

FLOATING UNDER THE TUSCAN SUN

意國艷陽下「浪」遊

YVONNE GORDON ditches the road less travelled
to explore Tuscany via its waterways

Yvonne Gordon展開托斯卡納河上漫遊之旅，
另闢「溪」徑探索區內隱世風光

“ TO TRAVEL TUSCANY DISCOVERING ITS WATERWAYS IS LIKE EXPLORING THE HEART, VEINS AND ARTERIES OF THE LANDSCAPE

在水上遊歷托斯卡納，猶如在這片美景的心臟和命脈深度探索

It's a calm morning on the Arno river when we paddle out in our kayaks. We're in Tuscany's Valle dell'Inferno e Bandella Nature Reserve, near the Levane dam.

The name translates as 'Valley of Hell', which doesn't seem appropriate for the tranquil scene before us. But before the dam was built here, when log rafts navigated the river towards Florence and Pisa, the area's steep rapids and rocky gorges were treacherous.

We glide along a calm stretch lined with dense trees with green and gold leaves, the scene doubled by the reflections mirrored in the still waters. The nature reserve is home to rich bird life and the air is filled with lively song. A grey heron stands motionless on a river bank while a hawk cruises silently above. We pass rocky banks and under the remaining arch of an ancient Roman bridge.

Most people know this region of Italy for its art, wine, rolling hills and cypress trees. But more recently, adventure sports have been taking off here, too – from hiking the ancient Via Francigena pilgrimage route that linked Canterbury and Rome, to mountain biking in places like Monte Amiata. But with miles of rivers, lakes and coastlines, I've decided to explore Tuscany through its waterways, a world away from the tour buses operating routes to the crowded cities of Florence and Pisa.

Our guides are Sebastian Schweizer and Enrico Pini Prato from watersports company T-rafting. I met Schweizer by chance six months earlier, when he and a group were inflating rafts on a bridge outside Colle di Val d'Elsa in Siena, about to take to the sparkling turquoise waters of the Elsa river.

Intrigued, I spoke to the group. Schweizer explained his passion for exploring the area through its various rivers and tributaries, which were used for

navigation long before roads. 'To travel Tuscany discovering its waterways is like exploring the heart, veins and the arteries of the landscape itself,' he told me.

'Not only do you enter a different dimension, but you grasp and understand the importance of the waterways through the centuries – the reasons for the location of settlements, the rise and fall of entire towns. As soon as you go on the water, everything changes too: sounds, temperature, perspective are so completely different.' I had immediately vowed to return and explore these watery corridors.

After a morning of kayaking, we set up a picnic on shaded wooden tables in the nature reserve and tuck into a typical Italian spread of cured meats, cheeses and fresh tomatoes. There are jars of olive paste, tuna fillets and artichoke hearts, with fresh bread, olive oil and wine.

At the village of Loro Ciuffenna, 12 kilometres north, an archway leads to tiny streets where stone houses have pretty shutters and pots of colourful flowers. An 11th century water mill sits over the rocky Ciuffenna river gorge, where the flow of water can be regulated to maintain the level of the lake above. We meet the mill keeper's son Fabrizio, who takes us to the small stone millhouse above the mill wheels and shows us how a chain is pulled to open a water gate and harness the power of the river. This was an important flour mill in the past and it's still used each winter to grind chestnuts into flour.

Next day, we hit the coast to kayak around the Piombino promontory that faces the Tuscan archipelago. It's a hot and sunny Sunday and locals are swimming and fishing from the shale beach when we set off into the blue waters of a crescent-shaped bay at Calamoresca to navigate the eight kilometres to the Gulf of Baratti.

We paddle along the shore for a couple

這是一個風平浪靜的早上，我們划獨木舟穿梭阿諾河上，這裡是托斯卡納鄰近勒瓦尼水壩的地獄之谷和班德拉自然保護區。

這個以「地獄」為名的地方，驟耳聽來似乎與眼前的寧靜境界格格不入，但在修築水壩之前，當河上木筏穿越佛羅倫斯及比薩，陡峭的急流和崎嶇的峽谷令航程看來險象環生。

我們渡過恬靜的水域，沿岸兩旁林木蒼翠金黃，連波平如鏡的水面也要把美景捕捉。這個自然保護區是各種鳥類的棲息天堂，啁啾啼聲處處可聞。放眼望去，一隻蒼鷺立在堤上動也不動，在我們上空就有一隻獵鷹悄悄地在盤旋。獨木舟繼而越過岩岸，途中駛經古羅馬時期的橋拱。

