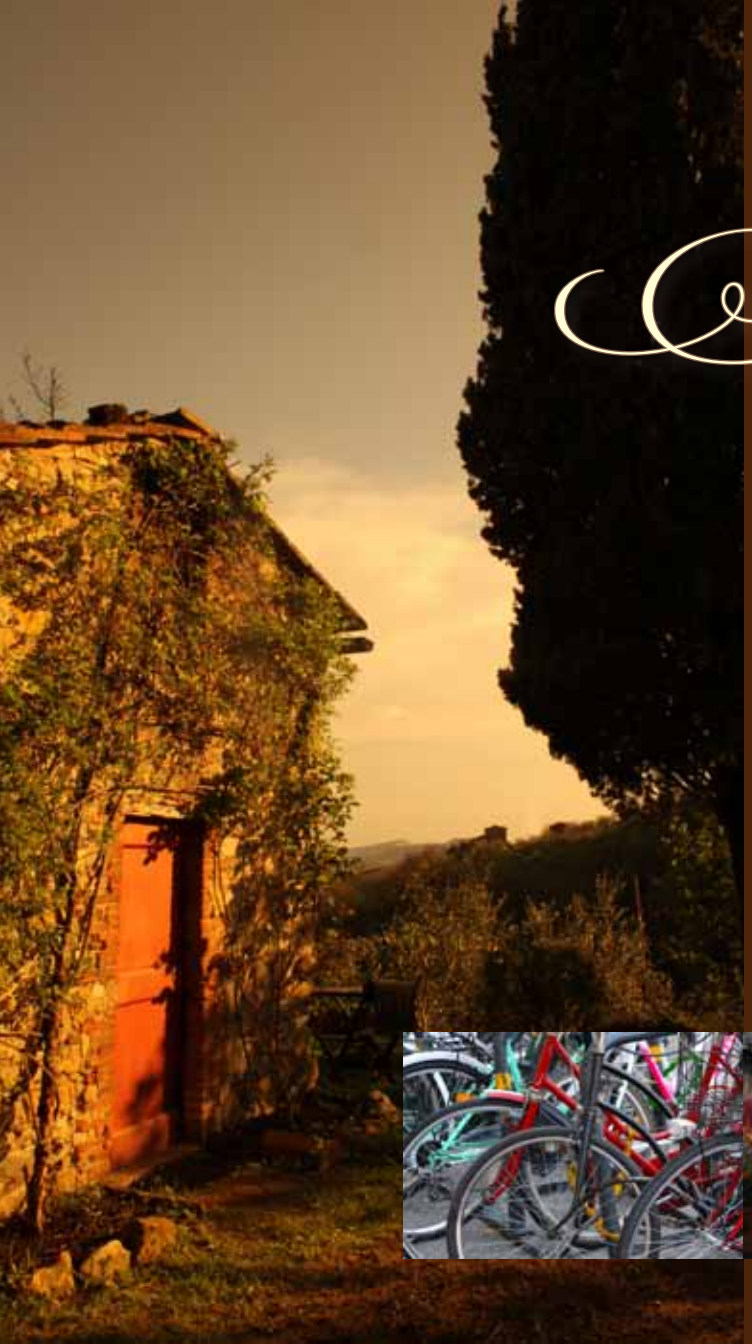
Travel Wine and Cuisine Discovers Tuscany

October 1 to 8, 2011
Abbondanza Toscana
Selva Estate, Lucca, Italy



Join

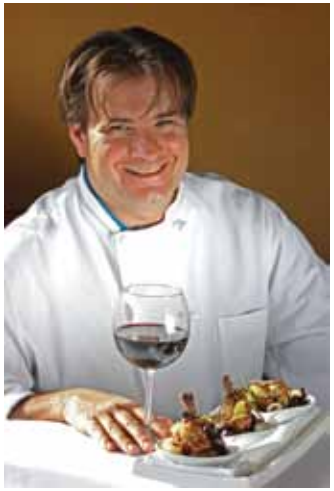
Christopher and Darcy Davies, the Editors/Co-Founders of Wine Country International ® magazine for an enchanted week of Travel, Wine & Cuisine in Tuscany. If you are a culinary tourist like we are, or you just want to check off a dream Tuscan vacation from your "bucket list," you will appreciate this trip's distinctive, educational and relaxing itinerary.

