

# GARDEN TOURS



**Tuscan Treasures**

June 4<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012

## ITALY



## TUSCAN TREASURES ITALY 2012

Tuscany is famous all around the world for its colors, tastes and smells. It offers many things to see, to do and to taste. But overall it offers the masterpieces of many illustrious figures that made Tuscany what it is today

## HIGHLIGHTS

- 4 Star Hotel Athena in Deluxe Rooms
- 4 Star Croce de Malta in Prestige Deluxe Rooms
- Breakfast Daily
- 3 course lunch including wine, water and coffee
- 4 course dinner at a charming local restaurant
- 3 course lunch including wine, water and coffee in Pienza
- Cooking class at Tenuta di Corsignano - wine tasting of their wines will accompany each of your lunch courses
- 3 course lunch including wine, water and coffee in Montecatini Alto
- Tuscan Villa visit for olive oil and wine tasting plus a 3 course lunch
- Farewell 4 course dinner in the hotel
- Tour of Siena including the Cattedrale di Santa Maria
- Private visit to Contrada dell 'Oca
- Castello di Celsa including drinks and snacks
- Tenuta Monaciano
- Villa La Foce
- Villa La Petraia
- Guided Walking tour of Montecatini Terme
- Funicolare trip up the hill to Montecatini Alto
- Guided Walking Tour of Lucca
- Lucca Botanical Garden
- Villa Pfanner Gardens
- Villa Massei
- One Leisure day in Siena and One Leisure Day in MT
- Local Guides and their tips
- Local drivers and their tips
- Memories to last a lifetime!

Surrounded by olive groves and the vineyards of Chianti, Siena is one of the most beautiful cities of Tuscany. Declared by UNESCO a World Heritage Site, Siena is famous for its art, museums, cuisine and medieval city. Set on three hills, the city is drawn together by winding alleyways and steep steps.

The Piazza del Campo is its heart with the Duomo and St Maria della Scala serving as further landmarks. The Chianti area, between Florence and Siena, is one of the most beautiful country sides in Italy and a famous wine production area.

There are plenty of ideas for gifts to bring back a little bit of Tuscany for a friend at home. The three main pedestrian streets for boutiques are Via di Citta, Banchi di Sopra and Via Dei Montanini. Styles range from trendy to classic. You'll find a gelateria, pizza shop or bar every few shops, so you can stop for that gelato fix often!

Siena's cuisine is pure and simple, yet distinguished by the excellence of its ingredients. Sieneese meats, vegetables and herbs are of excellent quality, and most recipes call for the use of olive oil (which in this region is among the highest quality).

Siena's museums are filled with fine examples of paintings and sculpture from the Romanic, Gothic and Pre-Renaissance periods. Aside from museums, the town is filled with Gothic architecture and the art of the Sieneese school. You will not want to miss Siena's many small churches, and historical squares either.

Montecatini Terme is an Italian district of approx. 21,000 inhabitants within the province of Pistoia in Tuscany. The Valdinievole is an original mix of famous thermal resorts, intact nature and ancient Medieval villages.

It is found in the deep and secret heart of Tuscany, between Pistoia and Lucca and, for centuries, was a crossroads for culture, trade and meetings.

Her hills conceal villages and castles that, from the "Swiss Pesciatina", stretch out until Montalbano where the genius of Leonardo da Vinci was born. From the chestnut woods, passing through the landscape scattered with olive trees, we reach the valley where the precious waters of Montecatini Terme and the steam of Monsummano Terme's grottos are born, and where the natural reserve of Padule di Fucecchio extends.

Lucca, clasped within her well-preserved walls, encloses a historical, architectural richness of masterpieces from different ages. In the vast plains and on the hills that surround the city are scattered numerous splendid villas, characterized by parks and gardens rich in tree-lined lanes, statues, fountains and waterworks.

The olive grove that colours the landscape with its typical silvery grey supplies an incomparable oil, famous throughout the world. The vine also contributes to the character of the landscape, especially on the hills, producing the famous Doc di Montecarlo and delle Colline Lucchesi wines.

