



BELLA ITALIA

Jane & Phil Harris experience history and luxury in one of Italy's most spectacular private country estates

Tenuta di Murlo, also referred to as the “Estate” or “Murlo”, in Tuscany, Italy, has been owned by the same family for generations. Ran by Carlotta Carabba Tettamanti, who started the business in 2006, it offers the ultimate Umbrian retreat.

Secluded in thousands of hectares of immaculate woods and olive groves and surrounded by valleys, lakes and rivers, it's one of the most exclusive private country estates in Italy, offering five villas, three apartments and two cottages. All come with five-star services and access to the Estate's exclusive restaurant and 18-hole championship golf at Antognolla.

The family's home is the imposing Murlo Castle that gives its name to the Estate, dating back to the 11th century.

We're collected by limousine from Rome airport with a transfer time of approximately one hour and forty minutes. As we enter the Murlo Estate through the electric gates and up the sweeping driveway we're surrounded by beautiful countryside. We're shown to our magnificent San Savino Villa, a four bedroom 14th century property which was the Estate's old chapel, with the bell tower still intact.

One of the most ancient properties on the Estate, its terracotta tile floors and original kitchen, along with its imposing old stone walls, give a sense of the building's history. Set within the elegant, spacious garden, the fantastic decked terrace provides a peaceful haven with uninterrupted views across the estate.

Our villa had everything we'd expected and more, with its three king-size double bedrooms and one twin bedroom all with en suite bathrooms and air conditioning or heating on request and fully equipped kitchen and



laundry. Media and entertainment included large LCD television, DVD and CD player, iPod docking station and Wi-Fi throughout the villa. Outside, there is a private heated pool, sun-beds, chairs, barbeque, parasols and breakfast table in the garden where we ate each morning. The food was all prepared for us from the menu, and enjoyed on the panoramic terrace.

There are a range of other villas, cottages and apartments, from the Subtilia villa which sleeps 18 to the Cottage at Caminata.

The Estate's restaurant, Il Caldaro, is only a few minutes' drive, where we enjoyed lunch and dinner within its authentic interior and on the terrace which offers wonderful views across to Antognolla Castle. Pizza nights are hugely popular. Not just your average pizza, these are handmade and cooked in the original medieval oven. Il Caldaro's enchanting atmosphere reflects the true Umbrian lifestyle where it's easy to lose your sense of time.

Murlo gourmet cooking classes allow you to get close to the acclaimed chefs, creating original as well as centuries-old local recipes using the finest fresh ingredients from the Estate. Lunch or dinner tasting-sessions follow your cooking class to taste the dishes you've prepared earlier. The courses are organised in your villa. As well as cooking lessons there's also wine tasting sessions and tours to the various vineyards and cellars of the

most important wineries in Umbria, such as Montefalco, Sagrantino.

When it comes to things to do – a perfect option is the guided tours. Set like a gem in the heart of Italy, Umbria offers the perfect combination of art, history and spirituality. For those who want to experience the ancient spirits of this captivating region, the Murlo Estate can arrange charming routes with professional guides to the most beautiful locations such as Assisi – which we took a day trip to – Perugia, Deruta and many more. We also visited the Cashmere district, nicknamed 'Cashmere valley', where around 500 companies are dedicated to producing the luxurious wool.

The Antognolla Golf Course is a few minutes drive from the villa and the Perugia Golf Course is only 20 minutes away. The Estate provides marked trails for hikers to follow that lead through some of the most breath-taking scenery. For the more experienced hiker wanting to visit the mountain tops, Perugia and Lake Trasimene boast mesmerising views. Fishing excursions are available in many of the Estate's lakes and rivers. Wellness services such as massages and beauty treatments can be arranged upon request in your villa and you can also enjoy personal yoga and meditation classes.

Our stay at the Murlo Estate was truly remarkable and unique – a trip we'll certainly never forget.

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