

Part of the “*Inside Tuscany: A Second Time Around*” series.

Central Tuscany: Arezzo

Visit and Enjoy the Tuscan Hill Town of Arezzo

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Scott Tiezzi Grabinger



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Cover Pictures:

- The ancient Roman amphitheater in Arezzo.
- My late cousin, Marisa Billi (Giangani), making dinner with fresh pasta after a long day of picking grapes.
- The campanile of the Arezzo Cathedral of Saints Donato and Peter.
- A selection of gelato.

To Jill, with love . . .

*. . . she is always there, through all the work and absences
supporting my dreams.*

and . . .

*. . . to my traveling family, Mike, Sarah, Addison, Bailey, Lindsay,
Rick, Luke, and Grace.*

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THANK YOU TO MANY FRIENDS AND RELATIVES, AMERICAN AND ITALIAN. . .

It took a lot of people to finish my first guide book and I am grateful to the following:

My wife Jill who patiently and sometimes impatiently lets me pursue my dreams and travels.

Without my Italian relatives I would know little of Tuscany or Arezzo. Nando and Marisa Giangani took me in as a son. They overlooked my cultural *faux pas* and taught me how “to be an Aretino,” a resident of the Arezzo province. Marisa fed me the best cooking in Tuscany, taught me to cook, solved problems, defended me while laughing with me all the while. Nando taught me about the region telling stories from when he was a child watching battles during World War II, racing bicycles, chauffeuring the director of the 1960 Rome Olympics (he has an official Olympic torch), and how to make limoncello. They taught me to pick grapes, introduced me to their families and friends and, most importantly, taught me the meaning of family. Sadly, Marisa left us in October 2017. I will always miss her.

Don Francesco Tiezzi was a cousin and local priest. Without him I’d never know Italy. He started everything by introducing my family to my Italian family (my maternal grandparents came from the area to the USA in 1910) on our first visit in 1992. Along with Nando and Marisa he took us to Rome, the sea, Florence, and a hundred places in between. He gave me a place to stay in his medieval rectory and helped me learn the history of Arezzo. He died in June 2014.

Second cousin Giovanni Tiezzi, his wife Antonella, and daughter Valeria have taken me around Tuscany, showing me some of the lesser known gems including Lucignano, Chiusure, Montefollonico, Chiusi, and a great pizzeria in Cesa. They house and feed me for several days each year. Angela and Daniele always graciously accept and help me. Cousin Maria Caldi, husband Valfrido, and daughters Gabriella and Alessandra have shown me around the Val d’Orcia, Pienza, and Monticchiello and have hosted my whole American family to wonderful meals.

Thanks also to the patient teachers of *La Cultura Italiana*, who took on the impossible goal of teaching me Italian over a period of years and becoming close friends as well as teachers: Paola, Laura, and Monica.



Tenuta Il Palazzo vineyard.

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Inside Tuscany Books

Traveling Adventures in Tuscany and Italy

Walking The Aqueduct: Tuscan Adventures and Culture

In Print Tuscany Guidebooks on Amazon

Central Tuscany: Arezzo

Central Tuscany: Valdichiana Hill Towns

Central Tuscany: Le Crete and the Val d'Orcia

Central Tuscany: Casentino and Valtiberina

Central Tuscany: Best of Cortona

Find these e-books for your iPad or phone on Apple's iBooks site

Inside Tuscany: Arezzo Churches

Inside Tuscany: Arezzo Museums and Sites

Inside Tuscany: Best of Cortona

Inside Tuscany: Driving in Italy

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Bistecca Fiorentina

One of the things that makes this dish work is the size of *Chianina* beef. The cattle range free to grow without hormones or antibiotics to about twice the size of American beef cattle before they are slaughtered.

The second factor is wood smoke. Tuscans grill the steak over wood coals for a smoky flavor. Use wood chips appropriate for your grill to get that important smoky flavor.

Ingredients

1/2 c EVOO

8 cloves of crushed (use garlic press) garlic

1 thick, large porterhouse steak. Ask the butcher for a piece about 1-1/2 to 2 inches thick.

1 lemon sliced into wedges

Coarse sea salt and pepper to taste

Directions

- Place the crushed garlic into the olive oil and let sit at least 3 hours, preferably overnight.
- Spread garlic flavored oil mixture over both sides of the steak. Let it marinate, turning frequently for two to four hours. Bring the steak to room temperature just before grilling.
- Heat the grill very hot. Use wood chips (eg, hickory, apple, mesquite) in the appropriate manner for your style of grill.
- Italians serve this blood rare, but cook to your preference.
- When finished, drizzle with lemon juice and slice the meat vertically. Serve with lemon wedges and olive oil.

Il Living in Arezzo



Ancient Roman amphitheater in Arezzo.

*“If you reject the food, ignore the customs, fear the religion
and avoid the people, you might better stay home.”*

James Michener

CHURCHES

1. Pieve della Santa Maria
2. Duomo degli Santi Donato e Pietro Maggiore
3. Basilica di San Francesco
4. Basilica di San Domenico
5. Chiesa di Sant'Agostino
6. Chiesa della Santa Maria in Gradi
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8. Badia delle Sante Flora e Lucilla
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15. Casa Museo Giorgio Vasari
16. Museo Statale Medievale e Moderna

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18. Prato e Fortezza
19. Piazza Grande
20. Bibliotecca — Library
21. Palazzo Comunale
22. Ponte Buriano — Mona Lisa Bridge
23. Cultura Italiana Arezzo — Italian School
24. Piazza Guido Monaco
25. Porta San Lorentino
27. Piazza Sant'Agostino
28. Piazza San Francesco
29. Piazza San Domenico
30. Pietri Parking Lot
31. Eden Parking Lot
32. Stazione — Railroad Station
33. Porta San Clemente



PICTURES FROM THE MONTHLY ANTIQUE MARKET



5 “Live” in Arezzo

“LIVE” FOR A COUPLE OF DAYS.

How about . . .

- watching a local weekend festival in medieval costume or visiting the monthly antique fair?
- walking through the Apennine hills and taking pictures in the evening light?
- shopping at the outdoor Saturday market?
- walking with the locals in the evening passeggiata before dinner?
- finishing the day off with an authentic Tuscan meal at an *osteria* — with a little *limoncello*.



The most scenic area in Tuscany, the Val d’Orcia, is just 45 min. from Arezzo.

HOW DO YOU DO THIS? SET UP A BASE.

I have learned that living in one place for even a couple of days has two advantages: First, I avoid wasting time packing and moving every day. Second, I have an opportunity to walk, take pictures, shop, gawk, and relax with a bit of espresso or gelato.

WHY AREZZO? TRADITION, LOCATION, AND COST

This book is about Arezzo. More than a Tuscan hill town, it is one of the major provinces in Tuscany called the *Aretine*. So, why do I use Arezzo as a base?

TRADITIONS

Arezzo is neither too big nor too small, and maintains long established traditions, such as closing for the lunch hours, holding weekly markets, tasting international foods, and celebrating medieval jousts. I find something exciting to do every week.

Finding Good Restaurants

Find the center of tourist activity. Turn your back to it and start walking away. After about five minutes, you will find the restaurants that locals use.



The ancient bronze Etruscan Chimera, the symbol of Arezzo.

heart of Chianti, and 45 minutes from Florence by train.

LESS EXPENSIVE

Since Arezzo is smaller than the “majors,” hotels and restaurants are less expensive. *Agriturismi* sit all around the city outskirts providing nightly, weekly, and monthly rooms with kitchens. Sitting up in the foothills, these places provide calendar picture views of the countryside. Or, stay in the city center for modest prices to be able to walk everywhere. Why stay in expensive and people-packed Florence when it is an easy, cheap 45 minute train ride away?

The Chimera: Symbol of Arezzo

The Etruscan, hollow bronze Chimera of Arezzo dates from 400 BC. The statue was discovered in Arezzo in 1533 and the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Cosimo I, immediately took the artifact to Florence, as he did with most fine works of art found in Tuscany. Many consider it the finest example of early Etruscan arts and crafts. In Greek mythology, the Chimera ravaged its homeland, Lycia, until slain by Bellerophon. Today, two replicas sit in fountains near the train station.

the monthly antique fair, and entertainment.

LOCATION

I like the proximity of Arezzo to dozens of other great sites in central and southern Tuscany (by car): 40 minutes from Cortona, 60 minutes from Montepulciano and Montalcino, 30 minutes from Castiglion Fiorentino and Poppi, 90 minutes to the

ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORY

Remnants and artifacts of the city go back to Etruscan and Roman times, such as the Roman Amphitheater in the old city *centro*.

Much of the old *centro* retains its medieval flavor. Many parts of the last set of walls (13th c.) still stand, including part of the imposing Medicea Fortezza (16th c.). Palazzos and municipal buildings illustrate centuries of history, culture, and prosperity.

Piazza Grande is one of the most unique piazzas in Italy and the center of most city activities including special markets,

ARTISTIC OFFERINGS:
MUSEUMS AND
CHURCHES

Museums and churches offer countless masterpieces including frescoes, paintings, sculpture, and stained glass. The church of San Domenico holds Cimabue’s *Crucifix*, and La Basilica di San Francesco has Piero della Francesca’s greatest masterpiece, the fresco cycle of *La Leggenda della Vera Croce* (The Legend of the True Cross).



A grand parade in medieval costumes starts the festival of La Giostra di Saracino.

FESTIVALS AND MARKETS

LA GIOSTRA DEL SARACINO — THE JOUST OF THE SARACEN

Website: <http://giostradelsaracinoarezzo.it/en/>

Arezzo’s grand medieval festival, held in June and September, celebrates its past by holding *La Giostra del Saracino* in June and September. Two riders from each of the four city neighborhoods gallop with a long lance toward a model of a Saracene, trying to hit its shield, gain points, and win the *Lancia d’Oro* (Golden Lance).

SAGRA

Barely a weekend goes by when Arezzo or one of the nearby towns isn’t celebrating a *sagra*, a festival based on a single food such as: *porcini* mushrooms, *polenta*, *pappardelle*, *cinghiale* (wild boar found in forests all over Tuscany), *bistecca*, rabbit, hare, and *ciaccia* (fried bread dough — it’s addictive).

