



Karen Bencke

Judy Corser

INSIDE:

Join This Year's Harvest 3

What's New in Turin 6

Italy's University of
Gastronomic Sciences 8

DREAM OF ITALY®



Volume 8, Issue 2

www.dreamofitaly.com

March 2009

A YEAR OF GASTRONOMY *One Woman's Reawakening in Italy*

I don't know where I got my fascination with Italy," says Canadian author *Judy Corser*.

She traces some of it to the 1999 novel *Galileo's Daughter* by Dava Sobel, which Corser happened to read as she was going through a divorce in 2003. The book's Florentine setting captivated her. "I wanted to go there. I wanted to see those places. I wanted to visit Galileo's grave," she explains.

But she had another motive for wanting to travel: in the wake of her divorce, her creativity had deserted her.

"After 19 books, it just disappeared," says Corser, who had rarely faced writer's block in the course of her 15-

year career as a romance novelist. "It was very scary to realize that something that you kind of took for granted...had suddenly just left you." The feeling, she says, was akin to walk-



P. Brevet

ing down a hallway lined with doors with no handles. She knew her writing ability was still there; she just couldn't reach it.

As she was trying to figure out what to do, a neuropsychologist told her that people associate skills and tasks with the circumstances in which they learned them. Essentially, Corser now associated writing with her marriage and her daily environment. When she sat in her home in suburban Vancouver and tried to write, all the pain of the divorce flooded back and stopped her cold. *The*

continued on page 4



An Olive Harvest Feeds the Body and Soul

I knew by the ring of the church bells it was time for lunch, but I was in no rush to climb down from the olive tree. The view from up there — rolling green hills splashed with red-gold autumn vineyards and the distant ivory hilltop town of *Montepulciano* against the warm blue sky — was divine. I'd been picking olives in this grove since early morning — had the scratches on my arms, the buzzy vibration in my palms and full crates of purple-black, gold-green fruit beneath the trees to prove it.

The traditional Italian harvest method, called *brucatura*, pulling one olive at a time off the full branches, had brought me to a euphoric state. Back home in Los Angeles it takes hours of yoga to get this feeling. But here in southern *Tuscany* it came to me through good old fashioned farm work — by pitching in with the olive harvest, or as the Italians say, the *raccoltta*.

The *raccoltta* yields one of Tuscany's most treasured products: olive oil. It begins the first week of November, which was when I arrived to help out at *Reniella*, in tiny *Montefollonico* (population: 700), nestled in the *Chiana Valley*. *Reniella* is an organic agriturismo — a working farm with guest accommodations, vineyards, fruit trees, a vegetable garden, a flock of sheep, a couple of pigs, chickens and 400 olive trees.

With such a workload, the British transplants who own *Reniella*, *Elfride*
continued on page 2

600 to 800 grapes are needed to produce a bottle of wine.

“I learned to recognize those *corregioli*, the large shiny



Phil Scopelliti



Phil Scopelliti



Phil Scopelliti

(“Elf”) and her husband *Bob Vaughan*, welcome travelers for a few weeks during the harvest to help out. They provide volunteers with lunch under the olive trees and cozy dinners, including pizza from their outdoor wood-burning oven. Best of all, you get a bottle of freshly pressed olive oil (*olio nuovo*) to bring home. This is a treasure I savored over every delightful drop of, bragging to my dinner guests as I passed it around my Thanksgiving table: “It’s from olives I picked...in Tuscany!”



The Tuscan Sun” dream — the Vaughans have blended in with the town.

They took on the challenge of Reniella five years ago without any previous farming experience. What they did have was loads of energy, a passion to learn and most importantly a shared sense of humor about the whole venture. “That first year,” Bob told me, laughing, “I butchered a pig with a knife in one hand and a manual in the other.”

The older farmers in town were impressed by the Vaughan’s determination and began stopping by to offer help and advice. With their assistance, and Bob and Elf’s hard work, Reniella got up and running.

