



ESCAPES

Escapes | Fattoria La Vialla

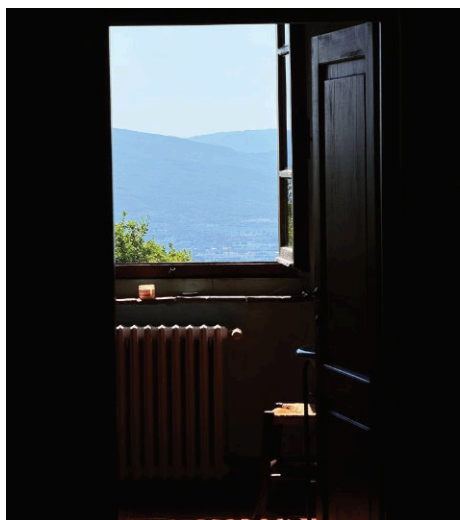
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“We spent a week on an incredible biodynamic farm and winery in Tuscany”

We first came across [Fattoria La Vialla](#) a few years ago, when we were sent some of their produce – a beautiful hamper of Italian sauces, pasta, cheese, wine, olive oil, and salami all made on an idyllic-looking farm in Tuscany. It had beautiful branding and came with a thick catalogue full of photos and illustrations that wouldn't look out of place on the shelves of a cult magazine shop. Even better, despite the clear premium level of the produce, the prices weren't even that more than what you'd pay for inferior stuff in a supermarket – and as Fattoria has a UK warehouse, there are no post-Brexit extra customs charges to worry about either.

After that first delivery, our Fattoria obsession deepened. We got the advent calendar at Christmas; we were buying hampers for family and friends; and re-stocking our own kitchen with wines and pastas as quickly as we were eating it. We loved that this family-run farm, founded in 1978, was certified organic and a leader in biodynamic agriculture in Europe. We loved that it was still run by the three sons – Antonio, Bandino and Gianni – of the original founders Piero and Giuliana Lo Franco.



Then one day on the website, we noticed a tiny link down at the bottom of that page that casually announced “Holidays at La Vialla”. YES, we thought, we need to see where the magic happens (and have a lovely holiday at the same time of course).

So as it turned out, Fattoria La Vialla is not only a huge 1400 acre working farm, producing incredible artisan food and wine – it also has 33 cottages dotted over the land, that have been bought up and restored over the years as the farm expanded its footprint. Every season (April – October), they are opened up for guests to come and stay – and we were lucky enough to grab a week’s rental for summer 2025 (and we mean lucky, they near enough all get booked out a year in advance).

Fattoria La Vialla is located about 20 minutes outside Arezzo, a lovely small city an hour’s train ride south of Florence. The main hub of the farm for guests is a small collection of buildings comprising a farm shop and a wine shop where you can stock up on the full range of their products, as well as freshly baked bread, vegetables and eggs. There are tables set up in the courtyard shaded by trees where a daily lunch is served – usually cheese, salami, salads and a daily changing dish like pasta.



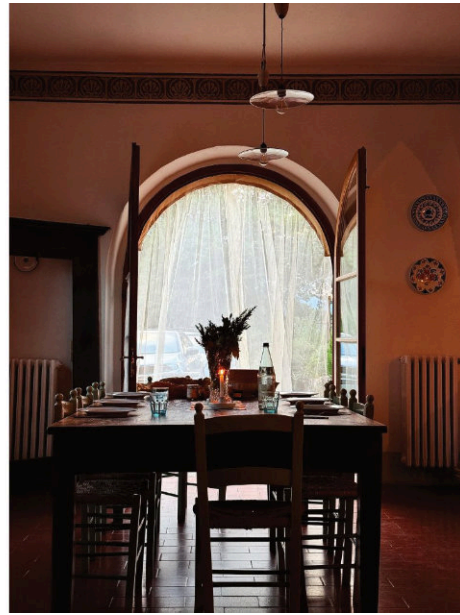
From here, the farm fans out in all directions. There are rows of vineyards and olive groves all around; a small museum dedicated to the history of farming and rural life; a winery where all the wines are made and aged in oak barrels; a dairy making proper Pecorino from 100% sheep’s milk; and an olive press making olive oil and other olive based products (more on that later).

