



**A GUIDE TO
SPANNOCCCHIA AND
BEYOND..**

ABOUT THIS BOOK

This Guest Book offers a general introduction to Spannocchia: our farm and our community. You will find information pertaining to Spannocchia's evolution over the past 700 years, all of which provides the context for our goals regarding sustainable farming, community living, and education. Inside you will also find ideas for day trips and activities during your stay.

We hope that you will soon discover that Spannocchia is a dynamic place, steeped in history and united by a community of farmers, educators, hospitality professionals, interns, artists, and other guests like yourselves.

During the guest season you will always find the reception staff happy to help; please stop by or give us a call at this number +39 3703524065 or write us a message on Whatsapp.

We look forward to seeing you!

TENUTA DI SPANNOCCHIA

Cultural and Natural History

The Tenuta, or agricultural estate, of Spannocchia is a present day example of the system by which rural Tuscany was organized and functioned for centuries.

The region of Tuscany in north-central Italy has one of the richest cultural histories of any area in the world. The ancient Etruscans flourished here in the millennium before the birth of Christ and passed many of the developments of their culture along to the succeeding Roman civilization. Medieval merchants and bankers from Florence, Siena and other Tuscan cities were instrumental in the development and extension of industry and trade throughout Europe and with the far east, bringing Europe out of the "Dark Ages" and leading finally to the very rebirth of Western culture in Tuscany with the Renaissance. The concentration of art and architectural masterpieces in Tuscany make it today one of the foremost areas in the world for the study and appreciation of art.

Life in the urban centers of Tuscany was naturally complemented by life in the surrounding rural areas, and woodland and forest have always played an integral role in that rural life. The Tenuta, or agricultural estate, of Spannocchia is a present day example of the system by which rural Tuscany was organized and functioned for centuries. Although written records of the estate are sketchy at best, it is known that the Spannocchi

family were resident on the property by the early 1200's. It is believed that the Spannocchi were part of one of the great feudal clans that, along with the Church, controlled most of the countryside of Tuscany during the medieval period, starting more or less with the crowning of Harle-magne as the first Holy Roman Emperor in 800 AD.

By the mid-1200's the Spannocchi were active in the nearby city of Siena, and by the 15th century were one of the most prominent banking and commercial families in that city. One branch of the family emigrated to Austria in the 1700's, but the Italian Spannocchi continued to be active in the life of Siena through the 1800's, maintaining ownership of Spannocchia, in addition to a variety of other farms, villas, and urban palaces, until the last remaining member of the family sold it to Delfino Cinelli in the 1920's. Cinelli, a Florentine aristocrat and a writer, bought the property both as an investment and for its value to him as a tranquil place to pursue his writing.

Spannocchia at that time continued to be farmed under the *mezzadria* tenant farming system, developed as early as the 1100's in Tuscany. Peasant sharecroppers received a farmhouse and the use of specific associated lands in

exchange for half (the Italian word *mezza*) of their crop production. Forest use was integral to the practice of agriculture throughout this period, for the production both of wood products complementary to the agricultural operations (timber, firewood, charcoal, implements) and of food crops, directly and indirectly, wild and cultivated. These latter included berries and other wild fruits, mushrooms, game, nuts, and domestic animals pastured in woodland and nut tree groves.

Following the end of the Second World War, the mezzadria system went out of favor with the advent of modern industrialized agriculture and the general prosperity of Italy; the last legal mezzadria contracts expired in 1991. As Spannocchia's population of tenant farmers dwindled and agriculture declined drastically during the 50's, 60's, and 70's, the farm gradually took on a new role, providing housing and work space for programs in archaeology sponsored by the American non profit Etruscan Foundation, established by Delfino Cinelli's son, Ferdinando, in 1958. The estate survived as an unusual example of an intact traditional Tuscan tenuta, a sort of living museum of the rural life of Tuscany which

has now largely disappeared after nearly a thousand years of very gradual and relatively minor change. In 1992 Ferdinando's daughter Francesca and her husband, Randall Stratton, moved to Spannocchia from the US to take on its management.

Today conservation is the central theme and direction of all activities on the property. It is a wildlife refuge, part of the Tuscan Riserva Naturale Alto Merse, a registered historic site, and a certified organic farm raising endangered breeds of domestic farm animals and producing wine, olive oil, vegetables, honey and traditional salt cured meats. Approximately 900 of its 1200 acres are forested, and this woodland is carefully managed also according to the central goal of conservation.

Mezzadria System

Mezzadria contracts between landowners and farm families were very detailed and all encompassing. Changing very little over time, the system defined rural life in the region for centuries, including social relationships, cultural practices, and agricultural methods.

FRIENDS OF SPANNOCCHIA

Agriculture and tourism are only part of what we do at Spannocchia. Our primary mission is for the estate to serve as an international model for sustainability and an educational center for responsible farming and tourism practices.

In 2002, the Friends of Spannocchia non profit organization was created to support these efforts. Through membership donations, we are able to create a place for people to experience the authentic history of rural Tuscany as well as modern sustainable farming practices at work.

Our members receive discounts on products and services including special pricing on any Spannocchia tours or activities. This tax-deductible donation to Friends of Spannocchia helps underwrite the costs of preserving the historic nature of our estate, run our Internship Program and helps us continue our mission of serving as an international example for conservation and sustainability.

