



Costa Cruises And “I Borghi Più Belli d'Italia” Together To Promote The Heritage Of Secret Italy

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International guests arriving in Italian ports on board Costa ships will have the chance to discover ten small towns of great artistic and cultural interest

Rome, 26 October 2017 - The sustainability, promotion and accessibility of the cultural and regional heritage of "secret" Italy are the principles that underpin the new partnership launched between [Costa Cruises](#) and [Associazione de I Borghi più belli d'Italia](#), which was presented today at the head offices of the National Tourism Agency in Rome.

With the initiative **"The Towns, a heritage to discover and promote"**, the Italian cruise company and the association that showcases small yet fascinating Italian towns intend to promote as-yet unexplored Italian artistic and cultural heritage of great value and interest to a broad international public. **In fact, ten of the most stunning small towns will become the destinations** of new excursions proposed to passengers arriving in Italian ports on Costa ships.

The project is in line with the **2017-2021 Strategic Tourism Plan** drawn up by the **Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism** whose guiding principles are sustainability, innovation and accessibility and which has dedicated 2017 to the promotion of Italian towns. To this end, the excursions to the towns will take the form of walking tours with the active involvement of the local communities, and will seek to propose truly unique alternative tourist itineraries that can contribute to making these precious locations part of Italy's tourism industry.

The ten Towns forming part of the programme (nine of which belong to the Association) were selected on the basis of their proximity to Costa ports, their accessibility and ability to host visitors, and the uniqueness of the tourist experience: **Seborga** and **Montemarcello** in Liguria; **Arquà Petrarca** in Veneto; **Orvieto** in Umbria; **Civita di Bagnoregio** in Lazio; **Locorotondo** in Puglia; **Castiglione di Sicilia**, **Montalbano Elicona** and **Salemi** in Sicily; **Atrani** in Campania.

The new programme of excursions involves transfers by bus from the port at which the Costa ship is docked to the town, with the assistance of the company's onboard staff. Local reps will welcome passengers and provide support during the activities to discover the site. The walking tours of the towns, planned with the local councils, will focus on introducing visitors to the finest local artistic heritage and panoramas. Passengers will be accompanied by local guides who will tell them about local history and traditions, promoting the local craft activities and cuisine.

The first excursions will be organised in mid-November during stops in Savona, Civitavecchia, Palermo, Venice, Bari and Messina by Costa Diadema, Costa Luminosa and Costa Deliziosa. The new tours will be promoted, both in Italy and abroad, via all of the company's communication channels and also directly on board the ships, thus guaranteeing the international visibility of the ten Italian towns.

"It is a great opportunity for our towns to show off their beauty to an international audience" - comments Fiorello Primi, Chairman of I Borghi più belli d'Italia - "to tell them about their history and traditions, and to reveal the art of "good living" and the most authentic Italian ways of life that they embody".

"This project has a truly innovative vision and fits with our strategy of contributing to the long-term sustainable development of the Italian regions. The itineraries for the visits to the towns were planned together with the local councils, which were very happy to receive our passengers. For Costa the initiative marries perfectly with our mission to act as global ambassadors for Italy's finest. The guests that arrive in Italy aboard our ships come from around 100 different countries: we give them the chance to enjoy a truly authentic, absorbing and wonderful experience that they will remember forever and that will make their cruise holiday even more special. An integral part of this project is the promotion of our towns, to which we will guarantee a continuous flow of visitors on a yearly basis. In fact, the tours will also be organised during the week and during the low season – explains Neil Palomba, President of Costa Cruises.

"The virtuous partnership between Costa Cruises and the [I Borghi più belli d'Italia](#) association is in line with the Italian tourism governance approach envisioned by the 2017-2022 Strategic Tourism Plan. A document shared with Italian Ministries, Regions, ANCI (Italian Municipalities Association), trade unions and trade associations that has identified the goals for re-establishing our world leadership in a sector that today in Italy is worth € 171 billion, the equivalent of 11.8% of the GDP and 12.8% of employment", remarked Cultural Heritage and Tourism Undersecretary, Antimo Cesaro. "The tourism that we envisage – he continued - is innovative, sustainable, widespread and suitably promoted, and engages all of the stakeholders involved, both public and private. This specific initiative seals the success of our "Anno dei Borghi" (Year of the Towns), with a +74% increase in presences recorded in rural areas, and lays the foundations for the years to come. Italy is full of Towns of incredible beauty but unfortunately many are suffering from the worrying phenomenon of depopulation, particularly among the younger age groups. With projects like this - concluded Cesaro - we will be able not only to ease crowding in the big tourist cities by offering Italian and international visitors unforgettable experiences based on culture, relaxation and cuisine; we will also contribute to kick-starting the economy of small towns and creating job opportunities".

For additional details:

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