



# CASTELLO DEL TERRICCIO

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TOSCANA

## CASTELLO DEL TERRICCIO

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## Castello del Terriccio Today

Castello del Terriccio is a place that moves through time without ostentation. A model of a **fully integrated agricultural estate** which, from the first hills of the Tuscan coast, overlooks the Tyrrhenian Sea, in Castellina Marittima, between Pisa and Livorno, about one hour from Florence and just a few kilometres from the Tuscan coast. Here, landscape, history and human labour coexist in balance.

The estate extends along the northern boundary of the Tuscan Maremma. It is a place that has never yielded to a single vocation but has continued to evolve while maintaining its own sense of measure. With this characteristic, Castello del Terriccio today is a complete ecosystem. Alongside the restoration of the historic village runs an **agricultural, cultural and hospitality project** coherent with the identity of the place. The hospitality experience is completed by the charming residence Villa La Marrana, created from the former stables, and by the restaurant Terraforte, housed in the historic carpentry workshop of the village, where **cuisine enters into dialogue with the territory**, nature, the seasons and the estate's own raw materials.

Once home to over **500 people**, Castello del Terriccio is a place where tradition and contemporaneity coexist without overlapping, and where every intervention is discreetly inserted into a story still open to the future.

## The Estate and the Historic Village

### A Constant Dialogue Between Past and Present

Castello del Terriccio extends over approximately 1,500 hectares along the hills marking the northern boundary of the Tuscan Maremma. A single body that has remained intact over time, where woodland and Mediterranean scrub occupy the largest portion, alongside pastureland, arable land, vineyards and olive groves. The estate has always been conceived as a **complex agricultural organism**, capable of preserving biodiversity and natural resources.

Today, **vineyards — about 60 hectares —** coexist with over **40 hectares of olive groves**, pastureland dedicated to **free-range cattle farming**, and a woodland heritage of approximately **800 hectares**, which plays a fundamental role in protecting the ecosystem. The forest makes it possible to absorb between 7 and 9 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year, corresponding to approximately 46,000–60,000 kilometres travelled by car.

At the centre of the property lies the historic village of Terriccio. Until the 1970s, the village housed sharecropping families and included a church, school, bakery, brick kiln, mills and a carpentry workshop. Thanks to the restoration project launched by **Vittorio Piozzo di Rosignano** - nephew of the previous owner, Gian Annibale Rossi di Medelana, and heir to the estate, which

he now manages - and thanks to an investment of Euro 2 million, Castello del Terriccio is gaining renewed charm. The ancient bakery, recently reopened, has returned to producing bread, once again sold to the local community. The carpentry workshop now houses Terraforte restaurant. The church, finally, celebrates Mass every Sunday. The buildings have been restored in respect of their original structures, giving shape to a continuous dialogue between memory and the present.

## History and Family

### A Preserved Heritage

The name Castello del Terriccio derives from the Castle of Doglia, an ancient medieval fortification whose remains can be found in the most panoramic part of the estate, once a defensive outpost against Saracen raids. As early as Etruscan times these hills were inhabited and cultivated: that origin is recalled by the **sun** discovered during vineyard excavation, which has become the symbol of the estate.

Over the centuries, Terriccio has passed through different historical phases. Between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century it was granted in emphyteusis to the Gaetani counts by Pope Bonifacio VIII; at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century it passed to the Poniatowski princes, who transformed it into a large agricultural estate organised around wheat, olive oil and wine - an identity it still maintains today.

Contemporary history begins in **1921** with the purchase by the **Serafini Ferri** family, ancestors of the current owner. For much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the village housed dozens of sharecropping families, in a self-sufficient system whose traces remain alive today, including the long-standing relationship with many families of employees. This balance would last until the early 1970s.

In **1975**, **Gian Annibale Rossi di Medelana** inherited the property and gave it a decisive turning point. Horses were his passion and, initially, he focused mainly on breeding thoroughbreds trained for the most complex equestrian discipline, *eventing*, which combines three specialties: dressage, show jumping and cross-country, a course with natural obstacles. His talent led him to be shortlisted for the Olympic team, until he suffered a terrible accident that confined him to a wheelchair at just 38 years old.

