



# Monteverdi Tuscany

## Italy as Intended

By Philip Fischetti

Nestled amongst the hills of the Val d'Orcia region of central Italy, Monteverdi Tuscany is a sprawling resort featuring three luxury villas, a 12-room boutique hotel, a spa, amazing dining, and all the amenities you would expect from a world-class getaway. Sitting at the end of a winding gravel road, within the medieval hamlet of Castiglioncello del Trinoro, Monteverdi Tuscany's mission is every bit as much about relaxation as it is about preservation. Should you take my recommendation, by the end of your stay you will come to agree that *this* is Italy.

The impetus behind Monteverdi Tuscany plays like the fantasy of two love-drunk teenagers watching a summer sunset on the beach. The young man turns to his sweetheart and with the bravado only excess hormones could explain, he says, "One day I'm going to come back here and I'm going to buy you this beach." That young man went on to become an MTA bus driver and complain yearly about the rising price of beach tags at the Jersey Shore. But in this case, Monteverdi Tuscany's founder Michael L. Cioffi *did* return to the place that left such an impression on him during his formative years. And, so to speak, he *did* buy the beach. Cioffi's love affair with the region began with his post-collegiate travels through Europe. On a return trip to

Italy in 2003 to celebrate his birthday, he came upon the hamlet of Castiglioncello del Trinoro. About two hours by car and roughly equidistant from both Rome and Florence, Castiglioncello del Trinoro is an old-world village with sections dating back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century still occupied by mostly older folks leading quiet lives. Memories Cioffi had forged during his earlier travels rushed back, and he knew this region was his true passion. "It was like stepping back in time," he recalled. "I had found this place of quietude—an ideal place for thinking, for conversation, for the arts and the humanities." So, beginning in 2005, Cioffi took up the mantle of that love-addled teen and began purchasing and restoring the vacant properties.

Find out more or book your stay today, visit [MonteverdiTuscany.com](http://MonteverdiTuscany.com)

Photos: Kelly Fajack and Monteverdi Tuscany



Top: One of the three beautifully restored rental villas. Above: A section of Castiglioncello del Trinoro before (inset) and after the extensive revitalization.

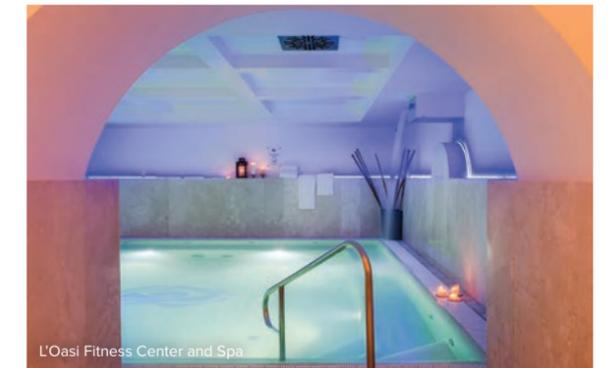
When it came to restoration, it was important to keep an eye to the past, as Cioffi's goal wasn't to impart his own style, nor to create a Disneyland-like veneer of inauthenticity. His ambition, along with designer Ilaria Miani and landscape expert Enzo Margheriti, was to breathe new life into the prevailing history and to prop up the tired, yet sturdy old bones of the existing structures. Walls were rebuilt using centuries-old practices and on-site materials. Floorplans in the building that was to become

the hotel remained unchanged from the originals. Terraces were restored and repurposed as hanging gardens, all while weaving in modern pleasantries and functionality to create a true masterpiece for today. As it sits now, Monteverdi Tuscany is an ever-evolving oasis of world-renowned dining, exquisite spa experiences, a haven for the arts, and just a place to lay by the pool in the type of tranquility that can only be afforded by 900 meters of elevation, sweeping vistas, and vanilla skies in every direction.

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## Rome in a Day (Or two and a half)

We opted to stay at the Rose Garden Palace, just outside of Rome's Trevi district. It's a great little spot with its classic Romanesque exterior, the tantalizing Il Roseto restaurant, and relaxing L'Oasi Fitness Center and Spa. It's a long stroll or a short jaunt on the metro to all the popular attractions. If you wish to be close, it's a great location, as it's just steps from more world-class dining all along Via Vittorio Veneto.



Here are the obvious spots to see in Rome if your time is limited:

### Day One: Trevi

It was already about 3 p.m. when we finally got settled. The first order of business was pizza. It's everywhere, but since we were headed to Trevi Fountain we chose Piccolo Buco. It came highly recommended and as long as you don't mind close quarters (come on, it's Europe), you won't be disappointed. Everything is farm fresh, homemade, and inexpensive.

Next stop, Trevi Fountain, which boasted all the awesomeness, antiquity, and artistry you'd expect from Roman architecture right there in the middle of the street—no lines or entry fee. Snap a few pictures and move on your way, or grab some gelato, make some new friends, and hang out on the steps all night.



### Day Two: Vatican City

Making your way through the Vatican simply cannot be described. You'll be completely awed when you reach the mind-blowing Sistine Chapel. Once you've navigated the labyrinths of the Vatican museums there's still the Papal Basilica of St. Peter and Michelangelo's breathtaking masterpiece (and my personal favorite) La Pietà. Seeing it for the first time is an intensely powerful experience. Expect audible weeping from the people crowding around the statue, but not from me... I definitely didn't cry...



### Day Three: Everything Else

The Spanish Steps, The Colosseum, The Roman Forum, the city of Rome itself... It's all amazing, it's all beautiful. There's a different energy to a lively European city that you should experience at least once if you can. It's something to see pedestrians absolutely consume a public street, block traffic, and flood the city with a vigor that makes everywhere you walk feel like a party. Oh, and you will walk. A lot.



Attention History Buffs: If tours are your thing, consider booking with [Visit.org](http://Visit.org). We went with the Passion of the Christ tour, which was led by Emerald City Tours, but there are many other options. [Visit.org](http://Visit.org) is a leading travel platform with 600 immersive, impactful travel experiences hosted by do-good organizations in 70 countries.

# Travel Spotlight



Photos: Philip Fischetti

## Surrounding Areas Pienza & Montepulciano

Spend a day exploring the piazzas, narrow alleyways, and sidewalk cafés of these two old-world cities, only 20 minutes from Monteverdi Tuscany.



On the first night of our stay, after a decadent five-course dinner at the on-site restaurant Oreade and the company of its gregarious host Fabio, my wife and I, along with our 18-month-old daughter, took a sunset walk through the village. We crossed paths with Luciana, one of the many residents still living in Castiglioncello del Trinoro. We quickly realized she didn't speak a word of English and we didn't speak a word of Italian.

Naturally, I did what any American abroad would do—I tried Spanish. Turns out they're not that similar. Regardless, we stood there for about 10 minutes, communicating in the way that defies language barriers. Luciana made funny faces at our daughter, we played with her dog, we all gestured at the view, and then we went our separate ways. We stopped at the edge of the stone pathway where a thin rail was the only thing between us and infinity and in that instant, I couldn't shake the feeling that man... *this* is Italy. **B**



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