



MISSISSIPPI STATE
UNIVERSITY

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
Traveling Bulldogs

MAY 23-31, 2024

with optional
FLORENCE POST-TOUR

Flavors of Tuscany

**BOOK WITH
CONFIDENCE**

30-day refund
guarantee

**A Cultural Journey Through Historic Sites,
Quaint Villages, Welcoming Wineries,
and Creative Kitchens**



Dear Alumni and Friends,

Join our small group for an intimate journey exploring Chianti's countryside—a region brimming with living history, extraordinary family traditions, and an endearing farm-to-table way of life. Meander through Tuscany's colorful cities, cypress-studded hilltop towns, classic *cucinas*, and idyllic vineyards, exploring the Italian countryside that provides overwhelming inspiration for artists, chefs, and vintners alike.

Settle in for seven nights at the luxurious hillside Castello La Leccia in Castellina, featuring deluxe accommodations and exceptional views of the lush, rolling Tuscan landscape.

Each invigorating day is enriched by historical site visits, cultural activities and interactions, memorable cuisine, and festive wine tastings. Admire the Etruscan ruins and Roman center at Volterra before visiting charming San Gimignano—the Town of Fine Towers—which is completely encircled by medieval walls. Enjoy a stroll through spectacular Siena—a UNESCO World Heritage Site—with its well-preserved cityscape, celebrated Duomo, and bustling Piazza del Campo. And learn the secrets of preparing traditional Tuscan food side-by-side with chefs from Castello La Leccia.


Space is limited. With significant savings of more than \$1,000 per couple, we anticipate this tour will fill quickly, so be certain to reserve your spot today and share this brochure with family and friends who may be interested in traveling with you.

Please reserve online at msstate.orbridge.com, by calling (866) 639-0079 or by returning the enclosed reservation form.

Sincerely,

Jeff Davis
Executive Director
Mississippi State University Alumni Association

Leanna Smith
Assistant Director of Alumni Partnerships & Business Development
Mississippi State University Alumni Association

 Orbridge takes seriously the responsibility to minimize our global environmental impact. Each year we plant 100,000 trees in U.S. State Forests with afforestation needs as an ongoing initiative among our evolving sustainability efforts. Learn more at orbridge.com/going-green.



Your 9-Day Itinerary *(subject to change)*

Day 1: En route from U.S.

Day 2: Arrive in Florence, Italy / Castellina (D)

Welcome dinner

Overnight: Castello La Leccia

Day 3: Castello La Leccia (B,L,D)

Enjoyment of accommodations with cooking class at the property, evening wine tasting and tour, plus leisure time

Overnight: Castello La Leccia

Day 4: Pienza (B,L,D)

UNESCO site tour, organic farm visit

Overnight: Castello La Leccia

Day 5: Cortona (B,D)

Santa Margherita church, Bramasole villa, city center, Etruscan museum.

Overnight: Castello La Leccia

Day 6: Volterra / San Gimignano (B,D)

Panoramic Volterra city tour, San Gimignano tower exploration, visit award-winning Gelateria Dondoli

Overnight: Castello La Leccia

Day 7: Monteriggioni / Castellina in Chianti / Gaiole (B,L,D)

Walled medieval village visit, Abbazia a Isola, vineyard excursion with cooking class and dinner

Overnight: Castello La Leccia

Day 8: Siena (B,D)

Guided sightseeing, Duomo, Sanctuary of Santa Caterina, Piazza del Campo, farewell dinner

Overnight: Castello La Leccia

Day 9: Florence / Depart for U.S. (B)

(B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner)

Activity Level: Activities are generally not very strenuous, however, this program requires individuals to have higher mobility due to many steep hills and stairs to climb in Chianti. Guests should be able to enjoy two hours or more of walking, be sure-footed on cobbled and uneven surfaces, and walk up and down stairs without assistance.



Roman Theatre, Volterra



Relax

- With your small group, enjoy seven nights deluxe accommodations in the luxurious hilltop Castello La Leccia in Castellina featuring exceptional views of the lush, rolling Tuscan landscape.

Explore

- Admire the Etruscan ruins and Roman center in Volterra before visiting charming San Gimignano—the *Town of Fine Towers*—which is completely encircled by medieval walls.
- Stop into the Renaissance town of Pienza, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which sits atop a hill overlooking the Tuscan countryside.
- Discover Podere Il Casale, an organic farm. Tour the grounds while learning about the owners' passion for the slow food movement, followed by a leisurely lunch.
- Take a guided tour of Cortona with free time to explore afterward.
- Wander within the walled medieval village of Monteriggioni—a city along the ancient pilgrim road of Via Francigena. Visit Abbadia a Isola and the hilltop village of Castellina in Chianti.
- Stroll Siena—another UNESCO World Heritage Site—with its well-preserved cityscape, celebrated Duomo, and bustling Piazza del Campo.

