

Welcome to Tuscany

Inside you will find:

Introduction.....	3
Arriving at Your Home Away From Home.....	4
Excursions in Tuscany (by area).....	4
Florence and Environs.....	4
Chianti, Siena and Environs.....	10
Lucca, Pisa and the Versilian Riviera.....	15
Arezzo and the Northeast.....	19
The Maremma.....	21
Southeastern Tuscany.....	23
About Tuscan Food and Wine.....	27
Practical Recommendations for Day-to-Day Living in Tuscany.....	29
Banking and Money Management.....	29
Business Hours.....	30
Driving in Italy.....	30
Holidays.....	31
Laundry.....	31
Market Days.....	32
Postal Service (Letters, Postcards & Stamps).....	32
Public Transportation.....	32
Security Precautions.....	34
Telephoning/Useful Numbers.....	34-37
Emergency.....	36
Airlines.....	36
Bus Lines.....	36
Car Rentals.....	36
Taxi Companies.....	37
Tourist (APT) Offices.....	37
Tipping.....	37
Water.....	38
Weather and Dress.....	38

WELCOME TO TUSCANY

Introduction

Before you travel, visit your favorite bookstore and select a book or two on Tuscany from the Doorways Selected Reading List; or try an alternative selection—but we recommend that you bring at least the *Michelin Green Guide* and *Florencewalks*. The *Michelin Green Guide* has small maps of each major city and town as well as lists of the important tourist attractions. At the back of the guide is an important list of the opening and closing times of museums.

It is well worth your while to visit the tourist office when you arrive in each new town or region along your journey. Most Italian towns have a provincial or local tourist office, referred to as the APT, or Azienda di Promozione Turistica. (Follow the signs to the lower case "i.") Here you will find maps and schedules of special events and concerts, as well as answers to your questions (in English). We have found the APT agents to be well-organized, friendly and helpful in supplying information about their local areas. For contact information for some major APT offices in Tuscany, please see the section of this guide entitled "Useful Numbers."

While you are in Tuscany, we hope you will also take advantage of several guides prepared especially for you by Doorways, Ltd. In addition to our Selected Reading List, we offer a detailed Restaurant Guide—chock full of our own favorites as well as our clients' recommendations. If you are traveling with children, don't forget to take our "Kids Love Italy" booklet. And for details concerning passport and customs regulations and many other particulars, you may find our "General Information for Travelers to Italy" helpful. Also, please feel free to ask your landlord or lady for information or assistance. Most of our villa owners are happy to bend over backwards to make your stay as comfortable and enjoyable as possible. (Though not all of the owners speak English, you may be surprised at how effectively essentials can be communicated across a language barrier.)

As you settle in, remember that Italy is very different from the U.S. in some fundamental ways. The pace of life is slower. The government is impossibly intricate, so people follow rules rather whimsically. Life becomes spontaneous—it takes ingenuity and humor to adjust. Things do eventually get done, often with humor and style, but it can be frustrating to a person expecting punctuality. For instance, it can take almost an hour to rent a car. Car rental agencies in Florence usually close for lunch. Open hours are posted, but they are only accurate "give or take" a half-hour or so. So you need to allow extra time and be prepared to break for a *cappuccino* or *gelato*. Times and distances should always be considered to be approximate. You may run



into a strike (*sciopero*), for they are frequent—but usually short in duration and limited in scope. A museum that was open yesterday may suddenly and without warning be closed for restoration (*in restauro*) and no one you ask will know when it will re-open.

Since it is pointless to try to live as you do in the U.S., you will likely start to adjust to the way of life in Italy. Indeed, you may find yourself enjoying it immeasurably as you, too, slip into accomplishing less than you had planned, lingering over your meals, enjoying a coffee in a sunlit square with a friend, watching people, and observing the change of colors as the sun sets.

Buon viaggio...

Tour Guides and Cars with Drivers

Here are a few of our favorite private guides and their phone numbers. To have them pick you up at your apartment or villa and show you the region as few tourists ever see it, call them directly. These guides speak English, of course! They can customize your half day or full day trip to suit your interests.

Guides	
Roberto Martelli	347 362 0631
Susan Wilson Arcamone	055 858 576
Cars with driver	
Eurodrive Agency	055-422 2839
Mundo Tours	055 598 644

Arriving at Your Home Away From Home

...e benvenuto in Toscana!

You will be met by your landlord or landlady at the pre-arranged arrival time, given your key and shown your villa or apartment. Even though you may be exhausted, this is the best time to find out what you will need to know for living in your Italian home. It is important to be clear about the telephone situation (see the section on "Telephoning" for more details), as well as when and where to put the garbage, what to do if the electricity goes out, what is expected when you check out, and where to leave your key when you leave. "Self-catering accommodations" generally means that you purchase your own staples, soaps and paper goods, replace light bulbs and leave your apartment "broom" clean. Please dispose of your garbage appropriately and leave the dishes clean and properly stored and the refrigerator empty (unless you find staples present when you check in—in which case, please replace them before you leave).

Excursions in Tuscany (by area)

Florence & Environs

Florence

Firenze, as has often been observed, is a city of the Renaissance. Though the modern city is many-faceted, millions flock to Florence even today principally to admire the monuments remaining from that phenomenally creative period between the 13th and 16th centuries. Following is a short guide to the city. For visiting the major historic sites, we propose three itineraries—for *one*, *three* or *five-day* visits. Also included are a few suggested attractions outside of the principal tour of monuments. But please don't feel wedded to the guide—use it as a springboard for your own adventures. In Florence, as elsewhere, we encourage you to keep your eyes and ears open (a keen sense of smell can also come in handy around dinner time) and make your own discoveries. *Andiamo!*

If you have only one day free for sightseeing in Florence, be sure to see the following highlights...

The Duomo (Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore), Campanile di Giotto and Battistero

Florence's cathedral was begun by Arnolfo di Cambio in

1296 and finally consecrated in 1436 after contributions by a number of successive architects. The crowning achievement, the dome, was a daring creation of Filippo Brunelleschi, who began to erect it without any supportive frame in 1434. The church's unique marble façade was not added until the 20th century. Next to the Duomo is the Campanile, Giotto's spectacular bell tower, and just across the square is the Battistero (Baptistery) of San Giovanni Battista—an 11th century Romanesque building most famous for its bronze doors, whose creation is generally regarded as marking the birth of the Florentine Renaissance. Many impressive sculptures and other works of art originally found within these three monuments are currently housed in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, well worth a visit.

The Palazzo Vecchio and the Piazza della Signoria

Erected between 1298 and 1314 using Arnolfo di Cambio's design, the Palazzo Vecchio is the most imposing of all Florence's civic buildings and the heart of Florentine politics since the 14th century. The Palazzo dominates Firenze's principal square, the Piazza della Signoria, which doubles as a unique outdoor sculpture gallery.

The Uffizi Gallery and the Ponte Vecchio

The Uffizi gallery is one of the largest art galleries in the world, housing some of the greatest works of the Renaissance. The palace that is home to the gallery is Va-

(Continued on page 5)

Renaissance Men

"Man is born not to mourn in idleness," wrote the Tuscan architect, musician, scholar, athlete and playwright, Leon Battista Alberti, "but to work at magnificent and large-scale tasks, thereby pleasing and honoring God, and manifesting in himself perfect *virtù*, that is, the fruit of happiness." And so Alberti strove to do. During the *rebirth* of the Renaissance, creative individuals began to shun specialization and explore the relationships between art and science and the entire spectrum of creative and learned disciplines. The term *Renaissance*, or—in Italian—*Rinascimento*, was itself coined by another such individual, Giorgio Vasari, whose varied talents were put to use as principal architect for the Medici, as a respected painter, and as author of the phenomenally influential Renaissance tome, *Lives of the Artists*. Perhaps the most famous example of the Renaissance Man is Leonardo da Vinci. Long heralded as one of the geniuses of Western civilization, da Vinci was in his day a master painter and architect, a geologist, botanist, inventor, writer and musician, and a rapt devotee of science, whose insights led to many important developments, that of man-powered flight, for example. Visit the museum in Vinci!

sari's architectural masterpiece, erected in 1565 on the order of Cosimo I de' Medici, Duke of Tuscany. The nearby Ponte Vecchio, built in 1345, is, as its name suggests, the oldest bridge in Firenze. It was the only bridge in the city to escape destruction during World War II. Originally decked with the shops of butchers, tanners and blacksmiths, today the bridge is the province of goldsmiths specializing in new and antique jewelry. Over it is the famous Vasari Corridor (see "Museum Tips and Reservations").

Dante Alighieri

Born in 1265 into a noble Florentine family, the great poet Dante was exiled from his beloved city during one of the notorious political struggles between Guelphs and Ghibellines (the Alighieris were affiliated with the Guelphs). While in exile (which lasted the rest of his life), Dante composed his greatest work, the three-part Divine Comedy, which was one of the first works of its kind written in the vernacular Italian instead of in Latin. The Comedy is filled with homages to works of the earlier poet, Virgil, as well as references to Florentine politics and religion of the day, and is still revered as a masterly epic of a pilgrim's progress through Hell, Purgatory and Heaven. The popular Tuscan actor Roberto Benigni is a devoted fan of Dante, and has been known to give spirited public readings of the poet's works.

The Galleria dell'Accademia

Established in 1783, the Galleria contains several of Michelangelo's important works, most prominent among them the famous statue of David—which was, at the moment of its creation in 1504, the largest statue sculpted since Roman times.

If three days are allotted, start with the essentials above and proceed on to...

Santa Croce

The magnificent Gothic church of Santa Croce was begun in 1294, yet another design of the influential Arnolfo di Cambio. Inside the church one finds numerous works of art by Giotto, Taddeo Gaddi and Donatello, among others, as well as the tombs of many illustrious Italians, including Michelangelo, Machiavelli, Galileo, Rossini and Dante. Dante's tomb is empty—as he died in exile in 1321 and is buried in Ravenna. Incorporated into the cloister beside the church is Brunelleschi's Cappella de' Pazzi, considered a masterpiece of Renaissance architecture.

San Lorenzo and the Medici Chapel

Founded in the 4th century, San Lorenzo was the first cathedral in the city and later became parish church of the Medici family. Brunelleschi rebuilt it in the Renaissance classical style in 1419 (the façade was never completed). Michelangelo's work is in evidence in San Lorenzo—during the 1520s he sculpted two Medici tombs in the Sacrestia Nuova and designed the church's extraordinary library, the Biblioteca Mediceo-Laurenziana. Michelangelo is also credited with the design of the Medici family mausoleum, the Cappella dei Principi.

Museo di San Marco

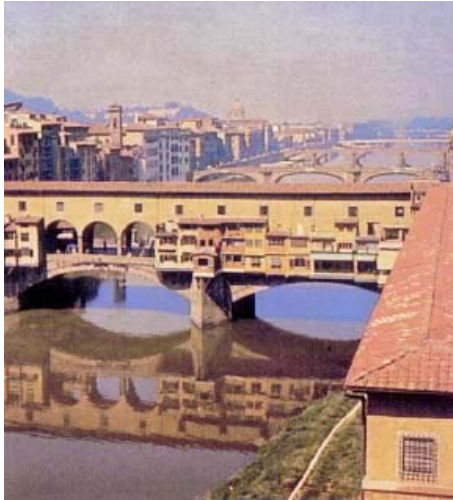
The Dominican church and convent of San Marco are home to the Museo di San Marco, famous for its works by Fra' Angelico, who was a friar here. The convent was founded in the 13th century and enlarged in 1437 when Dominican monks from nearby Fiesole moved there at the invitation of Cosimo il Vecchio. He paid a considerable sum to have the convent rebuilt by his favorite architect, Michelozzo, whose simple cloisters and cells are setting for a remarkable series of devotional frescoes by Fra' Angelico.

Pitti Palace and the Boboli Gardens

A visit to the Pitti Palace takes one across the river to Firenze's Oltrarno district, otherwise a center for hip bars and restaurants, artisans' workshops and flea markets. The wealthy merchant Luca Pitti commissioned Brunelleschi to build this impressive palace, which later passed to the Medici family, who hired the architect Ammannati to construct the grandiose courtyard. The palace was progressively enlarged in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, and served as seat of the Savoyard court when Florence was the capital of Italy (1865 - 1871). Today it houses an impressive group of museums—the Palatine Gallery, the Gallery of Modern Art, the Silver Museum, the Porcelain Museum and the Contini-Bonaccorsi Collection. Behind the palace are the Boboli Gardens, perhaps the grandest Italian-style gardens anywhere.

Piazzale Michelangelo and San Miniato al Monte

The Piazzale Michelangelo has been called the "balcony of Firenze," offering one of the city's most impressive panoramas and free parking. In the middle of the *piazzale* one finds a reproduction of Michelangelo's David. The Romanesque church of San Miniato al Monte sits on a hill still higher up, proudly displaying its splendid façade of white and green marble. This is a gem and one of our most favorite. Go for the view, the beauty of the church and the monks' Gregorian chants at 3 p.m.



The Bargello National Museum

The 13th century building housing the museum once served as seat of the *podestà*, the city's chief magistrate, who made use of its courtyard for any necessary executions. The sixteenth century occupant was Florence's chief of police, the *bargello*, whose title has stuck. The National Museum was founded in 1859 and contains several masterpieces by Michelangelo as well as fine works by Giambologna, Cellini, Donatello and others.

Santa Maria Novella

Constructed during the 13th and 14th centuries, the Florentine seat of the Dominicans was given its elegant green and white marble façade a century later by Leon Battista Alberti. The interior is gothic and contains the works of many famous artists such as Brunelleschi, Filippino Lippi, Bronzino, Orcagna and Domenico Ghirlandaio. Next to the church are splendid cloisters with frescoes by Paolo Uccello.

Forte di Belvedere

The fortress was built by Bernardo Buontalenti for the Grand Duke Ferdinando I in 1590 in the shape of a star. Recently restored, the building is only open when an exhibition is being held there. But from the courtyard one enjoys breathtaking views over the city.

If you are lucky enough to have five days in Florence, add the following to your tour...

Santo Spirito

A celebrated feature of the trendy *Oltrarno* district, the church of Santo Spirito represents one of the purest architectural creations of the Renaissance. The eminent architect, Brunelleschi, designed it and commenced

building in 1444, but died two years later before it was finished. Bland on the outside and lovely on the interior, the church takes the form of a Latin cross. Works of many Florentine artists are found here—including Filippino Lippi, Maso di Banco and Sansovino. The Piazza Santo Spirito is a great place to lounge in the shade or stroll the flea-market, and the neighborhood has a number of high-quality, inexpensive *trattorie*.

Palazzo Medici-Riccardi

Home to the Medici for a century before they moved into the Palazzo Vecchio in 1540, the Palazzo Medici-Riccardi was later acquired by the Riccardi family and now houses government offices. It was built according to an austere design by Michelozzo for Cosimo il Vecchio de' Medici, who rejected Brunelleschi's original plans as being too flamboyant. Through the main door, the courtyard walls bear a mosaic of ancient Roman masonry fragments. Two rooms in the Palazzo are open to the public, the Cappella dei Magi and the Sala di Luca Giordano. The rest of the palace is reserved for various cultural exhibitions.

And here are a few additional recommendations, to follow according to your own interests...

Institute and Museum of History and Science

Piazza dei Giudici, 1. Tel. 01139-055-265-311
Website: <http://www.imss.fi.it/>

The *Istituto e Museo di Storia della Scienza di Firenze* was founded in 1927 on the initiative of the University of Florence. It is located in the Palazzo Castellani in the heart of historic Florence. The *Istituto* carries out an important research program and possesses an ample library. The museum's collection includes around 5000

(Continued on page 7)

A Soccer Game in Florence



When in Tuscany, do as the Tuscans do! The team of Florence, *Fiorentina*, is one of the major teams of the *Serie A* (premiere league) of Italy. Games are held from September to May. For information, go to the official web site of the Associazione Calcio Fiorentina www.acfiorentina.it. You can also buy tickets online—clicking on "Biglietteria" and then "biglietti." Clicking on "Stadio," you can have a look at the different areas which you can buy tickets for. (The web site is in Italian.) Or, join the crowd for a discussion about soccer, almost any time of the day, at the bar Marisa in front of Florence's stadium (closed on Tuesdays). You can also purchase tickets there.

Nightlife in Florence

Florence is very lively at night—especially during the warmer seasons, when the areas around Piazza del Duomo, Piazza della Repubblica and Piazza della Signoria are crowded with Florentines and tourists. In the Oltrarno, the Piazza Santo Spirito and the surrounding area is known for its hopping nightspots. In addition to the traditional local bars, restaurants, and dance clubs (*discoteche*), in recent years many English and Irish-style “pubs” have opened, sometimes offering live music and a dance area, and often a good selection of beers. Big discos are usually outside the city center, but some smaller ones can be found within the city. The disco scene changes quickly. Bars, pubs and discos open and close frequently, sometimes just to change name, so for information go to the tourist office or check the listings in **Florescope**, the English version of **Firenze Spettacolo**.

original items (including Galileo’s instruments), divided

into two fundamental categories: the apparatus and scientific instruments of the Medici, and the Lorenese collection of instruments and didactic and experimental devices.

For opening, closing and holiday hours, please go online.

Museo Stibbert

The museum created by Frederick Stibbert (1838-1906) is a rare example of a 19th century museum setting. A group of inspired architects and decorators renovated the Villa Di Montughi in order to house the Stibbert collection, which reflects Stibbert’s interests in the history and customs of diverse cultures, and includes weapons, armor, costumes, furnishings, examples of the applied arts, and 16th to 19th century tapestries and paintings.

