



C O R S I C A

Activities Guide · Bouches de Bonifacio & the Extreme South

Seven miles across the strait from Sardinia, Corsica changes everything — the language, the cooking, the colour of the rock. What follows is what we know well, gathered from seasons spent working these anchorages. Tell us what appeals and we will build the week around it.

B Y S E A

T H E L A V E Z Z I A R C H I P E L A G O

Cala Lazzarina & Cala di u Grecu

Twenty-three granite islets scattered in water clear enough to read the seabed at ten metres. No trees, no shops, no roads — only sun-smoothed boulders, scented maquis and seabirds. Cala Lazzarina is the great south-western bay; Cala di u Grecu, on the north-east, stays mirror-flat when the strait is roaring.

S W I M S T O P

Cala di u Giunco

shallow, southerly and made for a catamaran · the pick of the archipelago for a long snorkel

A S H O R E

The Sémillante Memorial

A French frigate went down here in a gale in 1855 with all hands. Two walled cemeteries and a stone pyramid stand above the coves. Marked paths only — the flora is protected and the rangers are watchful.

T H E L A G O O N

Piantarella & Île Piana

A shallow turquoise lagoon under the Sperone headland, and one of the most reliable wind spots in the Mediterranean — wingfoil, windsurf, kayak and paddleboard. Currents between the beach and Piana can be strong; we will position the tender.

W H I T E S A N D

Petit & Grand Sperone

two coves below the golf links, joined by a coastal path through the maquis · early or late is best

MYMLAN

SAILING CATAMARAN

B E N E A T H T H E S U R F A C E

Dive days arranged with a local centre · Captain Sam is a PADI Open Water Scuba Instructor

T H E C L A S S I C

Mérrouville

The Pellu pinnacle off the south-east of the Lavezzi, known everywhere simply as Grouper City. A resident colony of brown grouper – some past thirty kilos – rises from rock at thirty metres to peaks at seventeen, entirely unbothered by divers. Dentex, leerfish and the occasional tuna pass through in August. Certified divers with depth experience.

G E N T L E R

Kiki Crique

A sheltered rocky bay in three to twelve metres with its own resident grouper, Kiki. Big fish without the depth – the right first dive of the week, and excellent snorkelling.

T O P O G R A P H Y

Beccu – The Camel

arches, swim-throughs and vertical faults near the Lavezzi light · barracuda over the posidonia on the descent

F O R T H E E X P E R I E N C E D

Tête d'Homme & Tête de Cheval

walls and canyons off the Sémillante wreck site, at the tip of the archipelago

Please note that spearfishing is prohibited throughout the marine park – which is precisely why the fish here are the size they are, and why they let you come so close.

B O N I F A C I O

T H E A P P R O A C H

Into the Fjord

There is no better arrival in the Mediterranean. The citadel hangs over eighty metres of white limestone, the houses of the old town overhanging the drop, and the harbour opens like a canyon beneath it. Come on deck for this one.

T H E U P P E R T O W N

Haute Ville & the Citadel

A ninth-century labyrinth of alleys, washing lines and Genoese doorways above the port, reached by steep stairs or the little tourist train. The Bastion de l'Étendard, the churches of Sainte-Marie-Majeure and Saint-Jean-Baptiste, and a good deal of Corsican cheese and charcuterie along the way.

B O N I F A C I O · C O N T I N U E D

1 8 7 S T E P S

Escalier du Roi d'Aragon

A staircase cut into the sheer cliff face, once used to carry water up to the citadel. Steep, spectacular and not for anyone uneasy with heights. Closed shoes required, helmets provided, a few euros at the kiosk. Go at opening.

A T S U N S E T

The Marine Cemetery

Whitewashed mausolea on the Bosco plateau at the very end of the promontory, facing the sea. Walk out for the last half hour of light – it is the finest thing in the town and costs nothing.

B Y T E N D E R O R K A Y A K

Grotte du Sdragonatu

The Dragon's Cave – a single vast chamber entered through a low, narrow slot, with a hole in the roof shaped uncannily like Corsica itself. Flat, calm water only. The neighbouring Grotte Saint-Antoine at the harbour mouth is closed for rockfall.

