

Podere Riparbella



- Agriturismo
- Vineyard
- Olive Culture

Podere Riparbella
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The Ecological Concept



Olive tree in natural surroundings

«Everything that is against nature
will not last in the long run.»

Charles Darwin

Superior tourism,
gastronomy
and agriculture
in harmony with nature.

Legacy – Culture – Potential

What was once a neglected farm, today is a beautiful „podere“ which combines agritourism with wine and olive production. And tomorrow?

While searching for a suitable property in the early 1990's where they could turn their ideas into reality, the current leaseholders found the perfect place in Riparbella.

The couple, she an experienced chef and professional restaurateur, he an architect and experienced winemaker, needed a lot of imagination to see the farm's potential. The main house and the outbuildings were largely in poor condition, and the arable acreage had been less than carefully maintained.

After comprehensive restoration work on the structures and in the vineyards and olive groves had been done, we welcomed the first guests to Riparbella in 1997, and our production of wines and olive oils received the first of many awards for their excellent quality.

Diligence and sensuality go hand in hand at Riparbella – in the growing of vegetables for our sophisticated yet simple cuisine, the interior décor of the unpretentious guestrooms, the meticulous care taken of the olive trees and grapevines, as well as in the demand for top quality in the production of the wines and oils. Everything is done according to the highest ecological and sustainability standards.

What was then just a slumbering potential is today capital. Now the podere is waiting to be discovered and developed further by another innovative and creative entrepreneur.

Who knows what it could then become?

The Location: Italianità at it's best...



The view from southwest

Location location, location, it is said, and this location is unsurpassed.

Tuscany is a region in Central Italy, and its capital, Florence, is the home of some of the best known and beloved art and architecture of the Renaissance – Michaelangelo's „David,“ Botticelli's works in the Uffizi Gallery, and the cathedrals of Florence. The diverse natural surroundings stretch from the rugged Apennines to the beaches of the Tyrrhenian Sea to the olive groves and vineyards of the Chianti Region.

Podere Riparbella is situated 400 meters above sea level, close to the picturesque medieval city of Massa Marittima, rising gently back from the Tuscan Archipelago and at the same latitude as the island of Elba. Idyllic beaches, such as Baratti Bay and Punta Ala, are within east distance; the sea is visible on the horizon; hiking and bicycle paths are just outside the door; historic towns like Siena, Pisa, and Volterra are not far away – and almost anything the heart desires is available in abundance.

Agriturismo: Guest Quarters



11 guestrooms with bath/WC, covered terraces;
Restaurant with fireplace;
Library/event room with fireplace;
Reception area with bar and shop;
Professional hotel kitchen



New addition with guestrooms and covered terrace above,
Library and wine cellar on the ground floor.

Agriturism: Dining Room



Restaurant: A fresh, organic breakfast buffet awaits guests in the morning



Restaurant: dining tables set for the evening meal

Agriturism: Grape Arbor, Patio



Supper under the arbor

Agriturism: Hotel Infrastructure



Professional hotel kitchen with pantry, cold storage and freezer

Preparation of organic produce from our own garden

Agriturismo: Guestrooms, balconies



Agriturismo: Guestrooms



The interior of the hotel gleams with well-maintained simplicity. The light-filled, unpretentious rooms are thoughtfully furnished in a modern style. The contrasts between wooden beams and steel and glass doors, tiled floors and designer lamps, colorful drapes and chestnut tables create a personal and welcoming atmosphere.

Agriturismo: Guest Terraces



Guest terrace above the wine cellar

Agriturismo: Guest Terraces



Guest terrace
above the bar

Agriturismo: The Hotel Grounds



Plenty of nature in which
to linger

Agriturismo: Outdoor Seating



Inviting places to sit in the shadow of the oak tree

Viniculture: The «Triangolo» Vineyard



The „Triangolo“ vineyard with Sangiovese and Pinot Nero grapes

Viniculture: the Vermentino an Canonico Vineyards



The vineyards are laid out with a special growing and pruning system, the so-called Lyre trellis system. This gives the foliage twice the space with the same yield as more traditional systems, and admits more sunlight and air. The plants are therefore more robust and more disease resistant, so important in organic farming.

Viniculture: Products

We produce wines, olive oils, grappa, and brandy exclusively from fruits grown on our own land – 25 hectares (ca. 62 acres) of trees and 25 hectares of cultivable areas, organically farmed and certified by ICEA (Istituto Certificazione Etica e Ambientale = Environmental and Ethical Certification Institute).

The Wines

Our goal is to produce honest, clean, fruity and elegant wines with structure. They are meant to be enjoyed as accompaniments to food. They are meant to please. They are not woody, not jammy. We are vintners and want wines that taste like Riparbella.

