

# Il Pennato



SPANNOCCHIA'S INTERNSHIP NEWSLETTER

Volume 9, Issue II

## Taking Pictures By Katie Phelan, Education Director

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This summer, one of the Team Animali interns, Molly Callister, took over 4000 photographs in and around Spannocchia. For this edition of Il Pennato, I think that there is no better way to share with you the beauty of our farm than with a montage of Molly's work. Grazie mille to Molly for sharing her photos, and indeed, grazie mille to all of the Summer 2010 interns for a lot of hard work in the midst of a very hot summer.



Erica Smith, tutto fare extraordinaire, likes composing poems, concrete work and the mare...

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### Tramonto

Pink pink pink pink pink pink pink.

In the stripes of the *orto* below a cat sits coolly on an un-planted bed flicking flies with its tail.

At the edge of the Secret Garden I am perch on a rock with goose bumps rising up and a heart beat slowing down.

Piano, piano, *pianissimo*.

I open my mouth but am muted by the remnants of the sun

(*tranquilla*, she says, *no need for words this late in the day*)

I purse my lips to hum but am silenced by the glorious beets

(*calma*, they whisper from below ground, *no need for your music; the hillside will play*)

### Vigneto en Luglio

Bend me but don't break me

Touch me firmly—forgivingly.

When I stray too close to the dewy earth, tie me sternly to the wire.

Then, stand back and admire

My miniature bundles of fruit.

When I am weighed down by maturity please groom me gently

Pluck and clip extraneous foliage

With your wizened weathered hands.

But most importantly!

Let me see the sun and kiss the bugs,

Sailing by on the breeze

Please promise if I turn out crooked -- bobbing and weaving for position among my peers,

You will not discard me,

And I may wrap my curling fingers

'Round the limbs of my brothers and sisters.

Sing to me the lullabies and love songs of the Old Country,

When the heat is cruel, rest in my shade.

And when it comes time for harvest you will see

In children and in wine,

*Veritas*.



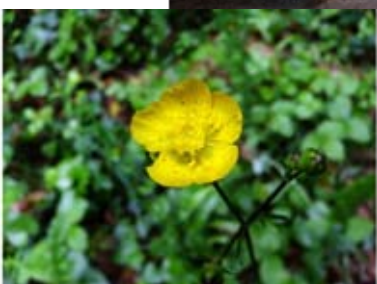


Molly Callister, team animal intern, likes baking, country music and laughing hysterically...

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## Comforts

The hard crust of the Tuscan bread  
Crackles and gives way to the knife  
Back and forth one swath at a time  
Motion and sound so like the sawing of wood  
Done daily to keep warm the hearth  
Providing the energy to begin the new day  
For without either there would be no comfort  
Just a cold room and an empty plate





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## Moments on Paper

The most irritating task I faced in my three months at Spannocchia was keeping up with my journal. I was so caught up in the rush of each and every day, that I felt like I would miss something if I stopped for a minute to record my thoughts. Yet, now as I sit in my cramped-up New York City apartment, listening to the cabs and trucks rush by, I am grateful for these words. Which though at times a little corny and overly philosophical, have the ability to capture the essence of the gift I was given this summer.

### 6/22/10

This place is doing incredible things for me. It is opening all of my senses. Each day I feel myself stopping just for a minute to try to reflect on it all. I am constantly surrounded by beautiful, precious moments here...all of which can teach me more about the world and myself. I know if I don't stop I could easily miss them all. I am not sure if I can even find meaning in all of these moments yet, but I know that they are somehow important. Last Monday began the string of rainy weather here. We did what outside work we could do that day and then on Tuesday after harvesting over 25 kilos of peas, I spent the rest of the day shelling the sweet peas in the kitchen. The monotony and simplicity of the task was oddly fulfilling. I sat out on the porch shelling until my fingers were green. For a while Carolyn came to help, but sitting in solidarity with the peas was my moment.