Your incredible land itinerary:

*'Dear Donna...While downloading a few hundred photos of Tuscany I couldn't get over the sheer beauty of it all. It will stay in my memory forever. The whole tour was so well planned and we all fell in love with Marco. What a wonderful guide he was...so informative, witty, attentive and easy on the eyes too! The food was great and dining al fresco up at Montecatini Alto was a delight on a warm evening. So many great memories to cherish of a truly special area of Italy shared with a friendly group of traveling friends. Thank you for all your planning and attention to details.'* Barbara, Italy 2011

## Monday June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012 Arrival day

Your Hotel for the first four nights Hotel Athena, Siena, Italy

In the historic centre of Siena, near to Piazza del Campo, famous for the well known Palio, there is Hotel Athena. There is a large terrace with wonderful views where guests can take advantage of the bar service while enjoying the countryside around and below them characterised by the ancient city walls of Siena and its backdrop of soft green hills. We have even negotiated free internet for you!



<http://www.hotelathena.com/en/index.html>

<http://www.hotelathena.com/en/camere-servizi.html>

## Tuesday June 5<sup>th</sup> Siena



Tour of Siena including the Cathedrale di Santa Maria, better known as the Duomo, a gleaming marble treasury of Gothic art. The cathedral itself was originally designed and completed between 1215 and 1263 on the site of an earlier structure. It has the form of a Latin cross with a slightly projecting transept, a dome and a bell tower. The dome rises from a hexagonal base with supporting columns. The lantern atop the dome was added by Gian Lorenzo Bernini. The nave is separated from the two aisles by semicircular arches. The exterior and interior are constructed of white and greenish-black marble in alternating stripes, with addition of red marble on the façade. The origins of the first structure are obscure and shrouded in legend. There was a 9th century church with bishop's palace at the present location. In December 1058 a synod was held in this church resulting in the election of Pope Nicholas II

and the deposition of the antipope Benedict X.

In 1196 the cathedral masons' guild, the Opera di Santa Maria, was put in charge of the construction of a new cathedral. By 1215 there were already daily masses said in the new church.

Duccio's Maesta at the Museo dell'Opera Metropolitana del Duomo



The Maestà, or Maestà of Duccio is an altarpiece composed of many individual paintings commissioned by the city of Siena in 1308 from the artist Duccio di Buoninsegna. The front panels make up a large enthroned Madonna and Child with saints and angels, and a predella of the Childhood of Christ with prophets. The reverse has the rest of a combined cycle of the Life of the Virgin and Life of Christ in a total of forty-three small scenes; several panels are now dispersed or lost. Though it took a generation for its effect truly to be felt, Duccio's Maestà set Italian painting on a course leading away from the hieratic representations of Byzantine art towards more direct presentations of reality. Tempera and gold on wood.

The painting was installed in the cathedral of Siena on June 9, 1311. One person who witnessed this event wrote: ' And on that day when it was brought into the cathedral, all workshops remained closed, and the bishop commanded a great host of devoted priests and monks to file past in solemn procession. This was accompanied by all the high officers of the Commune and by all the people; all honorable citizens of Siena surrounded said panel with candles held in their hands, and women and children followed humbly behind. They accompanied the panel amidst the glorious pealing of bells after a solemn procession on the Piazza del Campo into the very cathedral; and all this out of reverence for the costly panel... The poor received many alms, and we prayed to the Holy Mother of God, our patron saint, that she might in her infinite mercy preserve this our city of Siena from every misfortune, traitor or enemy.'

Private visit to Contrada dell 'Oca. A contrada is a district, or a ward, within an Italian city. The most well-known contrade (plural) are probably the 17 contrade of Siena that race in the **Palio di Siena**. Each is named after an animal or symbol and each has its own long history and complicated set of heraldic and semi-mythological associations. Oca or Goose is one of them. These districts were set up in the Middle Ages in order to supply troops to the many military companies that were hired to defend Siena as it fought to defend its independence from Florence and other nearby city states. As time has gone by, however, the contrade have lost their administrative and military functions and have instead become simply areas of localized patriotism, held together by the emotions and sense of civic pride of the residents. Their roles have broadened so that every important event – baptisms, deaths, marriages, church holidays, victories at the Palio, even wine or food festivals – is celebrated only within one's own contrada.

Every contrada has its own museum, fountain and baptismal font, motto, allied contrada (only *Oca* has no allies) and adversary contrada, typically a neighbor (only four, *Bruco*, *Drago*, *Giraffa* and *Selva*, have no declared adversaries). Often the adversary contrade share borders. Traditionally, its residents made dyes. *Oca's* symbol is a crowned goose wearing around its neck a blue ribbon marked with the cross of Savoy. Its colours are green and white, with red trim. *Oca* is one of only four noble contrade; it earned its title for its people's bravery during many battles fought by the former Siennese Republic.



