



UMBRIA

ABOUT

I've been living and working in Italy for most of my life. And I'm happy to say that food has been a big part of that. Not only do I love to cook, but I've been lucky enough to write about restaurants, shopping and travel for most of the big magazines like Food & Wine, Travel & Leisure, Bon Appetit and Town & Country. I admit it, I'm a foodie, for better or worse.

For years I've kept a personal list of my favorites (restaurants, hotels, stores, bakeries, etc.) that I was happy enough to give out to friends, editors, colleagues - and, well, anyone who asked. And a lot of what I discover makes its way to my blog, Elizabeth Minchilli in Rome, where I write about all sorts of good stuff in Rome and beyond

While Rome is my primary home, we have also spent much of the last 25 years in Umbria, at our home there. While most of our eating goes on in my own kitchen, we also go out quite a bit, exploring the hill towns and villages that make Umbria famous. This app is my own handpicked list of places that I recommend to friends. The list is not exhaustive, but it is ever growing. During this first launch, in July 2015, I have included many of my personal favorites. During August 2015 I will be working on version 1.2, which will include many more restaurant entries, as well as hotels and wineries.

PRICES

Since this guide contains so many different categories, I've used abstract pricing. The prices are relative for each category.

€ inexpensive

€€ average

€€€ expensive

OPENING HOURS

I've tried my best to be as specific as possible regarding opening hours. Unfortunately many restaurants change their hours - and especially their vacation and holiday closures - at whim. Keep in mind that many places will be closed at some point during August, and even into September. Certain places (like chocolate stores) close during the hottest months. If you are in doubt, it's always best to call ahead. Websites, which are often not updated for years, can be misleading

Thanks to the miracle of digital publishing, I'll be updating the content constantly. Once you purchase EAT UMBRIA you will automatically receive notices of new updates. And if you are out in the wild, and see a place you think I should include, please

send me an [email](#).

51 PLACES

A Week in Umbria with Elizabeth	Antiche Sere	Antico Forziere	Arnaldo Caprai
Asso di Coppe	Cantinone	Caseificio Montecristo	Ceramic Museum of Umbria
Cibocchi	Civico 25	Da Cesarino	Diecinove
Enoteca Oberdan	Fattoria Il Secondo Altopiano	FIMA	Giuseppe Strappini
Granarium	Grazia Deruta	Hispellum	Iper Coop -Wine Department
Jolanda Artigianato	L'Alchimista	La Cruccola	La Palomba
La Pergola	Lufra - Truck Stop Mozzarella	Madonna del Latte	Mangiar Bene
Mangiar Bene	Numero Uno	Osteria a Priori	Osteria Dada
Osteria Novecento	Paolo Bea	Pardi	Pasticceria Polticchia
Piero e Silvana	Pizzeria Cavour	Porcellino Divino	Porchettiamo
Ristorante La Mulinella	Ristorante Umbria	Rosa dei Venti	San Pietro a Pettine
Sberna	Semiramide	Taverna del Lupo	Trattoria al Moro Aronne
Trattoria di Oscar	Villa Roncalli	Vineria San Fortunato	

A Week in Umbria with Elizabeth

<http://www.elizabethminchilli.com>

A Week Long Trip In Umbria

ABOUT

For the last 25 years I've been lucky enough to divide my time between our apartment in Rome and our home in Umbria. During summers and most weekends spent at our Umbrian villa, I've come to fall in love with this unspoiled corner of Italy. Through my books and articles I've been able to share my passion in words and photographs. Now I would like to share the experience in person, and would like to invite you to join me in Umbria for a week.

During this 6 day tour we'll have the time to truly explore the region, from a completely food-centric point of view of course. From breakfast through dinner, we'll travel all over Umbria: tasting, drinking, eating, cooking, learning and having fun.

We'll be based in the the small hill town of Todi, one of Italy's most beautiful villages. You will be staying in a charming, family owned hotel right in the center of town, where you will have your own room. Each day we will be heading out to explore, while also spending time at my own villa nearby for cooking classes and meals.

For details please send me an [email](mailto:elizabeth@elizabethminchilli.com)

elizabeth@elizabethminchilli.com

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Culinary Tours Or Classes

ADDRESS

[TodiTodi, Province of Perugia, Umbria, Italy](#)

COST

\$\$\$

SOCIAL MEDIA

<https://www.facebook.com/elizabethminchilli>

<https://twitter.com/eminchilli>

GALLERY







Antiche Sere



Restaurant In Bevagna

Daily, Lunch and Dinner



ABOUT

When we first bought our house in Umbria, the point of any day trip around around Umbria was ending up at Salvatore Denaro's restaurant in Foligno, Il Bacco Felice. Ever since Salvatore closed his place a few years ago I have a reliable back up plan: I call Salvatore and ask for his advice.

Recently Salvatore advised: head to Antiche Sere. "It's an honest place" said Salvatore. And when Salvatore says a place is honest, he's not talking about the final bill, but about the integrity of the ingredients that go into the dishes. "And tell Luciano I sent you."

Located beneath the Porta di Canara, at the East end of town, the unpretentious spot was just what we were looking for. The olives that came to our table immediately were a good sign: firm and obviously Italian (not the mushy Tunisian olives that are turning up everywhere these days).

While settling into a crisp and cold glass of Umbrian white, we ordered off the day's menu. Emma, Gillian and I decided to split a couple of appetizers To start: a simple plate of sardines topped with red onions and a sprinkling of parsley. A bit of lemon and a drizzle of olive oil, and it's kind of the perfect first course that I'm definitely going to be copying. Next up, Luciano's minimal version of panzanella: chopped tomatoes tossed with a sliced onion and a handful of torn bread.

After our long walk through Bevagna Gillian and Emma decided they had earned a big bowl of pasta. Emma, being Emma, went directly for the truffles, which were heaped on freshly made fettucine. Even though it was about 100 degrees out, Gillian chose the area specialty: gnocchi al Sagrantino. Plump little potato dumplings in a bright purple sauce made from the local wine. My roast beef was definitely the lightest of the dishes. Sliced thinly and dressed in a lemony vinaigrette, it was draped over a bed of fresh greens and was exactly what I wanted.

Even though Salvatore couldn't stop by and join us for lunch, he made sure a plate of his heirloom tomatoes, straight from his nearby garden, did.

One tiramisu to split three ways, some coffee and we were ready to say goodbye to Bevagna.

And if you're wondering what the weird symbol is on the place mat, it's the logo for being an anarchist. So I guess Luciano is an anarchist, and proud of it. And a black sheep while he's at it. But whatever he is, Salvatore was right. He runs an 'honest' restaurant. Good to know.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Restaurant, Outdoor Seating, Open Sunday, Open Monday

ADDRESS

[Piazza Giuseppe Garibaldi 10, Bevagna](#)

COST

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SOCIAL MEDIA

<https://www.facebook.com/Antiche-Sere-Osteria-Enoteca-Bevagna-907749329293919/>

GALLERY





Antico Forziere

<http://www.anticoforziere.com/en/antico-forziere/> 

Elegant Restaurant Near Deruta

Tues-Sun Lunch and Dinner 

ABOUT

For some reason there are not many great places to eat right in Deruta. I'm not sure why, since they would obviously be able to have the most beautiful place settings in Italy. So I just never thought about eating lunch when making ceramic runs.

All this changed when I started leading day tours to Deruta. While I admit my stamina is strong when it comes to looking at and buying ceramics, when I'm giving a tour (where we visit 6 or 7 workshops) I realize that we have to refuel.

That's when my friends at Sberna told me about Antico Forziere. I'd seen it often, from the highway which cuts across Umbria. And sped right by it because, well, who would think of stopping by a hotel on a highway to have lunch?

As it turns out this family run small hotel runs a very elegant and sophisticated restaurant. While it might be a bit too upscale for it's own good (fancy linen and modern tableware in weird shapes) the food is actually very good.

Don't go hoping for Umbrian rusticity. But all of the meals I've had there have been carefully prepared and feature local ingredients. Just ignore the plating and garnish, which can go over the top.

Do save room for dessert, which is completely over the top. Lots of spun sugar going on. But if you get beyond this, it's clear that they've got a very talented pastry chef hidden in that kitchen.

The restaurant is located off E45 Exit Casalina

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Restaurant, Outdoor Seating, Open Sunday, Open Monday

ADDRESS

 [Via della Rocca 2, Deruta](#)

COST

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SOCIAL MEDIA

 <https://www.facebook.com/anticoforziere/> <https://twitter.com//AnticoForziere>

GALLERY



UMBRIA

+39.0742.378.802



Arnaldo Caprai

<http://www.arnaldocapraiusa.com>



Wine Producer

Daily, 10am-7pm (changes according to the season)



ABOUT

If you've heard of Sagrantino, chances are it's thanks to Arnaldo Caprai. This family bought an existing vineyard outside of Montefalco in 1971, determined to revive ancient varieties of grapes, particularly Sagrantino. In 1988 Arnaldo's son, Marco, took over, and it's thanks to his skill and enthusiasm that makes Caprai one of the most well known vineyards in Italy.

The winery is very organized and welcomes visits, and you can make a reservation [online](#). The tour usually includes a visit to the vineyard, the fermentation area, the cellar and the bottling area. The tours end with a tasting, with bruschette, cheese and cured meats.

If you don't have time for a full tour, the Enoteca is open daily from 10am-1pm and 2pm to 7pm for tastings.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Wine, Open Sunday, Open Monday

ADDRESS

 [Torre di Montefalco](#)

COST

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SOCIAL MEDIA

 <https://www.facebook.com/CantinaArnaldoCaprai>

 <https://twitter.com/Arnaldocaprai>

GALLERY



ABOUT

Buying ceramics is hard, hard work. First you've got to drive [there](#). Then there is the whole decision making process. And then lugging them all the way to the car.

Of course, I'm kidding. There's few things I love better than going [ceramic shopping](#) in [Deruta](#). But one thing I do always mess up on is timing. I always underestimate just how long I'm going to be spending making all those [hard decisions](#). I think it's going to be a half hour or so. And then, before I know it, it's 1:30.

Recently [Domenico](#) actually came along with me to Deruta. I realized that he pretty much has never done this with me when he started asking which exit to get out on from the highway. If I'm driving, our car almost heads there on it's own.

Domenico was along for the ride since this trip was slightly more manly than others. I wasn't here to buy girly mugs or plates. We were here to buy architectural elements. And so the architect came along to take charge.

It's been about 25 years since we restored our [farmhouse](#), and some of the fixtures are starting to show their age. So we were in Deruta to look at new tiles for one of our showers.

After about an hour and a half of this, I looked at my watch and realized it was 1:30. Way to late to head to Assisi where I had thought we were going to have lunch. Instead, we ended up asking [Michele](#), who was giving us tile advice, where he ate.

Although I've been heading to Deruta regularly for the last 25 years or so, I'd never been happy at any of the restaurants in town. A few touristy places in the old part of town, and the hotel along the more modern Via Tiberina seemed about it. Michele suggested we head across the street to Asso di Coppe "Good food and a good price." was all he said about it. Since by this time it was almost 1:45, we were starving and restaurants would start closing soon, we sort of didn't have any choice.

At first I thought it was kind of odd that I'd never heard of this place. But once we pulled up to park I realized why: it's a truck stop. Literally. It's located right on the E45 with entrances there as well as from the Via Tiberina in Deruta.

We had our pick of tables and so chose one with a view. Of the gas pumps and trucks. This, plus the large TV playing the midday news made Domenico very happy and the food hadn't even arrived yet.

Soon enough the cheery waiter brought over menus, as well as toasty hot torta di testa stuffed with thick slices of hand cut prosciutto. A good start.

We looked at the menus, but then just followed the advice of the waiter, since that's what everyone else seemed to be doing. And by everyone else I'm referring to the locals who evidently come here regularly: three policeman, two plumbers, a table full of bank employees, and a few other couples.

On the waiter's advice Domenico got the gnocchi with ragu : a big heaping bowl of dumplings with a very old fashioned meaty sauce. Nothing fancy, but very good. Instead I went a bit more summery, ordering umbricelli (a kind of Umbrian thick spaghetti) with chopped fresh tomatoes and mozzarella. Again, nothing special but very homey and good.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Restaurant, Open Sunday

ADDRESS

 [Strada Statale E45, km57.300, Deruta](#)

COST

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SOCIAL MEDIA

 <https://www.facebook.com/assodicoppe>

GALLERY



UMBRIA

+39.075.573.4430



Cantinone

<http://ristoranteilcantinoneperugia.com/>



Trattoria In Perugia

Open lunch and dinner. Closed Sunday.



ABOUT

This lovely little restaurant is located just off the main square. The small outdoor terrace faces one of the most stunning archways in town, but locals tend to head for one of the vaulted inner dining rooms. I loved loved loved the Umbrian pesto which was made from majoram, thyme, savory and walnuts.