The Grapes

The wines are the result of attentive and intensive work combined with great respect for nature in the vineyards. We grow grapes by the labor intensive „lyre“ method, thanks to which the grapes ripen more evenly and the risk of disease decreases. We can use natural herbicides and pesticides with confidence, and have only a minimal need for the use of copper.

The Land

Our vineyards lie at an elevation of 380 meters above sea level in the rolling hills of the Colline Metallifere in the northern Maremma. The soil is rich in humus, and has clay, sand, and generous mineral components.

Wine Production

Our only task is to turn grape juice into fine wine. We use no supplementary apparatus in our cellar (separators, concentrators) and add no enhancing agents (enzymes, tannin powders, flavorings). Likewise unacceptable are acidification and chaptalization. We use sulfites only in small amounts as a stabilizer before bottling. The cellar is well-equipped with several stainless steel tanks and oak casks in a variety of sizes.



Grape Varieties and Distribution

Our grapevines are divided among three vineyards: Canonica – Triangolo -- Vermentino.

The Canonico

2.65 hectares (ca. 6.5 acres) with Sangiovese, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, and Pinot Nero varieties

The Triangolo

1.058 hectares (ca. 2.6 acres) with Sangiovese and Pinot Nero varieties.

The Vermentino

0.6 hectares (ca. 1.48 acres) with Vermentino only.

Variety totals:

Sangiovese	2.3064 hectares (5.7 acres)
Merlot	0.3624 hectares (0.895 acres)
Cabernet Franc	0.5111 hectares (1.263 acres)
Pinot Nero	0.5263 hectares (1.3 acres)
Vermentino	0.6000 hectares (1.48 acres)

Annual production in a good year yields 15-17,000 bottles with a potential for 22-25,000 bottles. Rights to an additional 0.25 hectares (0.62 acres) for wine cultivation exist and are valid for 3 years.

Viniculture: Cellar #1



The inventory of the wine cellar has grown over the years.

Besides in numerous steel tanks, the wines age also in very large oak wood casks and in medium sized barrels and barriques.



Viniculture: Cellar #2



A small bottling room is located along side of the wine cellar. We have always filled the bottles manually, but we cork and label them with the help of machines.



Wine Harvest Impressions



Harvest ready grapes



Harvesting Vermentino grapes



Bringing them in



Arrival of Sangiovese grapes for processing



Grapes are separated from their stems, then sent down to ferment in steel tanks



Food and drink after a good day's work

Olive Culture: The Trees



The Moraiolo olives
of Riparbella

Olive Culture: Tending and Harvesting



Grafting olive saplings



Freshly grafted



Olive tree



Olives on the branch



The olive harvest



Olives ready for pressing

Olive Culture: Products (2018)



The Oil

Our goal is to produce the freshest, purest oils. For that it takes healthy, properly balanced, green-ripe olives and the professional hand of a passionate oil miller. We store batches separately in anaerobic environments and do an initial raw degustation to determine the oil variants. The oil is then filtered, sorted, and sealed under protective argon gas and put into cold storage until bottling.

The Trees

We fertilize and prune the trees regularly. Thanks to our cultivation and ground cover methods, the humus content of the soil is very high, which helps protect the trees against the stresses of drought. The olives are picked quickly and carefully, cleaned, and processed on our modern production line within 24 hours of harvest.

Varieties of Olive Trees

There are 1,100 trees of which 900 are in production and 200 are semi-wild.

Moraiolo	400
Maurino	300
Leccino	50
Pendolino	50

Annual production averages 800 kg/880 liters

Since 2009 we have an additional olive grove under lease, the Bruscoline, with 200 trees of mixed varieties, excluding Maurino.

Vegetable and Flowers Gardens, Destillates



The irrigated vegetable and flower gardens are designed for the use of our guests.

Distillates

Grappa and brandy are crafted from our own raw materials by a passionate distiller and marketed under our own label.



Livestock Options



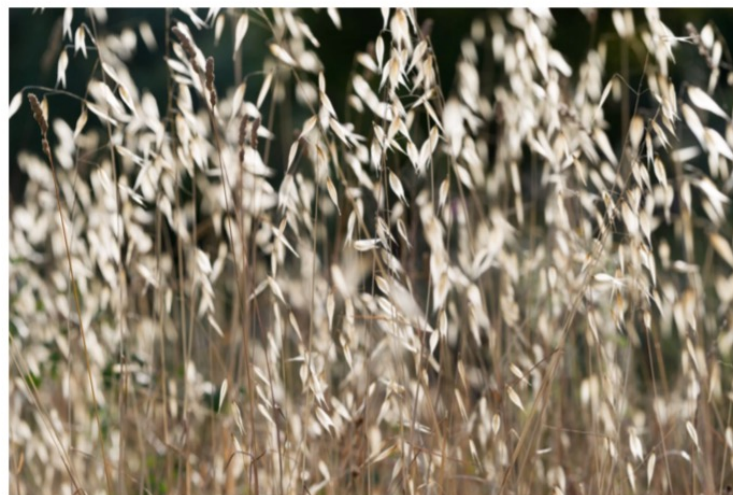
There are two covered wooded pens with fenced pasture, currently occupied by two donkeys. The structures are large enough (each has three feeding troughs) for additional donkeys or horses or to offer as vacation boarding for saddle horses.