Visit to Castello di Celsa including drinks and snacks. Celsa has the quality that dreams are made of. A castle with turrets surrounded by a formal garden, a Renaissance chapel and a beautifully converted conservatory - the Limonaia - look across the valley towards the skyline of Siena, surrounded by 250 hectares of land. The Castello di Celsa is one of Italy's best kept secrets as it is not open to the public.

The exclusive Castello di Celsa, owned by the princely Aldobrandini family, lies fourteen kilometers south-east of Siena. The true beauty of Celsa lies in its silence and the spectacular view over the surrounding countryside, at a stone's throw from the magical city of Siena, a landscape that has not changed for centuries.



Visit to Tenuta Monaciano – A drawing by the artist Ettore Romagnoli dating from 1835 attests to the fact that there was a garden annex to the Villa in the eighteenth century but was actually put in place during the middle part of the century when the building was completely modified by the nobleman Alessandro Pucci Sansedoni. The owner constructed a new villa and romantic garden complex in the innovative spirit of the styles pervading Florence at the time. The Villa and the garden are the heart of the Monaciano estate rising high on the hilltop that dominates the Tuscan Chianti in the countryside in the province of Siena. Thanks to a recent restoration and conservation initiative, the garden has been returned to its original splendour without additions and intrusive modifications, typical to restoration projects. Behind the garden project, one can still experience the original

inspiration and design of the eighteenth century noble owner, who actively participated in the farm's management possessing botanical, territorial and agricultural knowledge.

The park is divided approximately into two parts: the first part, on the higher end, is dedicated to decorative flowers; the second part, at the lower end, is the heart of the romantic park, with large forested spaces alternating with curved walkways that spontaneously open up onto surprising new views and paths, created to enchant visitors at every turn.

The landscaping of the garden is based on the English style where full green spaces alternate with empty open spaces, forests offset by clearings. The romantic park is made up of evergreen high-standing trees such as Holm oak trees, a large Lebanese Cedar, as well as horse chestnut, oak and palm trees.



Other significant elements of the garden include stone fixtures and sculptures strategically positioned, guiding one's gaze towards the immense panorama where the historical Villa emerges among the Tuscan hillside completing the scene. The garden was designed as a place of contemplation, relaxation, and place for collection and harvest for the original owners of the villa. Such purposes, both eclectic and domestic, have ensured that spectacular and extraordinary aspects be highlighted. The most noteworthy are: the heated green house, the Lemon house, the Aviary, the Water Lily Pond, Venus's Grotto, the temple, water fountains and other wonders interspersed with flowering hedges, forests and pathways.

<http://www.monaciano.com/la-villa.html>

3 course lunch including wine, water and coffee  
4 course dinner at a charming local restaurant.

### Wednesday June 6th

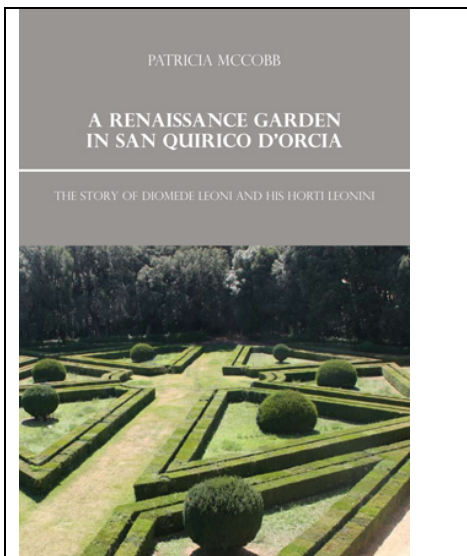
After breakfast we are off on another incredible journey of discovery...



### Abbey of Sant'Antimo

The origins of the abbey date to a small oratory built here, one the location of a former Roman villa, in 352 at the death of Anthimus. In 715 it was cared by the diocese of Chiusi.

In 770 the Lombards commissioned the construction of a Benedictine monastery, which had also to act as a hotel for the pilgrims directed to Rome. In 781, in his trip back from Rome, Charlemagne, gave his imprint to the construction, though the version according to which he was the founder of the abbey is most likely a legend. In 814 a document by Louis the Pious made it an imperial abbey. Later the abbot received the title of Palatine Count. At his apex, the abbey possessed 96 castles, terrains and other lands, as well as 85 monasteries, churches and hospitals. Their most important possession was the castle of Montalcino, which was the abbot's residence. There are some lovely gardens here that we will discover.