Like many Umbrian restaurants you can find many meaty sauces atop homemade pasta. A rabbit and lemon ragu' tops home made tagliatelle and a duck sauce tops gnocchetti

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Open Monday, Restaurant, Outdoor Seating

ADDRESS

 [Via Ritorta, PerugiaPerugia, Provincia di Perugia, Umbria, Italy](#)

COST

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SOCIAL MEDIA

 <https://www.facebook.com/ilcantinoneperugia/>

GALLERY



Caseificio Montecristo

<http://www.formaggimontecristo.it/en/> 

Cheese Maker In Todi

Mon-Sat, 9am-1pm & 4-8pm 

ABOUT

When I first started visiting Caseificio Montecristo the store was located in the middle of a farm, with strange hours and barely any cheese for sale at any given time. I remember waking up early, phoning the store and asking if they could pretty please set aside some mozzarella and ricotta for me? Later that morning I would load Emma and Sophie into the car and we would make our mozzarella run. The best part for them was the chance to wave at the cows as we parked next to the stalls. The best part for me were, of course, the pristine white globes.

These days the Caseificio has changed a bit. They opened a very fancy store just down the road, in a new shopping center beneath the local motel. It may not be as picturesque (no cows) but it offered them a chance to truly expand their cheese making, including now at least 20 goat, cow and sheep milk cheeses that are extraordinary.

While I certainly enjoy these cheeses, it's the mozzarella we still make a daily run for. Made from cow milk, not buffalo, it's just about perfect. We basically live on that, and tomatoes, all summer long.

I recently visited behind the scenes and made two videos: [mozzarella](#) making and [ricotta](#) making.

The exact address won't show up on the map. But it's in the ground floor of the Europalace Hotel, just off the Todi/Orvieto Exit of the E45.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Food Stores, Open Monday

ADDRESS

 [Vocabolo Campette, Ponterio](#)

COST

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SOCIAL MEDIA

 <https://www.facebook.com/CaseificioMontecristo/>

GALLERY





Ceramic Museum of Umbria

http://www.museoceramicadideruta.it/en/ceramics-museum-of-deruta_1.html 

Small Ceramic Museum

Wed-Sun 10:30-1 & 2:30-5 (exact times change with season) 

ABOUT

I realize that most people head to Deruta to shop. With hundreds of small workshops making - and selling - some of the most beautiful hand painted ceramics in Italy, it's hard not to spend money. Some people I know (and I'm not naming any names here, but you know who you are) will even freely admit to having an addiction. Who can blame them?

During a recent trip to Deruta I was reminded that there is a reason these plates, bowls, dishes and cups are so irresistible. The tradition behind this craftsmanship goes back centuries. And it's this sense of place and history that we are acquiring every time we bring one of these pieces into our home.

What most people don't realize is that the historical part of this equation is on full display in the most wonderful - and totally ignored and under-visited - museum in Umbria. The Museo Regionale della Ceramica is located in the old part of Deruta, up on the hill. Just off the main piazza, the museum is situated in the converted cloister of the Church of San Francesco.

As with all things to do with Italian artistic patrimony, there was a ton of money spent on this beautiful museum. The displays are state of the art, and the pieces themselves - dating back to the 14th century - are worthy of some of the best museums in Europe. If you're wondering why you've never heard of this museum it's because once it was built, there was no more money left for promotion or even staffing. In fact, the day I went up, a Tuesday, the museum was closed to the public and I had to pay an 80 Euro fee for a special opening just for us.

Which was well worth it.

Our gracious guide gave us a private tour of the entire museum, from bottom to top. And when I say bottom, I mean we started below ground. As it turns out, totally by accident, when they were digging the foundation for a new parking area next to the museum, they came across a completely intact series of Renaissance kilns. How many museums of decorative arts in the world can you visit where they have the 16th century kilns in the same building where the 16th century ceramics that were made in them - on display? It was a profoundly moving experience that put our entire day in perspective.

Since the craft of majolica has been going on here pretty much non stop for centuries, it's hard to dig anywhere without coming up with brightly painted shards documenting styles over the years. Case after case of these treasures are on laid out on display. One entire wing of the museum is filled with objects from the 20th century, a sort of open study collection for aspiring students of the craft (I loved the pieces made for the Perugina chocolate factory in the 50's). But the real treasures - dating from the middle ages through the 18th century - fill case after case on the second floor. Apothecary jars, salt cellars, platters and urns are the precursors of what is now for sale in the myriad workshops that line the Via Tiberina below.

If you do make it to Deruta, I'm assuming that you are as passionate (I'm not going to use the word addicted again) about ceramics as I am. If so, then make sure you stop by the Museo. At the very least you'll have a better understanding of where your passion originated.

Would you like to come to Deruta with me? Have a look at my [Day Trips](#) and let me know if you'd like to receive more details. I've been in love with Deruta for a long time, and even wrote a [book](#) about it.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Museum

ADDRESS

 [Largo San Francesco, Deruta](#)

COST

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SOCIAL MEDIA

 <https://www.facebook.com/MuseoCeramicaDeruta/>

 <https://twitter.com/MuseoDeruta>

GALLERY







Cibocchi



Simple Local Trattoria

Thurs-Tues, Lunch and Dinner



ABOUT

During the summer we spend as much time as possible at our [house](#) in Umbria. We don't do much. Swimming, long walks, visits to nearby villages. And eating. Lots of eating. And cooking. Tons of cooking. And while it's usually easiest to just stay at home for dinner (I don't mind the cooking part of things and in fact look forward to it) sometimes we feel like getting out of the house and so do the next best thing to eating at home: we head down the hill to Cibocchi.

Cibocchi is our local trattoria. Located at the bottom of the hill, between our house and Todi, it's definitely one of the least known restaurants around. Situated right along an asphalt road, the little stone building is actually on the banks of the river, although you'd never know it. It's all about the road.

Domenico has been going to Cibocchi since the '80's, with our friend Edward. Back then, before either men had families, they would show up in the middle of winter and - being the only customers - sit down with Everardo and his family in the kitchen, eating with them while the TV blared.

When we started going as a family a few years later, Cibocchi was still pretty rough and tumble. If we wanted to sit outside, we had to cross the road and perch on one of the few wooden tables by the parking lot.

Over the years regulars finally convinced the family to build an outdoor terrace. And the inside dining room has been spruced up to include an even bigger TV.

But nothing else has changed. The menu remains comfortably the same and delicious. As soon as we sit down at the table Everardo's son Fabio brings a basket of freshly baked [Torta al Testo](#), still warm from the pan. Primi are: fettucine, strangozzi or ravioli (all home made) with pomodoro, ragu or truffle sauce. Secondi are rabbit, chicken or wild boar, each served stewed in slightly different versions of piquant cacciatori. Sometimes there's grilled pork or lamb chops, but don't count on it. Want dessert? Just wander into the bar and choose an ice cream from the freezer.

And that's it. Nothing else. For as long as we've been going. Every so often they'll have another kind of sauce for the pasta. But they won't tell you about it. You have to ask. In spring they often get in wild asparagus. Sometimes they have mushrooms. I always go for the truffle pasta. Unlike most other restaurants around, they actually use real fresh Umbrian truffles, not a pre-made puree. A bit grainy, the gritty sauce floats on a slick of olive oil to coat the eggy noodles. My favorite secondo, which I order almost every time, is the rabbit. Seemingly hacked apart by a blind person with a huge butcher's knife, the small boney pieces are lovingly stewed in a garlicky and spicy mix of oil, wine and tons of lemon rind and rosemary. Once you pick all the bits of meat off the fiddly bones, the pizza a testa is perfect for sopping up the pan drippings (which is of course the main reason for ordering this dish).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Restaurant, Open Sunday, Open Monday

ADDRESS

[Via Ponte 5b, Todi, Perugia](#)

COST

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SOCIAL MEDIA

<https://www.facebook.com/trattoriacibocchi/>

GALLERY





UMBRIA

+39.075.571.6376 

Civico 25

<http://civico25.com> 

Cozy Restaurant In Perugia

Mon-Sat 7.30pm-11:30pm 

ABOUT

This cute little enoteca is a good place to stop for a drink or dinner. Opened only in the evenings, the large counter as you walk in is full of open bottles of Umbrian wine, which makes it a great place to sample some of the local labels.

If you feel a bit hungry, sit down and order some of the excellent salumi. And if you want more, the dinner menu is interesting and tries to go beyond the usual Umbrian fare. During a recent dinner the strangozzi (home made pasta) was tossed with radicchio, pancetta and parmigiano. And my main course was a delicious filet of pork cooked in a crust of potatoes and served with sauteed cabbage. For dessert a very impressive dark chocolate cake topped with candied orange peel.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Wine, Restaurant, Open Monday

ADDRESS

 [Via della Viola 25, Perugia](#)

COST

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SOCIAL MEDIA

 <https://www.facebook.com/civico25perugia/>

GALLERY





Da Cesarino

Restaurant



ABOUT

This is one of the oldest restaurants in Perugia, located right in the main piazza facing the Duomo and the famous fountain. I had read mixed reviews about it online, and realized I needed to try it myself. I skipped the outdoor terrace on a hot and muggy August day and my friend Laura and I headed inside, to the main dining room, with the rest of the locals. And had a pretty fantastic meal. This was not fancy. This was not creative. But a plate full of perfectly made crostini went down well with the house wine. Laura ordered the perfect version of an Umbrian Amatriciana (sausage instead of guanciale) and I had the most amazing stracchino stuffed gnocchi in pesto. Although the waiter started out grumpy (old fashioned restaurant grumpy) by the end he was dragging us into the kitchen to see the open grill.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Open Monday, Open Sunday, Restaurant, Outdoor Seating

ADDRESS

 [5, Piazza IV Novembre, Perugia](#)[Perugia, Provincia di Perugia, Umbria, Italy](#)

COST

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SOCIAL MEDIA

 <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Da-Cesarino/109002192495867>

GALLERY



UMBRIA

+39.0742.847.494 

Diecinove

<http://birradiecinove.com> 

Craft Beer In Spello

Daily, 11-1 & 4-8 

ABOUT

Craft beer has become a big thing in Umbria. Actually, it's become a big thing all over Italy. There is a younger generation that is turning back to the land and to traditionally made food products, and while beer is not really a traditional Italian food product, it's become a way for this younger generation to express themselves, using local ingredients, in a new and exciting way.

Umbria has proved fertile ground, literally and figuratively, for this trend. Go into any supermarket and you'll most likely see some local brews lining the shelves next to the Peroni. Even funner is to visit some of the microbreweries that have popped up all over the place.

Dieci Nove is one of the newest, and smallest. Located in a ground floor space on a steep and narrow street in Spello, the brewing goes on in the back (you can see it through the glass windows) and the tasting in front.

Like many of these small enterprises, they try to work with local ingredients when possible, to make their beers speak of the location. I particularly liked their somewhat sweet Ambrata, made with honey and figs. And the Bianche ai Fiori di Sambuco was dry and floral.

The small shop has several tables.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Drinks, Open Sunday, Open Monday, Craft Beer

ADDRESS

 [Via S. Angelo 12, Spello](#)

COST

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SOCIAL MEDIA

 <https://www.facebook.com/birradiecinove/>

 <https://twitter.com/birradiecinove>

GALLERY





Enoteca Oberdan

<http://www.enotecaoberdan.it>

Small Restaurant In Todi

Wed-Fri Dinner only, Sat-Sun Lunch & Dinner



ABOUT

This is a place that I want to love. As you can see from the photos, the place couldn't be cuter. Tucked into the ground floor of a building right next to Giardino Oberdan, the place feels just rustic enough. The enoteca part of the equation comes through loud and strong not only in the wine list, but in the stacks of wine boxes filling almost every spare inch. And when the weather is warm, they put tables outside in the public garden, which enjoys views out over the valley.

If you're lucky the food is excellent. On one evening we snacked on a basket of warm torta al testo while we looked at the wine menu. Not huge, but lots of fun things to choose from, especially northern whites which are pretty rare in this part of the world. Domenico started out with a yummy dish of Mezzi Paccheri al Pesto di Olive. A new twist was the addition of bread crumbs, which added a nice crunch.

I ordered the Tortino di Zucchini con Scamorza Affumicata e Pomodoro. I don't know what I was expecting, but the mini pink le creuset pot was almost too cute to dig into. It was filled with layers of zucchini and tomatoes, barely held together with the smoked cheese. Enough vegetables to make me feel virtuous, but also enough gooey cheese to satisfy.

Domenico can never resist bacala on the menu, and the fried filets that arrived next were simple and perfect.

The problem lies with the fact that the chef/owner, while talented, cooks every single dish herself. This not only leads to long long waits, but also to ridiculously frustrating miscommunications between the kitchen and dining room. Another night we arrived at 8pm and by 10pm we still had not received our main courses. Since we had ordered only antipasti first (which were all very small) we were starving. Emma and I had each ordered the Carpaccio. When it finally arrived (15 minutes AFTER the others had received their second course) we were told that they only had enough for one portion, so they had decided to split it between us. Did we want to order a frittata instead?

