

Clockwise from right: Fields of sunflowers line the shores of the lake; ferries cross the lake making getting around a breeze; fishing boats at Sant' Archangelo



The word on the street in this neck of the woods says George Clooney probably isn't considering buying a sumptuous 300-room lakeside villa with breathtaking views over Lake Trasimeno, (at least he hasn't mentioned it to me) and you're unlikely to bump into Brad and Angelina pushing one of those über strollers by the lakeside. You know, the ones with the chunky 4x4 jeep tyres, built for mums and dads who like to combine marathon running with nappy changing.

Nope, the Lake Trasimeno area just isn't like that. No glitz, no gala nights, no paparazzi flying over the lake trying to grab snaps of the rich and famous slapping on the sunfactor 50. But even though, for folks from the UK, a tour of the Italian lakes usually means the more famous northern lakes, this understated, unspoilt region, which lies right in the centre of the Italian peninsula on the border between Tuscany and Umbria, has enough to keep you busy from dawn til dusk.

HEART OF THE RENAISSANCE

Surprising as it may seem, within a range of about 100 kilometres, nearly 20% of the world's artistic heritage can be found. Florence, Perugia, Siena, Arezzo, Assisi, Orvieto, Gubbio, Spoleto, Chiusi and Cortona are all within striking distance, which means that the vast majority of Italian Renaissance art and a considerable portion of ancient and medieval art are within easy reach. On top of this, it's all



within a couple of hours drive from the centre of Rome.

Even on your first visit to the area, the landscape can seem strangely familiar. The beautiful rolling Umbrian hills and the special quality of the light have inspired countless artists throughout the centuries. Laid back and relaxing, surrounded on three sides by soft, undulating hills, the 128 square kilometre lake is the fourth largest in Italy. Its gently