

# Il Pennato

Volume 12

Issue III

## FALLING INTO STEP

By Jessica Haden, Education Director

What a hardworking and fun bunch this was! Van rides were exciting adventures, thanks to frequent serenading, and dinners were always joyous and laughter-filled occasions. We bonded, exhausted, over hands sticky from picking grapes, feet wet from dewy grass during the olive harvest, and fun times during the many feasts (including Francesca and Randall's annual Thanksgiving celebration). With this group Pulcinelli was always full of love, yummy lunches, and lots of smoke from the fireplace...!

Thank you Cody for your interesting and funny interjections, Madeline for your constant smile, Kristyn for your awesome stories, Vincent for your genuine curiosity, Bo for your good humor, Whitney for making us laugh, Tiana for keeping everything organized and clean, and Connor for your always positive attitude! You will all be missed!



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## FIREPLACE CAKE

Vincent Feucht and Connor Wright

Ingredients:

lots of Spank wine

white flour

nut flour

chick pea flour

some eggs

lemon and orange zest

tasty spices

brown sugar (it'll

compliment the taste of  
the spice)

whatever else you want



- 1) Eat an amazing dinner in the Villa, drinking a fair share of Spank wine.
- 2) Return to Pulcinelli, and build a rip-roaring fire.
- 3) Lounge about and drink in the living room on Spank's most poorly designed couches while enjoying each other's company. Tend to the fire as necessary.
- 4) Once you suddenly feel compelled to bake a cake in the fireplace, go into the kitchen and whip everything together to the best of your slightly inebriated abilities.
- 5) Pour the cake batter into a pan, and put another pan of equal or greater size on top.
- 6) Place the pans in the fireplace, adjusting the coals as necessary so they surround and cover the cake pans.
- 7) Fall asleep downstairs in middle of a movie, not checking on the cake at all. Don't worry, it's going to be perfect.
- 8) Wake up around 7:15 with an achy neck and a creaky back, and check on your masterpiece. It should look like Sauron baked a cake in the fires of Mount Doom, and terrible enough that even Lapo rejects it.



## Lessons From *La Budella*

by Bo Dossett

There are certain points in a person's life, of fairly rare occurrence, where an experience can make one step back and ask "How did I get here?", "What decisions have I made that brought me here?", and, sometimes, "What the hell am I doing?" Occasionally these moments bring with them a certain clarity, a kind of detachment from the here and now, and the ability to see life, not as a series of individual moments, but as a long trajectory, with actions and reactions, decisions leading to other decisions, and the blank space ahead that still remains to be filled.

On rare occasions, one of these moments can be triggered by a cow stomach.

A few days ago, I found myself standing in the Transformation Room, on a morning that had started out like so many others. Orders needed to be filled out, temperatures needed to be checked, sausages to label, and there were hind legs of pigs in desperate need of having the blood massaged out of them. Finally, as the morning rolled around to 11ish, one of the half a dozen times a day that *Radio Tre* plays yet another version of "My Favorite Things," from *The Sound of Music*, it was time to inflate the cow stomachs.

Cow stomachs form the casing of the Mortadella type of aged sausage that has been made in Italy for at least the past six hundred years, depending on who you ask. However, before the stomachs can be filled, the insides need to be dry. This is accomplished by inflating the stomach by blowing it up like a large balloon, which necessitates the forming of a close relationship between a person's mouth and a bovine body part formally used to hold poop.

Riccio, Spannocchia's resident butcher, has gestured to the bucket of stomachs with a request to please inflate "le budelle," an Italian word which I've generally understood as a catch-all for "the guts." In my latex-gloved hands, I hold the chosen *budella* in front of my face, looking at how veins crisscrossed the outer surface like a watershed map. The smell of a cow stomach generally falls somewhere between week-old laundry and roadkill possum, and it consistently amazes me that the beautiful, delicious sausages that will be sold a few months down the road can be made from something that makes me miss the sweet smell of manure in the morning.

I'm still staring into the pinkish-white sack of the cow stomach, and starting to space out. My eyes are becoming unfocused, and I'm drawn to a single droplet of water that is slowly working its way down to the small puddle of water at the bottom of the stomach. I've been staring into a part of a dead cow's intestinal tract for almost thirty seconds now.