On Wednesday after another hard day of work, I went to the kitchen before dinner to help Graziella. Her spirit is addicting. I am forced to communicate with her in my broken Italian and though we never may fully linguistically understand each other, I feel that I share one of my closest relationships at Spannocchia with her. Something about being with her in the kitchen helping to stir the béchamel or assemble the crostoni is magical to me.

And today...today I smell like a giant garlic clove. Jeri and I spent the morning harvesting enough garlic to last the farm until February! After picking, we put the garlic under the villa to dry for a few weeks before we prepare it for storage. My moment today was definitely the sunset though. Most of us stopped our dinner duties and went out to the Secret Garden to stand and watch the sunset. There was something spectacular about the silence among us as we absorbed the beauty that was in front of us.

### 7/15/10

Today's work was incredible. It was a valid reason to stop myself and say, "what the heck am I doing!" We met at the wall this morning with Carmen already worked up about needing extra help, which Andrew and Garrett were quickly enlisted for. The fun would lie in the potato fields...it was time for harvest. Soon enough, Carmen was panicking because it was already 8AM and Riccio hadn't arrived with his tractor for harvest. "Dov'e Riccio!? Dov'e Riccio!?" She quickly stormed off yelling his name through the fields until finally her persistence proved successful and Riccio came meandering through the fields with his tractor. The next hour was a blur of dirt, potatoes, and bickering.



Carmen continued to yell at Riccio over the blare of the tractor while he swirled all over the potato field and the five of us hastily grabbed at all the potatoes he uncovered. It was fulfilling, fast-paced work. We filled eight bins with the potatoes and then spent the rest of the morning in the ceramics room sorting through them all. At noon, Jeri and I went back to Pulcinelli and created the Italian lunch of my dreams. Get ready...the figs are ripe!!! I went down to the orto and picked the first handful off one of the trees and proudly carried them home. We created an incredible salad of fresh lettuce, figs, gorgonzola, and caramelized onions. With it we had the roasted garlic focaccia we made in the pizza oven last night. Roberto and Angelo also came to lunch and brought a bottle of Spannocchia white wine and Molly brought prosciutto from working in the prosciutto room all morning. That salad, focaccia, prosciutto, and wine = the perfect lunch.

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**7/29/10**

Last Saturday we had a wonderful group outing to see the opera, Don Giovanni, at San Galgano monastery. The whole night was magical. We arrived close to 7PM and camped out under the cherry tree for our picnic dinner. The fresh meat, cheese, tomatoes, and bread couldn't have tasted much better. We had our classic Spannocchia white wine with it. It felt like a dream until a timid Italian man with some authority kindly asked us to move our festa away from the monastery. So we did...to an even better spot! The second half of our picnic overlooked a vast field of sunflowers as the sun was setting; it couldn't have gotten more Tuscan. I tried to soak up every single second of that sunset and those flowers; it was all so beautiful in the simplest way. With my friends' laughter in the background, I stood there completely and utterly content. Once the sun had gone down, we packed up our things and followed the crowd into the monastery for the opera. I cannot think of a more perfect setting to witness an opera. I was enclosed in the stonewalls of San Galgano, with the open roof and starry sky above me. The summer air was perfect and my heart melted with the music. I couldn't have been much happier.

**8/17/10**

How is it that time can throw you so completely off guard? I can't believe this is the last week of the internship. Saying that it went quickly is an understatement. Yesterday, I woke up with a strange sinking feeling in my stomach. As Jeri and I pulled out the tomato plants from the greenhouse, I couldn't help but grab symbolism from the moment. We had weeded around those young plants on our first day of work. Throughout the summer the fruit prospered and I snuck down when the garden was quiet to pick the reddest tomatoes.



And now, here we were pulling them out, saying goodbye to summer and to all that it gave us, just as I am beginning to say goodbye to this experience. Somehow this put me at ease.



Carolyn Wieczoreck, GSI of Summer '10, likes breaking crucial (or is that cruciate?) ligaments, not to mention glasses, serving platters and the occasional heart...