Despite the tragic outcome, **Gian Annibale reacted with courage and extraordinary strength of will** and determination, and chose to **devote himself to wine production**. His project was precise: to make known the vocation of Castello del Terriccio by concentrating in the glass, as Notari writes in *L'Arte di Bere*, "all the smiles of the sky, all the rays of the sun and the entire soul of the Mediterranean scrub." Thus began a new life and what would become a success story.

*“It is not so much or only the difficulties that life puts in your way that determine destiny, but how you face them,”* explains **Vittorio Piozzo di Rosignano Rossi di Medelana**, Gian Annibale’s nephew, at the helm of the estate since 2019. *“My uncle found the strength to rethink his life by building the success of this estate. Had this accident not occurred, perhaps Castello del Terriccio as we understand it today would not exist.”*

Viticulture became the centre of a research-driven project. From the outset, he surrounded himself with the best professionals. He established a collaboration with Carlo Ferrini, then an emerging oenologist, today one of the most important names in Italian wine. Only international grape varieties were introduced, selecting parcel by parcel the most suitable areas. Wines destined to mark the history of Italian oenology were born, including Lupicaia.

After the passing of Gian Annibale Rossi di Medelana, from 2019 the leadership of the estate was entrusted to his nephew Vittorio, who chose to leave a professional path far from agriculture to return to Castello del Terriccio, a place to which he had been connected since childhood, when he spent summers there. His approach is measured and respectful. He does not overturn, but observes. He introduces targeted changes, improves what exists, strengthens a vision. *“The picture was already beautiful, but it needed a new frame,”* he likes to say.

Even today, as he walks through the estate, memories resurface *“little by little, slowly.. and then suddenly.”* Like the memory of afternoon snacks of bread, garden tomatoes and olive oil. For this reason, **olive oil** is a product to which Vittorio feels particularly attached. For him, Castello del Terriccio is not a place to reinvent, but to accompany, in a constant balance between respect and evolution.

Likewise, wine is not a static object: it is alive and has accompanied humankind for millennia; it changes with time and with tastes, and it requires listening, because evolving is part of life. Climate change, variations in consumer preferences and a new style at the table require entrepreneurial vision — a vision that Vittorio brings from the very beginning. Wine is never made by chance: it requires the ability to read time, because the vineyard needs years to come into production, years during which the market changes.

Working where one’s ancestors worked, opening the windows and seeing the sea, following the birth of wines from vineyard to glass: it is in this silent continuity that the identity of Castello del Terriccio is recognised today.

## Wine Production

### A Mosaic of Vineyards

The ancient Etruscans played a fundamental role in perfecting wine production. They introduced new vine-training and winemaking techniques and developed trade with distant lands. Castello del Terriccio also preserves evidence of their presence, such as the sun discovered on the estate, dating back to this civilisation and now the company logo.

The vocation of these lands for viticulture had already been identified by this civilisation. The great extent of the property presents very different pedoclimatic conditions, with **altitudes ranging from 50 to 450 metres** above sea level. **Three main areas** can be identified:

- the flat area closest to the sea;
- the hills around the village;
- the north-eastern elevations dedicated to pasture and cereal crops.

Vineyards and olive groves are concentrated in the flat and hilly soils. The former, rich in **alluvial sands and gravels**, give wines freshness, aromatic expression and moderate alcohol levels. The hilly areas, characterised by calcareous substrates of marine origin, produce wines of great structure, minerality and ageing potential.

Across approximately 60 hectares of vineyards grow **Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Verdot, Merlot, Syrah, Cabernet Franc, Viognier**, as well as **Chardonnay and Mourvèdre**, introduced more recently. The latter, in particular, is a variety being studied with a view to countering climate change.

