

IL FONTANILE

Villa Il Fontanile

The estate of Fontanile lies in an area called Maremma, a lesser known and therefore all the more captivating part of Tuscany extending south towards Latium.

One is almost tempted to believe that this untamed landscape owes its mystique to the lingering presence of the Etruscans, remembered for their peace loving and hedonistic way of life.

Over the past 15 years the area has become a favourite spot for a certain Italian intellectual elite seeking the charm of the Tuscan way of life enriched by the joys of an unspoilt seaside.

Surrounded by shady trees and an extensive gardens the Villa Il Fontanile is the heart of a 400 acres estate which stretches along the beaches of the Maremma. Built at the beginning of the 20th century, Fontanile was fully restored in 1998 and divided into four ample apartments. House and garden breathe a relaxed and informal atmosphere, a serenity which will immediately make you feel at ease.

The extensive garden surrounding the Villa was planned with a variety of 'rooms' and separate areas in order to guarantee guests a certain amount of privacy. A short distance from the main house lies a large pool - 18 x 6 m - surrounded by a lawn and fragrant bushes such as roses, lavender and rosemary. The pool is exposed to the south-west and catches the sun all day long.

The beach, three kilometres from the Villa, is of fine sand with a multitude of coloured shells. In the dunes along the beach 2 further houses are available for rent.

The layout of the apartments and houses is generous, the decor is friendly and comfortable, large windows light up the houses.

As far as modern comfort is concerned the houses leave nothing to be desired. Kitchens and bathrooms are new and fully equipped, mattresses are excellent, all houses have a dishwasher, a washing machine, a television and a telephone.

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DAILY LIFE

The closest village to Il Fontanile is Pescia Romana. Here you find all kind of shops. Supermarket, bank, post office, pharmacy, and a bar for the daily Capuccino.

Food shops: 8 am to 1 pm, 5 pm to 8 pm, in Pescia on Thursday afternoon food shops are closed.

The butcher is on the left hand side as you reach the village, before you get to the square.

Supermarket: is called DESPAR and is at the left hand side of the main square. It is opened daily except Sundays from 8am to 1 pm and from 5pm to 8 pm, closed on Thursday afternoon. The supermarket is fine for everything, but we suggest you get your bread and meat from the specialised shops in the village.

Shopping on a Sunday: in high season shops are open also on Thursday afternoon and Sunday morning.

Laundry Service: in the village of Pescia Romana there is a laundry service open every day from 9 till 12,30 and from 17 till 19,30. On Sunday it's closed all day long. This service is situated 50 mt from the baker.

Banks: 8.30. – 1.30, 14.45 – 15.45, Bancomat and cash on advance with credit cards. See the little map in the house to locate the bank.

Post office: again the closest PO, PT in Italian, is in Pescia Romana, open from 8 am to 1.30 pm from Monday to Saturday.

Doctor/pharmacy: in case of emergency please call 118. The hospital at Orbetello (30 minutes) has a first aid ambulance Tel. 0564 869111. The nearest pharmacy is in Pescia Romana.

Train: the nearest train station is at Montalto di Castro, which is at a distance of 15 minutes by car from the estate. A trip Montalto to Rome takes slightly over 1 hour. Trains to and from Rome leave regularly by the hour.

Car rental: in Orbetello, Signor Evio Pantanini, Via Dante,37
Tel. 0564 860233. Mobile: Mr. Lucio 335-1262996 or Mr. Renzo 335-7123173

Markets:

All villages and towns have a market once a week which usually lasts from 9 am to 12:30 pm. Markets are excellent for buying fruit and vegetable. They also have endless stalls with clothes, household ware and sometimes second hand clothes which can be fun. Pescia Romana on Monday, the market is in the square behind the butcher Nardi.

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Orbetello on Saturday is considered the best market, even though it is in a modern part of the town.

SPORTS

Tennis:

As you leave the village to drive on to the Aurelia you will find the modern church to your left, the bank behind yourself and the tennis courts to the right. Usually you can go there directly and play, booking ahead is not necessary. However the telephone number is 0766 831003. The costs vary according to the number of people playing and the time of the day.

Riding:

Torre Palazi near Capalbio 15 Km far from here. Contact Fabrizio on mobile phone: 338 6179374.

Golf:

There are three golf courses in the region.

In Tuscany:

The Golf Club Maremmello, 20 min away, has 9 holes, Par 70. tel. 0564 886217

The famous Punta Ala Club is 1 hour by car, it has 18 holes, Par 72.

You have to be member of a club, bring membership card along, which should indicate your handicap. It has 18 holes, PAR 72 – S.S.S.72.

The telephone number is 0564 922121, they speak English and German.

