



Parco Volterra

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SPECIAL REPORT: PROVINCE OF PISA, TUSCANY

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Exploring the Province of Pisa

Think Pisa is home to just a leaning tower? Think again. While *Torre di Pisa* (the Tower of Pisa) surely brings in hordes of visitors each year, it also turns off a certain number who are looking to avoid the tourist mayhem. This stereotype is the big reason it took your editor two dozen visits to Italy to finally make it to Pisa. Yet, I'm happy to now report back that Pisa, and most certainly the tower, are well worth a visit. Even better, there are plenty of gems in the surrounding countryside of the province of Pisa that make this corner of Tuscany worth an entire week or more of exploration.

Pisa

The city of *Pisa* has a distinguished history and certainly if you visit, further reading is a must. From the 6th century until the 13th century, Pisa was one of four glorious Maritime Republics (the other three were *Venice*, *Genoa* and *Amalfi*) and is endowed with a rich artistic heritage celebrating Pisa's splendor. Since the 14th century, Pisa has been a presti-



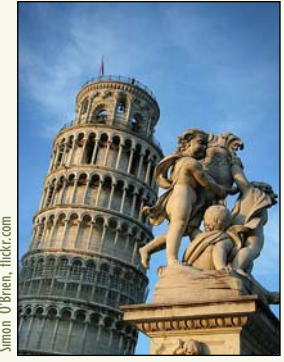
raneke, flickr.com

View from the Tower

gious educational center (it has been compared to Oxford in England) boasting a university and two noteworthy specialty schools.

Despite the tacky souvenir stands and the surrounding crowds, Pisa's *Campo dei Miracoli*, home to a group of buildings including the *Duomo*, the *Battistero*, the *Campo Santo* and the *Torre*, requires

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Simon O'Brien, flickr.com

An Insider's Guide to PISA

Sixteen years ago, *Gloria Cappelli* moved to *Pisa* from a village south of *Siena* to study at the famous *University of Pisa*. Little by little she fell in love with the city and has never left. She now teaches in the university's English Studies department. Capelli and her Canadian husband, *Marcel*, manage a vacation rental in Pisa called *Behind the Tower* (www.behindthetower.com) and another vacation rental in her hometown of *Civitella Marittima*, called *Casina di Rosa* (www.casinadirosa.com). Gloria and Marcel offer a 10% discount on their vacation rentals to all *Dream of Italy* subscribers.

An active advocate for tourism to Pisa through her blog, www.athomeintuscany.org Cappelli believes there are misconceptions that her hometown is only notable for its famous tower. "I have seen the city mature and change with me. I am very fond of it. I think it is a very underrated city," she says.

"I love that if you take even just a few steps from Piazza dei Miracoli, Pisa is a real city. It does not revolve around tourists: very few of them actually venture away from the immediate proximity of the Leaning Tower. It's a university city, with many young people (30,000 students

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Galileo Galilei was born in Pisa.



Pisa Luminara

at least several hours of your time. The best way to soak in all the impressive art and history that these buildings represent is to hire a private guide. I was thrilled with the lovely and sharp *Vincenzo Riolo* who is available for hire through www.pisatour.it (If you can't afford a private guide, Pisa Tour offers 3-hour group walking tours on Monday and Thursday afternoons and Saturday morning for 12€ per person.)

Having never gone out of my way to visit Pisa, I was surprised at how giddy I was to finally see the tower and to climb it. If you can physically do it, go for it. I had the same feeling I did when standing on the Parthenon in Athens; I couldn't believe I was here on this iconic building. From 1990 to 2001, the tower was closed to the public so engineers could correct the lean, bringing it back about 15 inches towards vertical. As you climb the 293 steps, you will definitely still feel the tilt it maintains and notice the well-worn-out steps. You must reserve an appointed time slot and Vincenzo's advice to wait until the end of a timed group so we weren't rushed up the stairs was spot on.