All to say, this place is hit or miss. Great when it's great, but problematic when it's not.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Restaurant, Outdoor Seating, Open Sunday

ADDRESS

Via Augusto Ciuffelli 22, Todi

COST

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SOCIAL MEDIA

<https://www.facebook.com/enotecaoberdan/>

GALLERY







Fattoria Il Secondo Altopiano

<http://www.ilsecondoaltopiano.com>

Goat Cheese Farm

Call for a visit.



ABOUT

You know when you get something stuck in your head and it just won't leave? Could be a song that runs through your mind while you're trying to work. Or a 'to do' list that swells at 3am when you're trying to get back to sleep.

Well, I got something stuck in my head recently that refused to leave. It was a photograph of some cheese.

You're probably thinking "The girl lives in Italy. Cheese schmeeze." But this cheese was not your normal hunk of parmesan or globe of glistening mozzarella. These were daintily-presented, beautifully-wrapped, ash-dusted perfect little goat cheeses. And they weren't just some expensive treat imported from France. They were (or so I was told) from a little goat farm outside of Orvieto.

My friend Vince, who had recently bought a house in Orvieto, had been telling me about this goat farm for a while. But it wasn't until he posted a photograph on FB of his most recent purchases that I really began to listen.

One thing you've got to understand is that while Italy has an awful lot of good sheep and cows milk cheese, goat cheese is still pretty rare. Especially the "French" kind that is worth a quick trip to Paris to buy.

Which is how I came to discover Vince's source: Fattoria dell Secondo Altopiano.

Located in the hills just west of Orvieto, the small farm is run by a young couple who started it from scratch. Alessandra is from Rome, and Emanuele is from Sicily and they somehow came up with the idea of starting this farm as a way to make a living and stay in the countryside, while running a sustainable business. Emanuele, a veterinarian, and Alessandra have created a slice of paradise where goat cheese is the happy outcome.

The farm is about 15 hectares and the goat shed and cheese making facilities are right in the center. Built almost entirely of wood, the barn shelters the 80 goats that make up their herd. I am a goat junky, and fall in love with almost any goat I see. But these babies were some of the most beautiful and happy I've ever seen. Along with the entire farm, they are raised biologically and biodynamically and treated homeopathically when possible.

The milk doesn't have to travel very far, since the goat shed shares space with the cheese making facilities. Every day the goats are milked, and the milked turned into the gorgeous cheeses I had come to taste.

They make about a dozen types of cheeses, all with raw, unpasteurized goat milk. Some are ready right away, just a few hours old. Others aged from anywhere from a few days to a few weeks. Alessandra takes the order, and you can pick and choose from a tray she brings out to sample, as well as an extremely cute hand illustrated 'menu'. Once you've chosen, Emanuele makes a trip to the cellar where the cheeses are aged. He then rolls some of the cheeses in herbs or other spices before handing them back to Alessandra to be artfully wrapped up for the ride home.

Me, being me, of course bought way too much cheese. Naturally I called it research (I had to try everything, right?) And who knew if I would ever be back? (right) But really, it was just hunger, with a bit of gluttony thrown in. My friend Jane, who came with me, also came away with over a kilo. The thing was, that every cheese we sampled was fantastic. As good as, or even better, than anything I've had in France. Certainly the best Italian-made goat cheese I've ever had.

Vince, however, was more reserved, buying just one perfect, ash-dusted pyramid. But he lives in Orvieto, and so can come back anytime he wants to. (especially now that he's bought a motorino)

UPDATE: I've since made trips to this magical place a regular thing. Not just to buy cheese, but it also forms part of the day trip Sophie and I lead: [Wine and Cheese Day in Orvieto](#).

And if you love baby goats as much as I do, then you'll certainly love this [video](#).

It's kind of hard to find, so please visit the web site and copy down the directions.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Food Stores

ADDRESS

05010, Sugano di Orvieto,

COST

\$\$\$

SOCIAL MEDIA

[https://www.facebook.com/Fattoria-II-Secondo-](https://www.facebook.com/Fattoria-II-Secondo-Alttopiano-201627753186484/)

Alttopiano-201627753186484/

GALLERY



UMBRIA

+39.075.9711.285



FIMA

<http://www.fimaderuta.it/>



Handmade Ceramics

Mon-Sat, 8:30am-7pm. Sat closes at 5



ABOUT

FIMA is rightly many people's go to choice for high quality ceramics in Deruta. It is one of the few places that still works every single stage of creation on site – from processing the clay to the finished glazing. Their standard of decoration is extremely high, with exquisite brush work on everything from the smallest cup to the large decorative platters.

But what I love about FIMA? That they continue to produce new and wonderful designs not found anywhere else. I love the fact that they have taken their very traditional "Fondo" design and transformed it using bright new colors like orange, mint green and turquoise. And their jewel colored "Vario" which they apply to the surface of everything from canisters to platters always tempts me. And then there are their artfully painted display pieces like urns and platters meant to hang on walls. I mean really, do I need an urn? At FIMA I start to think I do.

But what I really loved seeing during a recent visit was that FIMA has gladly taken over some of Cama's old patterns. My favorite "Siena", with the white deers displayed on a deep black background was there. And yes, I'm seriously thinking of ordering an entire 12 piece place setting of that pattern because I had always wanted to do so from Cama, but now that's no longer a possibility. I don't want to make the same mistake twice. (Cama went out of business a few years ago)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Kitchen And Table Top Stores, Open Monday

ADDRESS

 [Via Tiberina 111, Deruta](#)

COST

\$\$\$

SOCIAL MEDIA

 <https://www.facebook.com/FIMA-Maioliche-Artistiche-235831203199429/>

GALLERY







Giuseppe Strappini

Baskets & Ceramics



ABOUT

Even though I really enjoyed wandering around Bevagna, looking into all the [meticulously recreated artisan workshops](#), there was one thing I kept thinking as I saw the ancient ways to make paper and candles.

Why can't I buy any of this stuff?

I mean really. Would a gift shop at the Museum really be that hard? A half dozen beeswax candles? A boxed set of note cards? Nothing? Come on Bevagna. If you can get locals to volunteer their time to oversee these fabulous workshops, then you'd think someone would figure out that the hand made candles and paper might be a good source of income.

Luckily my shopping desire does not go completely unrequited. There is a fabulous shop on the main street in town that sells wonderfully rustic hand made ceramics, as well as 'guess what this is for kinds of baskets.

While the ceramics' uses are easily identifiable (pitcher, plate, bowls) many of the baskets are complete mysteries.

The owner of the shop and I played 'guess the use' for a half dozen of the quirky woven masterpieces. Some of the answers to the "What's this?" question turned out to be:

- For picking fruit
- For keeping food cool while hanging on the edge of a well
- For holding a toddler

I kid you not. A rather large round basket turned out to be a sort of rustic playpen. Or pig pen. Take your pick.

I stocked up big time. A couple of hand made brooms. A thingy for picking fruit (those figs are ripening as I write) and a half dozen small dishes that will surely make there way into someone's Christmas stocking. And if any of you need a playpen/pigpen, the owner comes down to Rome regularly. So place your order now.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Kitchen And Table Top Stores

ADDRESS

 [Corso Matteotti 105, Bevagna](#)

COST

\$\$\$

SOCIAL MEDIA

 <https://www.facebook.com/Antichità-Giuseppe-Strappini-759011070850568/>

GALLERY





UMBRIA

+39.0742.361.114



Granarium

<http://www.granarium.it/home-english.html>



Tues-Sun, 7am - 1pm.



ABOUT

It's hard enough to find a good bakery these days, but when you find one that also grows their own wheat, mills it, and then bakes it into delicious breads, cakes and savory treats it's worth taking a drive to.

Granarium is located on an out of the way road just outside of Cantalupo, about 10 minutes from Bevagna. It's well worth the trip there to stock up on bread, but you should also consider taking a tour of the mill. And if you are planning on making your own pizza or anything else, their flour is the best.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Bakery, Open Sunday

ADDRESS

 [Via Madonna della Pia 14, Bevagna](#)

COST

\$\$\$

SOCIAL MEDIA

 <https://www.facebook.com/GranariumDoveIlGranoDiventaPane>

GALLERY





ABOUT

I admit that I get a lot of compliments about my [blog](#). Particularly the photography. (And thank you very much!) But I am well aware that while I work hard at making the photographs look pretty, I can't take all the credit. If there is one thing makes anything I cook up immediately share-worthy it has got to be a hand-painted plate from Deruta.

I've been visiting Deruta regularly for the last 25 years or so.

The small Umbrian town, just south of Perugia (and not far from [our house in Todi](#)) was the subject of my first book, [Deruta: A Tradition of Italian Ceramics](#). So, as you've probably guessed, I've built up quite a collection plates, bowls, mugs and platters over the years. One of my favorite places in this ancient town is the workshop of Ubaldo Grazia.

The building itself dates to the turn of the last century. While production is way down these days, due to competition from Asia and the general economic situation, there are still entire rooms at Grazia dedicated to turning, glazing, firing and of course displaying.

The workshop is open for tours, and I love wandering from room to room, past ceramics in almost every stage of completion: raw lumps of green hued clay, rosy fired vessels, just painted bowls and plates, and - finally - brilliantly glazed ware ready for sale.

Grazia is considered to be one of the best places in town in terms of quality, and the meticulous attention in the glazing room - with women painting designs using the finest of paint brushes - is amazing. Grazia also uses a second coating of glass like glaze which gives everything they produce an extra finish.

While I may end up buying everyday mugs and plates that I don't mind chipping elsewhere, Grazia is where I go to for one-of-a-kind pieces. Urns, platters and apothecary jars fill the display shelves with designs dating back to the 16th and 17th centuries. While these unique pieces might not make their way into my blog very often (it's kind of hard to serve pasta in an urn) they definitely have a place in my heart. (And just in case you were wondering? They also make some of the most stunning tableware in town as well.)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Kitchen And Table Top Stores, Open Monday

ADDRESS

 [Via Tiberina 181, Deruta Perugia](#)

COST

\$\$\$

SOCIAL MEDIA

 <https://www.facebook.com/grazia.maioliche/>

GALLERY





UMBRIA

+39.0742.651.782



Hispellum

<http://www.enotecahispellum.com/>



Local Products

Daily, 9:30am-11:30pm



ABOUT

This perfect little store located in the center of Spello is chock full of local products from the surrounding farms. You'll find just about everything here from cured meats to legumes, to wine and pasta. And a vast assortment of local olive oils. They are very organized and are happy to wrap things up vacum packed to either shipping or stuffing in your suitcase.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Food Stores

ADDRESS

[Via Cavour 13, Spello](#)

COST

\$\$\$

SOCIAL MEDIA

<https://www.facebook.com/enotecahispellum/>

GALLERY



ABOUT

Usually the words supermarket wine means jugs of horrid plonk with screw on tops. Even in Italy, where you can get pretty great wines at affordable prices, the choices of high end wines - or even interesting wines - in supermarkets is usually pretty limited. Unless you head over the mall at Collestrada and hit the IperCoop.

This is my brother-in-law Phil's favorite outing when he comes to visit us in Todi

Phil is not the kind of person that usually hangs out in malls. And being from New York, he doesn't usually buy wines in supermarkets. But once he lands in Italy the first thing he does is head straight for one of the ugliest shopping centers in this area of Umbria, Collestrada.

He makes a bee line to the IperCoop which, strangely, has one of the best selections of wine in this part of Italy.

This is a HUGE supermarket, that sells just about everything, from spare car parts to house dresses to....super tuscans. The wine section is set in one corner, and is usually oddly empty.

Since this is Umbria, this is where you can get all the various Sagrantinos. But since this is a pretty heavy wine to drink in the summertime, I often branch out. Wines from all over Italy and that they are reasonably priced. And the organization by region makes it extremely easy to find interesting wines from each area.

The whole adventure has a bit of an element of treasure hunt, because you can find real gems amidst the more mass produced wines. And it's a great feeling of satisfaction when you find something like a Valentini Trebbiano D'Abruzzo.

Also, you can always find things you would never be able to get in the states.

Since the vast majority of wines under ten euros, it's easy to go a bit overboard. But when you see a Barolo for 30 euros, which would have cost over 100 \$ in the States, how can you pass that up?

If you're looking for wine store service in terms of expert help or packaging, you need to go somewhere else (like Montefalco).

