



## TENUTA DI GRACCIANO MARAMAI, TUSCANY

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### INTRODUCTION

Maramai is a country house. It is named after the Tuscan farmer's family that lived there until the early '70s. The first floor was used for storage; the arched room housed cattle. The second floor was where the family lived, the central room with the big chimneypiece being the kitchen. The other tall building was for drying tobacco, a major crop in the region (a typical Italian cigar is called "toscano"), and the small long building behind it was a pigsty.

The house was renovated from 2000 to 2003 as a country house with modern facilities that could be used all year round. Maramai is located in the Podere Rovisci, the oldest vineyard of the Tenuta di Gracciano, itself a 70 hectares estate originally belonging, since the first years of the XIXth Century, to the Svetoni family. From this historical family of wine makers from Montepulciano, the property passed down some 40 years ago to the present owners, the della Seta family from Florence.

### DAILY LIFE

In Montepulciano Stazione

**Food shops** - 8 am to 1 pm, 5 pm to 8 pm. Food shops are closed on Wednesday afternoon.

**Supermarket** - There are a few grocery shops and a couple of small Supermarkets. There is a **bakery "Il Forno"**, **three butchers** and a **fishmonger's** where you can buy fresh fish.

In Abbadia di Montepulciano

Good fresh **pasta shop** by the bakery. Montepulciano has a bigger **Conad supermarket**.

In Chiusi

**Supermarket is bigger and cheaper.**

**Shopping on a Sunday** - In high season (July and August) in Chiusi shops are open the first Sunday of month.

#### Banks

There are a few banks in Montepulciano Stazione, and Abbadia di Montepulciano also has 2 banks; opening hours are 8.30am - 1pm and 2.30pm - 3pm on weekdays. Other banks can be found in Montepulciano and every major town in the area. All banks have a cash point for major credit cards.

#### Post office

There is a post office in Montepulciano Stazione, close to the railway station. Opening hours: 8.15am - 13.30pm from Monday to Saturday. In Montepulciano there is a post office in the old town.

Opening hours: 8.15am - 7pm from Monday to Friday and 8.15am - 12.30am on Saturday. Stamps can be bought in any tobacconist shop.

#### International newspapers

In Montepulciano and Pienza newsagents sell major international newspapers and some magazines; a newsstand in Montepulciano Stazione sells Italian newspapers and magazines.

#### Trains

The nearest and most convenient train station is Chiusi-Chianciano which is directly connected to Rome and Florence. Tel.0578-892021. The small railway station at Montepulciano Stazione is on the local line between Chiusi and Siena. Timetables on webpage: [www.trenitalia.com](http://www.trenitalia.com)

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**Doctors**

For any emergency call the first aid number 118. Otherwise the hospital at Nottola (3 min. drive) has a first aid service Tel.0578-713201. The closest pharmacy is in the village of Acquaviva 5 minutes from Maramai, Tel.0578-767652; there's another one in Abbadia some 10 minutes away Tel.0578-708024. More chemists may be found in Montepulciano town and other big centers.

**Car Rental**

In Chiusi, on the square opposite the train station, you will find a Herzt office. Address: Piazza Dante 22 Telephone: 0578 227993 Fax: 0578 224191

Hours of Operation: Mo-Fr 0900-1300 1500-1900, Sa 0900-1300, Su on req or a local car rental in Torrita di Siena : "LA.GO.R. autonoleggi" Tel.0578-684195.

**Internet**

In Montepulciano the Tourist Office near Porta al Prato has access to computers, and there is an Internet Train in Via di Gracciano nel Corso, above Piazza Michelozzo. They don't have the capacity to let you hook up your own computer, but you can rent time on theirs. It is not terribly expensive.

**Markets & Fairs**

Villages and towns tend to have a market once a week which usually lasts from 9 am to 1 pm. Markets are excellent for buying fruit and vegetable as well as cheese. Antique fairs are held on a monthly basis.

Montepulciano Stazione on Saturday morning facing the railway station. Food.

Montepulciano: Thursday on main square.

Arezzo: an antique fair is held in the main square every first Sunday of the month.

**WINE & OLIVE OIL**

Montepulciano has long been famous for its vino nobile (the poet Redi in the fifteenth century said it was "the king of wines" and Voltaire mentioned it as a treat in his novel Candide). Vino Nobile is made of a blend including Sangiovese, Merlot, Malvasia and the local "prugnolo gentile" grapes, it is bottled when three years old, if younger it is called "rosso di Montepulciano". Montepulciano was the first wine in Italy to be granted the DOCG (guaranteed) certificate.

