



Postcards From Italy: What It's Really Like to Be There Now!



Venice view. Photo by Colin Heinrich, courtesy Indagare

From the canals of Venice to the rolling hills of Tuscany to the cobblestoned streets of Rome and Florence and the seaside charms of Amalfi and Sicily—there are few destinations that stir our collective imagination more than Italy: the food, the wine, the history, the art, *la dolce vita*. Since it's one of the top destinations that Indagare members and subscribers are most interested in returning to now, we asked members of our network on the ground there to share with us what it's really like to be in Italy post-vaccine—and for a few of their best insider tips.

Contact Indagare or your Trip Designer to start planning a safe and meaningful trip to Italy—this year and beyond. Our team can provide information on destination requirements, hotel policies and insurance options, transportation and much more.

Bianca Arrivabene

CEO, *Giberto Venezia* and Deputy Chairman, *Christie's Italy*

Currently in: Venice and Positano

“[Italy](#) is *the* destination. Staff at restaurants and hotels are eager to have clients to serve. Museums have many fewer cues outside their doors. You will have Italy to yourself—this will not last long. I will be traveling to [Greece](#), as I live in Italy, and just love the blue blue sea there along with the spirit of freedom that the country gives me. But I have been traveling to Positano, Assisi, Firenze, Roma, Taormina—and all places look even better than before Covid! I have been in Positano for one week so far. It’s just bliss, a smaller number of tourists and locals at our complete disposal, better than the past years. It is a little bit like when we were younger, less people and better quality. In Italy this summer people can expect sun, smiling Italians, fewer cues at museums and it will be easier to find a table at Harry’s Bar or Nerano. There is also this place you should check out in Positano, called *Torresponda....*”

J.J. Martin

Founder [LaDoubleJ](#) Brand

Currently in: Milan



J.J. Martin in Milan. Courtesy of J.J. Martin / La DoubleJ

“I’m currently stationed in [Milan](#), my adopted home for the last 20 years. *How is this year different from last year? Are you joking?* Ha ha! Big changes all around! As a business owner in Italy, we have had to run, jump, swivel, turn, duck and pick ourselves up every time the huge slap of Queen Corona has shaken off our plans or uprooted us from our foundations. But it’s also been a time of incredible rebirth and creativity. We are more prolific than ever, launching a brand-new store in Milan, a collaboration with Ladurée and new athleisure and *aperitivo* collections. I have really found that whenever darkness or density descends, we can turn lights on inside ourselves the minute we move into the frequency of creativity, solutions, and building something new—no matter how crappy your current state is.

Italy has a magic warmth that you don’t find in many countries. It’s a combination of its extreme beauty, the incredible but simple food, unbridled joy in relationships and passion for what people do. But it’s all wrapped up in a relaxed package that most Western countries don’t possess. The slow pace of the country, which used to drive me nuts 15 years ago, is now one of my favorite qualities. It reminds me to create space, sit

in silence and melt down into the moment.

The great thing about living in Milan is that weekend journeys to extremely juicy destinations are extremely easy to do. I've already taken four extraordinary days on Ischia at Mezzatorre hotel with my dear friend Marie-Louise Sciò. The thermal waters there are amazing. I love the islands in Italy—whether it's Ischia, Pantelleria, [Capri](#), or [Sicily](#). The volcanic rock is magnetic. I did a long weekend in [Portofino](#), which I hadn't done in years. I hiked up the Monte for incredible meditations next to a creek and swam by myself in the emerald water at sunset. I've just been to [Lake Como](#), which a lot of Milanese curiously don't like. But lake energy is super powerful.... I love [Il Sereno](#) in Como, which was designed by Patricia Urquiola. Normally I prefer antique villas, but this hotel is stunning and so comfortable. A friend just went to [Venice](#) and told me it was nearly empty. That's heaven. A place I love to visit is Scicli, on the eastern coast of Sicily. The town is filled with tiny houses built into the rock and incredible 16th-century Baroque churches. I can spend hours in these churches when they're empty. One of my favorite things to do is to visit Capri in the off season. If you can go in May or late September to early October, especially during the week, it is the most unbelievable experience. In Capri, there is an amazing hike from Marina Piccola all the way to the top of the mountain that you must do at sunrise. There is also a Grotta della Madonna—you swim through jellyfish in order to scamper up the rock stairs to this incredible rock cave. Every time I speak gently to the *meduse* (jellyfish in Italian), I never get stung."

