

# ITALY'S WILD WEST

*Tuscany's countryside destination Maremma is incredibly unique in the many charms it offers to tourists—hills, tradition, people, beaches, history, and an unpretentious tranquillity – TT Bureau*

**YOU MIGHT BE** taken aback if told that the beautiful coastline of Maremma in Southern Tuscany, Italy, is considered one of the top luxury destinations in the world. But, sometimes, truth can be stranger than fiction. Still relatively unexplored and cut off from the other popular locations of Italy, Maremma is rather an off-the-beaten-track destination, and comparatively less crowded than other regions of Italy.

Picturesque mountains; amazing landscape; stunning coastline, with its intimate coves; the soothing waters of the Mediterranean Sea; beautiful plains; delectable cuisine; and hearty red and white wines make Maremma an enchanting place. Vast pine forests border many of the beaches, and a few undrained marshes form wildlife parks—the most famous of which is the Parco dell'Uccellina. These areas teem with wildlife, most notably a



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wide range of spectacular bird species.

Some of Italy's best foods and wines can be found here. Ancient traditions have been conscientiously preserved in the medieval towns—small, but well-maintained—that dot the region. The towns are separated by thick forests and sprawling green fields of olive groves and vineyards. Life seems so easy and simple here, cut away from the concrete jungle, the stress and the fast-paced city life—very much pastoral and similar to the local people, who speak straight from the heart and lead uncomplicated lives. With other Tuscan towns a short drive away, you are never lost from the mainland Italy. For, Maremma quickly brings you back to the modern world, with its shopping centre, restaurants and nightlife.

What makes Maremma special is its history, which is amply seen in its churches, castles,

monuments, archaeological museums and ruins that lie scattered throughout the region. All these structures keep alive the grand and fascinating past of Italy from the Medieval and Renaissance periods. The beautiful hill towns of Sovana, Sorano and Pitigliano showcase the remains of the Etruscan civilisation.

The partying culture of the locals bonds well with the Italian way of living life to the fullest. Wine and food easily find their way in the cuisine through numerous festivals. The celebrations are rumbustious. People wear colourful costumes, enjoy traditional music and participate in elaborate parades.

It is advisable to stay in farmhouses if you are in Maremma. You get to know the life in rural Tuscany, as well as see the numerous attractions of the region.

### HORSE RIDING IN TUSCANY

There are many horse-riding trails in the thick, woody swamps of Maremma and the National Park of the Casentino Forests. Advanced horseback riders can ride to north into the Mugello, south into Chianti, or farther south into the Siena or Grosseto provinces, in order to enjoy the best trails available.



### MAREMMA MUSTS

- Visit the towns of Pitigliano, Sorano, Roselle, and Sovana to explore the ruins of Etruscan civilisation. You need to spend at least a day here.
- Go to Parco Regionale Della Maremma to see the fascinating stretch of coastline. The visitor centre at Alberese offers you walking trails, which enable you to see wild boar, deer, foxes and hawks. The Centro Turismo Equestre Il Rialto, to the north, offers guided canoe outings and horse riding trips.
- Relax on the beaches in the Maremma Nature Park, the towns of Marina di Grosseto and Castiglione della Pescaia. Other noted beach areas are Punt'Ala, Talamone and Monte Argentario.
- Nightlife hunters can head for the pubs and bars at Punta Ala. The other happening places are located along the coast that extends from Marina di Grosseto, Monte Argentario, Punta Ala, and Castiglione della Pescaia.
- Golfers can tee off against the backdrop of Monte Amiata, or the beautiful coastal plains. There are other golf courses as well.
- Maremma is well-known for its cowboys, known as 'butteri'. Till recently, they herded the cattle on their horses. Now, they appear for festivals and other special occasions. Tourists can still ride with the 'butteri' as the latter check their cattle in the unspoiled Maremma National Park.