At present there are no small domestic animals in residence. But it is completely possible to raise pigs, or sheep here.

Multiple possibilities for raising animals



Nature is all around us



Nearby places of historic and cultural interest



The stately cathedral in Massa Marittima



Siena: the pearl of Tuscany

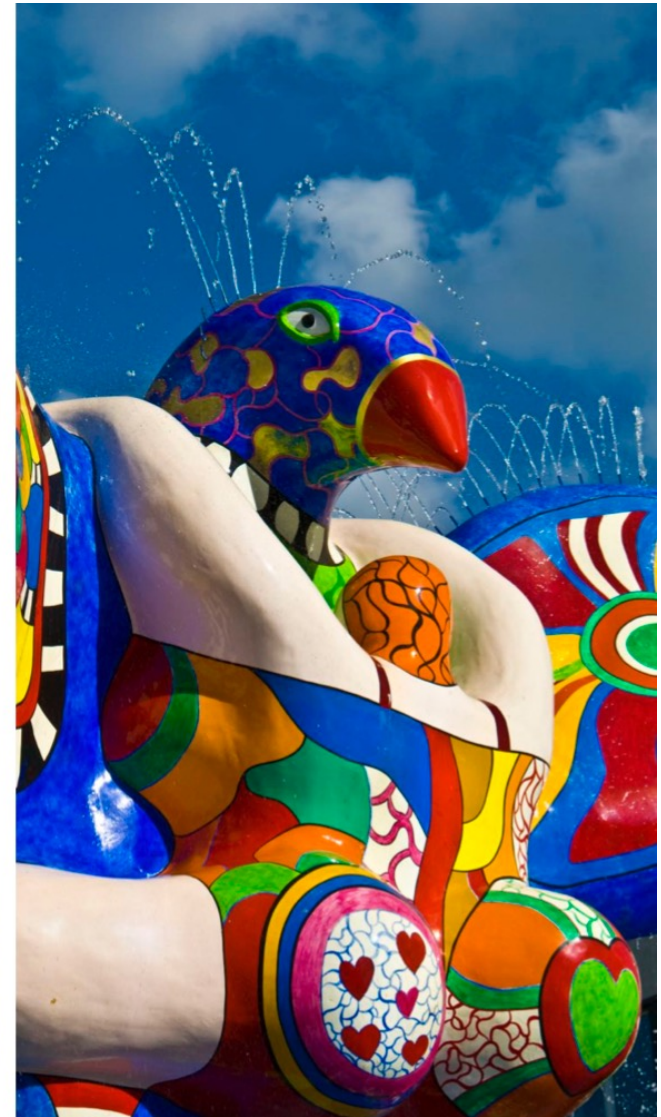
Beautiful seashores



Tuscany: World famous natural beauty



Tuscany: Culture in abundance



Facts & Figures 1

City	Massa Marittima GR, Italy
Address	Podere Riparbella 4, Zona Carbonaie, 58024 Massa Marittima
Elevation	423 meters above sea level
Total Area	49.5 hectares (122.3 acres) with 4.2 hectares (10.37 acres) viniculture, ca. 8.7 hectares (21.5 acres) olive plantation, 500 m ² (0.123 acres) irrigated vegetable gardens, forest, arable farmland
Structures	
„Hotel“-building	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 11 Guestrooms, 11 bathrooms, 2 large covered terraces,- Restaurant with professional kitchen and bar, library/conference room- Attic for supplementary use
Private living quarters	2 bedrooms, shower and separate WC, kitchen/staff room, office, covered portico
Commercial space	wine and oil cellars, storeroom, storage cellar, pantries, sheds, haylofts, stables

Total interior areas Agritourism area 457 m²

Farm areas 689 m²

Living area, private 68 m²

Total area (+ balconies) 1,324 m²

Exterior areas (barnyards. Terraces, pergola) 220 m²

Building volume Total net building volume 4,600 m³

Parking 15 outdoor parking places (expandable)

Facts & Figures 2

Construction years	Total renovation 1994 -1996, new construction 1999, facade renovation 2015. The property is extraordinarily well maintained.
Move-in	availability immediate, upon agreement
Sale price	3.2 Mio. Euro turnkey, excluded are goods and wine warehouses, which must be evaluated.

