



CASTELLO DI GALBINO AREZZO AREA, TUSCANY

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Castello di Galbino is an imposing castle with four corner round towers, dating back to the 11th century. It was part of the Barbolani di Montauto feudal estate, which included other castles and villas in the area. Through the centuries the castle has been the country residence of several noble florentine families, and more recently of the dukes of San Clemente (my grandmother). Its frescoed galleries, carved stone staircases and fireplaces, its arched ceilings and antique furnishing, recently restored by Marina Baldeschi (my mother), make it an impressive home with an unique atmosphere. Its location at the border between Tuscany and Umbria allows to visit a part of the region far away from the more touristic routes, but very rich in art (it's the land of Piero della Francesca) and nature (from the castle start beautiful walks in the woods and hills of the Val Tiberina).

DAILY LIFE

In the tiny village called **Tavarnelle**, there is a little shop for all the basics. In your main town, **Anghiari**, there is the **DESPAR** mini market along with all the specialty shops: (baker -"forno") (butcher - "macellaio") (fruit & vegetable vendor - ortolano & frutti vendolo) etc. In Sansepolcro, you'll find the big **COOP** supermarket.

The travelling outdoor markets meet weekly as follows

ANGHIARI: Wednesday

SANSEPOLCRO: Tuesday and Saturday

AREZZO: Saturday and daily in the Piazza St. Agostino.

Gelato - Leonardo Luzzi, outside Anghiari about 2km in the little locality of "Viaio". Great ice cream and "granite" fruit ices in the cafe in the main square of Anghiari (it has tables & umbrellas set up in front) and in front of the 19th century theater!

For a truly exceptional experience try Gelateria GHIGNONI, in Sansepolcro, via Tiberina Sud 850, tel. 0575 741900. Best "pinolata" of Italy.

Banks - there are two banks in Anghiari: Banca Popolare dell'Etruria or Monte dei Paschi di Siena. Banking hours: 8:20 am until 13:20 pm Monday - Friday.

Post office - small town post offices are open from 8 - 13:20 Mon. - Fri. and 8 -12 Sat. The main Arezzo, Siena and Florence offices are open from 8 -19:30. STAMPS: "francobolli" are also sold at "Tabacchi" which display a blue sign with a large white T. Mail can be sent "posta prioritaria": fast mail, registered: "raccomandata". Mail boxes are red and usually have a slot for local mail (per lacittà) or for everywhere else (per tutte le altre destinazione).

Hospitals - in case of any medical problems go directly to the PRONTO SOCCORSO [Emergency room] of the Sansepolcro hospital or call 118. You will receive immediate and free medical service for any ailment. Often there is an English speaking doctor on duty during the months of July and August because of the tourists in the area; if not use your best Italian and point to the place it hurts!

General Doctor - in Anghiari:

Dr. Piero Martini; PHONE: 0575/ 787 182:home or 0575/ 789 865 - office.

Dr. Maurizio Checcaglini 0575/789 666

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Pediatrician - in Arezzo:

Dott. Luigi Fatucchi; PHONE: 0575/ 25145

Dentist in Anghiari: Dott. Claudio Zucchini; PHONE: 0575/ 749 234.**Dentist** in Arezzo: Dott. Michele Guida; PHONE: 0575/ 23980 or 0575/ 26780. Dott. Guida does fine work like American dentist.Special artisans In the area

Busatti - weaving mills make beautiful linens and fabrics which can used to make bedspreads, tablecloths, towels etc. Custom made and finished work available: Busatti; 14 via Mazzini, Anghiari. Ask for Signora Elena, Tamara, Paola or Rossana. . .say that you're guests at the Castello di Galbino, they will certainly give you lots of special attention and probably will even give you a discount! Upon request, they will give you a tour of their ancient (150yrs.) weaving factory: (interesting for kids & adults but very noisy!) Mon. - Fri. only. Ask for Elena to book a tour (0575/ 788-424).

You will note that many of the fabrics used for upholstering, bedspreads and drapes at the castello come from "busatti". The company even made a calendar in 1996 featuring Castello di Galbino as a back ground to show their cotton & linen materials.

Cultural information

For all news about concerts, cultural and gastronomic events consult the often multilingual representatives at the **Azienda Di Promozione Di Arezzo** -APT; 28 Piazza della Repubblica (train station); Arezzo phone: 0575/377-678.

In Anghiari go to the **Ufficio Turistico**, Corso Matteotti 103, 52031 Anghiari. Phone: 0575/ 749-279.

In Sansepolcro go to the **Cooperativa La Ginestra**, 44 via G. Bulloni; Sansepolcro. Phone: 0575/ 741861.

Be sure to consult this house book for more tourist information brochures on the individual towns of Anghiari and Sansepolcro, Arezzo etc. The house book also contains much information about other towns in the provinces of Arezzo, Siena, Florence and even farther afield.

Wine Tours

Giulio Benuzzi is a wine expert and can take you on a wine tour . Phone: 055633001 or 334 7234689

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SANSEPOLCRO, ANGHARI, MONTERCHI: VALTIBERINA

These towns are a little way to the north and east of the Valdichiana in the High Tiber Valley. The whole area is a very attractive and somewhat less "touristy" than many parts of Tuscany. If coming from the Cortona area or the Valdichiana, there is a scenic road behind Castiglion Fiorentino (marked to Palazzo del Pero & later to Sansepolcro). Otherwise, go north out of Arezzo on the road marked to Anghiari.

Sansepolcro is one of the very few non-hill towns in all of Tuscany. In fact when descending from Anghiari on the 8k bee-line road to Sansepolcro, one sees a large "valley" town in the distance! It is famous for its lace, pasta (Buitoni), and for one of the world's most famous paintings "The Resurrection" by Piero della Francesca, who was born here around 1495. This painting is found in the "Pinacoteca" or painting gallery of the Museo Civico. If you are an art history fan or simply want to learn more about Piero della Francesca, read the article called "Following Piero's Trail" by R.W. Apple Jr. which suggests you retrace the places where Piero's work was concentrated: Florence, Arezzo, Sansepolcro, Monterchi, Perugia, Urbino and Rimini! **Anghiari** is a fine old and miraculously unruined hill town across the valley from Sansepolcro. A supposedly "staged" battle (1440) took place on the plains beneath Anghiari, and was immortalized in a painting by Leonardo da Vinci. The two rival factions, Florentines vs. the Milanese Visconti family dressed up for battle, did a bit of rabble-rousing, then stopped for a long picnic lunch with much wine; followed by a few more scrambles, quitting before they'd bloodied or mussed up their uniforms. In fact, the painting was probably the most dramatic event of the day - particularly since it was one of Leonardo's most spectacular experimental failures. It was a huge fresco painted on the wall of a very important public state room in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence and he used a new experimental kind of paint to make it even more glorious but unfortunately what actually happened was that it almost immediately began to fall off the wall! All that remains are some of the lovely drawings he made for it. While in Anghiari be sure wander through the little winding streets of the old town or "Centro Storico" and to visit the Palazzo Taglieschi, a Renaissance nobleman's residence, which is now a museum of traditional crafts from the Valtiberina. Visit also the Pieve di Sovara a pretty Romanesque parish church, just beyond the town. Anghiari is famous for antiques, furniture restoration, and the Busatti fabric weaving mills; along with being a very attractive town surrounded by lovely views.

Monterchi, a few kilometres to the south of Anghiari is a tiny triangle of a medieval town. Monterchi is most famous for Piero della Francesca's extraordinary fresco: "La Madonna del Parto" (1445), which used to be located in the little chapel of the cemetery. The portrayal of the Virgin Mary in her 9th month was enough to get Piero ex-communicated from the church! The fresco has recently been taken into the town's museum for cleaning and restoration and you can get a really close-up view of it there. The way to Monterchi is well sign-posted!

Caprese Michelangelo, north of Anghiari, is the birthplace of Michelangelo. They don't have any of his originals here, but there are replicas as well as some questionata "tributes" by modern sculptors. You certainly begin to understand why Michelangelo was so inspired when you see the surrounding countryside. **La Verna** is the famous Franciscan monastery, where Saint Francis stayed when he trekked up from Assisi. La Verna is a perfect spot for meditation even today. There are some beautiful della Robbia ceramics to see. Located directly north of Caprese Michelangelo.

Special Events

The main event of the late summer takes place in the Piazza Torre di Berta of SANSEPOLCRO on the 2nd Sunday in September where the Archers of Sansepolcro and Gubbio (town just over the border of Tuscany in Umbria) have a splendid competition using enormous fixed cross-bows called "balestre". The Palio della Balestra is an ancient rivalry, preceded by a parade and display of stunning flag twirling. It is well worth getting seat tickets which are available during the preceding week in the main square.

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Evening Concerts

Held out doors under midnight-blue star-studded skies, in the museum garden of Monterchi (Madonna del Parto - Piero della Francesca), there are weekly concerts in the evenings - usually mid-week. They start at 9 - 9:30pm; predominantly classical music but there is a real mix... check monthly program.

Anghiari monthly Antique Fair

Meets in the old town main square of Anghiari every 3rd Sunday of the month... features mainly antiques. Dealers come from all parts of Italy, and there is definitely high standard merchandise. (Don't miss!)

Wine

Enoteca Guidi, wine bar and restaurant, via Pacioli 44, Sansepolcro, tel. 0575 736587. Excellent food and a wide variety of wines.

Enoteca "La Barrique", Santa Fiora, 0575 749865.

On the road between Monterchi and Le Ville is the Enoteca Valtiberina. They do not make their own wine, but offer a very wide selection of wines from the Valtiberina and from all over Italy. The owners who run it lived in London for 25 years and speak English quite well

Artisans

The the center of Anghiari there is a factory called BUSATTI which specializes in wonderful woven table linens, sheets, towels and bedspreads; they sell their own fabrics as well. High quality cotton and linen are used in the production. They will custom make drapes, table cloths, napkins, bedspreads with their fabrics before you return home or else ship abroad should more elaborate orders require more time. The shop sits above the 130 year old weaving mills where their fabrics are produced. Busatti is a family tradition, the business is carried on by Paola and Giovanni Sassolini, who are descendants of the BUSATTI founders. BUSATTI, viaMazzini 14, Anghiari, Phone: 0575 788424.

If you like baskets and basketwork at all, you should treat yourself to a visit to the "laboratorio" of LEONARDO LUZZI - "Lavori in Vimini". A few yards up the road from Anghiari, towards Caprese Michelangelo there is a sign on the right for "Viaio". Follow this little road out onto the valley floor. After it has twisted around for a little way you'll see a very strange looking abandoned school house with three huge pine trees in front of it, an old bathtub for soaking reeds and possibly some baskets scattered about drying in the sunshine. Push your way through the door (No. 50) and a very pleasant lady will guide you past, over and through heaps of cane in various conditions, a couple of elderly gents weaving away and up some stairs to as good a selection of basket work as you could hope to find; all rather reasonably priced. DITTA LUZZI LEONARDO; Frazione Viaio, Anghiari. Phone: 0575 789-790.

COSE DI LANA, Santa Fiora, 0575 745212 Knitwear factory shop, very good prices for cotton and wool sweaters, jumpers, trousers, jackets etc.

