

Made-to-measure Drives

Overleaping the usual 'supercars to splurge on' luxury tripe, we land on five of the best driving experiences money can buy. The first, a customisable driving tour; the others, made to measure just how good you potentially can be behind the wheel of a great car!

by **Ishan Raghava**



1. The 'lifestyle' pick *Red Travel's Italian driving tour*

We begin at the spiritual home of the high performance automobile: Italy. Now a driving tour of Italy is a pretty special experience, even if you're in a rent-a-car. The countryside, especially in the Tuscan region, is absolutely breathtaking – small red-roofed village houses and large medieval castles perched on hilltops punctuate the landscape; there are endless hills covered in a patchwork quilt of greens, browns and yellows, with the occasional bright red splash of a poppy field; vineyards, olive groves and legions of Mediterranean pines dominate the setting, with cypresses standing sentry over them all...

The surroundings are exceptional. But what you're driving is the norm. If you want something beyond, and I mean far, *far* beyond, you'll contact Red Travel.

This is a Turin-based company – winner of the Five Star Diamond Award from the American Academy of Hospitality Sciences in 2005 and '08 – that organises personalised driving tours of Italy. In supercars.

Umbria, Lazio, Tuscany; rolling hills and twisting roads. Cities such as Milan, Rome, Florence, Venice and Naples. In your choice of Ferrari (the 599 GTB Fiorano, the 430 Scuderia, and even the latest launch, the 458 Italia are available), or the Lamborghini Gallardo LP560-4, or the Maserati Granturismo.

It truly is a once-in-a-lifetime driving experience.

But what, you may wonder, of the other logistics: Luggage (supercars aren't exactly built to haul suitcases), accommodation, meals, driving routes etc? Well, it's all taken care of. Each tour is led by a Tour Director in his car. Pit-stops are made at Michelin-starred restaurants along the way, and the finest 5- or 7-star hotels are booked for night halts. Your luggage is transported separately and checked into your room before you arrive. And each morning, the car will be prepped and ready for you to drive, having been washed, refueled and given a once-over by the Red Travel crew.

Programs generally vary from one to eight days and lend themselves to a high degree of personalisation, so if there's something special that you want to do which isn't on the standard menu, just let Red Travel know. Shopping presentations with the finest Italian designers, yachting, golfing, hot-air ballooning, transfers by private jet, visits to castles, vineyards and other exclusive locations – it's all possible. In the company's own words, your Red Travel tour of Italy is "a unique journey, individually created for you to fully experience the Italian Way of Life."

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