FIERA ANTIQUARIA — ANTIQUE FAIR

Website: <http://www.fieraantiquaria.org>

On the first Sunday of every month (and the Saturday before), Arezzo hosts Italy’s most important *Fiera Antiquaria*. Over 200 dealers set up shop taking over almost every street in the *centro* selling everything imaginable from furniture to chandeliers to lace to music to copper sinks for washing hair.



Typical Aretino antipasti of *crostini nero*, *bruschetta* with tomatoes, and *prosciutto* wrapped around bread sticks.

MUSIC FESTIVALS

Arezzo is the home of Guido Monaco, inventor of musical notation, and holds in his honor the annual classical *International Polyphonic Choral Competition* during the first part of September. To celebrate contemporary arts, Arezzo holds *Arezzo PLAY* arts and music festival.

Website il Polifonico:
<http://www.polifonico.org>

Website Arezzo Wave: <http://www.arezowave.com>

SATURDAY MARKETS

You don't need a special festival to find excitement. Every Saturday morning the Aretini visit the *mercato*, held along a half-kilometer of Via Giotto with booths lining both sides, two deep on one side. You'll find kitchen items, chimney sweeping tools, shoes, toys, clothing, intimate apparel, succulent roast *porchetta*, fresh pasta, flowers, fruit, and electronics. Most likely, you will find that special thing you didn't know that you needed with the benefit of enjoying being part of the life of the city.

CUISINE

The cuisine in the Aretine province is as varied as the scenery. Arezzo's food is based on the agricultural riches of the Valdichiana to the south with its fruit orchards, grains, corn, and prized *chianina* beef, which provides the world's tastiest porterhouse steak, the *bistecca Fiorentina*.

Restaurants offer fresh pastas with *cinghiale* (wild boar) sauce. Osterias specialize in meats grilled over a wood fire including ribs, rabbit, chicken, and beef, seasoned simply with salt, pepper, olive oil, and a little lemon juice. Tuscany and Arezzo also have great seafood restaurants with the catch of the day rushed that morning from the nearby Tyrrhenian Sea. Not to be forgotten, some

of the world’s great wines are in Tuscany: Chianti Classico, Vino Nobile di Montepulciano, and Brunello di Montalcino .

IMPORTANT AREZZO LOCATIONS AND TOURIST INFORMATION

NOTE: As a result of the economic crisis in Italy, the public Tourist Information agencies are being closed. All arts and sports are bearing the brunt of the budget cuts.

TRAIN STATION

43.46145, 11.87629.

TI PALAZZO COMUNALE

Information on latest events. Art and history displays.

Piazza della Libertà

Open only 14.00-16.00

43.46706, 11.88277

TI SCALI MOBILI

43.467472, 11.883121

FAMOUS PEOPLE FROM THE ARETINE

- Dante Alighieri championed the use of Tuscan vernacular over Latin in literature, changing the history of Italy. Today, “Tuscan Italian” is the *lingua franca* of TV, movies, school, and youth all over Italy.
- Pietro Aretino (1492-1566). A gifted poet and blackmailer adept at appealing to powerful men’s purses in order that his select words about them might never reach the public.
- Spinello Aretino (1350-1410). Was a fourteenth century artist, architect, and master of Italian fresco.
- Daniele Bennati (b. 1980). Cyclist specializing in fast sprints winner of two stages in the Tour de France.
- Leonardo Bruni (1369-1444). Humanist, historian, politician.
- Ivan Bruschi (1920-1996). Antique lover and founder of Arezzo’s monthly *Fiera Antiquaria*.
- Poggio Bracciolini (1380-1459, Terranova). Humanist, writer, and humorist.
- Pietro Benvenuti (1769-1844). Painter.
- Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564, Caprese). One of the world’s greatest painters, architects, and sculptors. Michelangelo’s frescoes and sculptures set a standard for

representing passion, strength, and movement.

- Andrea Cesalpino (1519-1603). Philosopher, doctor of medicine, scientist.
- Luca Ferrari (1605-1654). Painter of the Baroque period.
- Vittorio Fossombroni (1754-1844). Engineer who reclaimed the Val di Chiana, mathematician, politician.
- Gian Francesco Gamurrini (1835-1923). Archeologist and historian.
- Bartolomeo della Gatta (1448-1502, Monte San Savino). Architect and painter.
- Guido Monaco d'Arezzo (991-1033). Inventor of the modern system of musical notation. A piazza in the city center is dedicated to Guido.
- Guittone d'Arezzo (1235-1294). Along with Dante, one of the first writers in Italian vernacular.
- Guillaume de Marcillat (1470-1529). Though French, much of his greatest works in stained glass were done in Arezzo.
- Margaritone d'Arezzo (1250-1290). Painter and architect.
- Masaccio (1401-1428). Introduced a new style of painting of movement and plasticity that influenced the Renaissance.
- Mecenatē (Gaius Cilnius Maecenas) (68 BC). Politician, soldier, man of letters, patron of the arts. The Archeological Museum is named to honor him.
- Domenico Pecori (1480-1527). Painter.
- Francesco Petrarca (Petrarch) (1304-1374). Writer of lyric poetry, the "Father of Humanism." His home is open to visit in Arezzo.
- Piero della Francesca (1415-1492, Sansepolcro). Great painter and innovator of Renaissance painting style. His greatest Arezzo work is the fresco cycle of *The Legend of the True Cross* in the Basilica di San Francesco.

Restaurant Dining Hints

When you go to a restaurant you are *not expected* to order a full meal. Unless it is a grand occasion, Italians order only a couple courses like an *antipasto* and *primo piatto* or a *secondo piatto* and a *dolce*.

Don't be afraid to mix and match. You may want the grilled vegetables — a side dish usually accompanying a *primo* or *secondo piatto* — as an *antipasto*. Order two *antipasti* or just a pasta dish.

Eat what you want.

- Pietro da Cortona (1556-1669, Cortona). Painter in the rich and decorative Baroque style.
- Francesco Redi (1626-1697). Scientist, physician, naturalist, and poet.
- Ristoro d’Arezzo (13th c.). Scholar, astronomer, and geographer.
- Andrea Sansovino (1467-1529, Monte San Savino). Sculptor and architect.
- Santi di Tito (1536-1603, Sansepolcro). Late Mannerist and baroque style painter.
- Luca Signorelli (1445-1523, Cortona). Prolific painter noted for sensitive style, brilliant use of color and mastery of foreshortening and perspective.
- Paolo Uccello (1397-1475, Pratovecchio). Renaissance painter and mathematician notable for pioneering work on visual perspective.
- Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574). Well-known architect, painter, and author who left his mark all over the Arezzo province.

Slow Food Movement

A movement originating in Italy, founded by Carlo Petrini, to combat the growth of fast food. It strives to preserve local cultural cuisine and associated food sources: plants, seeds, and domestic animals. The movement encourages restaurants and homes to cook authentic meals using fresh local ingredients.

Pizza Dining Hints

To eat a pizza without making a mess cut a slice, then fold it in half. You’ll have two sides of crust to hang on to.

It is usually best to avoid pizzas with mushrooms. Mushrooms hold a lot of water and can make the pizza watery and the crust soft.

POPULAR ARETINE FOODS



Antipasti from the “Wonderful” restaurant: cured meats, fresh mozzarella, assorted crostini, and pecorino cheese.



The dolce course from Osteria Mercanti: panna cotta with chocolate sauce.



From the Trattoria Saraceno: home made picci noodles with cinghiale ragù.

6 Eating Well in Arezzo

THE INGREDIENTS

ANTIPASTI, PRIMI AND SECONDI PIATTI, CONTORNI, DOLCE, AND DIGESTIVI

A full Italian dinner has four courses — maybe five or even six. First up is the *aperitivo*: a time to drink some Prosecco, wine, beer, or bitters accompanied by salty snacks. Second, is the *antipasto*. Common options include *prosciutto crudo* (dried, cured ham), *bresealo* (dried, cured beef), *salami*, *lardo* (cured, spiced, succulent fat sliced so thin that you can see through it — don't be put off by the name, it's incredibly tasty), and *bruschetta* and *crostini* with various toppings. You could make an entire meal from the *antipasti*, so be careful, there are three more courses to go. When at a restaurant, don't be afraid to order only an antipasto or two.

The third course is the *primo piatto*, first plate, with many options. The common element is starch. Common dishes include risotto, pastas of hundreds of shapes and toppings, *panzanella* (a type of bread salad), *ribollita* (vegetable soup with day old bread mixed in), and soups with pasta — the list is endless. At a celebration there may be two or more *primi piatti*.

Fourth comes the *secondo piatto*, which is a small amount of protein: *bistecca*, rabbit, sausage, ribs, pigeon, chicken, wild boar, pork, *cinghiale* — get the idea? This is usually accompanied by a *contorno* — vegetables — including green beans, baked Tuscan white beans, potatoes, green salad, artichokes, and sautéed greens It does seem incongruous to order French fries after eating pasta, but I've seen Italians order French fries (*patate frite*) with their pizza.

After finishing the *secondo*, it's time for the *dolce* (literally “sweet”). Italians are not big on desserts, so they tend to be simple: *panna cotta*,

Roast pork loin and grilled vegetables at Osteria Mercanti.



torta, tiramisu, *gelato* with toppings, or a simple plate of cheese and fruit.

Finally, it's time for *caffè* and *digestivi*. A *digestivo* helps you “digest” the meal and settle the stomach. They are usually highly alcoholic, and you drink only a tiny amount: *grappa*, *limoncello* (see included recipe in this book), and *nocino* (made from mashed, green walnuts). Many restaurant owners make their own. *Vin Santo* is also part of this, but more often served with dessert. It may sound a little far fetched to call these *digestivi*, but it works for me. I never have trouble sleeping after a *digestivo*.

EATING AT A RESTAURANT

On special occasions Italians go to a restaurant and eat four course meals. It seems like a lot of food, but portions are small and the meal lasts a couple of hours. There are far fewer obese people in Italy than the US. They know how to manage portions and they walk a lot. (See sidebar on p. 42.)

