Off the Beaten Track

THE GARFAGNANA
Assuming nerves and stomach can handle the ride, driving the dozens of narrow spaghetti roads in this overwhelming rural region rewards with dramatic mountain passes, subterranean lakes and mountains of alpine fauna.

LARI
A pilgrimage to this medieval village between Pisa and Volterra is a must for curious foodies: it is home to the world’s smallest pasta factory, aka an artisan workshop run by the Martelli family since 1926.

LAJATICO
Ringed by a natural amphitheatre of soul-stirring hills, this tiny village raises the curtain on an extraordinary open-air opera concert once a year, and gourmet winetasting and dining on the Bocelli family estate.

TERME DI SASSETTA
Take a break from tasting super-hot Super Tuscans along Tuscany’s Central Coast with a flop in natural hot springs in a remote chestnut wood near Sassetta, central Tuscany.

RISERVA NATURALE PROVINCIALE DIACCA BOTRONA
Explore the watery realms of this small nature reserve by boat; bring binoculars to make the most of the extraordinary bird life waiting to be watched in pristine silence.

IL CEDRO
Gourmet travel in Tuscany means tracking down far-flung dining legends, unchanged for decades, and cooking up seasonal fruits of the land. Enter Il Cedro in the Parco Nazionale delle Foreste Casentinesi, Monte Falterona e Campigna.

CAPRESE MICHELANGELO
Dedicated Michelangelo fans won’t do better than an off-track drive to the tiny medieval village in eastern Tuscany’s Valle del Casentino where David’s creator spent his childhood roaming the countryside and painting.

ABBAZIA DI MONTE OLIVETO MAGGIORE
Seek out solitude and soul-soaring fresco art at this medieval abbey, a forest retreat for Benedictine monks southeast of Siena. Its church, frescoed refectory, library and historic wine cellar are equally uplifting.

ABBAZIA DI SANT’ANTIMO
Revel in the silence and natural magnificence of this serenely beautiful and isolated Romanesque abbey, a three-hour walk or 11km drive from Montalcino.

GIARDINO DEI TAROCCHI
Never say Tuscany lacks variety. Franco-American artist Niki de Saint Phalle lived in a sculpture while creating the 22 oversized Gaudí-influenced sculptures that tumble down the hillside at this fantastical sculpture garden in southern Tuscany.