

Aroma~Herbal Adventure in Tuscany

with Kathi Keville

June 14~June 25, 2025



Immerse yourself in the healing power of fragrance as you experience Tuscany with its unparalleled beauty, antiquity, culture, romance, and culinary wonders. Living in an ancient villa just outside Siena, we will seek out the wisdom and craft of ancient and modern masters of essential oils, perfumes, herbs, and the healing arts. This adventure offers you a rich harvest of scents, flavors, textures, colors, and experiences, with

herbal products to bring back home. Friendship, holistic health, learning, herbs, movement, yoga, Italian food, nature, and culture are the ingredients of our journey.



See page 16 for trip pricing

Our country lodging—the grand Villa Certano—is just minutes from Siena in the heart of Tuscany. This 16th century villa with 100 acres is owned by the Baldassarrini family. The ancient setting is surrounded by flowering linden trees and home to beehives, 20 acres each of olive groves and grape vineyards, lavender, a formal rose garden, herb garden, and winery. Views from each comfy room looks like a painting. A 1200 year-old church (see above) nestles between villa and winery, the door covered with blooming roses. You will tour this historic estate and its aromatic herbs and flowers with Kathi, our hostess Annalisa, and a local Tuscan herbalist. Sit under the 450 year-old Deodora Cedar, breathing in the deep richness and potpourri of scents of this historic land.





View
from our
Villa
Cerano

Tuscan Countryside. Enjoy nature in the beautiful outdoors under the famous Tuscan sky as we discover plant medicines. A local herbalist will take us through the countryside around the villa to discover familiar and new plant medicines of Tuscany. As we travel on daily excursions through the countryside on our private bus, we will enjoy a tapestry of rolling, wooded hills and sharp cliffs dotted with vineyards.

Dining. The food in Italy is incredible, fresh and delicious. Tuscany is known for its fine wildcrafted truffles and saffron. We will eat out at local *trattorias* and *ristorantes* during our time together. We also prepare wholesome food in the ancient kitchen and then, dine in Villa Certano's formal dining room with its hand-painted wallpaper. We will feast on the Villas own olive oil and wine. Meals are suited for all types of dietary preferences. Our hostess Annalisa will offer an Italian cooking class!



Shopping. You'll have time on your own in between our tours to explore shops In Siena, Florence and Assisi and discover all sorts of treasures! There will be local herbs and saffron, as well as truffles in every form—from salts to cheeses. The linen clothing is beautiful and inexpensive, especially in Siena's Wednesday market. We'll also take time for gift shops after touring both of the apothecary museums we visit.

Our Aromatherapy Creations. We'll harvest fresh herbs both from the villa and the wild, combining them with the villa's wine, olive oil, and local honey and beeswax to create an array of Tuscan aromatherapy products under Kathi's guidance. Bring them home to relive your Italian experience every time you use them. Pick linden, elder and lavender to bring home.



FLORENCE



Wander the streets, sample gelato, stand on the Ponte Vecchio, Florence's famous bridge, and stop by the Galileo Museum and its sundial in this jewel of Tuscany. We'll visit renowned outdoor markets of 'Firenze,' as Florence is known to Italians. The town is famous for the best pizzerias and restaurants. We'll sniff our way through natural perfumeries, have a tour of their manufacturing labs and sample a vast line of perfumes with creative ingredients and names, all designed and created in on-site labs.



Giardino dei Semplici ~ Simplers Botanical Gardens

Director Dr. Paolo Luzzi will share his passion and knowledge of Tuscany's healing and aromatic plants with us—including his collection of aromatic gums, resins and essential oils. The gardens are an education and research facility, as well as a repository of rare and endangered plants and trees. We will explore a tropical medicinal herb world in their large greenhouse. This third oldest botanical garden in the Western world highlights concepts of the Simplers, who use single plants for healing. One garden honors medieval herbalist Hildegard de Bingen. Another is a raised garden with braille signs that Luzzi designed for the blind.





Santa Maria Novella Pharmacy

Adjacent to the Piazza Di Santa Maria Novella and church is possibly the oldest—and most famous—pharmacy in the world. Since 1221, Dominican monks have been concocting perfumes, fragrant potions, skin creams, powders, pomades, aromatic honey and medicinal herbal liqueurs. The famous Seven Thieves Vinegar and Acqua di Rose were disinfectants during the plague. The apothecary

store sells aromatic treasures. Nothing seems to have changed except for installing a modern cash register. Housed in a fantastic, frescoed chapel, this is aptly described as “Italy’s most beautiful store.” It rose to fame after creating perfume for Catherine d’Medici, who carried her love of fragrance to France when she became their queen.