In the damp, chilly mornings, after Bob had taken Owain to the school bus stop on the back of his motorcycle, we’d head out to the grove, set up nets under the trees and start picking. The farm’s trees represent the region’s typical olive varieties. I learned to recognize those little, green, hard-to-pul-off *moraoli*, the easier *corregioli*, the large shiny black *leccini*, and the small green-black *olivastre*. We’d click into a rhythm, climbing up and down ladders, our conversations running from books to movies to life stories, with the

rustle of olive branches, birdsongs, the distant muffled shots of pheasant hunters, and neighbors picking on nearby farms filling up the background.

Elf had warned me, “Careful not to get whacked in the eye by an olive branch,” but during my first enthusiastic hour of picking the inevitable happened. Elf snapped into maternal mode, putting salve on it and apologizing as if it was her fault. “It’s my initiation rite,” I laughed, putting on my Jackie-O sunglasses to avoid another incident.

A whack in the eye seemed a small price to pay to become part of a 2,000-year-old tradition. Olive cultivation began here during Etruscan times and took hold during the Renaissance when the ruling *Medici* family offered farmers free land if they planted grapes and olives. Over the centuries, workers have had to endure all kinds of hardships, including winter freezes, the most recent in 1985, which wiped out two-thirds of the region’s trees. The Tuscans’ perseverance and commitment to quality through all the ups and downs has resulted in their olive oils being ranked among the most prized in the world.

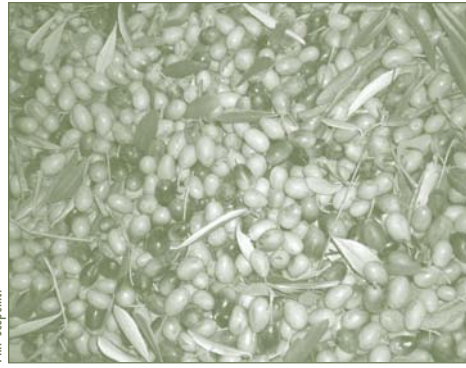
At Reniella, time-honored harvest traditions are followed. Oil comes from

Olive oil is the best oil to cook with si

little, green, hard to pull off **moraioli**, the easier black **leccini**, and the small green-black **olivastre**.”



Pam Mesaros



Phil Scopelliti

fruit picked by hand rather than rake or machine, just before it ripens, and brought to the mill as soon as possible to be put through the cold press process.

Though I tried to blend in during my week's stay, my awe over the whole process set me apart from the Vaughans and the locals. To these people, doing these patient, labor-intensive tasks was second nature. The bleary eyed overworked laborers at the family run *frantoio* where we took the olives to be pressed laughed at me as I snapped pictures of them running our olives through the old stone mills to make a paste that filled the room with a thick heavenly smell.

Rizzi, the Vaughan's 79-year-old neighbor, who I found high up on a ladder harvesting at an admirable break-neck speed with his wife Marcella, laughed as he showed me his scratched, arthritic hands. He kept repeating "la bestemmia, la bestemmia" — ranting about the curse of this work he's been



Pam Mesaros

doing ever since he could stand up, as he happily picked.

Laughing off the challenges went along with celebrating the *raccolta*. At an olive festival in nearby *Montissi*, I wandered the torch-lit Medieval alleyways, stopping at tables set up outside restaurants and shops that offered samples of *olio nuovo* from the nearby farms. A band played in the town square, sausages were grilled, and last year's wine was uncorked.



The celebration of the *raccolta* at Reniella happened with less fanfare every day at lunch.

The Details

Agriturismo Reniella
53040 Montefollonico
(39) 0577 660449
www.reniella.com

Olive harvest volunteers are welcome in 2009 between November 15th and 30th.