In Lazio:

Tarquinia Country Club, ½ hour drive, tel. 0766-812109

9 buche. Par 70

Please book ahead

Restaurant and pool on the premises

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Wine and food

The area has many appealing restaurants and trattorias of which you will find a list in the house. The gastronomical traditions of the Maremma are rich and varied, fresh vegetables, tender salads, ripe tomatoes and artichokes, „tortelli di ricotta e spinaci“ (large home made tortellini), „zuppa di funghi“ (mushroom soup), wild boar and excellent fish dishes as for instance „spaghetti allo scoglio“, Pecorino - the local sheep cheese which can be bought directly from a nearby producer. The local red wine - Morellino di Scansano - has lately been gaining considerable attention from connoisseurs all over the world. Many famous wine producers from northern Tuscany have bought farms in the area as they believe in the enormous potential of the Maremma.

RESTAURANTS IN THE SURROUNDINGS

Restaurants on the beach

La Selva

At 10 minutes drive from the estate. At the gate turn right, then right again at the first crossing, direction Chiarone, a small train station. After the station stick to the right when the road divides into two and then turn left at the first crossing, taking the road running parallel to the coastline until you reach La Selva. Booking is necessary as this restaurant is very popular, being nice without being too expensive. Tel 0564-890381. This restaurant is not directly on the beach.

Ultima Spiaggia

At 10 minutes drive from the estate. At the gate turn right, then right again at the first crossing, direction Chiarone, a small train station. After the station turn to the left following the signs to Ansedonia, drive under the railway and turn to the left again (sign says Graticciara), following the road until you reach a parking. The restaurant is on the beach. This is one of Italy's most fashionable beaches, so please book ahead. Tel 0564-890295

Carmen Bay

Also on the beach a little further down than „ultima spiaggia“. At the gate turn right, then right again at the first crossing, direction Chiarone, a small train station. After the station turn to the left following the signs for Ansedonia, drive under the railway and turn to the right still towards Ansedonia. Keep going for some time – approx. 7 kms - and before a sharp curve to the right, keep going straight ahead, and watch out for a sign „Macchia Tonda“. In June and September this restaurant is open for lunch, in July and August also in the evenings. Tel. 0564-893196 Mobile 338-6443613

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Ansedonia

Il Pescatore , via del Gelsomino 2

To reach Ansedonia, at the gate turn right, then right again at the first crossing, direction Chiarone, a small train station. After the station turn to the left following the signs for Ansedonia, drive under the railway and turn to the right still towards Ansedonia. This is a lovely road. You will reach Ansedonia after about 10 minutes drive. Follow the signs to the restaurant Il Pescatore. In July and August book ahead. They are never shut and their telephone number is 0564-882009.

Capalbio

Ristorante Tullio, Via Nuova 25, as you drive up to the old village on the right. Has a garden, excellent typical Tuscan food (no fish) and good wine list. Closed on Wednesdays.

Tel 0564-816196

Da Maria, via Nuova 3, on the square in front of the main door of the village wall. The first restaurant which opened in Capalbio. Unfortunately no garden.

Excellent food, good service and wine list.. Closed on Tuesday. Tel 0564-896014

Whithin the village walls you will find a number of nice restaurants.

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Surroundings

Distances

Siena and Rome can be reached in one and a half hours by car and are therefore ideal day trips.

Florence can be reached in 2,5 hours. In less than 1 hours drive you will reach Grosseto and Viterbo. Tarquinia and Tuscania can be reached in half an hour.

The beaches

A beach of fine sand stretches along the coast. The water is clean and usually warm enough to swim in from mid May to October.

The Fontanile beach lies 3 kms from the house. You will be given a key so that you can drive through the property to the shaded parking space close to the beach. There you will find a hut with sunbeds and parasols, as well as a sweetwater shower.

If you prefer the – typically Italian – beachclubs to the wilderness of the Fontanile beach we recommend the “ultima spiaggia”. See under “restaurants” for directions.

The islands and hiring a boat

In Porto Santo Stefano at half an hour's drive from Fontanile, you can hire a motor boat with a „captain“ which will take you to the islands of Giglio and Giannutri off the Tuscan coast. The attraction of such an expedition lies not only in the trip itself. Giglio has a charming main village and castle, and many creeks hidden between the cliffs which can only be reached by boat. Giannutri, its bare coastline dominated by ruins of a Roman villa overlooking the sea recalls some of the Greek islands, while deep-sea divers can look for sunken Roman galleons on the sea bed.

The Argentario

a peninsula just north from Pescia Romana deserves a mention, even though it is not quite clear under which heading it should be included. Cliffs above the sea, archeological excavations, mediterranean macchia with a large number of self-propagating wild flowers, and jet-set holiday resorts such as Porto Santo Stefano all come together here. On the way lies the town of Orbetello, charming and of historical interest.

National Park “Parco dell'Uccellina”

While staying at Fontanile you should not miss visiting the „Parco Regionale della Maremma“, also known as the „Parco dell'Uccellina“. It is a regional park of rare beauty with walks through high and lofty pine forests towards the coast. A large variety of Mediterranean flora and fauna as well as spectacular views of an untouched landscape will make this visit unforgettable. The animals you can see are deer, wild boar, roe-buck as well as porcupines, foxes, martins and badgers. Closer to the shore you will come across birds such as call ducks and herons.

