



Discoveries in Tuscany

November 4-14, 2012

Join Mario Olivi, owner of the Olive Tap in Downers Grove as he hosts a trip to the amazing central region of Italy - Tuscany!

Tuscany is world famous for its food, wine, its rich culture and its stunning landscapes. Together we'll discover the sights and towns in the Tuscan region - Florence, Lucca, Pisa, Siena, San Gimignano, the Chianti region and partake in the process of olive oil making, enjoy a cooking class, wine tastings and so much more.

Highlights & Inclusions:

\$4,999.00 per person, double
\$559.00 single supplement

- Round Trip Airfare from Chicago*
- Transfers in Italy
- Meet & Greet Services
- 9 Nights Accommodations
 - 5 Nights in Florence at the Hotel L'Orologio in Superior Double Rooms
 - 4 Nights in Siena at the Grand Hotel Continental in Classic Double Rooms
- English-Speaking Escort on touring days and Local Guides in Florence, Lucca, Pisa, Siena and San Gimignano
- Stops in Pienza and Volterra
- Participate in authentic Olive Oil harvest
- 16 Meals – Including Breakfast Daily
 - Welcome dinner
 - Lunch & Olive Tasting at Tenuta San Pietro Estate
 - Tour, lunch & Wine Tasting at Osteria di Passignano
 - Cooking Class & Dinner at Chianti School
 - Pecorino Cheese Production Tour & Lunch at Podere il Casale
 - Tour and Wine Tasting at Poggio Antico Wine Estate
 - Tour/lunch at Poggio Allora Farm
 - Farewell dinner
- Deluxe Coaches with AC for Excursions
- Baggage Handling at hotels

** based on airfare of \$1100.00 round trip pp*



The Olive Tap

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Downers Grove, IL 60515

630-964-2444

www.theolivetap.com email: olivetapdg@att.net

Viking Travel Service

700 Pasquinelli Drive
Westmont, IL 60559

630-321-1664

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5 – nights in Florence

Includes: Florence / Lucca / Pisa and Chianti Region

Day by Day Itinerary

Sunday, November 4th 2012 Depart USA for Florence, Italy.

Monday, November 5th 2012 Arrival in Florence with Meet & Greet and Private Transfer to the Hotel L'Orologio for a 5 night stay. The theme of the L'Orologio Hotel is international Haute Horlogerie (Fine Watchmaking) inspired, in particular, by vintage wristwatches. L'Orologio offers stylish rooms with marble bathrooms, flat-screen TV with satellite channels, and air conditioning. It's near shops, restaurants and only 5 minutes walking from both S.M. Novella Train Station and Florence Cathedral. Daily buffet breakfast is served in the top-floor dining room, which boasts lovely views of the square.

Welcome to Florence!

Florence is known all over the world as the city of art, the capital of the Renaissance and one of the most important centers of literary and scientific culture. Visit Piazza della Signoria, which has been the political heart of the city from the Middle Ages to the present day. The square however is not just the "civic" center of Florence; it is also a splendid open-air museum. The square of the Uffizi stretches out on the south side, towards the Arno River. Apart from the great sculptures lined up in front of the facade of Palazzo Vecchio (among them the copy of David by Michelangelo), we can hardly avoid noticing the Fountain of Neptune by Ammannati and the equestrian statue of Cosimo I de Medici by Giambologna. Close by you will visit the Ponte Vecchio, the oldest bridge which crosses the Arno at its widest point. The Square of Santa Croce (Holy Cross) is one of Florence's largest squares, and traditionally one of the city's main arenas for festivities. The Basilica of Santa Croce, is one of the largest churches in the city. Here lie the tombs of Michelangelo, Galileo Galilei, Vittorio Alfieri, Gioacchino Rossini. Tonight we gather for a Welcome Dinner. (D)

Private Guided Walking Tour in Florence with English speaking guide.