Rates: The two-bedroom, two-bathroom apartment (sleeps four) rents for between 600 and 700€ per week depending on the season (650€ weekly during the harvest). The spacious double room is 50€ per night with breakfast or 45€ per night for stays of more than three days (10€ per night for an additional bed).

Though it was glorious to be in the trees when the sun was shining, ultimately the sight of Elf setting up a picnic brought me down to join her and Bob in the shade. We piled our plates with *Pecorino* cheese, thick crusty bread, tomatoes, slices of salami, peppers and fennel, as Bob poured us tumblers of full-bodied homemade wine.

And finally, we passed around the cloudy, green-gold *olio nuovo* from olives that had been in our hands just days before. As I tasted it, I got more than its peppery, grassy fresh flavor. I got the feeling that comes with joining in from the *raccolta* — peace from doing work that feeds body and soul.

—Susan Van Allen

DREAM OF ITALY®

Kathleen A. McCabe
Editor and Publisher

Copy Editor: Stephen J. McCabe
Design: Leaird Designs
www.leaird-designs.com

Dream of Italy, the subscription newsletter covering Italian travel and culture, is published 10 times a year. Delivery by mail is \$89 per year in the United States and \$99 abroad. An Internet subscription (downloadable PDF) costs \$79 per year. Subscriptions include online access to over 60 back issues and regular e-mail updates.

Three ways to subscribe:

1. Send a check to *Dream of Italy*, P.O. Box 5496, Washington, DC, 20016
2. Call 877-OF-ITALY (toll free) or 202-297-3708
3. Subscribe online at www.dreamofitaly.com (Visa, Mastercard and American Express accepted)

Editorial feedback is welcome.

E-mail: editor@dreamofitaly.com

Advertising opportunities are available.

E-mail: ads@dreamofitaly.com

Copyright © 2009 *Dream of Italy*, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Reproduction in whole or part without permission is prohibited. Every effort is made to provide information that is accurate and reliable; however, *Dream of Italy* cannot be responsible for errors that may occur. ISSN 1550-1353 www.dreamofitaly.com

nce it burns at a higher temperature.

A Year of Gastronomy *continued from page 1*

cure, the neuropsychologist thought, *might be travel*. That way, Corser could lay down new memories in new places that didn't involve her ex-husband.

So, in February 2005, she set off with her daughter Alison and friend Christine for a tour of *Milan, Florence and Tuscany*. For Corser, who hadn't had much opportunity to travel while married for 23 years, writing and raising three children, the trip was a chance to challenge herself.

"It's a natural thing that we all have...fear of being out of your comfort zone," she says. "You want to travel, you want to see new things, you want to have new tastes and excitement, but you're still afraid."

Discovering Italy

On her first trip to Italy, she overcame many of her initial reservations, and she wanted to deepen her knowledge of the country. After returning to Vancouver, she started taking Italian courses. From an acquaintance at the *Istituto Italiano di Cultura* in Vancouver, she found out that grants were available to help North Americans study at private language schools in Italy.

She also learned about the Master of Food Culture and Communications program at the University of Gastronomic Sciences (*Università degli Studi di Scienze Gastronomiche*, or UNISG) in *Colorno*, in the region of *Emilia-Romagna*. "I've always been interested in why people eat what they eat," says Corser, who has done everything from preserving peaches to

raising sheep.

The university was founded in 2003 by members of Slow Food, a movement that promotes authentic regional

cuisines around the world. Its focus on local products and food history appealed to her strongly, and

with a group of women friends in January 2008. It was part of her overall plan to keep pushing her boundaries. "I just started to default to 'yes' instead of defaulting to 'no,'" is the way she explains it.

But Italy kept drawing her back. A month after the Mexican trip, she headed to Venice with her son

Christian and daughter Alison. On that vacation, she tackled driving in Italy for the first time, and found to her delight that it wasn't as hair-raising as the stereotypes would have had her believe. "It was a real confidence booster."