ANTIQUÉ DEALER: ANTICHITA' VILLA MIRAVALLE 0575 788131, via della Propositura 2, Poggini Milton piazza Baldaccio 5 0575 788424. Two address where to find interesting pieces.

Restaurants Near Anghiari & Sansepolcro

In Anghiari:

Nena - phone: 0575 789 491.

Here is another characteristic Anghiari village restaurant on the steep hill, highly recommended by the Galbino's owners!

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La Pergola - Tavernelle: Phone: 0575 723-010. Closed Mon:

Just beyond the castle in the tiny "locality" of Tavernelle is a small Osteria/Trattoria family-style eating place which the owners of Galbino Castle recommend. Owner, Doretta often comes out of the kitchen to greet guests. Very simple fare; not elegant but RAVE reviews from everyone.

Antico Posto Di Ristoro - Phone: 0575 723-000. Closed Mon:

The local restaurant of La Scheggia is also recommended by the locals. The owner, known as Iole, prepares game meats, and delicious "pappardelle" huge ribbons strips of pasta with "lepre" or wild hare sauce. You'll pass La Scheggia every time you go towards Arezzo. (Family style and reasonable).

Locanda Castello Di Sorci - Phone: 0575 789 066. Closed Mon:

Located about 3 km beyond the village of Anghiari in the country. Very good prices. All the fare is local production, homemade egg pasta and great roasted meats. Ideal for large families and there is a playground outdoors for the kiddies.

Da Alighiero - Phone: 0575 788 040. Closed On Tuesday.

This restaurant is in the old town of Anghiari in a charming medieval looking building. Nice and cool inside too. The young couple, Gianni Papini and German wife, Silva who speaks rather good English are your hosts. Nice fare, moderately priced.

Cantina Del Granduca - Enoteca Wine Bar 0575 788275. Good selection of wines and excellent "bistecca". Informal but well kept.

Sansepolcro area:

Fiorentino - Phone: 0575 742 033; Closed Friday.

Located in the historical center of Sansepolcro. Elegant dining although moderately priced is a meal at Fiorentino. The owner, Alessio Uccellini, is a polyglot, jolly, rotund fellow who'll happily explain his menu. DA VENTURA; PHONE/FAX: 0575 742 560; CLOSED SATURDAY. Old, traditional San Sepolcro restaurant. Elegant décor, very theatrical service, there are often demonstrations of food preparation at your table.

Convento Cappuccini - Phone: 0575 742 032. Closed Sunday.

This is a very humble "trattoria/osteria" style restaurant. It is run by the Capuchin monks who offer lodging and meals to students. It is located in a lovely spiritual place in their Convent, about 500 meters outside Sansepolcro. The fare is simple and inexpensive but they may not be able to cater to large groups. Call ahead for reservations.

L'Osteria In Aboca - Phone: 0575 741-245. Located about 6 km. outside of San Sepolcro on Rte. 258 on the way to Rimini.. Eat outdoors under the trees. You'll probably be the only foreigners around...the cook does speak some English, but delivers the menu orally...so listen carefully! Simple local fare, but there are excellent grilled meats and great ravioli with mushroom sauce!

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UMBRIA AND MARCHE

Most of Umbria and the Marche is mountainous and very beautiful with endless twisting roads. The Adriatic coast still has a few nice spots but most of it is very busy and commercial in the summer. On the Tuscan side of the mountains there are lots of places that are well worth visiting. Forming a convenient little triangle are Perugia, Assisi and Arezzo. **Perugia** has been a major city for more than a thousand years. Perched high on a hill it has a beautiful central 'corso' and 'piazza'. You can park in a covered car park at the bottom of the town and then make your way up to the top on a series of escalators that thread their way through medieval passageways and underground streets. There are many things to see and it's worth picking up information from the Tourist Office in the main square, Piazza. 4 Novembre. Don't miss the National Gallery of Umbria (closed Monday) which has a wonderful collection, beautifully displayed, and the Collegio dei Cambio for the most amazing frescoes.

Assisi, just a few kilometers east of Perugia you'll come to Assisi sitting along the top of a kind of promontory. Obviously the most important thing to see here is the Basilica di San Francesco which is now open again after the tragic earthquake. Both the lower and the upper Basilicas are completely covered in wonderful frescoes (a cheaper option in the thirteenth century than mosaic or marble inlay! Some of those in the Upper Basilica may or may not be by Giotto - the controversy rages on!

Deruta, a few kilometers south of Perugia, is a little town devoted entirely to ceramics or pottery. There are almost more pottery workshops, factories and shops than there are houses! If you like handmade and decorated table ware, pots, ornaments from the most minute to enormous, this is your paradise. There's also a delightful little museum of pottery too for the real aficionado.

Another nice triangle could be Città di Castello, Montone, and Gubbio.

Gubbio is a lovely old hill town in the heart of Umbria with a dramatic central square right up at the top of the town. On May 15 they have a race where teams carry tree trunk sized "candles" running full tilt up the steep winding streets of the town. There's also a medieval archery competition "La Balestra" on the last Sunday in May.

Urbino is a bit further afield in the Marche but it is a particularly beautiful town and the road is lovely, making it a very nice day trip. Urbino was ruled by the Dukes of Montefeltro from the 1201 century onwards and in the 15th century Duke Federico di Montefeltro was a particularly important patron of the Renaissance arts. His Ducal Palace now houses the national Gallery of the Marche which includes Piero della Francesca's Flagellation and the famous studiolo (study) which is entirely paneled in trompe l'oeil wood inlay, Urbino is also the birthplace of Raphael and his house is open to visitors too.

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The one thing that really should not be missed on a visit to Arezzo are the frescoes by Piero della Francesca in the church of San Francesco. Unfortunately they were very nearly ruined; but after 15 years of laborious & high-tech procedures, they have been restored and preserved. The central apse behind the altar tells the story of the True Cross: "Leggenda della Vera Croce". As you approach the church in the Piazza San Francesco, you will see a big ticket office about 20 meters to the right of the church. You can get a guide book & postcards as well as tickets to enter the apse and view the frescoes. The tours leave every half hour, max. 25 persons/visit. Mon. - Sat. 9am-6pm non-stop or Sun. 1-5pm. During July/Aug. tours end at 6:30pm. When you arrive in the church audio headphones will be distributed, narrative in English, French & Italian. About 6 Euros/person. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO CALL AHEAD TO BOOK YOUR HALF HOUR TIME SLOT: 0575 900 404 (they speak English) or go in person to the ticket office just before the steps up to San Francesco Church. Punctuality is imperative as every half hour a group of a max. of 20 people are allowed inside!!

La Casa Museo di Ivan Bruschi: Antique Lovers will love to visit to the house of Ivan Bruschi, a famous antique dealer/collector who recently passed away and willed his home and his entire collection to the city of Arezzo. See all the rooms of his home and his extensive and eclectic collection. Open daily 10am – 1pm & 2pm - 6pm. Closed Monday. Located directly next to the San Francesco Church. Ph: 0575/ 900-404.

San Domenico church boasts another recently restored work of art-the exquisite Byzantine cross by Cimabue. The Cimabue cross has been under restoration for nearly 5 years, don't miss! The square outside San Domenico is one of the loveliest in town. Throughout the town you'll see little posters which designate where the recent movie LA VITA E BELLA or LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL directed by & starring ROBERTO BENIGNI was filmed. If you haven't seen this movie, ask me, I have a video in English. **Also particularly recommended** are visits to see 1) the Etruscan section of the Archeological museum; 2) the Duomo of Arezzo which boasts the fresco of Mary Magdalena also by Piero della. Francesca; and the 16th e. stained glass Windows by French master, Marcillat; 3) the Piazza Grande - 8 centuries of architecture represented here (where the antique fair is held on the first Sunday of the month); 4) the church of Pieve Santa Maria between the top of Corso Italia and Piazza Grande...(treasure hunt: who can find the crooked column on the Piazza Grande side?); and finally the Post Office (both inside and outside)!

Special Events

Already mentioned is the national FIERA DEL ANTIQUARIATO which falls on the first Sunday of the month although it starts late Friday evening beforehand then continues Saturday & Sunday, thus allowing a full weekend for antique browsing. Antique dealers from all over Italy come to display their wares. The main area of the fair is concentrated in the Piazza Grande and near the Duomo at the top of the town. This is where most of the furniture and "finer" pieces will be found; however, many streets of the center of town are filled with various vendors peddling "old things" of the swap-meet variety. It is the best antique fair in Italy and truly lots of fun due to the carnival atmosphere. The major traditional and historical event of the year is the Jousting of the Saracin or GIOSTRA DEL SARACINO held on the 3rd Saturday in June and the 1st Saturday in September in the Piazza Grande. The festival begins with a parade in 13th e. costume and flag twirling and tossing by the "sbandieratoli", it is then followed by a test of individual prowess between 8 knights, 2 representing each of the 4 town quarters. The knights on horse-back must tilt against a wooden effigy or "Buratto" - king of the Saracins for the prize of a golden lance. Tickets go on sale the Wed. prior to the event at special "Saracino"

office. Phone: 0575/ 377-262 ask for Sig. Roseila if you would like to book by phone. Pick up tickets in "Saracino" office (Teatro Biccheraio) next to the Pieve Santa Maria.

Market Days

Saturday mornings (major market (food and miscellaneous) on the south side of town between Parco Giotto & the Stadium. Piazza Sant'Agostino: daily - fruit & vegetable & fish market, (local color & fun!)

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Shopping

Food:

Superal - large & very fresh selection of everything edible. located just beyond the "old" hospital (follow signs).

Iper Coop - this brand new iper coop supermarket is similar to a huge American style grocery store. Nearly everything can be bought there as well as food. mail style shopping center too. Abundantly sign posted throughout the Arezzo area. This the nearest supermarket to Casa Fredda.

Esselung - behind the parco giotto area of Arezzo off via Mecenate. This is where many local Arezzo folks shop.

Specialty Shops:

Pasticceria & Caffè Carraturo - Corso Italia 61. Fancy Neapolitan pastries. (0575)355-757.

Forno near la pieve on Corso Italia. Big selection of interesting breads and biscotti.

Fresh pasta shops: Ravioli, Gnocchi, Pici, and many more types. There are 2 shops both located in via Madonna del Prato.

Pasticceria/Bar Stefano - best almond cookies in town!

Pasticceria Cenci - in via dei cenci: best pies & crostatas in town.

Caffè Dei Costanti - best coffee, cappuchino, also excellent ice cream; piazza San Francesco, in front of the famous church of San Francesco (piero della francesca frescoes inside). the film la Vita e Bella (Life is Beautiful) with Robert Benigni was filmed here and in other nearby streets of Arezzo!

Gelato:

The creamiest, yummiest, and also a young peoples' place to meet and buy ice cream is "i gelato at the corner of via Madonna del Prato and via de' Cenci. My son Francesco (age 18) swears by the gelato at this shop!

WINE: Highly recommended are the superò wines of the FATTORIA DI SAN FABIANO, just 900 meters from the Duomo of Arezzo. Try the amazing rich, robust wine called "ARMAIOLO" or when it is bottled and available the delightful fresh white wine "Chiaro" di San Fabiano. Call the estate manager to arrange wine tasting: Sig. Giuliarini (0575) 24566 or 370-368.