Buildout was performed according to the highest Swiss standards.

- The entire renovation and new construction were carried out according to ecological principles and with the use of many natural building materials.
- Electricity and water connections, rainwater cisterns (ca. 1,000 m² collection area, 180 m³ capacity) with corresponding pumps and conduits, wood carburator heating system with mounted LPG boiler, heat and cold recovery, thermal solar paneling, floor heating, various open fireplaces, LPG gas tank, telephone, internet, satellite TV, parking.
- Structural materials were thoroughly remediated in 1994/96 and 1999, and all structural and interior work was done in accordance with Swiss building standards. All floors, roofs, terraces, and walls were optimally provided with good thermal insulation.
- Electric, sanitary, and heating installations were planned and carried out according to Swiss standards.
- The central refrigeration system is equipped with waste heat recovery capability. Approx. 30% of total energy expense for hot water and heat can be covered by the use of the solar thermal collectors.
- The wood-burning heating, using our own firewood, and the LPG boilers were planned and installed according to Swiss environmental standards.
- Heating and hot water supply lines are optimally insulated.
- Gray water and sewage lines lead to a central septic system, which is regularly pumped out.
- Clarified water percolates in the olive grove.

Podere Riparbella 1

History

Little is known of the property's early history. It belonged to a large landowner who used part of the building as a vacation house. In its heyday, two families lived and worked on the estate.

Veronica Malzacher

Many years of mostly independent employment in the hospitality industry and cultural sector. Cofounder of a gastronomical and cultural enterprise on Lake Zurich. Expanded a business for pasta production and a sales company for Italian specialties in Switzerland. Business consulting for hotels, restaurants, and sales associations focused on „Ecology in Business.“

Christian Prohaska

Architect, specialized in the renovation of residential buildings as well as hotel and restaurant operations. Extensive collaborative work with contracting groups and collectives. Culturally and politically active.

Intensive and continuing theoretical training in the areas of grape and wine production.

Together

We were both born in 1948. In our many years of working in Switzerland, we gained rich experience that we were eager to put to use in a joint eco-project in Tuscany, supported by our many friends in the north.

Reasons for our choice

Tourism und agriculture presented different requirements for the project.

Speaking in favor of tourism

was the location of Podere Riparbella: nestled in the green Tuscan hills, near to the road yet quiet. Within a half hour's drive to the sea. Whether by train or by car, Italian, Swiss, and German visitors can easily reach us in a day.

Tuscany is a relatively sure value in the tourist trade, as the northern hunger for the sunshine and warmth of the south is insatiable.

Speaking in favor of viticulture

was the relative proximity to the sea, the hilly location at 400 m above sea level, the quality of the available arable acreage. Furthermore, the previously farmed areas as well as the overgrown ones were not chemically compromised.

The business idea

A Swiss cooperative buys the property. It is financed with private loans. It leases the property in its entirety to Veronica and Christian, who, as leaseholders, founded an Italian company – the Società Agricola.

And so the real property and the business are separate

Synergy between agriculture and tourism. Crises in either area (hail, frost) can therefore be more easily absorbed economically. Guests can always have a glass of wine with their food and can purchase wine, olive oil, and marmalades at the end of their visit.

Podere Riparbella 2

The building project

Basic idea: Not to alter the character of the existing structures. All of the rooms in the old part of the house retain their original dimensions. The guestrooms are therefore of varying sizes.

Fundamental principle: To build sustainably. To use long lasting building materials and apply ecological wisdom.

The real property

The various buildings retain the dimensions as defined by their natural stonework construction. Therefore their floor plans have been altered only slightly.

The addition to the main house was added in a second building phase in 1999 and a second story was added. Originally a barn with living quarters above stood here.

All improvements were carried out under the watchwords: maintain, adapt, and enhance.

We intentionally included no energy-dependent air conditioning systems. Both the renovated and the new facades, floors, and roofs are very well insulated, namely doubled-walled. In the summer, thanks to the insulation and window blinds, the guestrooms and common areas stay pleasantly cool.

In the winter, comfortable temperatures are maintained thanks to the radiators and radiant floor heating.

The farm

The fields, if cultivated at all before, were only expensively farmed by the previous owners, i.e., farmed with only small inputs of labor and capital. Ideal conditions under which to continue working the land ecologically and organically, as well as to make it easier to obtain certification.

We were careful to adapt all the new vineyards we planted to the particular topographies and soil types of their areas.

We increased the number of trees per acre in the olive groves, replaced many of the missing trees, and expanded the number of varieties planted.

We enlarged the vegetable and berry gardens significantly.

We protected the vineyards and gardens against loss and damage due to wild animals by installing chain link fencing.