The microclimate is strongly influenced by the presence of the sea: winters are mild and most annual rainfall occurs during this season. Spring is cool; summer is often hot and sunny, with long periods without rain, but the natural water reserves stored underground and in the extensive vine root systems allow the vines to avoid excessive water stress and maintain good grape acidity. Finally, constant ventilation due to proximity to the sea mitigates thermal stress on the plants, ensuring balanced grape ripening that extends into early autumn.

*“Our philosophy derives from respect for the natural course of things. In this sense, and climate change permitting, we would like to avoid artificial irrigation in the vineyard, as it disrupts the plant’s balance,”* emphasises Vittorio Piozzo.

Ideal environmental conditions, although even at Castello del Terriccio the challenge today is **managing climate change**. For this reason, together with **Carlo Ferrini** - one of Italy’s greatest oenologists and involved in the project from the outset - the estate is studying new low-vigour, drought-resistant rootstocks and vineyard exposures that ensure balanced grape ripening

while minimising physiological stress. Agronomic activities are coordinated by **Emanuele Vergari**, part of the estate since 1999.

### **Respect for the Environment**

Castello del Terriccio applies reasoned viticulture according to the principles of the National Integrated Production Quality System of the Tuscany Region. The goal is to **combine agricultural activity with environmental protection and the well-being of local communities**.

Where possible, predatory or parasitoid insects are used to combat plant diseases. These include *Anagyrus* against mealybugs, while *Bacillus thuringiensis* and pheromone traps based on sexual confusion are used to control grape moths. Fertilisation is carried out using manure from cattle raised on the estate, and weed control is performed exclusively through mechanical methods. To prevent soil compaction and erosion, vineyards are worked with alternating rows seeded with leguminous plants, later ploughed under in spring, thus favouring natural nitrogen input.

**Water resources** come exclusively from natural springs, wells and lakes fed by rainfall. Weather stations located in areas most sensitive to disease monitor parameters such as rainfall, wind, evapotranspiration, humidity and leaf wetness on a daily basis. These data, processed through predictive models, make it possible to optimise protection measures, intervening minimally and promptly.

Since 2024, Terriccio has been a partner in a University of Pisa project for the development of a modular robotic system dedicated to vineyard monitoring and treatment.

### **In the Cellar**

The wines of Castello del Terriccio stand out for a recognisable personality that combines **freshness, elegance, balance and the ability to evolve over time**.

This is an important distinctive feature that makes them contemporary and forward-looking, capable of engaging new consumers, as Tassinaiia does, or of captivating more expert palates, as with Gian Annibale. This is due to the natural vocation of the area as well as the farsighted vision that led to planting each variety only in the soils best suited to its expression.

**Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot**, destined for **Tassinaiia**, come from the lower part of the estate, characterised by soils rich in alluvial sands and gravels, which confer excellent freshness and moderate alcohol levels.

**Syrah**, planted in the hilly part of the estate and destined for **Castello del Terriccio**, roots itself in soils marked by great substrate complexity, with limestone-rich areas that give pronounced minerality and structure.

**Vinification follows an essential, respectful approach**, in the awareness that quality is first and foremost made in the vineyard. The different varieties and parcels are vinified separately, as are the ageing processes, which take place in French oak tonneaux and barriques, with calibrated use of wood. Only at the end of the process are the blends created, in order to preserve individual identities before final assembly.

Oenological direction is entrusted to Carlo Ferrini, assisted by cellar manager Valerio Corsini. The aim is to obtain deep, long-lived wines capable of faithfully reflecting the territory without force.

### **The Wines: Only Children of the Same Land**

Psychology says that siblings are “only children, from different families,” because parents change between one birth and another: they live different experiences, feel different emotions, overcome difficulties or rejoice in important events. The wines of Castello del Terriccio are like this: each is the child of a project, an era, an entrepreneurial vision that evolves over time.