It's a supermarket, no one knows anything and inevitably the check out girl will be unable take off the wine lock on the more expensive wines. But it's kind of part of the charm. Or lack there of.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Wine, Food Stores, Open Sunday, Open Monday

ADDRESS

 [Via Valtiera 181, Perugia](#)

COST

\$\$\$

SOCIAL MEDIA

 <https://www.facebook.com/Centrocommercialecollestrada>

GALLERY



ABOUT

Like all children, when I was growing up, my sisters and I enjoyed making fun of our parents. My mother was a particularly easy target since it was usually so easy to make her laugh. And today she is still the first one to make fun of any number of her own quirky habits. She can crack herself up by just starting to tell a story about some 'fantastic' find at a tag sale.

One of our early targets was her obsession with 'rooster' pitchers when we lived in Italy in the seventies. Coming from St. Louis, our house had been filled with (as far as I can remember) pretty standard white tableware. So when my mother first saw the brightly colored painted ceramics all over Italy she was smitten.

I thought they couldn't be tackier. Especially those pitchers shaped in the form of a rooster with the spout in the form of a beak through which you poured wine, water or whatever. But my mom? She couldn't get enough of them. Even when we moved back from to the States from Italy, when asked what she wanted us to bring her from a trip to Italy her first reply would always be "a rooster pitcher!"

It wasn't until I moved back to Italy on my own, in the late '80's, that my own love affair with majolica started. While I was a graduate student in Florence I was asked by the owners of a restaurant in East Hampton to head down to Vietri for them, to stock up on hand painted plates for their soon-to-be-opened restaurant. And that's when I realized that almost every region, every town, had it's own distinctive patterns, colors, shapes and designs. And that yes, I loved them all.

So fascinated was I by the subject of the diversity, that I eventually wrote a [book about the subject](#), on Umbrian ceramics from the small town of Deruta, where they've been making majolica for about 600 years.

You would think, at this point, that my cupboard is groaningly full of brightly colored plates. And it is. I admit it. I'm a ceramic junky. I've got six full sets of dishes from everywhere from Sicily to the [Veneto](#), not to mention various bowls, mugs and platters from every other town in between. But that doesn't stop me from dreaming. And in fact, my camera and my blog actually helps alleviate my need to actually buy. Nowadays I can take oodles of photos and fill my blog, instead of my shelves.

On a recent trip to Orvieto, I was once again reminded how each small town has a completely different history when it comes to ceramics. Even though Orvieto is only about a 40 minute drive from Deruta, the ceramics couldn't be more different.

I spent a half hour oggling and trying to justify buying a coffee set with renaissance portraits, a sugar bowl with a verdant deer and – yes I will admit it right here in public – a rooster pitcher.

Because you see my mother's obsession has finally come home to roost (my mother also loves puns). As you are walking down a narrow alley in Orvieto and see a stack of anthropomorphic pitchers pointing your beaks at you, you might just look the other way. But me? I'm trying to decide which one to buy. Because even if my own cupboard is full, I'm sure a rooster pitcher still tops my mom's wish list

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Kitchen And Table Top Stores

ADDRESS

 [Via del Duomo 66, Orvieto](#)

COST

\$\$\$

SOCIAL MEDIA

 <https://www.facebook.com/larceorvieto/>



UMBRIA

+39.0742.378.558



L'Alchimista

<http://ristorantealchimista.it>



Restaurant In Montefalco

Wed-Mon, 9am-11pm



ABOUT

We spend every August at our house in Umbria and - after about 20 years - our routine is pretty much the same. If you can call it a routine. We don't do much at all. Walks in the morning, swimming in the afternoon, and lots of cooking and eating. The one thing we almost never do is head out for lunch. It's usually just too hot to think about getting in the car and then sitting down for a big meal. But last August, was unseasonably and deliciously cool. And so I we broke with tradition and headed out into deepest Umbria

Actually, we just drove over to Montefalco.

Umbria is scattered with picturesque villages, and Montefalco is one of the prettiest. A walled in town that is very well known these days for its location in the heart of Umbrian wine country. Most of the better known vineyards - [Caprai](#), [Antonelli](#), [Bea](#) - are all in this area.

I hadn't been to Montefalco in a few years, and as we were walking up the main street I was surprised by how many new restaurants had opened. I guess wine tourism is the draw, but these places looked....mmm...touristy? They were all packed, but we continued up the steep street until we arrived at our destination: l'Alchimista.

L'Alchimista is located in what has got to be one of the prettiest piazzas in Umbria. Unfortunately I don't have any photographs since it was set up for their summer music festival with a stage and bleachers.

We took a seat under the white umbrellas and realized we were starved (must have been that cool weather) and so ordered probably too much food.

Although the place is known for their extensive list of some of the best local wines, we stuck to the house red, an everyday Montefalco Rosso, which was excellent.

We started with a couple of appetizers which we split. Zucchini flowers came two ways: one was stuffed with fluffy ricotta and the other acted as a casing for a mini portion of zucchini parmigiana. As delicious as they were pretty.

Next up a mixed plate of cured meats and cheeses. The hand cut local prosciutto was stellar, as was the local boar and pork salami. Actually, everything on the plate was completely delicious, even the three crostini which I usually tend to skip. And the bread that came with it? All home made and delicious.

Since my daughter Emma was with us, we went heavy on the truffles for our main course. Emma is, and always has been, truffle obsessed. As a child all I had to do was drizzle a few drops of truffle oil (yes, I know it's usually fake) on whatever it was I wanted her to eat, and she would gobble it up.

She couldn't resist the Umbricelli al Tartufo, hand made pasta which was perfectly cooked and smothered with both a sauce of truffles as well as a heaping portion of freshly shaved ones on top. I had a daily special, which combined a slightly spicy tomato sauce with both crunchy breadcrumbs and copious amounts of truffles. I'm still thinking about it.

Domenico instead ordered exquisitely made tortellini stuffed with ricotta and tossed with slow roasted tomatoes and zucchini. Even though we were stuffed, since Emma was leading the charge, so we couldn't head home without ordering dessert. I think it's physically impossible for her to leave a restaurant without doing so. A light as air tiramisu was her choice, and it was a good one. Made to order, it was not too sweet and delicate with just the right amount of coffee and mascarpone.

Afterwards took a walk through the town, heading off the main street through some of the incredibly narrow alley ways that lead to the walls of the town. Since it is on a slight hill the views out over the valley are pretty amazing. Especially on the weirdly crisp, cool and clear August day.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Restaurant, Outdoor Seating, Open Sunday, Open Monday,

Wine

ADDRESS

 [Piazza del Comune 14, Montefalco](#)

COST

\$\$\$

SOCIAL MEDIA

 <https://www.facebook.com/ristorantealchimista/>

GALLERY





La Cruccola



Rustic Trattoria Near Todi

Daily, Lunch and dinner



ABOUT

I think there is an image that most people have when they plan a vacation to the Italian countryside. Whether they are staying at a rented villa, a b&b or a hotel, they hope to stumble across a little restaurant, in a small village. As they order carafes of local wine, they'll sit back and enjoy a plate of pasta, maybe some rustic main course like meatballs, while the locals gather in the square: nonni on the few benches, kids running wild on bikes and kicking balls. And maybe the local cat will sidle up to your table, hoping for a scrap of prosciutto fat to fall his way.

I'm not sure if many places like this actually exist. But at least one does. In the small town of Acqualoreto.

There are lots of picture perfect little stone towns throughout Umbria. While many used to have small shops, restaurants, bars and even a post office or school, today they usually have no commercial enterprise what-so-ever. People still live there, but go elsewhere to go shopping or mail a letter (hah! No one does that anymore) And the lack of some sort of central magnet means that often the town squares are empty at night.

All of which makes the village of Acqualoreto so special. For whatever reason it has a bar at one end of the small piazza and a restaurant at the other. And right in the middle? A large war monument with plenty of benches for just hanging out.

I have a lot of friends who head to the bar every Wednesday for an expat get together, but Domenico and I gravitate to the restaurant at the other end of the piazza, La Cruccola. Run by Neisa, and ex-school teacher, the place is simple, homey and delicious. More like eating in someone's home, the menu doesn't vary that much and offers little choice. Antipasto is a plate of local prosciutto and pecorino (and when I say local, I mean the fields down below the town). First course is usually a choice of pasta with ragu, pomodoro or cacio e pepe. For a second course you can usually expect to find sausages one way or the other, and at least one kind of roast meat.

Domenico and I head there as often as possible. We usually skip the antipasto, but only because we know we can't possibly make it through the hearty portions of pasta and meat if we didn't. Domenico usually starts with whatever pasta is on offer. Recently it was cacio e pepe: made with local sharp pecorino and roughly ground fragrant black pepper, it was as good, or better, than anything we get back in Rome. I often order the pasta al pomodoro: one of the most satisfying ways I know to enjoy end of summer tomatoes. On a recent night Domenico had a massive portion of meatballs for his main course: big, fat and tender, gently spiced with a bit of nutmeg and bathed in a chunky tomato sauce. I ordered, as I usually tend to do, the roast beef. Cut paper thin, and cooked probably more well done than most people do, I love it. It's light, and the meat excellent and covered in a pan sauce that is one of the best things ever.

Even though we didn't order it, a couple of side dishes showed up as well. A small dish of chopped, raw wild greens, dressed with a sharp vinaigrette. And a big bowl of simple boiled green beans made perfect by enough salt and olive oil.

After this feast we passed on the home made crostata and instead shared a bowl of grapes, nibbling away slowly to make the night last as we hung out in the piazza. Like everyone else on this end of summer evening.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Restaurant, Open Sunday

ADDRESS

[Acqualoreto, baschi, italy](#)

COST

\$\$\$

GALLERY







La Palomba

Restaurant In Orvieto

Thurs-Tues, Lunch and Dinner



ABOUT

In Orvieto, when I need a truffle fix, I head to La Palomba. One of their most famous dishes, pasta all' ascaro, sounds like a recipe conceived in truffle heaven. It's basically hand made pasta - in this case thick, chewy flour and water umbricelli - tossed in sauce of egg yolks, pancetta, parmigiano and heaping quantities of black Umbrian truffles. Yes, basically carbonara by way of truffle.

During a recent lunch there, that is what I ordered. I could smell the fragrant strands of pasta even before they came to the table. Once there, the waitress hovered over my plate, grating even more truffles on top. She was so flagrantly abundant, that the truffle pieces scattered this way and that, landing on the white table cloth. It was a gorgeous mess.

My friend Gillian instead ordered the tagliatelle with lamb ragu. A tangle of eggy noodles in a slightly tomatoey but intensely lamby sauce. Redolent with fresh herbs - rosemary and marjoram - it was outstanding.

Of course I had to order the restaurant's signature dish - Palomba. Except that it wasn't palomba (wild dove) that day, but pigeon. "It all depends on what the hunters are able to get" explained the owner. That, and several other game dishes including boar and hare, are available if the hunting permits.

In any case, the pigeon made me more than happy. Made 'in salmi', a typical Umbrian recipe, the half bird was covered in a deep dark sauce that was made from the pan juices and seasonings - juniper berries, anchovies, capers, black olives, rosemary, vinegar and orange skin - all blended together with the bird's liver. The thick, piquant extra sauce was poured over a toasted, garlicky piece of bread. Gillian and I were basically fighting over the last, tiny bones.

Since it was lunch time, and we were driving, we didn't order wine. Until, that is, the food hit the table, then we quickly flagged down the waitress who brought us a bottle of the house vino rosso - a Sangiovese - which washed everything down very nicely.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Restaurant, Open Sunday, Open Monday

ADDRESS

[Via Cipriano Menente 16, Orvieto](#)

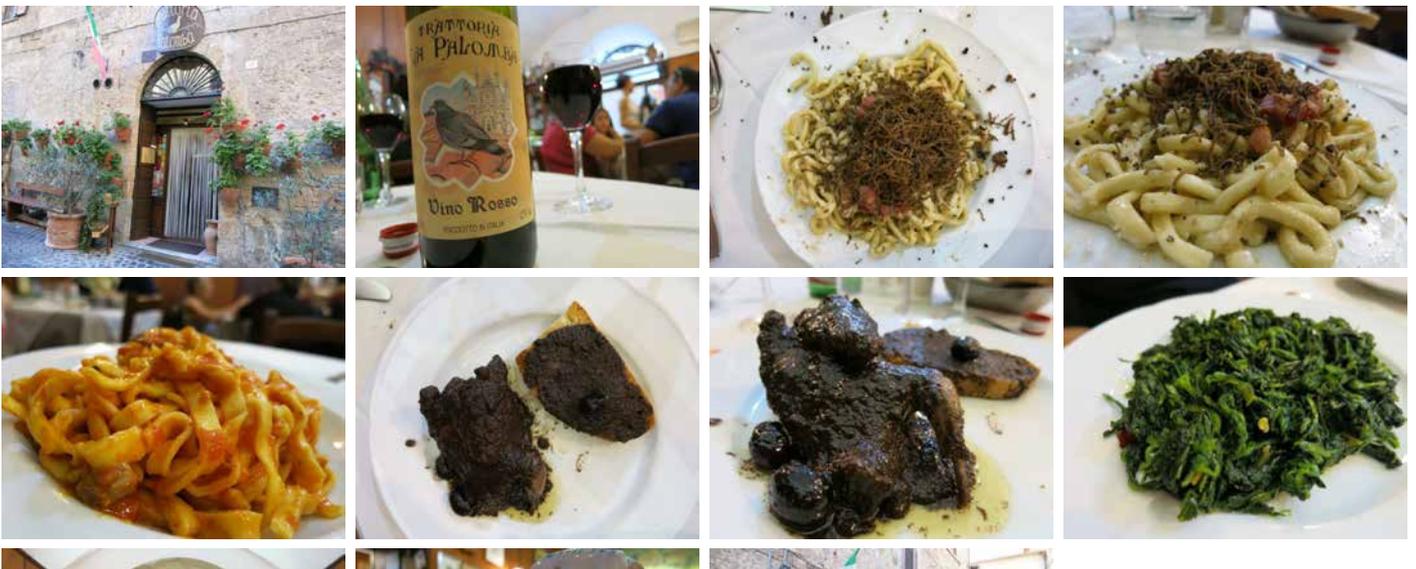
COST

\$\$\$

SOCIAL MEDIA

<https://www.facebook.com/trattorialapalomba/>

GALLERY







La Pergola

Family Restaurant In Orvieto

<http://www.lapergolaorvieto.com/en/orvieto/>



Thurs-Tues Lunch and Dinner



ABOUT

A simple, family run restaurant right in the center of Orvieto. The front room is painted in bright colors, while in the back there is a inner courtyard.