For opening, closing, and holiday hours please go online at <http://www.museostibbert.it/>

Museo di Firenze Com’era (Museum of Florence “As it Was”)

Via dell’Orto, 24. Tel. 01139-055-2616545

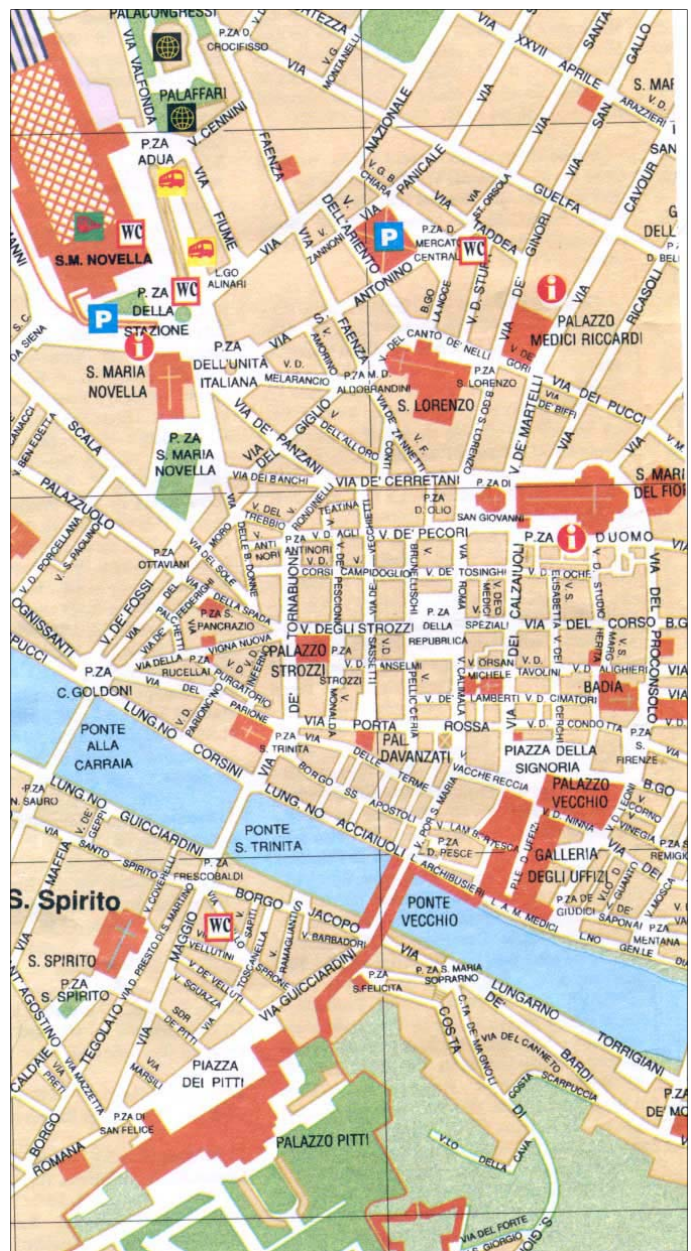
The museum traces the city’s evolution through drawings, plans and paintings. One of the most fascinating exhibits is the Pianta della Catena, a 19th century copy of a woodcut made around 1470, showing Florence at the height of the Renaissance.

For opening, closing, and holiday hours please go online at http://www.comune.firenze.it/servizi_publici/arte/musei/e.htm

Casa Buonarroti

Via Ghibellina, 70. Tel. 055 241752

Though Michelangelo owned this property, he never actually lived here. Among the jumble of works collected in the house are some true masterpieces, such as The Madonna of the Steps, the unfinished Battle of the Centaurs and the master models for the facade of San Lorenzo. For opening, closing, and holiday hours please go online at <http://www.casabuonarroti.it/english/e-home.htm>



Collezione Alberto della Ragione

Piazza della Signoria, 5

Modern art in Florence? Why not? This collection, donated to Florence in 1970, includes important works by 20th century Italian artists such as Morandi, Rosai, De Pisis, Sironi and De Chirico.

Hours:

Weekdays: 9:00 – 2:00

Holidays: 8:00 – 1:00

Closed Tuesday

A few notes about Florence...

Arriving

If you are coming from the south, drive into Florence by the *superstrada* from Siena to Florence. Exit at Certosa and drive straight into Florence following the (frequent) signs to the Piazzale Michelangelo. It is easy to find, parking is free, your car is safe, and best of all you will have a beautiful view over Florence, which will serve to orient you as you explore. (For more about the Piazzale, see the appropriate entry above.) Take a city bus into the center or walk down and across the Arno into central Florence (about 15 minutes). The center of Florence is closed to cars and there is usually congestion near the center.

We suggest the same itinerary if you are coming from the south along the Autostrada A1. If you are coming from the west using the Autostrada A14, or from the north using the Autostrada A1, follow signs for the airport "Amerigo Vespucci," just off the Autostrada; park there (there is a big pay parking area) and take the bus or a taxi to the city center.

Alternately, you may wish to park in the "park and ride" area north of the traffic circle just off the *superstrada* exit at Certosa and take the bus into the center of Florence.

(For pointers on riding the bus, see the section later entitled Public Transportation.) Most buses stop at the central rail station (the bus terminal is just next door).

Finally, it is possible to travel to Florence by train from Siena, Poggibonsi or Empoli, or by bus from Greve, Siena or Poggibonsi. (Since Siena's train station is outside the city center, a bus may be preferable for making the trip from Siena to Florence.) Schedules and maps are found at bus terminals and train stations. For more information, please refer to this guide's section on Public Transportation.

Bus service within Florence is also quite efficient and

"Box Office"

"Box Office" is a European vendor of tickets to concerts, theater and exhibitions. There are twenty branches in Tuscany. Below is contact information for the main Florence office. For locations in other cities check the English language media (see sidebar in this guide "English-Language Publications") or ask at the local APT office. (Credit cards are not accepted.)

Via Alamanni 39, Firenze. Mon., 3:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.; Tues. – Sat., 10:00 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.

comprehensive. The cost of a bus ticket (*biglietto*) in Florence is 1 Euro. A ticket is good for 60 minutes after you validate it (in the validating machine on the bus, which stamps it with date and time), and it can be used on more than one bus. Your ticket will not be collected, but you must have a validated ticket if there is a spot check, or incur a stiff fine.

Museum Tips and Reservations

Most museums in Florence are closed on Mondays. On other days it is important to go early in the day to museums and churches because most close for lunch and do not re-open. Start with the *Accademia*, where the line lengthens as the morning progresses. For reservations (for 1 - 30 people) for the Uffizi and other state museums, call 01139-055 294 883. The office is open 8:30 a.m. - 6:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Saturday. Your reservation will be held until your arrival at the Uffizi (which should be at least 30 minutes prior to your reservation time). At that time you will have to pay by cash. If you find the number constantly busy, try calling between 12:30 and 2:30 p.m., when it may be less busy. (That would be 6:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. Eastern Standard Time or Eastern Daylight Time—Italy also has daylight savings time.) In the future, it will be possible to pay with credit cards and reserve on line, but not yet. At that time you will be able to access the Doorways Web site at www.doorwaysltd.com, and then go to "links" and click on the Uffizi site. You can make reservations for the restored Vasari Corridor by calling 01139-055-238-8651.

Environs of Florence

Given the appeal of Florence and Siena, not to mention that of the Chianti villages, the smaller towns around Florence are sometimes overlooked. But many are delightful destinations that can offer the possibility of escaping the urban crush with a pleasant day trip. Following is a brief survey of interesting attractions in Florence's environs.

Going to the Movies

Non-Italian movies playing in Italy are almost always dubbed into Italian (as are American movies and television shows appearing on TV). A few specialized theaters offer films in their original languages, which are designated "V.O.," or *versione originale*. A couple of theaters showing V.O. features are found in Florence, though they are rare in smaller towns (check local cinema listings for the indication, V.O.)

Places to see English-speaking films in Florence

Cinema Astro

Piazza di San Simone, Firenze

English-language films six days a week

Goldoni

Via Serragli 109, Firenze (055 222 437)

Wednesday night V.O. features

Odeon Original Sound

Via Sassetti I, Firenze (055 214 068)

Monday night & Sunday morning V.O. features

Fiesole

The small town of Fiesole overlooks Florence high on a hill, 8 km north of Florence, and has substantial Roman and Etruscan remains. Florence's predecessor by centuries, the town became a fashionable suburb after Florence finally dominated it in the 12th century. Fiesole is popular for its many fine villas and gardens. Readers of English novels may remember it as the scene of Lucy's first kiss in E.M. Forster's "Room With a View." The town's trendy cafés and restaurants become crowded with Florentines and visitors in the summertime, when its position makes it one of the coolest places in the neighborhood of the city.

Pistoia and Prato

As one of the more querulous localities of the querulous Middle Ages, it is perhaps appropriate that Pistoia claims credit for the origin of the word *pistol*. Though a *pistol* was originally a dagger, the word later came to refer to small firearms made in the town during the 16th century. Pistoia still preserves an impressive medieval center—and something of the spirit of the times in its annual medieval jousting tournament, the *Giostra dell'Orso*, held in the Piazza del Duomo. (Instead of another horseman, however, participants are challenged to lance a wooden bear.) Pistoia is also an important

center for horticulture and is also the site of an enjoyable zoo. While Prato, as an industrial city (long a center for the production of woolens), is perhaps less picturesque, it reveals some wonderful churches and museums in its quiet historic center.

Carmignano, Vinci and Montecatini Terme

Carmignano is an unpretentious little hill town with a lovely church at its center and a reputation for wine production. After a stroll through the center of town, head to one of the rural villas on the outskirts, Capezzana or Baccheretto, for a taste of the local product. Nearby is the town of Vinci, best known as the birthplace of the Renaissance genius, Leonardo. The local museum named after him features models of machines and instruments of his devising. A good stretch farther north and west, Montecatini Terme has long been favored as a spa town. Lovely parks surround the thermal bath buildings, where visitors take the warm saline waters, internally and externally.

Montelupo, San Miniato and Certaldo

The pleasant village of Montelupo is worth a visit for its interesting Museo Archeologico e della Ceramica, where finds from the Paleolithic and the Bronze Age are displayed, as well as Etruscan and Roman Relics. The collection in the other part of the museum emphasizes the local history of ceramics making, which continues to this day. If your visit should fall on the third Sunday of the month, you may find a nice gift or two at the ceramics market in the old cinema. If you've taken it upon yourself by this time to "do as the Tuscans do" and go truffle hunting, the outskirts of nearby San Miniato, once an important stop on the Via Francigena pilgrimage route, may be a good place to start. (See the sidebar on *Sagre*.) Otherwise, stop in for the antiques fair on the first Sunday of the month, the organic foods market on the second, or the arts and crafts market on

(Continued on page 10)

Boccaccio and the Decameron

The *Decameron* of Giovanni Boccaccio, a collection of 100 stories, was written in the middle of the 14th century and played an important role in the development of European literary history, as genesis of the "novella," and model for other story collections such as Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. A tragedy of Boccaccio's time ties the tales of the *Decameron* together: ten noble folk flee the plague of the Black Death that has struck Florence, heading to nearby Fiesole, where each agrees to tell a story a day for ten days. Though Boccaccio himself survived the Black Death and went on to write a number of other works, he lost his father, step-mother and many friends to the terrible plague.

the third. Certaldo was also once a stop on the Via Francigena. Though the town today is divided into two distinct areas, the historic hilltop center and a modern suburb below, a sense of the past is preserved during the Mercantia festival during the first week of August, when candles are lit throughout the town to remember what it was like before electricity. Certaldo is familiar to literary buffs as the hometown of Giovanni Boccaccio, the father of Italian prose and friend to Dante and Petrarch.

Chianti, Siena and Environs

Chianti

There's something about Chianti...a kind of infectious magic that renders the area so much more than the sum of its—albeit admirable—parts, and captures the imaginations of visitors from around the world. Stretching between the two sparkling Tuscan cities of Florence and Siena, the rolling Chianti landscape is a verdant patchwork of vineyards and olive groves, alternating with wilder wooded areas. Not surprisingly, many of the folkways of the Tuscan people are inextricably linked to the age-old processes of wine and olive oil production, which, up until the 1950s and 60s, were accomplished by a traditional sharecropping system. The human race caught on early to the region's charms; the Etruscans put down a number of stakes as early as the 8th century B.C. and probably bestowed Chianti with its name, before succumbing to Roman conquest in the 4th century B.C. Etruscan ruins can still be seen in Chianti outside of Castellina and Radda, among other locations.

Many of the walled medieval towns and castles that majestically crown the Chianti hills today are built, like others across Italy, on the foundations of Roman civilization. Siena and Florence thrived during the Middle Ages (as did Lucca and Pisa) on account of their agricultural wealth and their success as centers of international finance and trade. Florence, of course, became a world leader during the Renaissance, when Tuscany set a new cultural standard for all of Europe. The significance of all this for us as visitors to the area is simply that Chianti today epitomizes all that Tuscany carries off seemingly without effort—as a land of jaw-dropping natural beauty and of inexhaustible cultural and historical fascination. (A number of other towns in the province of Siena, while falling outside of the boundaries of Chianti itself, nonetheless offer wonderful excursion destinations and will be covered in this section. Attractions to the southeast of Siena are covered in the section on Southeastern Tuscany.)

Strada Chiantigiana

A great way to explore Chianti is to drive along the Strada Chiantigiana (SS222)—the ancient wine road stretching between Florence and Siena. In this way one enjoys acres of unspoiled scenery, encountering a number of charming towns along the way—not to mention ample opportunity to taste the region's bounty. Greve in Chianti makes a likely first stop en-route and is home to the area's largest tourist office. Its central "square," the Piazza Matteotti, is actually a curiously lovely triangle, lined with wine bars and well supplied *alimentari*, or food stores. Greve's particular claim to fame is its annual September wine fair—one of Chianti's signature events. Considered the virtual heart of Gallo Nero country (Gallo Nero, the symbol of a black rooster, is a specification denoting the superior quality of Chianti Classico wine), Greve is surrounded by medieval castles, which are, as often as not, attractively set upon expansive wine-producing estates.

(Continued on page 12)

Markets in Florence

Cascine

Parco del Cascine, Viale Lincoln. Bus 1, 9, 12. Tuesday, 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Food, clothing, accessories, souvenirs

Mercato Centrale

Piazza del Mercato Centrale. Mon. – Fri. (Sat. afternoons in winter)

Food, clothing, accessories, souvenirs

Mercato Nuovo (Mercato del Porcellino)

Loggia Mercato Nuovo. Mon. – Sat., 9:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Tourist souvenirs, inexpensive jewelry, leather goods, etc.

Mercato di Sant'Ambrogio

Piazza Ghiberti. Bus A. Mon. – Sat., 7:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Produce & other food, clothing.

Mercato delle Pulci

Piazza dei Ciompi. Bus A. Mon. – Sat., 9:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Flea market

Plant Market

Piazza della Repubblica. Thurs., 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Plants and flowers

San Lorenzo

Piazza San Lorenzo. Every day

Leather, souvenir, etc. market

Santo Spirito

Piazza Santo Spirito. Second Sun./month, 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Flea market

Biking in Tuscany



Bicycling, like walking, is a wonderful way to become a part of the scenery instead of just observing it as a thing apart. If you rent a bike in Tuscany, we suggest you pick a hybrid, which allows you to pedal easily both on paved and dirt roads, whereas a mountain bike is not recommended on paved roads and a road bike is not recommended on dirt roads. If you would like to rent a bike in Florence, you can contact the agency Florence by Bike: Web site www.florencebybike.it /email info@florencebybike.it / tel. 011-39-055-488992. They are located in center city, and the owner and managers, Marika and Andrea, are very nice and helpful. They speak English, have a large selection of good bikes, and also offer guided and self-guided tours of Florence and around Tuscany. (See list of additional bicycle rental agencies below.) The Region of Tuscany also publishes a neat guide to Tuscan biking trips, which should be available in A.P.T. offices in the region. Meanwhile, a recommended cycling tour is included below from our friend Guido. Both rides are of medium difficulty. Don't forget that Tuscany is hilly (one of the best things about it, right?). Pace yourself, wear a helmet and remember to carry water with you!

Bike rental in Lucca:

Barbetti. *Via Anfiteatro 23 (0583 954 444)*

Poli Antonio. *Piazza Santa Maria 42 (0583 493 787)*

In Siena:

DF Bike. *Strada Massetana Romana, 54 (0577 271 905)*

In Arezzo:

City Bike. *Via de' Cenci 16 (0575 24541)*

A Ride Through the Heart of Chianti (about 50 km/32 miles)

Tavarnelle val di Pesa ~ Barberino val d'Elsa ~ Sant'Appiano ~ Poggibonsi ~ Castellina in Chianti ~ San Donato in Poggio ~ Tavarnelle val di Pesa

To undertake this ride you should be in reasonably good shape and accustomed to biking uphill. The views are breathtaking and there are many little towns along the way where you can stop for a refreshing drink.