- **Tassinaia** - First vintage 1992, representing the first oenological project. Contemporary and versatile in character, it appeals both to newcomers and experienced enthusiasts. A blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, it shows excellent freshness and minerality, partly due to the soils and partly to winemaking techniques with short macerations. Drinkability and freshness are its hallmarks.
- **Lupicaia** - Born in 1993 and still the symbol of Castello del Terriccio. Named after the vineyard toponym where wolves once roamed. A wine that reveals itself slowly, reaching maturity over time and gaining increasing charm. A blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot, powerful with balanced tannins and excellent savouriness, making it suitable for ageing. One of its most typical descriptors is eucalyptus, due to the magnificent eucalyptus trees standing beside the vineyard.
- **Castello del Terriccio** - Introduced in 2000, a blend of Syrah and Petit Verdot. Its harmony combines restraint and character. Rich aromatic profile with notes of spices and black fruit, recalling black cherry, blackberry, sweet spices and balsamic notes (mint). Ageing in French oak tonneaux adds complexity and elegance.
- **Gian Annibale** - A tribute by Vittorio Piozzo to his uncle, from whom it takes its name. A blend of Petit Verdot and Cabernet Sauvignon, first produced in 2018. Made only in the

best vintages and in limited quantities, it synthesises everything Castello del Terriccio has been and its future vision. It requires knowledge and respect in tasting.

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- **Con Vento** - The estate's only white wine, with historic roots. Despite being a land of great reds, Gian Annibale Rossi di Medelana wished from the outset to produce great white wines. In the early 1990s he entrusted this project to Graziana Grassini, followed by Hans Terzer from 2001 to 2004, while Carlo Ferrini took over from 2005. The name refers both to the constant marine breezes and to the history of a place that once offered hospitality to monks, interpreting the freshness and luminosity of these windswept hills.

## A Fully Integrated Agricultural Estate

### The Olive Oil of Castello del Terriccio

The estate's olive groves cover approximately **40 hectares**, planted with traditional Tuscan varieties. The extra virgin olive oil is produced from around **7,000 olive trees of Frantoio, Leccino, Moraiolo, Maurino, Pendolino and the rare Rosciola varieties**, cultivated according to sustainable agriculture principles. Trees aged 50–60 years root themselves in diverse soils, giving complexity and identity to each olive.

Olives are pressed in the estate mill within twelve hours of harvesting, using cold extraction, to obtain a high-quality extra virgin olive oil produced in limited quantities. This rigorous process prevents alteration and fully preserves the fruit's organoleptic characteristics. After pressing, the oil naturally decants and rests in darkness, silence and controlled temperature in steel containers that safeguard a centuries-old tradition, testified by ancient terracotta jars still present on the estate.

Deliberately low yields prioritise quality over quantity, resulting in an extra virgin oil of extraordinary finesse. With **annual production of approximately 80 quintals**, the oil is distinguished by very low acidity, between 0.2 and 0.3, and by a harmonious, intensely aromatic and flavourful sensory profile — an authentic expression of the Tuscan territory, destined to become I.G.P. Toscano.

### Livestock Farming

The estate also includes approximately **200 hectares of pastureland dedicated to Limousine cattle farming**, raised free-range and fed on grass and hay cultivated on the estate. These animals are well suited to challenging environments and are characterised by their golden-red coat and developed musculature. Their meat, used in Terraforte restaurant, is very lean, fine-grained and tender.

## The Hunting Reserve

Within an agricultural and ecological vision as complex as that of Castello del Terriccio, the hunting reserve represents a tool for **responsible land management**. Rooted in the historical tradition of large Tuscan estates, it is not conceived as an extractive activity, but as a necessary practice to maintain ecosystem balance. Regulating wildlife pressure protects biodiversity, preserves woodland, pasture and crops, and ensures the sustainability of agricultural and forestry activities. Managed according to strict criteria and current regulations, the reserve helps contain uncontrolled wildlife proliferation, fostering a harmonious relationship between nature, landscape and human labour.

