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Eating and Sleeping Along the Strada del Prosecco

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Although you could complete the 31-mile Strada del Prosecco in Italy's Veneto region in less than a day, it's more pleasant to take your time and draw out the experience. You can't eat your way through Veneto's pleasures – gustatory and otherwise – in 24 hours, and who would want to?



STUNNING VISTA OF PARADISE FOR A PROSECCO LOVER

TRAVELING THE STRADA DEL PROSECCO

There are opportunities to hike, bike, horseback ride, golf, cave explore, museum-browse, shop, and café-idle in between meals, in addition to the obvious visits to area wineries. You have a choice of 50 restaurants, 35 *trattorie*, and 25 *osterie* (taverns). Overnight options include 22 hotels from one to five stars, 80 agri-tourism lodgings, and 65 B & Bs, all concentrated in and around Conegliano and Valdobbiadene.

On a recent visit I stayed at three different lodgings: an in-town hotel appropriate for business as well as leisure visitors; an agri-tourism converted farmhouse; and a family-owned five-star boutique inn.

The [Hotel Canon d'Oro](#) is located on a main street of Conegliano. The 16th century converted pawnshop is right across the street from Palazzo Sarcinelli, an equally-old building that is one of the town's major exhibition centers. The location is perfect for in-town browsing and for attending the annual Castellana Dama, the life-size checkers game "played" every June with celebrities, costumes, and pageantry.



OUTSIDE VIEW OF THE HOTEL CANON D'ORO AND ITS RESTAURANT INCONTRADA

Back when it was a pawnshop, the Canon d'Oro was owned by the Confraternità dei Battuti, a group of town merchants who met regularly to do good deeds and to beat themselves. The grand hall where they gathered is also nearby, and can be visited upon prior arrangement.

The hotel has 46 rooms ranging from about 160 square feet for the smallest room to 485 square feet for the largest junior suite. Furnishings are lackluster but each room is different, given the structure's history. All have en suite bathrooms with tub or shower, (the latter with so many settings that an instruction card would be helpful), Wi-Fi, safes, TVs and phones. Service is briskly efficient, as you would expect from a hotel with a large business traveler clientele.



INTERIOR OF THE INCONTRADA RESTAURANT AT HOTEL CANON D'ORO

Breakfast is lifted from the prosaic with the addition of aceto balsamico, peanut butter, a large selection of pastries, and a table with labeled specialties such as local Prosecco, the Venetian bread cioppa, and an almond sweet called sbrisolona, originally from Mantova.

The dining room of the Canon d'Oro, Incontrada, is bland in appearance but assertive in gastronomy; the kitchen does credit to regional culinary traditions. A recent dinner began with scallops on squares of turnip with bacon – a strange combination that looked and tasted fine. The *primo* was crespelle (crepes) with scampi and asparagus. The *secondo* was *scorfano con patate e fagioli* (redfish with potatoes and beans). Dessert was a sophisticated version of strawberry shortcake: an edible shortbread "dish" of gelato *alla panna* with strawberries and strawberry *coulis* on top.



ROCKFISH WITH POTATOES AND VERY GREEN GREENS AT THE INCONTRADA RESTAURANT

From city mouse to country mouse is the contrast between Canon d'Oro and [Agriturismo Althéa](#), a five-bedroom agri-tourism facility located near Vittorio Veneto. An ancient farmhouse was renovated by the vine-producing Drusian family eight years ago, originally to accommodate visitors to the vineyards. But the location proved so popular that the rooms were opened to non-business guests as well.



THE RESTORED FARMHOUSE THAT HAS BECOME ALTHÉA B & B RETAINS ITS ORIGINAL “LOOK”

The furniture and style are rustic — no rugs, no frills, no frigo-bar, no bath accessories except liquid soap, no wake-up service. But there are enough plugs and outlets for modern technology, desk, night table, wardrobe with good hangers, firm mattress, and a large plasma TV. No hair dryer in the room but, if you ask for one, it will be provided. Most of the guests (German, Austrian, French, and Italian) are here to travel the Strada del Prosecco. There are almost no Americans.



RUSTIQUE WITH KITSCH AT THE ALTHÉA AGRI-TOURISM B & B NEAR VITTORIO VENETO

Breakfast is simple and rustic, befitting the atmosphere. A continental breakfast outside among the vineyards provides a perfect setting for grape groupies. From Thursday through Sunday, guests can book dinner at Althéa, with simple menus exulting the various vines of the Drusian label. Think hand-made ravioli, farm-produced salami, spit-roasted meats, farm-grown vegetables, almond cakes, and hazelnut pies. Our meal included in-season asparagus, potato puffs, grilled chicken, and a stew of local vegetables and olives.



SPECTACULAR MORNING VIEW AT THE ALTHÉA AGRI-TOURISM B & B NEAR VITTORIO VENETO

The polar opposite of homespun Althéa Hotel is [Villa Abbazia](#), a sophisticated Relais et Chateaux in the history-rich town of Follina, famous for textiles as well as wine. In 1990, the Zanon di Marchi family converted a residence dating from the 18th century into a boutique hotel with 12 rooms. All are exuberantly decorated in over-the-top Laura Ashley on steroids.



NOT AN ARTIFICIAL FLOWER IN SIGHT AT THE HOTEL VILLA ABBAZIA IN FOLLINA

The palazzo next door supplements this offer with a few large suites, equally lush in design and favored by visiting VIPs. Architectural minimalists need not apply, but if you appreciate excess expressed with refinement and lacquered with service, you will be in *House & Garden* heaven.



NOTHING PROSAIC ABOUT THE SITTING AREA OF THE HOTEL VILLA ABBAZIA IN FOLLINA

Choice is everywhere: 100 kinds of tea in the tearoom. More multi-lingual TV channels than you could watch in a month. Breakfast with more cakes than you will find in a local bakery, plus the best cappuccino of my entire stay. Two members of the Zanon family preside over La Corte, the Michelin-starred restaurant where elegant décor jostles for attention with the beautifully-presented food all to make your life comfortable as you travel along the Strada del Prosecco.



A FLORAL ROOM AT THE FIVE-STAR HOTEL VILLA ABBAZIA IN FOLLINA

The only drawback (aside the orange juice: why was it not fresh?) is that you may not want to leave. Overcome your inertia with the lure of hundreds of wineries and eateries close by, not to mention the unfolding panorama of UNESCO-nominated scenery.

Written by and photos by Claudia Flisi for EuropeUpClose.com