- Start from Tavarnelle, along the Via Cassia (SS 2) and ride in the direction of Poggibonsi.
- After 2.4 km of rolling hills you will reach the beautifully preserved medieval town of Barberino val d'Elsa. Continue downhill.
- At the end of the town of Barberino, turn right in the direction of S. Appiano.
- Continue, keeping always left at the next two forks in the road. *Stop to visit the Romanesque Pieve di S. Appiano, a jewel of medieval architecture.*

- Continue downhill (be careful—it is steep in some sections, with switchbacks), until you reach again the Via Cassia, and turn right for Poggibonsi.
- At the end of the downhill, before entering the boulevard, watch for a left turn in the direction of Castellina in Chianti. Make the left turn.
- Here begins a 20-km (12 miles) long but gradual uphill. Stretch. Take it easy and, once you are out of Poggibonsi, enjoy the increasingly beautiful views of the countryside. (The last few kilometers are easier.) *Once you reach Castellina, stop for a visit to this lovely little town and the Etruscan tombs of Monte Calvario—just outside of town, in the direction of Radda.*
- Go back to the main intersection, just outside of the city center, and take the road in the direction of San Donato in Poggio. (There is a short, steep uphill.)
- Enjoy the mostly downhill ride—some short uphill sections are always present—to San Donato. Views are amazing. On a clear day you can see as far as the Apuan Alps (Guido swears he has seen them!). *In San Donato stop for a tour of the town and a visit to the Romanesque Pieve.*
- Keep proceeding in the direction of Tavarnelle. Cross over the *Superstrada*, and in 4 km you'll be back where you started. *It is now time for a glass of Chianti!*

The Giro d'Italia

Soccer is undoubtedly the most popular sport in Italy, but judging by the number of amateur cyclists that ride fully equipped on shiny road bikes along the hilly roads of Tuscany, you can see that cycling has many followers. Everybody knows about the Tour de France, but Italy has its own tour, the Giro d'Italia. For three weeks between the second half of May and the first half of June the most famous bicycle racers of the world compete in an exhausting competition up and down the mountains of Italy. The course varies every year but usually a couple of stages take place in Tuscany. The Giro d'Italia is a moment for everybody that lives along the route to come out and wait for the race to pass, cheering for a favorite champion. A long colorful procession of cars precedes the race. The towns where the races finish are crowded and lively. Watch for this if you are in Tuscany during this time.

If you will be in the lakes of Northern Italy after or before your time in Tuscany, it is also interesting to watch the racers when they begin to climb the mountains. Fans climb up by all possible means, walking, biking or driving (even the day before, camping and barbecuing) to wait for the race. The race is considered to be harder than the Tour de France, because the climbs are more numerous, longer and steeper than those in France. Only one American has been able to win the Giro in its history: Andrew Hampsten in 1988, who now lives and operates a winery in southwest Tuscany.

(Continued from page 10)

Panzano

A little further south along the Strada, Panzano in Chianti still preserves some of the towers and walls of its own medieval castle, around which the town originally evolved. Splendid views of the surrounding countryside are one of the particular delights of Panzano. The Enoteca il Vinaio offers a broad selection of local wines and a menu of light dining fare, to be enjoyed on a scenic vine-bedecked terrace. Another pleasing fixture of Chianti is the Romanesque country church referred to as a *pieve*, often found just on the edge of town. Panzano's *pieve*, one km to the south of town, is the lovely hilltop San Leolino—home to a number of interesting Renaissance frescoes. Panzano's main church of Santa Maria also merits a visit. For a special treat for your feet, visit the leather shop Carlo Fagiani in Panzano at via G. d. Verrazzano, 17 (tel. 055-85 22 39) and have a pair of shoes custom made for you! Your feet are measured every which-way, then you choose the style and select a pelt. Four days later you will have wonderful, comfortable shoes. Customers of Doorways receive a 5% discount with presentation of a store brochure marked with our stamp (sent in your final package). Best of all, your measurements will be kept on file, so you can order shoes shipped to your home in the U.S. by ordering on line. We've done it and it works beautifully!

Castellina

Continuing southward one reaches Castellina in Chianti. Castellina sits on a hilltop overlooking picturesque valleys on all sides. The spot was an important crossroads in Etruscan times and later a point of conflict between rivaling Florence and Siena. Some remains of the Etruscan civilization—including four impressive tombs and a well—can still be seen in the town and on its perimeter. Remains of the contentious medieval period include many of Castellina's *palazzi* and the town's considerable fortifying walls, together with the fascinating covered walkway running along their eastern perimeter.

Around Radda and Gaiole

To explore the territory around Radda and Gaiole in Chianti it is necessary to stray a bit eastward from the SS222, but the slight detour is worth the effort. Seven km north of Radda lies Volpaia—the site of additional Etruscan ruins, as well as a castle-dominated wine estate. Still farther east, outside Gaiole, one discovers the Badia a Coltibuono, a Vallombrosian abbey set amongst woods of cedar that are a hiker's paradise. Gaiole itself is primarily a market town, while the surrounding area is

rich with castles and *pievi*. The territory south of town is graced by the Castello del Brolio—the restored residence of a noble family, historically influential in the wine industry. The castle is open to the public. From its elevated position the view southward stretches generously from Monte Amiata to Siena and the hills beyond.

Siena

Back on the wine road, continuing south, one eventually reaches Siena, and though it is never too late to love Siena, better sooner than later. Though the comely city bustles with fashionable shops and cafés, Siena seems, in many ways, frozen in time. The city center is closed to traffic. Proud medieval *palazzi* and steep narrow alleys rise on every side of its breathtaking shell-shaped *piazza*, the Piazza del Campo. Twice a year, on July 2 and August 16, the Campo is blanketed with straw and soil in preparation for the famous bareback horse race, the Palio. Each of Siena's seventeen distinct neighborhoods, or *contrade*, elects a horse and rider to represent it in the race, as has been the tradition since the 13th century. (Only the horse, however, is required to finish the race for a qualifying win—which gives an apt indication of the dangerously high stakes of the race.)

Siena, a bustling city all year round, comes brilliantly to life during the weeks preceding the race. Members of the rivaling *contrade* proudly don their traditional colors and parade through the streets. Serious bets are laid, many a rallying pageant held and the occasional alliance forged and broken, in keen anticipation. If you are fortunate enough to be in Siena for one of the days of the Palio, expect pressing crowds and oppressive heat. To avoid the worst of the crowds, it is possible to enjoy the pageantry by attending one of the elimination heats several days before the main event. Tickets can be purchased in advance at the cost of \$200 or more per ticket. Arriving in Siena on most any other day of the year, the Campo is a perfect spot to sit at leisure with a latte.

The Campo, Palazzo Pubblico and Torre del Mangia

Built on the foundation of the city's ancient Roman forum, the Campo slopes gently downward from Jacopo della Quercia's Fonte Gaia, a fountain at the northern end, to the Gothic town hall, known as the Palazzo Pubblico, and its adjacent tower, the Torre del Mangia (the climb to the top of the Torre—some 500 steps—is well worth the effort, as its summit affords splendid views for miles around). Tucked within the Palazzo Pubblico is Siena's Museo Civico, home to notable frescoes by Simone Martini and Ambrogio Lorenzetti, two important painters of the influential Siennese school of painting, which flourished from the latter half of the 13th century to

the earlier half of the 14th. The Palazzo and Torre date from the same era, which was a Golden Age for Siena. When a 1269 defeat by the Florentines frustrated and humbled the territory-hungry Sienese in their bloody rivalry with the larger city, wealthy Sienese bankers and merchants turned their attention instead to an expansive program of construction of civic and religious buildings. Tragically, the Golden Age was brought to an abrupt halt by the arrival in 1348 of the plague known as the Black Death.

The Duomo

Siena's stunning Duomo was begun in the Gothic style well before 1348, but construction had to be abandoned when the fateful plague struck, and when it finally was begun again, Romanesque was the favored style: hence the striking black and white marble façade. Curiously, an incomplete nave remains attached to the Duomo, attesting to the early wish of the architects to expand the entire structure; this wish too was abandoned with the arrival of the Black Death. Today the nave is inhabited by a distinguished museum, the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo—home to a number of important works removed from the church, including marble statues by Giovanni Pisano (originally part of the Duomo's façade) and a stupendous fresco cycle by Ambrogio Lorenzetti. Many impressive works still remain in the sanctuary of the church, as well, including a remarkable pulpit carved by Pisano and his father, Nicola, assisted by the a young student named Arnolfo di Cambio (who would later design the Duomo of Florence and that city's Palazzo Vecchio). Also present are the pulpit's four statues of saints carved by a young Michelangelo.

Other Attractions in Siena

The Basilica di San Domenico and the Basilica di San Francesco are also well worthy of visits, and Siena's Pinacoteca Nazionale houses one of Italy's foremost art collections. The museum in the Palazzo Piccolomini

Crest of the Medici

The Medici name is ubiquitous in Florence and is often heard in other areas of Tuscany where the powerful Renaissance family wielded its influence. The extent of the Medici presence can be observed on buildings across the region bearing the family emblem—a crowned shield ornamented by a curious arrangement of red balls. The experts can't seem to decide whether to attribute the balls to the family's probable medical history (as symbols of pills or cupping glasses), or to embrace the local legend that the balls actually represent dents in the shield, inflicted by a giant in the days of Charlemagne.



displays a fascinating collection of medieval documents of state, and a multi-faceted cultural center is soon to open in the 1000-year-old Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala, across from the Duomo. But we hope you won't fall into the trap of examining only Siena's wonderful "trees" and missing the wonder of the "forest." One of the delights of this fair city is rambling its stony streets with no aim other than that of getting lost—only to find yourself somewhere unexpected! Keeping in mind the three-way primary artery of the Via di Città, Via Banchi di Sotto and Via Banchi di Sopra, and their positions with respect to the Campo, just walk; you can't possibly make a wrong turn.

Market day in Siena is Wednesday, and a grand affair it is. Including at least a hundred stands selling food and great variety of other goods, the market takes place at La Lizza, a sprawling parkway on the northwest edge of town. Another highlight of the area is the huge Medici Fortress (with a nice belvedere) and the *Enoteca Italiana* within, where visitors can taste and buy from a comprehensive list of quality wines from all over Italy. Near the Medici Fortress is a huge public parking lot—an important thing to remember if you drive into town, since cars are granted limited access within the city. More parking is available at the nearby soccer stadium. Find either by following signs to the soccer stadium marked by a soccer ball. If you arrive in Siena by train, you will need to catch a cab into town, since the station is located outside of the gates. The SITA bus line runs service between Florence and Siena, and the trip takes less time than the train and takes you closer to the center of Siena.

Environs of Siena

San Gimignano

San Gimignano is a picture-perfect medieval town—famous for its thirteen towers (remaining from the original seventy-two), which have prompted joking comparisons of its skyline with that of Manhattan. Like Siena, San Gimignano thrived during the Middle Ages as a prominent stop along the Via Francigena, a pilgrimage route connecting Rome with a great expanse of Europe. (See sidebar.) Visitors can purchase a single ticket for admission to the town's major attractions, including the Collegiata (cathedral), the Museo Civico and the Torre Grossa. Among the works of art virtually covering the walls of the Collegiata (plain on the outside but mesmerizing within) are a fresco cycle depicting the sad earthly life of San Gimignano's patron saint, Santa Fina, and a separate cycle by Taddeo di Bartolo, including a striking 15th century depiction of hell. The Museo Civico houses notable works by di Bartolo and Lippo Memmi, while the Torre Grossa offers a breathtaking climb rewarded by a breathtaking vista.

The best time to visit San Gimignano is in the morning or evening, to avoid her crowds of admirers. Though the towers, churches and museums do not remain open into the evening, the beauty of the lights and the appeal of local restaurants make it a fine time to enjoy the town. After dinner, those in the know recommend the *gelateria* in Piazza della Cisterna (on the left side if you are coming from Porta San Giovanni). San Gimignano's reputation is enhanced no less by the Vernaccia di San Gimignano, the prized white wine produced locally since the 14th century.

Volterra

Though Volterra actually lies in the province of Pisa and not that of Siena, it is located so as to make a desirable daytrip from Chianti in combination with San Gimignano, described just above. Situated on a high plateau, the medieval town offers uninterrupted views over the surrounding countryside. Once an Etruscan stronghold, Volterra was the very last of the Etruscan towns to fall to the Romans, during the 3rd century B.C. In many places the ancient Etruscan walls still stand, and Volterra's famous Museo Guarnacci contains one of the best collections of Etruscan artifacts in Italy. Today the character of the city is decidedly medieval—its impressive Piazza dei Priori is dominated by a Pisan-style Duomo and baptistery, housing a notable 15th century fresco by Benozzo Gozzoli, among other works. Visitors can wander an extensive park of Roman remains. The city is also known for its craftsmen, who sculpt locally mined alabaster into glossy white statues and other items of large variety, which make wonderful gifts.

Monteriggioni

Tiny Monteriggioni's fourteen towers rival those of San

The Contrade of Siena

Part of the excitement of the famous *Palio* of Siena is due to the intensity of the rivalry among the town's 17 *contrade*, or neighborhoods, which dates back to the 13th century. The *contrade* still play an essential part in the cultural life of the *Senesi* throughout the year, each offering meetings and activities in its community center. Following are the names/symbols of the 17 *contrade Senesi*.

Aquila (eagle)
 Bruco (caterpillar)
 Chiocciola (snail)
 Civetta (owl)
 Drago (dragon)
 Giraffa (giraffe)
 Istrice (porcupine)
 Leocorno (unicorn)
 Lupa (she-wolf)
 Nicchio (scallop shell)
 Oca (goose)
 Onda (wave)
 Pantera (panther)
 Selva (wood)
 Tartuca (tortoise)
 Torre (tower)
 Valdimontone (*montone*, mountain goat)

Gimignano, and present just as interesting a skyline—rising as they do from the town's fortified walls, giving the bizarre illusion of a giant crown worn by a hilltop. Monteriggioni's main square is home to a small Romanesque church with a pretty façade. Though Dante did not cast a favoring eye on the town in his *Divine Comedy*, where he described it as a huge well, filled with fearsome giants, today its well-preserved medieval architecture makes it an atmospheric spot to stop for dinner or a cappuccino.

Just 3 km W of Monteriggioni is the former Cistercian abbey of Abbadia Isola. It is a beautiful Romanesque church built in the 11-12th century.

San Galgano

Positioned in isolation on a lovely rural plain south of Siena, the ruined 13th century Abbazia di San Galgano was once an exemplary Gothic building and an important center of the Cistercian order (from which the monks supervised the building of the Duomo of Siena). Today, its nave open to sun and rain, the abbey is an eerie reminder of the unrelenting passage of time, and one of the most breathtaking sights in Tuscany. Saint Galgano himself was a noble 12th century knight who put down his sword to embrace the contemplative life of a Cistercian monk. He lived in a hut on a nearby hillside, which is still occupied by the circular Romanesque

chapel he built there. Visitors can enter the chapel to see Galgano's legendary "sword in the stone" and some frescoes by Ambrogio Lorenzetti.

North and west of Chianti lies another enchanting and richly varied area of Tuscany. Lucca is a somnolent beauty of a city, encircled by tree-lined ramparts; and to its north lies the Garfagnana, a series of verdant river valleys alternating with the snowy peaks of the Apuan Alps. Southwest of Lucca, the well-known city of Pisa lends its name to the stretch of Ligurian coastline often referred to as the Pisan Maremma; and, continuing northward, one reaches the Versilian Riviera—a time-honored vacation spot of Florentine beach lovers. Below are descriptions of some of the area's highlights.

Lucca, Pisa and the Versilian Riviera

Lucca

Lucca is one of the most captivating cities in Tuscany—a grid of ancient Roman streets snug behind a mammoth belt of tree-topped battlements (upon which visitors should not hesitate to walk to enjoy the exceptional views). An early political power under Roman rule, Lucca later came briefly under the control of neighboring rival, Pisa, but was granted autonomy in the 14th century and long remained a free commune, prospering by the policy of "minding its own business" until it was absorbed into the Tuscany Grand Duchy in 1815. Stately *palazzi* and Romanesque churches with delicate façades line Lucca's wide promenades, interspersed with shops and galleries and an unusual number of lovely gardens—some open for public visits. Bicycles are favored over automobiles by the Lucchesi, making the city center a peaceful place for a stroll or a wonderful place to bike.

Put on Your Walkin' Shoes!



One of the local customs in all Tuscan and Italian towns, including the smaller ones, is the evening stroll, or *passeggiata*, up and down the main thoroughfare of the center; *Via de' Banchi di Sopra* in Siena, *Via de' Calzaioli* in Firenze or *Corso Rossellino* in the small town of Pienza, just to name a few. (The rite is sometimes jokingly referred to as "doing laps"—*fare le vasche*.) Singles, couples and families with children and strollers emerge after dinner to see and be seen and enjoy the evening air and lights. This is the time for young men to meet young women and tourists are welcome to join in. The best time for the *passeggiata* is Saturday evening, before and after dinner.

Churches, Museums and Other Attractions

Puccini was born here, and sang in the choir at San Michele in Foro, the stupendous church dominating Lucca's vibrant main square, the Piazza San Michele (which is built on the remains of the Roman forum). Only a block from the piazza, the renowned composer's boyhood home has been turned into a charming museum, featuring original scores from his early works and other memorabilia that will delight music lovers. Other standouts among Lucca's many churches are the peculiarly asymmetrical Duomo di San Martino—home to a number of notable works of art by Nicola Pisano, Jacopo della Quercia, Ghirlandaio and Tintoretto, and the striking San Frediano, distinguished by its mosaic façade and additional mosaics within. Another curiosity of Lucca is the Piazza dell' Anfiteatro, a huge medieval square retaining the shape of the ancient Roman theater. And just a short walk away is the Guinigi Tower, a tree-topped belvedere adjoining the palaces of the Guinigi family, prominent patrons of Lucca who were active in the city's important Renaissance silk trade.