*If you stare too long into the budella, the budella begins to stare back into you.*

I look over to the other side of the room, where Riccio is steadily and rhythmically cutting up ribs, muscle memory taking over after years of slow and deliberate work, the patience to know that every part of the pig can be used for something, and that to waste anything is more than an economic loss, but a disrespect to the animals whose lives are used to feed ours. Tacked on the door to one of our curing rooms is a piece of paper with the words "Del maiale, non si butta via niente." From the pig, you waste nothing.

I look back down at the cow stomach in my hands, thinking about the generations of young assistants and aides apprenticed to the silent, efficient *maestros* like the man on the other side of the room. How many young men and women like me have stood here, in the shadows of those whose hands have learned the art of turning flesh into food? How many times has the torch been passed on to the younger, unsure assistants, the knowledge of centuries placed in hands still unused to wielding cleavers and boning knives. "La tradizione," said Riccio once, "we must respect the tradition. We must make our work beautiful."



Three months ago, during the fall session, I worked with the Spannocchia livestock, keeping donkeys, cattle, and pigs housed and healthy and fed. Though the number of pigs on the farm at any given time is well north of one hundred, for three months, day in and day out, the interns in charge of the animals visit every group, every day. The same muscles that my knife moves through these days were once a part of animals that I was responsible for. We walked their fences, kept their feeders full, and cleaned out their stalls. We carried water to them when frost

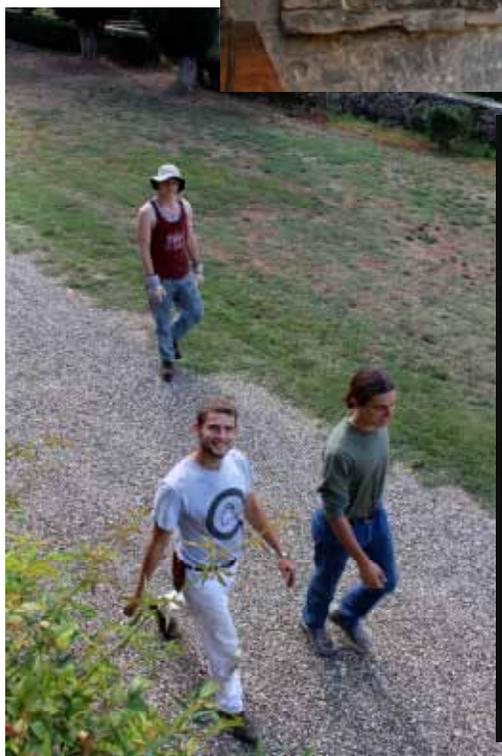
burst the pipes, and spread dry straw down for sows a few days from giving birth. When piglets were born, we made sure the hut was dry, and when some were stillborn or died in infancy, we carried the bodies away. At some point over those three months, I had petted and fed the same animals whose meat was going to fill the casing that I held in front of me and, looking down into that *budella*, I became aware of the extraordinary circumstances that had landed me here, in this moment. I felt a part of something much bigger than myself, a cycle of knowledge and work that I felt honored to be a part of, a turning of animal to food to work and back again, and a passing down of tradition and ability that stretched back farther than I could ever guess. The work of a butcher, like that of a farmer, is not always beautiful, but it is necessary, and that has a beauty unto itself. Still hearing the steady rhythm of Riccio's cleaver working behind me, I took a deep breath and began to blow.

*In a year, or half a hundred  
Now the flag and standard's planted  
After temples I have plund'ed  
The others, too, their fates granted  
We'll gobble up our mirth in plethora  
Feasting, dancing, etc. etc.*



*By Cody Haynes*

*Food for the happy, drinks for the dead  
And the songs are sung just how they should  
Between the beast and breaking bread  
There's one last chore for greater good  
Not stupid hens, more wine for a fool  
I, myself, will drain the pool*



(( By Madeline Long ))

Sitting in the small baggage claim area of the Florence airport I wait, excited energy coursing through my veins while mosquitoes bite at my legs. Towards me walks an eagerly waving person, clad in their tall, green wellies with a large fanny pack buckled around their waist. It must be Whitney. We stand and talk, hug in the relief of having arrived and found one another.