The Horti Leonini gardens are a splendid example of giardini all'italiana: they were designed in about 1540 by Diomede Leoni and periodically host temporary exhibits of contemporary sculpture.

It took a writer from New York who has chosen to divide her time between the States and San Giovanni d'Asso, the Landscape Architect Patricia McCobb, to tell the story of Diomede Leoni, too long omitted from the historical studies of the Val d'Orcia. In her new book, *A Renaissance Garden in Val d'Orcia: the Story of diomede Leoni and his Horti Leonini*, she writes about Diomede Leoni and the mystery of the building of his splendid garden in San Quirico, one of the singular pearls of the Val d'Orcia. The building of the Horti Leonini in the late 1500s began with the story of this man from San Quirico. Leoni, while still young, left his birthplace for Rome, where he lived amongst the elite of the artistic world.

An official letter written by the secretary of the Grand Duke Francesco I de'Medici in 1580, shows that the Medici had repayed Leoni for the construction of the Horti. The same letter brings to light certain details of the life of Diomede Leoni: he was an illegitimate son of a notary, inherited a piece

of land in San Quirico from his father, and he built his 'horti' for the comfort and convenience of travelers and, in particular, the nobility that passed through the town on the Via Romea. Further research shows that Diomede Leoni was one of three friends at the bedside of Michelangelo when he died. In fact, Leoni was the only one to write a testimony about the last minutes of life of the artist. The book about Diomede Leoni and his Horti Leonini is available here.

<http://www.mccobbassociates.com/diomede-leoni-and-his-horti-leonini/en/>

And our last visit before lunch will be to the small and intimate rose garden ... Giardino delle Rose



3 course lunch including wine, water and coffee in Pienza

Pienza, a town and commune in the province of Siena, Pienza, the unfinished "utopian" city, was commissioned by Pope Pius II in 1459. In just three years the cathedral, the papal and bishop's palaces and the central part of the town were completed, but the extensive project ended abruptly when Pius died only two years after the consecration of the cathedral. In 1996, UNESCO declared the town 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.

Our afternoon will be a visit to...



## La Foce

Visit to Villa La Foce - The garden at La Foce was designed by Iris Origo and the famous English landscape gardener Cecil Pinsent between 1925 and 1939. It is considered today an ideal combination between the landscape and 20th-century architecture, blending Italian and English traditions and taste. The property of La Foce extends over the hills overlooking the Val d'Orcia, an enchanting and miraculously unspoiled valley in southern Tuscany, listed as UNESCO world heritage in 2004. In 1924 the Irish-American Iris Origo - the famous author - and her Italian husband, Marchese Antonio Origo, acquired the La Foce estate- a combination of olive groves, widespread cultivated fields and woodland. In those days, their management of La Foce brought prosperity and cultural and social changes to the poverty-ridden land it was then. Today their daughters, Benedetta and Donata, run the La Foce estate and their personality pervades in the hospitable atmosphere.

<http://www.lafoce.com/>

### Thursday June 7th

A day of Leisure to discover on your own or just sit on the roof terrace of our hotel and watch the Italian world go by. 'La Dolce Vita'. You will discover that there is very much to see in Siena, so have an early breakfast and get out and walk. Don't forget to stop for gelato! We will have some ideas for you just in case!

### Friday June 8th

One of the highlights on this tour... cooking-class

Our cooking class at Tenuta di Corsignano - the dishes are cooked by you, the Chefs! A wine tasting of their wines will accompany each of your lunch courses plus an olive oil explanation and visit to the wine cellar.



You will get a wine tasting of all our wines and olive oil, explanation and visit of the wine cellar.

- 1 appetizer with our white wine
- 1 starter with our IGT rosso toscano
- 1 first course with our Chianti Classico
- 1 second course of meat and side dish with our Riserva
- 1 dessert with our Grappa and Vinsanto

Its name is tied to that of the Piccolomini Pope and to his native town Pienza, which was previously named Corsignano. In the Chianti Classico Gallo Nero area, at just 8 kilometres from Siena, on the road to the antique hamlet Vagliagli, this land of 54 acres was one of the final borders of the Papal Patronage.

Mario and Elena have devoted themselves to this enchanting earth, and little by little, with constancy and passion, they have made of it the reason of their lives.