Visit our website or inquire at reception to become a member today!

spannocchia



LEARN·GROW·SUSTAIN

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

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

The non profit association Friends of Spannocchia supports our unique programs: the Farm Internship that takes place in three sessions throughout the year, spring, summer and fall, the Butcher Apprenticeships that take place in fall, winter and springs, and the Culinary Apprenticeships.

During their three month stay, under the guidance of farm and agritourism staff, Spannocchia's interns are responsible for everything from animal feeding and care to tending to our gardens to maintaining our vineyards and olive groves. Through this voluntary work exchange, interns gain an introduction to the agricultural sector during their stay, as well as exposure to the Italian language, culture and history.

Our intern volunteers are an essential part of the Spannocchia community. We welcome you to engage with them for any questions about their work, farm life and the Internship Program.

For more information regarding our Internship and Apprenticeship Programs, please visit our website:

<http://www.spannocchia.org/internships>

ACTIVITIES AT SPANNOCCHIA

Please join us in some of the activities we offer at Spannocchia and truly immerse yourself in our community life. From Pizza Night to a Salumi Tasting or Cooking Class, we promise to entertain and educate, no matter what your age is!

Castello Tour

Your host will guide you through the Castello and its grounds. You will learn about the architecture of the Castello, the histories of the Cinelli and the Spannocchi families, the mezzadria sharecropping system (by which Spannocchia operated for centuries), and past and present agricultural activities on the property. You'll visit the Chapel, the Library, the Cantina, the Secret Garden, and lastly (weather permitting) you'll climb Spannocchia's medieval Tower for a breathtaking view of the 1100 acres of rolling hills and farmland surrounding the Castello. All of the sites and information presented throughout the tour will help Spannocchia guests to better understand the history of the area and our passion for sustainable living.

The Castello tour is held on weekdays, it takes about two hours and is free for Friends of Spannocchia members.

Traditional Cooking Class

The Cooking Class begins at 9:15 am with a tour through the vegetable garden at Spannocchia. Then in the kitchen we will prepare a three-course Tuscan meal utilizing food products from the estate.

The first course might be handmade pasta such as tagliatelle, ravioli, gnocchi, or pici, or perhaps the typical "ribollita" Tuscan soup, or in summer a simple but delicious bread salad called "panzanella". For our second course we may choose between our own farm-raised pork or beef, and this will be accompanied by fresh vegetables direct from our garden. We finish with a traditional dessert such

For availability and reservations, please contact info@spannocchia.org

Not all the activities are held daily and most of them are not offered on weekends. So it is important to schedule in advance with the reception staff.



as cantucci cookies with Spannocchia Vin Santo, pine nut cake, tiramisu, or our renowned chocolate salame.

A vegetarian menu is also available, and we will try to fill requests for specific traditional recipes. Each lesson concludes with lunch, tasting all the dishes created during the morning class, accompanied by Spannocchia wine and spring water.

Class is held on weekdays, from 10 am to 14:30 pm, and includes lunch.

Children Cooking Class

At Spannocchia we understand the importance of experiential learning, especially for the littlest of hands. We have designed a cooking class for six to ten year olds that encourages them to form deeper relationships with their food, the place it comes from, and the person who has produced it. We will begin with a trip to the vegetable garden. Here, the children will pick an ingredient of their choice to be incorporated into their lunch. We'll also meet our gardener, and learn about worms and compost and all the cool stuff that happens within the walls of our Orto. Next, to the kitchen to make fresh pasta and dessert, lots of hands on work guaranteed! Together we will create a two-course lunch (with snacks) in a fun and educational atmosphere. Lunch will be served in the dining room at 12.30. Not only is this a fun way for kids to spend a morning at Spannocchia, it allows parents time to relax or perhaps check out a local winery.

Class is held from 10 am to 13 am, lunch included.

Olives and Olive Oil Tour & Tasting

Have you ever wanted to know the whole story about olive oil and why it is such a prized product? Want to understand what makes an oil "extra virgin" and how to know if you're buying a high quality product? Did you know olive oil is like wine, with different blends, and that



there is a correct way of tasting it (and it isn't on bread!)? We will talk about the history of olives and olive oil, and explains how it is produced: from harvest to bottling. We'll take a walk in the olive orchard and learn about some typical Tuscan olive varieties. The class concludes with a guided tasting of several olive oils - including our own Extra Virgin Olive Oil.

The Olives and Olive Oil Tour & Tasting takes about 1 ½ hour.

Cinta senese Tour & Tasting

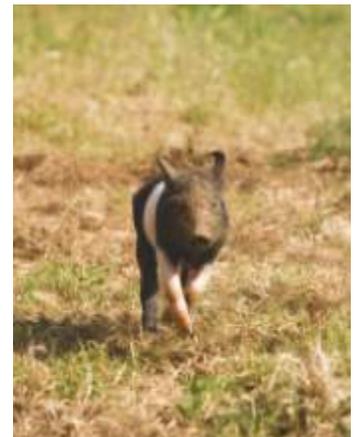
Meet Spannocchia's most entertaining and popular dwellers, our Cinta Senese pigs. Named for their distinct black-belted (cintura) band, they are a rare heritage breed that was at risk of extinction. Now, under the proper care of the Spannocchia famiglia, you will see them foraging in their natural habitat of the Senese countryside. This unique tour includes a visit with the animals, a guided explanation of our organic artisan meat production process, and a tasting of our award winning salumi. Magnifico!

