



Frequently Asked Questions

Can I bring my pet dog?

Yes, well-behaved dogs are welcome! Please clear up any mess and ensure that they don't get on the furniture!

What is your policy on the use of air conditioning?

Air conditioning is included in the rental price but we ask guests to be considerate in terms of usage as utilities are very expensive in Italy. We would recommend that you put on the A/C up to 15 minutes before you retire and that it is timed to turn off shortly after you expect to fall asleep. Instructions have been placed in each bedroom.

What is the quality of the road leading to the property and what type of car should I hire?

Ortone is accessed via an 800 metre private road that is steep in parts and not tarmacked. Aside from low-slung sports cars it is negotiable by all vehicles. When we drive to Italy, we use our 4x4 but we have also hired lower-end saloons and compacts. We would advise that whatever vehicle you hire, it is sufficiently powerful.

You mention that some parts of the property require adult supervision for young children - can you elaborate?

Some parts of the property do require supervision of very young children which should be expected anyway. For example, the stairs in the main house are relatively open at the mid level and the upper few steps are not bordered by a railing or a wall on one side (i.e. open plan). There is a steep, external set of steps close to the front door that has a handrail but would be unsuitable for a very young child to negotiate unsupervised. At the lower lawn terrace, there is a bank to the olive grove and again, one should keep an eye on young children. Finally, the swimming pool is not fenced so supervision of young children at all times is appropriate.

Why is there a supplement for using the pool out of season?

This would require the pool to be opened and chemically treated earlier or remain opened later and we would incur additional costs.



Why is the exact location not stated on your website?

For security reasons. The Owners provide very detailed instructions to get to the property once booking has been confirmed.

What is the weather like in Radicondoli?

July and August can be very hot, in the 30s and it may reach 40 degrees. May, June and September are fantastic months to visit; May and June have long daylight hours with temperatures akin to a hot English summer whilst September is still very warm in general and The Mediterranean is at its warmest. October is a beautiful time to visit but sunbathing weather is not guaranteed although it has been in the mid 70s when we have been there. Because of Radicondoli's altitude, it is not uncommon to have snow in the winter which can be a sprinkling or heavy. November is the wettest month but we have experienced temperatures in the low 70s. Spring can be variable although there is greater opportunity to eat al fresco than in England. Ortone is south facing and nestled in the lower slopes of Radicondoli and as such, it is rarely very windy. Elsewhere, Tuscany weather can be quite varied given the presence of mountains and sea. The Tuscan coast can be very mild in the winter but inland mountainous regions can be cold.

You mention that you can organise activities - do you have a commercial relationship with any of the people that you recommend?

No

Will the owners meet and greet us?

We can meet you if we're in the town, otherwise we will arrange for someone else to meet you at the designated time.



ACTIVITIES

Where does one start?!

Outdoor types can enjoy the mountains, hills, rivers and beautiful scenery, whether it is a casual walk in the country or a vigorous hike in the mountains. The region offers a number of outstanding natural parks and for those who are interested in flora and fauna, there are habitats where rare plant and animal species are preserved.

Sports enthusiasts have plenty of accessible sport. Tennis, golf, cycling, squash and horse riding are within easy reach as well as water sports either on The Mediterranean or inland, while the more adventurous can enjoy panoramic balloon flights over the stunning landscape. If you prefer to watch sport rather than play, football fans can follow Firenze who are in Serie A, cycling aficionados can catch a stage of the Giro d'Italia when it passes through Tuscany in May and follow other regional events throughout the year, and horse racing admirers can experience The Palio in Siena on July 2nd and August 16th each year.

If more sedentary activities are your preference, we can arrange through our local friends, wine tasting tours, photography field trips with a professional photographer, outdoor painting workshops with local artists or Tuscan cuisine cookery lessons at the villa.

In the summer, al fresco music lovers have the choice of major events or more intimate experiences. For example, the Lucca Summer Festival in July, where international rock, blues and pop artists perform in the picturesque yet grand Piazza Napoleone or if classical music or opera is your taste, concerts are regularly held in amphitheatres and piazzas and even at times against the backdrop of an abbey, church or castle.

Tuscany has a long tradition of festivals; whether they are in honour of the local or regional saint or to show off local art or just to celebrate food and wine. It is also possible to rent Vespa scooters (they are actually made in Pontedera, near Pisa), which is a fun way to take a scenic tour.

THINGS TO DO

Tennis: Two public hard courts in Radicondoli, two tennis clubs in Colle di Val D'Elsa (30 minutes drive), one with two outdoor clay & two indoor rubberised hard and one with three clay courts, and Pogibbonsi (35 minutes drive) which has four outdoor clay & two indoor rubberised hard courts.

Golf: La Bagnai Resort is a hotel and spa resort with an eighteen-hole golf course designed by Robert Trent Jones Jnr and which is a 36km/40 mins drive. Castelfalfi Resort is a hotel with two golf courses (27 holes) and which is a 55km/70 mins drive.