Development over the years

Over the years, energy saving building components were supplemented in order to decrease our dependence on fossil fuels.

Rainwater recovery was optimized and its use increased in order to reduce our consumption of ground water.

The entire property and farm have been managed and maintained to retain value. In several phases of development, necessary investments were transacted.

The decision to do without an energy-hungry swimming pool was not an easy one, since it is something many guests would like to have. But the seacoast with its attractive beaches is not very far away.

Podere Riparbella 3

Successes and awards

Guests appreciate our creative, light, and surprising cuisine. They enjoy trying our various wines with their meals. Visitors also request tastings and stop by to shop.

Our wines have won recognition at various events and from experts. We have also had great success with our olive oils. Every year brings many prizes and awards (Biol, Gambero Rosso, Slow Food, Flos Olei – ours was one of the 500 oils honored worldwide). We began the culture and harvesting of the olives as laypeople. We soon caught the olive „bug“ and dove right into this diverse, challenging world. Now both of us are trained professional olive oil tasters. Christian is a member of the official Panel of the Province of Livorno.

Our goal – to run both hotel and agricultural production consistently as ecologically and organically as possible – has earned positive recognition time and time again.

Customer feedback

«We thoroughly enjoyed our stay with you, and the food was superb. I also felt quite nourished by the forest and all the natural surroundings. It did us good to come out of our room in the morning and be immediately in the midst of all that beauty. Many thanks to you for being the guardians of this wonderful place.»

«A vacation at your place is balm for the body and the soul! A pleasure for all the senses.»

«We'd like to thank you once again wholeheartedly. Every day we felt your friendliness, the joy you take in your larger purpose, and your dedication to agritourism, and we appreciate the huge amount of work that's behind it. You meet it all with bravura. Our holidays were wonderful; we truly enjoyed it.»

«Of course we are already homesick for our Riparbella! You do enormous work and you offer hospitality with style. Compliments to you all! We have already spoiled our own guests with Vermentino and Merlot or Sciamagna, and they have enjoyed it immensely. We wish you some relaxing moments of your own, looking out at the gorgeous sea view.»

«...now we've already been home for two weeks, back in our daily routine.»

«Not a day goes by that we don't think back on our stay at Riparbella. We liked it very much and we so much enjoyed the glorious days in the beautiful surroundings, the delicious food, the wonderful wine, and your loving hospitality. We're now trying to bring a little bit of the beautiful Tuscan atmosphere into our daily lives by preparing the recipes from your website, one after the other.»

«Yes, I think back fondly on my „Riparbella Days“, on the hospitable atmosphere, the fine meals, and country air! The wine keg has found its special place and of course reminds me often of that beautiful time. The delicious oil has been long since used up, and I've been thinking about placing an order for more.»

Podere Riparbella 4

Quality characteristics

Ecology implemented and lived without zealousness

Unique characteristics

Synergy between agriculture and tourism. Professional kitchen.

Wines and olive oils of distinction.

No pool, no Wi-Fi, no TV.

Relaxation as it should be -- Dolce far niente.

Integration

In spite of being foreigners – often looked upon with suspicion – we have been accepted by our neighbors. Podere Riparbella offers various autonomous employment opportunities for six individuals.

Surroundings

Tuscans in Florence and Siena have been known to make fun of the Maremma: the people there are the peasants of Tuscany! That may be the case, but it also has a great advantage: nature is largely intact and unspoiled, and the people have remained amiable and genuine.