CIVITELLA PAGANICO REGION

As we ride through this picturesque area on our way to the hot springs, you will enjoy the hilly countryside that is densely forested with cypress, oak and juniper, and interspersed with colored fields of deep

violet lavender, blooming saffron flowers, soft green olive orchards, and orderly vineyards.

Terme Hot Springs Spa Resort

We will appreciate Tuscany’s rich tradition of “taking the waters,” while we soak and relax at the five-star resort and spa’s healing mineral waters enjoying indoor and outdoor pools. Etruscans and Romans once partook of these ancient healing mineral baths. The mineral rich clay here has renowned as a poultice for pain and skincare since ancient times. If you wish, enjoy a massage, beauty treatment and hydrotherapy at the spa—perhaps the mud massage with an herb bath—before sitting down to a delicious dinner in the resort’s upscale restaurant.





SIENA

We visit Siena—not far from our villa—on its bustling market day to experience Tuscan foods and wares, and shop—of course! With the same number of people today as 700 years ago, it was the first town in Europe to eliminate autos from its great central piazza, IL Campo, which sits atop a hill. Red brick lanes cascade everywhere in this walled city, inviting us to wander the streets or sit and people watch as “loitering” becomes a magical experience. And



then, there’s *The old chapel at Villa Certano* Grom’s at Piazza Salimbeni with first rate organic gelato! We’ll have a guided tour of Siena and its Duomo di Siena cathedral in true Gothic style with a fine inlaid floor.

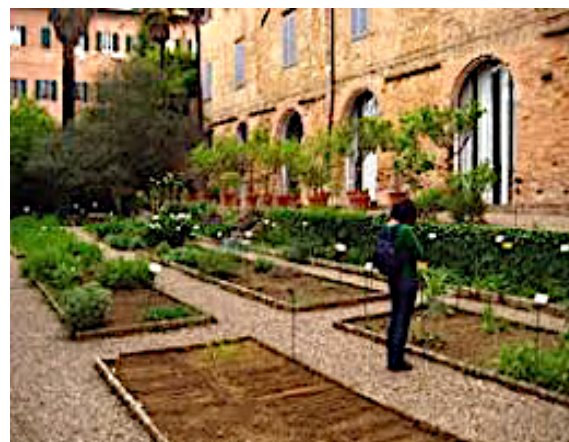


Famous herbalist, Mattioli, was born in 1501 in Siena, where he and his father had a practice. Mattioli created the Italian version of Greek Dioscorides’ *Herbal*—one of the world’s most famous herbals and the first to dedicate a section to aromatics—adding woodcuts.

Duomo from Sant Maria hospital window



Orto Botanico of Siena. Siena’s Botanical Gardens—on Mattioli Ave named after the great herbalist—feature over 3000 species! At Siena University, we tour the gardens and museum, which houses an extensive collection of very realistic ceramic mushrooms. This is the collection of the enchanting curator and plant researcher Dr. Claudia Perini, who will expertly guide us through the garden of Tuscan natives, exotic plants, and fruit-bearing plants.



Planted in 1784, these gardens have some of the best views in Siena. The medicinal herbs were previously cultivated at Siena’s Santa Maria della Scala hospital. Dr. Elibetta Moraldi will lecture on the properties of Italy’s aromatic plants and supporting studies.



SAN GIMIGNANO

The small walled medieval hilltop town is known for its many fine towers and a rich history that has not been forgotten by its residents. Their main crop is the glorious yellow and highly expensive saffron. You'll find it sold in the street shops. Of course, they have an herbal pharmacy museum. For countless centuries, this farming community has celebrated the Summer

Solstice with music, dance and good food. We will be there to celebrate with them!

Medieval Faire: *Ferie della Messa*. We will participate in the historic, pre-harvest solstice festival in San Gimignano's truly medieval setting. This annual event is described as "recalling ancient scents & traditions." It fills the town's streets and squares with markets of medieval arts and crafts, storytellers, actors, musicians, and music. About 500 townspeople dress in Medieval attire for the afternoon parade and tournament. Visit herb and craft booths, watch jousting and the dancing circle, flag throwing in the town square. Sample the saffron, truffles, and pine nut cakes for which this town is famous. We will complete our day dining at one of the town's delicious restaurants—with THE view.