FINDING GOOD PIZZA

Just because you are in Italy doesn't mean that every pizza is great. There are three ways to get pizza. First, you can find pizza at small shops that sell *panini*, bread, and pizza by the slice. Seldom are these pizzas good — a source of calories, eatable, fast, and cheap — but not good. Some of those slices may sit in the window drying out all day long.

The second choice is to pick up a slice at a bar. Frozen pizzas come into the bar in the morning and then are heated up when ordered. Again, they are eatable and cheap, and better than sandwich shops, though still not very good.

The third choice is handmade pizza from a pizzeria or restaurant; some are cooked in wood-fired ovens. The name “pizzeria” usually means that the pizza will be handmade and fresh — ask to be certain. Homemade pizzas are usually excellent.

The moral of the story is to ask the waiter if the pizza is handmade and cooked on the premises. Otherwise, order something else.

The first time I ate pizza, I was shocked. Each person in our group ordered a 12-inch pizza — no sharing. Pizzas differ from the US variety. They have cracker-thin crusts and light coatings of sauce and cheese so it is easy to eat a whole pizza.

SOME OF MY FAVORITE RESTAURANTS

OSTERIA CAPANNACCIA

See next chapter for more on the outstanding Osteria Capannaccia!

Location:

43.52483, 11.90643
Località Campriano, 51/c
0575-36175

Website: <http://www.lacapannaccia.it>

Hours:

Lunch: 12.30 to 14.00
Dinner: 20.00 to 24.00
Closed Sunday evening and all day Monday.

Reservations essential Friday through Sunday and advised for all other evenings.

Accessibility: All one level. Gravel parking lot.

(See next chapter for a more detailed description.)

The Capannaccia is about 7 km outside the city. It serves typical Aretine fare. It's informal, generous with portions (too generous), and moderately priced. A typical meal including all courses and all the house wine and water you can drink costs about €38.

As a traditional *osteria*, it specializes in grilled and roasted meats cooked over a wood fire. (Vegetarians will find meatless pasta, vegetables, and salads.)

La Capannaccia is a short drive north of Arezzo up a short winding road into the Apennine foothills with a wide view of the Arezzo valley and the Arezzo lights in the evening.

Favorites of mine include prosciutto and salami for the antipasto, risotto with porcini mushrooms for the *primo piatto*, steak and ribs for the *secondo*, *insalata mista* for the *contorno*, and *panna cotta* for *dolce*.



Bistecca Fiorentina
from the prized
chianina beef at
Capannaccia.



Top: a fresh piadina straight from the grill. Above: Fresh piadina ingredients including tomato, mozzarella, ham, arugula, and prosciutto.

LA TUA PIADINA — FAST FOOD ITALIAN STYLE

Location:

43.463379, 11.880012
Via de'Cenci, 18
0575.23240

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/La-Tua-Piadina/154235961279021>

Hours:

Th-Tues: 10.30-21.00
Closed Wed.

Accessibility: One level, but very small and cramped, no inside seating. There are a few benches and high tables outside the door.

This restaurant sits on a small narrow side street off the *Corso Italia* making fresh, cheap, healthy food quickly.

Though fast, *La Tua Piadina* does not contradict the slow food movement because everything is made from scratch with the freshest ingredients. The *piadina* is a cross between a filled crepe and a wrap. The “wrap” is like a flour tortilla freshly toasted on a grill for each customer. They place the

selected ingredients on the *piadina*, fold it into a cone like a filled crepe, place the *piadina* in a small plastic bag to prevent dripping, and deliver it into your hands hot and ready to take-away and eat.

There are several kinds of *piadine*, or you can make your own using fresh mozzarella, ham, prosciutto, speck, rucola, arugula, salami, tomatoes, parmigiano, and basil to name a few. My favorite combination is prosciutto, tomato, mozzarella, and basil.

It's inexpensive fare (about €5.00 — less for the *bebe* “baby” size, which is more than enough for an adult lunch) to take out onto the street, or to a nearby piazza or park and find a place to sit, relax, and watch people.

**TRATTORIA IL
SARACENO**

Location:

43.464017, 11.882530
Via Giuseppe Mazzini, 6
0575.27644
Corner of Corso Italia
and Via Giuseppe Mazzini

Website: <http://ilsaraceno.com>

Hours:

Tues, Th-Sun: 12.00-15.00,
19.00-21.00

Wed: 19.00-21.00

Closed all day Monday and Wednesday afternoon.

Accessibility:

The dining areas are a bit cramped. A couple of steps to enter. But the staff will do whatever necessary to accommodate you.

The restaurant is at the intersection of Corso Italia and the San Francesco Piazza. Facing up the hill, look to the right and it is about fifty-feet from Corso Italia. It is easy to miss because it has only a small, hand lettered vertical sign above the door with the name “Trattoria.”

The *Trattoria Saraceno* is an exception to the rule about not eating in the center of tourist activity. It’s excellent food with moderate prices.

Once inside you’ll see an attractive dining room with white tablecloths on the tables and hundreds of wine bottles lining the walls. This small dining room leads to another, much larger.

The Trattoria has a large menu with typical *antipasti*, *primi*, *secondi*, *contorni*, and *dolce*. My favorite *antipasto* is the



Trattoria Saraceno antipasto of three slices of bruschetta: tomatoes, cabbage, and cannellini beans.



mixed bruschetta plate with three slices of toasted bread topped with tomatoes, steamed cabbage, and Tuscan white beans. Not only is it good, the plating is beautiful with toppings of deep, red tomatoes and dark green basil, and ivory-colored beans beside a long skewer with a clove of garlic.

Primi piatti are universally good from soups to pastas to risottos. The *pici* pasta (fat, hand-made, spaghetti noodles) with *cinghiale* sauce and tripe soup are favorites with locals.

My favorite *secondo* is pork ribs grilled over an open fire salted, peppered, and drizzled with olive oil. To accompany the *secondo*, are salads, grilled vegetables, sautéed greens, and Tuscan white beans in tomato sauce — the best.

Many of the locals consider the wood-fired oven baked pizza the best in Arezzo. No argument from me. Thin, crispy crust with just the right amount of ingredients. My favorite is the pizza with *prosciutto cotto* — cooked ham.

Below: Outside dining area for Osteria dei Mercanti (Tripadvisor). Bottom: roast pork loin.



The house wines are adequate or you can order several wines by-the-glass including a *Vino Nobile di Montepulciano* that is outstanding.

Panna cotta with caramel sauce makes an excellent dessert accompanied by a small glass of *vin santo* for your *digestivo*.

OSTERIA DEI MERCANTI

Location:

43.464786, 11.880922
Via Ser Petraccolo, 9
0575.24330

Website: <http://www.osteria-deimercanti.it>

Walk north on Corso Italia, take the first left, and you will see the large tent.

Hours:

Mon-Fri: 12.00-15.00, 19.00-23.30

Sat and Sun: 19.00-23.30

No *pranzo* on Saturday and Sunday.

Accessibility: All one level, plenty of room.

They have a large dining room inside and a large tent on the piazza for outdoor dining.

Prices are reasonable with more than adequate servings. I've had pasta and pizza several times for a quick, tasty, filling lunch. They have a full menu of typical Aretine fare. The best *secondi piatti* are veal filets in three different styles: balsamic vinegar, cream and truffles, and porcini mushrooms.

ANTICA OSTERIA L'AGANIA

Location:

43.464089, 11.882382

Via Mazzini 10
52100 Arezzo, Italy
0575.295381

It's just about next door to Trattoria il Saraceno.

Website: <http://www.agania.it>

Email: info@agania.com

Hours:

Tues-Sun: 12.00-15.00,
18.00-22.30
Closed Monday.

Accessibility: A little difficult getting into, there are a couple of steps down into the main floor of the restaurant. Aisles are tight.

This is an inexpensive *osteria* in the center of Arezzo. It's a popular tourist destination and found in many guidebooks, probably because the food is good and the prices low. (You can also tell the tourist places by how early they open;

L'Agania, economical restaurant with excellent, economical meals.





Typical L'Agania antipasto: *crostini nero*, *crostini* with tomatoes, *prosciutto* and *salami*, fresh fig, olives, and *panzanella*.

vegetables.

Besides the requisite tiramisu, L'Agania has the best *panna cotta* in town, topped with berries, chocolate, or caramel.

It's not outstanding but definitely worth the price so I eat there a lot. The bread and house wines are good. And I'm an American who still likes to eat before 20.00.

Satisfied customer eating seafood risotto at Wonderful. Don't be fooled just because she is mother of the owner.

WONDERFUL RISTORANTE E PIZZERIA

Location:

43-48351, 11.85676

Località Quarata

Via Setteponti, 407



0575-364894

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Wonderful-Ristorante-Pizzeria-372770326217079/>

Hours: Wed - Mon: 12.30 - 15.00, 18.00 - 23.00
Closed Tuesday.

Accessibility: All one level, plenty of room.

Wonderful, about three km west of the town center,

Agania opens at 6:00 pm, prime time for Americans.)

In addition to *a la carte*, they have fixed price menus offering two or three courses.

There are six pastas that you can match with one of six different sauces including wild boar ragù, porcini, simple tomato sauce, and carbonara.

The *secondo piatti* include several kinds of stewed meats as well as grilled steak, *cinghiale*, pork, osso bucco, and rabbit. The grilled *cinghiale* goes well with grilled

is a pizzeria and seafood restaurant. On my visit, I had a grilled seafood mix including mussels, clams, swordfish, scampi, and calamari. Some of it was fried instead of grilled. The fried calamari (always a good benchmark) was tender and fresh. I also had a rich *primo piatto* of seafood linguini with a mild red sauce and tender clams and mussels. The restaurant has special menus featuring Tuscan specialties each weekend.

PASTICCERIA TIFFANY

Location:

43.461459, 11.877896

This may be the best bar in Arezzo. The pastries are varied and exquisite. Pick up a cake to take to a friend. My favorite breakfast is a chocolate croissant and cappuccino. The *barista* is an artist (check out page 24 for some of his designs.) It's very small. Only about 20 people can fit inside, standing shoulder to shoulder, but don't let that stop you.

