurs it is the closest experience to what it might feel like to ride in a stage of the Giro.

Gran Fondo della Vernaccia Andrea Tafi (San Gimignano)

This is one of Italy's most prestigious Gran Fondo events. Starting inside the medieval walls of San Gimignano the 150km ride attracts over 1,500 participants – creating the most atmospheric occasion. The name Vernaccia is derived from the famous white wine of the area (with all riders receiving a complementary bottle!!) whilst Andrea Tafi is a famous former rider who has leant his name to the event – a commonality for many of Italy's Gran Fondo rides.

Gran Fondo della Vernaccia - May 12-20th, 2012

Join us on the perfect Italian cycling experience. This 9 day itinerary rolls over the regions unparalleled landscapes and finishes with our participation in an important staged Italian cycling event - Gran Fondo della Vernaccia Andrea Tafi (San Gimignano). Our trails lead us to discover a place steeped in history and nature, classic hilltop towns, ancient hamlets and castles, World Heritage listed landscapes and arguably Italy's best wines. It is Italian cycling and culture at its best.

Participants have the choice of 4 routes:

Granfondo	162.5km	Cicloturistica	66.8km
Mediofondo	110km	Slow bike	15km

Gran Fondo della Vernaccia Trip Itinerary

DAY 1: Arrival at San Gimignano

Independent arrival at San Gimignano accommodation. This medieval hilltop town is one of the Italy's most memorable places with its 13 towers dominating the skyline. Just as memorable is the countryside surrounding the town that has joyfully benefited from its sharecropping civilization. No scheduled ride for the day as we reserve energy for tomorrows much anticipated Gran Fondo ride.

DAY 2: Gran Fondo della Vernaccia

Day of the Gran Fondo della Vernaccia - San Gimignano. Starting and ending from the centre of this historic town, you pedal along with over 1,500 other amateur cyclists across the best of Tuscan landscapes whilst breathing in the atmosphere of this wonderful occasion. An annual ride, it is one of Italy's most important and festive Gran Fondo events appropriately named after the areas celebrated white wine 'Vernaccia'.

In the great tradition of Italian Gran Fondo rides the event is completed with a 'pasta party'.

Meals: B,L



Trip Inclusions

- 8 nights B&B accommodation
- 3 dinners with wine
- 2 lunches with wine
- See a stage of the Giro d'Italia in Chianti
- Gran Fondo Event entry and race pack
- 6 Guided rides + Gran Fondo ride
- Bike Support

Not included

- International airfares & taxes
- Arrival transfers (available on request)
- Travel insurance – compulsory
- Bike hire (quality bikes available for hire on request)

Price: \$3,195.00 pp twin-share; Single supplement: \$495.00
Bike Hire: \$275.00 (aluminium); \$335.00 (carbon)

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DAY 3: Ride to Trequanda - 90km

After breakfast we depart for a 90km ride through the heart of Siena countryside.

We stay in a family owned and operated accommodation on a 336 hectare wine estate, its origins dating back over 500 years. Surrounded by picture postcard countryside and quite back-roads the area is an oasis for cycling. On our initial night we are treated to a welcome dinner of Tuscan specialities.

Meals: B, D

DAY 4: The Val D'Orcia: 75km or 50km

Today's ride introduces participants to the outstanding World Heritage listed landscape's of the Val d'Orcia. This riding excursion leads us to the stunning hilltop towns of Montepulciano and Pienza. From both you are treated to sweeping views over central and southern Tuscany, with Pienza sitting like a balcony over the Val d'Orcia and Montepulciano surrounded by vineyards of its famous wines.

Meals: B, D

DAY 5: Chianti Classico Ride: 120km or 160km

Our ride today explores the world famous territory of the Chianti. Here the rustic back-roads of the Chianti provide quality cycling equal to that of its renowned wines. For those desiring an 'extra-long' day in the saddle (160km) is the opportunity of a live-viewing of Stage 11 of the Giro d'Italia. Others preferring a 'little-less' riding for a 'little-more' cultural immersion will be able to relax and lunch Tuscan style in one of the Chianti's timeless villages.

Meals: B, D

DAY 6: Ride to Montalcino: 40km

Today's riding excursion unravels in the classic Tuscan hilltop town of Montalcino – our base for the final 3 nights. World famous for its exceptional red wine 'Brunello di Montalcino,' it sits on a lofty scenic ridge surrounded by vineyards dedicated to the production of its wine. Immersing within the vineyards and medieval atmosphere of Montalcino, we discover its ancient surrounds and captivating local life.

Here we stay in a small traditional family operated hotel that offers breathtaking views over the Val d'Orcia.

Meals: B

DAY 7: Brunello Wine Trail: 50km

Today's riding excursion is into the heart of the World Heritage listed landscape of the Val d'Orcia. The route takes us to visit the ancient thermal village of Bagno Vignoni; tranquil castle topped village of Castiglione d'Orcia; and Monastery of Sant'Antimo – one of the most beautiful in Italy.

The day's itinerary includes a memorable lunch. Immersing within a small cellar of a local 'Brunello' wine producer, we enjoy local food products along with the legendary wine of Montalcino.

Meals: B,L

DAY 8: Mount Amiata and Bagno Vignoni (Spa Village): 90km or 60km (Option)

Today's ride takes us to delightful thermal springs of Bagno Vignoni. Participants will have the choice of a longer ride via the slopes of Mount Amiata, a volcanic cone 1732m above sea level that dominates the landscapes of Southern Tuscany; or a shorter more direct route via the lovely medieval town of San Quirico d'Orcia.

Meals: B

DAY 9: Departure transfer to Siena

Following breakfast is the departure transfer to Siena station

Meals: B

BOOKINGS & ENQUIRIES

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