



Castello Banfi

Montalcino, Tuscany, Italy

### 9 / 10

If you like Italian wine, and Brunello in particular, you will have no doubt heard of Banfi. The large estate is home to this small luxury resort that sits overlooking the vineyards, with a gourmet restaurant and wine cantina, all designed for the many oenophiles who come to bed down here after a tasting.

### 8 / 10 LOCATION

On the southern side of the valley near a smaller town called Sant' Angelo in Colle, this small resort with only 14 rooms and suites feels extremely peaceful and off the grid but is only about 45 minutes from the Tuscan coast, so you can combine with a few day trips to the sea if you've had your fill of the wine area and towns like Montalcino and Siena. Bear in mind that Montalcino is a little bit further from the A1 than some of the other Val D' Orcia towns.

### 9 / 10 STYLE & CHARACTER

A 12th century castle serves as the resort's centrepiece. Rooms in the outer buildings are part of the original village dating back to the 17th century, and the setting and atmosphere at this resort is a version of a grown-up fairy tale, with ramparts and imposing gates as the backdrop to postcard-perfect views of the vineyards and valley, all part of a 7,100 acre estate. It's the perfect spot for a destination wedding or special anniversary.

### 9 / 10 SERVICE & FACILITIES

Helmed by the lovely Spanish manager Juan Miquel, the service here is very attentive but not pretentious. The resort offers great cooking classes with restaurant chef Domenico Francone, and exquisite five-course tasting menus. With Banfi's reputation in the Brunello world, it's worth doing a tasting here (guests get a complimentary tour of the vineyard with the resort's sommelier and a free tasting of three vintages), and then heading to smaller producers nearby, all of which can be set up by the concierge. Picnics set up in the vineyards are another highlight.

- Bar
- Laundry
- Parking
- Pool
- Restaurant
- Room service
- Wi-Fi

### 8 / 10 ROOMS

Airy and one of a kind, with stone floors, and a palette of soft light shades to counterbalance the original heavier details. Even regular rooms feel less cramped than many counterparts. Suites are as big as a decent-sized apartment in New York and come with a living room, desks, and large revamped

bathrooms. I loved room 37, the former village school, which now feels like a charming stand-alone cottage facing the vineyards and olive trees. Toiletries are made from the estate's grapes.

### **9 / 10 FOOD & DRINK**

For a small resort, the property has quite a wealth of options for eating: La Taverna, a casual spot open at lunch, and Sala dei Grappoli, a more formal affair with excellent tasting menus accompanied by six Banfi vintages including the Brunello. Quail with foie gras, artichoke, roast duck with figs and grilled vegetables, beetroot spaghetti with courgette and lobster, and ravioli filled with pheasant and accompanied by peas, almonds and summer truffles, are only some of the dishes that show the wide range of chef Francone's skills.

Breakfasts are quite the spread too, with a nice range of fresh and seasonal fruit, freshly baked breads and pastries, and eggs cooked on request.

### **8 / 10 VALUE FOR MONEY**

Double rooms from €450 (£383) in low season; and from €830 (£707) in high. Breakfast included. Free Wi-Fi. This place isn't cheap but it is definitely worth the splurge for kind service and storybook setting.

#### **Access for guests with disabilities?**

There are a couple of rooms that are suitable for guests with disabilities.

#### **Family-friendly?**

Families are welcome, but the wine focus and remoteness might be better for those traveling with babies or adult children.

Castello di Poggio alle Mura, 53024 Montalcino SI, Italy.

[00 39 0577 877700](tel:00390577877700)[castellobanfi.com](http://castellobanfi.com)

Rooms from £347 per night

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/europe/italy/tuscany/hotels/castello-banfi-hotel/#>