Her confidence grew further when she returned to Italy that June to study Italian for two weeks in *Umbria*. After her course, she set off on a 1,300-mile driving trip around southern Italy, where she managed to get by with the Italian she'd learned. "I was so happy to realize that I could do this on my own," she says. "I'd never even

thought of doing something like that before."

Making the Move

That wouldn't be her last trip to Italy in 2008. Late that summer, she learned she had been accepted into the UNISG program. She had less than two months to sublet her house in Ladner, B.C., and prepare to spend a year abroad. It was a bit chaotic, to say the least. By November, she was moving into an apartment in the city of *Parma* with a 37-year-old Danish fellow student. The university had assigned her both apartment and roommate.



Karen Bendle



M. Runcare



Karen Bendle



Karen Bendle

the connection between food and communication built on her strengths as a writer. Plus the classes are conducted in English.

The prospect of moving to Italy for the better part of a year was somewhat more daunting than a short vacation, however. Corser didn't leap blindly. She discovered that a Vancouver food journalist, *Don Genova*, had already gone through the program, so she contacted him to get the inside scoop. Feeling reassured, she applied, but she didn't get in right away; her name was put on a waiting list.

Still eager to travel, she headed off on a spur-of-the-moment trip to Mexico

Shakespeare used Italian settings in

Corser says Parma is the perfect base for a long stay in Italy. Not only does it have lots of furnished apartments for rent, but it is also within easy reach of both Florence and Milan. In addition, Parma—the one-time hometown of *Verdi*—has a thriving cultural scene. “You’re just in the midst of such amazing art and music and architecture...I love soaking it up,” says Corser, who is also a fan of the local cuisine. (Parma is, of course, the home of both *Parmigiano* cheese and Parma ham.)

Her apartment in central Parma differs substantially from her Canadian home. At street level, a normal-sized door cut into a huge medieval portal opens onto a courtyard paved with pink Veronese cobblestones. Stairs lead to the third-floor flat, a charming space with tall arched windows, chestnut ceiling beams and simple furniture. Off Corser’s bedroom, a small balcony overlooks the Parma River.

Each weekday, she leaves home around 10 a.m. for the 40-minute bus ride to Colorno. Many of her fellow students take the same bus, creating a convivial atmosphere en route. The diverse class of 24 people, most in their 20s or 30s, includes a New York event planner, an Irish food journalist and an Israeli architect.

Studying in a Palace

The Colorno school is a satellite of the main university campus in Bra, but its home is grand: the second floor of the *Reggia di Colorno*, an 18th-century ducal palace. The serene yellow façade trimmed with white has been retained,

but much of the interior has been gutted and renovated to better suit the school’s needs. Now, light hardwood floors reflect the light from huge windows overlooking formal landscaped gardens. “It’s a beautiful, beautiful place,” Corser says. “I’m so lucky to be here.”

There are some things about an old palace that just can’t be updated easily, though. For instance, students have

two choices for reaching their classrooms: a glacially slow elevator or a twisting staircase.



Karen Bendick



Karen Bendick



K. Westfall



P. Brevet

The school day lasts from 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and consists of presentations by an ever-changing roster of experts from all over the world. “It’s just a series of these really interesting people,” says Corser. One week, it might be an American professor talking about the role of olive oil in Mediterranean culture; the next, a British photographer walking students through the basics of food styling. Topics range widely, from culinary techniques to the history of cookbooks.

For Corser and some of the other students—particularly those from an American or Canadian background—it all felt a bit freewheeling at first. “I was kind of surprised that there was no real shape to it,” she says.

And, Corser concedes, keeping up with schoolwork at the age of 57 is a bit more exhausting than it was when she was younger, particularly since she doesn’t get home until 7p.m. most nights. However, she says she doesn’t mind. “There’s quite a bit of reading to do, but it’s all such interesting stuff that it doesn’t seem like work.”