“I’m one of you” We hear. This is Cody. Having overheard our conversation, he introduces himself in a way we would come to find out was classily Cody. We talk, file reports for a lost bag and make our way out of the airport. Two down, five to go.

Standing in line at the bus station, Whitney leans towards me and whispers, “I think that’s Vincent” Recognizing him from a picture seen online. A man with a blue collared shirt and a large backpack stands at the counter in front of us, moving from one window to the next, trying to establish if his ticket is valid. “Vincent”, Whitney whispers quietly, then again a little more audibly. He turns back towards us, at first confused and then joyfully as we establish our connection.

In Siena we try and find the hostel that I’ve arranged for some of us to share. Having only the address, Vincent approaches a tall guy holding a map in his hands, his back weighed down by his pack. They converse for a moment and then another connection is made. This is Bo, another intern.

Later on, approaching the Duomo in the late afternoon we keep our eyes peeled for the two other interns we are expecting to meet. As we approach we see a young woman sitting on the steps, her backpack pressing against her. Her feet are clad in boots and sandals are adorned to her bag. It could only be Kristyn.

Connor is next. We aimlessly say the name whose face we don’t know at people sitting on the steps and walking by. Vincent and Bo venture off towards the front and return a few minutes later with a third person in tow, having found Connor sitting on one of the many sets of steps.

The next day we sit at The Dublin Post, our assorted bags scattered around the outside seating area. We are still awaiting the arrival of Tiana. A woman approaches with suitcase in hand, flustered



from traveling, moments later we meet our fearless leader, Jessica, and with that, our group is complete!

Over the next three months we spend our days herding pigs, pruning vineyards and orchards, planting, weeding, and seeding. Beans are shelled, wood is stacked, pigs are fed. Our hands in a perpetual state of stickiness during the Vendemmia.

When night comes we are warmed by fires and the good company of one another. Wine and laughter are plentiful and wonderful food from Pietrina and Graziella satisfy our appetites night after night.



As quickly as we settled into our routine at Spannocchia, we soon started to think about our departures. After many goodbyes and a wonderful final meal, the time had come for us all to go our own ways. Some of us headed back to the States while others would be settling in for a winter at Spannocchia.

After posing for one last group picture, we all piled into our trusty van. The first stop was the train station where we said our goodbyes to Kristyn, heading back to her home. And Connor and Bo, off to Elba on a short break before they would return to Spannocchia for the winter.

Piazza Gramsci was next. Tiana would board a bus to Rome before heading home. Whitney and I to Florence before returning to our respective states, accompanied by Vincent, who would venture home for a short break and then return for the winter at Spannocchia. We exchanged our final hugs with Jessica and then Cody, who wasn't set to depart until later on in the week. With one final wave, the most meaningful three months of my life came to an end.

As I've settled back into my home life, I often find myself smiling at the thought of many fond memories. I truly miss each and every person who was a part of my three months at Spannocchia. It is an experience I will never forget and to all of you who were a part of it, I am thankful.

By Whitney Brewer

**Sunsets**

**Piano, Piano. Aspetta, facciamo cosi!**

**A lot of wine**

**Natural**

**New and unexpected friendships**

**Ortlandia**

**Community**

**Ciao, tutti!**

**Harvests**

**Increase in appetite**

**After dinner fun at Pulcinelli**

**Italian class**

**Nine seater on Italian highways**

**Three months away from home**

**El cibo e importante**

**Remember to close the chicken coop!**

**Nuovi ricordi**

**Slow life**

**Hard to say goodbye**

**Insightful**

**Plenty of butter, yo.**

I'll be back!

-Whitney



A big thank you to Tiana and Cody for the beautiful photos!!



**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



From left to right, Whitney Brewer (orto), Vincent Feucht (tuttofare), Tiana Ziglinski (GSI), Bo Dossett (animali), Madeline Long (animali), Kristyn Smith (tuttofare), Connor Wright (tuttofare), Cody Haynes (orto)



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