

~~ *Villa Maddalena* ~~

From Fiumicino International Airport, Rome and From Florence Airport

Rome

- Take expressway A – 12, from airport to the Grand Raccordo Anulare (GRA) (the Rome ‘beltway’).
- Cloverleaf to northbound GRA, intersection #30.
- Follow signs to exit # 10 “Firenze” via the A- 1, Autostrada – watch carefully.
- Take ticket at Fiano Romano. You are now on Autostrada A-1 (toll road).
- Drive north 2 + hours to Valdichiana/Bettolle/Sinalunga exit.

Florence

- Take the motorway out of the airport, turning north, away from the signs for the center of Florence. (Throughout Italy the center of a city or town is signified by what looks like a bulls-eye.)
- Follow the green autostrada signs for A-1 and A-11. **DO NOT TAKE the A-11.** It will take you to Bologna!!! It is confusing, so watch for the **A-1 to Rome**.
- Take ticket at toll plaza. You are now on the Autostrada A-1.
- Drive 1 + hours south to Valdichiana/Bettolle/Sinalunga exit.

On the Autostrada – This is like an east-coast toll road. Throughout its length there are service areas, without exiting the tollway. There are cafes at most service areas and twice on the road up from Rome and once on the road south from Florence there are full Autogrills. These are restaurants that are built spanning OVER the highway, accessible from both sides. Upstairs there is both a café-style snack area and a full cafeteria-style restaurant. Two things –

As is the case in most large public cafes you first go look at the sandwiches, pastries, etc. Decide what you want to have, THEN walk to the CASSA, tell the cashier what you want, the trick is to remember the names of the sandwiches – you might jot them down) pay and then present the receipt at the food counter. The waiter will read it, make a small tear in the lower edge to indicate they are working on it, place it on the counter in front of you and fill your order.

Secondly, the cafeteria is REALLY GOOD. The food is all fresh, and for the hot dishes, freshly made in front of you. A wide selection of fresh fruit salad, green and vegetable salads, pasta, cheese plates, desserts, fresh grilled meats, roast meats, fresh rolls.

Maddie and I regularly stop on our way up from Rome to ‘tuck in’ a decent meal after all the airplane food. Even the freshly grilled panini from any of the smaller cafes are really tasty. That, and a quick espresso and I’m good to go!!!

Exiting the Autostrada -

1. Pay toll as you leave. Credit card is easiest. Look carefully at the signs over the toll booths for the credit card symbol. Alternatively, use the booths on the far right where an attendant will take bills and coins. The booths that show only money symbols require exact change.
2. Turn right out of the toll plaza.
3. Follow signs for Siena onto the Sinalunga/Perugia highway.
4. You will be going northwest to Siena. Exit for Sinalunga. Turn left at bottom of ramp. At the next stop, turn left again. Go under the Sinalunga/Perugia highway.
5. Drive through traffic circle to the intersection with via Trento, another rather oddly shaped traffic circle – exit to your right, up via Trento, which goes uphill. (An aside – you will pass an Agip gas station on your left and a bit further down on your right is the I Gelsi shopping center. Stop for groceries, ATM, etc. if you need to.) If not, proceed to via Trento and turn right.
6. Immediately, maybe 20 yards, turn left. Drive through the fields and up over the bridge which crosses the railway.
7. At ‘T’ intersection, turn left, following signs for Torrita di Siena, Asciano...
8. About 1.5 miles turn right at tiny brick shrine to the Madonna on your right, following signs for Trequanda and Asciano. Once you turn there will be a terracotta pot factory on your left.
9. At next ‘T’ turn left, then just past the line-up of recycling bins, **immediately turn right**. Drive up into the hills.
10. At a fork in the road, with Trequanda visible on the hill up ahead, bend left, follow signs to Petroio and Montisi, go up the hill, seeing the carabinieri station on the right and the other road up into the village of Trequanda (also a gas station here with a 24 hour pump).
11. Now, at the carabinieri station, bend left. You will pass a little set of shops with a parking area in front (Café Paradiso – open at 7.30, generally.) DO NOT TURN off this road. You will pass the left turn for Petroio. Don’t turn off.
12. Continue on to Montisi, 4 km.