Clothing & Other:

There are many lovely shops along **Corso Italia**; my favorites are SUGAR for women where you'll find Armani, Prada, and other top Italian and foreign designer clothes; Another great shop for women is MAXMARA - No. 166 Corso Italia (0575) 299-645-Ask for owner - Dalida, say Joyce sent you. She'll give you a discount and VIP treatment. DINA BOUTIQUE carries chic ladies fashions - including many top Italian brands: Armani, Valentino, Fendi, etc. Ask for owner "Dina" (mother of Dalida -MaxMara) again, say Joyce sent you for special attention - 76 Via Vittorio Veneto. CARLO DONATI for men, Piazza Risorgimento 12-13. L'ALBERO, Corso Italia 161; very chic Italian shoes, all price ranges.. .be sure to go upstairs to see at all choices..

BUSATTI at the top of Corso Italia for hand-loomed fabrics in heavy linen and cotton, tablecloths, towels, etc. The weaving mill is located in Anghiari (and can be visited). Every even number year, I do the interior decoration of one of my villas using the Busatti fabrics, my bi-annual chance to be creative! The houses are photographed and the photos appear in the calendar of that year. (1996 - Castello di Galbino, 1998-Podere Maraviglia, 2000 - Casa Bacanella 2002 - Casa Fredda). There is a vast assortment at the Anghiari BUSATTI factory (mother house). Ask for Signora Elena or Rossana, Titi or Tamara and say Joyce sent you (you may receive a discount on purchases and a lot of personal attention).

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Scissors and knife shops:

Via Madonna del Prato is a little road which runs parallel to Via Guido Monaco. Along this road you'll find at least 3 scissors and knife shops. Buy the best little pocket knives to the most elegant Prosciutto knife, and if you happen to have brought your dull knives along, have them sharpened while you wait!

Porcellana bianca:

Mostly white porcelain shop (recently colors too) mid way up via Madonna del Prato.

Uno A Erre Gold Factory:

The backbone and wealth of the Province of Arezzo is due to the gold industry. The Uno-A-Erre gold company was established in 1926 by Carlo Zucchi and Leopoldo Gori. The combined assets of Mr. Zucchi's talent as a goldsmith and Mr. Gori entrepreneurial skills allowed this company to grow to become the largest gold factory in the world (not just Italy). At present there are over 800 employees, they have their own foundry and make their own alloys of platinum, gold, & silver and they are the largest producers of wedding rings in the world. Italian gold is 18k. Since I know the owners well, my friends, and my guests may make purchases at the boutique at absolutely excellent prices. This is not a retail boutique, so there is no duty free here, but you'll have factory prices rarely available even to Italians! Thus if you are interested in purchasing gold jewelry [rings, earrings, necklaces, bracelets, chains, pendants, watches, and a large range of silver too], call Joyce, In town call Signora Paola Imbasciati who runs the Boutique (& speaks perfect English) for an appointment. Cash & credit cards accepted. Factory hours are 8am - 5pm Mon. - Fri. Phone: 0575/ 925-953 - Signora Paola; 550 via Fiorentina, Arezzo. Understandably, a gold factory is run like Fort Knox, so announce yourself at the gate, saying "Siamo venuti per visitare la boutique - Signora Imbasciati per favore"; the guard will lower the gate following these magic words!

Cycling:

Cicli Pasquini, for cycling enthusiasts, Adelmo Pasquini has the largest range of bikes: mountain, racing, hybrids. There is a selection of cycling gear too. Via Einstein 85, Centro Commerciale Pratacci. 0575/ 380 672.

Hair dresser:

"**Forme & Profumi**", 126 Via Garibaldi, Arezzo. Phone: 0575/ 22336 Katia does wonderful hair cuts & Rosy does all esthetician beauty treatments. Say Joyce sent you...they don't speak English, but are lovely and intelligent...and will certainly give you that "MADE IN ITALY" look!

Travel:

Fracassi Viaggi, I always use Paola Fracassi for all travel needs. So if you need to make train, plane or hotel reservations, Paola is located at 66 via Guido Monaco, just down the Street from the train station. (0575) 30 20 50.

Leather:

Basetti, Località Marcena, 34; located just north of Arezzo on the road to Bibbiena has lots of leather jackets and leather accessories

Prada Outlet:

Well, I hope you know that Arezzo is famous now due to PRADA'S - LUNA ROSSA, the racing boat entered into America's Cup Sail boat competition in early 2000. The owner of Prada, Signor Bertelli, entrepreneur of Arezzo and husband of Miuccia Prada, has always been a sailor and when asked why he entered the America's Cup race, he answered that he has always loved sailing, he loves challenges and that he's got "molti sacchi di soldi" big sacks of money!

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THE FACTORY OUTLET FOR PRADA IS CALLED "I PELLETTIERI D'ITALIA" AND LOCATED JUST OUTSIDE OF LEVANELLA, strada provinciale 69 (near Monte varchi). They keep continuous hours from MONDAY to SATURDAY: 9:30 - 8 PM, SUNDAY: 2 - 7 PM. PHONE: 055/ 91-901

GUCCI, ARMANI, & BOTTEGA VENETA FACTORY OUTLET is also located in the VALDARNO area South of Florence and North of Arezzo. To get there, exit at Incisa from the Al motorway, then follow route 69 in the direction of Florence until you reach Leccio (approx. 6km). Continuous hours from 10 am to 7 pm including Sundays. Via Aretina 63, 50066 Leccio-Reggello (FI) Italy. Tel. 055/865 7775.

Now that you have bought enough Italian clothing, purses, bags, ceramics and other tuscan items that you can't live without how are you going to get it all home???

THE ANSWER IS MAILBOX ETC.!!! Via Monte Cervino 21. Incredibly enough there is one right in down-town Arezzo. See brochure & maps enclosed which traces the way from the Arezzo train station to Mailboxes etc. PHONE: 0575/ 295-687

Restaurants in Arezzo area

Trattoria da Guido - 85 via Madonna del Prato, Arezzo. This is a small family run trattoria. The owners are from Calabria, thus there is an interesting twist on the cuisine, not stuck in the rut of traditional Tuscan cooking. Try the fabulous rabbit (my favorite) and interesting selection of pastas. Phone: 0575/ 23760. Closed Sunday.

Pizzeria & Spaghetteria Sottolemura - Via A. Sansovino, 18 (zona T.Trieste) Arezzo. Simple easy-going place to have a pizza & a beer or any type of pasta. There are about a zillion types of pizza to choose from. During the summer there is a delightful garden behind the restaurant. It is usually packed during the summer, so go early (7:30pm) to get a table. Very reasonable. Phone: 0575 21403 Closed Monday.

Bruscheria Toscana - Via de Toilette, 14-20, Arezzo. This is quite a sweet and hidden little place, ideal for a quick snack or lunch.. .worth the wait for an outdoor table in the garden behind the church of San Francesco.. .great "bruschettà" or little open-faced toasts with various spreads. Reasonable. Phone: 0575/ 299 860. Closed Monday.

Ristorante Masaniello - Via Cavour, 42 located under the arches next to the Liceo Classico. Naples pizza with the thicker crust can be had here, but this is one of my favorite restaurants because they have exquisitely fresh fish and gorgeous pasta with fish sauces...cheery, simple atmosphere and reasonable prices. Phone: 0575 22542. Closed Mon.

Ristorante Buca di San Francesco - via S. Francesco 1, Arezzo. "La Buca" is an old Arezzo "institution". Sadly it is over-rated and I've been disappointed 3 times...don't go there if you can avoid it. Arezzo traditional cuisine. Expensive. Phone: 0575 23271 Closed Mon. eve & Tues. Open entire month of August.

Trattoria Lancia D'oro - Piazza Grande 18-19; Arezzo (under the Loggia in Piazza Grande) out-door seating available. Tuscan cuisine, home-made pasta, beautiful view of Piazza Grande by day or night. Moderate. Phone: 0575 21033 Closed Mon. Open entire month of August.

Osteria L'Agama - Via Mazzini 10, Arezzo. Located in a side Street off Corso Italia, L'Agania is a very rustic, very reasonable and very 'SIMPATICO' osteria. It is small, so you'd better book . The owner is a "crazy" fellow who serves the tables with typical Aretine fare "minestra di farro, panzanella, coniglio, grifi, & trippa", Reasonable/Moderate. Phone: 0575 25381 Closed Mon. Closed 6 - 28 August.

Osteria La Capannaccia - Via Campriano 51/e, Campriano. Up in the hills just north of Arezzo. Only the locals know about this place, typically you'll find Arezzo business men there for lunch and every one there for dinner. This rustic restaurant is located in an ex-barn. There are hams and salamis, onions & garlic dangling from above and a great open fire place at the far end of the room usually filled with goodies grilling over oak wood charcoais. Moderate. Payment in cash - no credit cards accepted. Urbano & Beppe are the 2 brother owners...lots of fun...

Ask us for directions as it isn't easy to find...unless you are a local! Phone: 0575 361759 Closed Sun. eve and Monday. Closed in August.

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Trattoria "al Principe"- 25 Giovi d'Arezzo. Fish is the specialty here (as the trattoria is located near the Arno river; try their "anguilla al tegamaccio"). Principe offers an excellent and interesting choice of Tuscan fare. Moderate/Expensive Phone: 0575/ 362 046 Closed Mon. Closed 20 My-20 August.

Ristorante Acquamatta - Piazza della Vittoria 13, Capolona (AR) Owners: Andrea, Paolo & Leonardo. Open for lunch & dinner. Located in an 14th century borgo, enter down little stone paved lane. The owners strive to attain the quality of the famous "Gambero Rosso" restaurant in San Vincenzo. The cucina offers mostly fish (but also meat). Atmosphere is elegant-rustic. Elegant tables white crystal & porcelain & sommelier will suggest wines from their well-stocked cellars. Excellent service. Reservations suggested.

Moderate- Expensive. Closed Sun. & Mon. PHONE: 0575 420-999 Fax: 0575/ 421 -807.

Ristorante Le Quattro Pietre - Via Setteponti 8, Cast. Fibocchi (Arezzo). Worth the drive from Arezzo to enjoy the incredible food. Ideal for large groups/families. Although the interior lacks charm, the outdoor seating area is quite pleasant and you'll enjoy the sound of a little fountain pouring into the fake swimming pool (pond?)...but again., I stress the food is very "genuino" and reasonable and the owners are adorable and accommodating. Phone: 0575/ 47 588. Closed Monday;

Relais Ristorante Villa Veza - Loc. Veza-Capolona. Villa Veza is roughly 15min. north of Arezzo, in the Casentino foothills. Nicola & Peggy Civetta, the owners are rather famous restaurateurs as they also own the "Primavera" in NYC. Needless to say, there is a tradition of fine food and the setting is romantic and panorama exquisite. Moderate. Reservations required. PHONE: 0575/ 422 042.

Ristorante Pizzeria Il Focolare - Just a couple of kilometers beyond Villa Veza is the tiny locality of Bicciano (Talla)...here, there are plenty of home-style specialities as well as the "fonduta di Formaggio e Bourgignon" cheese and meat fondu, but mostly during the colder months of the year. Reasonable. Phone: 0575/597455.