Antonia Miletto

Jewelry designer

Currently in: Venice

"I came back to Venice at the end of April. The Italian spring (and early summer) is magnificent, the climate softens, the air is perfumed, the long days still not too hot and allow you to stay out late, the light is wonderful. I think we became more sensitive to the grace of beauty, it is like we need it to forget! To me 2021 seems to be the year of the rebirth—we want positivity, lightness and the human warmth of our fellow men.

My summer travel plans? Definitely Italy: [Sardinia](#), Capri and Sicilian islands, enjoying the company of old friends, with the opportunity to go back to places that have been for so long off-limits for the "locals" because of the overtourism. This summer is the best of the best—a unique opportunity to see this country as it was 30 to 40 years ago. Thanks to my well-traveled friend Giorgio Pace, I discovered his home country, Molise. There is nowhere in Italy like this tiny region, so much beauty, tradition, history and culture nestling between Abruzzo and [Puglia](#)—and all so untouched, a real gem! For me the list

of places I will return to is long, but on a lighter note, since we are now allowed to eat inside the restaurant, I'd say just Harry's Bar in Venice, for drinks, anchovies sandwiches, lunch upstairs, enjoying the view or dinner on the main floor to watch people and be seen."

Carla Sersale

Founder [Emporio Sirenuse](#)

Currently in: Positano



Carla Sersale at Le Sirenuse in Positano. Photo courtesy of Carla Sersale

"I am in Positano and have been between here, Milan and [Rome](#) for the last six months. This year, Italy is vaccinating everybody at a very fast pace and our [Covid](#) rates have dropped to almost zero. We hope to get out of this nightmare between the end of July and August, but it is already totally safe to travel in Italy. We still wear masks when not sitting at a table, but my guess is that even this will be abolished in one month's time. Curfew is now at midnight and will disappear on June 21. The country is still not crowded and it is a magical time to visit famous places with less people. No difficulties in reserving a table at restaurants or booking a boat ride and less traffic on the roads. *Amazing!* I will remain in Positano, as our hotel, [Le Sirenuse](#), is open and we will be here waiting to welcome you. People should expect a great summer!"

Marie-Louise Sciò

Creative Director and CEO of [Il Pellicano Hotels](#)

Currently in: Ischia

“I am at the Mezzatorre and have been here for the past 10 days. It’s safe to say that we are all extremely eager to travel this year, more so than ever! We also want to travel ‘slow’ and truly visit and experience the destination we visit. *What is the best thing about Italy right now?* Everything! The weather, the sea, the sun, the amazing nature, the amazing food, the amazing people. This summer I am staying in Italy to travel; I will be between our three hotels, but will also go North to South to discover more about this wonderful country and gather ideas and inspirations to continue growing Issimo [the new lifestyle site]. This year, people should expect the best summer of their lives! There are so many places in Italy that I haven’t seen yet—I want to discover some of them and learn everything about them. I am planning to return to Le Sirenuse—I love Positano and I absolutely love that hotel.”

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Alatia Bradley Bach

New York City Real Estate Broker

Currently in: Florence



Indagare Member Alatia Bradley and her family in Venice, while on sabbatical. Photo courtesy Alatia Bradley

“I live in Firenze, in the Oltrarno, right on the Arno facing the Uffizi. I have been here for just shy of two years. We arrived in July of 2019. This year we still have no tourists in Italy. The country opened in early June. People are out, but they seem to all be Italian, which is nice! Last summer, we stayed in Italy and traveled, it was magical. I took my family to see Rome, [Naples](#) and Pompeii. We were alone at the Colosseum, the Vatican and Pompeii—it will never be like this again. The [Amalfi Coast](#) was like it was in the 50s. It is not empty, as in sad or creepy. It is just the way you always wish it would be—small, manageable, human. The way it is in the old movies. You can move from place to place without chaos, get taxis easily, ride trains with ease—enjoy the beauty and splendor of Italy without the crowds: The Uffizi has 14 new rooms on view and there are only 20 people in the museum. You can actually stand in front of the Botticellis for hours, You can get up close and see each and every flower on the *Primavera*. The Academia is completely re-arranged. I have experienced the *David* four times without crowds, it’s epic! *Come! It’s incredible!*

I was in Venice last weekend. The architecture Biennale is up. It’s the first time I have been able to enjoy the park and see the incredible architecture of the Pavilions themselves. San Marco is gorgeous and empty. We are spending two weeks in June in Positano. We expect it to be more crowded than last year with Italians and Europeans but still ‘empty.’ At The Vatican you can go for the Pope’s blessing and actually walk right into the Basilica afterwards—unheard of before.