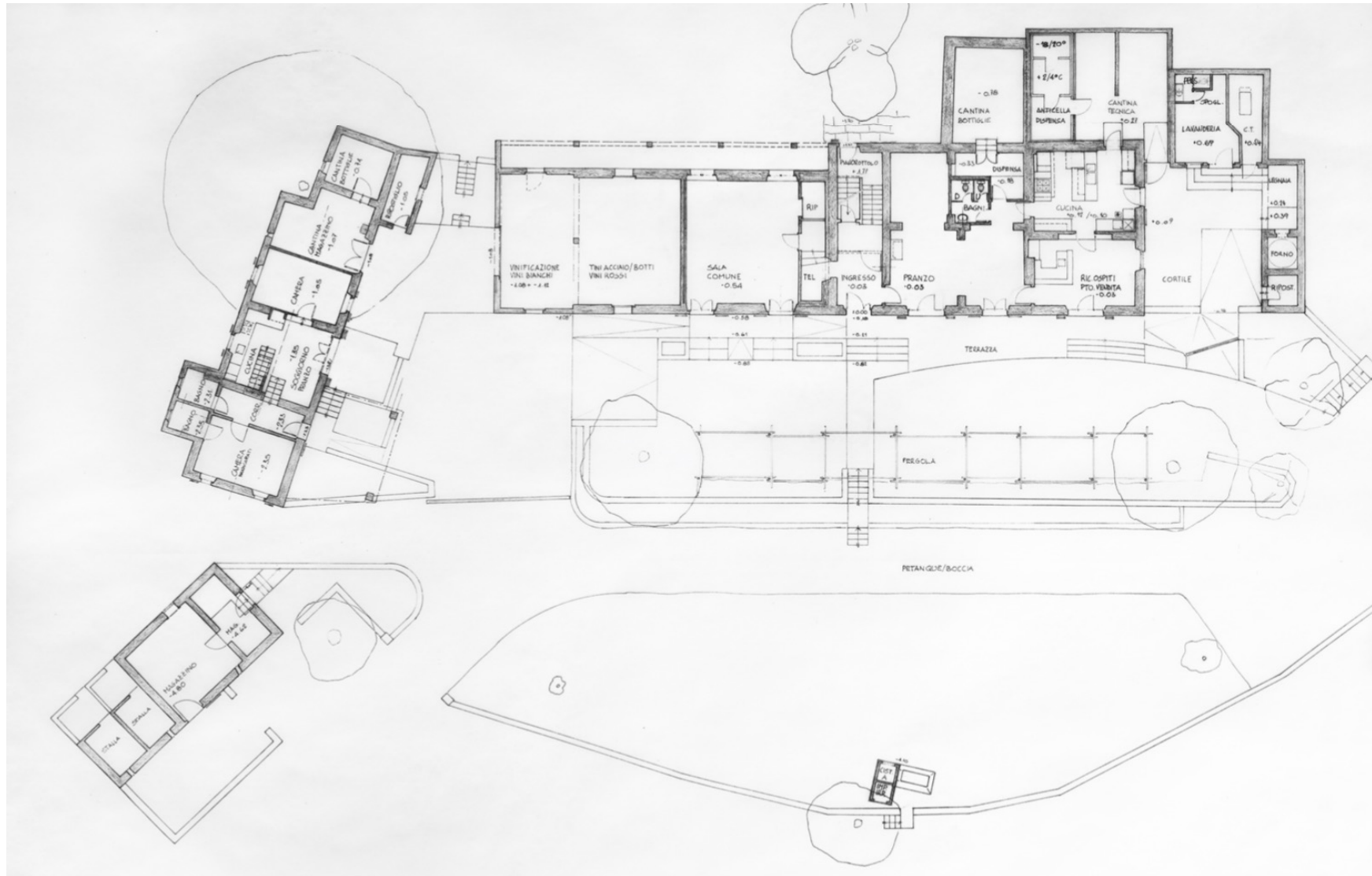
Reasons for leaving

We were both born in 1948, reason enough to look for new possibilities for Riparbella as well as for a new future for ourselves.

Wishes for the future

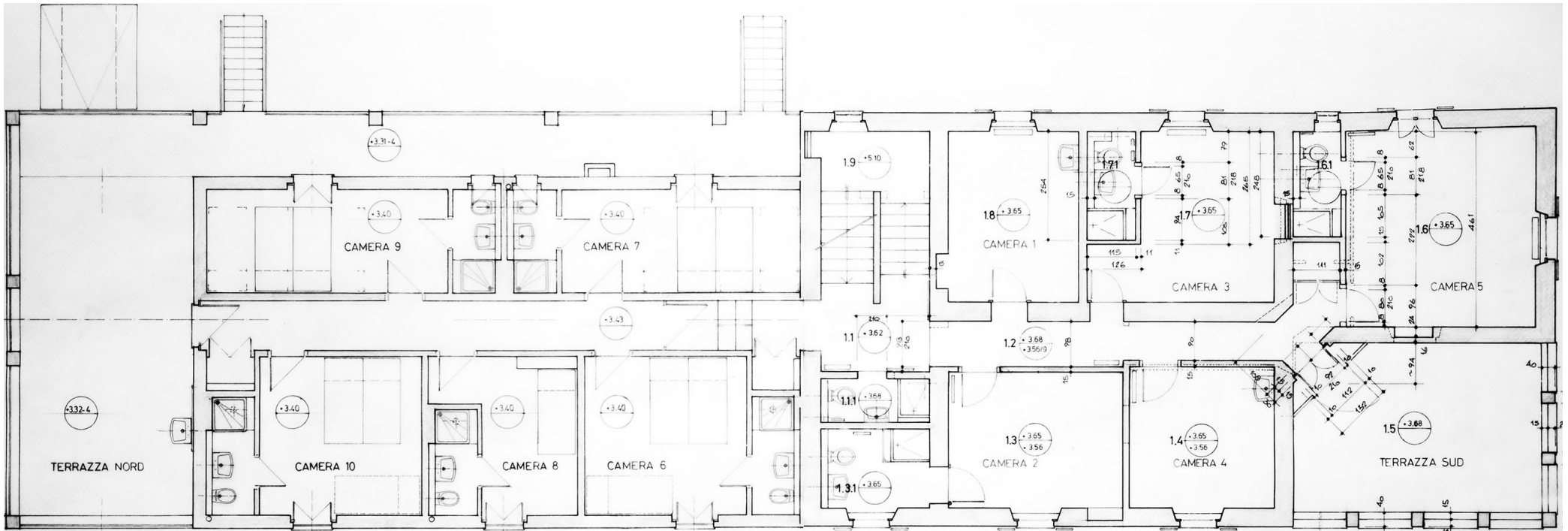
Of course it would be nice if our work here were continued. But we are very open to buyers who might want to realize another kind of project, for there are many possibilities. Our long-time coworkers would certainly be pleased if they could continue on at Riparbella. It would indeed be a great joy to all of us if respect for the ecology as a whole continued to thrive here.