The Cinta Tour & Tasting is held on weekdays and it takes about two hours.

Vegetable Garden Tour

We will introduces participants to Spannocchia's organic vegetable gardens. We will explain why we choose to be organic and the different aspects of organic and permaculture gardening including: crop rotating, synergetic beds, cover crops, the creating and use of compost and vermicompost, and our two greenhouses. As we guide participants through the different areas of the garden, she will explain the different herbs and seasonal crops growing, pointing out typical Tuscan crops grown only in this area.

The Vegetagle Garden Tour takes about one hour and is available only for Friends of Spannocchia members.



Tastes & Techniques of Italian Wine Production

Learn the basics of wine production and get an introduction to wine tasting in this interactive lesson. We'll discuss Spannocchia's viti and viniculture, visit the cantina and finish with a tasting of Spannocchia's organic wines and a taste of our grappa, made from the leftovers of our wine production. A guided tasting exercise to learn how to detect the subtle aromas in red or white wines! We will be happy to answer any questions you have about wine. And our ultimate nugget of advice? Keep drinking!

The Wine Tour & Tasting is held on weekdays.

Pasta Making, A Hands-On Class

Have you always wanted to learn how to make your own fresh pasta? We will explain all the details: from different wheat varieties and special ingredients to different shapes and fillings. You'll learn all about the different tools and techniques to make your own pasta back home! At the end of the class, you will receive your portions of hand-made pasta to cook in your guesthouse or prepare for lunch in the Fattoria kitchen.

The Pasta Making Class is held in the morning on weekdays, it takes about two/three hours and is available only for Friends of Spannocchia members.

Italian Regional Food Culture

If you've ever asked for lambrusco in Lecce, arancini in Alto Adige or pecorino in Parma, you'll know that Italians are deeply allied to their region in terms of food culture and identity. In this class, we'll investigate how history, culture, and climate combine to make Italian regional cuisines so unique! We will also discuss the variety of pasta in Italy: fresh, dried, and why Italians don't mix-and-match their sauces and shapes. Find out why, from knödel in Bolzano to sweet pastries in Sicily, Italy is a gastronome's dream!

It is held on weekdays, during one hour and a half. It is available only for Friends of Spannocchia members.



Spannocchia's Sustainable Harvest

Interested in multiple tours or tastings, but have limited time? This is the class for you! We'll give you a short overview of Spannocchia's sustainable farm practices, our connection to the international Slow Food movement, and the quality products we get as a result. You'll learn a little of everything about our farm, from the native livestock breeds we raise to our beehives and orchards and our "beyond organic" gardens and vineyard.

The tour is held on weekdays and it takes about 1 ½ hour.

Italian Language Lesson

Learn the basics of the Italian language during your stay at Spannocchia! Instructor is available for private or group lessons. Lessons usually focus on basic grammar and vocabulary, and the teacher always encourages conversation in class! Learn how to order at restaurants, ask about bus schedules, and find out where the nearest bathroom might be. Our instructor teaching style is flexible and can accommodate all levels of proficiency and can tailor the class to your particular interest (art, cooking, history, farming, etc). Each class lasts one hour and we will provide lesson materials.

Monday through Friday, time is flexible.

T'ai chi

We can arrange for a local T'ai Chi teacher to come to Spannocchia in the mornings before or after breakfast to lead participants through a series of stimulating and invigorating poses to get creative juices flowing. To arrange classes for your group, please send us the dates, times and number of participants.

Availability is in the mornings.

Yoga

We can arrange for a local certified Hatha Yoga teacher to come to Spannocchia and do a full hour of practice either outside in the gardens or indoors.

Time is flexible according to availability.

Massage

Offer your participants a break from work or study! We can arrange a Shiatsu full-body massage to ease away your travel pains and provide a moment of pure relaxation. The massage is done by a certified masseur and typically lasts one

hour. Please let us know the date, time, and number of people in your group who are requesting this service.

Time is flexible.

Nordic Walking

Organize an exciting excursion for your group participants or your party with the expert instructors from Nordic Walking Siena. Nordic Walking is pleasurable and highly efficient exercise; it is proven that it burns more calories, increases oxygen consumption, and can be up to 46% more efficient than normal walking. Tell the reception how many of you are interested, we will be happy to arrange a wonderful excursion.

Time is flexible.

Hikes with a local guide

Come and discover the beautiful surroundings of the area! Step by step you will explore the nature and the traditions of the countryside with our trusted and experienced guide at your side. For more information about routes and prices, please ask in reception.

The hikes last a couple of hours, but the time depends on the route.

LOCAL AMENITIES: ROSIA AND BEYOND

Shopping

Most of your basic shopping needs can be met in Rosia, 4km away on the SP73 towards Siena.

Most stores in Rosia have the following hours:

Winter: 9 am – 1 pm & 3:30 – 7:30 pm

Summer: 9 am – 1 pm & 4 – 8 pm

Some stores are closed Saturday afternoon.

All stores except bars and restaurants are closed on Sundays year-round. Many stores close for a month in the summer for vacation, especially in August.



