



## Traveling to Tuscany?

by Lucy Gordan | Travel, Travel blog | 0 comments



**FutureBrand**, the international business evaluation company, surveyed thousands of people to describe countries worldwide in a few words. The three most frequent for Italy were culture, beauty, and food. Without a doubt food is a “driver” when it comes to promoting the “Bel Paese” both at home and abroad.

When it comes to gastronomic tourism Tuscany, (especially its provinces of Florence and Siena), is the most popular region for American tourists and the second most popular for Europeans, Canadians, Japanese, and Australians. The *Osservatorio Turistico del Centro Studi Turistici* estimated that in 2014 3,000,000 of the c. 35,000,000 tourists who visited Tuscany came especially for the food, with a turnover of 450 million euro.

With these statistics it's hard to believe that Tuscany needs to publicize itself, but last week I attended an event in Florence, organized among others by the region's young and vibrant Alderman for Culture, Tourism, and Commerce, Sara Nocentini, with just those goals. With no intention of resting on the region's laurels, she described an innovative project, “*Vetrina Toscana*” or “A Window on Tuscany,” born four years ago to promote Tuscan agricultural producers and their products: chestnuts and chestnut flour, *panforte* and *Ricciarelli* from Siena, *cinta senese*, *lardo di Colonnata*, cheese, prosciutto, wine, and honey to name a few; local artisans, and restaurants that serve typically Tuscan cuisine made with Tuscan produce; and, of course, not to forget Tuscan wines. As of now the program includes 908 restaurants, 298 artisans including gourmet food shops and *enoteche*, and 196 producers of foods and wines, for a total of 1,402 adherents. The only requirement for joining is that the restaurants must include at least 30 exclusively Tuscan products on their menus.

Since April 2013, “*Vetrina Toscana*” has been online at [www.vetrina.toscana.it](http://www.vetrina.toscana.it), also in English, so with just a few clicks it's possible to plan your own custom-made trip to Tuscany, which can include tastings, special events organized by the adherents to “*Vetrina Toscana*” and guided tours of little known museums and off-the-beaten-path abbeys and monasteries. Its **Facebook** page has 7,700 fans and receives 300 “likes” everyday. **Twitter** registers 1,900 active followers.



Baccarossa's Sea Bream Tartare

Although it's not the first site to upload when you insert Tuscany into Google, “*Vetrina Toscana*” has had over 200,000 visitors who've consulted 350,000 pages. The largest number of visitors came from Italy, followed by the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany. Their collective demographic profile: between 30 and 50 years old, traveling alone or with a spouse, they usually stick to the à la carte menu and spend between 20 and 40 euros per person. Surprise: if a restaurant has a sommelier, the number of its American clients doubles!

To whet your appetite, click on “Baccarossa,” famous for fish, near Santa Croce in Florence, and charming family-run “Il Falconiere,” hotel, spa, cooking school, and one-star Michelin restaurant since 2002 just outside Cortona. Its suckling pig stuffed with *finocchio* and black olives is sublime! When it comes to wines, check out

Bolgheri Bianco 2013, Bolgheri Bianco DOC, Azienda Giorgio Meletti Cavallari di Castagnetto Carducci (Livorno); Numero 8, Rosso Toscano, IGT, Fattoria Castelvechio di San Casciano, Val di Pesa (Firenze); and Chianti Montespertoli DOCG Riserva 2009, Fattoria Urbana delle Fattorie Parri, Montespertoli (Firenze).



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