GOOD GELATO SITES:

GELATERIA VIOLETTA

Viale Michelangelo, 114

43.459231, 11.879412

Open: 13.00 - 24.00

Perhaps the best gelato in Arezzo. It is a privately owned store that still makes its own gelato and has been in operation for over 70 years. The walls have autographed pictures of many celebrities who have stopped by over the years. Try their own "Violetta" gelato as one of your "tastes."

GELATERIA ARTIGIANALE CREMÌ

Corso Italia, 100

43.463936, 11.881700



Top: The banner identifying the location of the Tiffany bar and bakery. Above: a Tiffany cappuccino made by the barista-artist.

Open: 09.00 - 23.00

Cremi is on Corso Italia. A favorite is stracciatella, vanilla with chunks of chocolate.

SOFT GELATO

Via Giuseppe Garibaldi 117
43.46359, 11.87918.

This has long been considered the best gelato in Arezzo. It's in a small store along the busy Via Giuseppe Garibaldi a bit outside the old centro. The gelato is the smoothest and richest I've had.

IL GELATO

Via de'Cenci 21
43.46347, 11. 87992.

This is off one of the side streets of Corso Italia. Look to see if they have *riso*, rice that day.

COOP.FI

Viale Giovanni Amendola
43.47556, 11.86189.

A big box store but first rate food. You'll find not just gelato but a *tavola calda* with hot dinner food, a seafood bar, and a deli.

There are many other good restaurants in Arezzo. It is hard to make a mistake and don't assume that price equals quality.

Coop.fi

Coop.fi resembles a super Walmart or Costco on the western edge of Arezzo. You can find electronics, cell phones, office supplies, toys, computers, printers, sporting goods, a gelateria, pizzeria, deli, wine, and bakery. The store has about 28 check out lines supplemented with another 20 self-checkout stations.

Coop.fi makes pizza fresh throughout the day. There are always five or six types available including pepperoni, mushroom, cheese, artichoke hearts, and prosciutto among others. A piece of pizza is 1/4th of a 16-inch pie costing about €2.00. To take it home say, "*Porto via.*"

7 Osteria Capannaccia

Location:

43.52483, 11.90643
Località Campriano, 51/c
0575.36175

Website: <http://www.lacapannaccia.it>

Hours:

Lunch: 12.30 to 14.00
Dinner: 20.00 to 24.00
Closed Sunday evening
and all day Monday.

Reservations essential
Friday through Sunday
and advised for all other
evenings.

Accessibility: All one
level. Gravel parking lot.

Time for lunch or dinner: at least an hour and
a half to three hours.

Cost: €30 to €38 for a
full meal.

Mentioned briefly in the
previous chapter, *Osteria
Capannaccia* deserves its
own chapter. My friends

and family consider this the best restaurant in Arezzo serving traditional Aretine fare with a focus on grilled meats. It's informal and serves generous portions at a moderate price. Too far out of town (about 7 km., 4.3 mi.) for most tourists, its patrons are almost all locals. It's worth the effort to go there.

The popular restaurant accommodates all kinds of diners and groups. On any particular day, especially weekends, you may eat alongside a formally dressed wedding party, a first communion celebration, and informally dressed families and couples.

La Capannaccia is up a short winding road in the Apennine foothills (see map at end of chapter). The view over the valley to Arezzo is perfect for a romantic dinner, especially in the evening



*Top: entrance.
Above: Urbano,
the owner.*



Two Capannaccia primi piatti: porcini risotto in meat sauce and pappardelle in cinghiale sauce.

with the lights of the city twinkling in the distance and a sky full of stars above.

TRADITIONAL OSTERIA

An *osteria* specializes in grilled and roasted meats cooked over a wood fire. (Vegetarians will find meatless pasta, vegetables, and salads.)

There is a menu on the wall outside the entrance, however, Urbano, the proprietor,

comes to your table, and asks what you would like, giving the options of the day. With each course, you can order one dish or ask for a taste of two or more of the options. It is always hard for me to decide between rabbit, ribs, and *bistecca*, so I order all three.

ANTIPASTI

- traditional prosciutto and salami plate
- several styles of *bruschette*: brushed with olive oil with a little salt, picante tomato sauce, and crostini nero

PRIMI PIATTI

- risotto with *porcini* mushrooms and meat — my favorite
- polenta with mushrooms
- pappardelle with wild boar and tomato sauce
- *ribollita*, a cooked mixture of beans, vegetables, and bread — a Tuscan specialty
- penne in a meatless, cream and picante tomato sauce

SECONDI PIATTI

All *secondi piatti* are grilled over an open wood fire seasoned simply with salt, pepper, and olive oil.

- *Bistecca Fiorentina*, porterhouse steak cooked in Florentine style
- *coniglio*, rabbit
- *pollo*, chicken

- *costole*, pork ribs
- *salsiccia*, sausages
- *fegato*, liver

LE VEDURE AND CONTORNO

- Tuscan white beans
- salad
- roasted potatoes

DOLCE

- *panna cotta* with chocolate, caramel, or fruit toppings
- tiramisu
- chocolate cake with hot chocolate topping
- *gelato*

BEVERAGES

- all the water you want
- all the house wine, red and white, that you want (finer wines available for purchase)
- Urbano's own homemade herbal *digestivo* and *limoncello* (*Digestivi* are served at the end of the meal to help with digestion.)
- *caffè*

TYPICAL CAPANNACCIA EXPERIENCE

One year when in Arezzo studying Italian and researching a new book I took a group of four students from the Italian school where I was studying to *La Capannaccia*. I opened the heavy, wooden, door under the portico, and we walked into a spacious dining hall, about twenty-feet wide and forty-feet long. At the opposite end is a fireplace, large enough to stand in, with grilling, sizzling meats.

Urbano, a tall man wearing an open-necked shirt with sleeves rolled up to his elbows, and a broad smile greeted us, and after finding our table, he immediately brought out red and white house wines and bottled water. He asked what we'd like for the *antipasti*.



The grill master preparing the meats over wood coals.



It was hard to decide so I asked, “Please give us a little bit of everything.” A short time later, plates of *bruschette*, and prosciutto and salami magically appeared. The *bruschette* were traditional pieces of toasted Tuscan bread (*bruschetta*) rubbed with garlic, drizzled with oil, and topped with a red picante

tomato sauce, *crostini nero*, fresh tomatoes, or served plain (see recipes for *bruschetta* in this book). Conversation stopped except to say, “Oh, you have to try this one!” or “My goodness, this is fantastic!”

Finishing the *antipasti*, Urbano returned for our *primi piatti* order. Again, we ordered a bit of everything: *risotto con porcini* and *cinghiale* sauce, penne in a creamy picante tomato sauce with peas, polenta with mushrooms, and pappardelle in *cinghiale* ragù. Unbelievably, the five of us emptied all the platters.

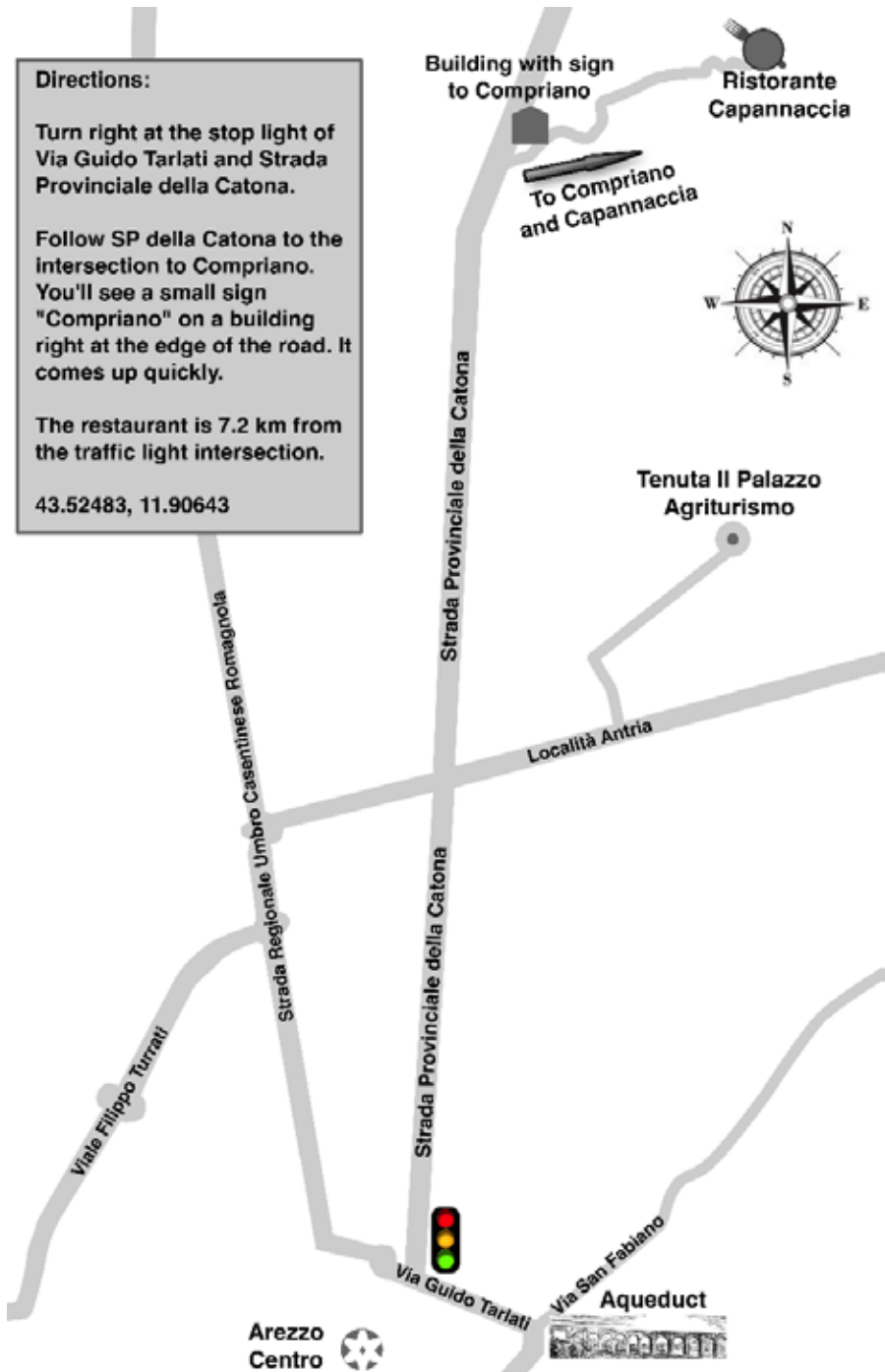
We were stuffed, but weren’t giving up and prepared ourselves for the *secondi piatti*. We ordered all of the options: grilled ribs, rabbit, liver, chicken, sausage, and *bistecca fiorentino* (porterhouse brushed with olive oil, garlic, and salt). When the platter arrived, the smell of the wood fire mingled with still sizzling meats while hands started sticking in forks from all directions. It wasn’t long before the platter was empty.