Pharmacy

In Italy there is always a pharmacy open somewhere: the local pharmacies take turns (farmacia di turno). The local newspapers carry a listing of the pharmacy hours, or it will be posted at each farmacia.

Farmacia Floridi Elena

via Massetana 78, Rosia

Tel. 0577 345008

Monday to Friday: 9 am – 1 pm & 4 pm – 8 pm

Saturday: 9 am – 1 pm

Banking

There are several 24-hour ATMs in Rosia, one at each of the banks and another directly outside the Coop supermarket.

Monte dei Paschi di Siena

via Massetana 87, Rosia

Tel. 0577 345026

Monday to Friday: 8:20 – 12:45 am & 14:15 – 16:15 pm

Banca Centro Toscana Umbria

via dei Lavatoi 1, Rosia

Monday to Friday: 8:20 am – 1:15 pm, 14:35 – 15:45 pm

Post Office**Poste Italiane**

via Massetana 82, Rosia (across from Monte dei Paschi bank)

Monday to Friday: 8:15 am – 1:30 pm

Saturday: 8:15 am – 12.30 am

**Stamps
Tobacco
Newspapers****Edicola e tabacchi di Braccagni Roberto**

via Massetana 74C, Rosia

Newspapers in English and other languages, magazines, office supplies, postcards, tobacco, phonecards, and bus tickets to Siena.

Monday to Friday: 7 am – 1 pm & 1:30 – 7:30 pm

Groceries**Coop**

via Mary Giglioli 2, Rosia

Monday to Saturday: 8:30 am – 8:30 pm

Sundays in the summer (July-September): 9 am – 1 pm

Special Stores**Erboristeria Essenza**

via Massetana 3, Rosia

Natural medicines and natural toiletries.

Reflexology treatments also available.

Tel. 0577 1657152

www.erboristeriaessenza.shoppingdonna.it

La Bottega di Stigliano

piazza di Stigliano 62, Stigliano

A space dedicated to all things edible and agricultural. Groceries come directly from the producer, respecting a '0 kilometer' policy on the provision of the highest quality food. The mission is to encourage and sustain the consumption of top quality local foods, thereby enriching our own lives while simultaneously assisting with the social, agricultural, and economic development of our territory.

Tel. 0577 345624

www.labottegadistigliano.it

LOCAL RESTAURANTS

If you would like help making a reservation at one of these restaurants, please stop by Reception.

Dining out in Tuscany is one of the best experiences about visiting this region. The food is simple, seasonal, and usually appeals to all kinds of palates. You can try regional wine specialties such as Chianti, Chianti Classico, Vernaccia di San Gimignano, Brunello di Montalcino, or Vino Nobile di Montepulciano.

Ristorante Pizzeria La Compagnia

via del Pinone 2, Sovicille

Fish Specialty, Pizza and Tuscan Cuisine.

Tel. 0577 314693; open for lunch and dinner, closed Monday.

Ristorante La Bottega di Stigliano

piazza di Stigliano 62, Sigliano

Local and fair trade ingredients.

Tel. 0577 345624; open for lunch and dinner, closed Tuesday.

Ristorante Dal Cateni

via dei Pratini, Orgia

Rustic family-run restaurant, typical cuisine and beautiful view from the terrace.

Tel. 0577 342028; open for lunch and dinner, Thursday only for dinner, closed Wednesday.

Ristorante Grillo Moro

strada dell'Aeroporto, Ampugnano

Traditional Tuscan cuisine enriched by the finesse of preparations, top quality meat.

Tel. 0577 393533; open for dinner, closed Monday.

Pizzeria Trattoria La Pergola di Radicondoli

via Garibaldi 22, Radicondoli

Historic restaurant, they prepare one of the best pizzas, Slow Food presidium, vegetarian and vegan options.

Tel. 0577 790 717; open for dinner, closed Tuesday.

Osteria La Montagnola

via Molli 22, Località Tegoia, Sovicille

Typical Tuscan home cooking, meat and fried specialties, panoramic terrace overlooking the valley of the Montagnola Senese.

Tel. 0577 314549; open for dinner, closed Monday.

La Foresteria Ristorante

Via Tom Benetollo 21, Rosia

Fish specialties, pizza and Tuscan cuisine.

Tel. 0577 1794211; open for lunch and dinner, closed Wednesday.

Ristorante Pizzeria Il Vecchio Tinaio

via dell'Ambulatorio 14, Località Brenna

A stone's throw from the Alto Merse Nature Reserve, in the ancient village, excellent local cuisine and pizza.

Tel: 0577 341059; Open for dinner during weekdays, lunch and dinner Saturday and Sunday, closed Monday.

DAY TRIPS

Siena

22 km north of
Spannocchia



A walk through the old center of Siena makes for a perfect day trip. Legend has it that Siena owes its name to Senio, the son of Romulus, which explains why both Siena and Rome make prominent use of the symbol of the she-wolf in their cities. In the Middle Ages, Siena became a Republic and flourished on trade and banking, but dissention reigned. Rivalry between Siena and Florence was bitter and the two cities were almost always at war until Siena was incorporated into the Grand Duchy of Tuscany in 1559. Among the Sienese and Florentines, this friendly rivalry remains even today. History enthusiasts will adore all that Siena has to offer; but, don't worry, there is absolutely something for everyone in this famous Tuscan town.