SAN SEPOLCRO

In the quaint, stone city of San Sepolcro, townspeople still promenade in the squares for the evening *passeggiata*. Situated where Italy's trades routes meet, the town has always been prosperous, as seen by impressive Italian Renaissance palaces still in use and masterpieces hanging in the churches and museums.



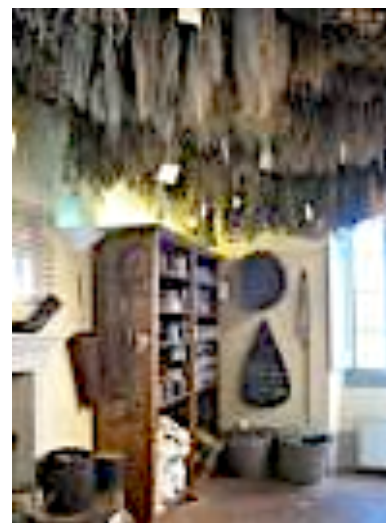
Known as the "City of Art", the works include

the famous "Resurrection" by Piero della Francesca. St. Francis preached here in the Cathedral of St. John.



Aboca Herbal Museum, Library & Shop.

This great cultural museum is housed in a magnificent, two-story, 18th century Palazzo, the Bourbon Del Monte. Its mission is to recover and spread traditional use of medicinal herbs. Exhibits showcase the history of herbalists and medicinal plants on theological, philosophical, mythological, magical and literary levels. Rooms of exquisite displays are dedicated to History, Pottery Jars that once held herb concoctions, Weighing Scales, Apothecary Glassware, Herbs, an Apothecary Shop, the Phytochemical Laboratory, Mortars room, and the 19th century Pharmacy.



There is even a Poison Cellar. Truly, our experience will be every herbalist, aromatherapist and history lover's dream come true, highlighted by a private tour.

We'll take time to explore Aboca's store, with their extensive line of herbal and aromatic products and bookstore with fabulous new herb books and old herbals reprints.



CHIANTI

Chianti—the hilly region between Florence and Siena filled with vineyards, orchards and olive groves—is famous for its Chianti wine made



from Sangiovese grapes and the dessert wine, Vin Santo. This center of the wine country is also prime land for farming Lavender Helichrysum and Tuscany's other aromatic natives. Our bus will take us through gorgeous rolling hills and spectacular views.



The Casalvento Estate.

Located on the highest hill of Castellina in Chianti, the estate is an herb farm that offers us the color and scent of fields of medicinal herbs, such as Helichrysum, Rose, Rosemary, Iris, Sage, Thyme, Juniper, and nine types of Lavender. This distillery produces high quality essential oils, hydrosol floral waters, and perfumes, which we will have an opportunity to smell and purchase. The owner, Dr. Lorenzo Domini and his son, Alessandro, will personally guide us through their fields and distillery to view the process from field to distillery to product. We then retreat into his classroom where Dr. Domini will present an entertaining lecture with demonstrations to show

how essential oils affect the brain using his state-of-the art equipment. We will see the reactions of brain waves to various oils and the beneficial effect of distilled hydrosols on the complexion. Our lunch beneath the olive trees will be traditionally Tuscan.



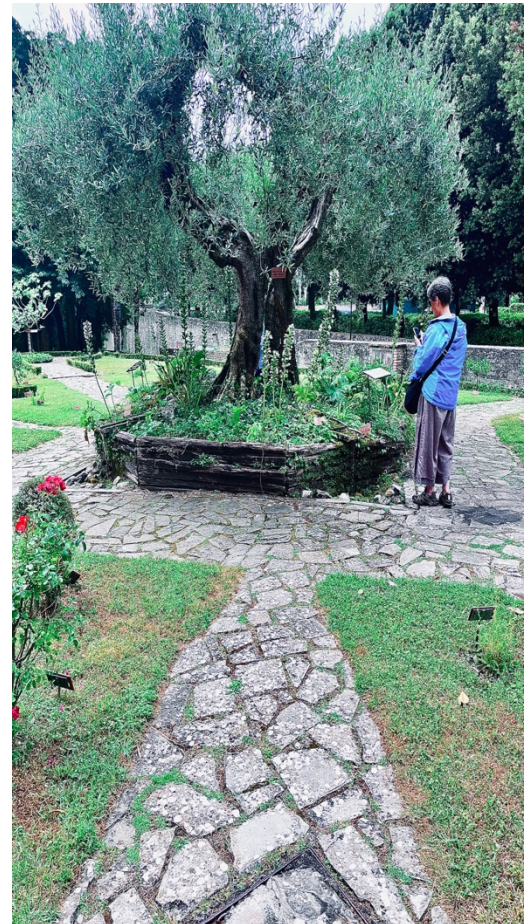
The Etruscans settled in Tuscany, probably from Asia Minor. The name Chianti is even thought to be derived from Etruscan. They developed a prestigious civilization that reached its peak in the 5th century BC, making wine and obviously loving the arts, including dance. We will see artifacts from when they lived at what is now the Estate of Casalvento.