**'Whoever loves nature, history, art will find at Corsignano a climate of freedom, friendship and why not....of pleasant elegance.'**

<http://www.tenutacorsignano.it/english/cooking-class.html>



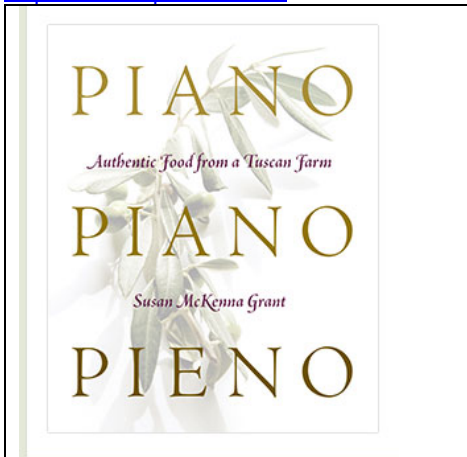
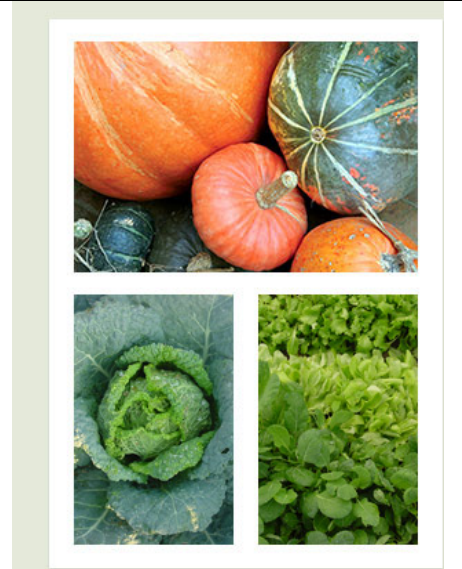
This day we also visit Villa La Petraia –You will hear the story of bringing the buildings and the fields of Petraia to an organic and biodynamic agricultural life after a forty year dormancy; the restoration of a 900-year old casa colonica; the rebuilding of ancient stone terrace walls; the planting of vineyards, olive groves, fruit orchards and vegetable gardens; and the reintroduction of animal husbandry plus we will enjoy a short olive oil tasting. Owned by Canadians!

'The first agriculture we undertook at La Petraia was the planting of a vegetable garden. Of course we had our own vision of what it would be, not exactly the same one as our Tuscan friends and helpers. There was much discussion, negotiation and gnashing of teeth, for with a garden, as with all property in Italy, owning it doesn't make it yours. Tuscans share a sense of possession of not just their own land but of their countryside, for they have hunted on it, foraged on it and cultivated it for centuries. It is theirs. As Canadians, we're accustomed to a limited growing season, so the ability to grow food in the dead of winter is a miracle. In mid-November we pull up the last of the tomatoes, eggplants and peppers, but the winter garden is just getting started. There are leeks, onions, lettuces, cabbages, broccoli, beets, kohlrabi, turnips, fennel, celery, parsnips, carrots, cardoons and brussels sprouts to keep us going until early spring, when fava beans, potatoes, peas and asparagus begin to appear.'

'Thankfully, the vegetable in Italy, like the child, is adored and worshipped in a thousand and one ways. This is a country that begins in the highest Alps of Europe and stretches a long reach south to within just a few miles of the African coast. There is little call for imported produce. Markets of fresh produce abound, from Rome and Milan to the smallest village in Tuscany or Sicily. Most shoppers look for the vegetables grown close to home, labeled *nostrano* ('ours' or 'local'). These are always the freshest, cheapest and most trusted.'

'So why grow your own? Why be bothered to plant a garden? The answer to these questions every gardener knows. Best gets better when you grow your own.'

<http://www.lapetraia.com/>



More than a decade ago, Susan McKenna Grant left Canada with her husband Michael to become an organic farmer and agriturismo owner in Italy. Gradually they brought their ancient, 165-acre piece of Tuscany, La Petraia, back to its profound and lush glory. Providing them with everything from wheat to grapes to olives, and wild boar, hens, rabbits, and deer, La Petraia is a self-sustaining kingdom and a cook's dream domain in the Chianti Classico zone in the heart of Tuscany. With these and many more exquisite ingredients at hand, she presents a repertoire of both classic and modern interpretations of northern Italian cuisine.

**About the Book**

Winner - Le Cordon Bleu World Food Media Award

Winner - Cordon d'Or Award--Best Culinary Literature Book

Winner - Gourmand World Cookbook Award - Best Italian Cuisine Book

We then continue on to Montecatini Terme, through some of the most incredible landscape of hills covered in all kinds of trees, and growing operations lining the highways with row upon row of topiary and shrubs and roses.