The absolutely best day (and night) all year to visit Pisa is on June 16th for the *Luminaria di San Ranieri*, when nearly 100,000 small candles are placed in special holders on buildings all along

the front of the Arno River in celebration of the city's patron saint. The sight of the twinkling lights as night falls is absolutely breathtaking and the whole city comes out to see the impressive fireworks display. (See Gloria Capelli's *Insider's Guide to Pisa*, starting on page 1, for plenty of additional ideas for exploring the city of Pisa.)

San Miniato

The town of *San Miniato*, located halfway between Pisa and Florence, is a must for history lovers and foodies alike. At the end of the 10th century, Otto I made San Miniato an outpost of the Holy Roman Empire. In medieval times, the town sat on the *via*



San Miniato

Francigena, an important pilgrimage route between northern Europe and Rome, bringing many visitors and invaders. In the 14th century, *Frederick II* ordered construction of the town's landmark fortress and tower.

Walk to the tower of the *Rocca* (also known as Frederick's tower) for a fantastic view of the surrounding countryside. It was heavily damaged in World War II and rebuilt brick by brick. You can buy a single ticket (for 5€) good for one year of visits to eight of San Miniato's museums, including the Rocca and the archaeological museum.

Of course, San Miniato has a number of noteworthy churches. The church of *San Domenico* houses a tomb dedicated to the Florentine doctor *Giovanni Chellini* and modeled after a tomb in

Florence's Santa Croce. The convent of *San Francesco* was supposedly founded by St. Francis of Assisi when he visited San Miniato in 1211. The Duomo's sanctuary (though rarely open) houses a crucifix said to have saved the town from the plague in 1637.

San Miniato's international reputation these days comes from its prized white truffles. Interestingly, one-third of Italy's white truffles come from this town. *The San Miniato National White Truffle Market* is held the last three weekends of November and attracts truffle merchants and food lovers alike who come to celebrate the power of this rare tuber. (For more foodie experiences in and around San Miniato, see page seven of this issue.)



The University of Pisa

October 2010

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Francesca Berit, flickr.com

reimann, flickr.com



Francesco Sgrici, flickr.com

Volterra

Volterra

Despite thousands of years of history to put it on the map, in modern times *Volterra* might be best known as the home of the Volturi, a family of vampires, chronicled by the *Twilight* series of books and movies. The latest *Twilight* film, *New Moon*, featured Volterra in the plotline (no matter that the scenes were filmed in *Montepulciano*) and the town has sought to capitalize on the starring role with various *Twilight* tourist initiatives, including a walking tour called “On the Trail of Bella and Edward.” (www.newmoonvolterra.com)

The recent Hollywood attention aside, Volterra — a beautiful walled town with charming narrow streets and lovely piazzas and an equally compelling history — is well worth a visit. It is compact and walkable. Start at *Porta all’Arco*, the original Etruscan gate built with the local stone tufa in the 4th century B.C. There’s a plaque dedicated to June 30, 1944, when Volterrans, in an effort to prevent the Nazis from blowing up the arch to stop the Allies, ripped up the stones in the streets and blocked up the gate. The Nazi commander changed his mind and later the stones were returned to the street.

Volterra was an important Etruscan city and the home to Greek-trained Etruscan artists who were known for their elaborate funerary urns. Volterra’s Museo Etrusco Guarnacci, one of

Italy’s top museums devoted to the Etruscans, has hundreds of these unique creations on display. Nearby, visit the Pinacoteca and Museo Civico, housed in the same palazzo, for 15th- and 16th-century art.

Volterra’s Roman theater from the first century B.C. is said to have the best acoustics of its kind. For years it was the site of Volterra’s garbage dump before being rediscovered in the 1950s. You can see it from above while following the town’s wall or pay admission to take a closer look.

