

Fall 2021



## MILAN

By September 2021, Europe was calling me. I love crossing the pond this time of year, when the summer madness has passed. The weather is still great and the hotspots a lot less crowded. I always like to combine business and pleasure.



So **Salon del Mobile**, the renowned Milan furniture fair was my first stop. **Excellence Luxury Magazine** which I write for was having an event during the fair so that was my starting point. My Italian friend, **Stefania** kindly picked me up at **Malpensa airport** and hosted me in her lovely Milan apartment with an oversized terrace. I took long walks all around Milan jumping in and out of furniture



showrooms and admiring the magnificent sights like the **Duomo**. A few standouts during **Milan Design Week** in the **Durini Design District** included showrooms for **Edro** housed in an old palazzo and **Versace** with its bold colors and designs. The food is always superb in Milan, and aperitivo time is a must to sip Aperol Spritz and nibble on all the tasty complimentary bites. Mini pizzas anyone?

Versace Milan furniture showroom video:

<https://vimeo.com/647064575>

Duomo Milan: <https://vimeo.com/649718055>



# Milano Durini Design



Shopping is of course a national pastime for tourists in Milan. I did a record-breaking shopping spree at one of my favorite Italian chains, **Twin Set**, just as they were closing the doors. Never too late to shop! Thank goodness the designer stores along **Montenapoleone** were closed by the time we strolled there. We stopped by the **Bulgari Hotel** for a quick tour and a bite. My host, Stefania took me to her favorite trendy restaurant for Saturday night out, **Parioli Milano**. I think I ate more focaccia than ever in Italy, but when it's homemade Italian carbs who can refuse?

Electric scooters seemed to have invaded the streets of Milan. I went to the **Milano Centrale Train Station**, to move to my next stop, Tuscany. Trains are great in Europe, unless you are a fashionista like me who doesn't know how to pack light. And my suitcases seemed to get heavier with each new stop I made. Porters are just not a thing, like in America. Here you have to fend for yourself.



## TUSCANY

I had always wanted to go to Tuscany. Now, was finally my time. I was invited to a very unique place, **Toscana Resort Castelfalfi**. It's actually a 1,000 year-old ancient settlement turned into a 2,700 nature estate consisting of protected terrain replete with vineyards, olive groves, lakes and a wildlife reserve. There are a myriad of wonderful activities to partake in at the resort and surrounding areas from golfing, hiking, biking, horseback riding, wine tasting and relaxing while watching the Tuscan sun rise, shine or set over the rolling countryside. But the main event is of course, the culinary food and locally grown organic wines. For good measure, throw in truffle-hunting to find a few of the prized possessions and take a cooking class to try to replicate the orgasmic dishes at home to make your Tuscan holiday complete.



I swam my daily laps in the nice big resort pool and made sure to save time to gaze endlessly out over the panoramic countryside sitting on one of the perfectly positioned bean bag chairs. I took a walk through the ancient village and checked out the 15th-century castle that now houses **La Rocca Di Castelfalfi** restaurant that offers an amazing tasting menu. I dined my first night at **Il Rosmarino**, a rustic traditional trattoria serving the best of Tuscany's cuisine including pizza from the wood-fire oven with shaved truffles sourced from the estate. I couldn't decide what to order so the chef gave me a little bit of everything to taste and the same for the wines. Needless to say, I exited a bit fatter and happier and met a few fellow diners.

The next day, I got a tour of the estate which included the brand-new Golf Club Castelfalfi Country Clubhouse, a perfect place to relax and grab a bite before or after doing your



Castelfalfi video:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EVDsz\\_C2XGM&t=3s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EVDsz_C2XGM&t=3s)

Castelfalfi Drone tour:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bFB2XhRVLqA>

18 or 9-hole course of choice. We continued our tour to the estate's 25-hectares of vineyards that produce 10 different varieties including **Sangiovese**, the "oenological king" of Tuscany, all complying with organic procedures. The main reds of the region include **Chianti**, **Brunello di Montalcino** and **Nobile di Montepulciano**, all produced from Sangiovese varieties. The resort began a cool program in 2019 called "**Be a Farmer in Castelfalfi**" which allows individuals to adopt a row of vines or an olive grove giving the 'virtual farmer' an opportunity to enjoy the production and participate personally in the agricultural life of Castelfalfi. What a great idea!