Partake

- Learn secrets of preparing traditional Tuscan food in class with chefs from Castello La Leccia.
- Savor a cooking class and dinner at Badia a Coltibuono, a remarkable winery featured on the Netflix TV show *Salt Fat Acid Heat*.

What's Included

- 7 nights accommodations
- 7 breakfasts, 3 lunches, and 7 dinners served with wine
- All lessons and tastings as described in the 9-day itinerary
- Private motor coach transportation
- Luggage portage
- Gratuities to Orbridge Travel Director, local guides, drivers, porters, and wait staff for included meals
- Group airport transfers for guests arriving and departing during the suggested times



Cortona

Insider, Interpreter, Epicure, Host

Your Orbridge Travel Director will infuse your journey with an epicure's appreciation of food and wine, a local's knowledge and pride of place, and a travel aficionado's ability to gather the beauty of all senses to your discoveries in Italy.






Your Accommodations (subject to change)

Become part of *la famiglia* as you settle into this authentic Tuscan wine estate. Sip a glass of Chianti on a sun-dappled terrace, stroll the grounds, and admire vineyards draped with Sangiovese, Merlot, and Petit Verdot grapes.

Historical sources cite La Leccia castle's ownership was divided among 16 owners for strategic purposes. Near the mid 1400s, the Ricasoli family dominated a large part of the Chianti Classico region as well as the castle.

After being modified to serve more as a villa in the 18th century, the entire property was purchased in 1920 by Giuliano Daddi, great-grandfather of the current proprietors, and subsequently was the site of heavy bombardments during WWII that destroyed part of the tower, the last medieval testimony, and devastated a wing of the villa.

Recently undergoing more than four years of careful and rigorous restoration, the castle and the surrounding garden have returned to life.

With a focus on sustainability and the environment, the original spaces remain intact but feature modern enhancements using eco-compatible materials and technologies. To warm the surroundings, wooden floors, beamed ceilings, pastel colors, and furniture were designed exclusively for the common spaces and made by Florentine craftsmen.

Each room offers climate control, desk, LCD TV, complimentary Wi-Fi, phone, safe, minibar, and en suite bathroom with a shower or tub and shower, sundries, and hairdryer.

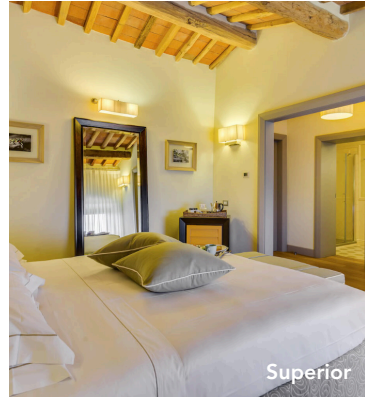
CATEGORIES

Superior: Enjoy elegant furnishings and a serene area to unwind after an enriching day of exploration (approx. 301-484 sq.ft.).

Deluxe: Delight in absolute refinement with beautiful views of the surrounding countryside. Each room is different from the others, but all provide modern comforts and tasteful décor (approx. 452-603 sq.ft.).



Courtyard



Superior



Deluxe



Pool

Optional Post-Tour Florence



Florence is arguably the cultural capital of Europe and the showcase of Renaissance exuberance. Lovers of beauty, art, and history can extend their experience in Tuscany to embrace the treasures of this magnificent city.

Post-Tour Itinerary *(subject to change)*

Day 9: Depart Castellina / Arrive in Florence (L)
Guided walking tour with art historian: Piazza della Signoria, the Duomo and Ponte Vecchio; local culinary market tasting tour to sample a delicious assortment of breads, cheeses, salumi, crostini, balsamic vinegars, sweets, and seasonal specialties—paired with glass of Chianti; afternoon artisanal tour and boat excursion on the Arno
Overnight: Hotel De La Ville

Day 10: Florence (B)
Historic walking tour: Baptistery of San Giovanni, Uffizi Gallery
Overnight: Hotel De La Ville

Day 11: Florence / Depart for U.S. (B)

What's Included

- Two nights accommodations at Hotel De La Ville or similar, with breakfast each morning
- Guided art history and cultural tour, plus a panoramic walking tour of Florence's historical highlights
- Local market experience and tasting, featuring three courses and a glass of wine
- Visit to artisanal leathermaker and jewelry workshops
- Private boat tour on the Arno River
- Admission to the Uffizi Gallery
- Luggage portorage
- Gratuities to local guide, drivers, and porters
- Airport transfers for guests departing during the suggested times



Ponte Vecchio

Flavors of Tuscany

MAY 23-31, 2024

Florence Post-Tour: May 31 - June 2, 2024

Reserve by Credit Card:

Online: msstate.orbridge.com

Phone: (866) 639-0079

Fax: (206) 452-5655

Reserve by Check:

Made payable to **Orbridge, LLC**

Mail to: Orbridge, P.O. Box 1376

Poulsbo, WA 98370

Travel Insurance: An application for trip cancellation, baggage and medical insurance will be sent to you by the MSU Alumni association's travel program once you are registered for the tour. Travel insurance is strongly recommended. Contact Leanna Smith at (662) 325-3360 or lsmith@alumni.msstate.edu for further information.