You will see alabaster, from jewelry to plates, for sale throughout Volterra and after awhile it may seem that many of the shops are simply selling the same items. One shop recommended by the locals that stands out from the rest is *Opus Artis*, which specializes in alabaster musical instruments and chess sets. (Via A. Cinci, 22; www.opusartis.com)

While walking around Volterra, you might also want to pop into *Palazzo Viti*, a private residence with 12 exquisitely decorated rooms, displaying the finest frescoes, antiques, furniture, alabaster and art that will take you back to the days when kings and princes visited. *Le Cantine*, in the palazzo’s wine cellar, is a nice place to stop for lunch and wine tasting. (www.palazzoviti.it)

Lajatico

The claim to fame of this lovely small town 25 miles south of Pisa is that it is the birthplace of tenor *Andrea Bocelli*. While Bocelli now lives on the Tuscan coast in *Forte di Marmi*, you can spot the house (with big red shutters) he bought for his mother in Lajatico. In 2006, Bocelli persuaded the local gov-

ernment to build an outdoor theater in the peaceful, rolling hills of the town.

Every July since 2006, Bocelli has performed for one night at the open air venue (*Teatro del Silenzio*), accompanied by fellow musicians such as Plácido Domingo, Sarah Brightman, Kenny G and Chris Botti. Fans come from around the world for the performance. The theater remains silent the rest of the year. The venue features a small lake surrounded by travertine blocks and modern art by *Igor Mitorai* and *Arnaldo Pomodoro*. If you plan ahead, you can purchase tickets to the July performance (www.selectitaly.com), but this beautiful outdoor space is worth a visit no matter what time of year you are there.

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was founded in 1343.

in a city of 90,000 people), where there is always something going on," she explains. "It's small enough that it is very safe and you can walk everywhere in the center and big enough that you can find everything you might possibly need in the area. I also like that it is such a great transportation hub: the airport is right downtown, the trains connect it to all the nearby cities."

Here are Capelli's insider recommendations for your next visit to the city of Pisa:

Where to Eat

Osteria di Culegna

Via Mercanti, 25
(39) 050 576426
Closed Sunday

This small restaurant in the center of the city, near *Borgo Stretto*, serves traditional Tuscan food with a twist. It is not uncommon to find on the menu "ancient" dishes, which are not easy to find in restaurants these days, such as fettuccine with rabbit meat sauce. The menu changes often, and the wine list is quite rich. It is essential to book a table, because the *osteria* is very popular among the locals.

Modus Bibendi

Via Domenico Cavalca, 18
(39) 050 5201421
Closed Monday

This is my favorite wine bar in the city for an *aperitivo*. Located in one of the liveliest and most authentic parts of the city, near the medieval heart of Pisa (*Piazza delle Vettovaglie*), and just a few steps away from the daily market, Modus is a really cool place. It is very popular among the university students for its cocktails served after 6 p.m. each day. You buy a drink and can help yourself to the buffet. After 8 p.m.,

Modus becomes a fashionable, but affordable, restaurant with gold-colored chairs and plates and, most importantly, delicious food and wine. And if you stay after 10p.m., you can get an after-dinner drink and mix and mingle with the locals.



Simon Lavemarakis, flickr.com

La Pergoletta

Via delle Belle Torri, 40
(39) 050 542458
www.ristorantelapergoletta.com
Closed Monday

The restaurant is located only steps away from the *Lungarno* and *Piazza della Berlina*, one of the liveliest areas in the city, with pubs and bars. Ask to be seated in the *chiostro*, a cloister with vines. It is the ideal place for a romantic dinner or for a very special occasion. Expect to pay between 25 and 40€ for a three-course meal.

Numero 11

Via San Martino, 47
(39) 050 27282
Closed Saturday
www.numeroundici.it

This restaurant with communal tables and a very informal atmosphere, serves both Italian and ethnic food: choose what you want from the daily specials board or from the food on display at the counter and order your meal. Help yourself to placemats, cutlery, glasses and water. Pay, collect your food from the counter and sit wherever you find a spot. *Numero 11* is proud to be the place where "universi-

ty professors, students, builders and clerks" eat side-by-side. The menu varies daily.

And Indulging...