My day was not yet complete as I was booked for my very first ever truffle hunting excursion. It was not at all what I was expecting. This muscular, tattooed Italian guy greets us with two cute dogs. One of the dogs is the hunter and the other digs up the treasures. I learned it's a family tradition passed on from one generation to the next. Finding the truffles is a mystery that only the truffle hunter and his dogs know how to do. Afterward, I checked out the unique cave art installations under the castle and several sculptures spread out around the estate. My favorite was "**The Circle of Life**", *The embraced male and female figures creating a bridge between the earth, where the olive tree grows, and the vault of heaven*. Castelfalfi takes their art seriously. They even have a gallery exhibition in the lower lobby and more sculptures around the main hotel.



Castelfalfi Resort truffle-hunting video:

<https://vimeo.com/647066459>

Castelfalfi Resort sculpture video: <https://vimeo.com/647065175>



Castelfalfi Sommelier Wine video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NwEXoOC8v7I>

Castelfalfi Resort, Tuscany vineyard video:

<https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/647065913>

Castelfalfi Resort, Tuscany Adopt a Vineyard program video:

<https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/647066086>





My last meal was dining al fresco at **La Via Del Sale** overlooking the magnificent Tuscan countryside while enjoying every bite of my gourmet meal and more Castelfalfi wines. I retired to my room and dreamed of coming back again soon to truly live life under the Tuscan sun. Now I personally know why **Toscana Resort Castelfalfi** won the “**Best Wine Resort**” at the **World Luxury Hotel Awards**.

Castelfalfi Resort La Via del Sale wine dinner video:

<https://vimeo.com/647066703>

I must say, Toscana Resort Castelfalfi is probably one of the most eco-conscious resorts caring completely about sustainability to its core. Almost everything is organic and sustainable here. And the best part is you can even choose to live here in one of the newly renovated farmhouses called fincas with pools and the most amazing views. They are available for sale while some apartments are for rent. Why only dream when Castelfalfi can become your reality.

Contact me if interested in **Castelfalfi Real Estate**

## Florence

Castelfalfi is close to Florence, so I decided to do an overnight there at the **Grand Hotel Baglioni** to have a reunion with a friend whom I originally met in **Punta del Este**. The 100-year old Baglioni in the heart of Florence is housed in a 19th-century building. I booked last minute and to my delight, got upgraded to a



suite with stained-glass windows. I ventured to the rooftop bar/restaurant and what a view! The tiered seating offers intimate nooks all with grand views of this spectacular city. Prosecco, please! My friend, **Sandy** arrived and we had a few cheers. We always catch up with each other in the coolest places from **St. Tropez** to the **Monaco Grand Prix**, **Milan**, **Rimini** and now **Florence**. The next day I took myself on a walking tour and took photos and videos at all the obligatory tourist spots like the Duomo, Santa Maria Novella, Michelangelo’s statue of David and crossed the Arno River onto the Ponte Vecchio bridge lined with gold jewelers galore. I made a quick stop in my favorite shop, **Luisa Via Roma**, but escaped unscathed without any packages under my arm. I admit, I did buy myself a pretty silk scarf from a street vendor along the Arno. I hopped on the train from Florence to Milan to get in position for my next stop, Switzerland.



Grand Hotel Baglioni rooftop video: <https://vimeo.com/649715601>

Prosecco First sip video: <https://vimeo.com/649715823>

Duomo Florence video: <https://vimeo.com/649715417>

## LAUSANNE

Traveling by train in Europe is scenic and Switzerland, especially so. My journey from Milan to **Lausanne** was about 4 hours. No one ever asked for my passport let alone my vaccine card. While disembarking upon arrival to Lausanne, a handsome Italian man wearing a beautifully tailored suit, came to my rescue and helped me with my luggage all the way to a taxi. Chivalry is certainly not dead here. I only wish I had gotten his phone number. My fleeting moment of flirtation was gone



