

# Your Own Private Tuscany



September 22, 2005

## News and Updates

The world keeps on turning and the travel business keeps on changing. Here's what's new:

### Kids Europe: Italy Discovery Journal

I have recently had the the pleasure of leafing through Pat Byrne's **Kids Europe: Italy Discovery Journal** and even though I don't have children I can assure you that this activity-filled guide is a winner.

The journal comes in a practical spiral format (or as an e-book if you prefer) with chapters on food, shopping, religion, history, art and architecture, popular culture - you name it and it's included.

If you're travelling by car there are lists of Italian and European license plates for kids to spot along with a "Cool Car Check List" for the auto nuts in the family.

For long train trips there are Italian card games to pass the time, word games, and



typical Italian hand gestures for them to practice.

There are place specific activities as well as activities that apply to the entire country, all marked as such at the bottom of each page for easy reference.

Lists of kid-tested Italian restaurant specialties, hints for distinguishing between Doric, Ionic and Corinthian column styles, mazes, word games, kooky facts - these are just a few of the over 100 interactive activities in this book.

If I were to pick a favourite I would have to choose the “Mail Test” on page 157, a test of Italy’s mail system that asks you mail yourself two postcards on the same day, one each from Vatican City and Rome, to see which of them arrives home first. Any bets on this one?

You can order the book from [www.kidseurope.com](http://www.kidseurope.com). If you’re trying to save money a downloadable version is available for \$6.99 US, but for my money I would order the print version. A coil binding allows the book to lie flat and you can easily remove pages that you don’t think you’ll use (if you’re obsessive about the weight of your luggage like I am). Do you know someone with kids who is planning a trip to Italy? Consider buying them one of the deluxe travel kits that includes the journal, Italian playing cards ( with instructions for three popular games), a euro coin holder for collecting all 8 of the euro coins, and assorted gel pens, coloured pencils, and stickers.

After becoming an expert on kids travel, friends started asking Pat for vacation rental recommendations so she founded the agency **Excellent Europe**, which has some fine hand-selected rentals in Tuscany, Rome and Venice. Her website, [www.excellenteuropa.com](http://www.excellenteuropa.com), meets most of my criteria for the “perfect website”. Congratulations, Pat!



## Information for Disabled Travellers

The website [www.agriturismo.com](http://www.agriturismo.com) has a searchable database to help you find properties in Italy that have facilities for the disabled. Go to the English pages and look for the “Accommodation Accessible” icon in the top left corner.

The following two web pages also contain some useful information for travel for the disabled:

[www.initaly.com/travel/handicap.htm](http://www.initaly.com/travel/handicap.htm) Of particular interest are three itineraries in Venice suitable for wheelchairs.

[www.slowtrav.com/europe/disabled\\_travel.htm](http://www.slowtrav.com/europe/disabled_travel.htm) This site has general information for Europe and Italy, including a list of Umbrian hill towns and their degree of accessibility.

Many thanks to Peter and Murray Corren for suggesting the inclusion of this information.

# Updates to the book:

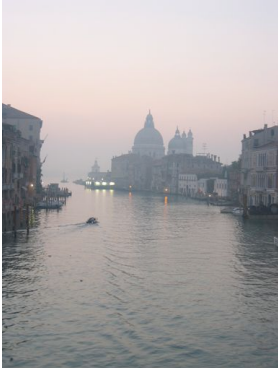


Page 15: The web page for Emilia Romagna Tourism has changed to [www.emiliaromagnaturismo.it/new/english/index.htm](http://www.emiliaromagnaturismo.it/new/english/index.htm)

Page 16: The web page for Lombardy has changed to [www.lombardia.indettaglio.it](http://www.lombardia.indettaglio.it)

Page 17: The web page for the Veneto has changed to <http://turismo.regione.veneto.it>

Page 21: For currency conversion I recommend [www.oanda.com/convert/classic](http://www.oanda.com/convert/classic)



Page 31: A bound copy (and a download) of Kids Europe: Italy Discover Journal can be ordered from [www.kidseurope.com](http://www.kidseurope.com)

Page 32: The mailing address for Vacances Provençales Vacations is now: 247 Davenport Road, Suite 200, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5R 1J9

Page 43: The fax number for Summer in Italy has changed to +39 089759007

Page 45: The e-mail contact for In Tuscany has changed to [manola@intuscany.net](mailto:manola@intuscany.net)



Page 45: [www.vrbo.com](http://www.vrbo.com) now has on line reviews!

Page 77: **Great news for hikers:** The latest edition of *Walking and Eating in Tuscany and Umbria* by James Ladsun and Pia Davis has finally been published, with new hikes and some changes to the old favourites.

Page 79: Divina Cucina is now offering 5-day cooking classes in Florence