The dishes are rigorously traditional. Like most Orvieto restaurants you'll find Baffo, a thick slice of pancetta cooked in wine and vinegar and served as an antipasto with toasted bread. Their home made pastas are excellent, including, of course, strozzapreti. This is very much a place where locals go, nothing fancy and always dependable.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Restaurant, Open Sunday, Open Monday

ADDRESS

 [Via dei Magoni 9/B, Orvieto](#)

COST

\$\$\$

SOCIAL MEDIA

 <https://www.facebook.com/lapergolaorvieto/>

GALLERY





Lufra - Truck Stop Mozzarella

<http://lufra-prodotti-campani.com/home>

Campania Cheeses

Daily, 8:30am-8:30pm



ABOUT

I don't usually shop at truck stops. You are more likely to find me at [Campo dei Fiori](#), [Piazza Vittorio](#) or the organic farmer's market in Rome. But all that changed a few years ago when Lufra' Mozzarella di Bufala opened its doors at the gas station where we usually stop on the way up to [Todi](#), from Rome.

Anyone with a home in Umbria knows which gas station I am talking about. Take the A1 autostrada north from Rome, and then exit at Orte. Just after you've paid your toll, and take a right on to the access road, the gas station is about 250 meters on your right, before you hit the E45.

A few years ago the owners of this pit stop completely redid it, adding several low-slung, cheaply-made commercial buildings they hoped to rent out to stores. Who in their right mind would ever decide to open a business here?

Some very smart Neapolitans, that's who. While Umbria may be known for black truffles, cured pork and olive oil, good mozzarella remains hard to find. The really great stuff comes from a small area in Campania, just south of Naples. (Needless to say, most mozzarella sold in grocery stores is not so great.)

Where many people would see the ugly road-side building off the highway as something to be avoided, The De-Tora brothers (Luca and Francesco, hence the name of the store: Lufra') realized that they could make the drive up from Campania in under two hours, hop off the highway, and deliver the freshest mozzarella in Umbria, as fresh as any you would get in central Naples. The store is packed with other goodies from Campania. The De-Tora family bakery supplies crusty loaves of bread (Umbrian bread is notoriously tasteless, so locals snap this up) as well as sfogliatelle, pastiera and the best almond-studded taralli I've ever had.

Other things to stock up on if you make it there:

Faella brand Pasta

Canned Pomodorini

Anything under oil (artichokes, hot peppers, etc)

Anchovies

Tuna

And....well, you're pretty safe picking up anything. The only warning: Don't enter hungry. We always do. Our solution? While we stock up on things to take up to the house with us, we also make sure we get a small plastic bag of small mozzarelle to eat as we drive along.

Note: if you are headed up on a Friday evening, or a holiday, call ahead and reserve your mozzarella and/or bread, since they tend to run out.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Food Stores, Open Sunday, Open Monday

ADDRESS

 [E 45 Km. 32.536, Orte](#)

COST

\$\$\$

GALLERY







Madonna del Latte

<http://www.madonnadellatte.it/en/>



Innovative Wines

Call in advance



ABOUT

The area around Orvieto has long been known for its white wine. Orvieto DOC is a blend of both Trebbiano toscano (also known locally as Procanico) as well as the famous Grechetto. While many of the traditional wine makers continue to make this much loved wine, at Madonna del Latte, outside of Orvieto, they are trying to do something a bit different.

The German family that runs this vineyard decided to plant other types of vines to produce new wines that break from local tradition in a delicious way. Their Sucano, is a full bodied red that blends Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon. They also produce Viognier (100% Viognier) as well as a still and a sparkling rose.

The vineyard is a pleasure to visit and tastings are held in the family dining room or - when weather permits - under a shaded pergola overlooking the vineyard. They are happy to ship.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Wine

ADDRESS

[Sugano, Orvieto](#)

COST

\$\$\$

SOCIAL MEDIA

<https://www.facebook.com/madonnadellatte.it>

<https://twitter.com/MadonnadelLatt>

GALLERY





Mangiar Bene

Trattoria & Pizzeria

<http://www.almangiarbene.it/>



ABOUT

This spacious restaurant is located down a little alleyway (as are most places in the center of Perugia). The entry way is taken up by a massive wood burning oven that turns out pizzas in the evening, but is used to bake the restaurants bread every morning. Although the menu is not extensive, every item is meticulously sourced. I loved my tagliata (hangar steak) and Sophie ordered a scamorza which had been melted and arrived sizzling at the table in its own little terracotta pot: crusty at the bottom and heaped with truffles on top.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Open Monday, Restaurant

ADDRESS

 [21, Via della Luna, Perugia](#)[Perugia, Provincia di Perugia, Umbria, Italy](#)

COST

\$\$\$

SOCIAL MEDIA

 <https://www.facebook.com/ilcantinoneperugia/>

GALLERY





Numero Uno

<http://www.osterianumerouno.eu/lang1/index.html>

Family Restaurant In Orvieto

Tues-Sun Lunch and Dinner



ABOUT

This family run restaurant is located in the less touristy part of Orvieto. So off the beaten track that you might get lost in winding alley ways of the old part of town getting there.

Once you make it there expect hearty, Umbrian fare. Sausages and other porky dishes feature largely. The menu, which changes daily, is printed on a big chalk board in the main room. But if you're not in a meat frame of mind, don't worry, there's always lots of vegetables going on as well. During a recent visit there was a baked artichoke dish, eggplant rolls and a vegetable flan: all hearty enough to be a main dish. Truffles too, since this is Umbria came atop pasta.

Don't be put off by the front room, which is decorated for families, complete with spaceships floating above and disney napkins on the table. (and if you are with your kids, they'll love it) The back room is a bit more grown up, with soaring arched ceilings and big wooden tables.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Restaurant, Open Sunday

ADDRESS

[Via Ripa Corsica 11, Orvieto](#)

COST

\$\$\$

SOCIAL MEDIA

<https://www.facebook.com/Osteria-Numero-Uno-144684832266775/>

GALLERY





Osteria a Priori

Slow Food In Perugia

<http://www.osteriaapriori.it>



Mon-Sat Lunch & Dinner



ABOUT

This cozy restaurant is located on a small alleyway in the heart of Perugia. Spread out over two levels, part of the ground floor is taken over by a small shop where you can buy many of the local Slow Food items used in the dishes.

The menu changes seasonally, but you can always be sure to find local ingredients used in new and creative ways. While many Umbrian restaurants stick to tried and true traditional recipes, Osterie a Priori puts a bit of a modern spin on things. Everything - from the olive oil to the flour used in the breads to (of course) the wine, is local.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Restaurant, Food Stores, Open Monday

ADDRESS

 [Via dei Priori 39, Perugia](#)

COST

\$\$\$

SOCIAL MEDIA

 <https://www.facebook.com/osteriaapriori/>

GALLERY





Osteria Dada



Rustic Osteria

Daily, lunch and dinner. Sunday Lunch only



ABOUT

This teeny tiny osteria is about as rustic as you can get and still call it a restaurant. The dozen tables are crammed into a space that seems barely large enough to hold six people. The tables are always full, and there is almost always a line waiting outside.

The service is friendly, and the food simple, hearty and delicious. It's kind of like eating at your grandmother's. If your grandmother was an Umbrian lady with a restaurant in Spello.

The day Sophie and I were there recently we decided to go with something on the quick side, since the kitchen seemed to be a bit backed up. We started with their house antipasti, which included a bit of everything. Cured meats, a few kinds of cheese, crostini and torta di testa (a local griddle bread). For our main course we shared a plate full of truffle topped scrambled eggs. Completely messy looking, but also completely delicious.

Be forewarned: Even if you reserve, they might not remember it. And once you get in, be prepared to wait, the kitchen is tinier than the dining room. But if you aren't in a hurry, it's a great place to try simple, affordable, well prepared Umbrian food.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Restaurant, Open Sunday, Open Monday

ADDRESS

[Spello, Via Cavour 47](#)

COST

\$\$\$

SOCIAL MEDIA

<https://www.facebook.com/osteria.dedada.7>

GALLERY



Osteria Novecento

<http://www.osterianovecentoilci.it> 

Country Trattoria

Tue-Sun, lunch and dinner 

ABOUT

While I love the standard dishes I'm used to finding all over Umbria (truffle topped pasta, roasted pig and game) it's actually nice to see someone doing something a bit new and different with local ingredients. The chef at Osteria Novecento, Stefano actually has a history at various restaurants in the area, but decided to finally open his own place just outside of Todi, in the minuscule hamlet of Ilci.

During a recent visit I got the chance to sample their special fixed price fish menu. For 35 Euros we got four fish-filled courses. A selection of 6 antipasti, all from the sea, that included marinated fresh anchovies, octopus salad and home cured salmon. While none of that may have been local, it was superbly fresh. The local 'seafood' came in the form of snails, that had me digging out every last bit of spicy tender morsel with a toothpick. The main course of fried shrimp and squid was pitch perfect. Crunchy and tender and addictive. Also? The goat cheese - stuffed zucchini blossoms is something I want to try at home as soon as possible.

The other dish I have become obsessed with is the Tagliatelle Verdi con Burrata e Limone. Obsessed. I think about it all the time. How brilliant to pair rich creamy burrata with just the right amount of lemon to coat fat, homemade pasta. Although I've grabbed bites of other people's pasta - like the one served with crunchy fried eggplant and fresh cherry tomatoes- I always end up with a plate full of tagliatelle in front of me.

The main meats are also excellent. I love their scrumptious roast pork - almost like a mini porchetta for one - just bursting with wild fennel. Just as delicious is their version of tagliata - a type of steak - served with grilled vegetables that was excellent. If you see it on the menu (which changes all the time) the boned guinea hen stuffed with sausage is superb.

The place is small and cozy. And very popular. So make sure you reserve. If weather permits, one of the few tables on the pint sized balcony allows you to enjoy one of the most unspoiled views in this part of the world. If that doesn't make you cry into your prosecco, I don't know what will.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Restaurant, Outdoor Seating, Open Sunday

ADDRESS

 [Località Ilci 24, Todi](#)

COST

\$\$\$

SOCIAL MEDIA

 <https://www.facebook.com/osterianovecentoilci/> <https://twitter.com/OstNovecento>

GALLERY





ABOUT

The Bea family has been making wine since the 16th century. Today they are considered one of the most exciting vineyards not only in Umbria, but in Italy. This small estate is known for their expressive, idiosyncratic and natural wines.

Sagrantino has been grown in this area of Umbria for centuries. For centuries bottled as a sweet wine, the last 50 years has seen the rise of Sagrantino secco, and Bea's is considered to be one of the best.

The wines are intense, unique and produced without mechanical or chemical intervention. The unfiltered wines often have sediment which enhances their rustic nature.

I've been stopping by Bea for the last twenty years, to sample and to buy. While I was more than happy to settle in at the rickety wooden table, tasting wines by candle light in the original cellar, I was thrilled to get a chance to visit his new winery recently. Designed by Giampiero Bea, the son of Paolo who oversees the vinification, the building is a sleek and modern mirror to the more earthy wine. The new tasting room is large and airy, and takes in views out over the vineyards and surrounding countryside.