T H E P O S T C A R D

Le Grain de Sable

the great limestone finger below the cliffs, best seen from the water in early light

O N F O O T

C O A S T A L

Capo Pertusato

An easy six kilometres there and back from the Chapelle Saint-Roch, following the Sentier de Pertusato along the cliff edge to the 1844 lighthouse at Corsica's southern tip. The citadel behind you, Sardinia ahead. Early morning or evening – there is no shade.

I N L A N D

Ospedale Forest & Piscia di Gallu

Half an hour above Porto-Vecchio the air cools and the maquis gives way to Laricio pine. A gentle walk of about two hours round trip past the dam ends at Corsica's highest waterfall, with deep river pools to swim in on the way. Best in the morning light.

T H E M O U N T A I N S

Aiguilles de Bavella

Cathedral spires of red granite at the Col de Bavella, an hour and a quarter inland. Ridge walks, river pools and a farmhouse lunch of charcuterie and brocciu. A full day, and worth every hour of it.

N O R T H T O P O R T O - V E C C H I O

T H E S H E L L

Rondinara

An almost perfectly circular bay closed by a narrow mouth, which keeps the water flat as glass whatever the strait is doing. White sand, no development behind it, and rich snorkelling along the rocks at either horn.

T H E L A G O O N

Santa Giulia

Two kilometres of horseshoe bay in shallow, luminous turquoise – the closest thing in the Mediterranean to the Seychelles. Watersports ashore and a handful of good beach tables at the water's edge.

T H E F A M O U S O N E

Palombaggia & Tamaricciu

White powder sand, red granite boulders and umbrella pines. Palombaggia is the postcard and gets busy; Tamaricciu, just south, is the same water in a smaller, quieter format. We will drop you early and lift you before the crowd builds.

A S H O R E

Porto-Vecchio Old Town

Genoese ramparts, the Bastion de France terrace over the gulf, and an evening's easy wandering between the citadel gates. Gelato obligatory.

C E L L A R & T E R R O I R

F I G A R I

Clos Canarelli

Corsica's most celebrated estate – organic and biodynamic, with a serious sense of place. Tastings are structured and by appointment; we will make the call.

N E A R P O R T O - V E C C H I O

Domaine de Torraccia

Rustic, welcoming and the right place to meet Niellucciu and Sciaccarellu properly, with a walk through the vines before you taste.

A cellar visit pairs well with a Bavella or Ospedale day – inland in the morning, tasting on the way back down, aboard for a late swim.

D I N N E R A S H O R E

August tables go early — tell us a day or two ahead and we will book

B O N I F A C I O

L'A Cheda

the town's serious gastronomic table, cooking largely from its own kitchen garden

B O N I F A C I O

Finestra by Italo Bassi · Le Jardin de l'Échauguette

the two names to know in the upper town for a special evening

P O R T O - V E C C H I O

Casadelmar

Michelin-starred, on the gulf · Corsican and Italian, tasting menus or à la carte

P O R T O - V E C C H I O

La Table de Mina · U Santa Marina

grandmothers' recipes reworked, five minutes from Palombaggia · and a long-standing local favourite

O N T H E Q U A Y

The Bonifacio Marina

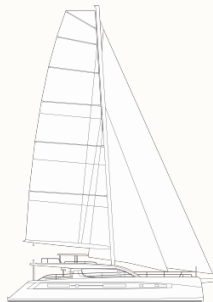
Fish restaurants and bars the length of the north quay, lively until late. Excellent for a relaxed evening — and thirty seconds from the passerelle.

A N O T E O N T H E R E S E R V E

Everything in this guide sits inside the Parc Naturel Marin des Bouches de Bonifacio — at nearly eighty thousand hectares, the largest marine protected area in France. From the Lavezzi in the east to Roccapina in the west we are in protected water continuously, and the rules are enforced by ranger boats and drones.

In practice: we anchor on clear sand only, never on the posidonia seagrass; in the Lavezzi bays we take an official mooring buoy, one yacht per buoy. Day buoys must be released in the evening. Holding tanks stay closed inside the park and are pumped out ashore. Spearfishing is banned outright, drones are restricted in the core zones, and nothing — shell, stone or plant — leaves the islands with us.

None of this will interrupt your week. It is simply why the water still looks like this.



S/Y MYMLAN II · Privilège Signature 580 · with the compliments of Captain Sam & Chef Zina