I just went to [Borgo Santo Pietro](#) in [Tuscany](#). Hands down the best hotel and service in Italy. In fact, it is Africa safari camp-Asian hotel-level detail and service. I highly recommend this place. I am excited to go to Reschio, in Umbria, which has just opened. And the [Hotel de la Ville](#) in Rome, which was closed for most of the last year. My new jewel of a boutique hotel in Rome is Margutta 19. I want to go north to Cinque Terre, Hotel Splendido. Turin and Milan. We love the vibe and the sea of Positano. We spend most days on a boat or at [Da Adolfo](#). We also quite like the main beach. The kids can run free and the food is amazing. We also love Forte dei Marmi—the sea isn’t the Med, but the huge wide sandy beaches and beach clubs are great. Everyone loves biking everywhere. I cannot wait to return to Naples in the fall. This is a vibrant city, but you need a guide. You cannot land here and go to the “center” like in Florence or Rome.

Just to be clear, we all feel very safe here. The government acted swiftly and firmly regarding Covid. Vaccines are being carried out much quicker than originally. Healthcare is brilliant here and throughout most of Italy. I would not hesitate at all to

come. It's a magical moment and it will not last..”

Martina Mondadori

Editor of *Cabana magazine*

Currently in: Milan

“I am currently in Milan, my hometown, where I moved back to in September 2020 after eight years in London. I wasn't here during the first lockdown, but the great Milanese energy is definitely coming back, which feels thrilling to say the least. The best thing about returning to Italy is that it's like going back to my childhood, without masses of tourists everywhere. I remember visiting Rome and then Orvieto last June and feeling that was the best experience I had in a very long time. The Vatican Museums all for ourselves! I will spend July in England and August between Puglia, Calabria and the [Dolomites](#). North and South! Everyone should *rush* to Italy this summer. It will be like having a huge playground with lots of space to have fun in. I am thrilled to visit Calabria for the first time. I always had a thing for the South of Italy—it feels like the gate to the Middle East to me. And Capri, Ravello, Lecce and [Siena](#). Because they will be empty!”

Samy Ghachem

Managing Director of [Sereno Hotels](#)

Currently in: Lake Como

“I am currently in Lake Como. I arrived on May 6 on a Delta Covid flight. The experience was great—took my 72-hour PCR in NYC and then the rapid antigen tests at JFK and upon arrival in Milan at Malpensa. The best part? No quarantining upon arrival! Our hotel opened on May 6, so I pretty much went straight to work from the airport. Last year, we didn't see any of our American clients. We still had a very good season, with all of our clients coming by car from Germany, Switzerland, France and the U.K. This year, we are now also starting to see a lot of reservations for Americans. [Il Sereno](#) is just now finishing construction of our new annex, which includes nine new rooms and a stunning penthouse. As of this Friday, we are sold out until July 11., thanks to a super VIP client that has taken over the entire hotel and our Villa Pliniana. I was recently asked if guests staying at our hotel are any different today than in years past. After some careful thought and reflection, I was happy to share that almost all of our guests in the past few weeks seemed grateful to be able to travel again, appreciative of the simplest things, like the beauty surrounding our hotel, savoring the magical views with no attention to time, enjoying the interaction with our staff and really just expressing happiness to be in the moment. For me, knowing that in a couple more weeks there will be a big wave of eager travelers heading this way is the best part of

being here right now—and being able to still enjoy the not-so-crowded shops, restaurants, and streets. Everything is open, including stores, restaurants, etc. and it's still easy to dine out without a reservation. That will change soon enough.

This summer, I look forward to spending more downtime in Como and surrounding areas, as I have taken up a passion for biking and hiking. I plan to spend a couple weekends in Sardinia as well, one of my favorite places in Italy. A couple of years ago, I drove to Alba in pursuit of white truffles. It was a great experience, so I will plan to do the same this year in October. Last summer, I visited Matera and absolutely loved it! There were very few tourists there at the time, the experience was unforgettable. Isola di Ponza is also another favorite of mine. When I was there last, it was a real gem of a destination with the bluest water in the Mediterranean. I am also hoping to spend more time in Milan this year. The city has evolved in the past several years as one of the hottest destinations for the arts, cuisine, fashion, design and so much more to discover. This summer, I think people should expect the warmest welcome ever. Italians are eager to welcome visitors more now than ever before.”

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- Indagare on June 16, 2021