The fattoria di Gracciano estate has been making Vino Nobile for the last two centuries. Initially made exclusively for home consumption, we have started selling our Vino Nobile, including to the United States. At the moment our prices are of 6 euros the bottle for Rosso di Montepulciano and 11 euros for Nobile di Montepulciano. Riserva is made from time to time, in exceptionally good years. Price varies accordingly.

A complimentary bottle is provided to our guest for tasting.

Anna can supply more or you can ask Francesco if you wish to visit the cellars in the estate house (go to the village of Gracciano, just a few minutes from Maramai, you will find a garden with tall trees with a brick wall on the road towards Montepulciano Stazione. Enter through the smaller brown iron gate).

The family also produces extra virgin olive oil in small quantities. You will find a sample in the kitchen. Should you like it and want to buy more please ask Anna (8 euros a bottle).

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## Restaurants in the area

You will find some very **basic pizzerias both in Gracciano and Montepulciano Stazione**, a few minutes drive from Maramai. Further away the following restaurants are our favorites. Should you discover other restaurants in the area you would like to recommend, please mention them!! Thank you.

## In Nottola

**Osteria di Nottola** - Tel. 0578-707114 (closed on Wednesdays) simple Tuscan food in very simple surroundings, also serves as bar (for morning coffee). It is the closest place to eat from Maramai, almost at walking distance, still very decent food. Cheap.

## In Acquaviva

**L'Angolo** - Tel.0578-767216 (closed on Monday). Simple pizzeria with restaurant, Good food but service can be frustrating. Less than 10 minutes from Maramai. Average price range.

## In Montepulciano

**Diva e Maceo** - Tel. 0578-716951, Via di Gracciano al Corso, as you enter the town, after the gate on your left. This trattoria serves typical Tuscan food. Average price range.

**La Grotta** - Tel 0578-757607 Right in front of the church of San Biagio outside Montepulciano. Elegant restaurant and, arguably the best food in Montepulciano. Very good wine list. Small garden. Booking recommended. Expensive but good value. Our favorite.

## In Monticchiello

**La Porta** - Tel 0578-755165 Small restaurant with terrace on the village walls. Few good dishes and good wines. A popular spot, booking recommended. Average price range.

**La Taverna di Miranda** - 0578-755050. Sophisticated Tuscan cuisine with French influence. Rather expensive.

## In Pienza

**Il Prato** - Tel 0578-749924. Just outside the old town with garden and view on the Orcia valley. Sophisticated food, good wine list. Expensive.

## In Montefollonico:

**La Chiusa** - Tel 0577-669668, Very sophisticated Michelin star kind of restaurant, considered the best in the region. Reservation needed. Very expensive.

**La Botte Piena** - Osteria in the historic centre of Montefollonico, Piazza, D. Cinughi 12, Phone: 0577669481. Closed on Wednesdays. Reasonable prices. Reservation recommended.

## In Sinalunga

**Locanda dell'Amorosa** - Tel.0577-67721. About half an hour from Maramai. Its cuisine is subject to discussion - some loving it others considering it too expensive- but the location is quite unique: an old farming village in the middle of the countryside worth visiting even if you don't want to stop for a meal. You can eat outdoors. Booking recommended.

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## Nature

**The patch of wood by Maramai** holds some wildlife like roe deer, porcupine, hare and birds (a list of the birds found at Maramai is available upon request).

**The lake of Montepulciano** is a nature reserve managed by the Italian WWF Oasi del Lago di Montepulciano. It is made of reedbeds and good for observing waterbirds especially in winter. To reach the entrance drive south to Chiusi and turn left after Tre Berte and follow the yellow sign.

**The road between Montepulciano and Montichiello** passes through nice woods with many paths for walks.

*We recommend the Italian Touring Club red guides to each Region. They're the most complete! You will find a selection of tourist guides at Maramai, please don't forget to put them back on their shelf once you've used them! Thank you.*

**Montepulciano** - is a small town just 8 km from Maramai. Walk along the main road (via Gracciano al Corso) for churches, palaces and shopping (wine, olive wood works, etc). Reach the main square with the cathedral (nice paintings and sculptures) and the town hall (view).

Don't miss the church of San Biagio (good restaurant nearby).

