

# TUSCANY FOR FOODIES



KATHERINE LAMBERT

Ah, to be in Tuscany, meandering through vineyards, sipping espresso in historic squares, marveling at cathedrals, kneading fresh pasta in a count's kitchen. ... Kneading pasta? In a count's kitchen? That's right, says Lisa Mushaw, a member of **Tower Club Tysons Corner** in Vienna, Virginia, who offers weeklong vacations such as this through a program called "Treasures of Tuscany: An Epicurean Voyage." These excursions, she says, might even involve plucking a guinea hen or grilling *bistecca alla fiorentina* (beef on a bed of arugula with shaved Parmesan) in a Tuscan castle — and definitely tasting non-imported chianti from local wineries and trying out just-pressed olive oil from nearby mills. A blending of travel, tourism, and culinary arts, "Treasures" came about when Mushaw, a sommelier and former event planner, decided to create getaways that would appeal to fellow foodies. Co-hosting the trips with an Italian chef based in Tuscany, Mushaw says the duo uniquely balances his Italian perspective with her American sensibility. "We follow the locals' route — we go to market, visit chocolate cafés, local pizzerias, and *enoteca* wine bars," she explains. With just a dozen participants, the tours are based in a centrally located spa town, with each cooking experience in a different location, and interspersed with plenty of time for relaxation and exploration. "It's about awakening to the true Tuscan experience," Mushaw says. — *Mary Sue Lawrence*