Not everything has been smooth sailing, of course. Initially, she missed her family intensely, but a Skype account—which lets her phone home via her computer for pennies—has helped ease that problem. Then there was the matter of Parma’s snow and fog, which came as a bit of a shock. “It may be good for the ham, but I don’t know about the people!” Corser says.

After her arrival, she often second-guessed her decision to take the course. She really likes her fellow students, but she’s conscious of the fact that they’re closer to her kids’ ages than her own. Occasionally she thought, with tongue somewhat in cheek, “What am I doing? I’m 57! I should be home knitting or something.”

Cultural Immersion

After a month in Italy, she was eager to meet some people closer to her own

continued on page 8

What's New In and Aro

Turin or *Torino* has always flown under the radar as one of Italy's most interesting destinations and much more than just a center of business. The world got a glimpse of its charms during the 2006 Winter Olympics. Here's what's new in and around one of our favorite Italian cities:

Eataly

For foodies in the know, Turin has long been a must-visit. Now the city can



add another culinary notch to its belt, with *Eataly*, the world's largest food and wine store. Located in the former *Carpano* Vermouth production plant, *Eataly* was founded by *Oscar Farinetti* in alliance with *Slow Food*, the organization devoted to preserving local food traditions. *Farinetti* says the goal is to "Buy, taste and learn about the best foods under the same roof."

To that end, many of the 40,000 carefully selected food items (most locally sourced from 900 Italian producers but others from international sources as well) are labeled with placards describing their provenance and attributes. There's a computer center, a library, a small museum and rooms for tasting seminars and cooking classes.

For travelers, *Eataly* is a fantastic and affordable destination for a meal or a snack. On the first floor there are eight main sections each devoted to a specific food and overseen by an expert: butcher; cured meats; bakery; pizzeria;

pasta kitchen; produce area; fishmonger; cheese section. There's a dining area in each section and if you're feeling ambitious you can move from one to another for a multi-course meal. Nearby to finish up your meal with something sweet, you'll find an *espresso* bar, chocolate section and *gelateria*.

But wait, there's more. Downstairs there's a more formal restaurant, *Guido per Eataly*, run by a famous restaurateur from nearby *Alba*. The basement also houses the wine cellar and a brew pub where you can pull up a stool and taste a tantalizing selection of beers. At *Eataly*, there's truly something for everyone. Expect to spend a few hours there; the aesthetics alone are worth experiencing but bring an empty stomach along too.

Via Nizza, 230
(39) 011 19506801
www.eatalytorino.it
Open daily 10 a.m. to 10:30 p.m.

Museum of Oriental Art

In December, a museum devoted to Oriental art opened in the *Palazzo Mazzonis*, a former noble residence in the city's *Quadrilatero Romano*, an up-



and-coming neighborhood. Turin has a history of connections with Asia, particularly encouraged by *King Carlo Emanuele I* in the 16th century. MAO as the museum is known (from the acronym for *Museo d'Arte Orientale*) displays 1,500 works of art divided

geographically into five galleries: Southern Asia, China, the Himalayas, Islamic countries (Iraq, Iran, Turkey) and Japan. Highlights of the museum's treasures include a wealth of paintings; reliefs from India; Khmer sculptures; Burmese and Thai works; artifacts from China's Han and Tang eras, with over 200 funerary objects and statuettes; Tibetan Buddhist pieces; a collection of pottery and glazed tiles decorated with Islamic designs; and colored wood engravings from Japan.

Via San Domenico, 9
(39) 011 4436927
www.maotorino.it
Open Tuesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Tickets: 7.50 € (6 € for seniors and students)

Palazzo Madama

Hard to imagine that one of the symbols of Turin, *Palazzo Madama*, was closed for nearly two decades for renovations until just two years ago. The



Baroque façade at the front was constructed in the 18th century by architect *Filippo Juvarra* to make the structure look like a unified building but look closer and there's also a medieval castle and a Roman gate in there too.