**Val d'Orcia** - Monticchiello, Bagno Vignoni, Pienza, San Quirico: almost every village is worth visiting in Val d'Orcia. These towns lie close to each other, about an one hour drive from Maramai. Pienza is a must, the entire town was built by Pope Pius II almost out of the blue who employed great Renaissance architects. Bagno Vignoni boasts a antique swimming pool as its central square, and Monticchiello is a very well preserved medieval village with a charming romanesque-gothic church. San Quirico d'Orcia is also worth visiting for its church, town hall and garden. The very romantic monastery of Sant' Anna in Camprena is reached north of Pienza (scenes of The English Patient have been filmed there). Monte Oliveto Maggiore is a famous Benedictine convent with a good shop and mass with Gregorian songs at 11 a.m. on Sunday.

**Cortona** - lying just opposite Montepulciano across the Val di Chiana, Cortona is a magnificent medieval town with fortress. The roads leading to it and passing through Valiano are beautiful.

**Northern Val di Chiana** - Lucignano and Monte San Savino are two interesting small towns in northern Val di Chiana about half an hour drive from Maramai.

**Arezzo** - is a big city and probably deserves a day's visit. Don't miss the Piero della Francesca frescos in the St Francis' church that have been recently restored. The town holds a well-known antique fair the first Sunday of each month. On the main square you will find a shop with beautiful, locally produced house linens.

**Siena** - at 40 minutes from Maramai, this art town compares with Pisa and probably Florence. It is definitely worth more than one visit. Siena is also famous for its traditional sweets like panforte (a fruit and almond cake) and ricciarelli (soft almond biscuits).

**Florence** - can be reached in little more than an hour from Maramai, taking the A1 northwards. Get out at the Firenze Sud gate and park as you reach the viali (ring boulevards).

**Umbria** - This beautiful region can be reached either by going towards Perugia, east of Maramai or by taking the Autostrada del Sole southwards. Interesting art cities are Orvieto (40 min, perched on sandstone cliffs with a splendid gothic cathedral), Todi (about an hour), Assisi (St. Francis' town, a bit more than an hour) and, further off, Gubbio or Spoleto.

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**Northern Latium** - In many ways northern Latium is the opposite of Tuscany. The first is straightforward, harmonious and clearly marked of human presence, the other is mysterious, untamed and full by contradictions. Papal power and roman aristocracy undermined any development of the middle classes for centuries, and still today you will find villages and cities in Latium more backward than in close-by Tuscany. Whereas the towns in Latium cannot be compared to Tuscany's splendour, the villages here are culturally far more interesting and of breathtaking beauty. Discovering Latium is a question of time and feeling. In the area of the Lago di Vico you should of course visit Viterbo, residence of the Pope in the 12th and 13th century, but also the lovely town of S.Martino al Cimino built around a fine 13th century Cistercian abbey. A little further away are Caprarola, dominated by the Villa Farnese, a fascinating pentagonal castle with a „secret garden“ full of azaleas and rhododendrons leading up to a sculpture garden, and Civita Castellana, the most important town in the region. The Duomo is one of the gems of Lazio.

**Suggestion for guided tours in Siena and Province**

Mrs Pia Maria Selenka

Official Tourist Guide Siena Tuscany Italy

German (native language),English,Italian

Loc. Toiano 253 - 53018 Siena - Italy

email: p.m.selenka@gmx.net

home: 0039 - 0577 314126

mobil: 0039 - 320 0479445

Prices:

HALF DAY: € 115,00 up to 30 pax + € 2,00 per pax extra (max 3 h)

FULL DAY: € 230,00 up to 30 pax + € 4,00 per pax extra (max 6 h)

Small groups up to 10 pax HALF DAY: € 135,00 FULL DAY: € 270,00

Groups with translator:

HALF DAY: € 95,00 up to 20 pax + € 2,00 per pax extra

FULL DAY: € 190,00 up to 20 pax + € 4,00 per pax extra

**SPORTS****Tennis**

A tennis court (red earth) is available at the sports center in Montepulciano Stazione. Tel .0578-738230

**Riding**

A very good center is the Centro Ippico Aretino, located close to Arezzo (tel. 0575 99204).

**The hot springs**

This part of Tuscany is famous for its hot springs, belonging to a geothermical system that more or less encircles the Monte Amiata. San Casciano Bagni, at a 30 minutes drive, is the one we would suggest. Chianciano Terme is a traditional thermal resort and even Montepulciano (Sant' Albino, tel. 0578-7911) has its thermal baths.