Lucca has its share of intriguing museums, including the Pinacoteca, located within an imposing 17th century palace that is a museum in itself (Museo Nazionale di Palazzo Mansi). Other highlights are the Casale Natale di Giacomo Puccini (mentioned above), the Museo della Cattedrale (a cumulative ticket with the sacristy of the Duomo and the church of San Giovanni e Reparata), and the Museo Nazionale di Villa Guinigi (exhibiting a collection of regional art and archeological finds).

Luccan Olive Oil

The lush green hills surrounding Lucca have been cultivated for the production of olive oil for some 600 years, according to local tax records, and the cherished customs of the region pertain not only to the production of this precious substance, but to its consumption as well! Interestingly, local producers of olive oil are referred to as *artigiani*, or "artisans"—a just indication of the respect afforded the oil's creators and creation processes. Known for a characteristic golden color, Luccan oils have gained notoriety in both nationally and internationally judged olive oil competitions. In particular, the working olive farm at Fattoria Colle Verde has distinguished itself by its Matraia brand olive oil, which is the only Luccan oil to have reached the finals in a prestigious contest sponsored by Italy's Union of Chambers of Commerce.

The Garfagnana

From atop Lucca's ramparts one catches sight of the Apuan Alps to the north. Together with the green valley of the Serchio River and the smaller Orecchiella moun-

tain range, the Alps comprise the beautiful area known as the Garfagnana. A lovely way to take in the scenery if you have limited time for exploring the Garfagnana is to board a train from Lucca to Aulla—a town at the Garfagnana's northern end. Travelers driving north from Lucca may enjoy a stop at the thermal baths in Bagni di Lucca, a tiny spa village once frequented by Romantic literary heavyweights including Byron and Shelley. But first, dare to cross the intriguing 11th century "Devil's Bridge" along the SS12 (more formally known as the Ponte della Maddalena). According to local legend, the strange looking monument, which crosses the Serchio River, was built by the horned one himself.

Barga and Environs



Continuing northward one encounters a rare curiosity of the Apuan Alps—the Grotta del Vento (or, "wind cave"). One, two or three-hour tours are offered to visitors curious to explore the caverns and subterranean lakes of this—Tuscany's most spectacular—cave. Not far from the Grotta is the cliff-side monastery, the Eremo di Calomini, where fresh trout from the Serchio river is grilled and served along with other specialties in a delightful outdoor restaurant open May to September. The monks of Calomini also tend a shop specializing in herbs and medicinal herbal extracts. Just across the river, the medieval town of Barga has much to recommend it—starting with the pleasing profile it cuts against the breathtaking scenery of the lower Serchio Valley. Crowning the town's maze of streets is a grassy square dominated by an impressive honey-stoned cathedral from the 11th century. During the warmer months, Barga bustles with cultural activities, including an August jazz festival and various outdoor concerts held in the picturesque Piazza Angeli, but its charming restaurants and monthly Sunday flea market make it an attractive destination at any time of year.

Castelnuovo, Vagli and the Parco dell'Orecchiella

Via Francigena

Many of the Tuscan towns that flourished during the Middle Ages were able to do so because of their favorable positions along the Via Francigena, a pilgrimage route leading through much of Europe down to Rome, where pilgrims of every stripe journeyed to visit the Apostles' tomb and receive the Pope's blessing. Naturally, the Francigena became a heavily traveled trade route as well. The Tuscan segment of the route started at Pontrémoli and continued south through Massa and Carrara, Lucca, San Gimignano and Siena, and on down to Rome. (The Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scale in Siena became a major medical center for the pilgrims and still stands today, across from the Duomo.)

The Garfagnana's largest tourist office is found in Castelnuovo di Garfagnana—capital of the region and a pleasant place to stop and stretch your legs (not forgetting to pay a visit to the 13th century castle in the historic center of town). Thursday is market day in Castelnuovo. A few kilometers to the north is the man-made lake of Vagli, from which the church tower of submerged Fabbriche di Carregine protrudes as an intriguing reminder of the underwater presence of Tuscany's own Atlantis. The lake is due for its 10-year draining in 2004, when the ruins of the abandoned town will be revealed to the curious. At the north end of the Garfagnana lies the Parco dell'Orecchiella—a lushly beautiful nature preserve and wildlife refuge crisscrossed with walking and bicycling paths. The Garfagnana is home to a number of interesting museums. Of particular note is the fascinating ethnographic museum, the Museo della Campagna, found in San Pellegrino in Alpe in the Orecchiella.

Pisa

More familiar to most travelers than Lucca is Pisa, barely a half-hour's drive southwest. A series of recent architectural discoveries in Pisa is sparking renewed interest in the city's history as a former maritime republic (though the coast is several kilometers from Pisa today, the ocean waves once lapped at the city's flanks). In 1988 and 1989, archeologists uncovered not only Pisa's original harbor—just 500 meters from the leaning tower—but also ten astonishingly well preserved Roman ships, soon to be displayed in a projected maritime museum. (Check local events listings for the Pisa Regatta, an event held every year to celebrate the city's maritime past.)

Campo dei Miracoli

Of course, for many, Pisa is more readily associated with its famous leaning tower, pressing unsteadily into the sandy subsoil of the Campo dei Miracoli, or “field of miracles.” The seemingly haphazard layout of the Campo’s monuments (which actually all tilt slightly in different directions) reputedly corresponds with the pattern of Aries. The marvelous Duomo—for which the landmark tower was built as a campanile—harbors a remarkable pulpit designed by Giovanni Pisano as well as paintings by Cimabue and Ghirlandaio. Nicola Pisano, father of Giovanni, is credited with the equally fine pulpit in the nearby Baptistery. A single ticket covers admission to all of these attractions, as well as to the Museo dell’Opera del Duomo, which exhibits—among many works of art once found in the Duomo, Campanile and Baptistery—additional pieces by the sculptors sharing the name of Pisano. Also part of the Campo dei Miracoli are the Camposanto—a 13th century cemetery housing an important collection of Roman sarcophagi—and the Museo delle Sinopie, where one finds a collection of restored 14th and 15th century frescoes removed from the Camposanto after sustaining damage during World War II.

Nightlife and Shopping

As a prominent university town, Pisa boasts a fairly lively nightlife. Pubs, clubs and restaurants line the pleasantly arcaded Borgo Stretto and other streets in the area of the University of Pisa, on the Arno’s north bank. Many trendy shops also open their doors on the Borgo Stretto, while Pisa’s pricier, more traditional shopping venues are found across the river on the Corso Italia. On the second weekend of each month, an antiques market is held where the Borgo Stretto meets the Ponte di Mezzo. Pisa also offers a fresh fruit and vegetable market, open every morning.

Opera

It can be a treat to hear an opera in a country where the art form was once the “popular” music of the day. American visitors are sometimes surprised to observe the strong responses of Italian opera audiences. While an enthusiastic ovation can hold up the progress of an evening’s performance for a matter of minutes, listeners also do not hesitate to “boo” a performer or performance that has not met with their expectations. The major opera house in Tuscany is the **Teatro Comunale di Firenze** in Florence’s Corso Italia. Pisa also has a venue for opera—the **Teatro Verdi** in Via Palestro, and Lucca, birthplace of Puccini, presents a fall opera season at the **Teatro del Giglio**. In the summer, opera can be found at the Puccini Lake (Torre del Lago on the coast).

*The famous
Leaning Tower
of Pisa*



Along the Coast

A number of interesting excursions are possible in the immediate environs of Pisa and along the stretch of Tyrrhenian coastline referred to as the Pisan Maremma—between the Maremma to the south and the Versilia to the north. Just east of town, the 14th century Carthusian monastery of Certosa di Pisa (no longer operating as such since the late 1960s) is a fascinating complex of chapels, cloisters and gardens, offering a fine view of Pisa’s Campo dei Miracoli. Not far from Certosa is a natural history museum belonging to the University of Pisa—regarded as one of the top three of such museums in Italy. To the south and west of Pisa, Livorno, a bustling port city of an international stripe, lost many of its historical monuments to World War II bombings, but retains a lively air and offers ferry service to the islands of Capraia and Elba (see Maremma section for more on the islands), the Cinque Terre (a popular destination in the region of Liguria), as well as to Corsica and Sardegna.

Also bordering the coast is the huge nature preserve of San Rossore, open to exploration on foot, bicycle or horseback. The park extends inland and northward all the way to the Lago Massaciuccoli, home to the quiet little lakeside town of Torre del Lago Puccini, where the composer built a summer home that stands just as he left it, opening its doors on appointment to touring visitors. The streets of Torre del Lago are named after Puccini’s operas and in the first week of every August a lakeside amphitheater rings with his sweet melodies during the Puccini Festival. On the other side of the lake, near the tiny village of Massaciuccoli, one discovers the unenclosed remains of a Roman villa and, in a nearby olive grove, the additional ruins of a complex of Roman baths.

Riviera della Versilia

Viareggio and Camaiore

Viareggio marks the southern boundary of the narrow strip of coastal plain dividing the Alpi Apuane from the sea, commonly referred to as the Riviera della Versilia. The sandy beaches and palm-lined esplanade of Viareggio fill up with partying Florentines in the warmer months and provide a gathering place for Mardi Gras revelers during the weeks before Lent and Easter. A major high-life destination during the 19th century, attracting such luminaries as Percy Bysshe and Mary Shelley, Viareggio retains the flavor of the period in its many villas, hotels and cafés. Continuing northward up the coast one finds a series of elegant resorts, endowed with views both seaward and inland to the Alpi Apuane. The Lido di Camaiore offers characteristic sandy beaches and a

terraced promenade, while the inland town of Camaiore is home to a number of interesting churches and other sites of historic interest.

Pietrasanta and Forte dei Marmi

Further northward, the charming town of Pietrasanta has long been a center for artisans skilled in the sculpture of bronze, clay and a distinctive marble mined in nearby Carrara—preferred above all other varieties by Michelangelo. Pietrasanta's Piazza Duomo provides an ideal exhibition space for local artists in the summertime. The *piazza* is home to a fine 14th century cathedral, an 18th century theater and other impressive buildings, and offers fine views of a castle known as the Rocca Arrighina, perched in a lofty spot on a wooded hillside above the

(Continued on page 19)

Hiking and Walking in Tuscany

Tuscany is a marvelous region for hiking. There are infinite marked trails, from long and difficult hikes on the Alpi Apuane, Appennines and Parco delle Foreste Casentinesi, to the great walks in Chianti or southeastern Tuscany (not to mention the nearby Cinque Terre with its ancient shepherds' paths and majestic views). British adventure lovers James Lasdun and Pia Davis have written a wonderful book about walking and eating in Tuscany (and Umbria), entitled ... "Walking and Eating in Tuscany and Umbria"! The book is available from Penguin and includes a number of detailed walks of varying distances through Chianti and Siena province, the environs of Florence, the Casentino, the Garfagnana and southern Tuscany. Another valuable reference for walking in Italy is the Club Alpino Italiano—CAI. CAI maintains thousands of miles of trails all over Italy, identifying them with a red/white/red paint blaze. Local tourist offices usually have CAI information, or at least an address and telephone number of the nearest chapter. It is a good idea to get as much information as possible about a walk before setting out so that you can judge the level of difficulty. It is best to wear boots on more rugged terrain, and always take a good supply of water! (There are no poisonous animals in Tuscany, except vipers, and viper encounters are very rare.) Some CAI chapters offer organized hikes on the weekend, which could be a delightful way to mix with Italians. Below is contact information for the CAI National Headquarters:

CAI National Headquarters
Via Ugo Foscolo 3
Milano
Tel: 02-864380

In the meantime, we include a nice hike here to get you started. The hike is of an intermediate difficulty level—that is, you should have sturdy shoes, be somewhat aerobically fit and have some leg strength to handle the hills.

Buona passeggiata!

Montepulciano to Pienza (total walking time = about 5 hours, not including lunch)

The best way to do this trail is to drive to Pienza, park your car and take the bus to Montepulciano. Once in the town of Poliziani, take some time to visit the center, with its marvelous medieval and Renaissance civil and religious buildings. Finish your tour at the masterpiece of the Renaissance, the church of San Biagio, on the outskirts of town. The trail starts there, just outside the church. Look for the white and red marks of the CAI on the curb. You will encounter these marks all the way to Pienza. After a few hundred meters there is a left turn on a dirt road. Have your camera handy, because you are entering and walking through the real Tuscan landscape you have seen in so many movies and postcards! After about three hours of walking up and down the hills, you will see a medieval village atop a steep hill. This town is called Montauto, and it is a great place to have lunch. There are two nice bars that serve typical Tuscan lunches, as well as a restaurant. Pause to enjoy the views from the small parking lot in front of the city gate. The town you see far away in front of you is your arrival point: Pienza. After lunch, go back downhill from the same way you came and after few hundred meters turn right and keep following the marks toward Pienza. After a couple of hours more you will reach your destination.

Lucca's Markets

General Market

Via dei Bacchettoni by the eastern wall. Wed. & Sat.
Food, clothes, flowers, household goods

Antiques Market

Piazza San Martino. Third weekend/month.

Craft Market

Piazza San Giusto. Last weekend/month.

square. The charming artists' community also doubles as a resort, its Marina di Pietrasanta offering all the amenities for beachside recreation as well as a hopping club scene. Forte dei Marmi is the most luxurious of the resorts of the Versilian Riviera. Exclusive designer boutiques line its attractive streets, and writers, artists and illuminati of the business world populate its secluded villas. Forte dei Marmi's Molo, a low pier, provides the most fashionable site for the customary evening stroll.

Carrara and on to the Cinqueterre

Continuing up the coast one eventually reaches Carrara—site of the world's largest known concentration of pure marble. Don't leave without visiting the legendary quarries where the precious stone has been mined since Roman times. The local Museo Civico del Marmo documents the history of the industry, while the 14th century rose window in Carrara's Duomo offers a sublime example of the beauty Michelangelo and others have long labored to reveal within the cold, hard stone. A short trip north of Carrara lies the beautiful Cinqueterre—five fishing villages inaccessible by car, but connected by rail. Hike from south to north for increasing difficulty, stop for a seafood lunch and take the train back. Neighboring Stazzema, on the other hand, makes an ideal base for those wishing to explore the most beautiful section of the Alpi Apuane—from casual walkers to skilled mountain climbers.

To the north and east of Chianti lies a fertile expanse of hills and valleys, encompassing the Valdarno and Pra-

Michelangelo's Marble of Choice

The marble found in the vast quarries of Carrara in the Alpi Apuane was mined as early as ancient Roman times, when it was used to build much of the Imperial City. Today the elegant white stone is seen in the lobbies of New York's World Trade Center. Michelangelo and Bernini are known to have prized the Carrara marble above other varieties for its special translucent quality. Visitors to the area can tour the marble quarries and the busy workshops of marble artisans in the nearby beach town of Pietrasanta and other locales.

tomagno, the Casentino, and the Valtiberina, before crossing regional borders into Umbria and Emilia-Romagna. Arezzo, at the southern end of the region, is the most prominent center of culture in this vast area (Bibbiena is a town of considerable size a little farther north), while countless smaller towns and medieval monasteries dot the varied landscape.

Arezzo and the Northeast of Tuscany

Arezzo

Once a prominent member of the twelve-city Etruscan Federation (probably due to its strategic location at the intersection of several valleys), Arezzo today is home to one of Italy's largest antiques markets and is also known for the "Legend of the True Cross," the famous fresco cycle by Piero della Francesca adorning the wall of the church of San Francesco. While another one of della Francesca's works can be seen in Arezzo's Duomo, enthusiasts of the celebrated painter may choose to follow his trail even further, through the neighboring towns of Monteverchi and Sansepolcro (see Valtiberina, below), and even on to Florence, Urbino, Rimini, Milan, Paris and London. Arezzo also counts among its attractions a couple of interesting museums and a curiously sloping medieval piazza, as well as monuments to two of its most prominent native sons—the medieval poet Petrarca and the Renaissance art historian Giorgio Vasari.

The Valdarno and Pratomagno

The Valdarno (valley of the Arno) lies between Florence and Arezzo and offers a picturesque rural route—that of the Setteponti (seven bridges)—between the two cities. Skirting the foothills of the Pratomagno, a mountainous region to the northeast, the Setteponti crosses the

(Continued on page 20)



Arno's tributaries among pleasant groves of chestnut and olive trees. Three million years ago, the whole area was covered by a lake and surrounded by tropical forests, reputedly inhabited by rhinoceros, hippopotamus, and elephants. Today, humans are more commonly seen—inhabiting charming little towns such as San Giovanni Valdarno and Montevarchi, Castelfranco di Sopra and Loro Ciuffenna. The Pratomagno, scattered with tiny hamlets among forests of cedar, harbors a notable attraction in the monastery of Vallombrosa.

The Casentino

The hills of the Pratomagno continue to climb to the northeast before tumbling into the mountain-ringed basin referred to as the Casentino, in the upper valley of the Arno. This beautiful area too has many interesting villages, as well as an impressive assortment of castles left from the medieval dynasty of the Guidi Counts, and a couple of fascinating monasteries, La Verna and Camaldoli. Here one also discovers some of the most exceptional hiking terrain in Italy. A portion of the Casentino is covered by the Foreste Casentinesi, a stunning national park extending northward as far as the Emilia-Romagna region. *Porcini* mushrooms grow in abundance locally, and are gathered and spirited home to the kitchens of locals, who have learned as children to distinguish them from other, less desirable varieties.