Finally, it was time for the *dolce* and we all ordered *panna cotta* with either chocolate, caramel, or berry (fruits of the forest) toppings.

We concluded with a bit of Urbano’s homemade herbal mint *digestivo* and *caffè* and waddled to the doorway, hoping that we’d all fit in the car.

I was rewarded with four happy faces telling me that this was one of the best meals that they had ever eaten.

Way to Capannaccia





*Top: pizza with prosciutto cotto (ham) from Trattoria il Saraceno.
Above: risotto with shrimp and saffron from Ristorante il Vesuvio.*

8 Coffee O Clock

Location:

43.462879, 11.880275

Corso Italia, 184
52100 Arezzo

Accessibility: Easy.

Website: <http://www.coffeeo-clock.com/domino/coffeeo-clock.com/COCClock.nsf/en-coffeeoclock/homepage.htm>

AT THE OFFICE

This is my home away from home and my Arezzo office.

Coffee O Clock (CoC) is a fresh updating of the classic Italian bar. It has a sleek, modern look and different practices that unite both new and old. The bar opened in October 2001 focusing on concepts of quality, service, information, and culture. Both old and young customers stream in and out all day, barely providing the young men and women baristas a break; however, even at its busiest times the wait is seldom more than a few minutes.

PLACING YOUR ORDER

Like traditional bars, it has an L-shaped counter. On the short side of the L, facing the entry, you place and pay for your order. The barista places your receipt on a plate next to the espresso machine to wait its turn. Then slide around the corner to the long side of the L and wait for your order. At the end of the L, is a glass case with *panini* and pastries for breakfast, lunch, and snacks. Once you receive your order, stand at the counter, or take a seat at one of the several tables or counters.

QUALITY AND OPTIONS

As well as ordinary cappuccinos and espressos, CoC turns out a variety of high quality drinks. The hot chocolate varieties are rich





enough to hold up the tiny *caffè* spoon. They have numerous teas from China and India (e.g., Darjeeling, Jasmine, Earl Grey), Irish coffee, cappuccinos, and espressos with flavorings like pepper, anise, vanilla, and cinnamon. Unlike other bars, CoC also serves traditional American drip coffee.

SERVICE

The staff is young and friendly, always greeting you with a smile. They work fast while joking and talking with customers. Unusual for most bars, they have several women baristas.

NO COST SEATING

One of the most visible differences between old and new is that Coffee O'Clock offers no-cost seating with several tables and long counters with stools along the windows. At most traditional bars, the seating areas are reserved for table service that costs more money.



The first thing that you notice when you walk in is a table that seats ten. There are several smaller tables scattered about and three long counters with stools against the windows. Three times as big as most bars, CoC has seating for over 30 patrons.

LIBRARY

Another radical departure is the “library” of daily reading materials. Along one of the walls sit about ten different morning newspapers in several languages along with a half-dozen weekly and monthly magazines. Every morning I drop in to catch up on the news in the *New York Times* — free except for the cost of a drink. And behold! If you stop in late in the afternoon, all the papers are still there.

CULTURE AND ART

To promote culture, the bar offers regular art exhibits displayed in small niches in the walls. I've seen photography, paintings, and sculpture. A unique showing in 2009 was ten new sculptural concepts of the small coffee spoon. It turned out to be a contest and the winning spoon was selected by the RIVER coffee company to be used in its bars.

WIRELESS

Coffee O Clock offers wireless for €3.00 (\$4.50) per hour, €4.00 (\$6.00) for two hours. That's a little high but it is a fast, reliable network.



Bialetti 1 tassa moka. (WMC, Hans Chr. R.)

How to Make the Perfect Espresso

On the web you can find 2000 word descriptions on how to make perfect espresso. Here is a short description for using a stovetop Bialetti Moka:

Start with fresh ground espresso.

Fill the espresso maker basket. Do not press or tamp down the coffee. Clean off any grounds on the rim of the basket and then screw on the top.

Set the moka on the stove over medium high heat. If the heat is too high you may burn the espresso. This takes three to five minutes.

Use within 30 seconds, if you wait too long the coffee will get stale.

Or, go to your local coffee shop.

Ciaccia

Ciaccia is fried bread dough. Many cultures have versions of this. Native Americans call it “fry bread”. At carnivals and markets in the US, it’s called “elephant ears”. Here is a simple way of making ciaccia. This is so popular, entire food festivals, or “*sagre*” are held in its honor.

You can make your own dough (use a bread recipe) or use frozen dough (e.g., Rhodes) from the grocery store.

- Thaw two loaves of frozen bread dough or make your own.
- Cut off a piece about the size of a golf ball.
- Slowly stretch out the ball of dough very thinly, with slightly thicker edges.
- Set the stretched dough under a damp cloth and let rise about 15 minutes until slightly puffy.
- Fry in a little vegetable oil until golden on both sides.
- Sprinkle with a little salt or cinnamon sugar, or pour on some syrup.

9 Sleeping in Arezzo

CASA PODERE SAN FIRENZE B&B

43.44318, 11.92568

Località Scopetone, 21

52100 Arezzo, Italy

+39.0575.360.486

+39.3339.303.526

Website: <http://www.casapoderesanfirenze.com>

FEATURES

- *Stunning views.* Casa Podere Bed & Breakfast is only about six km outside Arezzo high in the foothills offering stunning views of Arezzo. It is easy to see the geography of Arezzo with its broad plain surrounding the small bubble of old Arezzo sitting in the center.
- *Small and personal.* Casa Podere has six rooms of varying sizes. It serves both short and long-term stays with a common kitchen. It is quiet and unassuming with wonderful hosts.
- *Free wifi and television.* For those who can't disconnect for a few days, it's available. With a computer you can make reservations for upcoming visits to major tourist sites. You can either wait hours in line for the Uffizi Gallery in Florence or make a reservation online and walk right in when you arrive. The television has no English channels.
- *Well-equipped common kitchen.* There is a well-equipped, common kitchen next to the breakfast room with a gas range, oven, several espresso pots, and small refrigerator. Along with saving money, the common kitchen provides an opportunity to visit with other guests and swap stories and information.
- *English spoken.* Gabriella speaks and writes English and loves to practice. You can easily make a reservation through email or phone, and she loves to share information and travel advice.



- *Access-ibility.*
Difficult.
The parking lot has a small hill to climb to the building. There are no ramps or elevators between floors.
- *Includes breakfast.*
An Italian breakfast of coffee with milk, pastries, and cereals.



***PERSONAL
EXPERIENCE***

- The amazing view. The first time that I went up the mountain from Arezzo to Casa Podere, I was knocked over by the expansive view. It is even better in the morning as the sun rises bathing the whole plain, hills and city in golds and reds. Some rooms have a balcony overlooking the Arezzo plain.
- Cooler. Although only a couple of hundred meters above Arezzo, it's a great place to stay in the summer with cooler air and less humidity than at the lower altitude.



Top: Kitchen. Center: Small window covering made by Gabriella while pregnant with her son. Above: The hosts: Marco, Gabriella, Virgilio, and Elisa.

- Peaceful. This is one of the most peaceful places that I've stayed: not even close to traffic, the B&B is up a winding road about 1 km from the main highway, yet only a ten-minute drive from Arezzo.
- Recently remodeled. The word "remodel" barely suffices to describe what the family has done. They must have gutted the interior and started from scratch. Like many places in Italy that look old (a few hundred years) on the outside, on the inside it is a surprise of modern design and conveniences, and stylish fixtures, and furnishings.
- Kind gracious family. Gabriella and her family are charming and gracious people. She is ready to drop whatever she is doing to help you — or just to take you into her kitchen and make caffè and chat.
- Reasonably priced. For a B&B Casa Podere is a moderately priced place in a picturesque and bucolic setting.



Another bedroom in Casa Podere B&B.

LA CORTE DEL RE

43.46424, 11.88432

Via Borgunto, 5
52100 Arezzo
+39.0575.401603

Email: info@lacortedelre.com

Website: <http://www.lacortedelre.com/>

FEATURES

- *Perfect city location* adjacent to the Piazza Grande in the middle of the old city center — the *centro* — with short walks to restaurants, shops, and most of the attractions along the Corso Italia that hosts the nightly *passeggiata*, monthly antique fair, *La Giostra del Saracino*, and most other special events.

Franca, owner of La Corte del Re.



- *Pick up at the Train Station.* If arriving by train, let Franca know and she will pick you up so you don't have to climb the hill with your bags.
- *Modern spacious rooms.* The rooms are gorgeous with new furniture, bathrooms and fixtures. Most include a small kitchenette equipped with the basics so you can cook simple meals.
- TV with CNN in English.
- *Roof top patio.* In the mood for a picnic? The rooms spread along four floors as the hotel climbs the hill behind it. The top floor opens to a roof top patio adjacent to a shady city park.
- *Reasonable prices.* There is no hotel



in Arezzo with a better location, yet the prices are reasonable and less than many other Arezzo hotels.

- *Accessibility.* There are four floors of rooms with no elevator and narrow stairways.
- *English spoken.* Franca is a delightful person and speaks and writes English well; you can easily make reservations through email or the phone.



