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Women's La Dolce Vita Spring Tuscany

Castagneto Carducci

June 7-14, 2009

From \$3500 pp*

price may fluctuate with the exchange rate of the Euro



Overview

See Italy in a whole new light on this amazing cycling vacation in Tuscany. From the shimmering Mediterranean Sea to the rolling hills and ancient villages, we'll absorb the essence of Tuscany and allow our senses to run wild. From the honey-soaked light of the morning glowing over fields of red poppies, to the golden rays shining through the vineyards in the evening, we will discover the blissful rhythm of Tuscany. We'll bike the most charming roads in the world, and delight your taste buds with spectacular local foods, all while learning about our surroundings: art, architecture, history, and the art of making olive oil, wine, cheese and authentic Tuscan cuisine.

All ability levels are welcome and each bike ride is guided. The high staff-to-participant ratio means you'll have someone to encourage you, as well as teach you cycling tips, whether you're a beginner or a veteran. This is the trip you always promised yourself you'd take. Come join us in the sweet life

Where We'll Go On the Athleta Tuscany Tour

We will split our time between two spectacular regions of Tuscany: the authentic, unspoiled countryside of the Etruscan coast on the Mediterranean Sea, and Val d'Orcia, known as the heart of Tuscany, with gentle, carefully-cultivated hills peppered with picturesque towns and villages.

Some of the towns we will be visiting and riding through are: the Etruscan city of Montalcino, Pienza (the jewel of the Renaissance), Monastero di Sant'Anna (where the English patient was filmed), Abbazia di Monte Oliveto Maggiore (if we time it right we can hear the chanting of the monks), Castagneto Carducci, Sassetta, Suvereto, Montescudaio, Bolgheri, Massa, and Populonia. We'll have a full day to savor the charms of mystical Siena, considered one of the best-preserved medieval towns in Italy. An expert local guide will lead us into the heart of Siena's history and art.

Our home base for the first portion of the retreat is the lovely Campastrello Sport Hotel (www.campastrellosport.com) in the Etruscan coast region. Set in a beautiful Mediterranean garden, the hotel is modern but built in charming, traditional Tuscan style. The beautifully landscaped grounds feature fruit orchards and olive groves, a state-of-the-art Olympic swimming pool, and great views of the village and sunsets. Our meals are specially prepared and served in the hotel's noted restaurant, L'Olivo, which specializes in homestyle Tuscan cuisine.

We'll spend three nights here, exploring the Etruscan coast by day -- a cyclist's paradise of rolling hills and quiet roads through some of Italy's most prized vineyards. Stretching from medieval village to medieval village, our select routes take in glorious views with sublime spots to stop for a cappuccino or a gelato.

For the next portion of our adventure, we'll head inland to the magnificent region of Val d'Orcia, where we'll spend two nights at Fattoia de Colle (www.cinellicolombini.it). Set in a spectacular setting of cypress-lined lanes, ancient stone villages, and undulating hills studded with castles, Colle is a working wine and olive oil producing estate with beautifully renovated farmhouses and a main villa for our lodging. The estate also includes a small chapel, two swimming pools, and a gourmet restaurant preparing our sumptuous Tuscan meals from fresh, local produce.

The proprietor of Colle, Donatella Cinelli Colombini, is the producer of award-winning Brunello di Montalcino wines. Her signature vintage, Prime Donne, is produced solely by women.



Finally, we'll head back to the Etruscan coast and our friends at Fattoria de Colle for two more nights. We will pedal along the famous Strada del Vino (the wine road), have lunch with an internationally-renowned sculptor at his beautiful villa, see how olive oil is made at one of Tuscany's finest olive-oil presses, enjoy a cooking class with Chicca, a renowned Italian chef, and swim in the warm, clear waters of the Mediterranean Sea on beaches below a medieval castle.