Tuesday, November 6th 2012

Your destination for today is Tenuta San Pietro, located in the hills around Lucca and famous for the production of an excellent Extra Virgin Olive Oil! Tenuta Santo Pietro's 72-acre estate was part of a larger farm system laid out by Pope Pius II in the mid-1400s. We'll be here in the autumn, a unique time when we will join in an olive harvest! The property is home to over 1,100 olive trees of four indigenous varieties. The trees range in age from 15 years to well over 100 years. We will pick olives by hand, using traditional methods which ensure that the fruit is at its best when we cold press it, the same day the olives are picked from the trees. We will stop for lunch where Chef Guido will prepare an aperitif, pasta dish, second course and dessert all based on local products. Then continue to harvest and/or visit the local Oil Mill. To finish off after a long day of hard work, Maitre Gabriele will guide you in an olive oil tasting! Return back to your hotel for evening at leisure. (B,L)

Olive Oil Harvest Experience



Wednesday, November 7th 2012

Today enjoy a full day excursion to two of our Tuscan gems: Lucca and Pisa. In both cities you will have a guided walking tour of the main highlights. Following Patmos at a close second on Forbes list of "Europe's Most Idyllic Places to Live", is Lucca, a medieval city within a city in the region of Tuscany. Lucca, a living testimony to past times, kingdoms and dominions lies in a green valley just north west of Florence. This almost perfectly preserved jewel of medieval architecture and buildings emanates charm and shows layers of history from every corner of its narrow winding streets. Following our tour enjoy free time for shopping and lunch. Later we depart for Pisa where you will have a guided tour around the famous Piazza dei Miracoli (The Miracles' Square). Since the beginning, Pisa has been known for just one thing – the Leaning Tower. Yet it is just a single component of the city's amazing religious core – the Piazza dei Miracoli – where the Duomo, Baptistery and Camposanto complete an unrivalled quartet of medieval masterpieces. (B)

Excursion to Lucca and Pisa with Private Guided Walking Tours

Thursday, November 8th 2012

After breakfast, we head out for a full day excursion to the region of Chianti. Your first stop will be in Greve in Chianti, for an easy walk around the historical square where you can do some shopping or enjoy a cappuccino. The Chianti area in Tuscany is one of the most beautiful in the whole region, as well as the most well-known and appreciated by visitors from across the world. Chianti offers a unique landscape, with green, gentle hills covered with wide fields of vineyards and olive groves, small stone villages, characteristic parishes and countryside homes in stone.

Excursion to the Chianti Region & Cooking Lesson

Greve in Chianti, which is named after the river that runs through it, is the chief town of the Chianti Classico wine zone. Under the portico of the main square be sure not to miss the historical butchery, Antica Macelleria Falorni, where since the 1729 you can find the specialties of the local butcher. Entering the shop, you are hit by complete sensory overload. Everywhere you look there are cured hams, cheeses, salamis, and more cured hams hanging, stacked, packed and displayed. After the stop in Greve we head towards Badia a Passignano. (The Abbey of Passignano), located in the Chianti Classico region, is an ancient monastery dating back to 395, when it was established by the archbishop of Florence.

Afterwards enjoy a tour, lunch and Wine Tasting at Osteria di Passignano. Visit the vineyards with an introduction to vine growing and production. Visit the historical cellars of Badia a Passignano and a guided tasting of Chianti Classico Riserva Badia a Passignano, Brunello di Montalcino, Solaia, followed by an extra virgin olive oils tasting and a three course luncheon accompanied by Tignanello wine. The one Michelin-Starred Restaurant Osteria di Passignano, was founded by Marcello Crini, a great connoisseur and enthusiast of the traditional Tuscan cuisine and wine culture.

Later we reach Villa Bordoni Hotel and Restaurant. We participate in a rustic cooking lesson dedicated to the discovery of historical dishes such as ribollita, pappa al pomodoro, fett'unta, cinghiale in umido. Throughout the lesson, you will also be guided through a brief history of Italy's cuisine, discovering the reasons for Tuscany's particular style. Your lesson is followed by dinner based directly on what you and the group prepared - after going through the careful scrutiny of our Chef. The program includes the cooking lesson, guided wine tasting, dinner and wines. Later return to your hotel in Florence. (B,L,D)



Friday, November 9th 2012

Florence on your own or Modena (Balsamic Vinegar) optional tour

Today enjoy Florence on your own. Head into one of the museums, visit the huge San Lorenzo Market filled with leather products, designer clothes, souvenirs and a host of other items or partake on our optional tour to Modena. (B)