A few Highlights of the Casentino

The village of Poppi is dominated by a 13th century castle of the Guidi Counts, from the top of which one enjoys a splendid view over the Foreste Casentinesi. Visitors can purchase tickets to tour the castle's interior, which is arranged as a museum, offering a fascinating glimpse of the Counts' military exploits and other curiosities from the Middle Ages. Neighboring Stia is another former Guidi residence, and the medieval streets off its Piazza Tanucci (site of a local tourist office) are a delight to explore. Visitors may find a memento or two at 49 Via Sarnarelli, where a company called T.A.C.S. creates very fine handmade textiles according to local tradition. Many visitors to the area are drawn to Caprese Michelangelo, birthplace of the legendary artist. The museum opened in his honor has reproductions of his work, and it is interesting to pause in the room where he is believed to have been born.

The monastery at La Verna, resting on an isolated peak, is a time-honored stop for devotees of St. Francis of Assisi, as it is believed the holy man received the stigmata here in 1224. Not far removed from the impressive cluster of chapels and cloisters is a cavern where St. Francis is said to have retired often to rest. The monastery and hermitage of Camaldoli, by contrast, are ensconced

amid the firs of the Foreste Casentinesi. As a contemplative branch of the Benedictine order, the Camaldolite monks no doubt find these peaceful surroundings conducive to their vocation. Near the monastery downhill is a shop featuring monk-made soaps and liqueurs.

The Valtiberina

The Valtiberina (valley of the Tiber River) is a fertile stretch of territory bordering Umbria to the east. Its largest town, Sansepolcro, is best known as birthplace of the celebrated Renaissance artist, Piero della Francesca, whose paintings introduced new ways of using perspective and proportion. A number of his works are found in the Museo Civico (and another in the neighboring town of Montevarchi). Sansepolcro holds a cross-bow festival each September, not unlike that held in Massa Marittima in the Maremma, and also traditionally celebrates Good Friday with a candlelight procession. Nearby Anghiari is a mecca for traditional craftworks, particularly wood crafting and antique furniture restoration. Each April the town hosts the Valtiberina crafts market, and the third Sunday of every other month, a local antiques fair. Textiles are another specialty of the region. Lovely products are woven and sold, using only natural fibers, naturally dyed.

Extending, by the broadest definition, from Pisa southward along the coast all the way to the border with the Lazio region, the Maremma is a realm of remarkably diverse landscapes and a varied cultural life that has evolved over the centuries to match. Today, fields of oats, wheat, corn and sunflowers—together with the

(Continued on page 20)

Golf, anyone?



To find out where the closest golf course is in Tuscany, go to the Web site www.golf.it, where they list locations and descriptions of the Italian golf clubs. The site is in Italian, but once you are on the home page, click on "Informazioni," then on "Golf club, elenco circoli italiani," (list of the Italian golf clubs) then click on the region you want to select, in this case Toscana, and a list of clubs will appear. Click on the name of the club for address, telephone number and description.

What about Tennis, Horseback Riding, Swimming?

There are many opportunities to do all of the above throughout Tuscany. Ask for information at a local APT office, or check the English Yellow Pages—available at bookstores in Florence.

Mediterranean mainstays of vineyards and olive groves—reach across Maremman plains once covered by vast marshes. Woods of oak, pine and other species also claim stretches of the land, and clusters of hills rise here and there, giving a great variety to the terrain. As might be expected of such a length of coastline, the Maremma also offers its share of beautiful beaches—many retaining their natural splendor, yet “undiscovered” by the great numbers of visitors that head each year to the shores of Italy’s Versilian Riviera. A number of islands off the coast offers their own special allure.

The Maremma

Since the 1970s the Italian government has demonstrated a real interest in preserving the unique, pristine landscapes of the Maremma by creating a number of regional and national parks and nature preserves. Among the Maremma’s other attractions are the abundance of Etruscan sites scattered throughout the countryside and scores of medieval hill towns rivaling those of Chianti.

Parco Naturale della Maremma

Of the Maremma’s parks and nature preserves, the Parco Naturale della Maremma is one of the most beautiful, encompassing a 15-kilometer stretch along the Tyrrhenian coastline that is perhaps the best preserved coastal area in Italy. In exploring the park, visitors can choose from different itineraries: marked footpaths lead through woods of pine, oak, ilex and elm and a ubiquitous Mediterranean scrub, or *macchia*, of myrtle and juniper bushes. The park is home to wild white long-horned cattle, deer, foxes, goats, wild cats, horses, wild boar and migratory birds, as well as numerous aquatic species. Visitors will also enjoy exploring the Monti dell’Uccellina, a small mountain range within the park—from the natural grottoes at Cala di Forno at the mountains’



base to spectacular cliff-top views at higher altitudes. Mountain paths lead past romantic ruins—the towers of once-proud castles and an 11th century Benedictine abbey.

Other Parks and Nature Preserves

Travelers with a passion for bird watching will enjoy the Lagoon of Orbetello. About two hundred species are protected in the Lagoon’s sanctuary by the World Wide Wildlife Fund (and scores more at a second sanctuary at nearby Burano Lake). While in the area, a drive along the *strada panoramica* of the peninsular Monte Argentario is an ideal way to enjoy its wonderful landscapes—populated by wild orchids and dwarf palm trees, as well as the more customary citrus trees, olive groves and vineyards. Among the cluster of protected areas known as the Parchi della Val di Cornia, Poggio Neri stands out as being particularly well-suited to hiking, cycling and horseback riding. Further inland, along the Maremma’s easternmost boundary, Monte Amiata offers more hiking terrain in its wildlife preserve, the Parco Faunistico del Monte Amiata, not to mention stunning views in every direction.

Beaches of the Maremma

The Maremman coastline is blessed with inviting beaches, which are generally better preserved and less crowded than those of the Versilian Riviera. The sandy beach at Albarese, cushioned by a thick pine forest and nestled at the foot of the Monti dell’Uccellina, has been called the most beautiful in Italy. Other fine beaches are found near the ancient Etruscan town of Populonia, in the bays of Cala Martina and Cala Violina south of Follonica, at the resort towns of Punta Ala and Castiglione della Pescaia, and on the promontory of Monte Argentario. First-rate beaches are also found on a number of the fascinating islands off the Maremman coast, which boast not only beaches but a variety of other at-

(Continued on page 22)

English Writers in Tuscany, and Tuscany in English Writings

Lord Byron, Percy and Mary Shelley, Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Henry James, George Eliot, E.M. Forster. Quite a number of English literary figures fell in love with Italy, and Tuscany in particular, during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The Romantic poets left quite a few traces behind them. Lord Byron extolled the beauty of the land in *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*. Shelley was inspired to write many works of poetry while residing in Lerici, before dying tragically in a sailing accident. The Brownings lingered in Tuscany before heading north. George Eliot paused long enough to re-envision Renaissance Florence as a sort of feminist Utopia in *Romola*, a novel praised by James and Tennyson. E.M. Forster offered a charming 20th century portrait of the eternal fascination of the English with Tuscany in his novels, *A Room With a View* and *Where Angels Fear to Tread*.

tractions. Since 1996, many of these islands are protected—at least in part—by the Parco Nazionale dell'Arcipelago Toscano.

Inviting Islands

Elba, just a few kilometers from the mainland port of Piombino, is famous as the site of Napoleon's exile in 1814 after his defeat at Leipzig. Visitors can tour the two villas where he resided. Another highlight of Elba is the hike to the summit of Monte Capanne for splendid views. On the mountain one also finds two delightful villages well worth a visit—Poggio and Marciana Alta. The much smaller isle of Capraia is favored by many for its wildly beautiful volcanic terrain, crisscrossed with footpaths, and the skin-diving opportunities in its rocky coves. Farther down the coast, south and west of Monte Argentario, the islands of Giglio and Giannutri offer sandy beaches and some lovely natural landscapes protected as part of the Parco Naturale.

Etruscan History

It is no small part of the Maremma's appeal that the region is fairly steeped in its Etruscan heritage. Vast and mysterious necropolises remind us of both the longevity and the mortality of humankind. The hill top town of Vetulonia in the Maremman province of Grosseto is founded on the site of one of the most vital Etruscan cities, dating from the late 9th century B.C. Etruscan ingenuity is evident in the many objects of terracotta, bronze, silver and gold recovered from its tombs and currently housed in museums in Grosseto and Florence. Nearby Roselle is the site of another important excavation. Here visitors can walk along the ruins of a 5 meter-high wall that completely surrounded this Etruscan town in the 6th century B.C.

Passing through Grosseto on its way across the Maremma and down into the region of Lazio is the modern version of the Via Aurelia—the Roman road built around 241 B.C. to link Rome to the Etruscan towns along the coast. North of Grosseto, the Via Aurelia takes us into the vicinity of Populonia, once an important Etruscan port and today a charming medieval town with a huge necropolis on its perimeter. Following the road south from Grosseto we encounter the Etruscan towns of Cosa, Saturnia, Sovana and others, before crossing the border into Lazio—home to the major sites at Tarquinia and Cerveteri.

Massa Marittima and Other Highlights

Of the many appealing towns and villages scattered across the Maremma, Massa Marittima is one of the most enchanting—boasting an outstanding Duomo and perfect triangular medieval piazza, as well as an intrigu-

ing history as a mining town. From the triangular Piazza Garibaldi, visitors enjoy breathtaking views in every direction. Rising all around the town are the picturesque "metalliferous hills," which yield not only scenic riches but a wealth of iron, copper and lead ores that has been mined by locals since Etruscan times. Not least of all, Massa Marittima is known for the Festival of the Girifalco—a semi-annual cross bow contest among residents of the town's various districts, who don traditional costumes for the celebration.

The Maremma's "inland" attractions are hardly limited to the charms of Massa Marittima. Located in the vicinity of the Parco Naturale della Maremma, Magliano in Toscana distinguishes itself by its splendid 14th and 15th century fortifications, crowned by seven semi-circular towers, and by the beautiful ruins of the 11th century church of San Bruzio a few miles outside the town walls. Further east, towards the border with Umbria, Saturnia has enjoyed fame since Roman times as a spa town. Nearby, next to an old mill, are the Cascade del Gorello, hot water cascades falling over whitened rock into naturally-formed pools. The Etruscan village of Pitigliano impresses with its dramatic position on a rocky outcrop, overlooking a gorge on three sides. Like Massa Marittima, Pitigliano is associated with an annual local festival—celebrating the joys of the Grape each September. In fact, quite a variety of festivals take place in Maremman localities throughout the year—from the summer marine festivities held in many coastal towns to the ro-deo at Albarese.

Tuscany's southern provinces offer a natural beauty and a rich cultural heritage that remain curiously underappreciated by many visitors to the region. Vineyards and olive groves crisscross woods of oak, chestnut and pine to form the fertile mosaic of the southern Tuscan landscape. The Val d'Orcia (Orcia River Valley), together with Tuscany's highest mountain, Monte Amiata,

(Continued on page 23)

Olive oil

Tuscany produces some of Italy's most prized olive oils. Late Autumn is the season for harvesting olives, and November brings many *sagre*, or local festivals, to celebrate the harvest. The olives are picked by hand to preserve the healthy condition of the trees (which can live to produce fruit for hundreds of years) and to prevent bruising of the olives. Like vintners, many Tuscan olive oil producers open their doors to visitors to tour the groves and sample the scrumptious product. If you are not already staying on one of Doorways' olive estates, check out the **Oliveto Fonte di Foiano** near Castagneto Carducci (along the coast south of Livorno) or the **Antico Frantoio Ravagni** near Anghiari (in the Valtiberina).

and the smaller Monte Cetona, provide some of the most wonderful natural scenery in all of Tuscany. Strikingly varied landscapes are also found just over the line in the region of Umbria, home to the huge Lake Trasimeno and the idyllic Monti Sibillini.

An abundance of natural hot springs scattered throughout the area have given rise to spa towns where local residents and visitors have long sought the health benefits of “taking the waters.” Among the southern Tuscan hills one also discovers a wealth of unspoiled hill towns and villages, endowed with vestiges of the region’s fascinating cultural history, from Etruscan times to the present. While enjoying these many attractions, visitors to southern Tuscany also benefit from extremely easy access to the larger Italian cities of Florence, Siena and Rome. Not only does the major A1 Highway cut straight through southern Tuscany on its way from Florence to Rome, but a major train line follows much the same course. Passengers boarding in the nearby town of Chiusi can find themselves in Rome in about an hour or Florence in an hour and a quarter.

Southeastern Tuscany

Cortona and the Valdichiana

Cortona is a perfectly preserved medieval jewel, rising so steeply from the surrounding terrain that many of its walkways are actually staircases cut into stone. Ample recompense for the climb is paid in panoramic views over the Tuscan plain known as the Valdichiana. Legend has it that Cortona is older than even Troy; in any case the town later joined Arezzo as part of the Etruscan Confederation, and Etruscan remains are found in its Museo dell’Academia Etrusca, as well as in a couple of tomb sites on the outskirts of town. Paintings by Cortona’s most prominent artist, Luca Signorelli, are displayed in the town’s exceptional Museo Diocesano, as are works by Fra Angelico and other masters.

Among other highlights of the Valdichiana is the town of Monte San Savino, where an open-air theater becomes the center of a wonderful summer sequence of events. July features open-air concerts and films; August brings more musical entertainment in the form of the Festival Musicale; and September is the moment for the traditional local *sagra*—an all-you-can-eat extravaganza featuring roast suckling pig. Monte San Savino is also a good place to buy pottery, which has been made locally for centuries. Lucignano, Foiano della Chiana and Castiglion



della Chiana and Castiglion

Truffles

A popular (and expensive!) treasure of Tuscany is the truffle. A truffle is a variety of mushroom that grows inexplicably around the roots of certain trees, in certain soils, under certain conditions, in very few areas of the world—truffles are impossible to farm. There are black truffles and white truffles; the black are rare, the white even more so. Tuscany has both. Truffle hunters use dogs to sniff out the precious fungi. In earlier days hogs were employed for the purpose, but the hogs had too much of a habit of wolfing them down immediately upon discovery!

Fiorentino are neighboring villages, each with its own unique charm. A particular specialty of the region is the very tender beef known as Chianina.

Montepulciano

The lively town of Montepulciano is distinguished by its several fine examples of Renaissance architecture, and no less by its acclaimed red wine, the *Vino Nobile di Montepulciano*. After touring the town’s architectural beauties, visitors won’t regret taking time to wander some of the quieter back streets and medieval alleyways as well. Montepulciano’s residents show a celebratory spirit each August with an exhibition of local handicrafts (the *Mostra Interregionale dell’Artigianato*) and a festival of the *Cantiere Internazionale d’Arte*, featuring plays, music and dance performances and art exhibits. Best of all, according to tradition, on the last Sunday of August representatives from each of the town’s eight districts compete in the *Bravio delle Botti*, a race uphill pushing an 80-kilo barrel!

Montalcino and the Abbazia di Sant’Antimo

Renowned for its quality wines—the *Brunello di Montalcino* and the fruitier *Rosso di Montalcino* (see the section on Tuscan wines)—this charming walled town is beautifully positioned, overlooking the acres of vineyards from which its signature product is cultivated. Once a continual focus of the medieval rivalry between Siena and Florence, Montalcino today is a decidedly peaceful place for a stroll. Though its winding streets can be steep, many offer picturesque views and lead, as often as not, past lovely gardens and orchards within the city walls. A 14th century Siennese fortress, the *Rocca*, is the most imposing of Montalcino’s attractions and is one of the finest standing examples of military architecture in Tuscany. The view from atop the fortress is spectacular. Visitors can purchase tickets for admission in the ground-floor *enoteca*—before or after indulging in a

sample or two of the local product.

Admission to the Rocca also includes admission to Montalcino's Museo Civico, which boasts an important collection of paintings from the Sienese school, among other works. Near the museum is Montalcino's main square (or triangle), the Piazza del Popolo, which features an inviting old-fashioned caffè where visitors can pause for a break and admire the Palazzo dei Priori across the way. Montalcino is also home to a number of interesting churches, but if you are in danger of what has been called "Stendhal syndrome"—that is if you can

see only so many churches or so many *anythings* in a day without being overwhelmed, save yourself for the 12th-century Benedictine abbey of Sant'Antimo, just outside of town. Set gracefully at the foot of a great hill, the abbey is notable for its Romanesque buildings and artful interiors. If you are lucky, you may arrive in time for a mass and enjoy the soothing tones of Gregorian chant.

(Continued on page 25)

Tuscan Festivals and Events

A great way to experience Tuscan culture first-hand is to attend one of the many festivals that always seem to be springing up all over the region. During festival times, towns really come to life, and, often, additional celebrations and markets are held concurrently on the side. Many towns hold a minor festival in every season. Following is a partial list of prominent Tuscan festivals. You can look at the official web site of the Regione Toscana, www.regione.toscana.it for more information. Click on "turismo" and then on the big waving English flag for the version in English. There you will find a list of all the special events in Tuscany, with numbers to call.

Carnevale. February is the month of Carnevale. Viareggio is renowned throughout Italy for its amusing floats, often inspired by topical themes, but there are many opportunities to enjoy the carnival celebration all over Tuscany. The dates vary every year with Easter.

Lo Scoppio del Carro (Florence). On Easter Sunday, Lo Scoppio del Carro is the "Explosion of the Cart" in Florence's Piazza del Duomo. An 18th century gilded cart is pulled to the cathedral doors by white oxen, and a dove-shaped rocket swoops down a wire from above the high altar inside to ignite fireworks hidden in the cart. It is believed that a successful fireworks display means a good harvest.

Balestra del Girfalco (Massa Marittima). The "Falcon Contest" is held the first Sunday after May 22, and the first Sunday in August. The contest itself, preceded by a long procession of local citizens in dazzling Renaissance costumes, is a test of ancient battle skills, between teams representing the town's three traditional districts.

