

# EDMONTON JOURNAL SECOND HOMES

RECREATION AND INVESTMENT PROPERTIES

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Borgo di Vagli is a vacation home development being carved out of a 14th-century hamlet in Tuscany.

PHOTOS, SUPPLIED

## Hamlet home under the sun

Fractional project in Tuscany offers authentic Italy

ALISON APPELBE  
*Special to The Journal*  
TUSCANY, ITALY

If there's a single message that the designer-restorer of a 14th-century Italian hamlet wants to get across to potential buyers, it's that this is not your conventional luxury resort.

The project called Borgo di Vagli, located near the Tuscan town made famous by the blockbuster memoir and movie *Under the Tuscan Sun*, is the authentic restoration of what were once the homes of farmers, woodcutters and shepherds.

Over 10 years, Tuscany-based architect-designer Fulvio Di Rosa worked with skilled craftsmen to re-

store the Borgo di Vagli houses in a manner respectful of the original architecture — not to mention the history and culture of this Etruscan region.

The result is 10 one- and two-bedroom apartment units being sold as one-tenth fractional ownership — and to be occupied collectively by the 100 owners.

In a phone interview from New York, where he was on business, Di Rosa emphasized that Borgo di Vagli is not the ultra-convenient, amenity-packed, sun-belt resort that many people expect from a second-home investment.

"Owners attracted to Borgo di Vagli are deeply cultured and have travelled widely," he said. "There are not people who are interested in white gloves

and the number of stars (at a restaurant or hotel). This is a real hamlet. It is not a resort.

"Not one of these properties is alike — these farmers (who built them) were not interested in 'series,'" he continued dryly. "They were building in order to address their needs of the moment — whether for a bigger family, or two more cows or sheep.

"So buyers should expect 100-per-cent authenticity. And if they want authenticity, there's no more authentic place in Italy... but they must decide if it's right for them."

Borgo di Vagli, meaning "between the valleys," nestles into a 13-hectare terraced hillside of olive, fruit and oak trees. The hamlet is 20 minutes by car from Cortona, where di Rosa restored the now famous home of *Under the Tuscan Sun* author Frances Mayes.

Mayes recently wrote of a visit to Borgo di Vagli: "I spent an afternoon photographing architectural details: carvings over doors, stone roofs, deftly placed steps and the corners of buildings against the sky. Fulvio di Rosa has the artist's eye."

Here thick stone walls, wood-beamed ceilings and terra cotta and stone floors revive the medieval ambiance. Each residence has a vine-and-wisteria-covered pergola. They also feature state-of-the-art plumbing, fully equipped kitchens, high-speed Internet access and flat-screen TVs. A heated swimming pool is sited at the top of the hill, where, points out di Rosa, it doesn't compromise the historic landscape.

Antique Tuscan furniture suitable in a rural setting, tableware, pottery and traditional Busatti linens made by local crafts people fully furnish the units.



The units are being restored in keeping with the original architecture of the buildings and the region.

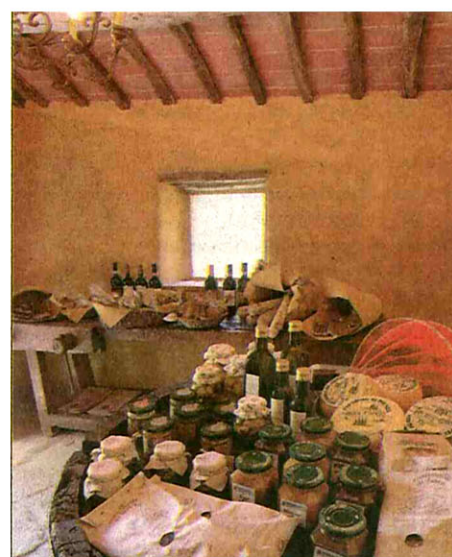


Floors are mostly stone or terra cotta.

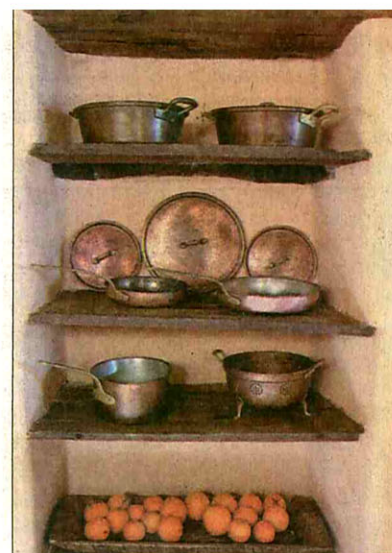


Furniture is a mix of Tuscan antiques and comfortable, new couches and chairs.

