

SOUTH TYROL BETWEEN ART & CULTURE

South Tyrol has an impressive range of activities and services to offer that are all worth discovering.

It is one of the most important wine producing regions in Europe, it has some of the most stunning peaks of the world around the Dolomite area (recognized by UNESCO as world heritage), the standards in accommodations are some of the highest you can find.

The cultural mix between Italian and Tyrolean traditions, cuisine, language and art has enabled a unique combination of unique experiences.

Many traditional events happen throughout the year, from the Easter celebrations in spring, the Sacred Heart Fires in June, witches dance in July, apple picking in late summer, wine harvesting in autumn, the famous *Toerggelen* in October, to the impressive *Krampus* beginning of December.



CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

At the end of the First World War, South Tyrol was ceded by the victorious powers to their ally Italy. The region had previously belonged to Austria for over five centuries. What followed were Mussolini's policy of Italianisation, the Option Agreement, the years of bombing, numerous protest rallies and hard political power struggles with the government in Rome. In 1972, the second South Tyrolean Autonomy Statute for the better protection of South Tyroleans came into force, which can now be fully implemented 20 years later. Today South Tyrol is an exemplary model for an autonomy of ethnic minorities.

The multicultural ambience can be seen all over, from the double language signs on the streets (or triple in case of the Ladin valley, where this ancient language is still commonly used) to the kids on the streets who jump from one language to the other just in the middle of the sentence.

THE CITIES: BOLZANO, MERANO, BRESSANONE AND BRUNICO

Each with a personal style, but all equally beautiful and interesting - South Tyrol's major cities are spread over the region and can be included in an itinerary very easily.

Bolzano - the capital: famous for its arcades, main Dome square and local markets



Merano - the historical thermal city, surrounded by impressive peaks



Bressanone - small and very charming, perfect starting point for many tours



Brunico - lively and elegant, just at the basis of Kronplatz mountain



THE MUSEUMS

Ötzi - The Iceman: situated in the heart of Bolzano's historical center lays Ötzi, the 5300 years old mummy found in the Ötztaler Alps. The well preserved body as well as its clothes and equipment can be seen at the well organized and modern museum.



Messner Mountain Museums: the famous climber and mountaineer Reinhold Messner has opened multiple museums in South Tyrol, dedicated to his great love - the mountains. The two most impressive are the MMM on top of Plan de Corones peak, and the one in the Castel Firmian, overlooking the city of Bolzano.



Lumen Museum: another brand new museum lays on top of Plan de Corones - Lumen, dedicated to mountain photography. Be prepared for a one-of-a-kind experience with 1800m2 of exhibition, event and food space. Spanning four floors LUMEN offers the possibility to experience the history of mountain photography from its beginnings until the present as well as displaying the art of mountain-photographers from all over the world.



Ladin Museum: in Alta Badia it is possible to visit the museum, that explain the Ladin history and culture

Museion: this Modern and Contemporary Art Museum is located in Bolzano and boasts a collection of 4500 works of art.

ARTISANAL CRAFTWORK OF WOODCARVING IN VAL GARDENA

Val Gardena has a century old tradition of woodcarving, which harks back to the long winter nights, during which people fantasized and tried to give wooden blocks a shape with rudimentary objects. At the same time carving was an opportunity to give shape to individual impressions, beliefs and life stances. Masks and everyday items were the most carved, followed by wooden toys and religious figures, which only testified to the improved technique and the achieved artistic finesse of carvers.

What had started as a small endeavor around 1600 had become a main trade at the end of the 18th century for many people in this Dolomite valley. The establishment of an art and design school, the construction of the road of Val Gardena as well as the establishment of a sales cooperative all contributed to the overall improvement in the valley. The carved and exported objects were mostly Christian figures, such as representations of Mary, angels, crucifixes and nativity scenes.

Today, artists are renown worldwide and have exposed in cities like New York, London and Shanghai.