Torre Santa Flora - Relais/Ristorante - Loc. Il Palazzo; 52010 Subbiano (Arezzo). Very attractive indoor & outdoor seating. Very pretty setting in front of Arno river & the ancient tower which is illuminated at night. Excellent and interesting selection of Arezzo specialities and good choice of wines. About 6km North of Arezzo on the road to Bibbiena. Moderately expensive. PHONE: 0575 421045. Open daily. Open throughout August..

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LUCIGNANO AND MONTE SAN SAVINO AREA

Lucignano

Lucignano has a little museum containing a magnificent piece called the "Albero della Vita". The "tree of life" is made of gold and coral branches and has a long history of love, marriage and tradition attached to it. Apparently a poor girl, who had no dowry could borrow from the tree of life in order to get married. The wealthy members of the community made contributions to this tree in order to keep its leaves gold!

The church of San Francesco is a beautiful Italian Gothic style church: stark, splendidly un-ornamented, thus true to the name of the saint it honors. There is a yearly event in Lucignano called the Maggiolata Lucignanesa, which occurs on the last 2 Sundays of the month MAY. There are processions in costume, folk dancers and floats and carts decorated in flowers and traditional music.

Lucignano has the Festa delle Tre Porte in June, where each of the three gateways of the town takes turns converting their streets into an open-air restaurant that serves vast quantities of local fare to all comers. There is a nominal entrance fee at the door.

In Palazzuolo, a tiny village about 12 km above Monte San Savino - on the way to Siena, they do the same thing in early August at the Festa del Cacciatore (the hunter's feast), but concentrate on wild game, meat, sausage and salami made from wild boar (cinghiale) - in case you don't like game - there are always marvelous pasta dishes!

Monte San Savino

The main sights in Monte San Savino are the Palazzo Comunale and on the other side of the Palace cloister, there is a hanging garden (Giardino Pensile) and an amphitheater where cultural events are held. If you are here during summer, be sure to pick up a copy of the booklet put out yearly by the town merchants called MONTESTATE, which lists all the events held in the out-door theater, cloister, and organ concerts in the Duomo. Events include out-door cinema, and sometimes dance performances and ballet. Also visit the Loggia dei Mercanti designed by Antonio San Gallo (where the post office is located); the Cassero or old castle/fortress which is now a museum and often has ceramics or painting exhibits going on; the church of Santa Chiara and the Duomo in the main square. The newly restored TEATRO VERDI offers occasional opera, music concerts & theatrical events; definitely worth a visit just to see the remarkable gilded balconies & fresco and ceiling!

Cultural Events

Perhaps a more romantic venue for concerts is the great-hall setting in the old castle of Cennina on the road towards Monte varchi. The concerts are usually held on Saturday evenings during July and until mid Aug. and their program is varied: chamber music, small orchestras, piano concerts and lyrical performances. Posters announcing these concerts abound in all the nearby villages or call Joyce's friend Oswald Righi (who speaks excellent English & French) at 055 99-69-20.

The Castello di Gargonza, a few kilometers north-west of Monte San Savino offers a series of afternoon & after supper summer concerts in their multi-purpose room; watch for signs posting events. The castle of Gargonza and entire surrounding village has been converted into a hotel and there is a restaurant at the entrance. Gargonza is an interesting excursion: park your car near the restaurant parking area, then walk through the medieval "borgo" and enjoy the spectacular views of the valley below. If you really enjoy magnificent views and are willing to walk up about 8 stories of rickety wooden steps, the guardian who lives at the base of the great tower will either lend you a key or open the tower door for you. Once you're at the top you can see both the Arezzo (to the East) and Siena (to the West) provinces!

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Gastronomy

The principle gastronomie event in Monte San Savino is the Festa della Porchetta in September, where everyone eats huge quantities of delicious whole roast pork with garlic and sage stuffing. Watch for signs or banners advertising this event. . . usually the first weekend of September. Naturally there are many other things dishes such as white Tuscan beans cooked in sage, panzanella and other specialties of the area.

While we are on the subject of gastronomy: you may want to try the excellent ice creams or gelato at **Cavallini's Bar** (near the Cassa di Risparmio di Firenze bank -which has an automatic teller by the way). A pie-cake dessert with pine nuts called the *Torta della Nonna* (Grandmother's cake) is also a specialty not to miss, [sold either at Bar Salvadori or Bar Cavallini]. Another excellent gelateria is **La Castiglia**, in front of the park. The little shop called **Il Primo** makes fresh pasta daily as well as the sauces which go on top. **Aldo's butcher shop** in the Piazza Gamurrini, 31, located in front of the Obelisk has the best "bistecca" steak in the area. Ask Aldo or his wife to cut you a thick 2" Bistecca fiorentina (equivalent of a T-bone steak, which is fabulous when grilled, first marinate in olive oil, salt & pepper, juniper berries and rosemary branches - continue to brush this mixture on the meat while grilling - true Bistecca Fiorentina is very rare inside, then crusty-seared on outside.)

La Badessa - Via Conte Cungi 60. This architecturally stunning restaurant is located in the recently restored Abbey/Convento of Monte San Savino, thus the name the Abbess. The atmosphere is at once, elegant and rustic and the owners, a young local couple- Andrea & Sandra try to offer dishes that are not necessarily part of the pure Tuscan repertoire. Superb dining, fine selection of wines, on the expensive side. Enjoy lunch or dinner from June-Sept. - outdoor seating available under extensive loggia. Off-season: open only during the evening. Closed Monday. Best to reserve: 0575/ 844-717. (If Sandra or Andrea answers...say Joyce sent you).

Osteria Del Cacciatore - Località Dreini, 39, Monte San Savino (AR). Located about 6k beyond Monte S .S. on the road to Siena, you'll find the "INN of the HUNTER": so, if s not surprising that the specialties include game and grilled meats. There is lots of seating in the open-air but covered terrace. Very reasonable. Closed Wednesday. Phone: 0575 847 020.

Ristorante Castello Di Gargonza - Located just outside the Castles' walled village, the restaurant has a rustic dining room as well as covered out-door seating. Arrive early in order to explore the ancient "borgo" and tower of the castle. Regular Tuscan cooking. Closed Tuesday. Moderate prices. Phone: 0575 847-065.

La Scuderia - Località Palazzuolo, Monte San Savino AR. Enjoy a scenic drive on the wooded road which winds up 12 km beyond Monte to La Scuderia (if you keep going you reach the superstrada to Siena!). This is a family run restaurant which boasts home-made pasta and excellent local dishes & grilled meats. There is a nice rustic dining room with fireplace for cool days and seating outdoors in the side-garden terrace for sunny days. Ravioli with sage are great! Very reasonable. Closed Thursday. Phone: 0575 847 014

Ristorante San Savino - 73 viale Diaz. You'll see this restaurant on your left while driving up the Siena road. It has never been in my book before because it is noisy (they leave the TV on during lunch/dinner)...the décor totally lacking in charm. But I've reconsidered...the food is good, fresh homemade pasta, cheap, and all the locals eat here. At night they serve wood oven pizza. (Couldn't be all that bad, right?!) Try it you may become a convert! Phone: 0575 849-352. Closed Tuesday.

Antico Forno - A funky tiny trattoria, 4via Cungi with a cavemous underground dining area. Lots of roasted meats & hardy Tuscan dishes. On Sunday, you can order a take-out chicken, guinea hen, rabbit & a portion of lasagna! Phone:0575/ 844-033

Osteria L'antico Borgo - via di Mezzo 35, Civitella in Vai di Chiana (only 10 min. from Monte San Savino. (AR). How wonderful to find a delightful little restaurant in a miniature village! Nice atmosphere with only 4 or 5 tables. Defmitely a family run restaurant, so sometimes service is slow, but the "slow" food is worth it! Closed Mon. & Tues. Wed-Fri. open only evenings. Sat. & Sun, they serve lunch and dirmer. Call for reservations. Phone: 0575/ 448-160.

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In Lucignano:

La Tavernetta - Via Roma 15, Lucignano (AR). La Tavernetta offers good Tuscan fare as well as seafood. There is out-door seating in the garden area. Highly recommended by natives and fellow foreigners! Moderate prices. Closed Monday. Phone: 0575 836-568.

Osteria Da Toto - Piazza del Tribunale 6, Lucignano (AR). There is a very rustic, old-fashion atmosphere with lots of hunting memorabilia in-doors. There is also a very simple out-door seating area. At the end of your meal, the owner, Sig. Toto, will have you sample his home-made "brews" of herbal liqueurs. Wild boar and other local specialties are served. Reasonable. Closed Tuesday. Phone: 0575 836-988.

La Rocca - Pizzeria - Via Matteotti, 15/17, Lucignano (AR). La Rocca has pizza in the evenings and a variety of pasta and meat dishes too. The one large dining room area is often a bit noisy! Reasonable. Closed Wednesday. Phone: 0575 836-775

In Sinalunga:

Osteria Delle Grotte - Viale Matteotti 35, Sinalunga (SI). This is one of those great little restaurants where you order the "menu" and they simply bring you a large variety of courses (often about 7!) - be sure to fast for a day or two before you come. The atmosphere is "molto simpatico". Moderate. Closed Wednesday. Phone: 0577 630 269.

La Locanda Dell'Amorosa - The Amorosa is a very well-known restaurant which appears in all guide books preceded by a various number of stars. The 17th century mini-village is a magnificent setting for the restaurant. The food is finely prepared, often it resembles "nouvelle cuisine" style. Expensive to very expensive according to the wines you choose. Closed all day Monday and for Lunch on Tuesday, but open in the evening on Tues., then daily until Sun. Phone: 0577/ 678 216.

Le Logge Ristorante - Trav. ai Monti, 82, Trequanda (SI). This restaurant is located just 2.5k beyond the Locanda dell'Amorosa. Le Logge is a delightful fish restaurant with a simple but attractive interior and lovely host Signor Iopoli. Call for reservations. Closed Wed & Thurs. Phone: 0577/ 630 920

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CORTONA AND CASTIGLION FIORENTINO

Be sure to take a morning to wander as far up to the top of the town as you possibly can, eventually arriving at the Santuario di Santa Margherita and the ancient Medici Fortress "Fortezza Girofalco" which overlooks the entire Valdichiana. On a very clear day, I have seen as far as the Island of Elba from up there; on a day of normal visibility, you'll enjoy the panorama of Lake Trasimeno, Mount Cetona and Mount Amiata across the valley. [From Casa Bacanella you clearly see the outlines of both the Fortress and Santa Margherita church from behind or looking westward]. Other highlights of Cortona include the charming 15th c. church of San Niccolò which contains an important painting by Luca Signorelli. The action takes place in the Piazza Signorelli: there are often out-door concerts and local events held here (such as the Saturday morning market). There are two museums which are well worth a visit: the Museo Diocesano where the famous Fra Beato Angelico can be seen and the Museo Etrusco located in Palazzo Casali, which boasts an intricate Etruscan lamp from the 5th c. B. C. and other Etruscan artefacts, along with many fine Renaissance paintings, and an impressive Egyptian collection.

Via Nazionale is the "main-drag" or shopping Street; towards late afternoon [6:00 - 7:30 pm], you'll note that the "passeggiata" or evening stroll is going on here. The passeggiata is a long established tradition whereby the town population comes out to meander up and down; old ladies arm-in-arm; young mothers with babies in strollers; children playing or riding bikes; teen-agers wearing their latest gear hoping to be noticed by LUI or LEI. The start of this unofficial procession is at the top of via Nazionale in front of the steps of the Palazzo Comunale and goes all the way to the delightful Parterre Park. Join the action or else settle into one of the sidewalk cafes and order an appetivo; then enjoy the parade!