Calcio in Costume (Florence). Three times in June, ending June 24th, Saint John the Baptist Day. A soccer game in costume, usually held in Piazza Santa Croce. This ancient game is a combination of soccer and rugby and involves four teams of 27 men. Each team represents a medieval district of the town. Play is very violent and supporters are very partisan.

Gioco del Ponte (Pisa). Held the last Sunday in June, the "Game of the Bridge" is a battle in Renaissance costume between the Pisans who live north of the river Arno and those who live south. Both sides struggle to push a seven-ton carriage over the historic Ponte di Mezzo.

Festival Pucciniano (Torre del Lago Puccini, near Lucca). Each August fans of Puccini celebrate with performances of the composer's operas in an open-air theater by the lake where he lived.

Giostra del Saracino (Arezzo). On the first Sunday of September, the "Joust of the Saracen" is held in Piazza Grande. This tournament dates back to the Crusades and the Middle Ages. There are lively and colorful processions to precede the event, in which eight costumed knights charge toward a wooden effigy of the Saracen. The aim is to hit the Saracen shield with a lance and then avoid a cat-o'-three-tails swinging back to unseat you.

Palio della Balestra (Sansepolcro). On the second Sunday of September, costumes, parades and flag throwing accompany a crossbow competition between Sansepolcro and the Umbrian town of Gubbio.

Luminara di Santa Croce (Lucca). On September 13th, the city's famous relic, the Volto Santo, believed by medieval pilgrims to be carved by Christ's follower, Nicodemus, at the time of the Crucifixion, is paraded around by torchlight.

Rassegna del Chianti Classico (Greve in Chianti). During the second week of September, Greve hosts the king of Tuscan wine festivals.

Pienza and the Val d'Orcia

Pienza is the largest of a host of delightful villages scattered throughout the lovely Val d'Orcia. ...Or, perhaps we should call it a *town*. Once known as Corsignano, the village was "transformed" during the 15th century by the architects of its native son Pope Pius II, who then made use of a papal bull to rename it Pienza. Highlights of this unique, "planned" Renaissance town are its huge Piazza Pio II and an impressive classically inspired Duomo. A leisurely drive through the Val d'Orcia is an invitation to many wonderful discoveries—from tiny villages centered around once-splendid medieval castles to hot springs formerly frequented by the ancient Romans.

At Bagno Vignoni one finds an enchanting piazza where warm, sulphurous waters from a nearby hot spring bubble up into a pool constructed long ago by the Medici family. Following the mountain road to Monte Amiata's summit, one gains a view not only of the Val d'Orcia but of two vast valleys on the mountain's other side, the Fiora and the Paglia. On a clear day the panorama encompasses the Tyrrhenian coast and the islands of Elba and Corsica, as well as the towns of Siena, Cortona and Orvieto and the lakes of Trasimeno and Bolsena. Of the numerous castles found in the area, Rocca di Tentennano stands out, towering impressively over the tiny medieval village of Rocca d'Orcia.

Cetona

Near the east end of the Val d'Orcia sits the beautifully preserved medieval village of Cetona and the mountain bearing the same name. Cetona's streets are a joy to climb, including a walkway along the walls of the village castle, the "Rocca." After thus soaking up the atmosphere, visitors may wish to explore two wonderful local museums.

The Museo Civico per la Preistoria documents the presence of humans on Monte Cetona from the Paleolithic to the Bronze Age, while the Belverde Archeological Park is the site of an important Bronze Age excavation on Monte Cetona itself. While on the mountain, take time to wander delightful walking paths and explore the cave.

Thermal Baths and Spa Towns

Scattered across Tuscany are a multitude of natural hot springs. Many were discovered as early as Roman times and became centers of healthy hygiene and social activity. And many continue to flourish today as spa towns. If you'd like to "take the waters" as the ancient Romans did, here are a few places you might try...

Montecatini Terme	Between Florence and Lucca
Terme di Petriolo	South of Siena
Terme di Bagni di Lucca	Garfagnana, north of Lucca
Terme di Saturnia	Maremma area
San Casciano dei Bagni	Near Cetona, South-eastern Tuscany
Bagno Vignoni	Maremma area



"Southern Sisters"

The Village of Cetona

At the very southern tip of Tuscany lies a trio of sister villages—Sovana, Pitigliano and Sorano—set into volcanic rock. (Pitigliano is also mentioned in the section on the Maremma—as southeastern Tuscany can be considered to overlap with that southwestern coastal area.)

All three villages are thick with atmosphere and surrounded with Etruscan tombs. Tiny Sovana reveals some interesting sights, including the glorious Romanesque church of Santa Maria and a wonderful 8th - 12th century Duomo. Pitigliano is most remarkable for its spectacular position on a rocky spur overlooking a gorge. Its medieval stone houses, dominated by the cathedral bell tower, give the impression that they are growing out of the surrounding rocks and wild vegetation. A maze of tiny medieval streets passes through the Jewish ghetto, formed when a community of Jews fleeing Catholic persecution took refuge here during the 17th century. Sorano is distinguished by an old

Orsini fortress surmounted by a clock tower, known as the Masso Leopoldino.

Did you know that it was the *Tuscans* who taught the *French* how to cook? French cuisine as we know it was founded in the court of Henry II, whose kitchen was staffed with Tuscan cooks imported by his Florentine wife, Catherine de Medici. The genius of Tuscan cooking is simplicity. Fancy sauces aren't needed to hide the food because Tuscans use pure strong flavors and the freshest of ingredients. Sparing use is made of a few seasonings: salt and pepper, basil, rosemary, sage and oregano. Tuscan olive oil is of course one of the finest in the world,

and its use is essential to the Tuscan cuisine. Only extra-virgin olive oil (which comes from the first, cold pressing of the olives) is used for cooking.

The Tuscan Meal

The typical Tuscan meal is composed of an *antipasto* (appetizer), a *primo piatto* (first course), a *secondo piatto* and *contorno* (second course with accompaniments), a *dolce* (dessert), *caffè* and *ammazzacaffè* (an after dinner liqueur).

A Tuscan *antipasto* will often be *Crostini Toscani*—pieces of toasted bread topped with garlic and olive oil or spread

Thematic Itineraries

Since there is so much to see in Tuscany, it can be helpful and enjoyable to arrange your excursions according to some topic of personal interest. Below are a couple of suggested itineraries that allow visitors to immerse themselves in one aspect of the local culture while also seeing some of Tuscany's foremost attractions.

Tour of the Pieve and Convents

(A *pieve* is a country church, usually Romanesque, often found just outside of a Tuscan town or village.)

Southeastern Tuscany

Collegiata San Quirico d'Orcia
Pieve di Corsignano, Pienza
Monte Oliveto Maggiore, Buonconvento
Abbazia di Farneta, near Cortona
Le Celle dei Cappuccini, Cortona
Abbazia di San Antimo, Montalcino

Northeastern Tuscany

Pieve di Gropina, Loro Ciuffenna
Pieve di Gaville, Figline Val d'Arno
Pieve di San Pietro a Cascia, Reggello
Monastero di Vallombrosa
Pieve di Romena, Casentino
La Verna, Casentino
Hermitage of Camaldoli, Casentino

Chianti and Environs

Pieve di S. Appiano, Barberino Val d'Elsa
Badia a Coltibuono, near Radda
Badia a Passignano, near Tavarnelle Val di Pesa
Pieve di San Donato in Poggio
Abbadia Isola, Monteriggioni
Pieve di Cellole, near San Gimignano

Southwest of Siena

Abbazia di San Galgano

Pisa Area

San Pietro in Grado
Certosa di Pisa

Etruscan and Roman Tour

(The Blue Guide to Tuscany is a good basic source of information about the Etruscan and Roman sites in the region. Of course, there are also books written exclusively on the subject., and information is available at local APT offices.)

Near Florence

Fiesole - Roman theater, baths and temple. Etruscan walls and other remains. Museum.
Florence - The most complete collection of Etruscan artifacts (at the Archeological Museum).
Castellina in Chianti (Radda) - Remains of a well and walls. Etruscan tomb at Montecalvario, outside of town.

Southeastern Tuscany

Cortona - Impressive Etruscan museum, tombs in environs.
Chiusi - Museum, tombs.
Pitigliano - Museum w/finds from nearby necropolis.
Sovana - Museum, necropoli in environs.

Maremma

Roselle - Important Etruscan excavation.
Vetulonia - Important Etruscan excavation.
Populonia - Etruscan and Roman excavations. Museum.
Campiglia Marittima - Mine-museum with Etruscan, Medieval and XIX Century excavations and techniques.

West of Chianti

Volterra - Museum. Necropolis. Etruscan gate. Roman theater and bath.

Neighboring Regions

Perugia & Orvieto (Umbria)
Civita di Bagnoregio and Tarquinia (Lazio)

with liver paste, olive paste, anchovy paste or mushroom paste, and *Affettati Misti*—a mixed dish of different kinds of salami.

About Tuscan Food and Wine

A typical first course might be the *Ribollita* or *Pappa al Pomodoro* (see side bar for the recipes!), or perhaps *pappardelle* (wide noodles) with wild boar or hare sauce, or *pici* (thick spaghetti) with tomato and garlic or wild boar or hare sauce.

For a second course we suggest you try the *trippa alla Fiorentina*—tripe prepared in the Florentine style, the *baccala' alla Livornese*—dried salt cod, most often prepared with garlic, parsley and tomatoes, or *cinghiale*—wild boar meat. The *contorni*, or side dishes, are usually grilled or boiled vegetables or the very popular *fagioli all'uccelletto*—a combination of beans in tomato sauce. Bistecca alla Fiorentina has long been a favorite, but is mentioned by the government's warning about mad cow disease.

Tuscany is not known particularly for its desserts; often, international favorites like *crème caramel* or *tiramisu* (originally from Northern Italy) are found in Tuscan restaurants. However, Tuscany does have a few tasty desserts of its own, including *castagnaccio*—a cake made with chestnut flour; *cantucci* or *biscotti* of Prato dipped in *Vin Santo*—specialty cookies dipped in a sweet dessert wine; or *pecorino* cheese with honey.

Tuscan Cheese

The most famous Tuscan cheese is the *pecorino Toscano*, made of sheep's milk. The *pecorino* from Pienza is considered by many to be the king of all sheep cheese. *Pecorino*—also called *cacio*—can be bought *fresco* (fresh), *semi stagionato* (partially aged), or *stagionato* (aged).

Music Festivals

Tuscany is alive with the sound of music in the summertime, as festivals spring up all over the land. Here are a few you might try to catch (for exact dates, check the English listings at www.regione.toscana.it)...

Florence	Maggio Musicale
Fiesole	<i>Estate Fiesolana</i>
Torre del Lago	Puccini Opera Festival
Badia a Passignano	Festival di Pentecoste
Siena	<i>Settimana Musicale Senese</i> (at the Chigiana)
Montepulciano	Summer Music Fest
La Foce	<i>Incontri in Terra di Siena</i> (chamber music fest)



stagionato (aged). Many *pecorini* are dusted with various ingredients to keep them soft and give them slightly varied tastes, as, for example, the *pecorino sotto cenere* (with ash coating), *pecorino peperoncino* (with hot peppers) and *pecorino tartufato* (with truffles). Some cheese makers mix the ingredients directly into the cheese, but others claim this spoils the purity of the *pecorino*. Go for a *pecorino* tasting and decide for yourself.

Tuscan Wines

As far as is known, Tuscany has been producing wine since Etruscan times. Some of the region's red wines are famous world wide, like the *Brunello di Montalcino* or the *Chianti Classico*, but there are also good Tuscan white wines, like the *Vernaccia di San Gimignano* and the *Bianco di Pitigliano*. Most Tuscan reds are based on *Sangiovese*, an excellent variety of grape that can produce reasonable wine quite easily but is difficult to master. Blending in small quantities of other grapes (often *Canaiole*, *Mammolo* or *Ciliegiolo*) for added complexity is common practice. Traditional white grapes are *Trebbiano* and *Malvasia*. Recent years have seen many experiments in Tuscany with non-traditional varieties of grapes, particularly the reds, *Cabernet Sauvignon*, *Merlot* and *Syrah*, and the whites, *Cabernet* and *Sauvignon* (though some traditionalists argue that the trend toward innovation is not a step forward).

The first standards for wine classification were defined in the early 1960s, with the categories "VdT," *vino da tavola* (table wine) and "DOC," *denominazione di origine controllata* (controlled denomination of origin). A third, and supposedly superior, category, "DOCG" (the added g stands for *garantita*, or guaranteed), was defined in

Vin Santo

Vin Santo is a special, traditional, sherry-like wine produced all over Tuscany, and often served for dessert in delicious combination with almond *biscotti* called *cantucci*. Theories differ about the origin of the name, but it probably stems from an early association of Vin Santo with Holy Week and a customary use of the wine in Catholic Masses. To produce Vin Santo, *Trebbiano* or *Malvasia* grapes are semi-dried, pressed and then aged in wooden casks for at least three—but up to twenty—years, before bottling.

the early 1980s. As producers became increasingly experimental and innovative and championed quality as the industry ethos, many ignored these classifications, striving to make the best wines possible, regardless. A new category, "IGT," *indicazione geografica tipica* (typical geographic indication) covers broadly regional wine styles.

Vini Rossi

Chianti, *Chianti Classico*, *Brunello di Montalcino*, *Vino Nobile di Montepulciano*, *Sassicaia*, *Ornellaia*. Isn't that enough to make any wine lover happy? In fact, Tuscany produces some of the best Italian wines. *Chianti* is produced in a wide area around Tuscany, but probably the best is produced in the area between Florence and Siena called *Chianti Classico*, or, as the black rooster on

the bottle shows, *Gallo Nero*. If you are staying in Chianti, you will have been given or can get a detailed map of the Chianti region listing all the *Chianti Classico* wineries on the back and pinpointing them on the front. *Sangiovese* grapes are the main constituency of *Chianti*. Small quantities of other grapes are also included. In the mid-19th century the Baron Bettino Ricasoli laid down his formula for the wine, which included the red grape, *Canaiolo*, and the white grapes, *Trebbiano* and *Malvasia*. However, the *Sangiovese* content is most prominent, at 75 - 90%. The *Brunello di Montalcino*, another DOCG wine, is made exclusively from the *Brunello* grape, a clone of the *Sangiovese*. It is aged a minimum of four years, at least the first three of which are in wood. It is slow maturing and long-lived, giving slightly fruity, powerful, intensely flavorsome, complex red wines. Nearly all *Brunello* producers also make *Rosso di Montalcino*—another DOC wine exclusively from *Brunello* grapes—which is younger (one year's minimum aging), livelier, less intense and more overtly fruity, yet still refined and fairly concentrated.

Another pair of great wines is produced in Montepulciano, both from a blend dominated by *Sangiovese* (locally known as *Prugnolo*) with *Canaiolo*, or sometimes *Mammolo*, and, optionally, small quantities of the white grapes *Trebbiano* and *Malvasia*. The *Vino Nobile di Montepulciano* is aged for a minimum of two years, three for the *Riserva*. A DOC wine, the *Rosso di Montepulciano*, is also produced, not only satisfying the need

Gardens of Tuscany

Many of Tuscany's lovely private gardens are open to visitors, some with regular hours and some by appointment. Following are a few you might like to visit. (Entire books are written on this subject, but here are just a few of the nearby gardens.)

In & Around Florence

Giardino di Boboli
Giardino dei Semplici
Giardino dell'Orticoltura
Gardens at the Villa Di Castello and the Villa della Petraia

In the Mugello (north of Florence)

Castello del Trebbio (by private appointment)

In Lucca

Botanical Gardens
During the last ten days of May, Lucca comes alive with a "Villas in Bloom" festival, held at the Villas Mansi, Torrigiani, Bruguier, Reale, Grabau and Oliva

Collodi

Villa Garzoni

Apuan Alps

Pania di Corfina

Pisa

Botanical Gardens

Between Pisa & Florence

Gardens at the Villa Medici of Cerreto Guidi

Siena

Botanical Gardens
Gardens at the Villas of Villa di Vicobello, Celsa, and Cetinale (by previous appointment)

San Quirico d'Orcia

The Horti Leonini

Pienza

Garden at Palazzo Piccolomini

Val d'Orcia

La Foce

Shopping for Gifts

Many Tuscan towns and villages are associated with a special, traditional form of craftsmanship, practiced by local artisans for centuries. Such handmade items naturally make special gifts to take home to family and friends. Below are some suggestions for artisan-made gifts, and their places of origin, to aid you in your shopping adventures. (Some food specialties are included, but only for those foods that are well preserved and contained for easy transport.)

Alabaster carvings	Volterra
Bone-handled pocket knives	Scarperia
Bronze, clay and marble sculpture	Pietrasanta
Engraved pottery	Monte San Savino
Glassworks	Empoli
Glazed pottery	Montelupo
Goldsmithery, mosaico fiorentino	Arezzo
Hand-loomed textiles	Stia
Hand-made soaps and liqueurs	Camaldoli (monastery)
Herbal extracts and remedies	Monte Oliveto Maggiore (monastery)
Honey (also wine—See Tuscan Wines)	Montalcino
Leather goods and hand-marbled paper	Florence
Olive oil	Lucca
<i>Panforte</i> and <i>ricciarelli</i> (confections)	Siena
Pottery	Impruneta
Wood crafts and natural textiles	Anghiari
Wood crafts and terracotta	Cortona

for a more youthful, fruitier style, but also helping to ensure that only the best grapes go into the *Vino Nobile*. The area around Bolgheri, on the Tuscan coast, is home to some of the most famous (and expensive) Tuscan wines. The well-known names of *Sassicaia* and *Ornellaia* are simply the names of the producer, while the denomination *Rosso di Bolgheri*, a DOC area, was created so that the producers could fit into the system. Its controls are stricter than most with regards to yield, but much looser on grape variety. *Bolgheri Rosso* can contain up to 70% *Sangiovese*, 70% *Merlot* or 80% *Cabernet Sauvignon*, allowing a wide variation of styles.