The common salon on the ground floor surrounded by Etruscan walls.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

- Patient help with reservations. The first time that I stayed at La Corte del Re was after nine months of preparation. Franca was extremely patient, putting up with my last minute time and date changes, and answering a million questions via email.
- Ten-minute walk from the train station. Corte del Re is about $\frac{3}{4}$ the way up the Arezzo hill just before the hill becomes a steeper climb and about ten-minutes from the Stazione. However, if you let Franca know when you are coming she will pick you up at the station.
- Easy to find from the Pietri parking lot. If you have a car, the Pietri parking lot is along the northern base of the hill, below the Duomo. You can choose the number of hours to pay at the kiosks at the parking lot. The top of the hill looks like a long, steep climb — and it is. However, Arezzo has installed a series of six escalators to whisk you easily to the top with your bags. From there it is a short three-minute downhill walk to Piazza Grande and La Corte del Re.
- Surprisingly large rooms. Usually, the old local hotels (not franchises) have small rooms, often made smaller by the addition of a bathroom. The rooms here are large and spacious with modern, stylish bathrooms.
- Center of the action. Being next to Piazza Grande brings on choices for activity. On a Friday night of my stay, a small French Market began, and the final choral competition of the International Polyphonic was held on the piazza outside my

window. After dining on French bread and sausages, I found myself falling asleep to the encore music of the winning group.

- The Etruscans. It is fascinating that the hotel fits into the side of the hill and into some Etruscan ruins from the seventh and sixth centuries BC — that's history. Some of the rooms use the Etruscan walls, and the public salon on the first floor has an Etruscan oven in the wall.
- I love Franca. Franca is the owner. She has a delightful sense of humor with an infectious laugh. She is solicitous and helps meet your needs and solve problems. She directs you to the important sites and good restaurants and stores. She is fun to be with.

TENUTA IL PALAZZO AGRITURISMO

Location:

43.503012, 11.904558

Tenuta Il Palazzo
Località Antria
52100 Arezzo, Italy

+39.0575.315016: voice and fax

Website: <http://www.tenutailpalazzo.it>

Email: agriturismo@tenutailpalazzo.it

FEATURES

- Il Palazzo is a *working farm* that bottles several types of red and white Chianti wines, and an organic extra virgin olive oil.
- *Peace and solitude.* Il Palazzo sits on the side of a hill overlooking a small valley, olive trees, vineyards, and wheat fields

One of Il Palazzo's many fine wines. You can buy them at the cantina.



with Arezzo in the distance, well away from busy streets and roads, yet only five minutes from the city center.

- *Wifi.* This is easily accessed in the common areas and outside, even by the pool. Most of the apartments can also link to the network depending on how far they are from the source. Reasonably fast.
- *Nine apartments.* One of the rooms is accessible for people with disabilities. Most are equipped with small kitchens for daily, weekly, and monthly stays. Television, but no English channels.
- *Accessibility.* A ground floor apartment designed for easy accessibility. The walk from the parking lot to the building is short but steep. The breakfast room requires negotiating a few steps.
- *Outside views.* Each apartment has a table outside the door for dining or enjoying the view, sunrises, and sunsets.
- *Swimming pool.* Large enough to do laps. It is so clear and clean that you can read a newspaper on the bottom. There are showers and a cabana next to the pool with plenty of seating.



Top: The way to reception.

Middle: One of the apartment buildings.

Bottom: "My" apartment.

- *Breakfast.* The breakfast includes pastries, cold cuts, cakes, *caffè*, milk and cereal. Breakfast is extra (€7 to €10) and you need to reserve the night before.
- *English spoken.* Isabella speaks fine English, and you can make reservations via the phone or email.
- You can arrange for tours of the extensive, ultra modern *cantina*, winery.
- If you are lucky you will be there during the latter part of September for the *vendemmia*, grape harvest. Il Palazzo wine making is highly modernized using the latest technologies.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

- Postcard picture setting. It looks just like the views of Tuscany that you've seen in books or on TV. Apartments overlook olive orchards and vineyards. It's so beautiful you'll be tempted to spend the whole day relaxing and enjoying the scenery just outside the front door. There is a small balcony on the end of a building making a beautiful, shaded place for lunch overlooking the valley and Il Palazzo vineyards.
- Sunrises and sunsets. The magical Tuscan stone turns colors throughout the day from a bright coral in the morning to rich gold in the evening. It is easy to spend a quiet day watching the changes of color in the fields, vineyards, and buildings.
- Winery tours. The winery uses advanced technological wizardry to make its high quality modern wines. Taste wine directly from the temperature controlled vats and barrels during a personal tour by Primo. The farm also makes olive oil that Primo will offer you from the barrels. All of their wines are excellent and I love the syrah.

Grapes ready to harvest with the mechanical harvester. The grapes are trained to grow below the foliage.



- Trivia. They use a robotic machine to sweep the pool. It's mesmerizing, watching it go along the bottom and then climb the vertical sides before returning to the bottom.
- Caring, personal service. Isabella, Anna, Lili, Alessio, Lorenzo, and Primo are gracious hosts. Isabella will stop and talk with you at anytime and take you into the breakfast room for a caffè and some torta. She'll direct you to local events and sites in and around Arezzo. I stopped by the office one day for a brief visit after lunch at a restaurant, and Isabella asked, "Would you like some caffè?" I said, "No thanks, I just finished lunch." Almost by magic a caffè and piece of *torta* showed up in front of me. Of course, it would be rude not to eat it and somehow I managed — as I usually do.
- Reasonably priced. It's hard to find, if not impossible, a more moderately priced agriturismo in a more idyllic setting with comfortable apartments and delightful people.



*Top to bottom:
The Il Palazzo breakfast table.
A kitchen in one of the apartments.
The Il Palazzo pool and cabana.*



Il Palazzo sangiovese vineyard.

VI Culture and Events in Arezzo



Shopping during the monthly Fiera Antiqueria in Arezzo.

“Perhaps travel cannot prevent bigotry, but by demonstrating that all peoples cry, laugh, eat, worry and diet can introduce the idea that if we try and understand each other, we may even become friends.”

Maya Angelou



Each event's Golden Lance is hand carved to represent a theme, person, or event. This lance shows Gaius Mecenate, an ancient Roman important in Arezzo history.

36 La Giostra del Saracino

HISTORY

Originating from the ancient Crusades, the *Joust of the Saracen* competition began in the Middle Ages after the Christian Crusaders battled with Islamic tribes, or the Moors, attempting to drive them from southern Italy and Europe.

The first documented event is dated August 6, 1535 when a majority of city magistrates (26 black stones v. 3 white stones) initiated *La Giostra del Saracino* with a prize of one arm of purple satin: .3364 sq m (.4 sq yd).

During the eighteenth century, popularity of the joust declined and did not resume until 1931. Today it takes place twice a year on the second Saturday in June (evening) and the first Sunday in September (daytime). The goal is to remember Arezzo's history and to immerse citizens and tourists in a uniquely festive atmosphere.

Two contestants from each of Arezzo's four neighborhoods (*Porta Sant'Andrea*, white and green; *Porta Crucifera*, red and green; *Porta del Foro*, crimson and yellow; and *Porto Santo Spirito*, yellow and blue) compete for the *Lancia d'Oro*, Golden Lance, and bragging rights until the next *Giostra*. The contestants attempt to gain points by hitting a shield held by a machine model of a Saracen.

PAGEANTRY

The day begins when the jousts are blessed in the Duomo and then proceed the short distance to the *Palazzo Comunale* where the *Araldo*, Herald, makes an official announcement from a window





on the second floor of the Palazzo opening the contest. Captains take an oath in the town hall square, and the race order is drawn up.

Then a parade of over 300 costumed locals representing valets, drummers, trumpeters, flag wavers, and riders with their lances go to each neighborhood in the city where the *Araldo* again reads the challenge. The parade concludes as everyone marches into Piazza Grande. After the officials arrive in the Piazza, the internationally known flag throwers entertain the public with their throwing and acrobatics.

Piazza Grande takes on a new appearance. A curved, dirt, ten-foot wide track for the horses extends from the southeast corner of the piazza, past the Saracen model, and into the northwest corner. Bleachers extend along the south and north sides of the piazza.



THE CONTEST

The goal of the joust is to hit a shield held by a wooden model of a Saracen. The knights (two from each neighborhood) take two turns each, galloping toward the target to score points on the shield. The rotating model Saracen, the *Buratto Re delle Indie*, the Puppet King of the Indies, holds the shield in one hand and a leather thong holding three lead and leather balls, a *mazzafrusto*, in the other. The idea is to hit the shield in a place with the highest point value (from one to five) and gallop away before it rotates and hits the rider on his back with the leather/lead balls.

The rules of this tournament were taken from a joust of 1678. A rider

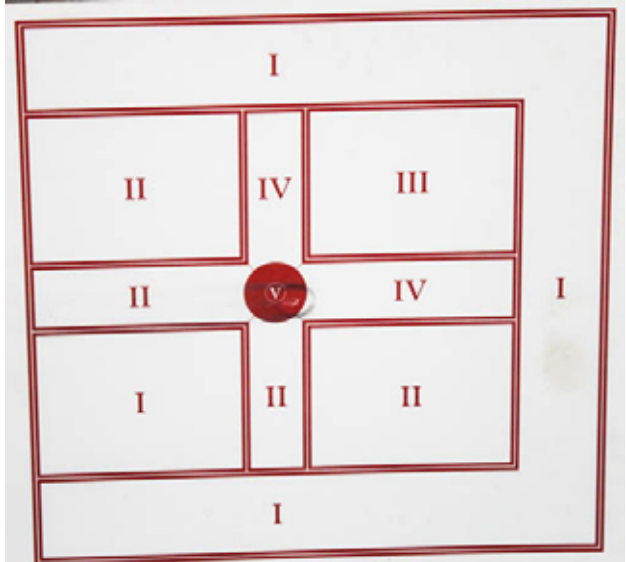
can be disqualified, lose his score or double it, when he breaks his lance in one of his assaults. In the event of a tie, a runoff between the tied neighborhoods continues until one scores more points.

The crowd is rowdy. They cheer when the knight hits the target but remain silent when he misses. They attempt to distract the knights from the other quarters.

This is one of most enjoyable ways to experience the age-old history and traditions of the old city. Arezzo is not alone with its traditions. Almost every old city in Italy has its own ceremonies and competitions stemming from the past.