Excursions in the vicinity

A very pleasant small excursion is to **Le Celle** on the northern outskirts of Cortona (there are plenty of yellow signs indicating the way). Le Celle is a beautifully positioned monastery where Saint Francis stayed on his travels between Assisi and La Verna. You can see the "cells" where the monks lead their cloistered life. The forest, little streams, and exquisite nature evoke peace and spirituality. The Franciscan monks (who happily receive visitors) will give you a little tour.

The old town of **Castiglion Fiorentino** [known as Castiglion Aretino until the Florentines snatched it in 1384] is well worth a wander around. There is the stunning Vasari Loggia with views towards the Val di Chio and surrounding hills; and a delightful cloister in the Piazza San Francesco, which just happens to be right next door to a great trattoria/ristorante called "Da Muzzicone".

Very near Castiglion Fiorentino is the tiny hamlet of Mandano, birthplace of none other than Roberto Benigni. Roberto Benigni won a "best foreign film" award at the Academy awards in Hollywood (1999) for his "La Vita è Bella" (Life is beautiful). The municipality of Castiglion Fiorentino thought it would be a nice gesture to make a little square in his honor, so don't be surprised when you see a bronze statue of Roberto dancing about! You'll see this statue if you take the road that goes to Monte San Savino (Al autostrada entrance).

Cortona restaurants:

Trattoria Toscana - via Dardano 12. A recently opened trattoria with simple, well-lit, and very attractive interior. Absolutely wonderful traditional Tuscan fare with a touch of imagination! The owner, Sig. Cenci is a young and enthusiastic cook, definitely try a meal here! PRONE: 0575/ 60 41 92. Closed Tuesday. Moderate.

Trattoria La Grotta - Piazza Baldelli 3. This is my all-time favorite. The owner, Signora Rosa Billi is the star in the kitchen. La Grotta serves delicious Tuscan fare and their white and green "gnocchi" or potato dumplings are out-of-this-world! The tiny Piazza Baldelli is set up with only 5 tables during the summer for out-door dining; so I recommend booking ahead if you wish to be seated outside. Alternatively, the indoor atmosphere is very pleasant with stone and beamed ceilings similar to an old cantina. Reasonable but wise to reserve. PRONE: 0575 63 02 71. Closed Tuesday. Reasonable.

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Osteria Del Teatro - Just off the Via Dardano on a little side Street: via Maffei n. 5. The atmosphere is always bustling and there are really too many tables crammed into the 2 small rooms of this inn; but, you'll often here polyglot conversations as waiters weave in and out of traffic between tables & diners. Worth a try, but have been disappointed twice. Americans would call this place "cute". Let me know if you've had a good meal! Phone: 0575/ 6305 56. Closed Wednesday.

Spaghetteria Etrusca - Via Dardano 37,39 (just inside the Porta Colona) serving Pasta only, this spaghetteria has a good selection of beers and salads too. During the summer, go early (7:30pm) in order to get an out-door table around the little square across the Street from the restaurant. Inexpensive.

Pizzeria And Trattoria Casina Dei Tigli - in the Parterre Park right next to the children's playground (thus great entertainment for kids between courses). During the summer there is plenty of out-door seating under the Linden or "tigli" trees. Many University of Georgia professors and students can be found here. Reasonable. Phone: 0575 60 43 81.

Corys - located high in the hills at 650m., on the Torreone side of Cortona (near the entrance to the Santa Margarita cathedral area) is a lovely little restaurant. Lovely, light, yet typical Tuscan dishes and excellent wines. Sit out-doors on the terrace overlooking the stunning green valley and panoramas of the Val di Chiana. Thanks to my dear friends, Lee & JoAnn Asher, I've discovered yet another great restaurant! Phone: 0575/ 605-143.

Amico Più - is a little restaurant where a lot of locals eat. Located on the road to Perugia, just beyond Camucia there is outdoor seating during the summer. Whereas it lacks the charm and atmosphere of the other restaurants.. it definitely has good pizza and on Fridays a huge selection of fish! Closed Tues. Reasonable Phone: 0575/ 630 038

Il Falconiere - located in the country on the north side of Cortona at Località San Martino, is both a restaurant, & relais (they have 9 rooms and 3 suites) is simply delightrul. There is one elegant dining room and 2 smaller rooms upstairs for private parties. Reservations always advisable. During summer, you have a choice of indoor or outdoor seating. The owners are lovely Silvia and Riccardo Baracchi. Silvia is the daughter of Graziella, (owner of Il Molino di Oggi, in Montanare), should you meet the owners, say Joyce sent you. (You'll probably receive a little extra TLC). The romantic setting and the excellent refined menu of Tuscan specialities will make for a very special dining experience. Expensive. Phone: 0575 61 26 79 or 0575 61 26 16.

In Montepulciano:

Ristorante La Grotta - one of my favorite restaurants!: Incredibly enough, my favorite restaurant in Montepulciano is also called La Grotta [like the one in Cortona] ! Located at the bottom of Montepulciano, in front of the magnificent Temple of San Biagio, La Grotta offers outdoor dining under the vine pergolas or indoor seating in the cantina- like vaulted dining room. Be sure to try their speciality: "Galletto al vino Nobile di Montepulciano" (Coq au vin). Moderate to expensive. Phone: 0578 75 76 07. Closed Wednesday.

In Castiglion Fiorentino:

Ristorante Da Muzzicone - DaMuzzicone is a pleasant, somewhat ordinary restaurant in the middle of the old town, where you can eat outside overlooking the Piazza San Francesco. The food is by no means ordinary though; the beef is extraordinary! The "rotondo" owner, Signor Muzzicone appears in an enormous white butchers apron and will hack off a 2" thick "Bistecca Fiorentina" from a large side of beef, which he'll prepare in any number of wonderful ways (alla griglia, grilled) tagliata (sliced & anointed with olive oil & herbs). Moderate prices. Phone: 0575/65 84 03.

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In Ossaia:

Hosteria & Pizzeria La Tufa - Located just down the road from Casa Bacanella and left at the "terrible T-junction" until you get to Ossaia. I am a long-time fan of La Tufa. Signor Rachini and his wife have been running this trattoria "hosteria" for years and the food is varied and very "genuino" and consistently good; the atmosphere charming; and very reasonably priced. Ideal for families, children, and adults. From the road, one would never guess the cavernous dimensions of La Tufa, nor that they have a nice outdoor terrace. During the summer, it tends to be crowded; and the service is slow, especially if you order pizza (they have a very small oven). So, opt for the great pasta and meat dishes! Phone: 0575/ 67 77 17. Closed Wednesday.

In Montanare:

La Locanda Del Molino Oggi - Località Montanare. From Casa Bacanella or Casa Storta, drive beyond Pergo in the direction of Mercatale about 2km until you see the Fina gas station on the right and the "locanda" on the left. Signora Graziella, the owner and chief cook has been cooking for more than 30 years. (In fact, her daughter & son-in-law own "La Falconiere" restaurant near Sodo on the other side of Cortona, which is very chic - "nouvelle cuisine" style.) Graziella tried to retire - but couldn't...she's just too spry and as such... look forward to an excellent, reasonably priced, country style meal, close to home (if you're staying in one of the villas above)! She's always open in the evenings! Phone: 0575 61-41-92. Closed Tuesday.

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SIENA

Sienna has got to be the quintessential hilltown/city, draped over not one but three hills! Sienna's outline includes a collage of towers and palaces, dominated by the black & white-layered cathedral. When arriving from any direction; long stretches of Tuscan farmlands, olive groves and orchards precede that first vision of Sienna, floating on its hilltops - needless to say, the contrast is stunning!

Things to see

So much has been written about Siennese civilization, that you'd be wise to follow a guide book for the details about the history and monuments. Sienna is so lovely to wander around in - that you'll have no trouble getting your bearings if you head toward the Piazza del Campo - which is the heart of the city and the stage of the famous annual horserace: "Il Palio" in July & Aug. If I am pressed to divulge which major sights should not be missed, then I'd suggest the needle-like tower "Torre di Mangia", the town hall or "Palazzo Pubblico" which has an excellent city museum; the cathedral or "Duomo" and the cathedral museum.

Should you miss your stairmaster workout at the gym, may I suggest a climb to the top of the Torre di Mangia (for the definitive view of Sienna) or the roof top of the cathedral museum for another interesting perspective of the city. A few more highlights are the "Pinacoteca Nazionale" (painting gallery), San Domenico church, the Fonte Branda (fountain) and St. Catherine's house. There are two excellent tourist offices which provide maps and mountains of literature: for info on the City of Sienna go to the AAST office at via di Citta 43; for info about the huge province of Sienna (the largest in the region of Tuscany) go to the EPT at via Montanini 92.

Special Events

The Accademia Chigiana hosts an annual musical festival during July and August. The Accademia is located in the Chigi Palace where the air is permeated with strains of music or singing from the Master classes held there. There are often famous musicians teaching the courses and then performing at various locations about the city & countryside. Pick up a program for the current offerings. Obviously the special event of the year is the Palio di Sienna; the great horse race held in the Piazza del Campo on July 2nd and August 16th each year. The atmosphere really begins to build up a good 3 or 4 days before the main event and on the evening before each "Palio", there is the last "prova" trial run in the square. You can usually get seats in the Windows of the various bars and shops around the Campo, by paying the owners a nominal "fee".

Unfortunately seat-tickets for the Palios themselves are virtually unobtainable unless you book a year in advance and are very expensive when they can be found. However, you can always join the Siennese standing in the center of the Campo and be able to see surprisingly well due to the sloping angle of the square! Although the race itself only lasts a minute and a half, there's a good two hours of pageantry preceding the event. On the evening before a Palio, each "Contrada" or city zone, holds a supper out in the streets and anyone can join in. Large quantities of traditional Siennese food are served at reasonable prices.

Shopping

Just as the Palio is synonymous with Sienna, so is "Paneforte" - literally: strong bread. It doesn't have much connection with bread, but it is certainly strong - a kind of super concentrated, spiced cake laced with fruits, nuts, orange peel and "secret" Siennese ingredients. A friend once said that it's the perfectly thing to have in your pocket when climbing Mount Everest. It has been made in Sienna for centuries and there are numerous very old firms, most of whom have delightful little shops in the Piazza del Campo where you can try and buy all the different varieties. If you really have a sweet-tooth, you might also want to try the "Riccarelli" - a marzipan (almond paste) cookie or the "Copate" a nougat biscuit. For grocery shopping, try the CONAD near Porta Ovile and the COOP near the train station or the huge COOP near the new hospital "Ospedale Nuovo". In the center of town there is a very good (but rather expensive) delicatessen called MORBIDI on the Banchi di Sopra Street. BROCCHI in via del Porrione has lovely brass and wrought iron work; Il TELAIO in Piazza del Campo has beautiful hand woven things and CERAMICA SAN BERNARDINO in 2 locations: 2 str. Ficareto and 33 str. S. Caterina has a fine selection of ceramics.

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Osteria Quikom - Sit at the simple long wooden tables and feast on artichoke, asparagus and mushroom pasta dishes with great local wine. Good place for kids (& parents) and quite reasonable. Near San Francesco on via dei Rossi 79, SIENA. Closed Sun. Phone: 0577 287 592.