**Saturday June 9th**

We are now in Montecatini Terme where you have just woken up in your beautiful Tuscan inspired room, had your breakfast and now you are ready to enjoy a wonderful and relaxing walking tour of this gorgeous town.





then a Funicolare trip up the hill to Montecatini Alto with its stunning views.

We will reach the upper town (Montecatini Alto) by FUNICOLAR - this is a typical means of transport which in few minutes connects Montecatini Terme with the very charming medieval village Montecatini Alto. Here there is a very nice little square where we will enjoy lunch – a 3 course meal including wine, water and coffee.



### **Grand Hotel Croce di Malta (last four nights)**

In a privileged setting, on the edges of the big Spa park of Montecatini Terme, in one of the most elegant boulevards and a short walk from the center, the Grand Hotel Croce di Malta is one of the most prestigious four star "Superior" hotels of the town.

The building has recently been renewed: new "PRESTIGE" rooms, a new elegant terrace, two pools (one with water at 28° and one with water at 35°) heated through solar panels taking care of the environment.

Please note we have negotiated free wi-fi in the common areas and in all rooms!

The Spa town of Montecatini Terme is the ideal departing point for a vacation to discover Tuscany area. In less of one hour : Florence, the birthplace of renaissance, the medieval walled town of Lucca, the leaning tower in Pisa.

<http://www.crocedimalta.com/?lan=en>  
<http://www.crocedimalta.com/camere.php>

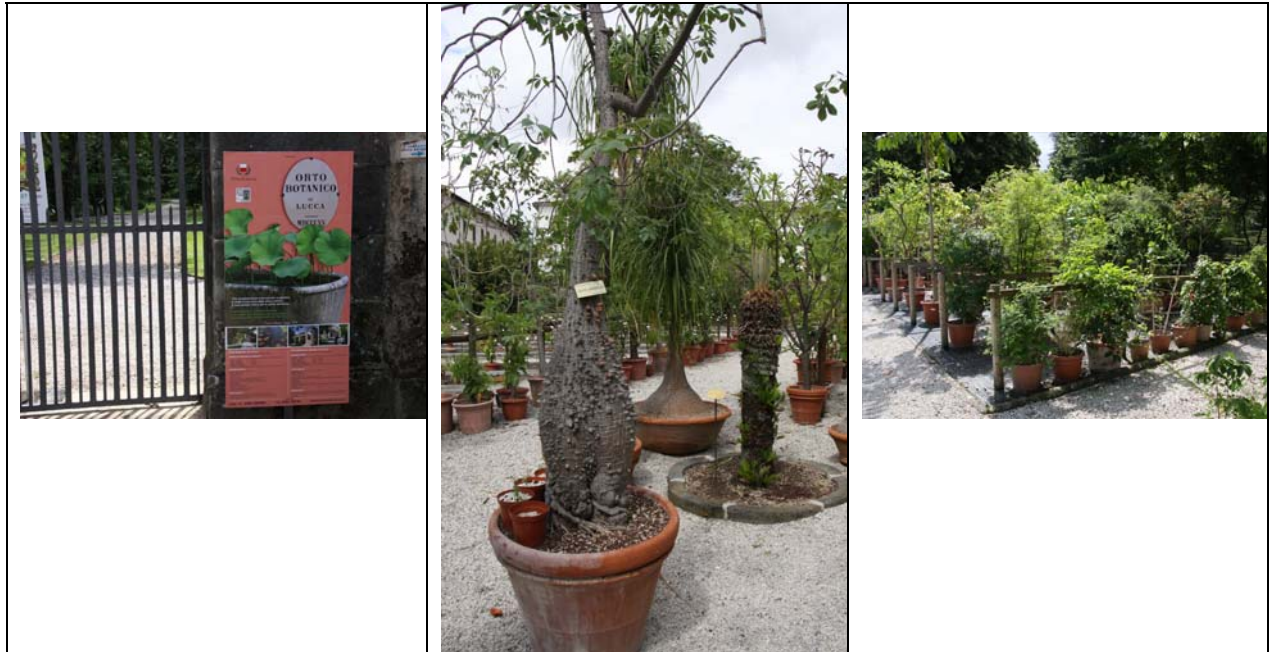
### **Sunday June 10th**

A full day to Lucca

This morning after breakfast, we board our coach to reach the walled town LUCCA – this is a very charming city very rich of art and history. It is a wonderful example of a Tuscan town, complete with winding narrow lanes and medieval buildings. Lucca was founded by the Etruscans (there are traces of a pre-existing Ligurian settlement) and became a Roman colony in 180 BC. The rectangular grid of its historical centre preserves the Roman street plan, and the Piazza San Michele occupies the site of the ancient forum. Traces of the amphitheatre can still be seen in the Piazza dell'Anfiteatro. Lucca was the site of a conference in 56 BC which reaffirmed the superiority of the Roman First Triumvirate.

