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HIDDEN UMBRIA BLOGGERS

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The Last Word: A Wrap-Up of the TBU Blog Trips

Written on 1 maggio 2012 by Rebecca

After months of feverish preparation, coordination, organization, and all the other -tions that are inevitably called into action when you attempting to get six two-and-a-half day blog trips covering the entire area of a region off the ground, the dust is settling.

Last week we showed about 80 travel bloggers from across the globe our favorite corners of Umbria, and are singularly thrilled with how the trips came off (Twitter analytics show two of the top terms as "great" and "awesome". Enough said.). Discoveries and friendships were made-punctuated with lots of talk and laughter-and ultimately our visitors came away with a better idea of all this relatively tiny region packs into its borders.

About the author **Rebecca**



- Twitter
- My posts

Rebecca Winke - Innkeeper, Blogger, and Travel Writer Rebecca moved to Italy from Chicago in 1993 and shortly thereafter opened an agriturismo in a renovated family farmhouse at the foot of Mount Subasio near Assisi, Umbria. She spends her time taking care of guests at Brigolante and writing about the lovely region she now calls home at her blog Rebecca's Ruminations and for other travel publications, and wondering what strange winds blew an urban vegetarian to a farm in Umbria. She also co-wrote the Umbria Slow: Food, Culture & Travel iPhone app for Sutro Media.



Why, yes. We *are* doing a happy dance.

I've loved seeing the first fruits of our efforts: comments, blog posts, and photo collections hot off the presses in these few days since our guests left Umbria. Their reactions have been both gratifying and surprising, as it has given me an opportunity to see my adopted home through fresh eyes and put into focus details that I had begun to take for granted in the decades I've lived here. Some of the feedback that I've found most interesting? Read on!

Food (and Wine)

Ok, you eat well in Umbria. No surprise there. Or, in the case of a few of our guests, big surprise there. I've long touted Umbria as a destination for travelers who are celiac or vegetarian, but it was fabulous to see how many bloggers on our trips were happily surprised to find how well they ate despite their restrictive diets. Jodi Ettenberg especially loved her gluten-free lunch at Terre Margaritelli (and the wine wasn't bad, either) and Alex Berger, lactose intolerant and a self-declared pasta detractor, summarily tossed his opinion

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La Crescinda di Spoleto [LE RICETTE DI MARIA GIARDINI]

Instagram Photos



of Italian food as sub-par out the window. Not bad for only two days of meals to work with.



Jodi from Legal Nomads was happily surprised by her food options in Umbria

It was also interesting to see that the meals which made the biggest impression weren't the sumptuous, elaborate, multi-course dinners (to which most of our groups were treated at least once; more than one blogger tweeted a mercy call for a food reprieve), but the simple, seasonal, relatively rustic fare which is most faithful to the culinary tradition of this region. The most commented were the simple picnic and agriturismo spreads, and the very first recipes blogged were Taste of Slow's Fava Bean Salad with Pecorino Cheese and Arvotolo, two dishes considered so quotidian that I suspect any Umbrian would be shocked to discover that they were noteworthy enough to merit a blog post! But this is the kind of cuisine where Umbria shines, and I was happy to see that our guests picked up on it.

Views

Bucolic, schmuolic. It's easy to become inured to Umbria's beauty when you see it every day. And then you have gifted photographers like Ken Kaminesky, Simon Falvo, Alexandra Korey, Abigail King, Jeanette Kramer, Andy Hayes, and others descend upon you for a few days to blast you out of your reverie with a collection of shots that range from the stunningly grandiose to the poignantly intimate, all of which capture the some essence of Umbria's soul. A special thanks to all of you for reminding me that despite the lack of bagels, free wifi, and a decent basketball team, I am very fortunate to live in such a breathtaking place on earth.



Holy Smokes. Ken Kaminesky captures the beauty of Assisi from above.

Also, sometimes a new perspective doesn't hurt. A number of bloggers got to hop a quick helicopter ride above Assisi, and the photos which came out of those fly-bys are fabulous. Keith Jenkins from Velvet Escape, Ken Kaminesky, Alex Berger from Virtual Wayfarer, Jodi



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Ettenberg, and 100 Days all treated us to bird’s-eye views of Assisi and the Umbrian Valley.