Overview of the buildings

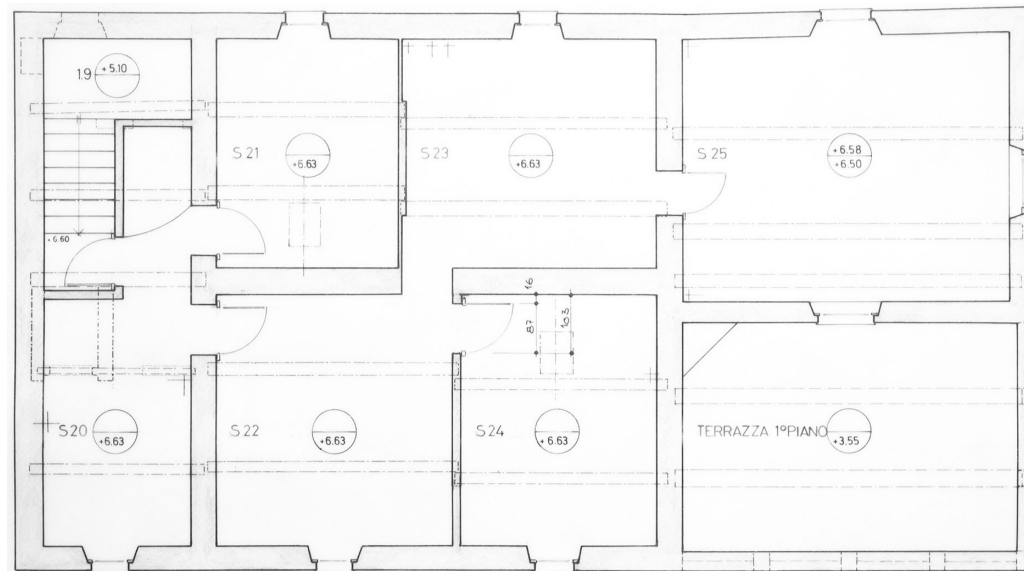


Podere Riparbella
I-58024 Massa Marittima +39 0566 91 55 57

Floorplan: Guest Quarters First Floor

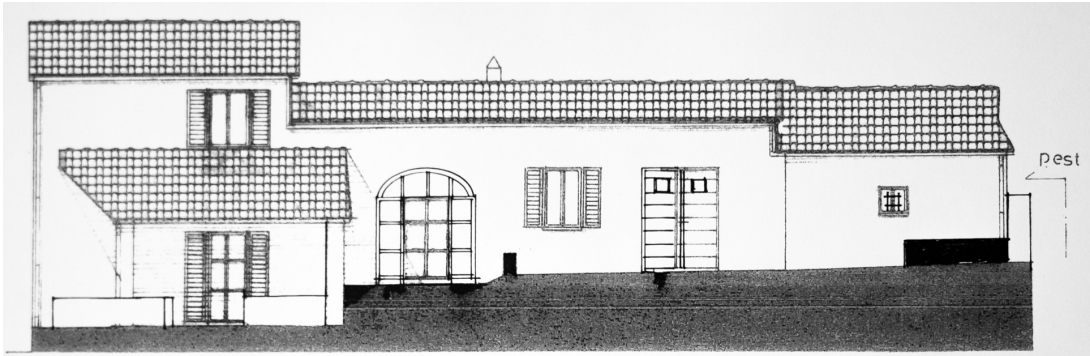


Floorplan: Guest Quarters Second Floor

