

Operator Focuses On Customized, Off-the-Beaten-Track Tours

BY FELICITY LONG
 PARKER, Colo. — Repeat travelers to Italy who are looking for something off the beaten track can take advantage of Pisoni-Ferrari Tour Co.'s customized offerings.

The company, also known as P de F Tours based here, specializes in private incentive tours and small FIT groups. "I personally design and accompany all of the group tours," said Alvaro Pisoni, company owner and former architect, who also makes all land arrangements.

Pisoni specializes in Italy and the other Alpine countries, particularly the lesser-known areas.

"The trend I've seen is that people are less interested in the cities and more drawn to the countryside," Pisoni said. "They want to visit farms and stay in stone houses, and I



P de F Tours puts a personal spin on itineraries. In Venice, for instance, clients might visit a private home for tea or tour a small Venetian island. Above, a view of the city.

prefer this kind of travel myself.

"Everyone wants to visit Venice for a day or two, but it doesn't have the same impact as discovering something on your own."

Pisoni added, however, that

he gladly includes visits to cities, but he puts his own spin on the itineraries.

"I don't stay on St. Mark's Place [in Venice], for example, the way the other tours do. We might go to a small Venetian island instead and visit a house

or palace for tea where no tourists are ever invited."

Pisoni said his contacts include proprietors of castles and villas throughout the region.

P de F also organizes cultural, educational and artistic tours; facilitates business and professional introductions and meetings, and customizes honeymoon packages and slower-paced senior tours.

Special-interest tours include gourmet food, shopping, architecture, opera and photography.

"I only do a few tours a year, and they can be on any special-interest subject as long as I have seven or eight months to do the research," he said.

"I was a city councilman in

Trento [Italy] for three years, so I can really give people an overview of the politics as well as the architecture of the country," Pisoni said.

"The political life in Italy is pretty confusing, but visitors seem to be fascinated by it."

Active travelers can hike, walk, cycle or ride horseback through the mountains, vineyards or orchards of Italy, and skiing and health spa vacations also are available.

The company can arrange meetings with local experts or guides on a variety of topics and can help clients trace their ancestors and search for relatives.

"We had one family who only knew the name of the town they came from, and I was able to trace their ancestors and find some relatives for them," he said.

Although most groups are small, Pisoni has handled groups of people and has a tour with 80 persons planned for next year.

Pisoni, who founded P de F Tours in 1985, will provide references on request.

He also is available to speak to groups and to present slide shows to help sell his tours.

For information, call (303) 841-5025; fax (303) 841-9002.