What to Expect on this Tour

Most mornings we will begin with yoga to awaken our senses and limber our bodies before enjoying a buffet breakfast with foamy cappuccinos. Then we'll pedal the Tuscan roads, famous for their cypress trees, lack of traffic, and friendly drivers. Our afternoons will be spent exploring villages, doing art projects or creative journaling, swimming in the calm sea, and rekindling the spark for life. Poetry, and creative processes for clarifying your heart's desire are sprinkled into the mix of all our adventures, bringing mindfulness to our Italian adventure.

Throughout the retreat, you will have personal and individualized professional instruction and guidance during all activities. Our staff consists of world-class athletes and coaches, who will offer you heartfelt support and instruction. We'll create small riding groups to ensure everyone rides with others at a similar ability level. Riding options are provided for beginners to accomplished riders. And, all rides are fully supported with a bike

mechanic and a sag wagon (full of fruit, water, cookies and, of course, chocolate).

To compliment your cycling, we also offer hiking and running adventures on trails lined with olive trees, and on roads leading to wonderful places. For instance, at Fattoria de Colle we can run/hike to a cheese maker's house!



What's Included

- Eight days, seven nights accommodations at comfortable, charming, and authentic family-run Tuscan establishments (two nights at Fattoria de Colle and five nights at Campastrello Sport Hotel. See FAQ for details on lodging).
- Six dinners, three lunches, and daily breakfasts – all amazing food, in true Tuscan spirit! And all snacks.
- Daily road cycling rides, guided by our professional staff.
- A bike mechanic and sag wagon with spare parts.
- Transportation from Camastrello Sport Hotel to Fattoria de Colle and back again.
- Guided art tour in Siena.
- A guided visit to Fonte di Foiano, rated one of the best olive oil presses in Italy.
- A visit to a local Tuscan farmhouse for a cooking demonstration and feast with acclaimed (and fun!) chef, Chicca.
- A day with world-renowned artist Rolando Stefanacci.
- A visit and guided tour of the magnificent town of Siena.
- Wine Tasting in the heart of Brunello country.
- A visit to Cicclo Sport, a Tuscan bike shop with even more local color than the sunsets over the Tyrhenian Sea.
- Yoga classes (daily, or as demand dictates).
- Watercolor painting lesson.

*** Price does not include airfare or bike rental.**

Staff

Colleen Cannon is your host along with Jacqueline Stanford, and Julia Ingersoll. In addition to these belle donne, we will have several additional male guides along to insure everyone rides as long and as forte (strong) as they want to. We will also have the assistance of our fabulous local Italian guides Riccardo or Gerrardo- our unique, support-van-driving, bike-mechanic, accordion-playing, food-and-wine-expert Tuscans. Together, the staff brings experience, attention to detail, enthusiasm and a good sense of humor to La Dolce Vita, so come enjoy life! Plus our amazing chef Chicca...YUMMY! It does not get any better than this.



Colleen is a world champion triathlete, whose passions now include horses and music. Colleen leads an active mountain life; skiing, snowshoeing, running, and riding. Colleen has mastered the art of living well, playing hard, embracing life and sharing her passion for living.

Julia is a painter who has been living and working in the hills of Florence, Italy, for the past five years. Julia studied Classical painting at the Florence Academy of Art, speaks fluent Italian and French, and enjoys sharing her knowledge of Italian art, history and culture as we ride through the hill towns and countryside of Tuscany. In her past-life as a former top-ranked professional mountain bike racer, she was a six-time national mountain bike team member, North American champion in 1992 and a bronze medalist at the world championships in Belgium but now enjoys cycling more than ever. Julia finds cycling and painting to be reciprocal passions, and enjoys discovering and sharing with others the life-giving immediacy of moving and working in nature.

Jacqueline has participated in five different sports at a national and international level including riding in the first Tour de France for women while on the Canadian National Cycling Team. In Jacqueline's principle sport, triathlons, she was ranked in the top ten in the world, winning several of the world's most prestigious races.

