

# Select Italy® Press Kit

**Select Italy:** *The Ultimate Source for Travel to Italy*™

*“There are an infinite number of things to do in Italy. A UNESCO study placed 40 percent of the world’s art in Italy and Italy ranks as the top overall travel destination. The challenge is not to find something to do, but to choose the right thing.”*

-- Andrea Sertoli, President, Select Italy

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Behind you the ordinary, the stressful and the done. Ahead a place of sensory seduction, luscious sights and tastes, and a thousand and more facets: Italy. It's a destination that while outwardly familiar, through its variety and extraordinary richness demands a selective hand. In between dreaming and doing, the savvy traveler requires a complete resource and trusted ambassador of expertise. That's Select Italy: your entrée to unforgettable, customized experiences in Italy – and from yacht charters to opera tickets to handpicked hotels, vacation packages and more, the ultimate source for travel to Italy.

## Company Overview

### Mission

Select Italy strives to create the best possible vacation in Italy for our clients. Whether they're hitting the favorite tourist spots or venturing far from the beaten path, Select Italy delivers the highest quality travel products, accommodations, experiences and innovations with unmatched customer service before, during and after their trip to Italy.

### Our Values

- **Passion**

We have a passion for Italy and our goal is to share that passion with our clients.

- **Selectivity**

The sheer number of things to do in Italy can be overwhelming. Select Italy exists to help its clients craft the perfect itinerary, custom-tailored to their individual needs and desires. Our travel agents and scouts visit Italy continuously throughout the year to revisit and refine our recommended accommodations, tours and unique travel experiences. Whether a client is looking for a food & wine adventure, or a trip that focuses on art, fashion, history or any of the other things for which Italy is famous, they can benefit from the top position Select Italy enjoys in the travel industry as the premier source for providing the ultimate Italian experience.

- **Attention**

We've built our company on a reputation for fulfilling our customer's wishes and providing superior customer service. With so many travel companies in the marketplace, we recognize that to remain the industry leader, we must constantly identify and provide our clients with a peerless vacation experience.

- **Innovation**

Italy is a dynamic place and so is the travel industry. Our Website, [www.selectitaly.com](http://www.selectitaly.com), is state-of-the-art and leads the industry in technological innovations, travel trends and new opportunities. Select Italy is first to identify the next undiscovered area of Italy and provide the easiest and best path for our clients to experience the country.



## Our Company

Select Italy was founded in 1997 and is based in Chicago with an office in New York and support staff in Italy. Personal attention to the client is always paramount. The company offers a wide array of products and services related to travel in Italy, including customized itineraries, wedding/honeymoon and other vacation packages, culinary tours, a complete pre-departure ticketing service for museums and musical events, private guided services, yacht charters, transportation services, hotel reservations and villas bookings, and more. One sales department handles all client interaction (consultation, itinerary preparation, etc.). Production is handled separately.

Select Italy's network of Italian travel partners spans the length and breadth of the country and includes highly qualified, government-licensed guides, world class transportation suppliers, globally known hotels, culinary celebrities and many other tourism professionals. In addition to our expertise in all aspects of the Italian travel experience, Select Italy enjoys a sterling reputation for unmatched customer service, technological savoir-faire and excellence in travel services.

## Our President

Select Italy's President and Founder is Andrea Sertoli, a native of Rome. Sertoli came to the travel industry after several years' experience in fields as diverse as agronomy, foreign affairs, non-profit work and hotel representation. Before coming to the United States, his travels took him to Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, North Africa and the Middle East. In the mid-1990s he became a leader in the promotion and development of the growing Italian bed & breakfast movement. His work promoting and representing these properties led him to apply his expertise in Italian travel to the client side of the travel industry. He worked with several U.S. travel agencies before founding Select Italy in 1997. It was one of the first niche specialist tour operators to appear on the travel industry landscape at a time when many travel agencies still followed the traditional airline and cruise agent business model.

Andrea Sertoli has been included on Travel & Leisure magazine's A-List of Top Travel Agents for ten years running.

## Our Website – A Travel Technology Leader

[www.selectitaly.com](http://www.selectitaly.com)

Since 2004, Select Italy has invested extensively in its Website. It is now one of the most powerful, comprehensive and user-friendly online resources for travel to Italy available, featuring thousands of individual product pages and traveler resources. These include Select Italy's Hotel Portfolios, bookings and reservation pages for museums and opera, as well as vacation packages, and more. An exclusive online custom trip planner allows clients to begin the Italian journey of a lifetime in just a few clicks.

Selectitaly.com uses cutting edge technologies to provide clients with a convenient and enjoyable travel planning and online shopping experience. The number of offerings available through the Website is constantly evolving and growing to help bring the most options and best possible Italy vacation to travelers.

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In addition, a triad of e-newsletters keeps Italy lovers in the loop: Espresso, Cappuccino, and Il Postino.