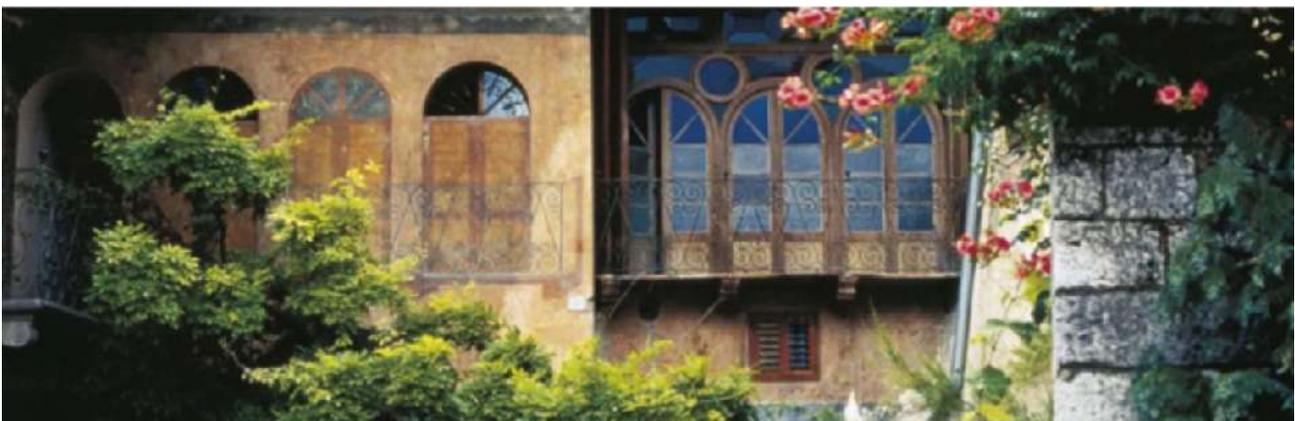
Meet the talented artist Aron Demetz at his atelier, who uses classical woodcarving techniques, Demetz creates life size figures which emphasize the relationship between man and his environment avoiding the traditional opposition among them, and allowing the two to become an inseparable whole.



Highlight: Spend a night in Demetz' former atelier, now transformed in a luxury apartment filled with extraordinary art pieces from him and his colleagues!

THE FAMOUS WINE STREET AMONG WINERIES, LAKES AND CASTLES

Snow-covered peaks and sunny promenades, perfectionism and passion, striving for quality and enjoying life all meld together in winegrowing into an exciting symbiosis, creating a special esprit in the Alto Adige winegrowing scene. The many facets of the terroir, the climatic conditions filled with contrasts paired with the wealth of experience and desire for innovation with the estate wineries, independent winegrowers, and cooperatives all create an incomparable bandwidth of characteristic wines in South Tyrol: the region produces 40.000 bottles a year and is proud to be among the best wine producing regions in Italy and worldwide.



CASTLES

While traveling through South Tyrol, enjoy dramatic views of 800 forts, castles and stately residences, the highest concentration of which is close to Bolzano/Bozen. A visit to the Franzensfeste fortress (Festung Franzensfeste) is impressive, whilst the entertaining Touriseum, the South Tyrol Museum of Tourism, is housed in Trauttmansdorff Castle. Those interested in learning more about the history of South Tyrol should head to the Tyrol Castle (Schloss Tirol). Some forts and castles invite visitors to journey back to the Middle Ages, while others house exciting museum and collections or are run as castle hotels or restaurants.



CHRISTMAS MARKETS

South Tyrol is renowned for its fabulous Christmas Markets, the most famous are the ones in Bolzano, Merano, Bressanone and Brunico, but also in the Dolomites valleys. They generally open at the end of November and close at the beginning of January. Stroll around the markets surrounded by the smell of traditional delicacies, and shop the best local product under the Christmas lights!



SPECIAL EVENTS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

Many traditional events take place in South Tyrol over the year, so it's easy to combine a travel to the region with a cultural event - here are just some of them!

Maibaum (1st May): after Easter, on May 1st, each village erects its "May Tree", which will be done with pure manpower and can take all day. In the meanwhile, local bands and dancers will entertain, and traditional food and wines area served.



Herz Jesu Feuer (June) : The custom to light fires around Midsummer and the summer solstice dates back to ancient times: the solstice bonfires, or St. John's Eve Fires, were mentioned for the first time in written documents already in the 12th century. In the 18th century, however, that tradition was reinterpreted. In 1796, the Tyrolean representatives - in view of the imminent threat of invasion by Napoleon - pledged their troth to the Sacred Heart of Jesus if they would be saved.



Törggelen: has a long and storied history. Long ago in autumn, South Tyrolean farmers and wine merchants met to sample the young wines. Today, Törggelen unites culinary delights with autumn hikes in the colourful landscape. After hiking through the pristine nature, guests arrive at traditional farmhouses to eat dumplings, Schlutzkrapfen, salted meats and homemade sausages and sauerkraut. This feast is complemented by new wine followed by roasted chestnuts and sweet Krapfen pastries for dessert.



Krampus (5th December): Krampus' are devile-like creatures that run around South Tyrol's cities and villages on the night on the 5th December in parades. They wear carved masks with horns, sheep fur, and scare kids with heavy chains. At midnight, so the legend tells, Saint Nicholas comes to earth to chase the Krampus and bring presents to the kids.



Many more traditional events take place all over South Tyrol. Depending on the clients' interests and time of travel we will be glad to include some special highlights in the itinerary.