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Travel: Top Bolgheri wineries to visit

Helen Farrell

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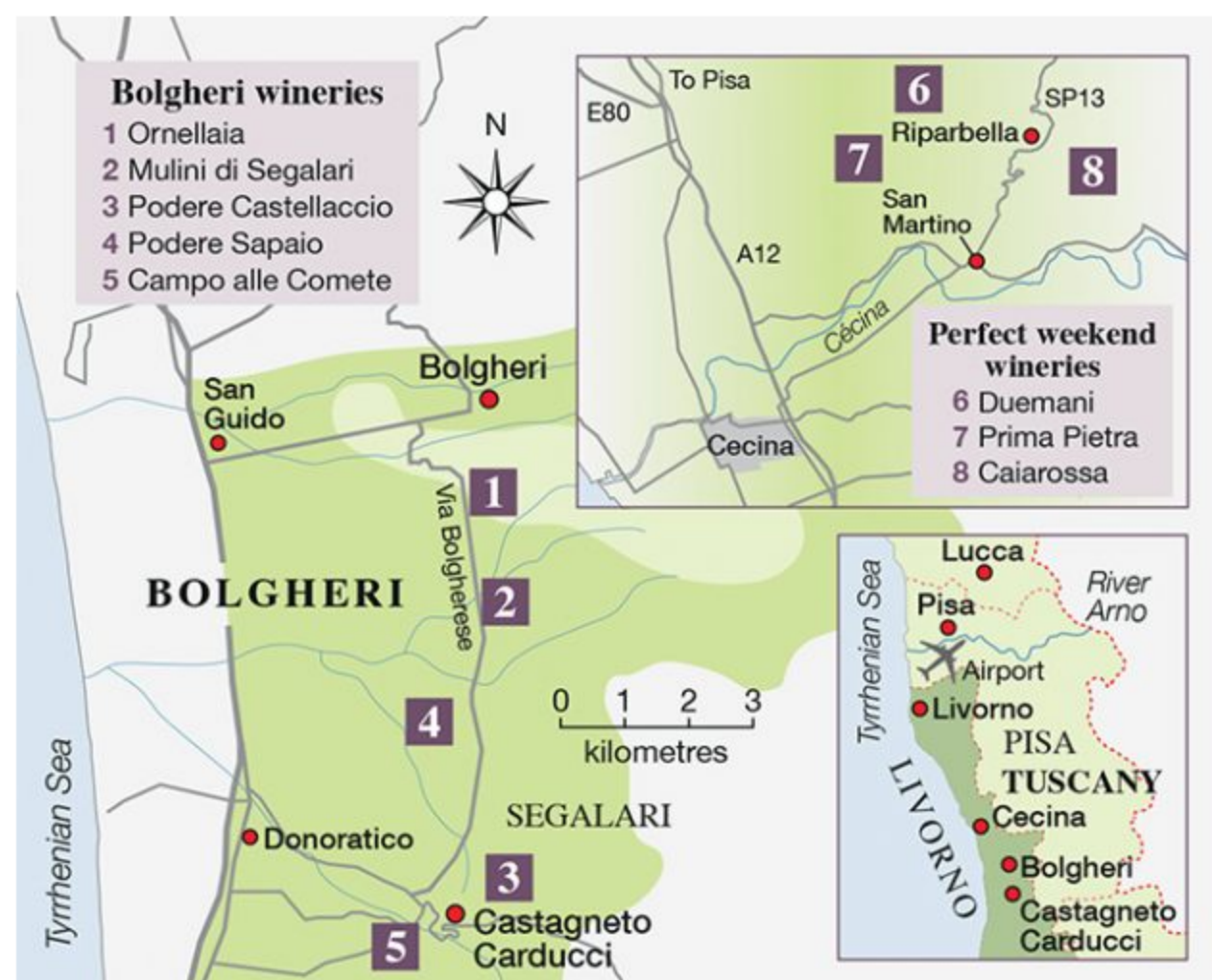
Helen Farrell picks her top Bolgheri wineries to visit...


Caiarossa vineyards.

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Travel: Top Bolgheri wineries to visit

*Getting there: Fly to Pisa and then the driving time to Bolgheri is about one hour. **Book flights from London to to Pisa with British Airways.***



Wineries to visit and where to find them. Credit: Maggie Nelson / Decanter.

Ornellaia

One of the quintessential 'aias', **Ornellaia**, five minutes from Bolgheri by car, stretches at the northern end of the winery lined Via Bolgherese.

Reserve your appointment months in advance to be buzzed through the hallowed gate and down the long driveway flanked with verdant vines.