Vini Bianchi

Tuscan white wines are generally less interesting than the reds, although some areas produce very nice white wines. The most famous is the *Vernaccia di San Gimignano*, produced in the hills around San Gimignano from *Vernaccia* grapes. The white wine produced in the *Chianti* area, generally made using *Trebbiano* grapes, is called *Galestro* or *Bianco della Toscana*. A particularly good white, the *Bianco di Pitigliano*, is produced in Maremma, using *Trebbiano* grapes with a host of other

varieties like *Greco*, *Malvasia*, *Grechetto*, *Sauvignon* or *Pinot Bianco*.

Take about \$50 worth of Euros, some U.S. dollars travelers' checks and some cash in U.S. dollars with you on your flight. Plan to exchange at the airport, where the rate is usually very good. If you arrive on a weekend, exchange enough money to last until Monday. A quick rule of thumb to convert Euros to dollars is to multiply the Euros by 90%. Dollars and Euros are very roughly equal; however at the time of this writing, Euros are slightly higher. If something costs 10 Euros, it would cost approximately \$9.00. Once your visit is under way, it is best to exchange money at a bank. Cash machines are becoming widely available in Italy and some offer a menu for language selection. Cash machines give you the best exchange rate, so be sure to bring your PIN numbers and cards connected with Cirrus or one of the other large networks. Banking hours vary, but the usual hours of business for the banks in towns is 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and 2:45 p.m. to 3:45 p.m. Some do not re-open in the afternoon. Many Italian banks have metal detector booths at the door for security purposes. Leave all parcels in the lockers provided and follow the instructions for entrance, one person at a time.

Practical Recommendations for Day-to-Day Living in Tuscany

Banking and Money Management

Stores are usually open from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and again from 3:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Many are closed on Sundays and Mondays. During the summer, afternoon hours are sometimes pushed back to 4:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m., and certain shops choose to remain open on Mondays. Most shops accept major credit cards. In larger towns, many *supermercati* (supermarkets) remain open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily except Sundays, and some have Sunday morning hours. (Please refer to the Doorways Restaurant Guide for business hours of restaurants.)

We suggest that all U.S. citizens carry an international driver's license to drive in Italy, along with a valid U.S. state driver's license. Technically, you are supposed to carry an Italian translation of the license, but no one we know has ever been asked for it. Seat belts must be worn. Do not be startled if you are stopped by *carabinieri* (police) with machine guns. Routine spot checks are

not uncommon. Your papers will be examined and then you will be waved on. Carry the rental car papers with you at all times, in the car when you are driving and with you when you are parked. (In the unlikely event that you cannot find your parked car, because you are lost or because the car has been stolen or towed, it is very helpful to have the papers with you.) The minimum age for renting a car in Italy is 21 years. The renter must carry a major credit card. A list of rental agencies in Tuscany is provided in the Useful Numbers section of this guide.

Driving in Italy

Driving rules are similar to those in the U.S., and international road signs are used throughout Italy. Certain areas of towns are marked *Zona di Silenzio*, which means, "Do not use your horn." Speed limits on *autostrade* (toll highways) are 130 kph (81 mph) on weekdays and 100 kph (62 mph) on weekends. In the countryside the speed limit is 90 kph (56 mph) and in urban areas 50 kph (31 mph). You can use your credit cards

to pay tolls by entering the lane marked with blue hash marks that says *VIACARD*, inserting your ticket and then your credit card. Do not get stuck in a *TELEPASS* lane, as these are fast lanes for people with bar-coded stickers.

Business Hours

Benzina (gasoline) is about three times as expensive in Italy as in the U.S. (Unleaded is *benzina senza piombo*; diesel is *gasolio*.) On the *autostrade* most filling stations accept credit cards and are open 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. However, once you are on smaller roads, filling stations close for 2 - 3 hours midday and again at 7 p.m. and are usually closed on Sundays. Credit cards are not honored at a few of the rural filling stations. Some service stations have automatic pumps, which accept Euro bills, but the mechanism is particular about accepting a bill that is creased or torn. You will have to resort to the automated pumps if you are on empty at lunch time, but the experience can be so frustrating that we recommend that you fill up weekdays during the

(Continued on page 31)

More to Explore...



Sometimes, in relying on travel guides to orient us in a new and unfamiliar place, we begin to assume that anything that has escaped the writer's mention must not be worth seeing.

Though this may perhaps be true in some places, it is certainly not the case in Tuscany, where no book could begin to capture all the magic and the beauty. We encourage you in your travels to stray off the beaten track, to trust your own sense of what is beautiful and to share with us your favorite discoveries. Though this Welcome to Tuscany guide brings to your attention many of Tuscany's most celebrated attractions, the region's countless beautiful villages may unavoidably get short shrift. Following is a supplemental list of some lovely villages not detailed in this guide, which we nonetheless recommend to the inspired explorers among you.

Chianti and Siena Province
Casole d'Elsa
San Casciano in Val di Pesa

Around Florence
Artimino
Borgo San Lorenzo
Scarperia
Vicchio

Around Lucca and Pisa
Castiglione di Garfagnana
Collodi
Cutigliano
Uzzano
Vicopisano

Around Arezzo
Foiano della Chiana
Loro Ciuffenna
Lucignano

Southern Tuscany
Abbadia San Salvatore
Ansedonia
Arcidosso
Castiglione d'Orcia
Montemerano
Radicofani
San Quirico d'Orcia

morning or Saturdays at a station that honors your credit card. Be sure to fill your tank before returning your car and keep that last day receipt. Should you be charged a re-fueling fee unfairly, we can help you receive a refund with this receipt as proof.

Driving in Italy can be a bit hair-raising at times. If you encounter a car coming the opposite way on a narrow road, we suggest you slow down or even stop as you pull over to the side. Let the other car maneuver by—Italians are more accustomed to it than we are! If you should be involved in an *incidente* (accident), the police can be reached by calling 112 or 113 from wherever you are. If you have rented your car through Doorways, complete insurance is included, so you only need to return your rental car to the nearest rental office to exchange for an undamaged car. (By the way, *accidente* is not an Italian word for accident, but a curse, as in, "damnit!") Note that AutoEurope has an 800 number you can call free from Italy to report problems 24 hours a day (see "Car Rental Agencies").

Holidays

Banks, shops, post offices, public offices and most museums are closed on public holidays. Below is a list of official holidays in Italy for 2009.

January 1 New Year's Day

The Sagra

A *sagra* is a festivity held in a particular town, usually celebrating a special product of the local land, often accompanied by lots of eating, drinking and merry-making. Every village and town in Tuscany has its own *sagra*. A few are listed below.

Sagra Musicale Lucchese (Lucca). From April to early July an extensive festival of sacred music is held in the city's numerous Romanesque churches.

Sagra del Tordo (Montalcino). On the last Sunday of October, the "Festival of the Thrush," held in the 14th century *fortezza*, is an archery contest undertaken in traditional costume by members of the town's four *contrade*. The contest is accompanied by considerable consumption of the local Brunello wine and of charcoal-grilled thrush.

Mostra Mercato del Tartufo Bianco (San Miniato). On late November weekends, truffle lovers gather to celebrate the white truffle, plentiful around San Miniato. Stands sell many food items flavored with the truffles and local restaurants offer special menus featuring the delicacy.

January 6	Epiphany Day
April 12	Easter
April 13	Easter Monday
April 25	Liberation Day
May 1	Labor Day
June 24	St. John's Day (in Florence)
August 15	Assumption Day
November 1	All Saints' Day
December 8	Immaculate Conception
December 25	Christmas Day
December 26	St. Stephen's Day

Laundry

Establish with your host the best approach for doing laundry. We have asked owners with machines on the premises to do laundry for their guests. Expect to pay \$8 - \$10 per load because of the high cost of utilities. Italian washing machines operate very differently, so don't attempt to do it without good instructions. Some machines have a "cook" cycle, which actually boils the clothes. A load of wash typically take 2-1/2 - 4 hours, unlike the 30 - 45 minutes typical in the U.S. Clothes will usually be dried outdoors since dryers are uncommon. Remember the limitations on electricity in a villa require that you use no more than two major appliances at once. Do not bake when you are laundering if the pool pump is going!

Self-service laundromats are just becoming available in Italy. In Florence, for instance, there are several coin-operated laundromats dispersed throughout the center of the old city (consult the English Yellow Pages, available in book stores). Other larger towns will have them as well. If you cannot find a coin-operated laundromat, leave your clothing at a laundry/dry cleaner. Prices are high, but the laundry will be nicely done. You can save money by requesting that the clothes be laundered but not ironed.

Open-air markets are wonderful for browsing and getting a good dose of local color. Virtually every small town in Tuscany has a weekly open-air market, where fruits and vegetables, cheese, meat, clothing, shoes, toys and other goods are sold. Larger cities like Florence have daily markets, often several in different locations. Some are aimed specifically at tourists, like Florence's San Lorenzo Market—a few steps away from the Duomo—but others are centuries-old local traditions. Most markets open in the morning and are closed by 1:00 p.m. Below is a partial list of general market days for a number of towns in Tuscany.

Market Days

Arezzo	Saturday
Barberino Val d'Elsa	Saturday
Castellina in Chianti	Saturday
Castelnuovo Berardenga	Thursday
Cetona	Saturday
Colle di Val D'Elsa	Friday
Empoli	Thursday
Florence (Cascine)	Tuesday
Greve in Chianti	Saturday
Impruneta	Saturday
Lucca	Wednesday, Saturday
Lucolena	Sunday
Poggibonsi	Tuesday
San Casciano	Monday
San Donato	Friday
San Gimignano	Thursday
San Polo	Thursday
Siena	Wednesday
Tavarnelle	Thursday

Postal Service... Letters, Postcards and Stamps

The best way to send a postcard is using the *posta prioritaria*. You can buy stamps at the *ufficio postale* (post office), in some bars or in a *tabaccheria* (convenience store) that has the sign *Valori Bollati*. Ask for a *francobollo per cartolina per gli Stati Uniti* (stamp for postcard for the United States). Post offices are usually open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.; some close during the lunch hours.

Public Transportation

Trains

The Italian rail system (*Ferrovie dello Stato*, or *FS*) is quite extensive and offers an excellent means of transportation between towns located along rail lines. A schedule called the *Pozzorario* is issued every June and October and can be purchased at newsstands and train stations (Tuscan schedules are covered in the *Pozzorario* designated "*Nord e Centro Italia*"); or, for information, schedules and rates before you leave the U.S., call Doorways, Ltd 800-261-4460 or visit our website,

villavacations.com and then click on "Travel Links" then Rail Europe. Train tickets can be bought from Doorways before you leave or at the ticket desk or cash-only vending machines in the station. When boarding a train in any Italian city, you must "validate" your ticket (*convalidare il biglietto*) in one of the small yellow machines at the entrance to the platform. Failure to do so may result in a fine.

Types of Trains

Eurostar (ES). High-speed train between major cities, making no intermediate stops. Requires a reservation and payment of a supplement.

Intercity (IS)--sometimes called *Eurocity (EC)*. (For connections abroad.) High-speed train between major cities. Requires payment of a supplement but no reservation. (A reservation is advisable during high season.)

Interregionale. Train connecting major cities, but with many stops along the way. Does not require a reservation or a supplement.

Regionale. Train connecting towns within the same region, with many local stops. Does not require a reservation or a supplement.

Buses

Buses are also an efficient means of transportation, and the bus systems in Tuscany usually cover, between them, even the smallest hamlets—though for these the schedules are often limited, timed to coincide with the school day. Refer to the list in the section of this guide entitled Useful Numbers for numbers of major bus lines. You will need to have a ticket before you get on a bus. Tickets may be purchased at most any bar, tobacco shop (look for the T outside the door) or bus terminal. The cost depends on the distance between towns. Bus schedules are given in terms of *giornaliero* (every day), *feriale* (work days, including Saturday unless it says *escluso sabato*), and *festivo* (Sundays and holidays).

Other Options

If you are planning day trips including several small towns in one day, public transportation will not be as efficient as renting a car (please see the section on "Driving in Italy," above, for more information on car rental). If you don't wish to drive or to use public transportation, you can hire a car with driver (Mundo Tours provides cars and English-speaking drivers for tours and transfers in and around Florence—phone: 055-598644/email: mundotours@dada.it), or join one of the bus group trips that run daily between the major tourist destinations.

(Continued on page 34)

Recipes

So, are you ready to try cooking the Tuscan way? That means simple, tasty, healthy dishes. Here are two typical Tuscan recipes: *Pappa al Pomodoro* and *Ribollita*. Both are soups incorporating the most typical Tuscan ingredients: unsalted Tuscan bread and Tuscan olive oil. *Ribollita* is mainly a winter dish, while *Pappa al Pomodoro* is most often prepared in summer, when the tomatoes are fresh and full of flavor. Remember that every restaurant, every family, even every person within the same family, has a different way to prepare these dishes; and, of course, everybody thinks that his way is the only right way, so feel free to experiment and to find your own right way, and be proud of it!

Pappa al Pomodoro

Make this dish in the height of summer when tomatoes are at their ripest and juiciest. Any other tomato will disappoint. Also, be sure your crusty loaf is very stale—otherwise it won't have the 'crumbly' texture that you are looking for here.

Ingredients:

1/4 cup olive oil
 1 large red onion, finely minced
 2 cloves garlic, finely minced
 2 pounds fresh summer tomatoes
 5 cups chicken stock
 10 slices 4-5 day old crusty Italian bread, cut into cubes
 2 cups fresh basil leaves
 salt and pepper
 olive oil to taste

Preparation:

Heat the oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the onions and garlic, stirring until they are soft. Stir in the tomatoes and chicken stock, and bring to a gentle boil. Cook, uncovered for 20 to 25 minutes. Add the bread, mix well, and cook another 20 to 25 minutes. Remove from the heat and whisk the soup until the bread is completely broken up into fine crumbs. Add the basil leaves, torn. Season with salt and pepper. Serve the soup hot or at room temperature, with a few drops of good olive oil.

Ribollita (Tuscan Vegetable and Bread Soup)

Tuscan cuisine is famous for giving new life to leftovers. This dish is a perfect example. An icon of Tuscan cuisine, *ribollita* literally means "reboiled." It's difficult to find an authentic *ribollita* because it takes three days to prepare. Minestrone is made the first day and eaten as is. The second day the leftover soup is layered with thin slices of bread (or toasted bread rubbed with garlic) and baked with thin slices of red onion on top. The third day the leftovers are reboiled.

Recipes for minestrone vary from region to region, restaurant to restaurant, and household to household. Most recipes are based upon regional produce. The most important ingredient in Tuscan minestrone is *cavolo nero*, or a winter black cabbage. Its leaves range in color from dark green to almost black. Though it once grew only in Tuscany, enterprising farmers in California's Salinas Valley are now growing it along with Royal Rose radicchio. If you cannot find black cabbage, substitute kale, chard, or Savoy cabbage.

Here's the recipe!

4 tablespoons olive oil
 1 red onion, chopped
 1 leek, white part only, chopped
 1 garlic clove, chopped
 4 carrots, sliced into half-inch rounds
 4 zucchini, sliced into half-inch rounds
 One-quarter whole Savoy cabbage, shredded and chopped
 1 bunch *cavolo nero* or kale
 1 small bunch spinach, shredded and chopped
 4 potatoes, peeled and cut into one-half inch cubes
 1 cup green beans, cut into bite-sized pieces
 2 cups Tuscan white beans, one cup puréed and one cup whole
 1 teaspoon coarse sea salt or kosher salt
 4 tablespoons tomato paste
 1 pound stale Italian bread, sliced

Heat the olive oil in a large pot and sauté the onion and leek together over low heat until they begin to brown slightly. Add the garlic and sauté for one minute. Add all the remaining vegetables. Season with sea salt and stir to mix in the onions and leeks evenly. Cover and cook for 20 minutes or until the vegetables have reduced in volume by half. Stir again and cover with water to the top of the pot. The more water you add, the more broth you will have with the soup. Bring to a boil and then lower the heat. Add the tomato paste and stir to dissolve. Cover and cook the soup for one hour. Add the Tuscan beans. *Ecco il minestrone!* The next day, layer the soup in a deep baking dish with the stale bread, top with thinly sliced red onions, and bake. On the third day, if there's any soup left over, reboil the soup, stirring well to break up the bread slices. The soup should be thick enough to eat with a fork! It's served with the traditional drizzle of extra virgin olive oil on top.



Security Precautions

The Italian government recently cracked down on petty theft, and the problem is much improved from days past. However, be vigilant on buses and in crowds, and particularly if you are approached by gypsies—often children, sometimes with a woman nursing a baby. Before leaving home, make several copies of your passport. Leave one copy at home, send one to us at the Doorways office, and take another with you. Make a list of the numbers of your passport, bank account and credit cards, and of the phone numbers to call if they are stolen (or subscribe to a service which keeps your list of credit cards and take that number with you). List also your travelers' check numbers and store the lists in your suitcase with your passport copy.

Take a money belt or pouch and wear the bulk of your money, travelers' checks and credit cards under your clothes. Carry money for the day and one credit card in your wallet, backpack or pocket for convenience.

Telephoning/Useful Numbers

Telephoning

Note: Not all Italian phone numbers have the same number of digits. Also, sometimes you will see dashes and/or spaces between digits, sometimes not.