The winning neighborhood wins the *Golden Lance*. It is 3.55 meters long (11-1/2 feet). The *lancia* is carved by Francesco Conti and adorned with golden leaves and precious stones and depict historical events or characters.

Official Website: www.giostradelsaracino.arezzo.it



Top: Rider from Porta Sant'Andrea attacks the Buratto (Institution Giostra del Saracino).

Above: a used target showing a hit on the "five-spot."



Antique Fair activities: Clockwise from upper left: Young girl learning the ropes. Busker with cymbals, drums, and pan pipe. Classical guitarist. Woman makes homemade noodles outside a restaurant.

37 Fiera Antiquaria — Antique Fair

THE FAIR

Imagine a flea market with over 200 dealers. Imagine a flea market that isn't a flea market but an exclusive place for selling valuable antiques. Then add 15,000 people crowded into narrow, steep medieval streets.

The monthly *Fiera Antiquaria* spreads throughout the old city center with a carnival-like atmosphere. It's like an octopus with its body in Piazza Grande and the arms spreading throughout the connecting side streets. It begins the morning of the Saturday before the first Sunday of a month, going from about 09.00 until sunset each day.

The fair is a living breathing part of the city. Restaurants have waiting lines, hotels are full, day visitors crowd the trains, and euros change hands. Street vendors sell balloons, roasted chestnuts, belts, braids, scarves, and tablecloths while buskers entertain. Mothers push their baby strollers, lovers walk hand-in-hand, shoppers eye the merchandise while others soak in the activity like sun worshippers on the beach. (Watch out for the strollers with twins sitting side-by-side.)

The sloped Piazza Grande is given over mostly to furniture and other large objects. There are armoires, doors, bed frames, toilet chairs, armchairs, tables, sarcophagi, chandeliers, and statues. You'll dis-

Below: The large items like furniture are on sale in Piazza Grande.

Bottom: A copper hair washing sink from a beauty salon.





cover candelabra, china, violins, bronzes, lace, and terra-cotta. Objects range from the Etruscan times through the twentieth century.

Everyone finds something of interest. The Beatles? €90 for their first album. Typewriters? Something that looks like it was made in the nineteenth century. Jewelry,

door knockers, paintings, film projectors, stamps, books, hooks, colored glass, lace, silver, ancient record players, and on and on.

If you wish to see the Antique Fair and stay in Arezzo, you need to make reservations well in advance or stay in a nearby town (e.g., Florence, Cortona, Monte San Savino) and take a bus or train into the city. The fair is only a five-minute walk from the train station. Parking and traffic are impossible. Saturday is called “Black Saturday” because the Antique Fair and Saturday Market coincide creating gridlock of both cars and shoppers that doesn’t sort out until late in the evening.

HISTORY

The Arezzo Antique Fair is a legacy of the famous antique dealer and collector, Ivan Bruschi, whose house and precious collection is now a museum only about 100-feet from the Piazza Grande (see chapter 21 on Ivan Bruschi’s Museum). The first fair was in 1969.

LASTING IMPACT

In 1968 Arezzo had fewer than fifteen antique shops and today Arezzo is now an antique center of Italy with more than 100 antiquarian shops selling furniture, drawings, statuary, terracotta, books, and scores of other objects of value spreading throughout time.

VITALS

Official Website: www.arezzeriaantiquaria.org

English Website: www.seeyouintuscany.com/tuscany_travel_guide/arezzo_area/arezzo/antiques_market/antiques_market.html

38 The Passeggiata

As evening arrives and shade falls over the streets, the young and old come out to slowly stroll up and down *Corso Italia* in the *centro* to see and be seen, to check-out and to be checked-out, and to work up an appetite for dinner. You see all kinds of people from men and women in Gucci and Armani to kids with torn jeans and glitter covered T-shirts. There are baby strollers that look like they were made by Ferrari, while others resemble military tanks.



Friends walk with arms linked arguing politics and exchanging local gossip. Small toddlers and children run up and down the street laughing and waving.

You are never too young to begin the passeggiata.

I participate in the *passeggiata* every night and day that I can when near the city. Even if tired, once there the energy that radiates from the people gives me an extra boost, no matter how tired from a long day of touring.

HOW TO PERFORM THE PASSEGGIATA

Italians take living seriously and even a simple event, like walking up and down a street, has its own art form and rituals.

Italians have unwritten dress codes for the *passeggiata* — the style depends on age. People make an effort to *fare la bella figura*, cut a beautiful figure. The older men wear suits and ties or sport coats, and the older women wear straight skirts with jackets and high heels. The younger are more





casual dressing in slacks, button down shirts, perhaps with a sweater thrown over the shoulders with the sleeves hanging crossed in front. Kids wear torn jeans and T-shirts, even in the chilly fall and spring. Tourists are easy to spot with their ball caps, shorts, fanny packs, socks with sandals, and generally sloppy dress.

The time for the *passeggiata* is usually between 17.00 and 19.30. The walk begins gradually as people wander out from work and the bars, but ends abruptly. Suddenly, between 19.30 and 20.00 the streets empty — everyone has either gone home or to restaurants for dinner.



There is no better way to meet people and experience the city and customs than walking in the *passeggiata*. It is also my favorite photo opportunity. The rite takes place in almost all old towns and cities in the pedestrian zones of the old *centro*. Better yet, it's free! Wherever you go in Italy, make an effort to find and participate in the local *passeggiata*.

Top: this is the way a man of a "certain age" walks in the passeggiata. Above: a couple with their dog.

39 Saturday Market

The Saturday Market is a place to shop and another form of the *passaggiata*.

The Arezzo Saturday market extends about one-half kilometer along *Via Giotto*. At least 100 booths line both sides of the street, two deep along one side.

You can find anything: vegetables, fruit,

clothing, hardware, cooking utensils, fresh food, cheese, seafood, sausages, *porchetta*, flowers, mushrooms, truffles — to name but a sample.

Its charm isn't just in what it offers but in the electricity generated by the people from one end to another shopping, visiting, strolling, negotiating, and paying for their goods. Vendors shout from one to another, old friends walk arm-in-arm, and families with strollers push their way through the crowds. They meet friends, show off babies, and paw through merchandise.

Some vendors have organized displays with clothes on hangers arranged by size, shoes lined up neatly, toys and gadgets in separate boxes; however, others simply dump their wares on the table and buyers have to dig through large piles to find something that they like.

Organized lines are meaningless in Italy. If you want to buy a sandwich with *porchetta* you stand in front of the counter and slowly push your way forward until you are next to the sales counter and shout your order to gain attention. If you're polite, you'll starve.

It's a great place to find fresh fruit and vegetables. The bargains aren't great with prices often the same as in the store, but it's



This is a clothing dealer at the market. Some dealers are organized with clothes lined up by size and on hangers, others just toss their goods on the table and it's a free-for-all.



fresher. Each vendor has a different policy. Some let you pick your own and put it into a bag, others don't want you touching the merchandise and select the fruit and vegetables for you. Again, it's organized chaos trying to get to the front and make yourself known to the vendors.

For me the most surprising is the hardware booth with huge copper pots (two-feet across and eighteen-inches deep), chimney sweeping tools, door knockers, fireplace tools, and other wrought iron works. The items are sturdy, heavy, and built to last. It's a beautiful display of craftsmanship.



Walking from end to end is like finding your way through an obstacle course. You have to be patient and assertive. People stop without notice to greet and talk to a friend, not caring that they are in the middle of the street. Baby strollers built like Humvees will take you out if you aren't watching.



I love the kitchen booths. They have all kinds of stove top espresso pots (mokas), pasta makers, ravioli cutters, serving

spoons, pots, pans, and a myriad of gadgets. You are bound to find something that you desperately need like a *tagliatelle* cutter, or oil and vinegar cruets, but think, you have to carry your purchases home.



I've mentioned *porchetta* a couple of times. *Porchetta* is a boned, whole roast pig stuffed with herbs and garlic. The pig (usually about three feet long) sits whole on the counter with an apple or orange in its mouth. Before being cooked the pig is boned, spread with herbs and garlic and stuffing, tied back together and roasted on a spit over a wood fire. The succulent meat is moist, subtly flavored, and exquisitely tender. It's sold by the *etto*, one hundred grams. One hundred grams is about ¼-pound, or you can buy a sandwich that makes a great lunch, or picnic.

All-in-all it's a great experience, an authentic chance to shop, visit, walk with the Aretini and steep yourself in the local culture — and find something that you didn't know that you needed.

Fresh roasted succulent porchetta.



*Top: Pan piper and seller from South America.
Above: Local Aretino sandwich makers.*

40 Mercato Internazionale

Every year around the middle of October the *Mercato Internazionale* arrives in Arezzo for a three day celebration of foods from around the world.

I discovered this one Friday morning on my way to the Pionta Hill when I found the Eden parking lot converted to a special food market.

Each year there are at least 170 booths offering food from 33 countries around the world. In addition to food, you can find jewelry, pottery, musical instruments, and objects that made sound effects like the wind or rain. The market takes up the entire Eden parking lot (room for 235 cars), a couple of side streets, and Piazza Sant'Agostino. More than 320,000 people visited the *Mercato* in 2017. There were 170 international operators and 90 local exhibitors.

It was a cornucopia of delicacies and objects: Italian *panini*, Spanish paella, Bavarian beer, speck, French cheeses, Australian pastries, porcelain, perfumes from Provence, Irish Guinness, steak from Argentina, and pastries. There were dozens of chocolates, chunks of licorice as large as bricks, crepes, and German food with brats, sauerkraut, and pork steaks. One vendor brought in fifteen kilo (33 lbs) loaves of bread to make *panini* throughout the weekend. There were olives, every type imaginable and traditional American food including hamburgers, fresh pasta, and spit roasted chicken. Others were selling very expensive rare white and black truffles. Two truffles, about one-inch in diameter, cost at least €10 (about \$15.00). In reality, these prices were a bargain.

If you want one smash-bang festival to attend on your visit, this is it. It's thrilling, memorable, and fun. And after six weeks on Italian food, I always look forward to a change of diet for a few days.



Top: Making paella at one of the most popular stands, Spain. Above: dancing the flamenco at the Spanish booth.