Osteria Le Logge - Just off the Piazza del Campo in via Porrione, enjoy a meal at one of the sidewalk tables (or inside if they're full). Succulent risottos and pasta dishes along with interesting second courses like stuffed guinea hen and all for a very moderate price. Via del Porrione 33, Sena. Closed Sun. Phone: 0577 48 013.

Ai Marsili - is one of Siena's best and most elegant restaurants. Traditional Sieneese cuisine is not always on front stage with dishes like "Gnocchi all'anatra" potato dumplings in duck sauce, but it's all so delicious, why put up a fuss? Near Piazza del Duomo, and off via di Citta on via del Castoro 3, Siena. Closed Mon. Phone: 0577 47154

Mugolone - via dei Pellegrini 8, Siena; Phone: 0577 283 235. Very typical & traditional Senese restaurant, on the elegant side. ..highly recommended! Closed. Thurs.

Antica Trattoria Botteganova - Strada Chiantigiana, 29, 53100 Siena. If you are leaving Siena and on your way to Chianti, here is a fine restaurant which one of my guests voted "one of the best restaurants in Italy". I haven't tried it, but knowing the Bassocks, I trust them! Phone: 0557/ 284-230 Closed Monday.

Wine

Siena is the home of the **Enoteca Italiana** in the Fortezza Medicea (Medici fortress) where they have tried to collect all possible Italian wines and is a definite MUST for any wine buffs. Sometime they organize special tastings, concentrating on one particular region of Italy.

The Chianti Hills, Monteriggioni & San Gimignano:

The area that lies north of Siena and south of Florence is known as Chianti (sometimes even referred to as Chiantishire, due to its huge foreign population). Vineyards in this area are officially entitled to classify their wine "Chianti Classico", [the top category - and most sought after denomination]. Fiere was the line of defense, behind which the Sieneese & Florentine Republics scowled at each other for centuries. You'd think that modern times would have put an end to this rivalry; no such luck - they are still gripping about which geographic area constitutes "Chianti Classico" growing region. Assuming that you'll want to do some wine tasting while in the area, let the individual vineyard owners explain the politics. Chianti will stun you with its panoramic views, infinite greenery, rolling hills and farm land, dense oak woods, boundless estates, tiny vineyards, castles, churches and romantic hill towns. There is something for everyone in Chianti; but I have no intention of influencing your choice of where to go or what to do. Permit me however to offer my humble suggestions of bigger towns, tiny gems of hilltowns, castles and vineyards that you can discover for yourself. Naturally, I'll indicate my favorite restaurants too!

Bigger towns: Castellina, Radda, Gaiole, and Greve. Greve is the "Capitai" of Chianti wine and as such you'll find the village awash in specialized wine shops! The annual wine fair takes place in early September complete with dancing in the courtyard of the castle at Montefioralle - 1 km away.

Tiny hilltowns: San Sano, Ama, San Polo, Vagliagli, Rietine, Vistarerra, & Panzano. Post-card perfect little villages!

Castles: Vertine - a 12th e. gem! !; Brolio, Cacchiano, Meleto, Barbischio, Volpaia - most of these cannot be visited; but they are splendid to photograph from near or far. Check a guide book - many also sell wine on their estates.

Vineyards: Try the Antinori's estate at Santa Cristina (closer to Florence); the Ricasoli's estate & castle at Brolio, beyond Gaiole; Lorenzo de' Medici Stucchi-Prinetti's - Badia al Coltibuono; Ama & San Polo estates are both near Lecchi; and San Felice - near Castlenovo Berardenga. "Cin-Cin!"

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After the laborious task of wine tasting; and if you are up to more driving, please don't miss the wonderful hilltowns of Monteriggioni and San Gimignano. Actually these 2 towns deserve a trip of their own...I know, you are already saying: "if only we had booked another week!". Well, do not despair, Tuscany has been here for over 3,000 years, so, you must definitely return again some day. A word to the wise: San Gimignano must be approached either early in the day or at dusk and preferably on a midweek day...never try to visit this town on Italian holidays, or Sat. & Sundays...there could be a mob scene!!

San Gimignano is a medieval New York or Chicago with a landscape of ancient skyscrapers! ! San Gimignano is Italy's best-preserved medieval city. Originally there were at least 70 towers in the 1300s (in a town barely one-eighth of a square mile in size), but now there are only 15. Once, almost every city in central Italy looked like this. The towers were more that defensive stongholds in the incessant family feuds; they served as status symbols of a family's or a town's wealthy and power. But towers aside, San Gimignano also has pretty streets, churches, piazzas, and public buildings to explore. If you are a photo buff, save a few shots for San Gimignano at dusk. The illuminated towers against an electric blue sky.

A WORD TO THE WISE: BE SURE TO VISIT SAN GIMIGNANO ONLY ON MID WEEK DAYS (TUES. WED. THURS.) THE WEEKEND AND ITALIAN HOLIDAYS ARE TO BE AVOIDED LIKE THE PLAGUE. YOU'LL FIND THERE IS NO PARKING WITHIN 1 KM FROM THE TOWN AND THE SHOPS AND STREETS ARE PACKED TO THE GILLS!

Here is a **special restaurant** that you may want to try, particularly if you find yourself at the far north end of Chianti ...thus almost to Florence area. **Il Paese dei Campanelli**: is one of the best trattorias in the area. The trattoria is actually a beautiful old farmhouse; guests will enjoy the charming, elegant interior. Excellent and interesting Tuscan dishes. (Medium to high prices.) Borgo di Petrognano; Barberino Val d'Elsa (FI). Closed Monday. Phone: 055/ 807 5280 or 807-5318. (about 15km to castle). will leave you breathless.

Exploring the Southern Siena Province of Tuscany:

There is no hiding that I am totally in love with the "Sud Senese" - the vast area south of Siena. It's an arid and rugged terrain, as well as its desert-like vistas remind me of my native California. Monte Amiata & Monte Cetona (ancient, now-extinct volcanoes) and the myriad hilltowns poking above the horizon are my familiar landmarks. Two graceful hilltowns linger south of Siena, both with a distinguished past and both best known for their wine - Montepulciano and Montalcino. So, don't miss these famous towns; but try to see a few of the others mentioned too. Buon viaggio!

Montepulciano boasts the fine *Vino Nobile di Montepulciano* wine and the residents of this town, called "Poliziani" are genteel and cultured. This long cultural tradition dates back to Renaissance times when Montepulciano owed allegiance to Florence; in fact, the Palazzo Comunale in the Piazza Grande is a smaller version of Florence's Palazzo Vecchio. The temple of San Biagio, is an amazing architectural masterpiece by Antonio da San Gallo, built between 1518-1545; it lies at the bottom of the town overlooking harmonious valleys and hills with the famous *Vino Nobile* vineyards. Be sure to visit the newly inaugurated Museo Civico di Montepulciano & Pinacoteca Crociani, via Ricci 10, open Tues. - Sunday. Many rare and beautiful pieces from Etruscan to Renaissance art.

Special Events:

The town's biggest festival is the "Bruscello", a partly improvised play on medieval and Renaissance themes in music and verse, acted by townspeople in Aug. The "Bravio delle Botti" is a form of "Summer Olympics" whereby teams from the various neighborhoods race up the steep main Street pushing huge barrels in the heat of August.

Specialties:

The area around the town has numerous "Fattorie" or "Cantine" where one may taste "assaggiare" & buy wine.

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Although I mention it a dozen times throughout my guidebook, I can only highly recommend for the umpteenth time to have at least one meal at "La Grotta" situated across the street from San Biagio Temple. Weather permitting, the outdoor garden is lovely for enjoying the delightful food prepared by the owners: Gian Carlo & Pierrette Mazzuoli, a husband/wife team and their son David who waits the tables. The wife is originally from the Perigord region in Southwest France, a gastronomic capital. As a 30 year resident, she has adapted her native cuisine to the fresh and natural ingredients which abound in Tuscany. The result is magical, her Galletto al Vino Nobile (Coq au Vin) is legendary; forget the calories and try the wonderful desserts! Closed on Wednesdays.

Montefollonico is a beautiful little village with a walled town dating back to the 13th e. about 5k from Montepulciano. There is a frescoed parish church and Palazzo Comunale. **La Chiusa restaurant**, located in an old olive press (frantoio) is considered a mecca of gastronomy in all guide books. Personally, I feel you get a false or "hyped up" version of genuine Tuscan fare and you'll pay very dearly for this gastronomic experience. The owner, Umberto Lucherini, may have an orgasm while he recites the menu and goes into minute detail how everything is made; but if you are prepared for the "cinema", then, by all means, enjoy!

Montichiello is another charming mini-village perched on a hillside on a back road leading towards Pienza. In 20 minutes you can walk around the entire town; peak into the 13th e. church with the Pietro Lorenzetti altarpiece. Your visit may be prolonged if you stop to shop at the village boutique full of regional food specialties or want to try lunch at the "La Taverna di Moranda" which offers typical Val d'Orcia dishes

Pienza is a jewel set above one of the most stunning Tuscan landscapes. It wasn't by accident that Pope Pius II (Silvius Piccolomini) chose to convert his native village into this elegant Renaissance city which he named after himself. The main sites are the Piazza Pio, Palazzo Piccolomini, Archbishops' Palace and the Cathedral (1462) built on the edge of a slight cliff which has been subsidizing for years - you'll note the huge cracks in the apse - so far no one has figured out a way to shore it up. Take a stroll along the outer wall of the town and note the "sympatico" names of the little alleys [i.e.: "via del Bacio" Street of the kiss!]. As you stroll down the main drag - Corso Rossellino, you'll find dozens of fancy food shops offering local honey, preserves and the famous sheep cheese "Pecorino". Pienza is the self-proclaimed capital of sheep cheese in Tuscany; this mild & delicate "cacio" has been made here since Etruscan times. Between Pienza and San Quirico d'Orcia you'll probably observe many flocks of the sheep, (responsible for the "pecorino" cheese). If you are ready for lunch or dinner, try the **Trattoria "Latte di Luna"** at the end of via S. Carlo for excellent imaginative dishes, prepared by a local young couple. Get there early for out-door seating in the tiny square. Since you've got to pass through S. Q. d'Orcia to get to the Bagno Vignoni spa town or Montalcino, the main reason for a visit to **San Quirico D'Orcia** is to see the Collegiata Church. This ancient church dating back to 1080 has an exceptional facade and portals from the 1200s, sculpted with lions and telamones. Don't forget to bring your bathing suit and towel when stopping by **Bagno Vignoni**. Just a few minutes south of San Quirico D'Orcia is the Roman town of Bagno Vignoni. The main square of this pretty little village boasts an enormous pool of steaming hot water which dates to Roman times. The entire village is built up around this square in amphitheater style, everyone having a "view" on the great pool. If you want to take a marvelous thermal water swim, go to the Hotel Posta di Marciteci. The lake-size pool is fed by a waterfall from the natural hot springs. Children and adults will enjoy standing under the waterfall and swim the warm waters (particularly from October through April). Non-hotel guests pay a small admission fee for the day. Bring your bathing suit, cap & towel. Open 9:30am-1:00pm & 2:30-6:30pm. Closed Thurs. Try the **Antica Osteria del Leone** for lunch (next to the Roman bath in town square).