- **Espresso** is a monthly dispatch from Select Italy's President, Andrea Sertoli, along with a short new travel video. It's a quick shot of insider information to infuse and energize your day with a new aspect of Italy to discover. Sent to all Select Italy clients.
- **Cappuccino** is Select Italy's monthly newsletter. In it the company's travel experts provide stories about current trends and happenings in Italy, offering a glimpse into not only what you would see if visiting, but also an understanding of what is happening in Italy now. Available to all clients.
- **Il Postino**, exclusively for travel agents, contains travel industry news, tips for trip planning and selling points for Italian destinations. Travel agents who read Il Postino have access to the experience of Select Italy's travel experts, who contribute articles based on their own research and travels.

Those interested can subscribe online, and are also offered the opportunity to subscribe at the completion of the order process.

## Awards & Recognitions

Select Italy's passion for Italy travel has resulted in wide recognition and critical acclaim. Each year, Travel & Leisure magazine, in collaboration with the agents of American Express Travel, announces its A-List of top travel agents. Select Italy is proud to have been included on this list as a top travel specialist for Italy for the past eight years (2002-2011). In 2006, Select Italy received accreditation from IATAN (International Airlines Travel Agent Network), the premier international travel agent association. In 2005, the Website received the Better Business Bureau's Online Reliability Seal. Selectitaly.com has also received many honors and is constantly innovating to enhance clients' experience.

## Client Services

### Custom Travel Planning

<http://selectitaly.com/fit.php>

Select Italy's core business is working extensively with clients to build customized itineraries for the specific region(s) in Italy the traveler would like to visit, preferred type of accommodation, and desired activities – all at a pace determined by the traveler. Members of the custom travel team undertake research in function of the specific client's profile, and propose unique activities that will meet their wishes. These experts work with each client until the ideal trip to Italy has been completely planned and each service is confirmed.

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Select Italy's standard portfolio of products, such as privately guided services, museum reservations and tickets to musical and cultural events, are frequently part of an itinerary, but each tour is custom-tailored according to a traveler's specific needs and requests. The custom travel department's Italy experts often research and arrange private appointments with artisans, clergy, chefs, wineries, private galleries, and fashion designers. With each itinerary, the client receives a complimentary package that includes walking tour maps and a customized booklet of recommendations for restaurants, shopping, side trips, and sights to visit. Itineraries of a higher complexity also include point-to-point driving maps and directions, train tickets and car transfers.

The custom travel team also works with each traveler to find properties to match his or her taste. Select Italy regularly books villas, exclusive hotels, apartments and estates. A sampling of more than 3,500 hotels, along with 400 villas and apartments, is available to view and book online.

## Wedding & Honeymoon Services

<http://selectitaly.com/weddings.php>

Select Italy devotes a special section of its operation to providing the ultimate setting for an unforgettable wedding, honeymoon or renewal of vows occasion. The service can range from a small romantic ceremony to a full week of wedding events and accommodations for hundreds of guests.

## Vacation Packages

<http://selectitaly.com/vacations.php>

For clients that wish to take advantage of Select Italy's vacation planning expertise, but prefer not to work with a trip planner, we provide a wide variety of vacation packages. Each includes two to ten nights of accommodations, guided activities, transfers and other services. These packages can be used as a building block for a complete Italian vacation or to add a structured component to portions of an independently planned trip.

Some examples of current Vacation Packages are:

- **The Ultimate Road Trip:** Ferrari Tour of Italy. A customizable luxury road trip through the very best that Italy has to offer, featuring transportation in the latest Ferrari, Maserati, and Lamborghini models, and accommodations in five-star hotels.
- **The Big Three:** A weeklong package featuring Rome, Florence and Venice. Perfect for first-time travelers to Italy, or for those looking to reacquaint themselves with the classic Italian vacation destinations.
- **Castles & Culinary Delights:** A three-night stay at the four-star Villa Luppis in the Prosecco area of Friuli – includes a variety of cooking and tasting opportunities combined with full day excursions to explore the ancient castles of the region.
- **Tuscan Rejuvenation:** A four-night luxury stay at the five-star Adler Thermae Spa & Wellness Resort. Includes five spa treatments, gourmet meals, private airport transfers, and unlimited access to all spa facilities.

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## A La Carte Products And Services

Along with planning comprehensive customized trips for travel agents and direct clients, Select Italy also offers a variety of products and services to travelers à la carte. So clients can pick and choose different services for their trip abroad, without having the entire trip planned for them. Among the services we're proud to offer:

### • Hotel Booking

<http://www.selectitaly.com/hotels.php>

Still in the planning stages for your next trip to Italy? Use Select Italy's portfolio of preferred hotels to find the ideal place to stay! Organized by categories tailored to your needs and interests, the hotels in Select Italy's portfolio have been comprehensively researched and often offer special perks to our clients.

### • Villas & Apartments

<http://www.selectitaly.com/villas.php>

Select Italy is at the forefront of the vacation rental movement – it maintains a portfolio of more than 430 carefully selected villas and apartments, all available for booking online.

### • Musical & Cultural Events

<http://www.selectitaly.com/events.php>

Select Italy makes it easy to access more than 1,100 musical and cultural events at venues in 13 cities, including the famous La Scala opera house in Milan. Tickets can be purchased online prior to departure for Italy.