The palace houses Turin's *Museo Civico d'Arte Antica* which was originally established in 1861 and has an overall collection of some 60,000 historic and art pieces, mainly from Turin and the surrounding areas. Galleries on four

Turin produces more chocolate annual

und Turin

floors display items from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance and beyond. Highlights include *Portrait of a Man* by *Antonello da Messina* and a large collection of decorative arts, emphasizing ceramics.

Not to be missed is a highlight of the structure itself, a massive marble staircase designed by *Juvarra*. The beautiful *Café Madama* is an inviting place to take a break and indulge in some local delicacies.

Piazza Castello
(39) 011 4433501

www.palazzomadamatorino.it

Open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and on Sunday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Tickets: 7.50 € (6 € for seniors and students)

Osteria Pappa & Ciccia

On a recent visit to Turin, we set out down *Via Garibaldi*, the city's main pedestrian boulevard, looking for a place for a casual dinner. Turning left onto *Via San Dalmazzo*, we found just what we were looking for at the relatively new *Osteria Pappa & Ciccia*.

Owner *Potito Conza* or *Tito* was born into a restaurant family and spent years working in Chicago where he met his American wife, *Bridgett*.

His menu offers fresh, seasonal, regional food at affordable prices. The selections change monthly and include

four *antipasti* (4€), four first courses (7€), four second courses (11€) and four desserts (4€). Selections from the April menu include *Mousse di Castelmagno*

D.O.P. con Miele e Noci (local cheese



with honey and walnuts), *Tajarin ai Tre Carni* (regional pasta with a sauce of pork, veal and rabbit, *Guancialetto alla Barbera* (cow cheek slow cooked in Barbera wine for five hours) and *Bonnet* (Piedmontese specialty made with almond cookies, rum, cocoa and caramel).

Via San Dalmazzo, 1
(39) 011 5618279

Open Tuesday through Sunday, noon to 3p.m. and 7 to 11p.m. (Open until midnight on Friday and Saturday.)

Reggia di Venaria Reale

The region of Piedmont spent \$300 million to restore the royal estate of *Venaria Reale*, seven miles from Turin, to its former glory and visitors may



now enjoy its stunning transformation. The former country retreat of the House of Savoy began its decline into disrepair when Napoleon's troops arrived in the area in 1798 and used the estate for army barracks. To describe just how magnificent the estate — comprised of a Baroque palace, stables, gardens and a 235-acre hunting preserve— was during its prime, consider an old local proverb that claimed leaving Turin without visiting Venaria was like "seeing the mother but not the daughter."

Consider some of the restoration statistics: 800 people restored 1.5 million square feet of stucco and plaster and 11,000 square feet of frescoes. To bring

the gardens back to their former opulence, 40,000 plants were interred. The property, included in the UNESCO World Heritage List, has often been compared to Versailles and it is easy to see why. Many concerts and special events are held at the estate; see the Web site for more details.

Piazza della Repubblica, 4
Venaria Reale

www.lavenariareale.it
(39) 011 4992333

Tickets for combined admission to palace and gardens: 12 € (8 € for seniors and students)

Dolce Stil Novo alla Reggia

If you want to eat like royalty while visiting Venaria Reale, book a table at Chef *Alfredo Russo's* brand new restaurant at the palace. *Dolce Stil Novo* (sweet new style) derives its name from the 13th century Italian literary movement (*Dante Alighieri* was a notable participant) emphasizing love. Chef *Russo*, the recipient of a Michelin star, was named best young Italian chef 2004. Those who want a chance to learn from *Russo* in an intimate, hands-on manner, can sign up for *Dolce School Novo*. A small group of students joins the chef for a morning preparing lunch for the restaurant guests and themselves (350€ per person).

Reggia di Venaria Reale
(39) 011 4992343

www.dolcestilnovo.com

Open Tuesday for dinner, Wednesday through Saturday for lunch and dinner and Sunday for lunch. Reservations highly recommended.