托斯卡納素以藝術、葡萄酒、高低起伏的山脈和柏樹見稱，但當地的歷史運動卻在最近數年才日漸興起，多元化的活動包括到法蘭奇納古道（從坎特伯雷延伸至羅馬）的意大利區段，沿這條歷史悠久的朝聖路線遠足，以及踏單車遊走阿米亞塔山等山嶺。至於本人則決定涉水探索托斯卡納，因這裡的河流、湖泊和海岸線延綿數英里，是佛羅倫斯及比薩兩個繁盛都市的旅遊巴未能直達的世外桃源。

為我們擔當導遊的，是在水上運動公司T-rafting工作的Sebastian Schweizer和Enrico Pini Prato。六個月前，我在機緣巧合下認識Sebastian，他與一行人正於西恩納市的埃爾薩谷口村外的大橋上為橡皮筏充氣，準備出發遊遍碧綠澄明的埃爾薩河。

我在好奇心驅使下與他們打開話匣子，Sebastian向我解釋他熱衷於沿水

A river runs through it
Clockwise from top: Valle dell'Inferno e Bandella Nature Reserve; a traditional Italian spread; sea kayaking on the Tuscan coast; Loro Ciuffenna

一水走天涯

最上圖起順時針：地獄之谷和班德拉自然保護區；傳統意大利大餐；在托斯卡納海岸划艇；洛羅丘芬納村莊

Photos: Lunch: Getty Images. Kayak: Torino Expeditions





“

WE PADDLE SLOWLY UP THE RIVER, AND BEFORE LONG THE YELLOW AND GOLDEN BUILDINGS OF FLORENCE COME INTO VIEW

大家緩緩地划向上游，未幾，佛羅倫斯一座座黃澄澄、金燦燦的建築便映入眼簾

of hours. It's all thick green forest and sandstone cliffs, passing the Baratti and Populonia Archaeological Park which has Etruscan and Roman tombs. Small green dwarf palms dot the cliffs, while we pass anchored motorboats and secluded coves.

We stop at a small stony cove, Cala Galera, and gather around on logs for another picnic, of olives, salami, bread, red wine, apples and grapes. Some locals arrive in their kayaks and sit chatting to us before taking a dip in the sea – which is a warm 22°C. As I envy the locals doing this every Sunday, the phrase 'la dolce vita' comes to mind.

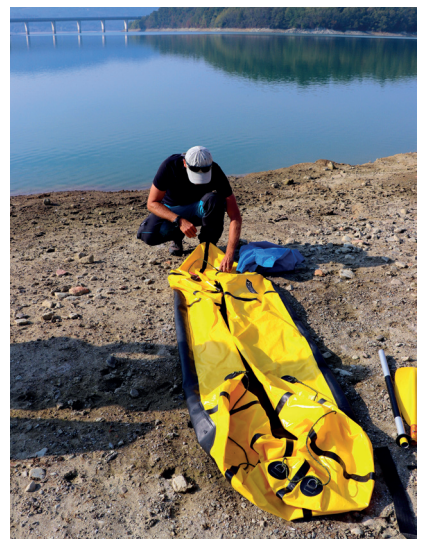
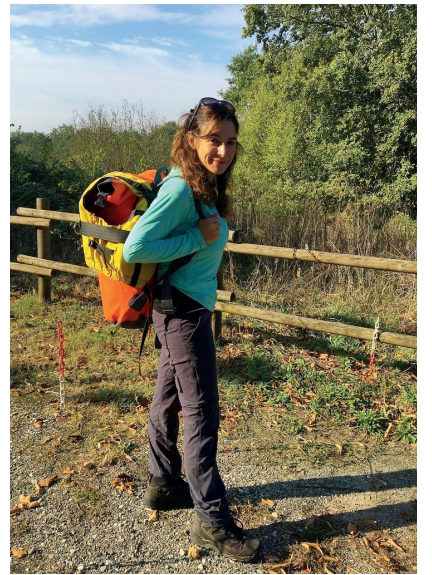
My next aqua adventure is packrafting, where you hike with a small inflatable raft in a backpack before crossing a lake or river. The sport is believed to have originated in Alaska, and was introduced to Tuscany last season by T-rafting. We set out one morning to hike from the Bosco ai Frati convent through the forest to the man-made Lake Bilancino in the Mugello area, with our rafts tucked into backpacks.