in a flash. He went his way and I went my way. Within moments, I was at the grand entrance to the **Beau-Rivage Palace Lausanne Hotel**, a **Leading Hotel of the World** overlooking Lake Geneva and the majestic Alps beyond. It is considered one of the best hotels in Europe and now I can happily vouch for that accolade. It first opened its doors in 1861 and has never looked back. The hotel's 4-hectare gardens and splendid terrace offer an oasis of calm with the city center just minutes away. After checking out my room with a view, I took a stroll along the lake. Then I ventured through the hotel's expansive and beautiful gardens checking out the pool and spa along the way and spotted a dog grave for beloved furry



friends. I couldn't help but notice the hotel's spectacular chandeliers and muraled ceilings accented with cupids. The hotel is home to a **Michelin** restaurant, **Anne-Sophie Pic**, and the best Japanese spot in town called **Miyako Lausanne**. That's where I met my client, **Cris** for dinner, trying out the sake and a few dishes.

Beau-Rivage Hotel video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GeJVryzslQo>

Beau-Rivage Palace Hotel detox ice room video:

<https://vimeo.com/647068584>

Beau-Rivage Palace Hotel garden video: <https://vimeo.com/647068715>

Beau-Rivage Palace Hotel dog cemetery video:

<https://vimeo.com/649714941>

Lake Geneva swans video: <https://vimeo.com/649715124>

Lake Geneva Swiss flag video: <https://vimeo.com/649715326>



### Day Trip to Jungfrauoch in Grindelwald

The purpose of my trip to Lausanne was to go visit my client’s secret spot where they age their new product, “3454” flavored balsamic vinegar, inside the glaciers. This adventurous destination can be reached by helicopter or gondola followed by the highest train ride to the ‘**Top of Europe**’, to **Jungfrauoch** on **Eiger Mountain**. We drove through the hills that seemed alive with the “sound of music”, at least til we hit a literal roadblock of cows crossing, and then it was the sound of cowbells ringing in our ears. How perfectly Swiss is that?

Swiss Cows video: <https://vimeo.com/649718155>

Swiss chalets video: <https://vimeo.com/647069686>

*“The journey to Jungfrauoch is the kind of once-in-a-lifetime experience you’ll only encounter in the Alps. From Grindelwald Grund you can catch the train from Kleine Scheidegg and change there for the highest railway in the world. Before long you’ll be at a the Jungfrauoch saddle, 3,454 metres up. One of many incredible things about this location is that the railway was completed all the way back in 1912. At the penultimate stop there are windows into the interior of the Aletsch Glacier. After that you’ll be in “The Top of Europe”, marveling at the glacier and the 4,000 metre peaks around it like Mönch and Jungfrau. Go even higher to the Sphinx Observatory for 360° views as far as the Vosges in France, or enter the frozen wonderland of the glacier at the Ice Palace.”*

“Top of Europe” gondola ride video: <https://vimeo.com/647069789>

Eigenhorn glaciers video: <https://vimeo.com/647070532>



I did all of the above, plus a private balsamic tasting inside the glacier in my client’s very own secret “showroom” full of their aging barrels of balsamic vinegar. First, I

noticed the amazing aroma, then came the orgasmic tasting of this out-of-this-world fruit-flavored fermented balsamic sitting in oak barrels inside the glacier for 5 to 10 years. Wowza! What a taste indeed! And what a unique product concept from start to finish. The premium product is flavored with apples. It is named “**3454 Beyond Balsamico**” because it is aged at 3454 meters up (11,332 feet) inside the glacier. The secondary collection has a variety of flavors from raspberry to blackberry, blueberry, pear and more and is named “**Mountain Essence**”.



Who says the Swiss can’t one-up the Italians when it comes to balsamic. It’s really a flash of genius by a Swiss entrepreneur hedge-funder turned foodie. It’s at this elevation that the product becomes a work of art. And these balsamic barrels are being sold just like works of art in limited edition numbered barrels to investors who are guaranteed a great return and/or a great balsamic beyond all others. “3454 Beyond Balsamico” has partnered with one of the very best chefs in the world, **Franck Giovannini**, who runs the **3 Michelin star, Restaurant de l’Hotel de Ville**, in **Crissier, Switzerland**. Chef Giovannini has created a custom menu for “3454 Beyond Balsamico”. Stay tuned for the premier launch during **Miami Beach Wine & Food Festival** when I will be hosting “3454 Beyond Balsamico” private dinners for a select group of VIPS.