Grab coffee, gelato, or a glass of Chianti and people watch in the Piazza del Campo. Get lost in the side streets and alleyways, exploring the seventeen contrade (neighborhoods) with their distinctive symbols. Marvel at the Gothic architecture of buildings like the Basilica di San Domenico, the Duomo, Palazzo Tolomei, and more.

There's something to do during every season in Siena. The most well known event is, of course, the Palio: the famous horse race. Two Palios are run each summer, one in early July and one in mid-August. In the days leading up to the races, you can find special dinners, parties, and teams of drummers and flag throwers preparing for the big day in every neighborhood.

Dining in Siena

Vineria Tirabuscìò

via San Pietro 16 - Tel. 0577-601324; closed on Thursdays.

Ristorante Pizzeria Nonno Mede

via Camporegio 19 - Tel. 0577-247966; closed on Mondays.

Ristorante La Taverna di San Giuseppe

via Dupre 132 - Tel. 0577-42286; closed on Sundays.

Osteria del Gatto

via San Marco, 8 - Tel. 0577-287133; closed Sunday.

Ristorante Salefino

via degli Umiliati, 1 - Tel. 0577 287224; closed on Mondays.

Bottiglieria Salefino

piazza del Sale, 3 - Tel. 0577 44685; closed on Sundays.

Osteria Babazuf

via Pantaneto, 85/87, 53100 Siena SI; closed on Mondays.

Firenze

70 km north of
Spannocchia

**Some of our
favorite places
to visit
in the city,
recommended
by Spannocchia
staff members.**

A good guide book, a decent map, and a sturdy pair of walking shoes are all you need for a trip to Florence: an arrestingly beautiful city that's best appreciated from Piazzale Michelangelo.

Keep in mind that it can be quite hot, especially in the summer, so you may decide to do most of your sightseeing around town in the mornings and evenings, and take advantage of restaurants and museums for lunch during the hot mid-day hours.

Piazzale Michelangelo

This square has an amazing view overlooking the city and the Arno river.

Grande Museo del Duomo

The Duomo is the main Church of Florence with the extraordinary dome of Brunelleschi. To visit the dome, bell tower, baptistery, crypt and museum, you'll need the single entrance ticket purchased in person or online, which allows you to visit each of these sites for 48 hours. Reservations are necessary to climb the dome, and recommend for the museum and bell tower.

Uffizi

Known as one of the most important museums in Italy, and in the world, here you'll see famous works by Botticelli, Michelangelo, Raffaello, Leonardo, Giotto, and more great masters. It's best to have a reservation during the busy months, when entry lines can otherwise take up to two hours.

Galleria dell'Accademia

Another of the most important museums in Italy, and in the world, and where you'll get to see Michelangelo's The David as well as other masterpieces. It's best to have a reservation.

Cappella Brancacci

Inside the Santa Maria dei Carmini Church, one of the highest peak of the Renaissance artworks, with frescoes from Masaccio and Filippino Lippi. Highly recommended for art lovers!

Museo San Marco

An ancient monastery where all the cells are decorated with frescoes from Frangelico, an amazing off-the-beaten-path option.

La Specola

A Historical Science Museum from the 1700s: taxidermied animals, insects, and one of the largest collections of anatomical waxes.



Dining in Firenze

Le Volpi e L'Uva

piazza dei Rossi 1

Great wine selection and small plates (cheeses, salumi, creative crostini and more).

Mercato Centrale

via dell'Ariento

Check out the historical market downstairs with products from around Italy and the world. The recently updated first floor has a variety of stalls selling everything from pizza and lampredotto to fresh salads and sweets.

Il Pizzaiuolo

via de' Macci 113/r.

A very good spot for pizza; reservations are recommended.

Artbar

via del Moro 4.

Cocktails and aperitivi.

Libreria Brac

via dei Vagellai 18r.

Contemporary art library, coffee, vegetarian and vegan cuisine.

'Ino

via de' Georgofili 3, vicino a Ponte Vecchio.

Special sandwiches and snacks; open for lunch only.

secinque

piazza della Passera 1.

Restaurant with natural wines and delicious food.

Il Magazzino di Luca Cai

piazza della Passera 2.

Restaurant specializing in traditional Florentine tripe and lampredotto, as well as other local specialties.

Buca Lapi

via del Trebbio 1/r.

Specialists in Florentine steak: reservations are recommended.

Ditta Artigianale

via dei Neri 32.

Offering a wide variety of coffee during the day (not just espresso and cappuccino!), this place also becomes a cocktail bar in the evenings.

Edoardo Bio

piazza del Duomo 45R.

Excellent and organic gelato near the Duomo.

Colle Val d'Elsa

25 km north
of Spannocchia
(on the road to
San Gimignano)

The charming town of Colle Val d'Elsa may not be a top tourist destination but it is well worth the stop. It is responsible for 95% of Italy's crystal production and 15% worldwide, and there are numerous showrooms and museums spread out around the town. The Museo del Cristallo, located in the town center (via dei Fossi, Tel. 0577 912260), opens during the tourist season from 10 am to 12 pm and 4 pm to 7:30 pm; always closed Monday.

