

# Tuscan Roads, Take Me Home: Maremma, Val d'Elsa

Springtime is a season for wandering, and what better place to be than in Tuscany? For those of us who don't drive, it helps to find someone with a car, preferably someone Italian who navigates the country roads with carefree grace.

Heading south from Siena, after a bucolic two-hour drive, we reach beautiful thermal spas, of which Saturnia is the most famous. Here we might relax with a farm stay near the “Mulino” cascades, where access to the healing waters is free. Gazing at starry skies, riding horseback, walking through the peaceful countryside,



where a soldier stood defiantly resisting the enemy?) might be detected in the corner of one of the outbuildings of this hamlet of 4-5 buildings, whose stones speak of past centuries and is now awaiting someone with the courage to take on a project of this scope. Looking south from the windows of the *podere*, behind the olive groves, we can just make out San Gimignano's towers on the horizon, 20 kilometers away.



tasting delicious local fare, drinking a glass of Scansano wine next to a swimming pool on a hot afternoon: these are a few options. And yet, visiting fascinating villages and historic sites such as Pitigliano, Sorano, and the rest of the Maremma region, including the coast near Grosseto, will also be tempting.

Another option is to head towards Certaldo, where Giovanni Boccaccio was born and died. A short drive beyond this town, we reach the Val d'Elsa, rolling hills rich with grapes and olives, an hour or so east of Lucca and less than an hour south of Florence. Here once stood a town named Semifonte, which rivaled Florence in importance. The Florentines defeated and destroyed Semifonte in 1202, but the remains of the town wall (maybe a watchtower



Who hasn't dreamt of owning properties such as these?

And they are for sale. The one near Saturnia pictured at the top of the page, offered at 1,100,000 euros, is a modern and functioning agriturismo, a 3 bedroom home upstairs with 2 vacation apartments downstairs, and 20+ hectares including vineyard and olive orchard.

The one near Certaldo, with 1.5 hectares of land, mostly covered by mature olive trees, is offered at 500,000 euros. This property would allow ample scope for expressing personal creativity in the renovations.

The owners of these properties have reached out to *Grapevine* in their search for potential buyers....

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