See HAMLET / F6



Not far from Borgo di Vagli are local food, wine and produce markets where owners can go for their daily shopping.



Canadians looking for a rustic, authentic vacation home will find it in Borgo di Vagli.

## Tuscany property unlike anything in North America

### HAMLET

*Continued from F1*

Borgo di Vagli is the most recent of restorations by di Rosa that have included a 12th-century hamlet near Siena, a palazzo and a former convent. Given that property values in Tuscany are 15 times what they were 20 years ago, and that each Borgo di Vagli unit might fetch \$1 million or more, di Rosa

looked to North American-style fractional ownership to make this latest property more affordable.

Borgo di Vagli is selling one-tenth fractional (full) ownership of one-bedroom units from 60,000 euros (about \$95,300) and two bedrooms from 95,500 euros (\$151,600). The fully transferable titles are handled and held by a trustee in the United Kingdom. More than half are sold; about 50 per cent of buyers are North American.

Every November, owners can reserve for a guaranteed 21 days of "planned vacation" (with a maximum 14 consecutive days). Equal access to high-demand periods are guaranteed under a "rotating priority system."

Once these stays are allotted, owners are offered both "space available" reservations and "short notice" visits at no additional cost. Guests of owners can use the vacation time. Owners can also take advantage of the worldwide holiday property exchange program, The Registry Collection.

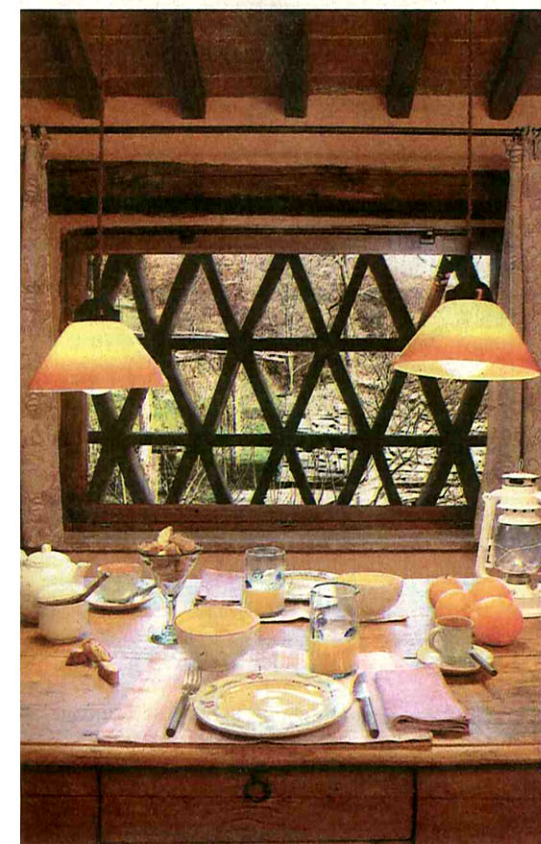
There is an annual fee of between \$3,572 and \$4,535 for on-site management (including concierge service for dinner reservations, golf tee times, winery tours and travel arrangements, etc.), utilities, taxes and other collective expenses. Extraordinary services such as daily housekeeping are additional.

A rustic trattoria (restaurant) is set into Borgo di Vagli's medieval guard tower (dining is by candlelight). There is also a local food, wine and produce market, and restaurants in Cortona (population 22,000). It's a one-hour drive to Assisi and Chiusi, and 90 minutes to Siena. The nearest airport is Florence, one hour and 45 minutes away.

It's strongly recommended that potential buyers visit before making a decision.

"A picture is something — reality is something else," said di Rosa, concerned that romanticism will trump a deeply felt interest in historic Tuscany. "We want people to be sure they are genuinely interested. Because if they're looking for shopping and spa visits — we are completely the wrong place."

For more, visit [www.clubborgodivagli.com](http://www.clubborgodivagli.com).



Owners can dine in or at the resort's trattoria.