GUEST INFORMATION:

Guest #1 Name (Title/Salutation): _____

Email: _____ Class Year: _____

Home Phone: _____ Alt. Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Guest #2 Name (Title/Salutation): _____

Email: _____ Class Year: _____

Home Phone: _____ Alt. Phone: _____

DEPOSIT PAYMENT:

Check ACH (Automated Clearing House) MasterCard/Visa American Express Discover

Card #: _____ Exp. Date: _____ CW: _____

Name (as printed on card): _____

Billing Address (if different from above): _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

CATEGORY SELECTION & DEPOSIT:

Category Preference: 1st choice _____ 2nd choice _____

_____ guests joining program (\$850/person) +

_____ guests joining post-tour (\$500/person) = **TOTAL DEPOSIT: \$** _____

I/we have read, understand, and agree to the full Terms & Conditions at terms.orbridge.com; and I/we agree that Orbridge, LLC is authorized to charge my credit card above and/or take my/our deposit for this program.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Reservations, Deposits and Final Payment. To secure your reservation, deposits are due upon placing a reservation as follows: \$850 per person per program and \$500 per person for any pre/post-tour. Orbridge accepts payment by check, ACH, wire or major credit card. Final payment is due 90 days prior to the departure date. Reservations made after the final payment due date are due at the time of registration. If final payment is not received by Orbridge by the final payment due date, Orbridge may cancel your reservation in its sole discretion with no right of refund. CST#2098750-40 WST#602828994

Reservation Grace Period. Reservations made 121+ days prior to the departure date may be cancelled within 30 days from the reservation date ("Grace Period") for a full refund. Notice of cancellation must be received in writing during the Grace Period. The date of receipt will be used for the effective date.

Reservation Cancellations and Refunds. Notice of cancellation must be submitted to Orbridge in writing. The date of receipt will be used for the effective date. If the cancellation notice is received after the Grace Period (if applicable): (a) 91+ days prior to the departure date, all monies paid will be refunded less an administrative fee of \$350 per person for the main program and \$200 per person for a pre/post-tour; (b) 90-76 days prior to the departure date, a 25% cancellation fee for the full cost of the program and the balance will be refunded; (c) 75-61 days prior to the departure date, a 50% cancellation fee for the full cost of the program and the balance will be refunded; (d) 60-46 days prior to the departure date, a 75% cancellation fee for the full cost of the program and the balance will be refunded; (e) within 45 days prior to the departure date, a 100% cancellation fee for the full cost of the program. A 100% cancellation fee applies to all non-refundable airfare. Refunds, if any, will be processed within 30 days of our receipt of your written notice.

For complete Terms & Conditions, visit terms.orbridge.com | Copyright © 2023 Orbridge, LLC | orbridge.com | (866) 639-0079

*Special group rate; limited offer. Rates are per person based on double occupancy except where noted as Single, in U.S. dollars. Airfare not included. Single availability limited. **Place your deposit on or before the specified date, and one Orbridge Wine Gift per room reserved will ship after receipt of final payment. Where prohibited by state law (including, but not limited to AR, DE, KY, MS, OK, RI, UT) or by retailer licensing obligations (IL, MA, MD, NH, NJ, NY, PA, SD, TX, VA, VT), guests will receive alternative specialty items of comparable value. All Wine Gifts are handled by an independent third party.





Flavors of Tuscany

MAY 23-31, 2024

Special Alumni Rate: **Save more than \$1,000**
per couple

What Guests Are Saying...

The property was beautiful, the region was beautiful, our guide was over the top in helping us with every need. The breakfasts, dinner, and wine were great; the weather was great; and our companions became fast friends. The program was absolutely fabulous, and everything ran quite smoothly in my opinion. I would return there in a heartbeat, and I would enthusiastically recommend the property to anyone who would like to visit. My wife and I loved it!

~Michael S., Ashland, OH

The highlights of the trip were the people, the scenery, the wine, the food, and a beautiful location to wake up to each day. We felt a part of Toscana.

~Lucy & Jim C., Grand Prairie, TX



Mississippi State University Alumni Association
P.O. Box AA
Mississippi State, MS 39762

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Reserve by November 17, 2023

to receive six bottles of wine
featuring labels by vintners you
will visit during this program.**