‘3453 Beyond Balsamico’ private glacier tasting showroom video: <https://vimeo.com/647069962>

‘3454 Beyond Balsamico’ private glacier tasting & toasting video: <https://vimeo.com/647070207>

Eigenhorn mountain parachuting video: <https://vimeo.com/647070362>

## MONACO

Next up on my European itinerary, was the **Monaco Yacht Show**. After a 1-year hiatus due to Covid, **Port Hercules** was once again packed like sardines with megayachts and gigayachts. It was a much more sober week with barely any hospitality aboard these floating mansions or inside the fabulous **Yacht Club de Monaco**.



It was nice to see and be seen, albeit without clinking glasses of champagne. The show standout was **Artefact by Nobiskrug** German shipyard with the perfect tagline, “**German Superyachts for the 22nd Century**”. This artsy fartsy spaceship-like gigayacht had the wow factor curb appeal with curved cut windows and an otherworldly façade. **Tatiana** by Turkish shipyard, **Bilgin** was another beauty with attention to design details like no other including lots of texture, color and incredible finishes plus a beach club leading up to the salon with a dramatically lit staircase. **Wally** had a world-premier of their **WHY 200**, first full wide-body superyacht designed by founder, **Luca Bassani**. I had met Luca years ago before Wally was a known brand name in the yachting industry, back at the **Maxi Yacht Rolex Cup** sailing race in Sardinia. He invited me to watch the race on his first **Wallypower Tender**



and join him for drinks apres race on his Wally superyacht. So two decades later, we crossed paths again...both just a tad bit older, but wiser. For those of us commoners, not invited to **Prince Albert's Save the Planet charity gala**, except for **Sharon Stone**, **Belair Fine Arts Monte-Carlo** in the **Fairmont Hotel** picked up the slack. The gallery hosted nightly bashes flowing with French champagne, homemade Italian pasta and gourmet chocolates, all worth the calories. Party people still managed to mix and mingle during the yacht show at popular spots like **American Bar** in Hotel d'Paris, **Buddha Bar**, **Sass Café**, **Twiga** and **Jimmy'z** for dancing and drinking the night away under the stars in **Monte-Carlo**.



Monaco Yacht Show video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w8zUPMIRryU>

MY/Artefact Superyacht by Nobiskrug video:

<https://vimeo.com/647070677>

Camper & Nicholsons tender to MY/Elements Superyacht video:

<https://vimeo.com/647070905>

Camper & Nicholsons tender from MY/Elements Superyacht video:

<https://vimeo.com/647070975>



### ST. TROPEZ

**Les Voiles de Saint Tropez**, a sailing regatta, takes over the social scene where the Monaco Yacht Show leaves off. After the final superyacht horn is blown at closing time, it's time to set sail to St. Tropez. Some of the world's most beautiful sailing yachts compete in a 2-week regatta in this trendy **Cote d'Azur** town. I took a day trip with my friend, Martina who was competing on **Tuiga**. I had a business meeting with the Principal of the **Panama** island development, **La Peregrina**. This project will have a superyacht marina designed by **Philippe Starck** and **Yoo Residences** as well as an **Aman Resort & Residences** by world-renowned architect, **Jean-Michel Gathy**. We are looking to raise funds for Phase 1 so I am all ears if anyone is interested. I will be the CMO (Chief Marketing Officer) when it kicks off the ground. After our 2 rose bottles-long meeting, we headed over to the colorful and fun restaurant, **L'Opera** for dinner outside while watching their lively show with singers, dancers and acrobatics.

