



THE EAST

3 PERFECT DAYS

♥ DAY 1 // ON HORSEBACK IN THE HILLS

Exploring the Morianincu is like stepping back in time, so the best way to experience it is on horseback (p158). Spend a morning in the saddle enjoying the cool green shade of the region's chestnut forests, then switch to car or bicycle for a jaunt along the Corniche de la Castagniccia (p156) to the pretty little village of Cervione (opposite). Take in the church and museum, or just hang out in one of the village cafes, before having dinner at Aux 3 Fourchettes (p156).

♥ DAY 2 // HISTORY AND HILLTOP VILLAGES

Take advantage of the cool of the morning to explore the ancient Roman site at Aléria (p163), then enjoy a leisurely lunch at the floating seafood restaurant Aux Coquillages de Diane (p163). In the afternoon, escape the heat with a driving tour around the pretty hilltop villages of the Fiumorbu (p164), perhaps taking a dip in the Abatescu river at Catastaju.

♥ DAY 3 // MESSING ABOUT ON THE RIVER

Wake up over coffee and croissants at Solenzara's Glacier du Port (p165), then head up the valley for some aerial fun and games at the Corsica Forest Parc Aventure (p166). Spread a picnic lunch on the riverbank and spend the afternoon cooling off in one of the Solenzara river's perfect natural swimming pools (p166), then return to town for a slap-up seafood dinner at La Fonderie (p167).

TRANSPORT

BUS // Rapides Bleus (☎ 04 95 31 03 79; www.kallistour.com) buses, operated by Corsicatours, run along the east coast between Bastia and Porto Vecchio (three hours), calling at Moriani-Plage, Cateraggio (for Aléria), Ghisonaccia, Solenzara and several other destinations; it runs daily in summer, and Monday to Saturday between mid-September and mid-June. Bikes can be carried for an extra charge. See p163 for other bus services to/from the Costa Serena and Côte des Nacres.

LA COSTA VERDE

The Costa Verde, which stretches south from Folelli to the Phare d'Alistro, and inland to the hill villages of Cervione and the Morianincu, has a lopsided charm. While the coastal section of this microregion is nothing to write home about, the mountainous hinterland is dazzlingly beautiful, with a series of *villages perchés* (perched villages) strung along forest-clad ridges, a fistful of religious buildings steeped in history, and glorious coastal panoramas.

Although it's less than half an hour's drive from Bastia, this little-known corner of Corsica falls below the radar for many travellers – not that we're complaining. Another pull is the smattering of quality restaurants and cute *chambres d'hôtes* (B&Bs), plus lots of easy hiking. Bring a good map and start exploring.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

TOURIST INFORMATION // Costa Verde Tourist Office (☎ 04 95 38 41 73; www.costa-verde-corsica.com; N198, Moriani-Plage; 🕒 9am–1pm & 3–8pm Mon–Sat, 9am–1pm Sun Jul & Aug, 9am–noon & 2–6pm Mon–Fri Sep–Jun)

CERVIONE

pop 1200

The liveliest of the Costa Verde's inland villages, Cervione is special: the setting is enchanting, with neat stone houses huddled around a cathedral, a small maze of alleys and archways to explore, and a main street lined with cafes on one side and stunning views on the other.

EXPLORING CERVIONE

♥ LOCAL CHURCHES // RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE, COLOURFUL FRESCOS AND TRADITIONAL MUSIC

You can't miss the yellow facade and majestic bell tower of the **Cathédrale St-Érasme** (place de l'Église), one of Corsica's earliest baroque churches. Dating from the first half of the 18th century, it boasts an impressive black-and-white marble floor, a magnificent baroque organ and beautifully carved wooden choir stalls. From late June to early September the cathedral hosts regular concerts of choral music and performances of traditional Corsican polyphonic chants.

A hidden gem that is well worth a detour, the Romanesque **Chapelle Ste-Christine** harbours fabulous frescos from the 15th century, which adorn the twin apses inside and show scenes from the life of Christ. The chapel is about 3km from Cervione; take the road to Prunete for about 500m, then follow the signs for Cappella Santa Cristina. The key should be in the door.

♥ MUSÉE DE L'ADECEC // LEARN ABOUT THE ISLAND'S RURAL PAST

Housed in the 16th-century former residence of the bishop of Aléria, the **Musée de l'ADECEC** (☎ 04 95 38 12 83; place du Musée;

(Continued on page 156)