Our home base will be at Abbondanza Toscana and the Selva Estate in the lush hills of Lucca. It is comprised of 1000 secluded, private acres less than 20 minutes from Lucca which is famous for its intact Renaissance-era city walls and for producing the best olive oil in Tuscany!

During the week you will experience the local cuisine, wines and attractions of every area that you visit. And since food is an integral way of daily life in Italy, we will be joined by Michael Long, one of Colorado's most celebrated chefs, who will conduct several hands-on cooking demonstrations using local ingredients. Traditional and modern cooking techniques will be incorporated into this intimate program. Best of all, we all get to eat afterward!

This week-long program will not only satisfy your culinary desires, but Professional Travel Photographer Christopher Davies will also teach you how to document your experiences with practical photography techniques.

To view a gallery of Christopher's photography, visit www.daviesphotos.com



GUEST CHEF MICHAEL LONG,
ARIA RESTAURANT, DENVER, CO

Having worked in kitchens since the age of 12, Chef Michael Long's career has taken him from dishwasher at a neighborhood Italian joint in Florida to Opus, one of Colorado's most celebrated restaurants. He graduated from the Culinary Institute of America at Hyde Park and has cooked in New York; Florida at Café Arugula, La Vielle Maison, then rated four Mobile stars, and Topaz Café and Porch; Prince Edward Island, Canada at The Inn at Bay Fortune under Food Network Canada personality Michael Smith; South Carolina at Florence Country Club; and finally to Colorado, heading up the team at Opus Restaurant. Chef Long's culinary philosophy is driven by the whimsical nature of creating dishes that entertain all senses while striving to present the finest food possible across a variety of cuisines.

In October 2011, Chef Long plans to open his new restaurant Aria in Denver's Cherry Creek neighborhood.

SCHEDULE:

DAY 1- ARRIVAL LUCCA
Sat 10/1/11 At 16.00
Official welcome to participants, with prosecco & cheese and tea & cookies under the pergola. Introduction to a rich week of experiences by your hosts Christopher and Darcy Davies. Begin limoncello preparation for tasting on the last night. Dinner prepared by staff.

DAY 2- VISIT MONTESCUDAIO WINE FESTIVAL
Sun 10/2/11
After breakfast, the group goes to the up-and-coming wine region of Montescudaio (DOC and IGT) for its annual wine festival, held in a medieval village with 360° views of vineyards. Excellent opportunity for photos of the tastings in arched cantinas, views and winding streets. Lunch on own. Dinner prepared by staff.

DAY 3-LUCCA PHOTOGRAPHY & COOKING LESSONS
Mon 10/3/11
Before breakfast, a visit to the shepherdess to watch her make pecorino and exquisite ricotta. After breakfast, Chris discusses how to make the most of your photographs of Tuscan wine, dishes and scenery. A break for hiking, reading and photos. At 16.00, a tour of the Selva herb and vegetable gardens, then grappa making. Begin dinner preparation immediately afterwards. Lunch prepared by staff. Prepare dinner with chef Michael Long using estate-raised lamb.

CHRISTOPHER J. DAVIES
WINE COUNTRY INTERNATIONAL® MAGAZINE

Professional commercial & magazine photographer Christopher Davies co-founded Wine Country International® magazine in 2002 with his wife Darcy. When he is not traveling the world creating cover stories for his magazine, Davies writes several syndicated columns for wine, cuisine and travel publications. In addition, he and Darcy co-host Travel, Wine & Cuisine Radio which is currently podcast on iTunes.

