

## ROMANTIC AL FRESCO DINING: LUCCA, ITALY'S TENUTA SAN PIETRO

Up in the hills of [Lucca](#), outside the city walls, is a restaurant with breathtaking scenery and exquisite food: [Tenuta San Pietro](#). Lucca is the hometown of famed opera composer Giacomo Puccini. The restaurant is located on a bluff that has a wide vista, great for sunset viewing. I was glad to have been given the opportunity to experience it!

When I first heard that Tenuta San Pietro is known for their catered (admittedly, for the "beautiful people and others in the know"), I didn't know what to think. But I learned that the Italians take a great deal of pride in their food creation and don't just crank out banquet food like some in the US.

I started out with quite drinkable wines, some of which were said to have been first developed back in the day by friends of Puccini, including Podere Concori, 2011 and Terre di Matraia. Wine is very much part of the Italian dining culture, served at lunch and dinner.

Talk about [localvore](#): the restaurant creates its own olive oil from groves below!

The first course was composition of warm seafood accompanied by vegetable "caponatina" served in tomato. The seafood ranged from shellfish to squid and was so perfectly fresh, the flavors were mild and delicate. The warm temperature ensured that the textures were tender and not chewy. The dishes were white, well displaying the food, but of interesting shapes as to not be generic.

The next course was linguini pasta with a creamy but not goopy sauce. I learned that non-egg pasta -- for example, linguini and not fettucini -- needs to be cooked for 20 minutes. Properly cooked linguini will still have what they call a "crunchy" texture (al dente or thereabouts). The restaurant owner boldly speaks of "ordering [Italian food](#) in Italy, eat American food in America"! At any rate, he also advocates eating leisurely, eating a pasta first course in a reasonable portion and no doggie bags.

The main course was an interesting presentation for fish: turbot flan with a prawn center served with a sauce of baby tomatoes, fresh basil, olives from Tenuta San Pietro and veggies. It was a light, fresh entree' for a hot, summer evening.

Dessert was a coconut cream cake filled with chocolate and garnished with fresh, local fruit like gooseberries. They made for a tart contrast with the cake and very palate cleansing.

The restaurant is also part of a resort hotel that includes many activities as part of its offerings.

Fonte: [www.examiner.com](http://www.examiner.com) - Tamar Fleishman, 30 luglio 2012