Head for the old town, located above the rest of the city, by taking the elevator at the bottom of the hill to the top for stunning views and winding cobblestone roads with various restaurants and shops that are less touristy than you find in many Tuscan towns. Stop in for dinner at L'Oste di Borgo if you're looking for a creative take on local foods. Closed on Tuesday. In the lower section of town, check out the Friday morning market, for a glimpse of local life.



San Gimignano

38 km northwest
of Spannocchia

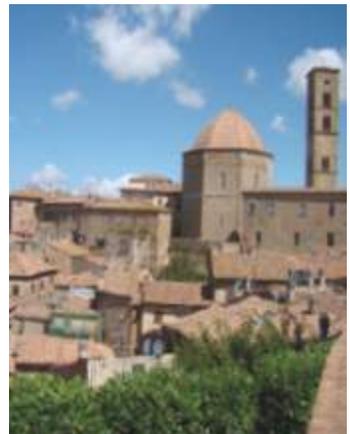
Only 15 of the original 72 towers rise above San Gimignano's skyline of this popular hilltop town; but don't be discouraged, you can still climb them for an impressive view of the surrounding countryside. The city developed according to a characteristic star-shaped plan along the ancient via Francigena. Hosting millions of visitors each year, this UNESCO world heritage site is certainly worth a visit! And you don't want to miss the main church, the Duomo! It's an ideal place to taste Italy's first DOC (denominazione di origine controllata) wine: Vernaccia di San Gimignano. Cool off in Piazza della Cisterna, the main square, with some of the best (and most creative!) gelato in the region at Dondoli.



Volterra

69 km northwest of
Spannocchia

The town of Volterra, once one of the most important Etruscan cities, is built on a high plateau enclosed by volcanic hills midway between Siena and the sea. Don't miss the



Roman theater, which is in remarkable condition. Everything in the center is built from the yellow-grey stone panchino, and you can often find fossilized seashells embedded in the pavement of streets and squares. While beautiful, Volterra does not receive quite as many tourists as other Tuscan towns, so it may offer a better chance at seeing a slice of typical Tuscan life.

Montepulciano

75 km southeast
of Spannocchia

An excellent example of a fine old Renaissance town away from the more obvious tourist routes. Perched on the crest of a hill of volcanic rock between two valleys, it occupies a remarkably beautiful site. While breathtaking from an architectural point of view, the main attraction for many today remains the city's namesake red wine, the vino nobile di Montepulciano. If you're visiting on a Thursday, be on the lookout for the weekly town market. It's also a short drive from the town of Pienza.

Pienza

69 km a sud-est
di Spannocchia

Another UNESCO World Heritage site, Pienza is famous for being the hometown of Pope Pio II, as well as for the specialty Pecorino (sheep's milk cheese). Located on a plateau in the south Tuscan countryside, there are excellent views of the surrounding area that make it worth a stop, despite its popularity with tourists.

Montalcino

65 km east
of Spannocchia

Known as the home of the premiere DOCG Brunello wine and its lighter-weight cousin Rosso di Montalcino, Montalcino is a well-to-do hill town that has changed little since the 16th century. At 2000 feet above sea level, it offers lovely vistas over faded terracotta roof tiles, a timeless landscape covered with vineyards yielding the Sangiovese grosso grape. Hike up to the 14th century



Fortezza, that moonlights as the town's Enoteca, for Brunello tasting by the glass or people watch in the Piazza del Popolo. The local tourist office will supply you with lists and maps of the dozens of local wine producers, world-recognized and not, whose rolling estates make up much of this idyllic 12-square-mile corner of southern Tuscany. Among local wineries, Spannocchia staff favorites include Le Potazzine and Piombaia. From here, it's just a short drive to the Abbazia di Sant'Antimo.

Torri

10 km
from Spannocchia

Torri is an historical medieval walled village of antique origin that was known for its splendor during the Middle Ages. It is an excellent example of a nearly unchanged town, without the shops and bars you find in many other Tuscan villages today. A cloister, elegant and refined, lies within the town, and its floor of fishbone brick and alternating Romanesque black and white travertine denotes its medieval construction. A gracious terrace, positioned at the south, kept the monks in communication with the surrounding nature and remains unaltered to this day.

Open Friday and Monday mornings from 9 am to 12 pm.

Chiusdino

17 km
from Spannocchia

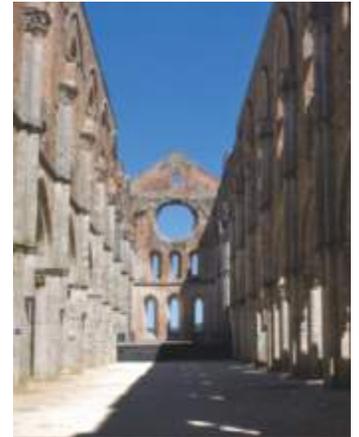
Chiusdino is Saint Galgano's birthplace, and it is a typical hilltop village with a cluster of grey stone houses on narrow, steep, and winding streets. In addition to taking in the picturesque piazza, and surrounding views of the countryside, you can visit St. Galgano's house, Casa Parrocchiale, the chapel of Compagnia, and a simple Romanesque parish church. Chiusdino is the largest of the series of small towns in the Val di Merse, and is practically untouched by tourism. It's an excellent stop before or after a visit to the Abbazia di San Galgano.