The vineyard is open for visits and tastings, which cost either 40 or 50 Euros per person, and include pairings with cheese, bruschetta and crostata.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Wine

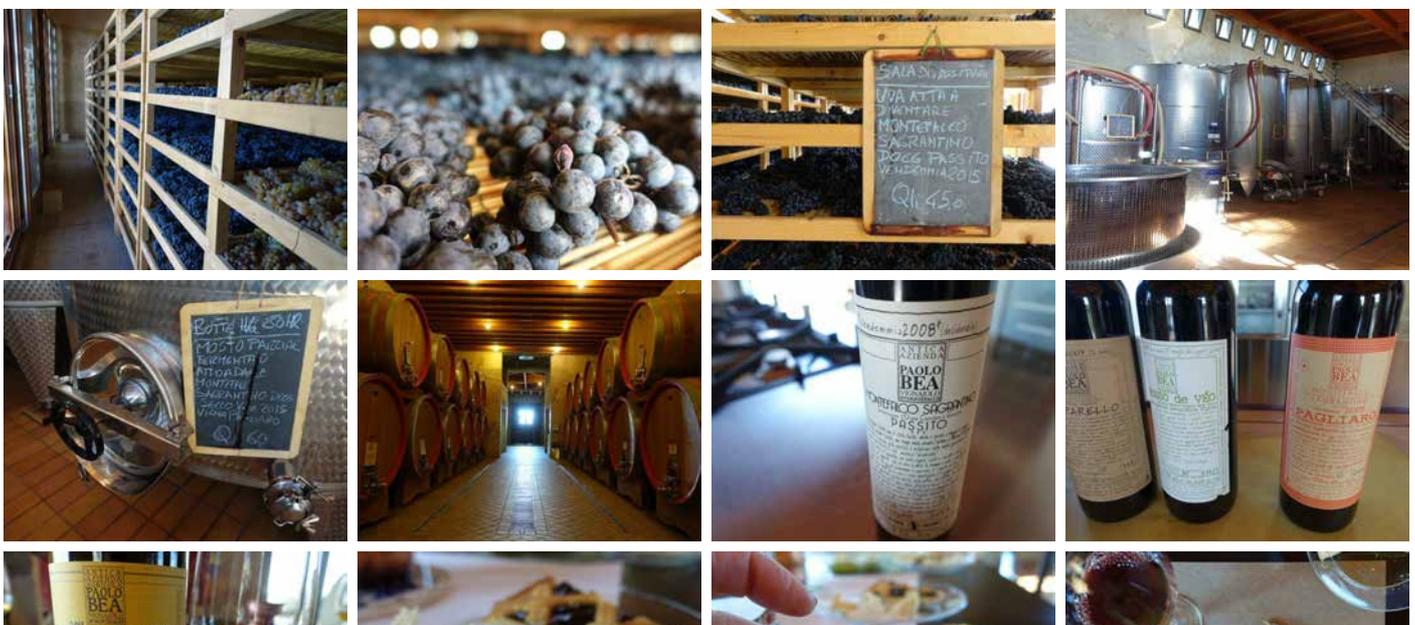
ADDRESS

 [Montefalco](#)

COST

\$\$\$

GALLERY







Pardi

<http://www.tessiturapardi.com/>

Traditional Table Clothes



ABOUT

Umbria has a long tradition of weaving and even though there are now huge workshops that churn out cashmere for the likes of Max Mara, Gucci and others, there are still little shops that sell the traditional patterns that are woven from mixes of cotton and linen. One of my favorite shops is Tessitura Pardi.

This family owned company dates back to 1949 and their main factory is based in Bastardo (yes, the town is really named that!). You can actually arrange for a visit to the factory, to see how the fabrics are woven. But it's much easier to visit one of their many shops located throughout Umbria.

Their main store is located in Montefalco, but they have shops in Todi, Spello, Assisi, Spello, Norcia as well as throughout Tuscany (Florence, Siena, etc).

The reason I'm including a fabric store in a guide on food is because they specialize in table clothes. Over the years it has been my go to source for my tables both in Umbria and Rome. If you think you need a special size, no worries, you can have one made to order. The only problem is choosing from the fabulous colors and patterns. The great thing is that it's all machine washable.

And if you're not ready to invest in a table cloth? The dish towels make the make perfect gifts!

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Kitchen And Table Top Stores

ADDRESS

 [7, Corso Goffredo Mameli, Montefalco](#)
Montefalco,
Provincia di Perugia, Umbria, Italy

COST

\$\$\$

SOCIAL MEDIA

 <https://www.facebook.com/Tessitura-Pardi-154060041315582/>

GALLERY





Pasticceria Polticchia



Biscotti



ABOUT

One of my favorite small towns in Umbria is Bevagna. One thing it's got going for it is that it feels like the perfect medieval stone hill top village. But it's not on a hill! While views might be nice, being able to arrive to a main square without sweating has it's charms.

Bevagna is located along the banks of the Topino river, and one of my favorite parts of any visit is parking. The parking lot located right outside the Molino gate of the city has got to have the best view of any parking lot in Italy. Grassy banks lead right to the river, while a weeping willow frames the town in a way that's almost too pretty.

The small bridge that leads over the river passes over what used to be the communal laundry. Nice to look at, and makes me appreciate my Miele more than ever.

This attention to preservation of a past way of life runs strong in Bevagna. Yes, there are gorgeous churches to visit, but the town has also recreated a series of [artisan's workshops](#) that are dotted throughout the alleyways. You can stop by the Museo Comunale for a map and then make your way to a paper, silk and candle making workshops. If you want to go all out, pay for the 7 euro combined ticket and visit the museum, small 18th century theatre and recreated Renaissance pharmacy.

And for an extra euro, theater and religion come together in big way in the church of Santa Maria Laurentia. I won't spoil the drama for you. Just watch this [video](#).

I'll just tell you that my favorite cookie store is here. It's a small bakery that does sell cakes and bread and other baked goods. But it's the cookies that I will actually make a detour for. Yes, they have the normal, dry, nut-filled biscotti that are made for dunking in the sweet Sagrantino wine. But they also make cookies that are completely their own, and that I've never seen before. Pistachio or almond topped butter cookies are so delicate they almost fall apart on the way to your mouth. Their Sagrantino and hazelnut biscotti are crisp and sugary. But my favorite are the almond and fig filled cookies which are basically fig newtons to which I'm pretty sure they've added addictive drug.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Bakery, Open Sunday, Open Monday

ADDRESS

[Via Fabio Alberti 9, Bevagna](#)

COST

\$\$\$

GALLERY





UMBRIA

+39.075.894.4633



Piero e Silvana



Family Trattoria

Open lunch and dinner.



ABOUT

Sometimes the place where you live is the place you know the least. I wouldn't say that Umbria, where we have had a home for almost 30 years, remains unknown to me. In fact, in at least 4 of my 8 books Umbria plays a starring role. But like most people I tend, after a while, to go back to places I know and love. Same restaurants, same stores, even the same museums and farms. But for the next few weeks Sophie and I have decided to go beyond our comfort zone and finally get to many of the places we've saving for the last few years on our wish lists.

The reason? Beyond pure curiosity, we also have 5 week-long tours coming up in Umbria in the next 9 months and we thought it would be nice to change things up a bit. One of the tours is based in Perugia, so we'll be eating our way through that town, checking out restaurants. And two of the tours are based in Todi, where - we have realized - there are a handful of restaurants that have remained off our radar.

Usually, when we 'go into town' (Todi is the biggest town near our home) we have a tired and tested routine. We park at bottom of the hill, then take the funicular up to the top. We get out, marvel at the view out over the Tiber valley from the Giardinini, then have a little passeggiata up towards the main square. Most of our favorite places - restaurants, pizzerie, linen store - as well as things like pharmacies and banks - are right along this short but incredibly beautiful route. And while we always talk about wandering the alleys leading in other directions, since it involves steep climbs (Todi is a hill top village) we tend to just keep it as a future goal as we sip Negronis in the piazza.

But last night we ventured out on new paths. We parked at the foot of the hill, next to Bramante's Consolazione, and wandered along narrow medieval alleys towards our destination: Trattoria Piero e Silvana.

Along the way we discovered a magnificent walk way above the medieval walls with views out over the other side of town. And those walls? Covered in caper plants that Sophie and I are planning on going back to pick.

We sat outside at Piero e Silvana's and had, I think, the best table in the house. Perched on the corner of the outside terrace, our table looked across the street and had a picture perfect view down Via del Porto Nuovo where - at the end - the ancient archway framed the pristine valley below.

Our meal was as perfect as the view. Nothing fancy, which is just the way we like things. Rustic home cooking by the family that owns the place. We started with a charcuterie board (Sophie was craving salami) which included truffle topped pork salami, wild boar salami, deer prosciutto and some of the best home made porchetta I've had in a while. The platter also included two crostini topped with bubbling pecorino cheese that had been drizzled with honey and scattered with toasted coffee grounds which was fantastic.

Believe it or not, we were still feeling very meaty and so Domenico ordered stewed boar, which was in a rich and spicy sauce. Sophie and I, instead, order the mixed grilled meats which included a pork chop, a veal chop, chicken breast and a sausage. All perfectly seasoned and grilled, but WAY too much, so we ended up getting a doggie bag. (which actually made Pico quite happy).

Unfortunately we were too full for dessert, which I saw when I went inside to pay our bill. Cute jars full of tiramisu and panna cotta that we'll just have to save to look forward to the next time we go.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Open Monday, Open Sunday, Outdoor Seating, Restaurant

ADDRESS

 [91, Via Giacomo Matteotti, TodiTodi, Provincia di Perugia, Umbria, Italy](#)

COST

\$\$\$

SOCIAL MEDIA

 <https://www.facebook.com/TrattoriaDaPieroESilvana/>

GALLERY



UMBRIA

+39.075.894.3730 

Pizzeria Cavour

<https://www.ristorantecavour-todi.com> 

Pizza & View

Fri-Wed, lunch and dinner. 

ABOUT

If you happen to be in Todi, and want a drop dead gorgeous view of the Umbrian countryside as a topping to your pizza, then Pizzeria Cavour is your best choice. While it is open all year round, I love this place for it's precariously perched terraces that run down the hill behind the restaurant.

Located on main street that leads out of the Piazza del Popolo, Corso Cavour, the restaurant has a few tables located outside the front door. Don't be tempted to sit there. Or even inside in their vaulted dining rooms (unless it's winter, then be my guest). Instead call ahead and reserve a table on the terrace outside. Be forewarned: you have to climb down some pretty steep steps and, for the furthest terrace, what sometimes feels like a goat path, but it's worth it. The green valley below opens up beneath the shaded pergolas.

I know they serve food other than pizza, but we usually just stick to the pizza. But they do have a lot of local specialities, that are worth trying if you want to go beyond pizza.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Restaurant, Open Sunday, Open Monday

ADDRESS

 [Corso Cavour 21, Todi](#)

COST

\$\$\$

SOCIAL MEDIA

 <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Pizzeria-Ristorante-Cavour/155410907814450>

GALLERY



UMBRIA

+39.075.465.0335



Porcellino Divino

<http://www.porcellinodivino.it>



Porchetta

Daily, 8am-8pm



ABOUT

In Umbria you're never very far from a porchetta stand. It's the land of pork and one of the best ways to consume it is in the form of Porchetta. These mobile trucks tend to park near busy locations. One of my favorite is located in the parking lot of a huge supermarket, and others are located just outside of the fortified walls of medieval villages.

But one of my favorite places to stop, when I'm near Assisi, is at Porcellino Divino. Located in the modern part of town, it's not much to look at from the outside but don't worry: porchetta awaits.

The porchetta is made artisinally from local pigs and has won awards at various competition. You can order a panino to stay or to go, along with other cured meats. Craft beer is available to wash it all down.

One of the things that distinguishes Umbrian porchetta from others is that they include the liver, which is my favorite part. If it's yours too, make sure you ask for extra.

If you happen to be having a big party, and need an entire porchetta, they will ship anywhere in Italy. Just saying.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ADDRESS

Food Stores, Street Food / Snacks, Open Sunday, Open Monday  [Via Los Angeles 44, Assisi](#)

COST

\$\$\$

SOCIAL MEDIA

 <https://www.facebook.com/PorcellinoDivino2013/>

GALLERY



UMBRIA

+39.0742.770.809



Porchettiamo

<http://porchettiamo.com>



Porchetta Festival In May

Yearly festival



ABOUT

Porchettiamo is a pork lovers dream come true. For three days in the month of May, a small town in Umbria is taken over by stands selling porchetta. While porchetta is always roasted pig, different regions put their own special spin on it. And Porchettiamo brings together the best Porchetta makers from different regions.

Located in the small town of San Terenziano, the three day festival takes over the main square with stands from Tuscany, Lazio, Emilia Romagna, Calabria, Sicily and of course Umbria. Since the festival can get pretty crowded on Friday and Saturday nights, I usually end up going for lunch. A panino or two, plus some to take home as well.