Modena (Balsamic Vinegar) optional Tour. Today visit a local Modenese family. From their Liberty Style Villa built in the early 1900's, discover the secrets of the famous Aceto Balsamico Tradizionale di Modena DOP (certified Balsamic Vinegar, minimum 12 years old). This isn't the factory "balsamic vinegar" you can find at the market back home; this is a single family producing small amounts of the world's finest vinegar for generations, THE REAL BLACK GOLD, using the same ancient technique of aging local wine in oak barrels that Italian families in this region have been using for centuries. Enjoy a tasting of Aceto Balsamico Tradizionale DOP, allowing yourself to compare 5-year balsamico with 15- and 45-year balsamico. Try homemade gelato topped with Aceto Balsamico Tradizionale and some Fresh Ricotta with Balsamic Jelly. From here we head to Agriturismo to visit a typical Agriturismo Winery/Farm in a XVth Century monastery in the hills of Bologna for a tour, wine tasting and a delicious lunch of home-made pasta such as and Tortelloni, filled pasta, and Tagliatelle, with Ragout. Price depends on number of participants.

Saturday, November 10th 2012

4 - Nights in Siena

Includes: Siena / Pienza / San Gimignano and Volterra Private Guided Walking Tour in Siena

Following breakfast we depart for Siena. With its narrow streets and steep alleys, Siena is often described as Italy's best-preserved medieval city. Although much looks as it did in the early 14th century, Siena is no museum. Walk through the streets and you can see that the medieval contrade, 17 districts into which the city has been historically divided, are a vibrant part of modern life.

Check in at the Grand Hotel Continental, for a 4 night stay. The Hotel Continental is housed in Palazzo Gori Pannilini, built in the 17th century by the Chigi Pope Alexander VII for his niece Olimpia on the occasion of her marriage to the nobleman Giulio de' Gori. The grandeur of the architecture and the building's sumptuous decorative scheme perfectly express the high social standing of the families. Many famous people of the time stayed here, including Queen Margaret of Savoy and her court. Recent restoration work has uncovered frescoes of outstanding beauty and the structure of a medieval tower. All this and much more contribute to the unique character of the Grand Hotel Continental, the only 5-star luxury hotel in Siena. (B)

Sunday, November 11th 2012

Full Day Excursion Pienza / Podere il Casale / Poggio Antico Wine Estate

After breakfast we depart for Pienza, located in Val d'Orcia, a region of Tuscany for an on-your-own exploration. Pleasant walks and great views can be had from the village walls. In 1996, UNESCO declared the town of Pienza a World Heritage Site, and in 2004 the entire valley, the *Val d'Orcia*, was included on the list of UNESCO's World Cultural Landscapes.

Just before noon you will board your bus to reach the organic farm Podere Il Casale for a Pecorino Cheese Production Demo and a light lunch with typical Tuscan local and genuine products. Meet the owners who will explain how the famous Italian cheeses; pecorino, caprino and ricotta are made. You will tour the farm that overlooks the Orcia Valley.



Mid-afternoon we reach Poggio Antico Wine Estate where you will have a tour and an exclusive wine tasting. The estate includes about 500 acres of beautiful woods, fields, olive groves and vineyards. Located at an average altitude of approximately 1,476 feet above sea level, Poggio Antico is one of the highest altitude producers of Brunello. The unique combination of altitude, positioning, and soil quality give Poggio Antico wines their special character and elegance. Later return to your hotel in Siena. (B,L)

Monday, November 12th 2012

Full Day Excursion to San Gimignano and Volterra

San Gimignano is called "the town of the beautiful towers", one of the best preserved medieval towns in Tuscany. Its stunning skyline bristles with tall towers dating from the 13th century. The "Rocca" (fortress), built in 1353 by the Florentines has today only one surviving tower. It encloses a public garden filled with fig and olive trees. From there you can enjoy the best view over the vineyards where wine has been produced for hundred of years.

At approximately noon you will reach your bus for a short transfer to Poggio Alloro Farm where you will have a tour of the property and a typical Tuscan lunch. The Fioroni brothers lovingly and devotedly cultivate their land with vines, olives and cereal crops: durum wheat, rye, maize, barley and others. Today, just like in days gone by, everything is planned and accomplished with complete respect for the environment.