Flag Waving

Okay, I have to admit that I was blind-sided by the enthusiastic response to the flag corps from Città della Pieve. Again, I live in a Medieval town where any excuse is a good excuse to call out the sbandiatori (flag wavers), so for me a flag-waving performance comes a dime a dozen and is usually when I take advantage of ten minutes of performance to go get a drink or use the restroom. Not so, of course, if you hail from Canada like Janice Waugh of Solo Traveler (who seemed inordinately interested in the males-wearing-tights aspect of the troupe) or from, uh, Canada like Cheryl Howard (who also seemed inordinately interested in the males-wearing-tights aspect of the troupe). Maybe it’s just ladies from Canada. Huh. Ahem. Moving on....

	Cheryl Howard @cdngrrleh New post! Flag Throwing Men In Tights? Welcome To Umbria! p.ost.im/p/egPQX9 via @cdngrrleh #ttot #tbumbr	28 Apr
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	Akila and Patrick @theroadforks Great photos from @solotraveler on Umbrian medieval performance. solotravelerblog.com/men-in-tights-...	27 Apr
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	Travelers @infotravelers Men in Tights – tradition in Umbria, Italy bit.ly/IPJk18	26 Apr

You have to wonder what the men of Umbria would think about their tight-wearing habits being widely Tweeted about.

Jokes aside, the Medieval history that saturates this region can be dour during the grey winter months, but come spring and the beginning of the festival season Umbria can throw a Medieval party like no place else. Another highlight for many was the final stop for all our blog trips, when we converged on the tiny town of Narni who gave us a preview of their Corsa all’Anello Medieval festival and jousting competition, which is going on until the end of May. The costumed horsemen and “dames”, the beating drums, the delicate dances, the rollicking tavern where we lunched...it was a great way to wrap up our blog trips and show Umbria with its hair down.



Our official photographer Mario Mele took this action shot of the flag-waving tight-clad Umbrian men. Mario is from Salerno. He doesn't do tights.

Sex

Pipe down, nothing untoward happened on our blog trips (Though two of our tutors who shall remain unnamed—[Fabio](#) and [Nicola](#)—declared themselves prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice for our bloggers. But, like they say, what happens in Umbria stays in Umbria.), mostly because bloggers were dead tired from three days of intense conference-going which preceded our blog trips, with the packed days and late nights that that entails. My group were great sports—sleepily enthusiastic or enthusiastically sleepy, depending—and cheerfully dragged themselves through guided visits and wine tastings and long meals to the limits of human endurance. The one time I saw them visibly perk up was when our guide in Todi announced that there were graphic hard-core scenes sculpted into the intricate stonework on the portal of San Fortunato, at which point cameras got pulled out and the rest of the day was punctuated with raunchy one-liners. Moral of the story: sex sells. Even in Umbria.



I can't come up with a caption for the positions of this monk and nun which won't get me in trouble.

And, as any woman can tell you, the next best thing to sex is chocolate, which was another

huge crowd-pleaser on our trips. One itinerary included a visit to the Perugina Chocolate School, which was one of the most commented and tweeted stops on any of our six trips. The group made limoncello-filled chocolates with Perugina's master chef, and Michael from Time Travel Turtle shows us how it's done...or, alternatively, how it's not done in his hilarious [blog post](#).

So, my final word? Definitely not "final". I look forward to seeing blog posts, articles, photos, and videos far into the future from the TBU bloggers who traveled Umbria with us and-I hope-sharing a quick cappuccino when they pass through our region again. It was a pleasure to meet them all and share our Umbria!

We are gathering all the Umbria-related blog posts and photo albums on our [Facebook page](#), so please stop by and take a look!

Rebecca

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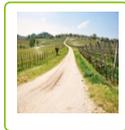
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**Simon Falvo** · [Segui](#) · Editor and Publisher presso Wild About Travel · 364 persone ricevono gli aggiornamenti
Gosh! Thank you [Rebecca!](#) What an honor being defined a 'talented photographer'! And furthermore, together with a great name like [Ken Kaminesky!](#) He is a real professional. I'm just playing :-)
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**Taste of Slow**
Great article! Thanks for mentioning my recipes from Umbria - I really loved the cuisine of your region, and there will be more recipes and blogposts coming up!
[Rispondi](#) · [1](#) · [Mi piace](#) · [Segui post](#) · 1 maggio 2012 alle ore 18.40

**Alexandra Korey** · Social Media Manager presso The Florentine
thanks for the link, cara. When and where will the official photos be published? can you email me the one of the two of us?
[Rispondi](#) · [Mi piace](#) · [Segui post](#) · 2 maggio 2012 alle ore 7.59

**Rebecca At Brigolante** · [Segui](#) · Owner-Operator presso Brigolante Guest Apartments
Good question...I'll email Il Talibano and ask him :)
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