La Peregrina, Panama Development Presentation:

<http://www.ehopeinternational.com/PanamaLaPeregrinaTeaser.pdf>

Minuty Rose video: <https://vimeo.com/647071083>

Cafe L'Opera show video: <https://vimeo.com/647071157>

Cafe L'Opera show singer & acrobatics video:  
<https://vimeo.com/647071335>

Cafe L'Opera show banana dancers video:  
<https://vimeo.com/647071660>

### MYKONOS

I chose **Mykonos** as my final destination in Europe for a relaxing week and another reunion with another friend I met years ago on a summer holiday on the beach there. Now my Dutch friend, **Didi** is married to an American she met that very same summer way back when. It has been decades since I've been back, and boy has Mykonos grown up. It's having its 15 minutes of fame now and has become the hotspot for



scenesters, jetsetters and celebrities alike to spend their summer face time. Now it is a super sexy jetset spot with slick and stylish expensive beach clubs. Years ago, it was more casual and bohemian with affordable Greek tavernas. I can live off Greek salad forever! Now it's fine dining and **Whispering Angel** or craft cocktails everywhere with DJ's blasting their music onto the once tranquil beaches. And you get the privilege of a beach lounge chair only if you can drop about 100 to 200+ euros just for the seat. I think I'd rather drink my lunch than

than get a tan for that price. I arrived September 25 for the tail-end of the booming season. The masses had departed and so had most of the megayachts. That was just fine for me, to rediscover the magical, mystical Greek Island created by the **Greek Gods** as a more peaceful place.

The very first time I went to Mykonos, I stayed by chance at **Cavo Tagoo**. It has been completely transformed into a scenester celebrity hotel I could barely recognize. This trip I opted for the second hotel I stayed at in the past, **Rochari**, conveniently located right in town. It's next to **Belvedere Hotel**, but for a fraction of the cost and just as fashionable, plus a far better panoramic view of Mykonos port and the sunsets. Rochari also had a complete facelift and is super stylish with very friendly staff and a hospitable owner. They serve up an amazing full breakfast buffet complete with an omelette and crepe chef to customize your order. Rochari has a new pool, bar, gym, spa and fashionable rooms many with great terraces.



They also have a Caravan shop on-premises with clothes to match the spirit. There is more mindfulness in the air here for those spiritual adventurers versus the heavy base beats at other places. Day 2 we checked out **Nammos**, but it wasn't really my scene. It was a bit too pretentious, full of designer brand name shops in their **Nammos Village** and show-offs on the beach with megayachts in the bay. We took a quick twirl, then moved onto a more chill spot called **Hippie Fish** at **Agios Ioannis** beach. Here we were greeted with a big fat Greek wedding. How fun! We made new friends over bottles of wine and a delish seafood dinner. We ended our beach tours on day 3 at **Principote** on **Panormos beach**. It's a sexy spot, but a bit too arrogant for my taste with unfriendly, unwelcoming staff. We quickly walked up the beach to a more inviting spot for lunch, **Kalosta Greek Taverna** where the owner welcomed us with open arms and a complimentary glass of wine. We met some Italians in good spirits and polished off more wine from our perch above the beach.

I wanted to reacclimate myself and discover the "**New Mykonos**" which is now beach club driven. So each day Didi and I set out to check out another beach club. Day 1 was **Paraga** where some things never change. We had a hearty Greek lunch at **Tsaso's Taverna** and low and behold, behind us was our long-lost friend **Mo (Mohammed, a Saudi Prince)** we had met that very first summer. After a bottle of wine, we walked up to **Scorpios** beach club and I fell in love. I had found 'my place' in this hippie chic venue with cool restaurants, a DJ with the best music and earthy cabanas to sunbathe while a big earthy "Goddess" watches over you. Scorpios is totally my vibe!

**Scorpios Beach Club DJ video:** <https://vimeo.com/647071797>

**Nammos Beach Club catch of the day video:**  
<https://vimeo.com/647071942>

**Hippie Fish Restaurant, swinging Hope video:**  
<https://vimeo.com/647072045>

**Principote Beach Club, Panormas Beach video:**  
<https://vimeo.com/647072085>

I absolutely love Mykonos town which is called **Chora**. It's a must to visit "**Little Venice**" here and watch the sunset while gazing over at the famous windmills of Mykonos. The maze-like streets here beg you to get lost along the way while shopping. And shopping I did. I discovered a new Greek designer whose style I loved. The shop name is **Sadh** and her name is **Eleftheria**, which is Greek for Freedom. So Hope met Freedom and we instantly became kindred spirits. In her shop, I also coincidentally met her best friend, **Elpida**, which means Hope so Hope met Hope in Mykonos. I bought a cool caftan, perfect for my Miami lifestyle. Eleftheria invited me to the season closing party that night at the new hotspot in town called **Noema**. I made a ton



of new friends and had a celebratory night making my send-off ever so sweet. There I met the new owner of Scorpios who invited me to their closing party the next night and my final farewell in Mykonos. It was Sunday, my last night and on my way home from buying a few more goodies, I came across a free show in the open-air **Greek Amphitheater** with the performers all in traditional costumes. What a farewell in true Mykonos style where the old merged with the new. I felt satisfied that I had come, reunited with old friends and conquered the 'New Mykonos'.