Heading north from here, there are the rental homes spread out over a huge area and accessed by the winding stone roads that run through the farm. We were staying in one of the furthest houses from the main entrance – Spedale – a good 25 minute drive up the hill. And what a treat once you get there: incredible views over the valley, complete peace and quiet; and even a swimming pool (one of the few houses to have one). It was blissfully remote; we saw more wild boars than people up here during our stay.

The house itself is a big old Tuscan stone farmhouse with arched windows, terracotta tiled floors, a huge kitchen, lounge area, massive fireplace and five bedrooms on the second floor. It’s ideal for a family getaway and we spent many a happy day relaxing by the pool and cooking our meals, almost exclusively from Fattoria produce: fresh bread, jams, honey and eggs at breakfast; pecorino and salami at lunch; and pastas with sun-dried tomato and fresh courgettes in the evenings. Plus several bottles of wine, of course.

Talking of wine, Fattoria produces around 40 different labels of various styles, from classic champagne-method sparkling, to unfiltered whites, and Chiantis. We especially loved the Torbolino non filtrato 2024 (Chardonnay, Viognier, Sauvignon Blanc, unfiltered); the Barricatto Bianco (aged in oak); and the unfiltered sparkling rosé. All the wines are made from La Vialla's organic, biodynamic grapes and are harvested by hand. In fact, the entire wine making process is certified carbon neutral: production waste is composted together with animal manure and then returned to the soil.

These biodynamic principles govern the entire agricultural philosophy at La Vialla, not just the winemaking. Whereas farming organically means the removal of pesticides and so on, biodynamic farming is far more holistic, working in harmony with natural cycles. They use crop rotation and fallowing to keep the land healthy and fertile; they produce their own biodynamic preparations and compost each year; they follow the lunar calendar to inform farming cycles; and even cow dung is recycled by packing it into cow horns and burying them in the ground – the microorganisms create a humus from it, which is then spread over the fields to complete the circle again. Such is the scale of their work, that the farm is now certified carbon neutral – they sequester more carbon away in a year than they give out.



Around the rest of the farm there are stables where you can book horse riding sessions; a swimming lake (ideal if your house doesn't have a pool); and many miles of walking trails to enjoy. We also loved the weekly communal dinners, served on a huge long outdoor table every Tuesday and Wednesday, where around 40 La Vialla guests enjoy a meal together. And on Thursdays and Fridays, there's also a communal breakfast which we'd highly recommend too.

Another discovery we made while there, was La Vialla's OliPhenolia range. We knew they made incredible olive oils, but we didn't know about the line up of products made using the waste 'olive water' that is part of the olive oil making process. This waste product is incredibly rich in polyphenols (20 times more so than olive oil itself) and La Vialla has made this into all sorts of beauty products from face cream and body scrub to shampoo and hair tonic. The latter are proven to help with dandruff and improve hair density, so could well be worth a try for anyone with those issues.



Most interesting of all though are the shots of pure olive water. The Lo Franco's great-grandmother, Caterina Lo Franco, who died in 2000 (at the age of 98!), swore by the positive effects of this bitter polyphenol-rich olive water. Although the shots are bitter, they go down pretty easy – we're sold anyway and have 100 shots at home ready to go.

Our week at La Vialla went all too quickly but we at least came home laden with produce to continue the spirit of the holiday at home. If you're into Italian food and wine and currently buying from supermarkets, you need to check out La Vialla's [online shop](#) immediately. We guarantee you will be converted after you have tried a few of their products. It's all insanely good.

There is so much to learn and discover about all the work La Vialla do and all the things they make, that we have barely scratched the surface here. If you're interested to know more, there's huge amounts of information on their website, about their biodynamic methods and their story so far. Better yet, you could book your own trip there to see for yourself! We have no doubt we'll be back for another visit soon.

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