If castle-fortresses intrigue you, then visit **Castello Di Ripa D'Orcia** (6km beyond Bagno Vignoni); passing by the tiny medieval borgo of Vignoni Alto, and then through an ancient forest-woods until you see the "forbidding" entrance gate of the Castello di Ripa d'Orcia (during summer weekends there is a simple restaurant run by owners of the castle).

The **Rocca D'Orcia** is a hamlet with a stately castle which one can observe from the Hotel Posta Pool at Bagno Vignoni, across the valley.

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The eastern part of the Val d'Orcia reveals the most fascinating and rugged landscapes, particularly along the roads leading up to **Radiconfani**. From a distance Radiconfani resembles a pyramid with a top-hat! Climb up to the ruined fortress for a 360° view of Southern Tuscany! Looking due East, 3 delicious little towns dot the horizon: **San Casciano Dei Bagni** (my all-time favorite for charm and the excellent "Bar Centrale" restaurant; **Celle Sul Rigo** and **Castiglioncello Del Trinoro**.

Montalcino dominates the countryside with its walled village and stunning fortress which was the seat of the Siena government while Siena was under a fifty year siege. Purchase a ticket to walk along the ramparts at the **Enoteca** (end of the courtyard). After your visit, have a snack at the little bar and sample and / or purchase the Enoteca's wonderful collection of **Brunello wine**.

Wine:

Understandably, the major attraction of the town is liquid - Brunella di Montalcino, a dark, pungent red holds a proud place among Italy's finest wines. As the country around Montalcino is swathed in vineyards, wine tasting is the order of the day! Brunello and Rosso di Montalcino can be purchased at the many Enotecas (wine libraries) about town. But, if you'd like to go directly to the producer for a case of wine and obviously better prices: try **Altesino Winery**; owned by our friend **Claudio Basla**. Simply watch for the many "Altesino" signs guiding you to the vineyard or call ahead for special treatment & tasting: 0577 80-62-08. Better still, contact Anna Lisa Tempestini (Claudio's wife) 348/ 3401-398; for an amazing wine tour! About 2k south of Montalcino is a charming rustic farm restaurant on the

Fattoria Dei Barbi (800/ 499-310) estate which offers typical local dishes; there is also a wine concession at the **Cantine Dei Barbi** on the premises. Just a bit further south (or 10k south of Montalcino) is the acclaimed Abbey of **San Antimo**, one of the finest examples of Romanesque architecture in Tuscany. This exquisite church is served by a small order of 5 French priests who sing the most haunting Gregorian chants during Sunday mass. The caretaker does not live on-site, but is usually around in the morning, otherwise look for the priest in Castelnuovo dell'Abate to visit the interior. While we are talking about "sacred places"; a most worthwhile trip in this general south Siena vicinity, is the magnificent **Abbazia Di Monte Olf/Eto Maggiore**, dating from 1313. North of Montalcino on a narrow winding road beyond Buonconvento, you'll find austere green meadows alternating with ragged gullies and bare white cliffs. In the center of these eroding hills you'll see a huge grove of cypresses surrounding the Abbey. From here, a local road leads east to **Montisi** (7k) with a quaint restaurant called La Romita, and **Trequanda** (12k) two seldom visited but fine villages, the latter has a 13th century castle and another Romanesque church. Beyond these two villages is the Locanda dell'Amorosa in a miniature medieval hamlet, complete with a manor house and frescoed church. The "Locanda" located 2k south of **Sinalunga** is actually an inn and a prize-winning restaurant. You may want to reserve a half day for a special excursion to **Cetona**, a tiny gem of a village with the ethereal Franciscan monastery & celebrated restaurant "La Fratteria di Padre Eligio" only 1 km away. If Etruscology, Etruscan tombs and tunnels are your bag, then put **Chiusi** on your agenda. The Archaeological museum in Chiusi contains one of the largest Etruscan collections in Italy. The ancient town of Chiusi is a village full of charm and simpatico restaurants, but the new part of Chiusi is a real disappointment; don't be taken aback, there's bound to be at least one flaw in the kingdom of Tuscany! Vero?

Restaurants in the Southern Siennese vicinity:

Castello Di Ripa D'Orcia - pleasant little restaurant, within the castle. Interesting menu, moderately priced. Panoramic drive to get there either via San Quirico d'Orcia or Vignoni Alto. Phone: 0577 897 376

Antica Osteria Del Leone - this is one of my favorite trattoria's! Located just behind the famous Roman baths of Bagno Vignoni, you'll find this small and quaint little trattoria which offers many South Siennese specialities (Pici con ragu) at very reasonable prices. Piazza del Moretto, Bagno Vignoni. Phone: 0577 887- 300. (If it is not too hot, you may want to combine a swim at the huge lake-like pool of thermal waters at the Hotel Posta Marcucci of Bagno Vignoni.)

Cantina Il Borgo - simple snacks and lunches in an old cellar of the ancient "borgo" of Rocca D'orcina. Phone: 0577 887280.

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La Rosa Del Trinoro - Set in the authentic medieval "borgo", Castiglioncello Del Trinoro you'll find a little trattoria offering simple fare. Typical dishes prepared here! Open air section can get chilly! Enjoy also the incredible views of the Val d'Orcia. Phone: 0578 265 529.

La Taverna Di Moranda - Charming, small restaurant which offers typical dishes from the Val d'Orcia. La Taverna di Moranda is one of my favorites with wonderful food and a first-class selection of wines. They are very friendly and the village of Monticchiello is worth strolling around. Via di Mezzo 17, Monticchiello. Phone: 0578755 050.

La Grotta - Contemplate the exquisite architecture of San Gallo's Temple of San Biagio, while feasting in the tree covered garden or opt for the cool recesses of the restaurant's vaulted-cellar interior. Try the marvelous "Galletto al Vino Nobile di Montepulciano" (Coq au vin). Pierrette Mathieu, the owner's French wife is from Bergerac, (Perigord region) which explains the origins of many of the dishes, rarely found in the Tuscan countryside. The atmosphere is charming, food superb and prices moderate to expensive. This is one of my all-time-favorite restaurants which I highly recommend! Closed Wednesday. Località S. Biagio, Montepulciano. Phone: 0578 757-607. My favorite restaurant in all of Tuscany!!!

La Romita - Delightful, small restaurant in the village of Montisi, which is unassuming from the outside, but once inside there is a large villa garden where one may choose to dine outdoors; or in the small rooms of the restaurant which was once a villa/home. Nice South Siennese cuisine with a speciality of Duck. The owner Umberto Primi is highly eccentric, but the food is very "serious"! Montisi. Phone: 0577 80 32 27.

Bar Centrale - call Silvestre) Baraldo, (the owner of Bar Centrale) the mayor of San Casciano, since he always knows everyone in the area. Silvestro's bar offers excellent "gelato" and pastries; but he also runs a terrific little spaghetteria mostly a pasta or "primo" (incredible cold soups too restaurant) although there are also steaks. During the summer months, Bar Centrale generally stays open until week hours of the morning. Located on the main square of San Casciano dei Bagni; outdoor seating in front. Closed Wed. San Casciano Dei Bagni. Phone: 0578 58041.

La Crocetta - Small restaurant located in an old farm house setting, just outside the village of San Casciano dei Bagni. Dine outdoors in the garden, served by the charming owners Andrea & Costina Leotti. San Casciano Dei Bagni. Phone: 0578 58136.

Osteria Vecchia - Behind the Bar Cavour, just off the main square of Cetona, there is this very good country food trattoria which is relatively inexpensive. Cetona. Phone: 0578 239040

Ristorante "La Grotta" - Very rustic and simple setting in an old cellar like structure which offers equally rustic and simple Tuscan fare. Piazza S. Agata 12; Radicofani. Phone: 0578 55866

Osteria La Solita Zuppa - Located in the old town of Chiusi (known as Chiusi Alto) as opposed to Chiusi scalo where the modern town and train station are located. Excellent barley soup (zuppa di farro) as well as health-style, vegetarian and other pasta dishes can be enjoyed. Closed Tuesday. Not expensive, only slightly sophisticated. Via Porsenna 21; Chiusi. Phone: 0578 21006.

Latte Di Luna - At the end of the main Street of Pienza you'll find this charming trattoria. It is a family affair run by a young couple: Enrica Bassi and husband Roberto. The Pici con ragù are outstanding; the duck with olives not to be missed and there are delicious "semi-freddi" flavored with orange, hazelnut, fig, or melon for dessert. Outdoor eating area in front & cozy interior as well. Reasonable to moderate prices. Via S. Carlo 2/4, 53026 Pienza. Phone: 0578 748-606.

Here are three restaurants* suggestions for special meals. They are expensive and it is always advisable to book ahead.

***Fratteria Di Padre Eligio** - Convento di San Francesco; Cetona.. Remarkable, private restaurant with only 5 tables. Everything is prepared to perfection and naturally, reservations are a must!. Set in an ancient Franciscan monastery with a view of the Val di Chiana. An atmosphere of spirituality! You may also request a tour of the monastery when booking your table; but you must arrive early (7 - 7:30 pm) for the guided tour in English; which is then followed by the most extraordinary gastronomic experience! Fixed price/person, wine & drinks extra. Extensive wine cellar. Expensive but well worth it. Phone: 0578 23 80 15

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***La Chiusa** - Elegant dining, and fine "nouvelie-cuisine" fare. Beware that the somewhat eccentric theatrical owner, Umberto Lucherini may hover around you all evening. Dania Masotti, his ex-wife is the genius in command of the kitchen! Very expensive. Via della Madonnina 88: Montefollonico. Phone: 0577 6696820.

***Locanda Dell'Amorosa** - Lovely setting in the 17th century villa/farm "borgo" surrounded by wonderful countryside outside of Sinalunga. Teli the owner, Carlo Criterio, that Joyce sent you. Interesting dishes based on Siennese recipes & local foods. Expensive. Closed Mon. Sinalunga. Phone: 0577 679497.

Taverna Dei Barbi - Take the route which includes the Val d'Orda via La Foce; it's a wonderful drive! Located just a few kilometers beyond Montalcino you'll see signs for the "Fattoria dei Barbi". Here you'll find very good food in a proper restaurant which is part of this highly respected vineyard. Closed Wed. Località Podernovi Montalcino; Phone: 0577 84 11 11.

Poggio Antico - If you are in the mood for a more elegant atmosphere and superb cuisine with a "degustazione" menu, go to Poggio Antico. Located about 4k beyond Montalcino on the road to Grosseto; and situated at the top of a hill with views of Mt. Amiata and on a very clear day you'll see the Mediterranean sea! Only indoor seating available. Località I Poggi, Montalcino; Phone: 0577 849 200.

(WHILE YOU ARE IN MONTALCINO - **FOR LADIES ONLY!: On a little side street just below the fortress of Montalcino, there is a "laboratorio" called **La Luna Nuova**, via Ricasoli 36, run by a woman artisan, Chiara Franceschetti. Chiara weaves beautiful fabrics, then fashions them into interesting vests, jackets, sweaters and pullovers. Knitted items also; all natural fibers (cotton, linen, wool. I mention for "ladies only"; but the truth is: there are many great men's sweaters too, it's just that men often don't have the patience to wait until the owner arrives. If she's not there call her at home and she'll come, Chiara speaks some English. Phone: 0577 849-170 or 0577 849-392 if no one answers @ 1st number 19).