You can buy tokens at the main booth, and then spend them at any stand. To wash it all down there is craft beer as well as local wine.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Street Food / Snacks

ADDRESS

 [San Terenziano di Gualdo Cattaneo](#)

COST

\$\$\$

SOCIAL MEDIA

 <https://www.facebook.com/Porchettiamo/>

 <https://twitter.com/porchettiamo>

GALLERY





Ristorante La Mulinella



Country Trattoria In Todi

Thurs-Tues Lunch and Dinner



ABOUT

The food in Umbria never that creative. Which, in a food world full of 'the next new thing' can actually be a good thing. But when all the restaurants in any given area have pretty much photocopied the same menu over and over, it's the little things that can make all the difference.

While Ristorante La Mulinella in Todi serves the same pastas and meat dishes (think black truffles and boar stew) that you'd find almost everywhere else in Umbria, it's the extra things that make us head here.

First of all the setting. Located just down the hill from Todi, in the summer Ristorante La Mulinella spreads its tables beneath the shade of an ancient mulberry tree.

Secondly, but no less important: the bread. Umbria is not known for the excellence of it's bread. Ristorante La Mulinella bakes its own loafs, which is a complete rarity. And at other restaurants I can easily resist the bread basket before the start of a meal, at Mulinella I make no pretense and just dive straight into whatever they've baked up that day. Sometimes it's simply a perfectly moist, crusty loaf but when we're lucky they've used whole wheat flour and studded it with walnuts.

And then there is the service. Things in Umbria are usually pretty [rough and ready](#) (which is ok with me). But I do love Mulinella's bits of extra elegance. The food always come out of the kitchen on metal serving dishes, and then is portioned by the waiter onto the plates at the table. Even if it's just one portion. I'm not 100% why they do it, but I'm 100% sure it makes me feel special every time.

But of course, all of this wouldn't matter if the food weren't some of the best in this part of Umbria. This is where you can get an excellent fettucine con tartufo or gnocchi con pomodoro. But if I have to choose between a pasta or a main dish, at Ristorante La Mulinella I usually go for the meat. I love their stew of wild boar in a slightly spicy, piquant sauce. Equally delicious is the coniglio alla cacciatore, a lovely rabbit stew. My father's all time favorite though is the stinco, a lamb shank that he special orders ahead of time (especially when my meat-eating brother-in-laws are visiting). This huge hunk of meat, cooked slowly so that the meat is falling off the bone, is Umbrian cooking at its best.

What to order:

Fettucine con Tartufi (freshly made pasta with black truffles)

Gnocchi con pomodoro (freshly made potato gnocchi with tomato sauce)

Cinghiale alla cacciatore (wild boar stew)

Agnello Scottaditta (grilled lamb chops)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Restaurant, Open Sunday, Open Monday

ADDRESS

[29 Località Ponte Naia, Todi](#)

COST

\$\$\$

SOCIAL MEDIA

<https://www.facebook.com/La-Mulinella-110729702275438/>

GALLERY







Ristorante Umbria

<http://www.ristoranteumbria.it/en/>

Restaurant With View

Wed-Mon, Lunch and Dinner



ABOUT

Ristorante Umbria is, I think, the very first restaurant I ever went to in Todi. That's because, for a long while, it was just about the only place in town. Although there were a few smaller places, and then eventually a pizza place or two, the Umbria was pretty much it, when it came to fine dining in this hill top medieval town.

And by fine dining I mean a true ristorante, with starched linen table clothes, professional service and a wine list that included more than just the local Grechetto or Montefalco Rosso. In other words, 'fancy.' Which pretty much explains why I hadn't been there in at least eight years.

When we head up to Umbria for the [weekends](#) the last thing we usually feel like doing is putting on anything fancier than jeans not muddied by the garden and heading out for a formal meal. We are more likely to grill sausages and [bruschetta](#) at home, or else head down the road to the uber rustic [Cibocchi](#).

But recently I was in Umbria for a different reason. I was not there to unwind, garden and cook my way through a weekend. I was with a group of 20 travelers who I had the great pleasure to show around (and by this I mostly mean eat around) Umbria. Based in Perugia, we headed out to eat [truffles in Trevi](#), twirl [unbricelli in Orvieto](#) and drink Sagrantino just about everywhere. Our day in Todi provided the perfect excuse to visit the Umbria again after my too-long absence. Maybe it had to do with the fact it was a picture perfect day, or that I was seeing everything through the rose colored glasses of first time visitors, but our meal there was magical.

After a visit to San Fortunato and the Duomo we headed beneath the arches that support the town hall, down the steeply winding street that leads to the almost hidden door of the Umbria. The reason Todi's most famous restaurant is tucked in this out of the way location and not on the main square becomes apparent once you arrive. The restaurant balances on the very edge of the town and the spacious vine covered terrace that makes up the summer seating has got to enjoy one of the best front row seats of the picture perfect green valleys and hills this part of the world is known for.

Since it was a chilly March day, however, we took over the main dining room, which is beyond charming. With a fire lit in the massive stone fireplace, we sat down at the perfectly laid table beneath a portrait Jacopone.

Our menu that day spoke Umbrian big time. We started out with a warming bowl full of farro soup, rich with concentrated tomatoey broth and bought to life with a bright green drizzle of olive oil. The obligatory umbricelli turned towards spring, with a sauce made of both cultivated and wild asparagus, studded with crispy chunks of pancetta.

For our second course we had a choice between two dishes. Rabbit was cooked in salmi, a thick piquant sauce made of capers and thickened with the liver of the rabbit. Duck, instead, was braised slowly in Sagrantino and served atop a bed of lentils.

After a sweet ending to our meal, which included biscotti dipped in sweet wine and thick slices of pine nut studded torta della nonna, we headed out to the terrace. As we sipped our coffee and took a gazillion photos of the view, I promised myself that next time we came up to Todi I would remember to pack my 'fancy' clothes so that I wouldn't make the mistake of waiting another eight years to come back here.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Restaurant, Open Sunday, Open Monday, Outdoor Seating

ADDRESS

[Via San Bonaventura 13, Todi Perugia](#)

COST

\$\$\$

SOCIAL MEDIA

<https://www.facebook.com/rist.umbria/>

GALLERY





Rosa dei Venti

<https://www.ristorantelarosadeiventitodi.com> 

Pizza & Pasta & View

Wed-Mon, lunch and dinner 

ABOUT

It's difficult for me to write about Rosa dei Venti, since it's been our go to local place for as long as I've been coming to Umbria. When we first started going there, about 30 years ago, I can remember that we would arrive with candles in hand, since they had no outdoor area set up for eating. Finally, after much begging, they would drag a table outside for us, into the parking lot with one of the best views in this part of the world, and grudgingly serve us by our own candlelight.

As Sophie and Emma grew up, we would head there often since they had a playground of sorts. A typically Italian playground that involved a swing set and slide, made out of somewhat rusted and sharp edged pieces situated at one end of the parking lot. We still joke about the time the climbed the vertiginous ladder to the top of the slide, only to find an enormous wasps nest had set up shop.

But the girls survived, and so did Rosa dei Venti. What started out as a place where you could count on grilled sausages and a few kinds of pasta has now grown, under the current generation of this family run enterprise, to become one of the most popular restaurants around Todi.

The biggest changes include the addition, finally, of an enormous terrace overlooking the Umbrian countryside. And the addition of pizza to their menu. Pizza, evidently, is that the city folk of Todi want, and they make the 7 kilometer drive from town to enjoy it in this bucolic location.

The pizza is very good. Crispy thin, and so big it stretches out over the sides of the plate. I alternate between two of my favorites. The Rucola is a white pizza, topped with mozzarella, raw arugula and shavings of parmesan cheese. The Patatosa is also a white pizza, topped with mozzarella, potatoes, sausage and parmesan.

While I love the pizza, I skip even the idea of it, if the place is crowded. With only one pizza chef and one oven, the pizza backlog can get crazy (up to 45 minutes) on a busy weekend night. In that case I stick to pasta (Tagliatelle al Tartufo is an outstanding standard) or else go straight to grilled meats, which has always been their strong point. A massive fireplace inside hosts a wood fired grill. I used to stick to Umbrian fare, like sausages, puntarelle (ribs) or stringhette (pork belly) but have lately become enamoured of their Tagliata, a grilled flank steak that is sliced thinly than topped with balsamic vinegar, arugula and parmesan flakes.

Make sure you ask for the side dishes, since they are always good. Boiled wild chicory, sauteed with garlic and olive oil or my favorite oven roasted potatoes (order more than you think. Trust me on this)

If you go with your kids, this is the point in the meal when you can let them go into the restaurant and choose a pre-packaged ice cream for the dessert. They can run across the busy parking lot, grab their gelato, and then run back to play on swing set. They've updated the swing and gotten rid of the slide. The complimentary, home made, after dinner drinks (limoncello, bay leaf and walnut licquers) will help you ignore the fact they are basically playing in a parking lot.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Restaurant, Open Sunday, Open Monday, Outdoor Seating

ADDRESS

 [Vocabolo Crocefisso 3, Frazione Fiore, Todi, PG](#)

COST

\$\$\$

SOCIAL MEDIA

 <https://www.facebook.com/rosadeiventitodi/>



ABOUT

Truffles in Umbria are a big deal. They are also a big deal in our house. First there was the whole Pico thing. My 8 year old mutt decided, out of the blue, that he was a truffle dog. At least for two days at the end of last August. One day, coming back from his early morning walk on his own on our property, he returned to the back door with a huge truffle in his mouth.

For real.

And then, two days later, while our gardener was digging up an old bush, Pico came running over, started digging, and came up with three more truffles.

After that burst of energy, Pico has pretty much taken it easy since then, mostly napping on various couches and certainly not out truffling.

On the other hand my maid (or at least her son) has had better luck, and she gifted me an entire bag full of the black beauties. I gladly used those - and the Pico truffles - to make [pasta](#) and pizza and even a completely indulgent breakfast of [eggs](#). And I still have a baggie full of truffles in my freezer.

But not all my truffling has been at home. A true truffle extravaganza came when my friend Gillian and I headed over the hills to Trevi, to visit truffle central at San Pietro a Pettine.

I'd actually come across this company at [Taste](#), in Florence, where I tried some of their products like truffle honey and truffle pate. What I didn't realize is that they also have a restaurant and organize private truffle hunts on their estate

Since Gillian and I were feeling kind of lazy, we let the truffles be hunted on their own, and settled for a multi-course, truffle-laden meal cooked for us by Alice, whose father owns San Pietro a Pettine.

It was a veritable truffle orgy.

We started out with a mixed antipasto which combined rustic, old fashioned, truffle treatments with new and fresh approaches. A piece of country bread was toasted and topped with a paper thin slice of lardo before being smothered with grated truffles. A freshly baked slice of slightly sweet brioche was slathered with a porcini-truffle pate. Fresh balls of mozzarella were sliced open to hold the clever pairing of marinated zucchini and truffle slices. An old fashioned truffle filled galatine of chicken was served with a few slices of preserved artichokes. And finally, sharp pecorino cheese was drizzled with truffle infused honey.

And that was only the beginning.

A truly obscene amount of truffles was used to make the fabulous spaghetti al tartufo. This was followed by a soft and creamy plate of farm fresh eggs scrambled with....of course, more massive amounts of truffles.

Although I didn't think it possible to eat anything more - truffled or not - both Gillian and I managed to finish the pignoli panna cotta topped with (you're not going to believe this) truffle nutella.

Which, I can admit right here, I could live on.

We made a half-hearted effort to walk off the lunch by visiting the exquisitely preserved and restored Romanesque church of San Pietro on the property. And of course visited their little store to stock up on such things as truffle honey, truffled quail eggs and the cutest little truffle mushroom risotto kits I've ever seen.

Alice kindly invited me into the kitchen to watch her doing her truffle thing - and I made a video which you can watch [here](#).

And if you'd like to join me on a truffle hunt in Umbria, we offer a delicious [day trip](#) from Rome.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Restaurant, Outdoor Seating, Food Stores

ADDRESS

 [Loc. San Pietro a Pettine, Trevi](#)

COST

\$\$\$

SOCIAL MEDIA

 <https://www.facebook.com/lacucinasanpietroapettine/>



ABOUT

The app entry is a blatant plea to make you spend money. But don't worry. I have my reasons.

Here they are:

- 1) You will really like what you'll be spending your money on.
- 2) It's a good value
- 3) It's (kind of) for a good cause.

Because this entry is about hand painted ceramics from Umbria. See. Got your attention, didn't I? You want shiny, pretty plates, right? You NEED them (yes, I'm in your head and hear what you are saying to yourself).