To visit the park drive to the village of Alberese which has an own exit from the Aurelia as you drive towards Grosseto. Within the village follow the signs and look for the information center of the park which is next to a large parking space on the right of the

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road. From here a bus will take you to the center of the park from where the itineraries start.

In summer, from June 15th to September 30th, the visits are guided and leave from the information center:

7.30 am Tour „San Rabano“, approx. 5 hours, 6 km long

8 am Tour „Le Torri“, approx. 3 hours, 5 km long

8.30 am Tour „Le Torri“, approx. 3 hours

4 pm Tour „Le Torri“, approx. 3 hours

During the rest of the year you can take the bus to the center of the park at every hour from 9 am to 3 pm. The last bus back to the car park is at 6 pm. You can choose from 4 itineraries and take the walk on your own.

3 further itineraries are open all year round from dawn to dusk, with no need to take the bus.

At the information centre of the park you will find more information about each itinerary. Even though having to stick to a timetable during your holiday might seem uninviting, we highly recommend a visit, especially in the early morning.

Tel 0564-407111 or 0564 407098

At Orbetello there is another Natural Park managed by the WWF. They organise a guided tour from september to april, on Thursday from 10 am to 2 pm. To reach the entrance drive on the Aurelia until the km.150, Bosco di Patanella. Tel 0564-820297

The Etruscans

Little is known of these people who sprang to importance in the 8th century BC. At the height of their power their influence spread from the Po Valley to Campania, even encompassing ancient Rome, which defeated them in the 3rd century BC. A trip through what was known as Etruria is one of the most interesting archeological excursions in Italy. The Etruscans' demise may be partly attributed to their ephemeral attitude towards life on this earth, which led them to build their homes of wood and clay. Their tombs on the other hand were built to last forever.

Tarquinius and Tuscania

Tarquinius and Tuscania boast world wide famous archeological excavations which should not be missed. Tarquinius is whimsical, sometimes even bacchanal. The tombs are hidden underground, accessed through small holes cut into the earth, and there are thousands of them. It's impossible to say which tombs your guide will take the group to, because they are opened in rotation to save the magnificent and delicate wall paintings adorning the walls, giving a better idea of what life was like in Etruria than any scholar could hope to do.

Tuscania is a beautiful Etrurian walled town with more interesting tombs (ask at the National Museum in Piazza Madonna del Riposo). Also worth a visit here are the exquisite 11th-century churches of San Pietro and Santa Maria Maggiore. Both have lovely façades, carved altars and pulpits. Other Etruscan sites of relevance to be visited in the area are Populonia, Vetulonia, Ansedonia and Norcia.

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Sovana, Sorano and Pitigliano

These three towns stand close to each other at about 1 hours drive from Fontanile. Sovana is often considered the most interesting spot of southern Tuscany, boasting a magnificent Etruscan necropolis and 2 remarkable Romanic churches. Pitigliano is a medieval town with a dramatic location, interestingly enough with a jewish quarter and also known for the white wine produced here, Bianco di Pitigliano.

Northern Latium

In many ways northern Latium is the opposite of Tuscany. The first is straightforward, harmonious and clearly marked by human presence, the other is mysterious, untamed and full of contradictions. Papal power and roman aristocracy undermined any development of the middle classes for centuries, and still today you will find villages and cities in Latium more backward than in close-by Tuscany. Whereas the towns in Latium cannot be compared to Tuscany's splendour, the villages here are culturally far more interesting and of breathtaking beauty. Discovering Latium is a question of time and feeling.

In the area of the Lago di Vico you should of course visit Viterbo, residence of the Pope in the 12th and 13th century, but also the lovely town of S.Martino al Cimino built around a fine 13th century Cistercian abbey. A little further away are Caprarola, dominated by the Villa Farnese, a fascinating pentagonal castle with a „secret garden“ full of azaleas and rhododendrons leading up to a sculpture garden, and Civita Castellana, the most important town in the region. The Duomo is one of the gems of Lazio.

The hot springs of Saturnia

Tuscany is famous for its hot springs, belonging to a geothermical system that more or less encircles the Monte Amiata. Saturnia, at one hours drive, is the most spectacular, with hot waterfalls in the middle of nature, open to everyone. In summer one might prefer coming here in the evening or - even better - at night.

The Tarot-Garden of the artist Niki de Saint-Phalle (1930 – 2002)

On one of the hills not far from Fontanile the famous French artist has built her „Jardin des Tarots“, twentytwo giant sculptures in ceramic and coloured glass inspired by the figures of the magic tarot cards.

The park is open daily from 2.30 to 7.30 in the afternoon, and is shut on Sundays and holidays. The first Saturday of every month the entrance is free. For further information call 0564 895122