Lucca was a product of power and war. The walled city is three miles around with the depth of the wall anywhere from 30-90 feet wide and 40 feet high. It was built to protect Lucca from Florence. The wealthy lived inside the walls and there are about 300 villas. The Bertoli Olive oil family lived here as well as Puccini. The workers lived outside the walls. Lucca got rich

because of the silk trade. Napoleons sister, Alesa who built Villa Realia, built the parks and gardens in Lucca. The sixteenth century city walls limit the amount of traffic inside the city, making the area a quiet place to navigate on foot and also by bike. We have a guided walking tour to visit the main places of interest including:



#### The Orto Botanico Comunale di Lucca Botanical Garden

The garden was established in 1820 by Marie Louise, Duchess of Parma, and contains a number of mature plantings of botanical interest. Its site is roughly triangular, set within a corner of Lucca's city wall, and organized into two main sections. One contains the gardens proper with an arboretum, pond, and smaller plantings; the other contains the greenhouse, botanical school, and laboratories. The Museo Botanico "Cesare Bicchi" contains a herbarium and archive.

and the magical Villa Pfanner Gardens.



'The courtyard of Palazzo Pfanner seems built to host performances with its theatre-like staircase and the entrance hall with its vaulted ceiling that fades away in the distance with the pleasant view of a cool verdant garden.'

So wrote the French essayist and writer André Suarès (1868-1948) during his brief stay in Lucca in the early 20th century. It is impossible to say he was wrong. The architectural structure of Palazzo Pfanner is indeed surprising and unique in the urban context. The building and garden stand magnificently in a vast baroque scenario a few steps away from the 16th century city walls. With its lawns, its ornamental flowers, forest plants, and earthenware pots of lemons that accompany the monumental string of 18th century statues depicting the deities of Greek Olympus and the Four Seasons, the Palazzo Pfanner garden, ascribed to the genius of Filippo Juvarra, represents an excellent example of a baroque garden laid out in the heart of medieval Lucca. The octagonal fountain-basin set in the intersection of the two central paths and the elegant north facing lemon-house with on its top two lions and a basilisk, the emblem of the Controni family, decorate a green space

where alternate box-wood and laurel hedges, two ancient bamboo cane thickets, yews, pines, magnolias, a long-standing camelia, bushes of peonies and hortensias, roses and pots of geraniums. and from the more austere aristocratic large houses that frame the damp, dark medieval alleys of Lucca's old town centre.

[http://www.palazzopfanner.it/pfanner\\_palace\\_lucca\\_garden\\_residence\\_museum\\_tours\\_events-1-En.html](http://www.palazzopfanner.it/pfanner_palace_lucca_garden_residence_museum_tours_events-1-En.html)



Then off for a very special treat into the country to a true Tuscan Villa for olive oil and wine tasting plus a 3 course lunch at Fattoria Colle Verde.

'The Colle Verde Estate was assembled in the 16th century by Tomas Guinigi, a scion of one of the leading families of Lucca during the medieval and renaissance periods. Vineyards and olive groves lie on a wide, south-facing valley dropping from 300 to 100 meters above sea level. This natural amphitheater of terraces creates an extremely well balanced and unique agricultural ecosystem. The special microclimate and the distinctive characteristics of our terrain combined with the almost obsessive care that has been lavished upon our grape vines and olive trees for centuries enables us to produce distinctive wines and olive oils that manifest intense varietal perfumes and full flavors. Sometimes rather austere and reserved at first, as you get to know them they display noble and generous characteristics qualities that are

very much like those of the people who have lived and worked in these hills for generations.'

The tour includes a visit to the Olive Oil Press and an explanation of historical insights involved in olive oil production followed by a tasting of their olive oil and continues with a winery-tour focusing on all aspects of viticulture, including a sit-down tasting of selected Colle Verde wines.

<http://www.colleverde.it/>

We next visit Villa Massei – the garden of Paul Gervais de Bedee and Gil Cohen. Paul is a thirteenth generation New Englander, descended from the family of Francois-Rene de Chateaubriand. Gil is the rose lover and philanthropist.