La Bottega del Gelato

Piazza Giuseppe Garibaldi, 11
(39) 050 575467

This is the place to go for the best *gelato* in the city. Their chocolate ice cream is to die for and when it is very hot, there is nothing better than getting a glass of their mint *granita* and drink it sitting on the walls along the river!

Cioccolato e Affini

Lungarno Pacinotti 5
(39) 050 3160073
Closed Monday morning

This is the official *De Bondt* chocolate store, very close to *Piazza Garibaldi*. De Bondt is a small but much appreciated chocolate factory, located just outside the city. This manufacturer specializes in mixing the best quality chocolate with local products such as pine nuts from the near park of *San Rossore*.

Nando

Corso Italia, 103
(39) 050 27242

This is a small pizzeria on *Corso Italia* which serves excellent *cecina*, a type of thin pie made with chick-pea flour typical of the area.

Casa della Panna

Via dei Mille, 18
(39) 050 556401

Nowhere else in Pisa you will have as good a *cappuccino* as here. Or try *caffè con la panna*, coffee with cream on top. The same owners manage *Bar Macchi* in *Piazza Dante* as well, with the same level of service. Both are perfect places for a truly Italian breakfast.

In 1964, Italy asked for aid in

Where to Shop

Max il Cuoiaio

Via Domenico Cavalca, 57
(39) 050 574299
Closed Monday morning

If you like leather goods, this is the place for you. They make fabulous leather purses, professional bags and briefcases, wallets, belts and other leather goods. Truth be told, if you are looking for a leather bag, the many stalls near the Leaning Tower also have some fabulous items.

Bottega d'Arte Petrucci

Piazza Felice Cavallotti, 11
(39) 050 553000

If you are not in Pisa on the second weekend of the month, when the stalls of the monthly antique market are scattered throughout the center of the city, this is one of those cluttered shops where you can find real treasures. They have antique paintings and prints, small objects, beautiful frames and reproductions of famous works of art. A great place for lovers of art and antiques.

"Il Mercato" (Pisa's Main Market)

Parcheggio Scambiatore
Via Pietrasantina
Wednesday and Saturday morning,
8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

This large market offers stalls selling food, clothes, shoes, bags and more. Very popular among the locals: you can get great deals. The market can be reached by bus (*Navetta E*). A much smaller version of the market can be found on *Via San Martino* by the church.

What to See and Do

Palazzo Blu

Lungarno Gambacorti, 9
(39) 050 916.950
Closed Monday

One of the "minor" museums of Pisa, Palazzo Blu is quickly becoming one of the major exhibition centers in Tuscany. It hosts a permanent collection and temporary exhibitions. Currently, the museum is hosting an international exhibition dedicated to *Jean Miro* (closing on January 23, 2011).

Le Piagge and San Michele degli Scalzi

Viale delle Piagge

Le Piagge is the name of the green heart of Pisa. It's a park along the river *Arno* with paths, benches and areas for people who want to exercise. A walk at Le Piagge makes for a perfect break from the busy rhythms of the city. *San Michele degli Scalzi* is a beautiful church with a leaning bell tower located at the end of the tree-lined boulevard running along the park. The old church is next to a converted industrial area that is now an exhibition center. It is a very nice combination of modern and medieval architecture, definitely off-the-beaten-path. In May every year, Le Piagge hosts the Fair of *Sant'Ubaldo*, almost a village festival in the heart of the city, popular among families with young children because most of the stalls sell flowers and pets.



Keith Haring's Mural "Tuttomondo"

Piazza Vittorio Emanuele

Not many people know about this large mural that Keith Haring painted on the side of a building in *Piazza Vittorio Emanuele* in 1989. It is dedicated to the theme of peace and harmony in the world. Opposite to the mural, a cocktail bar has recently opened.