### • Museum Reservations & Prepaid Tickets

<http://selectitaly.com/museums.php>

Select Italy is the most complete and efficient museum reservation service for travelers to Italy. It currently offers advance purchase and reservations to 27 museums and galleries, as well as multi-site museum passes on Rome, Turin & Venice. This is a great time saver, as entrance wait times during the high season can stretch to four hours at Italian museums such as the Galleria degli Uffizi in Florence. Clients can make all their museum reservations at one time.

### • Guided Services

[http://selectitaly.com/guided\\_services.php](http://selectitaly.com/guided_services.php)

Using English-speaking guides, these services include walking tours, full-day excursions, and port-of-call excursions (for cruise ship passengers). In some cases, clients can choose exclusive privately guided tours, or opt to join a small group of Select Italy clients.

### • Food & Wine Services

<http://selectitaly.com/food.php>

Select Italy offers over 50 Food & Wine related services. These include wine tastings, cooking classes, "Tour and Taste" activities (which combine guided tours with wine tastings, or may include a culinary expedition), visits of vineyards and wineries, and vacation packages with a culinary theme.

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## • Transportation Services

<http://selectitaly.com/transportation.php>

On Select Italy's Website, clients can order train tickets and rail passes, reserve seats on airport shuttles, arrange private car transfers, water taxis and car rentals – all in advance. Airfare to Italy can also be arranged, and can be done by contacting a member of the Select Italy team for further information.

## • Private Visits

Select Italy offers after-hours, exclusive, private tours of the Vatican Museum and Sistine Chapel. It is the only US tour operator offering private, exclusive visits to the Vasari Corridor in Florence, despite its official closure to the public. Private visits to Rome's Borghese Gallery are also available.

## • Maritime Services

<http://selectitaly.com/yachts.php>

Select Italy currently offers a variety of yachts, catamarans, and cruising vessels available for weekend excursions or weeklong vacations. These boats offer the option to include full crews with a skipper, deckhand, and perhaps the most important crew member, chef.

## • Sporting Events

<http://selectitaly.com/sports.php>

In 2006, the same year that the Italian national team won the World Cup, Select Italy began offering tickets to Serie A and Serie B soccer matches. Tickets to basketball, tennis, auto racing, and other Italian sporting events can also be arranged.

Other services that Select Italy offers its clients include: photography workshops, painting classes, shopping excursions, and spa services.

## Bring Italy Home

### Select Italy Store

<http://selectitaly.com/store.php>

Select Italy's store features over 100 items, including books, posters, travel guides, maps, soaps and skincare products from the Chianti Cashmere line, discount vouchers, gift certificates, and more. The store allows people to prepare for their trip to order authentic Italian items to remember a fantastic vacation, to find unique Italian gifts, or just to simply purchase items of interest.

### Select Italy Dinners

<http://selectitaly.com/nydinner>

Select Italy features monthly Italian cooking shows and dinners at our loft space in New York Partnering with Chef Andrea Tiberi of Eatalian Style Inc, these dinners are a combination cooking show, Italian food class, and a delicious dinner. A unique and stylish night out that recreates the service, style and quality of our services in Italy right here in the U.S.

## Business To Business Services

### Partnership With Travel Agents

<http://selectitaly.com/loginagent.php>

Select Italy receives approximately 50% of its business from travel agents, who turn to the company to provide the Italian expertise and level of detail that more general agencies typically cannot. By outsourcing comprehensive travel planning services to Select Italy, or by taking advantage of Select Italy's portfolio of individual services to help complete an itinerary designed by the agent, travel professionals are able to best serve their clients. Select Italy's products and services are commissionable, and can be purchased "a la carte" by agents for trips not requiring customized itinerary services.

### Specialty Group Travel & Tour Products

<http://selectitaly.com/tours.php>

Select Italy offers custom travel planning services for group travel, as well as scheduled departure group tours. Custom group tours, whether designed on request or conceived and promoted by Select Italy, can consist of thematic tours for small and large groups including, but not limited to, corporations and incentive groups, social clubs and associations, religious travelers, family reunions, or just groups of friends traveling together. These tours focus on the desired activities of the group. Past tours have included shopping, art, architecture, Jewish heritage, wine, and culinary focused activities.

### Web Affiliate Sales Programs

<http://www.selectitaly.com/affiliates>

Select Italy offers a comprehensive affiliate sales program. Affiliate partners that sign up can earn commission on sales referred from their websites to the Select Italy website. Almost all of the services available on SelectItaly.com are eligible for affiliate commissions.

### Corporate & Incentive Travel

For corporate incentive planners, Select Italy offers a wide range of attractive tour options. While any of the standard portfolio of services may be adapted for use as an incentive, Select Italy has created a special group of specialty-car based tours that are particularly well suited for this use. Highlights of the automotive incentives portfolio are tours of Italy in Ferraris, Masaraitis, Lamborghinis, vintage Alfa Romeos or high performance motorcycles.