In her past lives, Jacqueline has also been a high school math teacher, a farmer on a kibbutz in Israel, a windsurfing instructor, and she crewed on several yachts in the Tahitian Islands. She has toured over 15,000 miles on her bike throughout the US, Canada, and Europe. Currently, she is a full-time mom and is pursuing a

career in pottery. Jacqueline is a free spirit and lives life to the fullest. She believes that you can achieve anything that you want to achieve and have a lot of fun in the process.

More staff will be joining us. We have about 6 staff and 20 ladies on each tour

Endurance Demands

The beginning rider and the elite rider will both love the Tuscan countryside for bike riding at its best. A variety of options are available for our walks, runs and bike rides, depending on each person's comfort level. If you can, we suggest you start a training or workout program at least 3 months before you come so you can get the most out of the week. It does not need to be a hard-core program, just get out, play and be active a few days a week. If you just can't find the time, don't worry, there will always be others in the same situation and the supportive staff will help you along.



What is the bike riding like?

Exquisitely beautiful, quiet little roads wander everywhere through this ancient land, winding past views of the shining Mediterranean sea, up to scenic hilltop towns, past ancient olive groves, and alongside prize-winning vineyards. Italy is the center of the world for road cycling, so immerse yourself in the cycling culture and discover an intimate view of Tuscany at your own pace. A fully-equipped support van will accompany each ride, providing cold drinks, snacks, and mechanical assistance-and serving as a sag wagon if you desire. If you are an avid cyclist, bring your road bike, or you can arrange with us to rent a road bike. If you rent, we suggest you bring your helmet and bike shoes, and maybe your own seat.

Bike Rentals: Good carbon road bikes are available for rent, however, if you are used to your own bike, we encourage you to bring your own. The riding is scenic but can be a little challenging at times, so riding your own bike is safer and ultimately more enjoyable. Most overseas airlines are now charging 100.00 each way to bring your own bike but it is worth it. You must check with your airline and make sure that they will fly your bike into

Pisa. Some of the planes that fly in are too small to take bikes. Hard-sided bike boxes can usually be rented at your local pro bike shop. We will help you unpack and pack up your bike. Bike rental prices vary depending on the bike, but are reasonable, usually in the \$250 to \$300 range for the week (we will provide a quote once you submit a rental order).



What is the running and hiking like?

We will also wander the roads that link the village, vineyards and olive presses near our hotel, and there are lovely routes around the olive-clad hills for those desiring an early-morning run. So bring good hiking and/or trail running shoes, visor, sunscreen & small fanny pack or camelback type pack is recommended. At Colle, there are great running/hiking trails right out the door.

What will the swimming be like?

The part of the Mediterranean Sea near our home village is referred to as the Tyrrhenian Sea. It is warm, clear, and generally tranquil, providing excellent salt-water swimming. We will also have the opportunity to swim in the travertine pool on the estate grounds of our home for the week. Bring your goggles, sunscreen, swimsuit, and love of the sea!

What if I am new to Italy or Europe?

If you've never been to Europe, relax! You will love it. If you've been many times- you'll be surprised, refreshed, and delighted by our intimate version of the European experience. We will pick you up and always be available for any questions and with a helping hand. You'll feel like part of an extended Italian family at this retreat.

Accommodations

The location is the small, rural hilltop town of Castagneto Carducci, named after the Nobel Prize-winning poet, Carducci. The hotel is situated below the town, about 5km inland from the Mediterranean and 75km south of Pisa. The region was settled by the Etruscans and is known as the Upper Maremma. Aside from unforgettable experiences, you will enjoy our home base, Campastrello Sport, where we settle in their spacious rooms for our retreat. All rooms are amazing and feature modern conveniences and exceptional Tuscan cuisine. The cuisine is home-style, and simply wonderful! We don't run you ragged packing and unpacking every day. Visit the hotel on-line: www.campastrellosport.com



Our home for the second portion of our adventure will be historic Fattoria del Colle, an authentic working wine and olive oil estate with beautifully renovated farmhouses and main villa for our lodging. The estate also includes a small chapel, and two swimming pools with expansive views over the magnificent countryside that reflects the quintessential dream of Tuscany. Our delicious Tuscan meals, prepared from fresh, local ingredients, will be served in the farm's lovely restaurant.

