

Milan Italy

< tablecloths. It serves up tapas as well as a legendary paella – choose from *valenciana* (meat and fish) or *pescado* (fish). **Osteria Borsieri** (39 Via Pietro Borsieri, tel: 02 607 0800) This quality trattoria is a popular haunt in the bohemian Isola district and serves up cuisine from the Emilia region in central northern Italy – home to ravioli and spaghetti bolognese.

EXCLUSIVE

Alla Collina

Pistoiese (1 Via Amedei, tel: 02 8645 1085) This long-established Tuscan restaurant echoes an old-fashioned world of quality and service with its white tablecloths, dark panelling and great food.

Al Porto (6 Piazza Generale Cantore, tel: 02 8940 7425) This seafood eatery is a great bet for an atmospheric meal for two, serving soups, shellfish and fish steaks in refined surroundings overlooking the old dock at the start of the Navigli district. It's not over-expensive at around €60 a head excluding drinks.

AFTER DARK LOW KEY Ripa Kitchen and Bar (19 Ripa di Porta Ticinese,

tel: 02 5811 5021) A great place to kick off a night on the town or for a quiet beer with friends, this atmospheric watering hole overlooking one of the city's surviving canals also stays open till the small hours.

LIVE MUSIC

Le Biciclette (1 Via Torti, tel: 02 5810 4325) Since it opened in 1998, this venue has cut a dash on Milan's cultural map for innovative art displays and live music offered in an elegant bar-restaurant setting.

LATE & LIVELY

11 Club Room (11 Via Alessio di Tocqueville, tel: 02 8928 1611) Set in the glamorous area of Corso Como, 11 Club Room is one of the latest attractions on the Milanese night map offering great music and some of the best known Italian and international DJs. **Ragoo** (140 Viale Monza, tel: 02 2600 5157) This alternative discobar is always popular on Fridays and Saturdays with twenty and thirtysomethings looking for something different. Definitely worth the trip up to the Turro metro stop.

THIS MONTH SHOP Salvagent (Lifesaver) is just the place to go if you despair of shopping

in the high-end boutiques with their astronomical prices. There are three floors of authentic designer gear in all sizes for men, women and children (28 Via Balzaretto, tel: 02 2668 0764).

SEE *Masters of the Jewel*, a spectacular show of handmade jewellery, is on show at the Palazzina Liberty from 7–10 October. The exhibition celebrates the art of Italian goldsmiths. The best examples win prizes (22 Corso Marzo, Parco Largo Marinai d'Italia, maestridelgioiello.it).

GO The old artists' quarter of Brera is home to the Pinacoteca, one of the world's leading galleries. There are also private galleries in Via Brera, Via del Carmine and Via Solferino, but these streets are better known for shopping. Via Fiori Chiari, Via Madonnina and Piazza del Carmine form a pedestrianised area with artistic shops, while Via Moscova, Via Solferino and Corso Garibaldi are good for houseware, clothes and accessories. By night, Brera comes alive with craft stalls, bars and cafés.

ESCAPE One of the most striking cities in the region,

Bergamo, 50km north-east of Milan, makes a great day-trip. It is really two cities in one – the lower part is modern and vibrant, the upper part has a fine historic centre full of monuments and works of art as well as elegant restaurants. Try the traditional risotto, which locals claim is even better than the Milanese version. The beautiful Lake Iseo nearby is worth a look, as is the sanctuary at Caravaggio.

NO WAY!

In the 1930s and 1940s, the Italian dictator, Mussolini, tried to eliminate foreign words from Italian. A football goal became *meta* and Donald Duck became *Paperino*. The changes, obviously did not last. *Charles Searson*



Montpellier France

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CURRENCY €

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Pre-book your taxi at easyJet.com.

A local taxi costs €25.

Take the shuttle bus to Place de l'Europe. Tickets: €1.50 single.

Visit the Europcar desk for special easyJet rates.

BON APPETIT

UP TO €30 Chez

Bruno (6 Rue des Ecoles Laiques, tel: 04 6760 2971) Good quality cooking at this classic French bistro (complete with red chequered tablecloths) offering pork and lentils, fish with garlic sauce and homemade desserts.

EXCLUSIVE Les

Gourmands (40 Avenue St-Lazare, tel: 04 6772 8276) The interior garden here is a lunchtime oasis and the dining rooms provide a popular intimate hideaway in the evenings. Don't miss the chocolate and red fruit pudding.

AFTER DARK

LOW KEY

L'Alternatif (53 Rue de Faubourg-Boutonnet, tel: 04 6740 5236) A whiff of Old France hangs round this relaxed bar full of students, musicians and culture vultures. While away the afternoon, enjoy an early-evening apero or pop in for after-theatre drinks.

LATE & LIVELY

L'Opera (2 Rue d'Alger) Climb down the steep staircase into a basement rabbit-warren with an eclectic mix of sounds, a young student crowd and gallons of tequila. Be prepared for a hot and happy crowd. Open till 1am.

THIS MONTH

GO Take the 20-minute bus ride down to Palavas beach for some melancholic late-autumn seaside strolling past the sleeping ice cream stalls and abandoned beach games. Eat steak and chips with the locals. Paddle afterwards.

NO WAY!

This month in Montpellier, €100,000 in prizes and grants are up for grabs at the Festival du Cinéma Méditerranéen de Montpellier. On 21–29 October. *Samantha David*

EURO HOTEL
★★★★★



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Via Marangona 155, 23030 Livigno, Italy | Mobile +39.335.8788266