Either side of the sunken cantina entrance you will see a site-specific artwork: Cairo-born

Ghada Amer’s Happily Ever After iron and jasmine garden installation, and Japanese artist Yutaka Sone’s Carrara-inspired marble statue.

The artistic highlight of the cellar tour is Rebecca Horn’s ever-moving sculpture in the barricaia, instilling subtle energy to the precious liquor resting in the French oak barrels. The visit ends with a tasting of Ornellaia’s elegant wines, from the approachable Le Volte dell’ Ornellaia to the terroir-driven cuvée Ornellaia to the terroir-driven cuvée Ornellaia.



The Happily Ever After Garden installation at Ornellaia.

Mulini di Segalari

Continue along the Via Bolgherese in the direction of Castagneto Carducci, and take a left onto the Traversa di Lamentano. Even the most experienced wine adventurer is advised to pull over upon reaching the Serni olive oil mill and give Marina Tinacci Mannelli a call.

Down a steep hill and across a ford, her estate, **Mulini di Segalari** has to be seen to be believed. Planted every which way with vines, vibrant even post-harvest, this is a thriving valley of sustainability.

Following Tinacci around the former mill site is an education as the winemaker excitedly points out her just planted Sauvignon Gris, hands you Vermentino grapes to taste and chats about plans to welcome visitors for organic healthy lunches and ‘winemaker for a day’ experiences.

Step into the minuscule cellar where all the bottling and labelling is still done by hand.

Wines include 10,000 bottles of sea-breezy 100% Sangiovese Soloterra, and an expressive Vermentino and Manzoni Bianco white blend called Un po’ più su del Mare, as well as more typical Bolgheri blends.



Mulini di Segalari

Podere Castellaccio

Still in the Segalari area, but up on the hill and a cork’s throw from the hilltop town of Castagneto Carducci, **Podere Castellaccio** has some of the oldest vines and most mesmerising views in Bolgheri.

The 18ha estate has just 3.5ha under vine, organic Ciliegiole, Foglia Tonda, Pugnitello and Sangiovese, plus a Cabernet Franc parcel as a concession to Bolgheri’s contemporary scene. Alessandro Scappini is boldly staying true to his grandfather’s native vineyards.

A dreamy place to holiday, the estate boasts six beautifully appointed suites and verdant views as far as the Mediterranean. Light pours in through the floor-to-ceiling window in the new tasting room, where cured meats and cheeses are served as an accompaniment to the

new tasting room, where cured meats and cheeses are served as an accompaniment to the elegant Dinostro, an approachable 100% Sangiovese; Valénte, an opulent, fruit-forward native grape blend; and the fascinating Somatico, a punchy pure Pugnitello.