Live Music at:

Borderline Club

Via Vernaccini, 7

Caracol

Via Battichiodi, 8-10
(39) 050 9913199
Visit www.facebook.com and type in "Circolo-Caracol-Pisa"

They are *circoli ARCI* or private clubs. You need to have a membership card (available for purchase at the door), known as the ARCI card, which is valid for entry into all ARCI in Italy (costs up to 15€). If you like live music, these are the locales for you.

De Bondt Chocolate Factory

Via Sant'Antioco, 31
Visignano
(39) 050 779042
www.debondtchocolate.com

You can visit the laboratory where the delicious De Bondt chocolate is made. You need to call in advance to arrange the details of the visit, but they are always happy to receive small groups. At this time, they are not accepting visits from individual visitors, so get a group of your favorite chocoholics together and go!

Bagni di Pisa

Largo Shelley, 18
San Giuliano Terme
(39) 050 88501
www.bagnidipisa.com

If you like spa treatments, this fabulous spa is just 10 minutes outside of Pisa. For less than 100€, you can buy a day pass and get access to the thermal pools, Turkish baths and relaxation area, and enjoy a sea salt body scrub and a 30-minute relaxing massage. *San Giuliano Terme* is easily reachable by car, train or bus.

1 € = \$1.37 at press time

preventing the tower from falling.

FOOD & WINE EXPERIENCES IN

MARTELLI: WHAT MAY BE THE BEST PASTA IN ITALY



Dino Martelli can be forgiven for interrupting our conversation every five minutes or so. He has to move the pasta and today, like many days here at *Pasta Martelli*, he's the only one minding the 60-year-old machines at the small factory his family has run for 86 years. Martelli, sporting a factory coat in his company's trademark bright yellow, has an internal clock of sorts alerting him when to move a row of freshly crafted *spaghettini* from the extrusion machine to a drying rack. (Martelli produces four pasta shapes — *spaghettini*, *spaghetti*, *penne* and *maccheroni* — each day of the week is devoted to producing a certain shape.)



I'm here in the town of *Lari*, in the shadow of a 12th-century castle, to see where the pasta many call "Italy's best" is born. It's certainly deemed the best by some of Italy's most famous restaurants. *La Pergola*, Rome's Michelin-starred restaurant, serves Martelli pasta. This pasta is a true artisanal product.

Members of the Martelli family are the only employees here and they are devoted to a slower process that produces a higher quality product. Martelli produces 300 tons of pasta per year. That's about the same amount that Italian industrial producer *Barilla* produces in just five hours. Food critics say Martelli pasta is superior because it

retains its flavor and the use of bronze dies to extrude the dough leaves the surface of the pasta porous for better sauce absorption.

Between his manufacturing duties, Dino Martelli explains how Martelli pasta is unique:

Raw materials: Martelli pasta is made from a mixture of 70% Italian wheat (sourced from the *Maremma* area of Tuscany) and 30% Canadian wheat



(considered one of the best in the world). It is this unique mixture that gives Martelli pasta its particular tension. The wheat is then mixed with cold water (at a 70/30 ratio).



Slow extrusion: Martelli only uses only bronze dies in its manufacturing. Industrial pasta manufacturers usually use

teflon-lined dies which produce pasta with polished surfaces that doesn't hold sauce well.

Drying process: Once the pasta has been formed, it goes through a slower, more natural drying process than industrial products use. The pasta goes into drying closets with curved tin walls to move around the air from fans at the top. It is essential for the humidity of the air to change at certain stages in the drying process. The temperature is kept at about 91 to 97 degrees Fahrenheit for about 50 hours of drying; these specific conditions depend on the time of year and weather.

Most industrial producers dry their pasta for only five hours or so. Dino Martelli says his company is the only manufacturer who still uses these traditional drying closets. The drying temperatures here are lower than those used at industrial factories, ensuring that the gluten survives and gives the pasta additional flavor.