Paul's Blog on the garden

<http://gervaisdebedee.blogspot.com/2011/07/farm-at-villa-massei.html>

a gorgeous article on the garden that we will visit:

[http://www.1stdibs.com/articles/style\\_compass/paul\\_gervais/index.php](http://www.1stdibs.com/articles/style_compass/paul_gervais/index.php)

The edifice, dating back to the 17th century, was built in the southern hills of Lucca in a zone, agriculturally rich for its production of olives, vines and mulberries for silk worms.

For a long time, the villa was the country residence of the Senibaldi family, and after many changes of hands, was bought in 1981 by Gil Cohen and Paul Gervais, the present owners. The latest owners are responsible for the restoration of the portico on the façade facing uphill, which had been previously walled up in order to increase space inside the villa, and for the precise architectural and botanic composition of the garden. The portico has five arches on the façade facing uphill, forming an area linking the building to the garden. This is a very important and frequent characteristic of the Lucchese villas. The garden is very interesting for its variety. There is also a little nymphaeum in the garden. An Italian style garden, comprising 16 flower beds with low geometric hedge borders has been planted recently.

### **Monday June 11th Leisure Day**

Our hotel is very close to the main shopping area so relax, have a nice long breakfast, finish packing all your goodies but save some room as you might just want to go shopping this afternoon when the shops open. This evening we enjoy our final time together with a 4 course dinner in the hotel.

### **Tuesday June 12th departure**

After breakfast check-out of hotel and transfer to the airport for flight back home with souvenirs of this magical trip...chocolate, wine, olive oil, nougat and wafers...plus new friends and unforgettable memories!

**Your land package includes:**

- 4 Star Hotel Athena in Deluxe Rooms
- 4 Star Croce de Malta in Prestige Deluxe Rooms
- Breakfast Daily
- 3 course lunch including wine, water and coffee
- 4 course dinner at a charming local restaurant in a villa
- 3 course lunch including wine, water and coffee in Pienza
- Cooking class at Tenuta di Corsignano - wine tasting of their wines will accompany each of your lunch courses
- 3 course lunch including wine, water and coffee in Montecatini Alto
- Tuscan Villa visit for olive oil and wine tasting plus a 3 course lunch
- Farewell 4 course dinner in the hotel
- Tour of Siena including the Cathedrale di Santa Maria
- Private visit to Contrada dell 'Oca
- Castello di Celsa including drinks and snacks
- Tenuta Monaciano
- Villa La Foce
- Villa La Petraia
- Guided Walking tour of Montecatini Terme
- Funicolare trip up the hill to Montecatini Alto
- Guided Walking Tour of Lucca
- Lucca Botanical Garden
- Villa Pfanner Gardens
- Visit a true Tuscan Villa in the Country for olive oil and wine tasting
- Villa Massei
- One Leisure day in Siena and One Leisure Day in MT
- Local Guides and their tips
- Local drivers and their tips
- Memories to last a lifetime!

Further Reading from these sites:

<http://www.aboutsiena.com/food-and-wine-of-Siena.html>

<http://www.aboutsiena.com/museums-in-Siena.html>

<http://www.montecatini.it/english/citta.html>

<http://www.montecatini.turismo.toscana.it/>

You can come earlier or extend your stay, just let us know if you want to stay in the tour hotel so we can try and get you our rate. Please note this on your reservation form.

Not included:

Airfare, insurance, meals unless noted, items of a personal nature and extra hotel charges.

PLEASE Note that the tour is based in Euros

**Tour Dates: June 4<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> , 2012**



**LAND only** €2,570 Euros \*\* p/p sharing  
**SINGLE Supplement** €440 Euros  
See **Highlights Box** for all inclusions on this tour.

**NOTE:** this tour is set at a minimum of 15. Please get your registration form in early to secure your spot but do not book your air until you have heard that the tour is ready to book air. Carlson Wagonlit Travel/Journeys of Discovery - Exclusive Travel Agent on this tour. CWT can look after your air as well as insurance.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The tour actually starts in Siena and ends in Montecatini Terme, however we have put Florence down on the registration form as that is the closest airport. It will cost approx.. €130 euros to take a cab from Florence Airport to Siena and approx.. €100 euros from MT to Florence Airport. (2 or 3 per cab with one piece of baggage each)

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Subject to change without notice – September 27, 2011