How to Dial

Example phone number: 0577-749-754 (0577 is the local area code)

To call from anywhere in Italy, including from within the local 0577 area code, dial the entire number, 0577-749-754. (The current local dialing system in Italy has been in place since 1998.)

To call from the U.S., add the international access num-

ber, 011, and Italian country code, 39, to the beginning of the number. So you will dial 01139-0577-749-754.

Calling From Your Villa or Apartment

Some of our apartments and villas do not have phones, but you can use your host's phone in case of emergency if you have a telephone credit card. Dial the access code, which is charged only as a local call, and then dial your number.

Major Access Codes

AT&T: 172-1011

MCI: 172-1022

Sprint: 172-1877

Wait for the English-speaking operator and place your call, charging it to your credit card. This is less expensive than dialing the U.S. international telephone code, 001.

If your apartment or villa has a phone, you are responsible for settling with your host before your departure (unless the phone is set for incoming calls only). Some phones are metered by units (read the number when you arrive and when you leave, then subtract and multiply by 0.20 Euros for the amount due); some are set up to be monitored by the Italian phone company. Discuss this with your landlord while (s)he is introducing you to your apartment. (One difference between Italy and the U.S. is that phone bills are not itemized. You will receive a total with no list of the numbers that were called. To have an accurate accounting, therefore, it is wise to use your credit card.)

Cell Phones

If you want a cell phone for your trip, Doorways can arrange to have one delivered to you. It comes complete with packing material to send it back the day you return home.

An alternative to renting one is to purchase an Italian

Bars

A *bar* in Italy is a different kind of establishment from an American bar. That is—in contrast to a *pub* or *club*, a bar is a casual spot, usually open all day (more like a *caffè*), where customers can enjoy a simple lunch or a pastry, as well as a choice of coffee drinks, wines and liqueurs. In most bars, one pays in advance for counter service, or sits at a table for wait service and pays after. (Table service is usually more expensive.)

cell phone in Italy.

Using Public Phones and the Internet

Larger cities have phone centers run by the post office, where you will find booths and an information desk with an English-speaking staff. Place your call and pay for it at the desk at the end of the call.

Public pay phones accept telephone calling cards, however many do not accept coins. Post offices, tobacco shops (marked with a black and white "T"), and magazine stands sell telephone calling cards, which look like credit cards with a magnetic strip on the back. They are available in units of 2.58 Euros, or 5.16 Euros (since the Italians use a period where we use a comma), which is equivalent to approximately \$2.50 or \$5. Simply break off the little corner of the new card, insert the card into a phone that has a phone card slot (not all do) and the magnetic strip will be used up as you talk. Start another card when the first is finished. These cards are handy for making local calls (to reserve for dinner, for instance).

In Florence and other larger cities, many cafés are beginning to offer Internet access. A sign to that effect is usually posted outside. If you prefer to carry your computer, prepare yourself in advance. Check www.batteries.com for the adapter to convert Italian phone plugs to American ones and also for the adapter

English-Language Publications and Web Sites

The **International Herald Tribune** publishes **Italy Daily**, an English-language supplement covering the major news stories.

Florence Today is the English version of an events-listing publication found in many hotel lobbies.

Firenze Spettacolo, the classic Florentine events magazine, has an English-language supplement called **Florescope**.

Chianti News is in both English and Italian.

In Lucca, look for a special monthly English-language publication called **Grapevine**.

Handy English content Web sites to keep in mind are www.initaly.com, www.Ulysses.it (for information on wine and wineries) and www.emmeti.it.

Other English literature and listings are available in local tourist offices.

for the electrical plug. Bring an extra long phone line. Most laptops already have electrical converters to compensate automatically for the difference in electrical current. Print out a list of access numbers and instructions before leaving the USA. For example, the access number for Florence for AOL is 055-501-5540. In the villa, when setting up, determine if your Italian phone tone line is pulse or touch-tone and set the computer accordingly. Many of the villas have pulse tone. Or, save all this aggravation and read e-mail at an Internet café! After all, you're on vacation!

Useful Phone Numbers

Emergency Numbers

(These numbers can be dialed, as listed, from anywhere in Italy.)

Public Emergency Assistance (State Police)	113
Immediate Action Service (<i>Carabinieri</i>)	112
Fire Department	115
Health Emergency	118
Road Help (Automobile Club Italia)	116

The Public Emergency Assistance, afforded by the State Police, and the Immediate Action Service, provided by the *Carabinieri*, operate on a 24-hour basis. Public Emergency Assistance is intended particularly for persons in danger or faced with natural calamities. An operator should be available to speak English (and other major foreign languages). Please use these numbers only in case of urgent need, such as medical emergencies or help after an accident.

Additional numbers in Florence:

Florence Central Police Station	055 49771
IAMAT (multilingual doctors)	055 475 411

Bus Lines

CAP Via Nazionale 13, Florence (055 214 637). Information & tickets: Largo Fratelli Alinari 10. Northern Tuscany. www.capautolinee.it

LAZZI Via Mercadante 2, Florence (055 363 041). www.lazzi.it

RAMA Via Topazio 12, Grosseto (0564 454 169). Grosseto and the Maremma. www.griforama.it

SITA Viale dei Cadorna 105, Florence (055 214 721). www.sita-on-line.it

TRAIN Strada Statale 73i, Siena (0577 204 111). Siena Province. www.trainspa.it

Car Rental Agencies

AutoEurope

Toll-free number to call from Italy to the USA (00 800 233 5555 5) in case of rental car problems with a car rented through AutoEurope (in Europe, you will pick up at Avis or Europcar). This number is also listed on your AutoEurope rental car voucher.

Avis

Florence Airport (055 315588)

Mon-Sun 8:00 a.m. - 11:00 p.m.

Florence Center City (055 213629)

Via Borgo Ognissanti 128R (near the train station)

Mon-Sat, 8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Sun, 8:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

Europcar

Florence Airport (055 318609)

9:00 a.m. - 6:15 p.m./8 p.m. - 10:45 p.m.

Florence Center City (055 2360072)

Via Borgo Ognissanti 53R (near the train station)

Mon - Fri, 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Sat & Sun, 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

(Closed Sunday, August - April)

Hertz

Florence Airport (055 307370)

Mon - Fri, 8:30 a.m. - 10:30 p.m.

Sat & Sun, 9:30 a.m. - 10:30 p.m.

Florence Center City (0552398205)

Via Maso Finiguerra 33 (near the train station)

Mon - Sat, 8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Sun, 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

(Winter: Sat 8:00 a.m. - 2 p.m./Sun, closed)

Taxi Companies

(Keep in mind that if you call for a cab, the meter starts running from the moment the taxi arrives at the pick-up destination. Give your pick-up address and you will be given a taxi code—the name or number of the cab—and an estimated pick-up time.)

Florence: 055 4499
055 4390

Siena: 0577 49222

Lucca: 0583 581 605
0583 494 989

Pisa: 050 541 600

Tourist Offices, or Aziende di Promozione Turistica (A.P.T.):

Scooter-mania

The presence of the scooter in Tuscany dates back to the days just after World War II, when a Tuscan firm called Piaggio introduced the *Vespa*-98. Ubiquitous today, the scooter has found favor among many segments of the Tuscan population, as a convenient and relatively inexpensive way to get about the narrow streets so common in Tuscan towns. Don't be surprised if that buzzing you hear is a *Vespa* going the wrong way on a one-way street!

Abetone-Pistoia-Montagna Pistoiese. Via Marconi 28, San Marcello Pistoiese
Tel. 0573 630145 www.pistoia.turismo.toscana.it

Amiata. Via Adua 25, Abbadia San Salvatore
Tel. 0577 775811 www.amiataturismo.it

Arcipelago Toscano. Via Carducci 150, Portoferraio, Elba
Tel. 0565 930727 www.aptelba.it

Arezzo. Piazza Risorgimento 116 - 52100 Arezzo
Tel. 0575-23952/3 Fax.0575-28042 www.ap.arezzo.it

Chianciano Terme-Valdichiana. Piazza Italia 67, Chianciano Terme
Tel. 0578 671122/23 www.chiancianotermeinfo.it

Firenze. Via Manzoni 16 - 50121 Firenze
Tel. 055-23320/Fax. 055-2346286

Firenze. Via Cavour, Palazzo Medici Riccardi (near the Accademia)
Tel. 055 290 832 www.firenzeturismo.it

Grosseto. Via Monterosa 206, Grosseto
Tel. 0564 462611 www.lamaremmafabene.it

(Continued on page 37)



Livorno. Piazza Cavour 6 – 57100 Livorno
Tel. 0586-204611 / Fax. 0586-896173
www.costadeglietruschi.it

Lucca. Vecchia Porta San Donato, Piazzale Verde – 55100 Lucca
Tel. 0583-419689/Fax. 0583-490766 www.luccatourist.it

Massa Carrara. Lungomare Vespucci 24, Marina di Massa
Tel. 0585 240046 www.aptmassacarrara.it

Montecatini Terme-Valdinievole. Viale Verdi 66, Montecatini Terme
Tel. 0572 772244 www.montecatini.turismo.toscana.it

Pisa. Via Matteucci-Galleria Gerace 14, 56124 Pisa
Tel. 050-929777/Fax. 050-929764
www.pisaturismo.it

Prato. Piazza del Duomo 8, Prato
Tel. 0574 35141 www.prato.turismo.toscana.it

Siena. Piazza del Campo 56, Siena
Tel. 0577-280551/Fax. 0577-281041 www.teresiena.it

Versilia. Piazza Mazzini 22, Viareggio
Tel. 0584 48881 www.aptvorsilia.it

The Italian Government Tourist Board can be found online at: <http://www.italiantourism.com>

Tipping

A service charge is, by law, included in the bill at restaurants. A per-person cover charge is usually included as well. Sometimes these charges are listed separately, sometimes not. It is usual to round up the total to the nearest convenient denomination over and above the standard service charge. If you are very happy with your service and wish to leave a special gratuity, 10% is perfectly adequate. Tips are usually given directly to the waitperson, not left on the table. You tell the waitperson how much you are giving when you pay the bill. This allows you to give the appropriate tip without fumbling for small change. For more tips on dining out, please refer to the Doorways Restaurant Guide.

A tip of 1 Euro is appropriate for a taxi ride. You may wish to tip a custodian or caretaker if (s)he has opened church doors for you outside of normal hours, and occasionally you will encounter a restroom attendant—if a tip dish is placed nearby, one Euro is appropriate.

Water

Water is at a premium in Tuscany, especially during the summer. Americans who are used to long showers will rapidly deplete the supply for the whole countryside estate. Please respect the difference in climate by shortening your shower. Conserve water when doing dishes or laundry. Purchase mineral water at restaurants when you are eating out and at the grocery store for drinking at home or in the car. Bottled water comes with carbonation (*con gas, gassata* or *frizzante*) or without (*senza gas, non-gassata* or *naturale*).

Weather and Dress

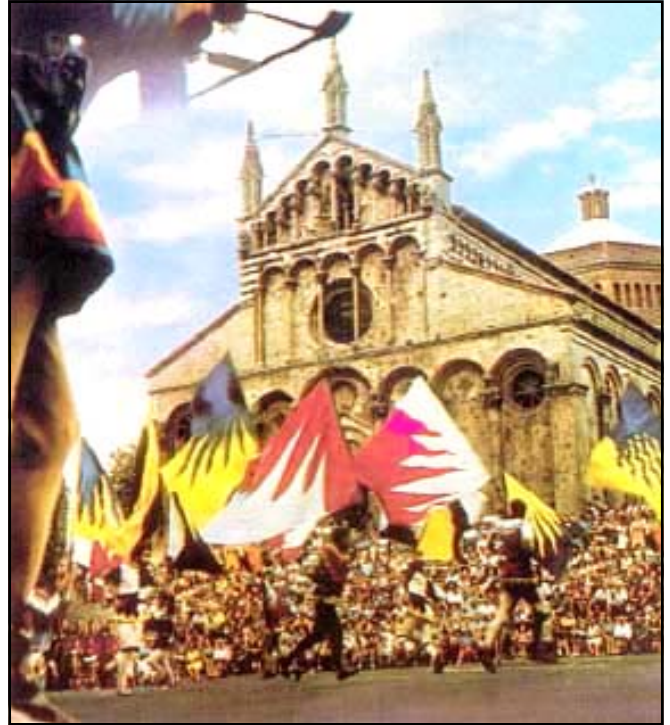
Spring comes a month earlier and winter a month later in Tuscany than in the northeastern United States. Tuscan winters are generally milder. Wisteria blooms in March! Pools open around June 1st and generally remain open until the end of October. Summers are hot and dry (air conditioning is unusual), so we do not recommend staying in Florence or Siena in July and August, but rather in the hilly Tuscan countryside.

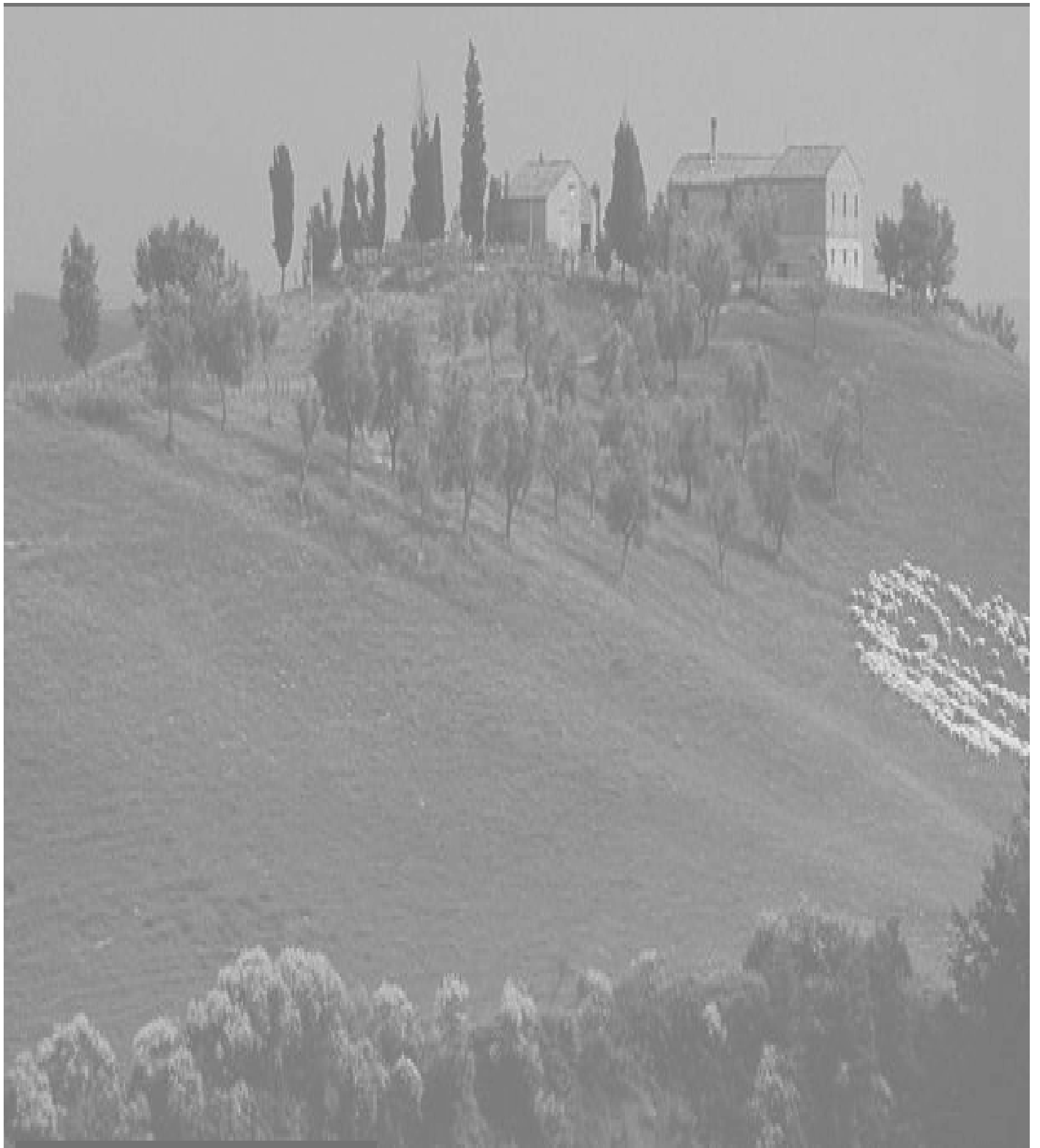
In the Chianti hills, you may even need a sweater for summer evenings! The very best times to visit Tuscany are during the spring (March - June) and fall (September - mid-November), when you should need only a raincoat with zip-out lining and a sweater. Informal wear is perfectly acceptable, especially in the summer in the country. Halter-tops and short shorts are not permitted in most churches, but skirt-like shorts are fine for women. It helps to carry a scarf to cover bare shoulders.

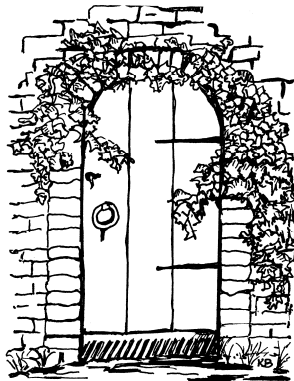
Please visit our website for more information:

www.villavacations.com

WELCOME TO TUSCANY







DOORWAYS, LTD.

900 County Line Road
Bryn Mawr, PA 19010

Phone: (610) 520-0806

Or: (800) 261-4460

Web site: www.villavacations.com