Everything here at Martelli goes back to tradition — even the eye-popping yellow color of their packaging. Many years ago when pasta was sold by weight at the local market, the wooden bins that held the pasta were lined in yellow paper. Thus the provenance of the color is the colored paper that used to be used in wooden boxes from which

The Martellis warmly welcome visitors to their factory in Lari. Call (39) 0587 684238 or visit their Web site at www.famigliamartelli.it If you'd like to try Martelli pasta but you won't be in Tuscany any time soon, you can order it online at www.gustiamo.com and www.zingermans.com

A SMALL VINEYARD WITH BIG FLAVOR



There have to be hundreds of vineyards in Tuscany just waiting to be discovered but travelers often wear a beaten path to the best-known and most commercial operations. It pays to seek out the small gems as I found out when a local tourism representative turned me on to *Ivana Cupelli* just outside of *San Miniato*.

After driving through a residential area, it is not immediately apparent where 15 acres of grape vines could be hiding, but they soon come into view



"No man is lonely while eating"

THIS CORNER OF TUSCANY

and we were greeted by the Ivana Cupelli herself as well as her daughter. While female vintners are still rare in Italy, their numbers are on the rise.

Cupelli's father, *Amelio*, started the vineyard when he moved from his native *Le Marche* to Tuscany in the 1950s. He began producing the beloved Tuscan *Vin Santo* which is labeled *Vin Santo Amelio* in his honor. The classic sweet wine is still Cupelli's calling card but in recent years the operation has expanded adding new land (where tobacco was once farmed) and new productions.

Now Cupelli and her family produce three other wines in addition to the traditional Tuscan dessert wine. *Podere Averda Bianco* is white with notes of citrus and flowers produced from old Tuscan *Trebbiano* vines. *Podere Averda Rosso*, also comes from old Tuscan grape, is a ruby red wine with a cherry and berry flavor.

The Cupellis seem most enthusiastic about their latest creation, a sparkling wine or *spumante*. *Spumante Cupelli L'Erede* also makes use of the native *Trebbiano* grapes. The family is producing this sparkling wine using both classic grapes and classic methods, in one they believe is a "one-of-a-kind" production in their corner of Tuscany.

To set up a tasting (which costs about 7 euros per person) or for more informa-

tion, call (39) 0571 400413 or visit www.cupellivini.com

AN INNOVATIVE YOUNG BUTCHER STEEPED IN TRADITION



After talking to *Andrea Falaschi* in his family's butcher shop in the heart of the town of *San Miniato*, I couldn't help but make (favorable) comparisons to Tuscany's most famous butcher *Dario Cecchini* (see *Dream of Italy* September 2004 and March 2010).



The 31-year-old Falaschi, like Cecchini, displays not only incredible talent for creating luscious and authentic meat products

but for combining his passion for the land and butchering in innovative ways with the arts and the local community.

Case in point: I visited *Macelleria Falaschi* just a few days before the butcher was putting on *I Tre Porcellini in Macelleria* (The Three Little Pigs in the Butcher) a combination musical puppet show/salami tasting. The pigs in this performance were distinguished by one raised in the wild (paired with Falaschi's famous *Cinta Senese DOP*), one raised in a semi-wild state (with Falaschi's



0571 43190; www.sergiofalaschi.it

"Gray" salami) and one raised in a stable (with Falaschi's Classic *Tuscan Salame*).

The Falaschi butcher shop is also the site of "Jazz in the Macelleria" – an annual event held each spring that started in 2005. Hundreds of fans of both jazz and the Falaschi's meaty offerings gather for a night of music and food.

Falaschi, who works beside his well-known master butcher father, Sergio, is part of a new generation of Italian butchers who stay true authentic and age-old practices while mixing it up a bit. Andrea Falaschi has participated in exchanges with the Belmont Butchery in Richmond, Virginia as well as Borough Market in London and is active with Slow Food International.

While the Falaschi family sells meats of all kinds, they're best known for their variety of *salumi* (cured meats and sausage) including *Prosciutto Toscano*, *spalla* (salt-cured shoulder) and spicy sausages. The creations are based on old family recipes made with only natural, local ingredients.