The rafts weigh three to four kilogrammes and the one-kilogramme ②

路探索這片領域的緣由。昔日，遠在馬路出現之前，水路是民眾在區內穿梭往來的主要通道。他表示：「在水上遊歷托斯卡納，猶如在這片美景的心臟和命脈深度探索，不但讓人開拓全新眼界，更可深入掌握水道數百年來主宰民居選址以至城鎮興衰的重要意義。置身水上，聲音、溫度及視野等統統變得截然不同。」因此我立志要重遊舊地，開展我的水上探索之旅。

經過半晝的獨木舟之旅後，我們在自然保護區的林蔭下享用傳統意大利大餐，在木枱前大啖各式醃肉、芝士和新鮮番茄，就連不同口味的橄欖醬、吞拿魚柳、雅枝竹芯，以至出爐麵包、橄欖油及葡萄酒各式珍貴食材也準備妥當。

我們在距離此地以北12公里的洛羅丘芬納村莊沿拱道前行，來到一條條滿佈石屋的小街，房屋放滿姹紫嫣紅的鮮花盆栽，百葉窗亦同樣美輪美奐。崎嶇的丘芬納河谷上面有一座建於11世紀的水車磨坊，水流可按情況收放自如，以確保上游水位處於適當水平。我們結識了磨坊主人的兒子Fabrizio，他帶我們到位於水車輪對上的細小石磨坊參觀，並親自示範如何把一條鎖鏈拉起，以開放閘門來排水，釋出河水滾滾而下的威力。舊日，這裡還有一家顯赫的麵粉廠，現在，廠房每年冬天仍 ②



Just add water

This page: Yvonne Gordon (top) tries packrafting; Opposite: the hot springs of Saturnia, Tuscany

水上樂無窮

本頁：Yvonne Gordon（最上圖）嘗試便攜小型充氣筏；對頁：托斯卡納的薩特尼亞溫泉區





Take me to the river
Gliding into Florence under
the Ponte Vecchio

河上風光
在老橋下悠然晃進佛羅倫斯

一望無際，砂岩峭壁多不勝數，地上還豎立了伊特魯里亞人和羅馬人的墳墓。在駛經靠岸汽船和杳無人煙的小海灣時，懸崖上星羅棋佈、矮小而翠綠的棕櫚樹清晰可見。

我們一個小石灣卡拉加萊拉登陸，圍坐在散落地上的舊木頭，拿出橄欖、莎樂美腸、麵包、紅酒、蘋果和葡萄，一起再度野營。一些自行划獨木舟前來的當地人亦與我們同坐，閒聊片刻後便肆意投奔大海，當時的氣溫是攝氏22度，相當和暖。當我想到意大利人每逢周日也可在此間適度假，腦海中隨即浮現出當地的「美好生活」（la dolce vita）哲學，酸溜溜的感覺油然而生。

至於我的下一趟水上歷奇行程，是背著便攜小型充氣筏攀山涉水，進行徒步漂流。這項運動據說源於阿拉斯加，並由T-rafting公司於上季引入托斯卡納。我們清早從波斯克修士修道院出發遠足，沿大片樹林走進位於穆傑洛區的Bilancino人工湖，充氣筏則安放於背囊內。

充氣筏重三至四公斤，重達一公斤的划槳則可摺成四段，方便收藏。我們在湖邊從背囊取出筏子，把它充氣後，就寫意地出發遠航。完成航程後，只要把筏子放氣並重新裝進背囊，全不費工夫。

數天以來飽覽天然海岸線、滿佈石頭的港灣及堤岸上綠樹林蔭的旖旎風光後，我們選擇駕車向佛羅倫斯進發。到了Lungarno Serristori公寓的位置，阿諾河依然是「主場」，我們放棄陸路，在黃沙遍地的岸邊把大型充氣筏拖到水中。

大家緩緩地划向上游，未幾，佛羅倫斯一座座黃澄澄、金燦燦的建築便映入眼簾。樓房大多建有石砌露台，百葉簾塗上繽紛色彩，外牆則飾上紋章圖案雕刻。河堤兩旁的柏樹和華麗街燈排列有致，船隻駛過橋底之際，我首次眺望到著名拱橋「老橋」以及橋上的蓋頂建築。

船隻漂浮至橋拱下面，我們開了一瓶氣泡酒prosecco，在陽光下享受清爽的口感。佛羅倫斯終於聞名不如見面，而我們抵埗的氣勢亦確實不同凡響。老橋上的旅客紛紛向我們投以艷羨的目光，前仆後繼從人潮之中捕捉最佳角度，拍下我們的壯舉。

我們原定於下午參加市內一個步行導賞團，但仰望到橋上水洩不通的人流，再回看河邊的綠茵景致，托斯卡納恬靜怡人的海景似要把我挽留。那一刻，我領略到自己心之所向。■

paddle folds neatly into four pieces. At the edge of the lake we unpack and inflate the rafts, setting off for a peaceful paddle across the water. When we're finished, the rafts are easy to deflate and repack.

