



TALES FROM

# TUSCANY

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FOLLOW THE TRAIL TO IL BORRO, THE  
SUSTAINABLE-ENTERPRISE ESTATE WITH A  
HERITAGE STEEPED IN TUSCAN HISTORY.

\ JOHN STEINBECK ONCE WROTE OF ITALY: "It isn't quite real when you're there and becomes beckoningly real when you have gone." This couldn't be more accurate for describing the picturesque organic wine estate of Il Borro, a fairy-tale Tuscany estate owned by a true Tuscan family: the Ferragamos.

**EMBRACED BY CYPRESS TREE-LINED HILLS** just outside of Florence, Il Borro, meaning 'The Gorge' is an enchanting medieval fortress village dating back almost a thousand years to the 12th century. Located in a strategically defensive area between two ancient Roman roads, the estate was extended throughout time, being passed between noble families (including, of course, the Medicis) over the centuries before Ferruccio Ferragamo, son of the famed shoemaker, bought the entire property in 1993.

Just as Conrad Hilton cast his visionary eye on the Waldorf Astoria long before he acquired it, Ferruccio had fallen madly in love with the historic estate many years before it would become his legacy.



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**AFTER OVER 20 YEARS OF PAINSTAKING RESTORATION**, Il Borro is now run by the next generation Ferragamo, Salvatore, Ferruccio's son. "Luckily, we are in an area famed for its artisanal craftsmen," he says. "We committed to using the original techniques to restore Il Borro to its former glory stone-by-stone." Authentic terracotta tiles sit atop the stucco-clad buildings that make up the ancient village. Cobble alleyways weave between vine-covered accommodations and botteghe (artisanal workshops) that showcase the best of the local produce and artisan makers. "This thousand-year-old village is my favorite area of the estate; the history is amazing," says Salvatore. "It is the heart and soul of the property and will be part of the future heritage of our family."

The remaining 700 acres of captivating landscape is home to the organic and sustainable enterprise that Il Borro prides itself on. "It is the most important thing to




respect and preserve the land that gives back to us so much." As well as the established vines that cover a grand proportion of the farmland, there is the biodynamic crop project Orto Del Borro, managed by Vittoria Ferragamo, Salvatore's sister, who oversees the growing of wholesome, seasonal produce used in the on-site restaurants as well as delivered to local customers.

**HEAD CHEF ANDREA CAMPANI** wanders the farm every morning to find inspiration for his daily-changing dishes—the true definition of farm-to-table eating. "I am the luckiest chef in Italy," he smiles. "The ingredients dictate the dishes that I create, not the other way around." Tomatoes in a panzanella salad sing with sweetness, ripe from the relentless summer sun, and the basil pesto (made with Il Borro olive oil, of course) cuts through a soft burrata with its garden-fresh punch. "I have been given free rein over the kitchen, to create dishes that reflect our culture and tradition." The key word here is transparency, from the open-view kitchen to the traceability of the ingredients. Campani's future plans to introduce wheat to the farm to make pasta from scratch for use in the worldwide (and growing) Il Borro Tuscan Bistro empire, will bring a piece of the hallowed land to its patrons.

**SALVATORE'S PRIDE AND JOY**, however, is the extensive vaulted cellar that houses the critically acclaimed wines from his vineyard. The certified-organic estate produces not only traditional Tuscan Sangiovese grape, used most famously in the Chianti wines, but also the more commonly known Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah to name but a few. "We wanted this incredibly fertile land to produce excellent wine once again and to share its flavors," Salvatore explains. Rather than creating a simple wine that was "used as a 'supplement' of necessity for farmers in the past", Salvatore and his oenologist Stefano Chioccioli have utilized Il Borro's terroir—the differing soils, altitudes and other variables of the landscape—to create a far more refined product in the way the French have for hundreds of years. "This is a relatively new method in Italy of producing a more polished wine," boasts Ferragamo. "This is why the Il Borro IGT Rosso wine is the one that I am most proud of. It has a precious balance that has taken years to perfect." »

SETTING A PRECEDENT

**THE FAMILY'S COMMITMENT TO ECO-CREDIBILITY** is so substantial that they have adopted wonderfully bucolic measures to ensure the organic nature of the wine. A herd of rare-breed Chianina cattle bathes under the Tuscan sun; they are bred for the use of their manure, which is buried and fermented before being diluted and sprayed over the vines, to ensure the ultimate soil fertility. "We are even bringing in horses to replace tractors between the vines to keep the ground from being compressed and damaging the soil," says Ferragamo. As well as the unique methods in the production, the wines themselves are nothing short of revolutionary. This year sees the launch of a 100-per-cent Sangiovese rosé which has already been given a 94 point rating as well as a pure Sangiovese sparkling rosé, the first of its kind ever produced. "Next year sees the launch of a sparkling wine aged on the yeast for over two years," says Ferragamo with pride. "These wines will only keep getting better with age."

**THE CHARM OF IL BORRO** is hard to resist. The family atmosphere created by the Ferragamos is strongly felt throughout the estate, from the pitch that regularly holds fierce sibling polo battles to the collection of etchings, paintings and illustrations in the wine art gallery that have been passed down through the generations. Il Borro is not only about the produce, it is about setting a precedent for the future of the estate and creating a new heritage that will, surely, one day be as synonymous with the Ferragamo name as fashion and footwear. 

*PREVIOUS SPREAD*  
 FROM LEFT\_ EXECUTIVE CHEF ANDREA CAMPANI GATHERS PRODUCE FROM THE GARDEN; WINEMAKER SALVATORE FERRAGAMO; IL BORRO'S RUSTIC STONE-WALL FAÇADE; A POOL WITH A VIEW ON THE ESTATE

*FROM TOP\_* THE WINE CELLAR AT IL BORRO IS THE BEATING HEART OF THE ESTATE; IL BORRO'S GRAPES GROW ON THE VALDARNO HILLS AT THE FOOT OF THE PRATOMAGNO MOUNTAINS



FOR THE FUTURE OF THE ESTATE AND CREATING A NEW HERITAGE IS THE FERRAGAMO FAMILY'S MISSION.'