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### My One and Only Journal Entry

The last full day I am spending in Italy is the day I decide to go out buy a journal and start writing. Typical. So now what? Rut row. I miss Italy already and I am still here. Pretty sure it was Jerlina who said when you miss a place you are still in, you know the withdrawals are going to be unbearable.

I want bartenders with no teeth and vineyard men with bushy eyebrows and farmers with hedgehog-like hair. Pig shit covered crocs, beautiful pink crocs and soapy wine in the Terrace. I want reckless driving and broken machini, subarinos with no doors and buckets full of slop. I want zappas, broken glass, watering hoses. I need butt dancing, pig soccer playing, and old men crying over horse races. I need waiters who marry horses and waiters who throw flags. What will I do without Jeri jumping on me in the morning, coffee cup in hand - the only sure-fire way to wake me up. Graziella's fresh pasta and Linda's stuffed pomadori. Lavender, rosemary, fennel, making flower bouquets full of Oleander and a million different colors of chrysanthemums. Dead-heading Geraniums was my zen practice of each day, what's going to fill that void? I already miss taking rights when coming to a fork in the road, and traveling with Erikha and Dready along dried up river beds while neon blue dragonflies land on our faces. I want to get lost on the way to abandoned monasteries and follow Pine Ridge road only to decide it isn't going where I want it to and bushwhack my own path 30 minutes before dinner. Olive oil and vinegar solved all our problems better then duct tape ever could. I miss Dready picking out books about modernity for me to read, none of which I read more then 10 pages of. Word of advice for new interni, always make sure navigators in the van have no idea where they are actually going, adventures like those in the Tuscan countryside are what you will remember. I'm missing wandering around the farm without shoes, giving myself the best summer feet and befriending guests who leave us fans for when it's too hot to sleep/think. I want to never stop laughing, eight different ways of laughing, the laughter from the eight of us, continuous, for three months. I already don't know what I will do without siestas on the grass, sleeping poolside in pink chairs and watching Molly use her wiles on unexpecting Italians. No more tick infested Lapo or recycle juices, no more impromptu dance parties in the kitchen, or anywhere else for that matter. What will we do without giant pyramids of empty nutella jars or taking coffee from the Villa on Saturday mornings with Jeri. Can I possibly find a group of people as crazy and intelligent as the seven people I got to live with all summer? No more Italian men yelling out "Ciao Bella" or Garrett's long stories of working with Roberto cutting down trees. The feeling in my fingertips may come back now that I no longer grab scalding hot dishes. Civil wars in the upstairs of Pulcinelli and camp sing alongs while stacking wood, what am I going to do without them? I want to belt out Bohemian Rhapsody at all hours of day and night, and have a random sing along in the van. I'll miss seeing what new horrifying species of insect will pop up every few weeks, even though the bug bites on my ankles are killing me at this moment. No more waking up at random hours of the night to feed baby donks or make horribly dysfunctional lunches with Cebuli. Madonna miala, we are landing in Houston Texas, gotta prepare myself for a overwhelming amount of culture shock. Basta, Finita, abranzata.

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## Summer 2010 Interns at Spannocchia



Left to Right:

\* Italian teacher Valeria  
Garrett Cumberland (Tutto fare)  
Jerilee Murphy (Orto)  
Sheela Prakash (Orto)  
Andrew Pezzullo (Tutto fare)  
Carolyn Wieceoreck (GSI)  
Erica Smith (Tutto fare)  
Kerry Cebul (Animali)  
Molly Callister (Animali)

### ***Spannocchia Internship Mission Statement:***

The Internship Program is dedicated to enriching the lives of young people by providing them with a unique educational experience on a community oriented farm in Tuscany, Italy. Tenuta di Spannocchia's 1100-acre pastoral estate serves as an active model for responsible stewardship through collective effort.

## **Spannocchia Internship Program**

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