PERUGIA

Perugia, the most important city of the Umbrian province, is one of Italy's important art and music centers. It is famous for its traditional desserts made with pine nuts, anise, and chocolate. Their signature Baci is made of dark chocolate and hazelnuts. This has also long been an area of saffron and vegetable farms and truffle foraging.

Perugia Medieval Botanical Garden. Filled with medicinal and aromatic plants, our personal guide to these amazing gardens at the University of Perugia will be its main gardener, Lucca Migini. He'll tell how his uncle Alessandro created this herbalist paradise that mingles art, astrology, and history, with plants that narrate myths, legends, and sacred stories. It includes seven flower beds based on principles laid down by Italy's 9th century Salerno School of Medicine, which set the foundation for European herbalism. One section displays plants representing twelve astrological signs. There's even a recreated Medieval apothecary.



Basilica of San Pietro century abbey is next to the for your eyes with amazing paintings, marble sculptures, rich with botanical themes. The original church was built in the 4th century. This hilltop has been considered sacred for 3,000 years. It was founded by Etruscans and later the Romans. An ancient road to Rome passes through its Medieval gate. We'll enjoy panoramic views of scenic Assisi, Mount Subasio, and the Umbria Valley from the garden.

with its 13th century bell tower and 10th gardens so we'll stop in to see a fest 15th-17th century art—remarkable frescos, and wood carvings that are



ASSISI

We will spend three days exploring and enjoying Assisi. Savor the food, ambience, and message of this powerful pilgrimage site. Built on a hill, the town offers scenic views of the countryside and castles, palaces, and Roman ruins that you will always remember. Herbs like Helichrysum and Thyme sprout wildly between stones of ancient towers. Hanging Geraniums are suspended along main streets. We will stay in an old monastery that has been modernized into a comfortable hotel reflecting the simplicity of monastic life. Just a block from the walled city, you can walk into Assisi through its main gate as you wish.



Assisi is filled with interesting shops, including lavender, olive wood, and natural paint stores, and an herbal pharmacy. There is a native plant preserve and hiking trails in the surrounding hills. You'll have free time to visit the old fort museum on medieval life with an amazing view—medicinal herbs and wildflowers surround it—and the massive Basilica of St. Francis, an artistic highlight of Medieval Europe that is often filled with sacred chanting.

Grotto of St. Francis. In the 13th century, a simple friar from Assisi challenged church decadence with a powerful message of non-materialism, simplicity, and advice to 'slow down and smell the flowers. His message of love and sensitivity about the environment has a broad and timeless appeal. Of course, St. Francis had a garden devoted to the aromatic herbs he loved. We will visit the Grotto and original Chapel of St. Francis. As pilgrims, we travel up the hills of Assisi to caves in which St. Francis meditated. Be prepared to experience the profound and sacred.





Assisi Lavender Festival. In June, lavender fields at their height of bloom and fragrance are cradled in view of Assisi. Soak in the scented landscape as you stroll down endless rows of lavender with its pink, blue, and lilac flowers. Beyond these long, colorful rows, sits the walled town of Assisi and surrounding hills.



Participate in an annual, country-style fair in the lavender fields. Booths display local, impassioned Italian artisans of horticulture and crafts selling their homemade wares. This festival is described as “discovering the many scents of aromatic plants often unknown.” There is basket weaving, hand-made clothing and bags, leather work, painting, jewelry, food and beverages, bee keeping. Be sure to sample the lavender gelato!!



We have our own guided garden tour to ID the many varieties of lavender and hear tips on cultivating aromatics. Demonstrations just for our group include essential oil distillation.



SUMMER SOLSTICE & HERB DAY

Along with the rest of Italy, we celebrate the Summer Solstice and then the old Herb Day Celebration of Fiesta di St. Giovanni's (St. John's Day on June 24).

