



CYCLE BELLA ITALIA

RIDE • EAT • DRINK • LIVE

December 2015

*Benvenuti! Welcome to the **Cycle Bella Italia** newsletter, where we share our passion for and knowledge of Tuscany with our cycling friends. Enjoy Tuscany through this newsletter, then join us on one of our upcoming week-long cycling tours. Come to Tuscany and experience **La Dolce Vita!***

From Your Cycle Bella Italia Team



Joe

Eran

Eric

Visit our website www.cyclebellaitalia.com, give us a like on Facebook, and see our updates and posts on Instagram and Twitter. We want to hear from you and from your friends, so please share all about us! To learn more about Cycle Bella Italia and our 2016 trips email us at: info@cyclebellaitalia.com

As visitors to our website you know of our favorite place in Italy...Tuscany. It's a region of ideal riding for cycling enthusiasts of all levels. Every route allows us to experience extraordinary panoramas and to enjoy interesting small towns that offer incredible food, fantastic wines, history and culture.

There are almost countless rides we can arrange, with routes suitable for cyclists of every level. For shorter rides, there are a variety of villages that we can ride to as our daily destination. If we like to challenge ourselves with longer distances, we have routes with stops along the way for refreshment and photos. We'll visit small cafés and refill our water bottles at the fresh water fountain present in virtually every town.

When you finish your visit with Cycle Bella Italia, you will have memories of the splendor of Tuscany because our week is much more than just time on the bike, you will experience life in Tuscany as the locals do.

Our Trips in 2016

In 2016, we offer three weeks of cycling from our base of operations in Pienza. Come join us for one of the following weeks:

- June 25 – July 2
- July 2 – July 9
- July 9 – July 16

Beautiful Tuscany



Tuscany is one of the most picturesque regions in all of Italy, located in the central part of the country, stretching from the Apennine Mountains on the east to the Tyrrhenian Sea on the west. In this region you can admire scenery of uncontaminated nature alongside medieval villages, historical towns, castles, country churches, beautiful abbeys, as well as numerous hot spring spas such as in Montecatini, Saturnia, and Bagno Vignoni.

Tuscany is a charmed land. Vineyards composed of rows of beautiful green vines arrayed in straight formation on gently rolling hillsides; single file lines of iconic green cypress trees; sandy roads leading to rust-colored farmhouses and ancient castles; symmetrically rounded hilltops surmounted by quaint enchanting towns.

The combination of great art, sumptuous countryside, and memorable food and wine makes a trip to this enchanting part of Italy incomparable. There are no words that adequately describe the incredible beauty of Tuscany.

Focus on: Pienza

Pienza, located in the southern part of Tuscany, provides extraordinary views all the stunning Val d'Orcia. This charming village, widely known as the "ideal city of the Renaissance", is the creation of the great humanist Enea Silvio Piccolomini who became Pope Pius II in 1458. Piccolomini transformed his birthplace village, the ancient and anonymous village of Corsignano, into what he considered the Utopian city should be, exemplifying the principles and philosophy of classical times and of the great Italian Renaissance. The project was designed by the architect Bernardo "il Rossellino" under the guidance of the great humanist Leon Battista Alberti and was further influenced by German philosopher Cardinal Nicolà Cusano and the German Gothic tradition. In only 3 years, a group of amazing and harmonious buildings were completed.



The design of Pienza has been well preserved in the street plan, architecture and construction details, such as the central square's herringbone paving edged with travertine. The streets of Pienza are full of small charming shops selling various types of pecorino cheese from fresh to aged, as well as a number of other typical local products, including fine wines, spices, pici (the handmade pasta specialty of Tuscany) and more.

Wine Talk

Vino Nobile di Montepulciano, one of the prestigious wines of Tuscany, is produced principally with **Sangiovese** grapes, the very same variety as used in the well-known Brunello di Montalcino.

The wines of Montepulciano have a long history, but the Vino Nobile as known today dates back to 1925 when a local producer, Adamo Fanetti added the word "Nobile" to the his Vino di Montepulciano and codified the parameters for production of Nobile wine. In 1980, Vino Nobile received Italy's coveted and highest recognition of appellation - DOCG.

Vino Nobile di Montepulciano is characterized by its dark cherry and plum aromas, strawberry and cherry fruit flavors, and a gently tannic finish. It is wine of medium body, firm tannins, and acidity which makes it a particularly age-worthy wine.

December in Tuscany



December is a celebration of Christmas in Tuscany, and Christmas, means delicious food, traditional festivals, colored lights and music. All of Tuscany gives life to Christmas markets, exhibitions and traditions that are typical for the season but with a genuine touch of local origins. In Pienza there is the annual panforte tossing contest and there are Christmas concerts in the cathedral in Siena. Many villages will play host to living nativities and then, of course, there are the New Year's Eve celebrations with bonfires and fireworks in so many towns.

The countryside during winter months looks glorious – you may even see it covered in snow around Christmastime. Santa's houses have become a tradition all over Italy, but there's another character as traditional as Santa (Babbo Natale) that children do not eagerly await. Befana is the ugly old lady traveling on a flying broom that leaves coal to naughty children.

From Our Shop

Here's the Cycle Bella Italia team sporting our team kit from 2015. We design a new cycling kit every year and each riding guest receives a jersey and bibs included in the price of the trip. Why not book your trip for 2016 now and reserve your 2016 CBI kit. Look for the new design in an upcoming newsletter.



Arriverderci! A Presto.