**Chora shopping streets video:** <https://vimeo.com/647072196>

**Little Venice restaurants & windmills video:**  
<https://vimeo.com/647072280>

**Greek Amphitheater traditional costumed dancers video:**  
<https://vimeo.com/647072516>

After re-indoctrinating myself to the Greek way of life on mystical Mykonos, it was time to return stateside to my own **Magical Miami**. After all, it's not so hard to go home when you live in your own little slice of paradise. For anyone looking to rent or buy villas or apartments in Mykonos next summer season, I've got you covered. Just give me a jingle.

## MIAMI

Now that the American borders have reopened to foreigners, I am looking forward to many more reunions with my global tribe back on my home turf. I'm ready to welcome my friends back to Miami. And for those that want a place in the Magic City of Miami, here are the latest and greatest new condo buildings...some ready now and some in 3 to 5 years as they rise to even greater heights.



### **Ready Now:**

**Monad Terrace** - South Beach, boutique building overlooking Biscayne Bay designed by French architect, Jean Nouvel  
[www.ehopeinternational.com/MonadTerraceBrochure.pdf](http://www.ehopeinternational.com/MonadTerraceBrochure.pdf)

**Elysee** - Edgewater, Miami, this ultra-luxury highrise has only 100 residences with amazing bayfront views  
<http://www.ehopeinternational.com/ElyseeMiamiBrochure.pdf>

**Paramount Miami World Center** - Miami, is America's largest master-planned community with the most amenities in the world and includes the Paramount residential tower  
<http://www.ehopeinternational.com/ParamountMiamiWorldCenterBrochure.pdf>

**Palazzo Della Luna** - Fisher Island, a 5-star private residential community on 216-acres accessible only by ferry is home to some of America's most elite  
[www.ehopeinternational.com/PalazzoDellaLunaBrochure.pdf](http://www.ehopeinternational.com/PalazzoDellaLunaBrochure.pdf)

### **Ready Soon in 2022:**

**Missoni Baia** - Edgewater, Miami, is Missoni's first venture into real estate with these bayfront residences in the neighborhood next to Wynwood, Design District & Midtown  
[www.ehopeinternational.com/MissoniBaiaMiamiEbrochure.pdf](http://www.ehopeinternational.com/MissoniBaiaMiamiEbrochure.pdf)

**Aston Martin** - Miami, alongside the Miami River where it meets the bay, this new tower will have 007 touches and 4 floors of amenities plus its own marina  
[www.ehopeinternational.com/AstonMartinResidencesBrochure.pdf](http://www.ehopeinternational.com/AstonMartinResidencesBrochure.pdf)

### **Pre-Construction Ready in 3 to 5 years:**

**Five Park** - South Beach, will be the tallest tower in South Beach overlooking a brand new park with ocean, bay & park views  
[www.ehopeinternational.com/FiveParkBrochure.pdf](http://www.ehopeinternational.com/FiveParkBrochure.pdf)

**Baccarat** - Miami, named after the luxury crystal company, will have 3 sparkling towers alongside the Miami River  
[www.ehopeinternational.com/BaccaratResidencesBrochure.pdf](http://www.ehopeinternational.com/BaccaratResidencesBrochure.pdf)

**Waldorf Astoria** - Miami, this beveled tower rising 100 stories into the clouds will carry the renowned 5-star hotel brand and white-glove service  
[www.ehopeinternational.com/WaldorfAstoriaMiamiBrochure.pdf](http://www.ehopeinternational.com/WaldorfAstoriaMiamiBrochure.pdf)



### **Cheers, Hope Gainer**

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