After lunch you will meet your driver to reach another pearl of Tuscany: Volterra, the capital of alabaster, where you will have some free time for an on-your-own exploration. The "magic and mysterious" city of Volterra has its roots in three thousand years of history. It is possible to find evidence and traces from every historical period which gives the artistic city a unique aspect. The Renaissance had an important influence on Volterra but without changing the city's Medieval character. The town has long been known for its alabaster, which has been mined since Etruscan times; today the Volterrans use it to make ornaments and souvenirs sold all over town. Later return to your hotel in Siena. (B,L)

Tuesday, November 13th 2012

Siena at leisure

Discover Siena on your own today. Tonight we gather for our farewell dinner. (B,D)

Wednesday, November 14th 2012

After breakfast we transfer to the Florence airport for our return flight home. (B)

Reserve your space early on this specially designed custom small group tour!



Booking Instructions

Deposit: \$500.00 per person is due at time of reservation along with insurance premium and signed reservation form.

Final Payment: Due no later than July 23, 2012 along with a copy of passport

Make Checks Payable to: Viking Travel Service

Mail Payments To: Viking Travel Service, 700 Pasquinelli Drive, Illinois 60559

Forms of Payment Accepted: Check, Credit Cards (VISA, Master Card, American Express) 3% fee for credit card payments

A valid passport is required. Passports must be valid for a minimum of 6 months from return date and have a few blank pages.

Not Included: Travel Insurance, Florence tourism tax of 1,00 euro and Siena hotel tax of 3,00 euro per person, per night payable directly to hotels, baggage fees imposed by the airline, increases in taxes, government fees, fuel supplements before ticketing and any optional tours. Gratuities for driver and guides are not included as is any items of personal nature or not specified as included.

Important Information/Tour conditions: Tour pricing is based on a minimum of 25 full paying passengers and 34 maximum. Transfers at airports are based on group arriving and departing at the same time. Deviation would require a separate transfer at additional cost. Prices quoted are in USD based on the Euro as of 1/11/12 and are subject to currency fluctuations. Air deviations subject to space availability, fees and new pricing. Seat requests cannot be guaranteed. Subject to all airline rules and regulations. Names on reservations must match what appears on valid passport. All participants should be in good physical conditions to travel.

Cancellation Policy: All cancellations must be in writing to Viking Travel Service, 700 Pasquinelli Dr., Westmont, IL 60559. Date cancellation notice is received will determine the actual cancellation date. Unused portions of this package are non-refundable. Airline tickets are nonrefundable once issued.

Penalties are per person: Time of deposit to March 1, 2012 = Full Refund
March 2 to May 1, 2012 = Deposit Amount
May 2 to July 23, 2012 = 75% penalty
July 24, 2012 to Departure and no shows = 100% penalty

Cancellation/travel Insurance: We strongly recommend travel insurance. Insurance will protect you in the event you must cancel for a covered medical reason, interruption, accident, baggage or covered unforeseen circumstance. As with all insurance policies, cost of insurance is non-refundable and subject to change at any time. Insurance does not cover cancel for any reason which may be purchased for additional cost. For more information contact Viking Travel Service. Group insurance requires a minimum of 10 passengers. Note: Insurance is based on total per person costs; therefore, upgrades and additions made to the original program would require and increase in insurance for maximum protection including the pre-existing medical waiver and default.

Insurance value is \$299.00 per person, dbl and \$329.00 per person, single and is due at time of booking and is non-refundable.

Travel Guard Protect & Assist Group Insurance Coverage

Coverage

Trip Cancellation
Trip Interruption
Travel Delay

Maximum Benefits

Trip Cost
\$750 or 150% Trip Cost (whichever is greater)
\$750 (Maximum of \$150 per day)

Coverage

Medical Expenses
Emergency Medical Transportation
Baggage Delay
Baggage & Personal Effects Loss

Maximum Benefits

\$25,000
\$250,000
\$250
\$1,000



Tenuta Santo Pietro

Tenuta Santo Pietro's 72-acre estate was part of a larger farm system laid out by Pope Pius II in the mid-1400s. Today it is a self-sufficient gentleman's farm with twelve acres of vineyards and twelve of olive trees. You can wander amid the splendor of the land for hours.



In autumn, join in an olive harvest or take part in a pressing. At any time of year, enjoy superior olive oil and wine produced from our land. Santo Pietro arranges wine and olive oil tastings for its guests and visitors.

