

LUXURY WITHOUT COMPROMISE

Robb Report



Adventures in Eating

The most exciting destinations, dishes, and chefs in the culinary world right now.

MAY 2018



Grant Achatz's Epic Hot-Dog Tour



CHICAGO

TWO WINDY CITY icons, the Chicago-style hot dog and Grant Achatz's Alinea, occupy opposite ends of the culinary spectrum. The dog started as simple sustenance for laborers, and Alinea is a Michelin three-star temple of modernist cuisine. But Achatz has found a way to bridge the gap.

The Chicago dog was fusion long before the term existed. In the early to mid-1900s on Chicago's Maxwell Street, immigrants sold clothes, dishes, toys, and food to one another

in a sprawling open-air market. The mixing of cultures and nearby laborers' need for cheap meals led to the dog's creation.

At the time, nearly 80 percent of the country's beef came from the Union Stock Yards in Chicago, and Jewish merchants worked the Maxwell Street Market, so it makes sense that the German sausage evolved into the Chicago style's core: an all-beef kosher dog. It's nestled in a poppy-seed bun (poppy seeds are from Eastern European Jews and the bread from Germans) with yellow mustard (German), relish (English), white onions (pan-European), tomato wedges (Jewish, Greek, and Italian), dill pickle (Germans and Eastern Europeans), sport peppers (Mexican), and a dash of celery salt (celery used to grow plentifully in town).

Of course, Alinea isn't going to make just any old dog. Since it opened in 2005, Achatz has created one of the world's most innovative and exciting restaurants, which now stands as the only three-star venue in the Windy City. Always looking to push the boundaries of what is possible in food, he's done

it again with his Chicago dog. He and his team use a rotary evaporator to distill the essence of the dog and its component parts down into one surprising, delightful, crystal-clear bite.

One *Robb Report* reader will have the exclusive opportunity to experience both versions of the Chicago dog with Achatz. He'll join you and one friend in Chicago and whisk you through a tour of the city's best purveyors, from the raucous Wiener's Circle to

the über-traditional Portillo's to Dog House, where you can try gourmet hot dogs made with alligator, kangaroo, and duck. After the tour, you'll head to Alinea to see how Achatz creates his take on the Chicago classic, and then you'll enjoy dinner for two in the restaurant's gallery.

For details and to purchase the \$35,000 package, e-mail hospitality+robbreport@alinearestaurant.com. —JEREMY REPANICH



Air Italia



TUSCANY

TUSCANY IS A bucket-list adventure for those who are passionate about Renaissance history, Sangiovese in its myriad forms, and plates groaning with the best steak in the world. While the cypress-lined roads, silver-green olive groves, and hilltop villages are immensely picturesque, during the best-weather months the streets are shared by multitudes. Now there's an option to skirt the traffic and enjoy sweeping views instead—by helicopter.

Access Italy (accessitaly.net), a travel-management agency known for its customized, private experiences, has designed a day specifically focusing on Brunello vineyards (from \$16,000 per couple).

Flying over the iconic medieval town of Montalcino, the helicopter drops travelers into two of the region's wineries; internationally acclaimed Casanova di Neri and biodynamic Val d'Orcia (both of which are conveniently equipped with helicopter pads). The chopper provides transportation to lunch, as well, at Michelin-starred Osteria Perilla.

For those intrigued by southern Italian regions emerging on the international wine radar (like Puglia and Sicily), Access Italy has a second plan (\$85,000) that allows oenophiles to stretch their helicopter travels over more days, interspersed with ground travel to take in natural and cultural sights. Land at Puglia's Polvanera; the vision of Filippo Cassano, who was inspired by a love of Primitivo, the winery offers a fascinating look at this close DNA match to California's Zinfandel. And in Sicily, a private tour, tasting, and lunch at irresistible Donnafugata will connect wine with art and soul (its collection includes "a wine for each desire").

—SARA SCHNEIDER

GRANT ACHATZ: MARK MANN; ALINEA "HOT DOG": BILL WISSER; SAN SEBASTIAN: ALEX TURRALDE