Combining the beauty of ancient stone architecture with modern comforts, we will retreat to a timeless world at Colle, in harmony with the peaceful and exquisite countryside surrounding us. The estate is located just outside the charming village of Trequanda, where there is a particularly good cappuccino bar as well as important 14th Century paintings in the town church.

Packing and Planning

Passport

Now would be a good time to check your passport! You must have at least six months left on your passport from your time of departure! If not, visit the State Department's website (http://travel.state.gov/passport_services.html) or visit your local post office for your renewal. You do not need a visa for your stay.

Weather

Outdoor conditions are generally temperate. Daytime temperatures in the 70's and cool nights. When it rains - it POURS, so do bring rain gear. Visit: www.weather.com and type in Pisa, Italy to check the local weather forecast before departure.

Dress

Italian rural culture is fairly relaxed, however short shorts and tank tops are not advised in restaurants or while sightseeing. Please bring some smart casual (tending towards the conservative if you're in doubt) attire to help you to feel more comfortable when out and about. This means, longer walking shorts, skirts, summer dresses, nice slacks, and blouses or tees. Nothing fancy, just nice, easy and casual. Plan to do laundry in the sink and hang out to dry (micro-fibers dry fastest). And do bring warmer things for cool evenings and dinners on the terrace, and the unexpected.

Gear We will run, hike, bike and swim. Bring appropriate gear. Comfortable sturdy shoes, a swim suit, goggles, small towel, and of course bike apparel including: 2 pairs bike shorts, 2 jerseys, lightweight rain jacket, bike shoes and helmet, water bottles or camel back and a spare tube or two. All rides are sagged by follow vehicles so you won't need a fanny pack or bike rack. We have most tools and the nearby bike store to access.

*** You can also buy bike jerseys, shorts, gloves, shoes etc all in Italy at our local bike shop Chiclo Sport. They look really cool when you bring them home because no one will have a jersey like yours!

Other Stuff

As with all foreign travel, plan to bring all the prescriptions and lotions that you will need for the trip. Make no assumptions! For example, Tylenol is not sold in Italy. We recommend you be current on your tetanus (check with your doctor, or if you have not had one in 5 years) otherwise, no shots are required.

Your carry-on should include: a change of clothes, your running/hiking shoes, a swimsuit and all your essential toiletries. This way, if they do lose your bags for a few days, it won't be as bad. Many essentials are easy to find --but bras, undies, shoes, and toiletries are difficult to replace. Pack smart. Additionally drink plenty of water on the journey; this is your best offense in staying healthy and adjusting to the time change quickly. I take an empty water bottle and then fill it up once I am through security.

If you can, we suggest that you plan to arrive a day or two early to acclimatize.

Vacation Price

\$3500 pp

Based on double occupancy. Reflects a 3% cash discount.

If you desire a single room, please e-mail or call us for the cost

What is the reservation and cancellation policy?

There is a \$500 non-refundable deposit due at the time of registration. Balance due 90 days prior to camp. Your camp fee is nonrefundable within 90 days of the camp. Please note that injury or illness does not disqualify you from the cancellation policy and we are unable to transfer deposits and/or payments from one year to the next so we highly recommend trip insurance which you can obtain through your travel agent for a nominal cost.

You must sign a liability release form to participate in camp, and payment does not include airfare or bike rental.

Travel Insurance

Trip cancellation insurance is recommended to cover such issues. Please call us for a quote to match this package by calling: **1-866-269-2659**

To Register for this Vacation

To register for this tour, please contact us directly at **1-866-269-2659** or email us at info@luxworldtravel.com for a Registration Form and a Payment Form.

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