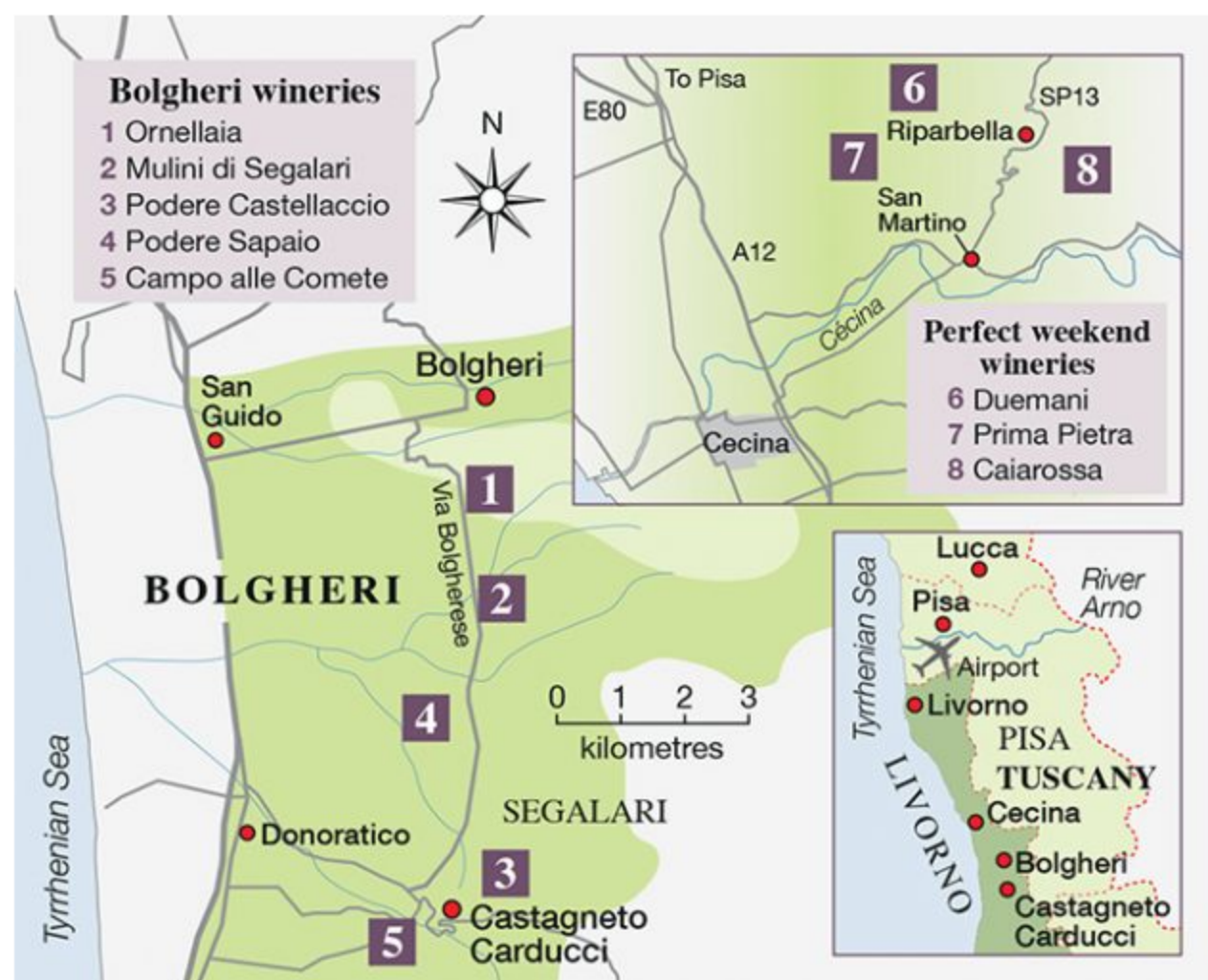
Arrive here an hour before sunset and watch the Tuscan tramonto at its most seductive.

Podere Sapaio

Back down on the Bolgheri plain, organically certified **Podere Sapaio** has been shaping a cult following with its crown emblazoned labels since 1999. Start your visit at the unassuming enoteca and spacious modern cellars through the winery's signature red gate off the main road in Donoratico.

Veneto-born Massimo Piccin explains his ethos of emphasising the land, vinifying and ageing each variety and parcel of vineyard separately and blending before returning the Sapaio Bolgheri DOC Superiore to the barrique for a final four or five months.

The €30 tour continues around the vineyards planted with Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Petit Verdot before heading down the bucolic back lanes of Bolgheri to the (again) red-gated Podere. Enjoy a tasting of the terroir-driven Sapaio and Volpola Bolgheri DOC in the stylish contemporary interior, or outdoors on the breezy patio gazing at the vines, a single fortress topping the distant hills beyond.



Campo alle Comete

Also on the flat, now under development but already open to visitors, **Campo alle Comete** is southern Italian standard-bearer Feudi di San Gregorio's 2016 Bolgheri investment.

Previously owned by Guicciardini Strozzi, the circular cellar emanates a space-like atmosphere, standing like an observatory with its weathered steel finish, well signposted with sky-blue totems off the Via Bolgherese.

The barrique cellar carries on the astral theme, the ceiling scattered with tiny star-like lights, while the wine shop's modern, bottle-lined walls give an introduction to the ambitious Campo alle Comete project: 15ha of international varieties, half of which is Merlot, with immediate plans to double the planted area.



The circular cellar at Campo alle Comete.

Dueamani

Climb up into the hills through the town of Riparbella to biodynamic boutique winery **Dueamani**. Be swept away by the expanse of Cabernet Franc while sipping fine yet fresh wines in the just-opened airy tasting room.

Prima Pietra winery

Feel the sea breeze caress your face at the highest vineyard along the Tuscan coast with magical views of the Mediterranean on the horizon. This single, sweeping, verdant vineyard stretches below the **Prima Pietra winery**, owned by Massimo Ferragamo, son of the famous shoe designer. A refined tasting room on the first floor of the farmhouse is set to open in summer 2018.

Caiarossa

Another expanse of greenery awaits at **Caiarossa**. The brick-red painted winery demands your attention on arrival and continues to captivate on the inside with the vertical, gravity-driven cellar built to feng shui principles. Find out about the producer’s biodynamic winemaking on a cellar tour with the young international team before tasting the cantina’s vivacious namesake wine, a seven-varietal blend.

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