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Press Release April 19, 2007

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The Tours They Are A Changin' - When Less Is More

The current vacation travel trend is moving away from touring by large motor coach towards more personalized, small groups, including more cultural interaction and greater educational stimulation.

/24-7PressRelease/ - PHOENIX, AZ, April 19, 2007 - Villa Vita International, a tour company devoted to small group tours to Tuscany, Italy, has noticed a pronounced trend away from touring with large groups on 45-seat motor coaches and staying in international hotels, towards more personalized tours that add an element of romance and cultural interaction with the surrounding area.

Although the allure of exploring those out-of-the-way secret spots is a strong draw to many travelers, fear of the unknown that might accompany the small "rustic and charming" accommodations encountered, or having to navigate the winding back roads of a foreign country alone, can sometimes offer more adventure than desired and inhibit many travelers from taking the plunge. Recently, however, tour companies have begun to offer small, highly personalized tours blending the security of a managed tour with exposure to those secret spots - the countryside villas and luxury B & B's that provide ideal tours for first time visitors and returning visitors alike.

For example, any visit to Tuscany should include a tour of Siena and San Gimignano, two places always on those "must-see-before-you-die" lists. But to fully immerse oneself in such an adventure, unique experiences such as cooking classes with local professional chefs, and Chianti vineyard tours guided by the vineyard family members themselves, can offer a much more intimate glimpse into the heart of this quintessential wine region. It is just such experiences that form the core of tours conducted by companies like Villa Vita International.

Operators responded to the changing market with a feast of experimentation, producing a wide variety of new kinds of tour products. As a result, "the tour product has changed dramatically," said Bob Whitley, president of the U.S. Tour Operators Association. "Today's tours have more leisure time, more independence, more 'sight-doing' as opposed to sightseeing, more soft adventure. They are designed for more sophisticated travelers."

Villa Vita's founder Gina Ruggiero says: "Accommodations that our clients prefer offer both the rustic charm of the Tuscan countryside and the modern conveniences of private baths and fine furnishings that raise the standard of the experience to another level". Gina created the company after years of specializing in customized travel to Italy, in response to many of her clients' desires for a more intimate vacation. Group sizes are typically 8 - 12 guests and are accompanied by American hosts who work together with local guides to help bridge the language barrier and provide an ideal introduction to the area. Such arrangements add insight to the many fascinating places off the beaten path, while keeping the American standard of comfort in mind. "Most importantly" she emphasized, "ample time is set aside to simply relax, and enjoy la dolce vita."

Villa Vita International also assists with putting together programs for special interest groups, health and wellness retreats, corporate retreats, and family reunions tailoring

Villa Vita International Logo

Logo for Release

Lion over Tuscany

Image for Release

Cypress Tree Lined Road

Cypress Tree Lined Road in Tuscany

the tours and itinerary to fit the needs and desires of the group. Gina personally escorts all pre-scheduled departures.

Villa Vita Inc. d.b.a. Villa Vita International is a service focused tour operator specializing in villa-based tours to Italy for individuals and small groups. Tours can be booked directly or through travel agents. For further information, please call (866)590-8181 or visit [\[url\]](http://www.villavita.net).

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