The property is home to over 1,100 olive trees of four indigenous varieties. The trees range in age from 15 years to well over 100 years. All the olives are picked by hand, using traditional methods which ensure that the fruit is at its best when we cold press it, the same day the olives are picked from the trees.

The vineyards include 12 acres of old and new growth vines of Sangiovese, Merlot and Vermentino grapes and produce approximately 1,300 cases of wine per year of the highest quality wines.



Olive Oil

Tenuta Santo Pietro takes pride on the superior taste and quality of their cold pressed extra virgin olive oil. They believe that what makes their oil so delicious is their commitment to traditional production. The ancient olive trees thrive in nutrient rich soil under the warm Tuscan sun. Each fall they hand pick the olives and never add any chemicals, preservatives or anything that isn't 100% natural. The result is a rich, green oil that is smooth, slightly peppery and addictive.

Wine

Currently they produce two wines from their vineyards: Pio II 2008- a lively, classic Chianti, and Viper 2007 - a richly blended Super Tuscan. Both go well with just about everything there is to eat in this area - cheeses, meats, pastas and vegetables. Wines are available for purchase on site in the Bar Wine Room, at local restaurants and shops, as well as in select locations in the US.





Autumn in Tuscany is a time of authenticity; vineyards and forests are enriched by beautiful changing colors, offering some of the most spectacular landscapes in one of Italy's most romantic regions.

Travelers will be able to discover the true Tuscany, as they visit its many historical hamlets and villages without the midsummer crowds, and drive on quiet country roads under crisp blue skies.

Autumn is the time of the 'vendemmia' (grape harvest), the 'raccolta' (olive harvest), and the opening of the hunting and wild mushroom season. Typical Tuscan cooking is in its element at this time of year, and traditional dishes are often the protagonists of the many celebrations associated with these essential moments in the simple Tuscan life. The season also lends itself to long walks in the country, to discover the inner beauty of this rich land... All of which can culminate in the comfort and warmth of a lit fireplace and a good glass of Chianti Classico back at Villa Bordoni.



David and Catherine Gardner, owners of Villa Bordoni.



Why not spice up your stay in Tuscany by taking the opportunity to prepare some authentic, seasonal Italian dishes with highly trained Chefs.

Hotel Villa Bordoni and **The Chianti Cooking School** organize cooking courses and offer lessons based on both Tuscan and other national dishes.

Rustic Lesson - La cucina povera!

Dedicate an afternoon to discovering traditional Tuscany in Loretta Somigli's farmhouse kitchen. Our rustic lessons are dedicated to the discovery of historical dishes such as ribollita, pappa al pomodoro, fett'unta, cinghiale in umido.

Throughout the lesson, you will also be guided through a wine tasting, discovering a variety of Tuscan reds and whites.

Your lesson is followed by dinner based on your efforts.





Osteria di Passignano

The Badia: history and place

The Badia di Passignano, situated in the heart of the Chianti Classico region of Tuscany, is a Vallombrosian monastery dating back to 395.

The Badia di Passignano (The Abbey of Passignano), located in the Chianti Classico region, is an ancient monastery dating back to 395, when it was established by the archbishop of Florence. Even today it is still inhabited by monks of the Vallombrosian Order, who remain the guardians of their cultural and historical treasures.



The Vallombrosian Order, a reformed branch of the Benedictines specializing in grape growing and forestry, was founded by Saint Giovanni Gualberto, whose relics have been located in the church of the abbey since his death in 1073.

Since the Middle Ages, the Vallombrosian monks and the Badia di Passignano are known for their attention to classical and musical texts, for having promoted scientific research (Galileo Galilei taught there in 1587), and for looking after the surrounding land by means of cultivation, especially grapevines, and reforestation.

The Osteria...who we are

For us the table is a voyage of discovery to constantly new flavors.

The Osteria di Passignano, born in 2000, was founded by Marcello Crini, a great connoisseur and enthusiast of the traditional Tuscan cuisine and wine culture; and Allegra Antinori.



The Antinori family owns the vineyards around the Abbey, from which the Chianti Classico Reserve wine “Badia a Passignano” is produced, and which is aged in the cellars beneath the monastery.