Italians once considered the Summer Solstice to be the most potent day of the year to harvest medicinal plants, and so shall we! We harvest and wildcraft herbs growing around our Villa Certano—telling plant tales. Wild St.

John's wort, linden flowers, roses, and lavender at their solar peak go into our Tuscany Solstice herbal creations.



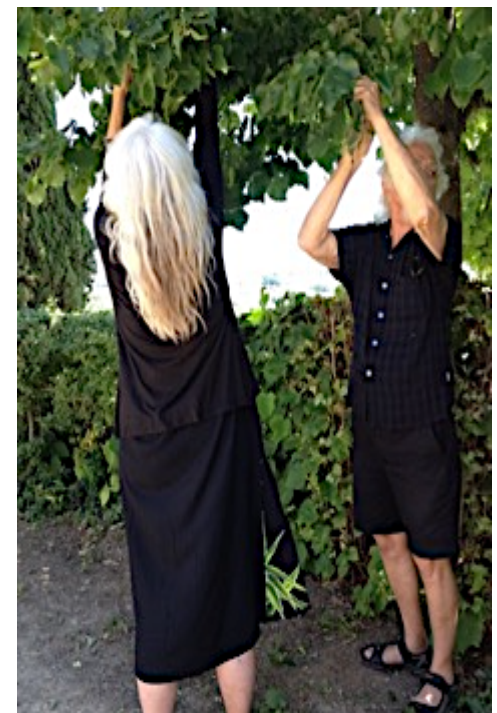
Olivewood funnel for our St. John's wort oil



We will follow an old Italian custom—still practiced in many regions, especially around Assisi—of gathering the fragrant flowers from wild hillsides and placing them in a shallow bowl outside overnight to gather dew and be blessed. We'll toast with herbal fizzy water drinks and the Italian walnut cordial Nocino, Italian-style.



Making our herbal preparations in Villa Certano's old kitchen



Harvesting Linden flowers

Your Guides through Tuscany

Kathi Keville is an internationally known aromatherapist-herbalist who has a BA in art and a passion for botanical and art history. Her academic studies include sociology, anthropology, and ethnobotany. Kathi relates colorful botanical stories about each location as we bus to our destinations. She has written 16 herb and aromatherapy books, works as an industry consultant, cultivates a 500-species organic herb garden in California, and teaches engaging, spirited seminars on the healing arts throughout the US. Kathi co-hosted Dish TV's aromatherapy series, "Everybody Nose." Her KVMR radio show is The Garden Forum. She co-led an herbal tour to Provence, France, organized professional herb retreats, and teaches High Sierra herbs for San Francisco State College. She belongs to a Medieval and Celtic choral group that studies Medieval Europe customs, with emphasis on Italy, France and England. Discover more about Kathi's books and classes: www.ahaherb.com



Richard and Natalie have been tour guides for health and adventure trips for 20 years. Tuscany is one of their favorite destinations. The couple co-created and operate the beautiful Lokahi Garden Sanctuary in Hawaii with 10 landscaped acres of over 250 edible and medicinal species.



Richard Liebmann ND has a deep love of the Tuscany countryside. A Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine, he was the first United Plant Savers Executive Director, National College of Naturopathic Medicines Academic Dean, opened Hawaii Family Health Clinic, and co-founded quality herbal medicine manufacturer, Equinox Botanicals.

Natalie Young MSW LMT degrees in modern dance, sociology, anthropology, and social work provide her with a special knack for guiding groups. She has also been a licensed massage therapist for 20 years. A gifted yoga/pilates instructor, she will share movement most mornings, combined with Kathi's Tuscan aromatherapy blends to enhance relaxation.





Annalisa Baldassarrini had a vision of an aromatherapy tour centered at her family's Villa Certano just outside Siena. She will guide us on a fascinating tour of her villa, including the grounds, inside the ancient church, old wine cellar and the new wine production area as she shares stories and secrets of a fascinating history. Annalisa is our interpreter in Florence. She also gives a cooking lesson on making *tiramisu* or another one of her family's recipes.



Linden Tree flowering at Villa Certano



Ron Bertolucci is a stone mason and landscaper. He cultivates medicinal and aromatic herbs, does distillation, and operates a small aromatherapy company. Questions about all the amazing stonework we see throughout our trip? He's your man. He'll lend a hand with the villa kitchen, classes, our tours, and wherever needed and make sure there's always fresh linden flower tea on the dinner table. Ron will also offer a talk at the villa to explain Italian masonry.