1 € = \$1.28 at press time

ly than France and Germany combined.

A Year of Gastronomy *continued from page 5*

age. She had already tried Internet dating in Canada, so she cautiously went online and set up a lunch date with an Italian man. "I felt quite brave to do that," she says. The meal was enjoyable but conversation was slow, as neither was fluent in the other's language. Corser is now hoping to take some conversational Italian classes at the University of Parma as another way to meet people.

Sometimes, she says, it is the most mundane things that require a bit of adjustment—tasks such as shopping, for instance. Rather than Canadian big box stores, where she could find just about everything under one roof, she was confronted by a huge variety of tiny, specialized shops. She enlisted her neighbor's help to track down a needle and thread, and searched everywhere for a blow dryer before finding one in a hardware store.

Italian shopkeepers also like to chat with browsers. Corser, more used to the anonymous North American shopping experience, found this unnerving at first, because she felt compelled to buy something once she'd talked to the clerk. Once she realized socializing didn't come with an obligation to buy, she felt more at ease with the custom.

Her program's densely packed schedule doesn't allow much time to sightsee around the rest of Italy, but she has managed to squeeze in some brief trips. She spent Christmas in Venice with a Canadian friend, highlighted by Midnight Mass in St. Mark's Cathedral. The university also takes students on extended, food-focused field trips to destinations in Italy,

Spain, France and the Greek Islands.

So what does she plan to do once she finishes her studies in November 2009? Mainly, she wants to share what she's learned about agriculture and authentic cuisine. That work could involve writing about food, or scouting sus-

tainable products for a chef.

She's pondering buying a small place in Italy, where she could spend three to four months each year. In particular, she's drawn to the relaxed pace of the south. "It's kind of a forgotten part of Italy."

One thing she's certain about, though, is that she'll be writing; her travels have definitely demolished her writer's block. After her first Italian trip, she started writing a biography of one of Canada's top chefs (it's currently on hold until she finishes her course.) In Parma, she's working on a series of short stories.

She also has plans for a memoir aimed at women in their 50s. "In the past, this demographic was just—it was invisible," says Corser. Today, though, women in this age group are more likely than ever before to be healthy and financially independent, she says. "We're not gone. We still have a lot of life ahead of us."

—Laura Byrne Paquet

Laura Byrne Paquet's articles have appeared in more than 80 publications, including National Geographic Traveler, Islands and Arthur Frommer's Budget Travel. She blogs on ways to "travel like a local" at www.FacingTheStreet.blogspot.com

THE DETAILS

University of Gastronomic Sciences

Colorno campus
Piazza Garibaldi, 26
43052 Colorno (Parma)
(39) 0521 811111
www.unisg.it



The next one-year Master of Food Culture and Communications program will begin in March 2010. There's a one-month break in August, and a six- to eight-week internship near the end of the program. The 16,000€ fee, payable in three instalments, includes tuition, books, field trips, lunches on class days, all academic activities and registration with the Italian National Health Service. Apartment accommodation in Parma or Colorno is an extra 5,000€ per year. Students must have an undergraduate university degree. Scholarships are available. The campus also offers a one-year Master in Italian Gastronomy and Tourism program, also in English and with similar fees.

The university has another campus in the village of Pollenzo, just outside Bra, in Piedmont. It offers a three-year undergraduate program and two-year graduate degree program, both of which require proficiency in both Italian and English (some assistance in learning Italian is provided in the first year of the undergraduate program). The annual fee for each program is 13,000€ plus 5,000€ for accommodation and 1,000€ for lunches on class days. Scholarships are available.

The university is currently holding information sessions in cities across North America, describing its courses and application process; for details, visit www.unisg.it



M. Rumeare

JUDY'S BOOKS

Judy has written 19 novels and two novellas under the name Judith Bowen. For details, see www.judithbowen.com



Vinegar must be aged for 12 years to qualify as balsamic.