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# MONOCLE

A BRIEFING ON GLOBAL AFFAIRS, BUSINESS, CULTURE & DESIGN

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## Hunker down for the holidays: a Monocle Christmas special

*Feet up, curl up and read up - we sit down with Nato's secretary-general, take a studio tour with Ed Ruscha and meet Madrid's tough new mayor*

- A AFFAIRS** Essential assets: how grace, a good airline and a nice rack can help your nation
- B BUSINESS** Hungary for it: Budapest's fashion industry
- C CULTURE** Rob Bounds Chrissy hits: how to keep it cosy
- D DESIGN** Norwegian wood: an exercise in diplomatic design
- E EDITS** Christmas shopping in Bassano del Grappa, plus 20 shops for perfect gift-giving

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Ill leave out the double chin

**SOFT POWER**  
**TOP 25**

**TRAVEL**  
**TOP 50**

# E

## Make merry Bassano del Grappa

### Preface

Festive treats as warming as the city's ubiquitous drink.

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This year our Christmas-shopping quest has taken us to the picturesque banks of the Brenta River in the Veneto region of northern Italy. In Bassano del Grappa, traditional craftsmanship has combined with centuries of trade to give this prosperous yet down-to-earth city a unique mix of independent retailers and producers. From the grape-based liquor that shares the city's name to jewellers, fashion and furniture shops (not to mention many aperitivo stops to keep your strength up), Bassano has something for any stocking. — (M)



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## CHRISTMAS SHOPPING Bassano del Grappa

1

### Libreria Palazzo Roberti Bookshop

In 1993 Lino Manfrotto, who was a successful producer of photographic equipment, eyed up the beautiful Palazzo Roberti as a residence for his family. The 17th-century building was bound by ministerial decree to remain a bookshop, so his daughters Lavinia (pictured), Lorenza and Veronica duly became booksellers. Across its four storeys the palazzo includes a frescoed hall, as well as a labyrinth of walnut-furnished rooms dedicated to specialist titles, where experts are always on hand. There is also a stationery shop selling Koh-I-Noor pencils and Fabiano jotters.

[palazzoroberti.it](http://palazzoroberti.it)



### 48 hours in Bassano The highlights

**To eat:** Go savoury with Bottega del Baccalà's salt cod or indulge your sweet tooth at patisserie Dolce Bassano. (page 220, 221)

**Books:** Get lost in Libreria Palazzo Roberti's many chambers or linger with a fresh orange juice among the shelves of Caffé dei Libri. (page 219, 223)

**To drink:** Hop between Poli Grappa Museum and Grapperia Nardini for a sharpener. (page 219, 220)

**Fashion:** Get an eyeful of Bassano Optical's frames or some smart womenswear at Zoe. (page 220, 221)



2

### Poli Museo della Grappa Museum/Liquor shop

A few steps from the Ponte Vecchio, up Via Gamba, elaborate copper alembic stills welcome visitors to this 15th-century palazzo. It houses the vastest collection of grappa in Italy and a shop for all Poli's own spirits. The distillery, headed by siblings Jacopo, Barbara, Giampaolo and Andrea Poli, produces the strong drink in nearby Schiavon. Made from the skin and seeds of fresh grapes, for centuries grappa was considered a medicine for ailments including the plague. It won't cure a cold but can warm you up come winter: the Poli Barrique, aged for 13 years, does the job nicely.

[poligrappa.com](http://poligrappa.com)



### Distill movement Grappa

Bassano del Grappa owes its name to the nearby Mount Grappa but the potent liquor of the same name is inextricably linked to the city. Fifty-five of the 130 Italian distilleries that produce grappa are in the Veneto region. It is made from grapes including moscato, chardonnay and pinot and must be over 37.5 per cent alcohol.

**POLI**  
**1898**

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