13 Gobbi - as an alternative to the famous La Chiusa restaurant outside Montefollonico, the 13 Gobbi or "Hunchbacks" is in the old village. Here you can have an enjoyable meal at a most reasonable price. Their grilled vegetables (zucchini, eggplants and tomatoes) are divine! 5 via Landò di Duccio, Montefollonico; Phone: 0577 669 755.

ALTHOUGH THIS RESTAURANT IS IN THE CITY OF SIENA AND NOT THE SOUTHERN TUSCANY AREA, SO MANY GUESTS HAVE ENJOYED EATING HERE. WHY NOT GIVE IT A TRY?

Le Logge - in Siena. Le Logge is a charming restaurant, and a great place for lunch in Siena. Find it as follows: facing the main building in the Piazza del Campo, turn left and continue to the first exit from the campo on that side. Turn right up this Street. Le Logge is a little way up on the left hand side. Go to the restaurant earlier to reserve a table and return later. During the summer, there are a few sidewalk or street tables too. 33 via del Porrione, Siena; Phone: 0577 48013.

Mugolone - via dei Pellegrini 8, SIENA; PHONE: 0577 283 235. Very typical & traditional Senese restaurant, on the elegant side.. highly recommended! Closed. Thursday.

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Florence is an absolutely extraordinary city, packed full of all the things that you've ever seen in Art books, on television programs and even on Multimedia CD-Roms! It's a big, busy hot, dusty city and many of the most beautiful works of art are inside surprisingly drab exteriors. Lots of people are very disappointed with their first view of Florence (particularly if it's on a scorching July or August day). Others are absolutely bowled over by FIRENZE, or "Fiorenza", the city of the flower (the lily to be exact).

State Museums and Galleries

In order to avoid those interminable lines while waiting call Iris MAGIC NUMBER: 055/ 294-883. For a very small booting fee you can reserve a time to pick up your ticket and view the Galleria degli Uffizzi, Pitti Palace and other important Florentine museums. Be sure to do yourself this favour!

Things To See

Unless you stay here for months you can't see it all; so if you must limit yourself to only a day or two. Be sure to visit at least the UFFIZI GALLERY, and particularly the Botticelli room. Venus, Primavera and so on are all there, larger than life and umpteen times as wonderful! On the way to the Uffizi you come to the PIAZZA DELLA SIGNORIA, & PALAZZO VECCHIO with a small copy of the David in front- (the real DAVIDE is in the GALLERIA DELL'ACCADEMIA and is only open from 9am-2pm, so go early). Then, see the BARGELLO, or sculpture museum, followed by a visit to the PONTE VECCHIO which is the only bridge over the Amo that wasn't destroyed during the 2nd World War, and is lined with tiny, exquisite jewellery shops. Apart from the DUOMO (cathedral), the BATISTERO (baptistry), and the TORRE DI GIOTTO Piazza del Duomo; which you are hardly likely to miss, recommended churches are SAN LORENZO & MEDICI CHAPEL behind the church (just next to the out-door market San Lorenzo, SANTA CROCE where everyone who is anyone has a tomb, and SANTA MARIA DEL CARMINE for the recently restored Masaccio fresco es. The PITTI PALACE and the MEDICI PALACE are both recommended and on a much smaller, more intimate level, LA CASA DAVANZATI, in via Porta Rossa is a veritable medieval home of a nobleman, complete with furnishings and a kitchen on the 3rd floor (remember, back then there were no elevators!) Forgive me if I digress, the ONLY reason to visit the MEDICI PALACE, in my humble opinion, is to see a rare gem of a room: the tiny Medici Chapel (upstairs), with frescoes depicting the "Procession of the Magi" by Benozzo Gozzoli (1459). The scene is wrapped around 3 walls of the chapel which transport you back 5 centuries to a golden fairytale world. Giuliano di Medici is on horseback and most of the faces are those of the Medici family members and other local celebrities, even Gozzoli got into the act! As they now say in America, "it is awesome"! The only pure Renaissance square in Florence is the PIAZZA SANTISSIMA ANNUNZIATA, surrounded on three sides by arcades: very Florentine! The place to get THE view of Barasce is PIAZZALE MICHE ANGELO, just south of the Amo, just above this square is the church of SAN MINIATO AL MONTE (also with a fine view of the city). In case you arrive in Florence without guide book or maps, pay a visit to the Tourist Information Center (APT) via Tornabuoni 15; PHONE: 055/ 217459.

Special Events

During June there are 3 matches of "Calcio Storico in Costume" (historical soccer in 16th costume) held in the Piazza della Signoria. This event is played by 27-men teams from the city's 4 quarters in commemoration of a defiant football match played in Piazza Santa Croce in 1530 during the siege by Charles V. Flag throwing and a parade are part of the pregame festivities. The best fireworks are reserved for the patron saint day, "La Festa di San Giovanni" - St. John the Baptist, on 24 June. Florentines adore cultural events, so take your pick: "Maggio Musicale Fiorentino"-the most important music festival which really begins in April until July bringing in big-name concert stars; most performances are held at the Teatro Comunale. The "Estate Fiesolana" is held outdoors in the old Roman amphitheatre of Fiesole from late June - August offering concerts, ballets, theatre and films.

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Shopping

Florence is mecca for very high fashion shops & the center of world fashion for lingerie, swimwear, leather goods: shoes & handbags in particular. A stroll down Via Tornabuoni will take you past all the famous names like Ferragamo, Beltrami, Gucci, Bottega Veneta etc. To follow are a few of my favorite shops:

Il Torchio - Exquisite hand-made paper goods; all my catalogs & guests books are made here.

Tell Anna Annichini, the owner, that Joyce sent you. Via dei Bardi 17; Phone: 055 234-2862.

Bottega Veneta - Via Tornabuoni, directly in front of Ferragamo near the Ponte Santa Trinità. Phone: 055 28 47 35. The owner is Mario Biagiotti, a family friend whose wife Carol is an American from Arizona.

..their son Paolo Biagiotti runs this chic and trendy B. V...mention you know Joyce. There are few styles in the selection of purses & shoes, but they are classic & elegant and they last for years!

Don't forget that just North of Arezzo at Leccio-Reggello is the B. V. factory outlet!)

Qui Nannini - Via Porta Rossa, 64r. Phone: 055 213-888. My young friend, Sandra Nannini, daughter of owner, is half-American/half Tuscan...she does most of the admistration nowadays but you might find her at the shop, so say hello from Joyce! The shoes & bags are very trendy. Located just off Via Tornabuoni.

Tessilarte - Via Toselli 100, (near Porta a Prato). Phone: 055 364-097. Tessilarte once was an old weaving mill, in fact you'll stili find the weaving looms in the entrance of this little factory. Ask for my dear friend, Paola Martinetti, owner, who designs sheets, tablecloths, & bedspreads in cotton & linen. Paola also designs for Christian Dior in addition to her own line, Excellent value and good discounts can be had! Go during factory hours which are: 8:30am-12:30pm/2:30pm-6:00pm. Sat. by appt. She will take orders and ship abroad if desired. By the way, Tessilarte is not in the town center; you'll have a good 20 min. walk from the Duomo area...you may want to take a taxi.

Florence - Trattorie & Restaurant

Trattoria Omero - up at the top of Florence, and in front of Gallileo's house/observatory. This is one of my favorite Florentine trattorie, I used to go here often when I lived in Florence back in 1979 & 1980. You have to pass through the grocery/wine shop in order to get to the restaurant itself. There are beautiful views of the city everywhere. Here you can try all the classic dishes of genuine old Tuscan tradition. Pasta ribbons - "pappardelle" with hare sauce, fried chicken and desserts are all delicious. There are 120 varieties of Tuscan wine to taste! Closed Tuesday; via del Pian dei Giulari, 1 Ir. Phone: 055 220-053.

La Garga - with exciting "Chagall-like" murals in every room, this charming if slightly cranked place, is my favorite (in-the-city) restaurant. Garga, an exuberant Florentine and his Canadian wife, Sharon serve mouthwatering home-made pasta, delicately prepared meat and fish dishes. It's gotten rather expensive. Closed at lunch & Monday; via del Moro 50/r. Phone: 055 239-8898.

Cibreo - this quintessential Florentine restaurant overlooks the market of Sant'Ambrogio. The decor is lovely, but plain & simple; food is the main concern here - all market fresh! Cibreo is now world-famous, and the daily competition for its 50 seats runs high. To dine here is an up-lifting, gastronomie experience! Ask for seating at the "Cibreino" - jokingly, "dei poveri" or for the poor - i.e.: students side of restaurant which has long tables at the back. Closed Sunday & Monday; via Andrea del Verrocchio, 4/5/8r. Phone: 055 234-1100.

Il Cantinone - another one of my "haunts" during my Florence days! Located in a subterranean wine cellar, Il Cantinone specializes in Chianti Classico wines and country cooking: pappa al pomodoro (thick tornato soup), polenta with boar, and the huge "crostone" or open-faced toasted bread sandwiches. One room is devoted to wine tasting and antipasti. Via S. Spirito 5; Phone: 055 218-898

I Quattro Amici - the best fish restaurant East the Mediterranean! When Sandro -Dr. Cherici, (my partner) was the director of the Banca Pop. dell'Etruria across the Street - we were regulars! Superb antipasti, pasta alle vongole and beautiful grilled or baked fish! Delightful fresh interior - the antithesis of traditional Florentine restaurants! Via degli Orti Oricellai, 29; Closed Wed. Phone: 055 215-413.

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Enoteca Pinchiorri - Calling all gourmets! "Enoteca" literally means library of wine - and there is an astonishing collection of labels to read: some 80,000 bottles of the best Italian and French wines available! The cooking is a mixture of "nouvelle cuisine" and traditional Tuscan recipes which win prizes yearly! I am incurable romantic; so there is nothing more enticing than a meal served in the beautifully appointed restaurant or the garden court (by candlelight) in the summer! Be prepared to spend a bundle, particularly if you order a prestigious wine or champagne! Via Ghibellina 87, near the Casa Buonarroti. Closed Sun & Mon. Phone: 055 242-777.

Caffè Concerto - all wood decor, this restaurant reminds me of a Californian "Chart House". The differences are vast however: situated right on the banks of the Arno, with terraces overlooking the river, soft lighting and flowers on the elegantly set

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Tennis

Courts are located just outside the town of Anghiari, A local hourly fee is charged. Phone: 788 135 for reservations, or ask Signor Rossi in person to book you a court.

Horse

Riding in the village of Gricignano, about 5km beyond Anghiari and on the way to Sansepolcro. Go in person and ask for Signori Montesi- Lawley. Tel 0575 720174.

Golf

Golf Club Casentino is a 9 hole course located just beyond the town of Poppi. Open daily from 8:30 am to 7:30pm continuously. Closed on Tuesdays. As this is a private golf club, those wishing to play should display a golf club membership from their home club. If you don't have one, just say you left it at home. Very nominal green fee and club rental fee. Phone: 0575/ 520-167. (Say you are a friend of Joyce Dittimore and Maurizio Bartolomeo: one of the founders) of the GOLF CLUB CASENTINO