A bit of background first. As many of you know, we have a [house](#) in Umbria, where we spend a lot of time. One of the first books I ever wrote grew out of a desire to throw light on one of the area's richest resources: hand crafted ceramics. [Deruta: A Tradition of Ceramics](#)

Deruta, at the time, seemed like the perfect subject for a book. They've been making gorgeous majolica in Deruta for hundreds of years. And have pretty much been doing it the same way, with the same materials, techniques and designs for centuries. For a bit of history, see this post on my blog. You can also try to buy the book, but unfortunately it's sadly out of print. (stay tuned for the ebook version, coming soon)

All was going fine in Deruta until recently, when this whole 'globalisation' thing started up. And the 'financial crisis' thing didn't help much either. It turns out that workers in Asia can make dishes that superficially look a lot like the ones from Deruta, but at half the price. (but that's ok, since you probably get twice the lead for free).

So, you can imagine what is happening in Deruta these days. Workshops that have been going strong for generations are closing. Young people are unwilling to learn an ancient craft that has no potential for making a living.

So I'm doing my part here folks. I am shopping. But I certainly can't be expected to keep the town afloat on my own. You have to do your part too.

The photos you see here, partly from my personal and ever expanding collection, are but a smidgin of the gorgouesness available at the more than 300 workshops in Deruta.

Like any person with an addiction, I too have my trusted sources. All of the ceramics you see here come from one store: Sberna. I've been going here for as long as I can remember. There are lots of other stores too, that I love. But Sberna - at least for me - combines just the right balance of high quality with great prices. I mean really, at the end of the day I want to use these plates. So yes, I want to them to be pretty. But I also don't want to have a heart attack if one breaks or chips. (see 2 above)

Sberna has become kind of a tradition in my family. When my sister Robin got married, she got a set of dishes. Ditto Jodi and Gretchen. While every trip to Deruta usually results in me bringing home a serving dish or two from Sberna, I recently went all out and bought a full service for 12. (see 3 above)

What I love about my most recent purchase is that I didn't have to make that difficult decision of choosing one pattern over another. With this fruity design, I got to mix and match. Cherries, pears, quinces, pomegranates, blackberries and grapes ring the dinner, pasta and desert plates. And all play very nicely with the platters, bowls and coffee cups I've accumulated over the years.

So, do your part too. (see 3 above) If you're in Umbria stop by. They ship. If you're nowhere near, place an order. Both Anna and Franca speak English.

And while I'm a Sberna girl, there are loads of other stores in Deruta.

I knew I'd get you on the first two reasons for spending the money. (See 1 and 2 above) but of course it's the good cause thing that's the kicker. (see 3 above)

So come on, do your part. I mean really, how often does doing the right thing result in pretty dishes?

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Kitchen And Table Top Stores, Open Monday, Open Sunday

ADDRESS

 [Via Tiberina 146, Deruta](#)

GALLERY



UMBRIA

+39.0744.951.008



Semiramide

<http://www.ristorantesemiramide.it/it/>



Countryside Trattoria

Wed-Mon, Lunch and Dinner



ABOUT

Luigi and Chiara run this family trattoria in a secluded corner of a small town in Umbria. Most of the ingredients - from the meats to the vegetables - come from the family's own production. During the correct seasons this is the place to find wild asparagus and mushrooms or wild boar or deer hunted in the surrounding woods.

Home made pasta, bread and pizzas baked in a wood burning oven are delicious.

During a recent lunch I enjoyed a plateful of home made fettucine dressed with pesto made with freshly picked basil. For a main dish I decided to try a special dish: lamb stew. Served in a small terracotta bowl, the meat was buttery tender, and bathed in a piquant sauce flavoured with capers and white wine.

During the winter the restaurant is cozily charming inside, and in the summer a tree shaded terrace is the place to be.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Restaurant, Outdoor Seating, Open Sunday, Open Monday

ADDRESS

 [Via Pian Dell'Ara 1, Melezzole](#)

COST

\$\$\$

SOCIAL MEDIA

 <https://www.facebook.com/RistoranteMelezzole/>

GALLERY



UMBRIA

+39.075.927.3291



Taverna del Lupo

<https://www.tavernadellupo.it/en/>



Traditional Restaurant

Daily, Lunch & Dinner



ABOUT

Taverna del Lupo is one of the oldest restaurants in Gubbio. Located in the old part of town, the stone arched ceiling soars over tables laid with crisp white cloth. It's a formal restaurant, and the food and service excellent.

If they are in season, truffles are usually a good choice here. Last time I was there I had a delicate plate of crespelle (crepes) layered with fresh truffles. I also love their soups, which often include legumes (chickpeas and lentils) paired with seasonal treats like chestnuts.

Taverna del Lupo is part of the Piatti del Buon Ricordo association. This means that each year they feature one dish on a hand painted plate made in Vietri. If you order that dish from the menu? You get to take the plate home with you! Last time I was there it was a pork roast cooked with grapes. I had a delicious lunch, and took home a gorgeous plate for my collection.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Restaurant, Open Sunday, Open Monday, Outdoor Seating

ADDRESS

 [Via Giovanni Ansidei 6, Gubbio](#)

COST

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SOCIAL MEDIA

 <https://www.facebook.com/Taverna-Del-Lupo-177540038935022/>

GALLERY



UMBRIA

+39.0763.342.763



Trattoria al Moro Aronne

<http://www.trattoriadelmoro.info/en/>



Simple Local Trattoria

Wed-Mon, Lunch and Dinner



ABOUT

Trattoria al Moro Aronne is one of my favorite restaurants in Orvieto. The food is simple and hearty, but made with care and plate-lickingly good.

I always start with a local speciality: Baffo. It's basically a few slices of pancetta (called Baffo in Umbria) that is sauteed with balsamic vinegar, sage and tomatoes. It is sinfully good.

I then have trouble deciding which pasta to order. If anything with Wild Boar is on the menu, I usually go with that. But they also have tagliatelle made with chicken livers that is a house speciality.

It's hard to site any other dishes, since they are always innovating and inventing new ones. Which in this part of the world is a rarity.

Great wine list of local wines, reasonably priced, and delicious desserts.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Restaurant, Open Sunday, Open Monday

ADDRESS

 [Via S. Leonardo 7, Orvieto](#)

COST

\$\$\$

SOCIAL MEDIA

 <https://www.facebook.com/trattoriadelmoroaronne>

 <https://twitter.com/Trattoriamoror>

GALLERY



ABOUT

The last thing I think about when heading out to lunch in Umbria is style, elegance or sophistication. Eating out in Umbria is usually all about rustic. It can be rustic with a hint of formality or rustic as in sit by the side of the road and watch the trucks go by rustic.

But a few weeks ago Domenico and I had a lunch date in Umbria with two intimidatingly design oriented people. Gael hails from Martha Stewart landia and Stephen is one of the top graphic designers in New York. They were both guests at Civitella Ranieri, a non-profit foundations that invites artists, writers, designers and all other manner of creative folk to Umbria to create.

Since we were in Todi and they were north of Perugia, Bevagna seemed a good half way point. While I love it for it's charming setting and rustic restaurants, for this lunch with these friends I decided a return trip to Trattoria di Oscar was in order.

I'd been there when they first opened, a few years ago, with Salvatore Denaro. The Umbria-based Sicilian chef is a huge supporter of younger chefs just starting out. Three years ago, I was impressed by their care and attention to Umbrian specialities and ingredients. I was curious as to how they'd developed.

While I remembered carefully prepared dishes like fried rabbit and lighter than usual panzanella, I wasn't at all prepared for the expertly executed and creative dishes that came out of the kitchen

Since it was deadly hot, both Gael and I went for the cool side of the menu. Gael ordered a saffron scented and colored fave bean soup that was bedecked with bright orange zucchini blossoms and a blindingly white dollop of sheep's milk ricotta. It was as delicious as beautiful.

I ordered gazpacho, which - I have to admit - I'm always a bit wary of. In Italy gazpacho is a great idea that is often abused: tepid, insipid purees that have none of the zing of the real thing. The gazpacho that came to the table was a wonderful, creative and - I'm happy to say - successful - spin on tomatoes and things in a blender. Perfectly smooth, the soup captured the intense flavor of the season's first intense cherry tomatoes. Just enough bread to emulsify it and make it hardy enough to satisfy (this is the part that is often left out) and the finishing touch which was pure brilliance: several chunks of mozzarella di buffala. Because of course what goes better with tomatoes than mozzarella? Which is why all gazpacho should have mozzarella in it, right? A final drizzle of fruity olive oil made it speak Italian even louder.

Stephen and Domenico, being men, ordered hearty pastas, ignoring the heat. Homemade pappardelle with a light lamb ragu. And I couldn't resist the sound of Insalata tepida di coniglio which turned out to be just that. Roasted chunks of rabbit meat layered between barely wilted Swiss chard and tossed in a citrusy dressing.

Coffee all around, and a walk through the winding alleys of Bevagna, You know, just run of the mill Umbrian rusticity. Which is actually pretty great.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Restaurant, Outdoor Seating, Open Sunday, Open Monday

ADDRESS

 [Piazza del Cirone 2, Bevagna](#)

COST

\$\$\$

SOCIAL MEDIA

 <https://www.facebook.com/LaTrattoriadiOscar/>

GALLERY



Villa Roncalli

<http://villaroncalli.com/en/> 

Elegant Sophisticated Cooking

Tue-Sat only Dinner; Sun Lunch & Dinner 

ABOUT

Villa Roncalli isn't your run of the mill Umbrian restaurant. Although starting out with some of the same humble ingredients that hail from this part of the world Chef Maria Luisa Scolastra transforms them into something decidedly more elegant and sophisticated.

Situated just outside of Foligno in a turn of the century villa, the dining room is formal, with white clothed tables, frescoes on the ceiling and an old world atmosphere. The menu changes constantly and is presented in a large, somewhat difficult to read, hand written book.

Although you may be tempted by the multi course tasting menu, be forewarned: it's a very long and drawn out affair. Don't get me wrong, the cooking and dishes are excellent. But when the last course arrives a good 4 hours after the first course, enthusiasm wanes fast. It's a pity, since they are all prepared with love and attention, and are delicious. Better to order just one or two courses, with the possibility of making it home before the next service begins.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Restaurant

COST

\$\$\$

ADDRESS

 [Viale Roma 25, Foligno](#)

SOCIAL MEDIA

 <https://www.facebook.com/Villa-Roncalli-123579717704339/>

GALLERY







Vineria San Fortunato



Wine Bar In Todi

Tues-Sun, 10am-2am.



ABOUT

Even though I love staying home when we are at our house in Umbria, and cooking [straight from the garden](#), there gets to be a point every summer when I say basta. I just need a night off where I don't have to cook or wash dishes (although I'm very good at inviting guests who don't mind that end of things) and getting out of my schmata and heading into town.

Town, in our case, means Todi. Arguably one of the prettiest medieval towns in Umbria we tend to take it for granted. That said, every time we make the effort to go out we end up saying "We should do this more often."

Last week we showered, put on fancy clothes (ok, not fancy. But not my 'at home' wear) and headed into the big city to check out a newly opened enoteca, Vineria San Fortunato.

Not much new ever happens in Todi, which is kind of nice. But not only is the Vineria new, it is located in a completely new location. The owners applied for permission not only to open their new place alongside the steps leading to the town's main church, San Fortunato, but they asked, very humbly, if they could possibly use the terrace half way up the stairs for their outside seating.

I guess they must have lit special candles to Saint Fortunato because the town hall said yes. If you live in Italy, you know this is a kind of miracle that doesn't happen very often.

The terrace couldn't be in a more beautiful location. Halfway up the steps, the backdrop to dinner was the ever-changing light against the dramatic facade of San Fortunato. Birds swooping by at dusk as church bells rang, it was almost too perfect.

Rita, the owner, had thought about having a place of her own for a while. With the experience of being a private cook in some of the villas around the countryside, she felt ready to make the move. Rather than start a full-fledged restaurant, with a complete menu, she decided to go the Enoteca route. The focus here is on wines, with good selection of Umbria's best. Although they offer several pasta and main dishes each day, we were very happy sticking to the cured meats and cheeses.

Before any of that could start though, Rita sent over a platter of mixed focaccia. Crispy crusts were topped with onions and capers; tomatoes and anchovies; and my favorite, slowly roasted potatoes and rosemary.

We all split the large tagliera, or platter, which included excellent cured meats from a local artisanal butcher, [David Salumi](#).

What we thought was going to be way too much prosciutto turned out to be just enough. Hand cut prosciutto, as well as sausages, salami and cheeses from [Caseificio Montecristo](#). And just in case we were still hungry, a platter of beautiful pancetta. As we lingered over our wine, nibbling the last bits of salami and cheese, the sun had set, the lights came on in front of the church and we watched life in Todi go by.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Restaurant, Wine, Outdoor Seating, Open Sunday, Open Monday

ADDRESS

[Piazza Umberto 5, Todi](#)

COST

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SOCIAL MEDIA

<https://www.facebook.com/Vineria-San-Fortunato-1452907271611923/>

GALLERY



