

Between Montepulciano and Montalcino: A Green Acres Agriturismo Holiday

\$\$ Agriturismo Cretaiole, in pristine farmland on the Montalcino–Pienza road, is warmly run by Isabella and her husband Carlo. This family-friendly farm, deeply rooted in the culture, welcomes visitors for weeklong stays (generally Sat–Sat) in six comfortable apartments. Eager to share their local traditions, they create a community of about 14–20 travelers who are looking for a rich cultural education. Isabella offers cooking demonstrations, and leads guests in hands-on truffle hunting, grape and olive harvesting, and gardening. Carlo’s father, Luciano, is in charge of the grappa. While there’s no swimming pool (for philosophical reasons), many thoughtful touches and extras—such as Wi-Fi, mountain bikes, and loaner mobile phones—are provided (Db–€630/week, small Db apartment–€840/week, large Db apartment–€1100, same apartment for four–€1,250, prices soft mid-Nov–mid-March, non-included activities are fairly priced, tel. & fax 0578-748-083, Isabella’s mobile 338-740-9245, www.cretaiole.it, info@cretaiole.it). It’s on the Montalcino–Pienza road (S-146), about 11 miles out of Montalcino, and about three miles out of Pienza. While they prefer weeklong stays, when things are slow they may accept guests for as little as three nights (for this you must book less than a month in advance, Db–€100, 3-night minimum).