Abbazia di San Galgano

15 km
from Spannocchia

About 15 km southwest on highway 73 (turning right at the gas station on SS 441 for the last 3 km) is the dramatic ruin of the 13th-century church of San Galgano. Don't miss the remarkable circular chapel of Monte Siepi on the hill above, site of the miraculous «sword in the stone» of Saint Galgano. There is a lovely wine bar that serves antipasti all day, located halfway up the hill between the abbey and the chapel: with outdoor seating and a terrific view of the valley and mountains to the west, this is a great spot for a sunset aperitivo. Open 10am – 7:00 pm. Closed Thursdays.



Abbazia di Monte Oliveto Maggiore

50 km from
Spannocchia

Located 5 km east of Buonconvento, the monastery is open 9 am to 12:30 pm and 3 pm to 7 pm with a restaurant, herbal shop and lodging on grounds. As headquarters of the Benedictine monks, this is one of the most interesting churches in Tuscany. Today's monks continue to live according to the Benedictine Rule, combining prayer, work and study, and tending to the modern day pilgrims who come to pray and marvel at the extraordinary High Renaissance fresco cycle that rims the Great Cloister. The large monastic library up the stairs contains many rare editions and unique manuscripts, while the stillthriving herb garden supplies the monastery's chemist with the ingredients for the worldfamous Benedictine liquors. Evening vespers in the Baroque chapel resonate with Gregorian chant. From here, it is a short drive to the Bosco della Ragnaia gardens.



Abbazia di Sant'Antimo

11 km south
of Montalcino

Follow the signs for Castelnuovo dell'Abate. Mon-Sat vespers at 5pm; Sunday vespers at 6:30 pm. The main draw to Montalcino, in addition to the wine, is the Abbazia di Sant'Antimo. Local legend attributes the founding of the abbey to the Holy Roman Emperor

Charlemagne (742-814), though the present building dates back only to 1118. Sitting alone in an olive grove along the old pilgrimage road linking Rome to Santiago de Compostela in Spain, it was built of local travertine and luminous, honey-colored alabaster from nearby Volterra. The seven monks of the Norberini order, who live in a nearby farmhouse, fill the cavernous church daily with ethereal Gregorian chants at regular intervals, evoking a sense of history and mystery that transports visitors back to the Middle Ages.



PARKS AND SCULPTURE GARDENS

Giardino dei Tarocchi

Literally translated as The Tarot Garden this unique and intriguing sculpture garden is loved by adults and children alike. Located 2 hours south of Spannocchia, it is the perfect addition to a day at the beach on the Tuscan coast. Featuring large, colorful, mosaic sculptures and architecture, it was created by famous artist Niki de Saint Phalle. It is located just minutes from the beach near the small town of Capalbio in the province of Grosseto. The garden can be visited from April 1 until October 15. www.nikidesaintphalle.com



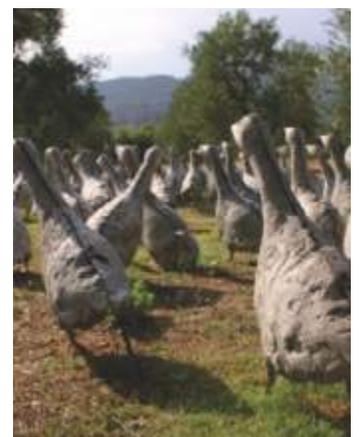
Bosco della Ragnaia

Half an hour from Buonconvento and 20 minutes away from the Abbazia di Monte Oliveto Maggiore there is a natural woodland garden that you can visit from sunrise to sunset. The perfect place to relax and unwind after a day of touring, this garden (created by an artist who wants to stay so low key that his name is impossible to find) is on the outskirts of San Giovanni d'Asso and in the heart of the Crete Senesi. No reservation or fee required. www.laragnaia.com.



Parco Sculture del Chianti

The Parco delle Sculture del Chianti is located about a 40 minute drive from Spannocchia in a small town in the Chianti, called Pievasciata. It is open from April to October from 10:00 am to sunset. In an untouched wood of ilex and oak trees in the heart of Sienese Chianti, internationally renowned artists have created imposing contemporary sculptures in their own creative styles. All the sculptures are truly site-specific, which explains their harmony with the trees, the sounds, the colors, the light, and every other element of the woods.



Orto Botanico and Museo dei Fisiocritici

The Orto Botanico of the University of Siena has more than 2000 plants from all over the world. The area is a total of two hectares, and

is located inside the Siena city walls near Porta Tufi with an entrance on Pier Andrea Mattioli, 4 – just a few meters away. Fisiocritici Museum, a science museum founded in 1691, is very different from today's idea of a science museum.

Giardino di Daniel Spoerri

The gardens of Daniel Spoerri cover an area of 15 hectares with 80 art installations to see and experience. It is a garden and *gallery* in continual evolution with works by Spoerri and other internationally known artists such as Nam June Paik, Eva Aeppli, and Roberto Barni. The entrance for the area is near Monte Amiata (past Montalcino), about 1 ½ hours from Spannocchia. Please call ahead for reservations to 0564 950457 . www.ilgiardinodidanielspoerri.it

Parco Fattoria di Celle

The Parco Fattoria di Celle, in the Pistoia province, has no entrance fee and can be visited upon reservation. In the mid-19th century the garden was turned into a romantic park, in a design by the architect Giovanni Gambini. In 1969, after changing hands several times, Villa Celle was bought by Prato entrepreneur Giuliano Gori, a collector of contemporary art, who over the years brought many works of art here, turning the villa into a fully-fledged open-air museum. Scattered inside the park are works of art by various national and international artists, including Luciano Faro, Sol LeWitt, Richard Long, Robert Morris, Dennis Oppenheim, Pistoletto, Richard Serra, and many more besides.