Throughout this wonderful plant journey, we will be joined by distinguished Tuscan aromatherapists, herbalists, botanists, university researchers, distillers, herb gardeners, guides and Italian interpreters leading us on special tours and adventures through museums, gardens, distilleries, farms, and apothecaries to explore the wonders and power of healing plants.



Marco Vallussi, Aromatherapist. We will have the pleasure of a lecture and demonstrations by aromatherapist and distiller Marco—who comes to us at our Villa Certano from his home and lab near Verona. He specializes in organic hydrolats (hydrosols) distilled from Italy’s wild aromatics. He will discuss his many years of working with aromatherapy as he shares the colorful history of Italy’s essential oils hydrosols, and aromatic plants.



Zora Keller, Herbalist. Zora will lead us on a fascinating herb walk along the trails through the wild area surrounding our Villa Certano. She will entertain us as she shares her herbal expertise through stories, history, and Italian uses of the plants. Using Italy’s medicinal and culinary herbs is a family tradition in her family. Some plants that we see will be special to Tuscany, some close relatives of what you know, and a few very familiar— but they do not always have exactly the same uses.





Dr. Lorenzo Domini

owns and operates The Casalvento Estate and Distillery on a Castellina hilltop in the Chianti wine country. He is a practicing M.D. with a doctorate in Clinical Pharmacology and over 90 publications published. He has been a consultant to pharmaceutical and cosmetic companies. His passion for physics,

chemistry, and creativity has led him to refine the estate's distillation technology and develop a superior line of cosmetics.



Alessandro Domini

continues the family tradition. He combines working at the Estate and on a master's degree in Pharmacy.



In the Domini classroom, observing skin changes with microscopic technology before and after applying hydrosols made at Casalvento. We also watch brain pattern changes while sniffing different essential oils.

Dr. Paolo Luzzi, Director of the Giardino dei Semplici (Simplics Botanical Gardens) in Florence, an education and research facility repository. This is oldest botanical garden in the Western world. A botanist who loves philosophy and traditional plant use, he has authored many scientific papers. He also teaches at the Unversità età libera, Florence.



Luca Menghini is head gardener of Perugia Medieval Botanical Garden at the University of Perugia. He is on the technical and administrative staff at Perugia's University Center for Scientific. His uncle Alessandro Menghini who designed this garden was professor of Pharmaceutical Botany at the Università degli Studi di Perugia and a scholar on the history of pharmacy.



Dr. Claudia Perini is Curator of Siena's Botanical Gardens, plant researcher, and renowned mycologist at the University of Siena, where she has worked since 1987. (The University located on Mattioli Avenue—named after the famous herbalist.) She is a member of the European Council for the Conservation of Fungi, Planta Europa network, IUCN Species Survival Commission, European Mycological Association secretary, and president of the Italian Botanical Society, Tuscan sections





Aroma-Herbalism Trip pricing for June 14-25, 2024

Our 12 days Includes classes, guided tours, museum and garden entrance fees, most meals except 3-4 on your own during free time in Siena, Florence, and Assisi. Plus pickup/drop off at Florence airport, our private bus and other transportation for all activities within Italy, double occupancy lodging – 3-4 share a bathroom (inquire for single room rate) and our personal attention to your comfort.

- \$3495 earlybird discount • \$3695 after 9-15-25 •

Airfare not included

\$300 Deposit confirms your space—non-refundable, non-transferable unless we cancel

Contact Richard for payment details & deposit: richardliebmann@gmail.com 808-987-7501



“amo la vita”



*Solstice
Morning
from Villa
Certano
window*

TUSCANY

“Birthplace of the Renaissance, the region gets its name from the Etruscans, the most powerful civilization of pre-Roman Italy. Its walled cities, cypress lined roads, and patchwork hills have been written about and photographed with such unrivaled enthusiasm that the image of the place seems to have insinuated itself in the public consciousness, even in the minds of those who have yet to set foot on its fertile soil. A cynic might expect the ‘real’ Tuscany to disappoint, for how could it ever live up to all the attention it received? And yet whenever I come home to the Tuscany ~ even after the shortest absence ~ its startling beauty, its richness and abundance strike me with a freshness that belies the many years I have spent here” ~ *Lori de Mori*





Snapshots!