Cycle & Vespa Hire: Bruno Bellini in San Gimignano rent cycles and Vespas and is a 41km/40 min drive.

Squash: There is a court at Club Equinox at Colle di Val D'Elsa which is a 30km/30 mins drive.

Horse Riding: Tegoni Farm is about ten to fifteen minutes drive from Radicondoli and offers a range of horse riding experiences from hourly lessons to full day trails through the pastures and woods.

Hot Air Ballooning: 'Ballooning in Tuscany' is a small, professional balloon rides operator that has three launch sites near Siena, which is 51km/40 mins.

Water Sports: All types of boats can be chartered along the Tuscan coast although sailing yachts are the most popular way to experience the warm Mediterranean waters. Club Nautico Scarlino at Scarlino Marina near Follonica (70km/70mins) offers sailing lessons and other companies at the marina offer skippered motor boats for 1/2 day or day trips. Wind

surfing is available at Talamone (120km/90mins) which is a protected bay with a large beach and has a range of winds for all levels. Baratti Bay (87km/80 mins) is a small bay that is great for snorkelling. The River Ombrone in the Maremma National Park is perfect for canoeing and is 110km/120mins.

Outdoor Musical Festivals: The Lucca Summer Festival musical event has been held throughout July since 1998. It has always attracted big names in the industry; for example, Bob Dylan, Elton John, Joe Cocker, Santana, Earth Wind & Fire, Alicia Keys, The Killers and Eric Clapton.



Scenic Drives: One of the simplest joys is just poodling around the magnificent countryside, stopping at small towns and villages for a light lunch, a glass of wine or an ice cream in a pretty piazza. Over 70% of Tuscany is hilly and as a result, the views can be breath taking. We have several driving guidebooks that cover both Tuscany and Umbria and other driving notes at Ortone.

Art: There are are numerous art galleries in the major cities, such as Florence, Siena and Arezzo where one can buy art and it can also be sourced in the smaller towns and even some villages. It is common for artists to rent a disused shop in say, San Gimignano or Monteriggioni for a week to exhibit their work. If you just want to appreciate fine art, then Tuscany has an abundance of art museums.

Antiques: Most of the marquee cities and towns have antique stores but for real bargains it is better to go to the antiques markets that are held regularly across

the region. Our favourites are Arezzo and Lucca. Arezzo is held on the first Sunday of every month and the Saturday before and consists of 500 exhibitors and circa 100 shops. Lucca is held on the third Saturday and Sunday of the month and has about 230 stallholders.

Shopping: There's something about pottering around Italian stores that make it a very pleasurable experience. Maybe it's the lack of the shopping mall culture and a sense that most goods are hand-made. If designer clothing and leather goods are your thing, you'll be in heaven, for example, in Florence, Siena, Lucca and there are shopping outlets selling designer brands at a discount. On the other hand, if you are looking for souvenirs; linen, ceramics, alabaster, crystal, handicrafts etc, you'll find these everywhere and most towns have a weekly market where you can buy a broad range of goods and produce.

Food: Tuscany cuisine is rustic and relatively simple yet remarkably varied because of the landscape. It has been described as "peasant cooking fit for a king". One of its signature dishes is bistecca alla fiorentina - a t-bone steak that is grilled over a wood fire and shared between two or more diners. At the coast, simply grilled or salted fresh fish and seafood is exquisite. Inland, game and soups feature heavily but of course, pasta is also a staple dish. We have many recommendations for local restaurants and they are available at Ortone.

Drink: Italy has the richest diversity of wine styles and grape varieties and Tuscany is at the core of wine-making. Within easy reach are the "Super Tuscans" from Bolgheri near the coast, the Brunellos from Montalcino and the vino nobile from Montepulciano. The Chianti Classico region which is the area between Siena and Florence is also a must visit, as are the vineyards at San Gimignano, home of Vernaccia. Vermentino (white) from the Grosseto province is also delightful wine. The local wines from Radicondoli are also very nice and good value.

FACILITIES

The Main House

Kitchen and Utility Area: Cooker, Refrigerator & Freezer, Iron, Ironing Board, Dishwasher, Spin Dryer, Washing Machine, Toaster, Kettle, Coffee Percolator,

Hall: Printer & Scanner, Telephone

Living Room: Open Fire

TV Room/Library: Wifi Router, SKY TV, Record Player & Speakers, iPod dock, XBOX, DVDs, Books in English, French and Italian, Games

Bedrooms: Air Conditioning, Hair dryers

The Apartment

Kitchen: Cooker, Microwave, Refrigerator & Freezer, Kettle, Coffee Percolator, Dishwasher

Living Room: TV and DVD player, Books & Games

Bedrooms: Air Conditioning, Hair Dryers

Swimming Pool: Multiple sun loungers, chairs and tables, sunshades, floats, poolside shower, electrical points