LOCAL WINERIES

Tuscany is home to some of the world's most notable wine regions. Famous reds are often based on the Sangiovese grape, whereas the Vernaccia grape is the basis of the region's best known white. Below you'll find some local producers recommended by our staff that include small family-run cantinas and those with a focus on sustainability.

Brunello di Montalcino

Le Potazzine - Montalcino - www.lepotazzine.com

Piombaia - Montalcino - www.piombaia.com

Podere Le Ripi - Montalcino - www.podereleripi.it

Fonterenza - Montalcino - www.fonterenza.it

Il Paradiso di Manfredi - Montalcino - www.ilparadisodimanfredi.it

Rosso and Nobile di Montepulciano

Avignonesi - Montepulciano - www.avignonesi.it

Croce di Febo - Montepulciano - www.crocedifebo.com

Il Conventino - Montepulciano - www.ilconventino.it

Chianti

Poggerino - Radda in Chianti - www.poggerino.com

Vignavecchia - Radda in Chianti - www.vignavecchia.com

Vallone di Cecione - Greve in Chianti - www.ilvallonedicecione.it

Buondonno - Castellina in Chianti - www.buondonno.com

Vernaccia di San Gimignano

San Quirico - San Gimignano - www.aziendasanquirico.it

Poggio Alloro - San Gimignano - www.fattoriapoggioalloro.com

Canneta - San Gimignano - www.canneta.com

Cappella Sant'Andrea - San Gimignano - www.cappellasantandrea.it

Other Tuscan Natural and Organic wines

Colombaia - Colle Val d'Elsa - www.colombaia.it

Stefano Amerighi - Cortona - www.stefanoamerighi.it

Massa Vecchia - Massa Marittima - www.massa-vecchia.com

Ampeleia - Roccatederighi - www.ampeleia.it

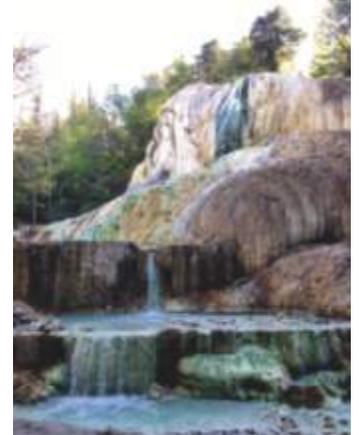
Pacina - Castelnuovo Berardenga - www.pacina.com

THERMAL BATHS

Terme di Petriolo

Just 40 minutes from our farm, the spa at Petriolo features simple thermal baths, where you can relax in the thermal pools before indulging in a holistic body treatment using the mineral mud from the area. Appointments necessary for spa treatments. Please check the website for more information.

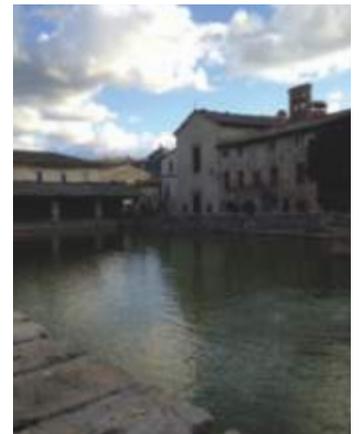
www.termedipetriolo.it



Bagno Vignoni

Vignoni is a charming town in the Val d'Orcia near Montalcino and Pienza about 1 ½ hours, by car, from Spannocchia. It is famous for the large and historic rectangular thermal bath located in the village center. Thermal pools accessible to visitors today include the hot springs at Piscina Val di Sole at the Hotel Posta Marcucci.

<http://www.postamarcucci.it/albergo-posta-marcucci-2>



Bagni di San Filippo

About a 1 ½ hour drive from Spannocchia, the Bagni di San Filippo offer a mix of man-made pools and spas, as well as natural hot spring pools. The Fosso Bianco, for example, is a series of natural pools that stretches along a stream warmed by thermal waters and passing by a scenic waterfall and unusual rock formations.

Terme di Rapolano

About 1 hour from Spannocchia, located right off the Siena-Bettolle highway in Rapolano Terme, are the Antica Querciolaia (www.termeaq.it) and Terme di San Giovanni (<http://www.termesangiiovanni.it/>), both hotel and thermal bath spas with many large heated pools. Besides a soak in the thermal baths, all kinds of spa treatments are available. On some Thursdays and every Saturday the baths are open until after midnight so you can experience the thermal baths under the stars!







Way to the Pigs

Olive Orchard

Synergic Garden

Terrace

Secret Garden

Forest House

Trash Room

Reception

Villa Garden

Villa Vegetable Garden

Swimming Pool

Path to S. Lucia

Chicken Coop

Fruit Orchard

Stable