Narrative version, for those who like a little explanation

- **Rome** Follow the signs for Rome, from Fiumicino. This is a 6 lane freeway, A - 12. You are heading east.
- Follow signs for the Grande Raccordo Annulare (GRA),
- Signs will give you a choice of Naples or Firenze. Follow for Firenze. This will clover-leaf you onto a collector-distributor.
- You will merge in about 1.5 miles by merging to the left onto the GRA. You are now northbound on this beltway – the GRA, always signed with green. Frequently painted on the road itself.
- There is a big construction project going on – as it has been for several years. This will cause some abrupt twists, dips and turns, sometimes with little warning. Go as slowly as you need to go. Don't panic. It's just Italian road-work. This construction, coupled with rush hour can really slow you down. Relax. There is no other way to get where you are going and with the Villa at the end of the drive, you'll find it's worth the trip!!! Besides, you're already most of the way there, from wherever you boarded the plane....
- Continue to Exit # 10 Firenze. Be very sharp in your sign-watching as you approach the exits, watch the numbers. You entered at intersection 30. You exit at 10. You will exit to the right and the exit is a bit confusing with some weaving of other traffic. You will sweep up and over the GRA and enter the A-1. Continue on through Settebagni, Fiano, etc. on the A-1.
- (At Fiano there is an Autogrill that spans the freeway, just prior to the toll plaza. The restaurant on the top floor is a good quality buffet. There is also a normal Italian coffee bar – look over the posted menu boards, go to the cassa first, tell the cashier what you want and pay. You will be given a receipt. You carry this to the barrista who prepares your coffee, panini, whatever you have ordered. You eat it standing at a high table OR go through the buffet for pasta made to order, salads, grilled meats, etc. there are clean rest rooms. Drop 50 centimes to €1 on the plate at the door. This is also a gas station opportunity.)
- Immediately after the Autogrill is the toll gate. Drive into a gate with a green light, take your ticket and DON'T LOSE IT. I always make one place in my car to put these.
- Drive about 140 km to the Valdichiana/Bettolle/Sinalunga exit.
- **Exiting the Autostrada either from Rome or Florence** Exit and pay, using your credit card. Insert your ticket. Wait a second and insert your card with the numbers to the left. It will spit it back out and tell you “arrividerci!!”
- Exit to the right. Follow signs to Siena until you are on the Siena/Perugia raccordo.

- Take the Sinalunga Exit. Drive under the raccordo, continue in the same direction around the traffic circle. You will pass an Agip gas station on your left. On your right about another 50 yards is the shopping plaza mentioned in the Instructions for the House – I Gelsi. Stop here for groceries at the Coop, a snack in the New Bar, the cash machine, etc.
- When you are finished, get back on the same street and continue to Via Trento – a ‘t’ intersection where you can only turn right. Turn right.
- Almost immediately, 20 yards, turn left. This will take you through the tobacco fields, and up over the railroad tracks to a ‘t’ intersection.
- Turn left. About a mile, you will pass, behind you on the right a little brick chapel. After traveling about a mile and a half, total, you will see a tiny brick shrine with a statue of the Madonna on your right, turn here, following the signs for Asciano and Trequanda.
- You will pass a flower pot factory on your left. Continue to the next ‘t’. Turn left, passing a cluster of recycling bins.
- Now, turn immediately right. This will take you up a hill and into the rolling hills of my Tuscany. Stay on this lovely road.
- After about 10 km, 6 miles, you will see Trequanda on the hill a bit to your right, with a castle with a round turret. As you come to the toe of this hill you should turn to the left and hairpin up the hill. This keeps you from driving up and through the village. Going through the village is a nice thing to do and you will end up at the same spot but if you anxious to ‘get there’ take the road to the left up the hillside.
- At the top of this hill you will see a carabinieri station to your right, behind which is our most convenient gas station and the florist and across the street the area hardware store. At this intersection, too, is the best butcher shop which also sells local wines and oils. Here, too is the café Paradiso, for pizza and crepes, after 7.30 pm.
- Drive past this little cluster of shops on your right, following signs for Petroio and finally, Montisi.
- Continue on this road, **do not turn off on the Petroio road to the left**. You will be arriving in Montisi on the east end. Turn to the right, into the village. The road continues on to the Castelmuzio turnoff at the bottom and then on to San Giovanni and highway 2, on to Montalcino (28 km).

- **Montisi**

- You will see the new housing as you enter town. Then you will see a small parking area that slopes down to your right, next to the elementary school. Across the street under the striped awning is the bakery.
- A tall stone wall will begin on your left. Continue on. At the end of that wall will be La Romita. The slow food restaurant, bed and breakfast and across the street Il Rondo the lunch and dinner bar and café. Behind Il Rondo is a small, public parking area. White letter “P” on a blue background.
- More wall on your left. Just before the end of the wall, across the street on your right is Il Barino – the center of the universe at our end of town. The building has been ‘slicked up’ but it is the place to get your coffee, IHT, pick-me-up. Very tiny, but the gathering spot for most of town...
- The wall ends and across a little lane is my neighbors’ house, Mannuccio and Anna Mannucci.
- The Villa is next on the left. Pull up out front to unload, leaving your flashers on. Pull as close to the house as you can so traffic coming from the parking lot, down the lane, can make the turn. Then it is necessary to move you car, either to the parking lot down the lane opposite the house, large, new parking area or in the parking lot behind Il Rondo.