After a few days exploring wild coastline, rocky coves and tree-lined river banks, we drive towards the city of Florence. At Lungarno Serristori, again on the river Arno, we ditch the road and launch a large inflatable raft from a sandy bank.

We paddle slowly up the river, and before long the yellow and golden buildings of Florence come into view. On the buildings there are coats of arms, stone balconies and painted shutters. Neat cypress trees and ornate street lamps line the bank. We pass under a bridge and in the distance, I catch my first glimpse of the famous Ponte Vecchio and its covered buildings.

As we float under the arch, we open a

bottle of prosecco and sip bubbles in the sun. It's my first time to see Florence and what a way to arrive. Tourists look down at us enviously from the famous arched bridge and take turns to snap photos from the crowded viewpoint.

We're due to have a guided walking tour of the city later in the day. But looking up at the crowds, and then back down the river towards patches of trees where the peaceful Tuscan waterways beckon, I know which way my heart wants to go. ■

然繼續運作，把栗子磨成粉末。

第二天，我們乘坐獨木舟在托斯卡納群島的沿海城鎮皮奧恩比諾附近闖蕩。當日為星期天，烈日當空，正當本地人在貝岩海灘對開游泳和垂釣之際，我們則在卡拉莫雷斯卡碧海藍天的新月形海灣，朝八公里開外的巴拉迪海灣進發。

我們沿著岸邊划行數小時，岸上巴拉迪和波普洛尼亞考古遺址公園的茂密綠林

TRY THESE OTHER WATERSPORTS IN TUSCANY

托斯卡納其他必玩水上運動

Go **sailing** on the Tyrrhenian Sea to discover the seven islands of the Tuscan Archipelago, including Elba Island (below), which has beaches, sailing and surfing. For daytrips or charters, see aviosail.eu

Try **diving** or **snorkelling** along the Etruscan coast, taking in the sandy beaches around the Gulf of Baratti, the rocky coastline of Maremma (right), or dive from the island of Capraia with Capraia Diving Center. capraia diving.it

Experience **canyoning** down a riverbed, which includes abseiling, jumping and sliding, with Toscana Adventure Team, tateam.it

Discover where to go stand-up paddleboarding (SUP), whitewater rafting, swimtrekking (snorkelling and hiking) or **rivertrekking** with T-rafting. t-rafting.com

Tuscany is full of free natural **hot springs**, perfect for relaxing muscles after adventures. Some of the best are Cascate del Mulino in Saturnia and Bagni San Filippo in south Tuscany.

從第勒尼安海揚帆出海，朝托斯卡納群島的七個島嶼進發；其中，厄爾巴島（下圖）既有迷人的海灘，亦可航海及衝浪一番，當你掌握當中技巧後，馬上可以一展身手。若想了解各式一日遊或包團選項，請瀏覽aviosail.eu

沿著伊特魯里亞海岸的巴拉迪海灣，或是Maremma區內（右圖）崎嶇不平的海岸線，鄰近的沙灘都是潛水或浮潛的好去處，你也可在卡普拉亞島上參加Capraia Diving Center的潛水活動，欣賞海底奇觀，可參考網站capraia diving.it

歷奇活動機構Toscana Adventure Team讓你體驗游繩下降、躍下及滑落至河床的溪降運動，詳情瀏覽tateam.it

水上運動公司T-rafting專門舉辦立式槳板、激流泛舟、集浮潛與遠足於一身的游泳遠足之旅及行澗之旅，如欲發揮潛能，可瀏覽t-rafting.com

遍佈托斯卡納的天然溫泉，是歷奇後鬆弛肌肉的好去處，當中位於薩特尼亞的Cascate del Mulino及托斯卡納南部的Bagni San Filippo更是皇牌推介。



DISCOVER TUSCANY

Cathay Pacific flies to Milan and Rome seven and four times a week, respectively

探索托斯卡納

國泰航空設有飛往米蘭和羅馬的航班，每周分別有七班和四班