## Terraforte Restaurant

From the collaboration with **Michelin-starred chef Cristiano Tomei** comes Terraforte restaurant, developed around a shared vision. Its free, instinctive cuisine draws from the surrounding environment: wild herbs, berries, bark, game and produce from the estate garden enter the dishes as living elements. Terraforte also hosts wine tastings during estate visits, which conclude with pairings featuring refined specialities.

## Territory in Architecture and on the Plate

The building that now houses Terraforte preserves a surprising past, still clearly legible within its walls. Before becoming a place of hospitality, it was the estate's carpentry workshop, where cypress trees grown on the surrounding land were transformed into beams, doors and windows by the skilled hands of the sharecropping families. These skills remain visible today, especially in the restaurant roof, where the ancient wooden structures are still evident.

The bricks used for the roof and walls also tell a local story: they were produced in the estate's own kiln, in a self-sufficient microcosm where every material was born and worked within the same property.

To keep this artisanal memory alive, two original tools from the old carpentry workshop — the large band saw and the column drill — were left in place during restoration, silent witnesses to an era of manual precision.

A distinctive element is the wooden door separating the main dining room from the tasting room. During restoration, beneath layers of time, the family crest of Vittorio Piozzo's ancestors emerged, branded with a fire mark — the same mark once used to brand the cattle herd.

## Food as an Act of Memory and Identity

The **bread** served at Terraforte is born from a simple gesture deeply rooted in rural history. Based on a living sourdough starter cared for daily, it gains fragrant structure and natural digestibility. What makes it unique is the addition of a small percentage of flour obtained from maritime pine bark — an ancient practice born of necessity, when white flour was scarce and expensive. What was once poverty becomes today an act of memory and identity, releasing a warm, resinous aroma evocative of the estate's pine forests.

**Triglia Terraforte** is one of the restaurant's signature dishes, present since opening day and never removed from the menu despite seasonal changes. Chosen as a tribute to the sea facing the estate, it embodies territory, memory and creativity.

**Rice with estate herbs** appears simple but conceals great creativity. A Tuscan rice absorbs the aromas of seasonal herbs gathered on the estate, completed by a delicate **nepitella oil** with balsamic freshness.

**Rice with tomato water and fig leaf powder** offers a deeper, almost ancestral journey, with dried fig leaves releasing primordial, familiar yet mysterious aromas.

**Terraforte fish soup** features prawns, red mullet, slipper lobster, crostini soaked in black kale and Orbetello bottarga. Intense savouriness, strategic spiciness and wild fennel buds provide energetic bursts of flavour.

**Desserts** mark the closing chapter of the menu, where **chef Giulio Bandini** reaches peaks of expression. Tradition becomes a starting point, as in the **pine nut cake paired with pine resin ice cream** — a refined, meditative forest aroma recalling the estate's paths and pinewoods.

## Villa La Marrana

### The Flavour of Staying in a Country-Chic Residence

Villa La Marrana is the guest house of Castello del Terriccio, set in a panoramic position within the estate, immersed in the Tuscan landscape and overlooking hills descending toward the sea. On clear days, the islands of the Tuscan Archipelago are visible.

**Converted from the ancient stables**, the villa preserves the character of rural architecture — generous spaces, natural materials and historical details — while being reinterpreted for **modern hospitality**. Bright, liveable interiors open onto lush gardens, panoramic terraces and a swimming pool overlooking the surrounding hills.

With **seven double rooms**, welcoming shared spaces, a professional kitchen and areas dedicated to **conviviality**, Villa La Marrana is designed for those wishing to experience Tuscany slowly: sunset walks, guided tastings, outdoor dinners among herbs and olive trees, and the rhythm of the seasons.

### **An Ideal Place for Wine Tourism Experiences**

Castello del Terriccio interprets hospitality as a sensory experience born from the connection between landscape, architecture and storytelling. The historic village, restored with respect for original structures, is the **heart of a vision where every space tells memory and contemporaneity**. In a context of growing wine tourism, the estate offers an integrated experience: not only tastings, but immersion in culture, environment and architecture — a living place, regenerated and deeply connected to nature and history.

### **Contacts**

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