If you're staying at a villa in the area, *Macelleria Falaschi* is a must-visit for your

food supplies. They even sell prepared meals. Via Augusto Conti, 18/20; (39)



spaghetti." —Robert Morley

Where to Stay in the Province of Pisa



Relais Orlogio



Cafaggio



La Mandriola

Hotel Relais Orlogio

Via della Faggiola, 12

Pisa

(39) 050 830361

www.hotelrelaisorologio.com

Rates: In the high season, rates start at around 270€ per night, including breakfast. But in the off season, you can get a great room for as little as 117€. Check the Web site for special packages.

If you're passing through *Pisa* on a honeymoon or romantic trip, this is *the place* to stay. The location can't be beat (just 300 feet from the tower but it feels tucked away); the décor exudes refined elegance and the staff is lovely. Plus this is one of the few places in Italy where I've seen an outdoor hot tub.

Hotel San Miniato

Via Aldo Moro, 2

San Miniato

(39) 0571 418904

www.hotelsanminiato.com

Rates: A double starts at 178€ per night, with breakfast.

Italian designers can work magic with ancient structures and modern décor. A former convent has been turned into a stylish new hotel while retaining an air of history. If you're planning on holding a meeting in Tuscany — this is the place, the captivating meeting hall is a former church. There's a small spa offering a steam room, sauna and Turkish bath.

Agriturismo Cafaggio

Via Cafaggio, 10

San Miniato

(39) 0571 408228

www.agriturismocafaggio.it

Rates: Apartments range from 505 to 994€ per week, depending on the season. Nightly rates start at 65€.

If you're traveling with young kids, this is a wonderful, laid-back place to stay. The children will love the farm animals (horseback riding available) and large grounds and swimming pool. Be sure to dine at the restaurant where nearly everything served comes right from the farm. The estate offers a total of 11 individual rooms and 11 apartments.

Albergo Quattro Gigli

Piazza Michele da Montopoli, 2

Montopoli

(39) 0571 466878

www.quattrogigli.it

Rates: A double room is 85 to 95€ per night. Half-board is 25€ per person (and well worth it).

This is just a charming, eclectic and Old-World style inn in the heart of Montopoli. Even if you're not lodging here, stop in for a meal — delicious Tuscan food presented in innovative ways. Cooking lessons are also available.

Terme Villa Borri

Via Galilei, 34

Casciana Terme

(39) 0587 644644

www.termevillaborri.com

Rates: Range from 80 to 90€ per person (for the first person, and lower as you add guests to the apartment), per night, with breakfast.

This is one of the nicest places to stay in this lovely Tuscan spa town. There are 22 luxury

apartments as well as 12 thermal treatment suites and a restaurant right on the property.

Borgo di Colleoli

Palaia

(39) 0587 692803

www.ilborgodicolleoli.it

Rates: A studio ranges from 500 to 1,000€ per week, depending on the season. The range for a two-room apartment is 700 to 1,200€ weekly.

This borgo (which started as a 15th-century castle and later became a 17th-century country retreat) has been meticulously renovated into a modern oasis with amazing views of the surrounding countryside. This is now like a tiny, exclusive village with its own wine bar, restaurant and swimming pools. If you're in the market for a home of your own, some of the apartments for sale — starting around \$400,000.

Agriturismo La Mandriola

Lajatico

(39) 0587 642040

www.lamandriola.com

Rates: The apartments start at 340€ per week and the independent farmhouses start at 1,100€ weekly.

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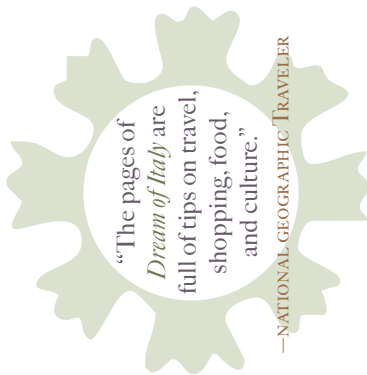
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