In 2010, Davies launched the Vinotasting newsletter, a quarterly publication dedicated to helping consumers demystify wine and spot the Best Buys and Best Wines for your tasting dollar. Vinotasting is published quarterly with print and Kindle™ editions offered. www.vinotasting.com

(L) Christopher Davies, Patagonia, Chile. Photo© 2009 by Darcy Davies

DAY 4-VISIT CHIANTI WINE REGION
Tues 10/4/11

Into Chianti, with a first stop for breakfast at the Autogrill, a cultural experience not to be missed. On to a terra cotta manufacturer and to the charming piazza of Greve, for regional Chianti products and an opportunity for the Chef to purchase Chianina beef from the famous butcher shop. Lunch at our favorite restaurant overlooking Chianti Classico region, wine tasting at a biodynamic winery, and back to Selva for a light dinner.

DAY 5-VISIT HISTORIC WALLED-IN CITY OF LUCCA & COOKING LESSON

Weds 10/5/11 At 8.30 Leave for Lucca with a stop to photograph a nearby vineyard, then to town for the best cappuccino in the world. A professionally guided tour of Lucca's cultural highlights, major sites, shopping, exploration of regional food products, and photo ops. Free time for lunch and individual exploration. Gather at 16.00 to return to Selva and make dinner with Chef Michael Long.

DAY 6-VISIT VINEYARDS & CELLARS/ CONCERT & CUISINE OF LUCCA
Thu 10/6/11

After breakfast Chris continues the photography segment with a coaching session on photographs taken during the week and further tips. Leave at 15.00 for Lucca for a tasting of Brunello wines in caves under the center of Lucca, followed by a Puccini concert in a Medieval church built on Roman ruins, and dinner at an incomparable restaurant with exquisite wine list.

DARCY R. DAVIES
WINE COUNTRY INTERNATIONAL ® MAGAZINE

Darcy is a respected art director with experience in creating packaging and designs for the wine industry and corporate annual reports. As co-founder of Wine Country International, she travels with Christopher to cover stories about Wine, Cuisine & Travel. Her most recent "bucket list" trip was in 2009 when she and Chris took an extreme cruise to Patagonia.

DAY 7-VISIT SEASIDE VILLAGE OF VIAREGGIO

Fri 10/7/11

Early departure for the sea to purchase fresh fish from the boats in Viareggio; return to Selva for lunch lesson with Chef Michael Long featuring the 'catch of the day,' Late afternoon Photo Gallery with each participant's favorite photos, wine and hors d'oeuvres. Pizza night to Selva for a light dinner.

DAY 8-VISIT BUONVIAGGIO

10/8/11

Departure from Selva to Pisa airport or Lucca train station.

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For more information about this program, online photo gallery and podcast about the Selva Estate visit :

http://www.vinotasting.com/tuscany.html

Package price

The full week program includes 4-star accommodations, all wines and meals, tastings, excursion fees, culinary and photography instruction and local transportation, including pickup from and delivery to the Pisa airport or the Lucca train station, at a fee of 2,500* euros. **Excludes air*

Gateway Airport: Pisa Nearby cities: Pisa-30 minutes, Florence 1 hour

Everything except airfare is included in the price of the tour: accommodations; meals and wine; all transportation for pickup, delivery and excursions; chef and photography instruction; tastings; and entry fees. The only exception is the two lunches on Sunday and Wednesday when the group tends to disperse and want to do their own thing. Note in booking form that we have the right to change any part of the schedule as long as it does not materially affect the experience.

HOW TO MAKE RESERVATIONS:

Reservations are handled by our booking agent, Serendipity Ventures, Inc. Please e-mail serendipityventuresinc@gmail.com to ensure that space is available and to obtain a booking form. A deposit is required to hold your reservation, and the balance is due by July 1, 2011.

Ci vediamo in Toscana! We look forward to seeing you in Tuscany!