Clockwise from top left: a man makes mini crepes for Nutella topping at the Holland booth. Father and daughter negotiate the crowded street. A clown selling balloons. One of the cheese sellers from Sardinia. A German stand selling sausages, kraut, and wieners. Above: the German booth.

41 Il Mercato Degli Agricoltori

The daily indoor Farmers' Market.

43.4656, 11.8787

Piazzetta delle Logge del Grano, 5

Hours:

Daily: 09.00-20.00

Website: <http://www.arezzone.it/attualita/logge-del-grano-mercato-degli-agricoltori-compie-due-anni-attivita/>

This new indoor market for fresh local vegetables and fruit opened in 2016. Although there is a daily market in Piazza Sant'Agostino, there is a greater variety of goods here, including wine, prepared pastas, sauces, meats, and cheeses.

The market also has its own restaurant, *Osteria delle Logge del Grano*, opened every day for lunch from 12.30 to 14.30.



Top: Entrance to the market. Middle: A wide selection of Apples from local orchards in the Valdichiana. Bottom: A selection of prepared contorni.



Prosciutto slicer at the Fiera Antiquaria.

42 Aretine Cuisine

In one sense, a “typical” Aretine cuisine is difficult to nail down. The Aretine province is a large area with valleys around the points of the compass, each with different foods and variations based on the local agriculture. The following are some foods found in most restaurants and homes.

BRUSCHETTA

Pronounced broos-kay-tah — NOT *broo-she-tah*. In the US, bruschetta is considered toast with a tomato mixture on top. In reality, bruschetta is toast, rubbed with garlic, soaked with olive oil, and lightly salted. It can be topped with a variety of things including tomatoes, mushrooms, truffle oil, white beans, prosciutto, par-migiano, pecorino, or whatever strikes your fancy. Bread toasted over a wood fire makes excellent bruschetta.

Basic Bruschetta

Ingredients

Several slices of good Italian or French bread.

Two whole garlic cloves.

Extra virgin olive oil.

Coarse sea salt.

Directions

- Toast the bread either in a toaster or under a broiler.
- Rub the toast gently with a garlic clove.
- Generously drizzle olive over the toast.
- Salt lightly.
- Serve plain or with sauteed mushrooms, cheese, prosciutto, Tuscan white beans, tomatoes, and so on.

Basic Bruschetta Tomato Topping

Ingredients

3 medium tomatoes seeded and coarsely chopped.

3 T of finely minced sweet onions.

2 T of minced fresh basil (dried does not work for this dish).

3 T of extra virgin olive oil.

½ t wine or balsamic vinegar.

Kosher or sea salt.

Directions

- Combine tomatoes, onions, and basil.
- Add oil and vinegar.

TUSCAN WHITE BEANS

Baked Tuscan white beans are a favorite side dish and topping for bruschetta. They are easy to make.

Tuscan White Beans

- Place two cups of white beans — preferably cannellini — into a pan and cover with water, making sure that the water level is about two-inches over the beans. Set aside to soak overnight.
- The next day, drain the beans and place in a large pan. Add a can of broth (any type except fish) and water to cover the beans, about one-inch over the top.
- Add two smashed garlic cloves, two bay leaves, and a sprig of rosemary.
- Simmer gently on the stove or in the oven adding more broth, if needed.
- Check the beans every half hour until tender but not mushy — two to four hours.
- Take out the garlic, rosemary, and bay leaves. Salt to taste, and serve. Drizzle a little olive oil over the top.

DOLCE, TORTA, AND DESSERTS

Italians aren't all that big on desserts. Fruit in season and cheese often follow the entrée. A *torta* is a simple cake made with a thin layer of dough and spread with marmalade. My favorite dessert is *panna cotta* — literally “baked cream.” It is in the flan, custard, and creme brulée families (see recipe in book).

DIGESTIVI

Digestivi are highly alcoholic drinks served at the conclusion of the meal to “aid digestion.” They include drinks like grappa, *limoncello*, *nocino*, and *vin santo*. They are very expensive drinks in the US liquor stores. However, it's easy to make your own limoncello for much less.

LIMONCELLO

This is one of the most popular *digestivi*. Easily made at home with lemons, pure alcohol (e.g., Everclear), sugar, and water. This is my wife's favorite and we always keep a small bottle in the freezer to pull out and sip after dinner.

Limoncello

Ingredients

1 liter of Everclear or another type of pure alcohol
8 to 10 organic lemons
2 liters of water
600 grams of sugar

Directions

- Use a sharp knife or potato peeler and peel the lemons. Take off only the yellow skin, avoiding the bitter white pith. A sharp potato peeler works best.
- Put the peels into a container and add the alcohol. Let stand for 7 to 10 days, shaking the container every day.
- Strain the alcohol into a container that holds at least 3 liters. Throw away the waxy, brittle lemon peels.
- Place sugar and water in a pot and heat gently until the sugar is thoroughly dissolved. Do not let it boil.
- Let the sugar water cool and then combine with the flavored alcohol. Pour into smaller bottles and keep in a cool place. We keep a small bottle in the freezer.

Bruschetta di Salsiccia

As with any *bruschetta*, the idea behind this is simple. Toast some bread (see page 265) and mix up some sausage and top the bread.

Ingredients

Several slices of crusty bread
Mild Italian sausage (or any other type you'd like)
mascarpone

Directions

- Toast the bread. Rub lightly with garlic and drizzle generously with EVOO.
- Brown the sausage and break up into little bits.
- Mix the sausage with some mascarpone. About 1 teaspoon of mascarpone for 3 tablespoons of sausage.
- Spread on the toast.
- Serve warm.



Antipasti with four kinds of crostini: mushroom, nero, lardo, and tomato sauce with a roll of cheese and ham.



Primo piatto: pappardelle with cinghiale ragù.



Contorni: boiled carrots and sautéed spinach.

43 The Legend of San Donato

San Donato, Arezzo's patron saint, lived from around the year 240 to August 7, 304 when he was martyred.

He was probably an Aretino, but nothing is known of his parents, infancy, youth or formative years. His parents lived in poverty and named their son "Donato," meaning "a gift from the bounty of God."

Around 270 Arezzo received its first bishop, San Satiro, who served until 285. He was a mentor to Donato, who became a deacon and then a priest. When San Satiro died, the beloved Donato was elected Arezzo's second bishop.

In the Duomo, there is a carved bas-relief altar screen upon the high altar. The panels depict the Apostles, Mary and numerous events from the life of San Donato.

Several of the panels represent miracles. One tells the story of San Donato curing a pagan, blind, rich woman. Accompanied by her son, she approached San Donato asking to be cured. She asked, "Show me the light." Donato asked, "How can you have light if you don't have oil?" She went home, destroyed her idols and adopted the Christian faith. Upon her conversion she was cured.

One panel depicts Donato in the forest killing a dragon, clearly a metaphor for the destruction of pagan idolatry.

In another, he helps the wife of a tax collector, Eustasio. Eustasio had to go on a trip in the countryside so he left the tax revenues hidden in the house. During his travels, he died and was returned to Arezzo for burial. A debt collector came to the wife and asked for money that he was owed; however, she did not know where Eustasio hid the money. The debtor threatened to take away all that the family owned. She appealed for help to Donato, who went



The reliquary for San Donato's head in the Pieve della Santa Maria.



Top: The altar screen on the high altar in the Duomo in Arezzo. The panels tell the story of episodes of San Donato's life.

Above: The center panel is a bas-relief of the Madonna and Child.

to Eustasio's tomb and asked, "Where have you hidden the money?" The dead Eustasio replied, "Under the entry door to the house." The wife was able to pay the debtor and save her home and family.

In a similar tale, a usurer approached a woman and demanded payment for an IOU from her dead husband. Donato defended the widow and her children. He raised the man from the grave who handed over a receipt for the debt that had already been paid.

Fighting the pagans was a constant challenge. During a long drought, the pagans hoped to diminish Donato's hold on the people by blaming him. Taken to court, Donato summoned the rain, which fell everywhere but upon him. The pagans had to release him.

Finally, the pagan priests had had enough of this

miracle worker. The more people Donato converted, the fewer the number of pagans to pay tribute to the pagan priests — they were

losing money and something had to be done. They incarcerated Donato and put him on trial.

The Roman governor of the Tuscan and Umbrian regions, Quadraziano, tried the case based on an edict that prohibited any Christian from spreading the religion. The judge said to Donato, “You, to the contrary, have continued to preach to the population, persuading them to follow a doctrine contrary to the traditional religion.” Quadraziano ordered him to carry a tripod with a brazier to offer a sacrifice at a small statue of the pagan goddess Giunone and commanded Donato, “Offer sacrifice to the goddess!”

Donato answered calmly, “I have encouraged the people to adore Jesus Christ with a tranquil conscience because I am sure that he is the one true God.” When told that he must offer sacrifice or die, he said, “I will not offer sacrifice to your gods who are nothing more than demons. I offer sacrifice only to Jesus Christ.” At that the judge sentenced Donato to death by beheading. His body was gathered by some Christians and buried in Arezzo on the Pionta hill, the site of the first cathedral. Today, the stone column on which he was beheaded is in the Duomo.

Later in the thirteenth century, after the new cathedral was built and consecrated in his honor, his body was translated to the Duomo. However, legend has it that when placed in an urn in the Duomo, the head leapt out and rolled down the hill and stopped at the more humble church of the people, Pieve della Santa Maria. A member of the Duomo picked up the head, carried it up the hill, placed it in the urn and it again leapt out and rolled down the hill stopping at the Pieve. With that, the head was placed in a reliquary at the Pieve and the body was held in an urn behind the altar in the Duomo.

An exciting story, but it’s only a legend. In reality, his body was placed in the first Duomo on the Pionta Hill, near the present day train station. After Florence took control of Arezzo, it demanded that the hill town build a new Duomo within the security of the walls at the top of the hill. As they tore down the old Duomo, the relics of the saints, including the body and head of San Donato,



*San Donato
cures a child of
blindness.*

were sent out for safekeeping to other churches. The head was sent to the Pieve. Later after the new Duomo was finished, the body was placed behind the altar.

The legend is more exciting.

“Long voyages, great lies.”
Italian proverb