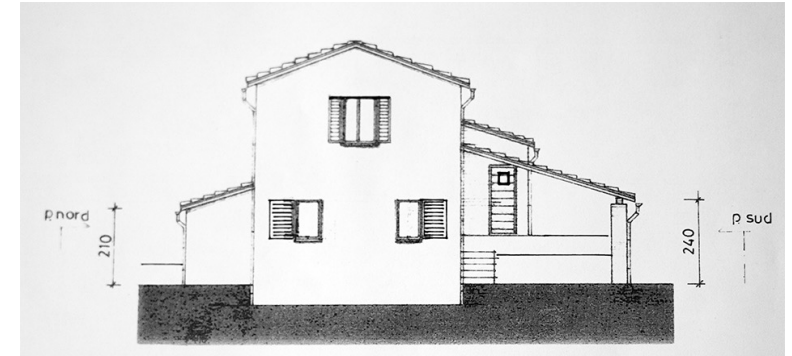


Elevations: Staff quarters

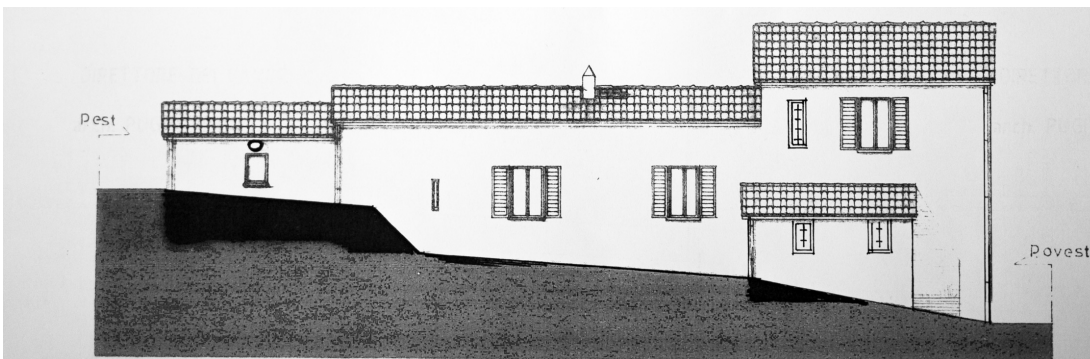
south



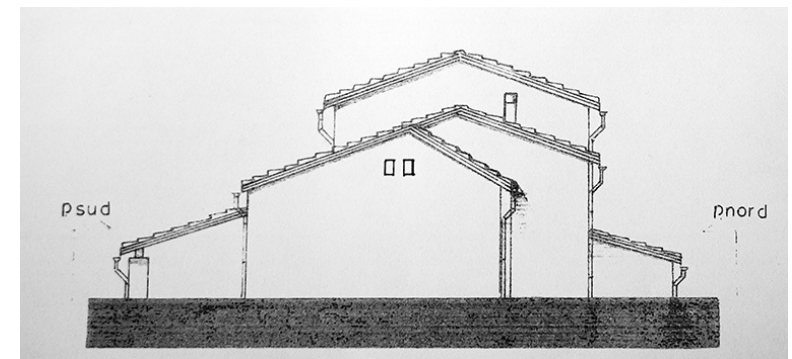
west



north

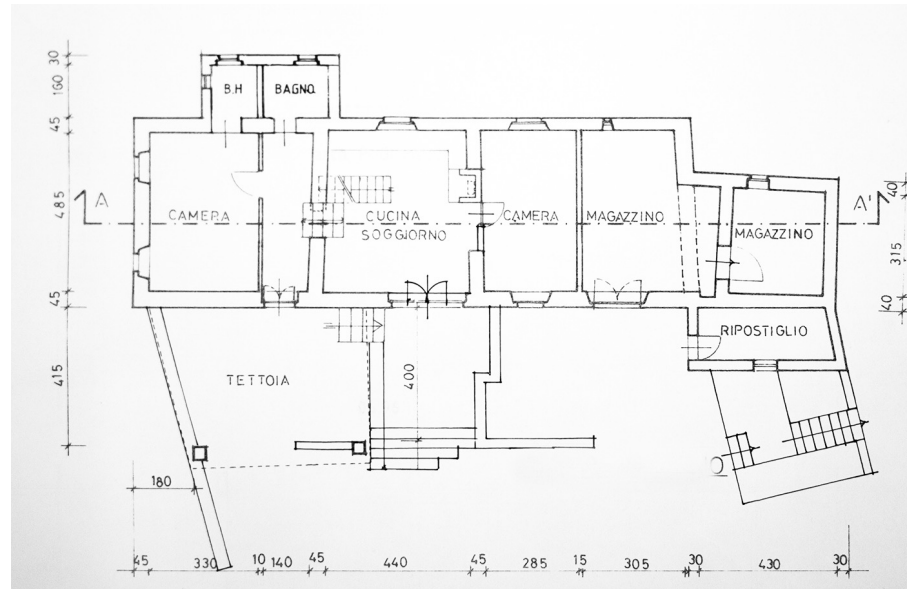


east

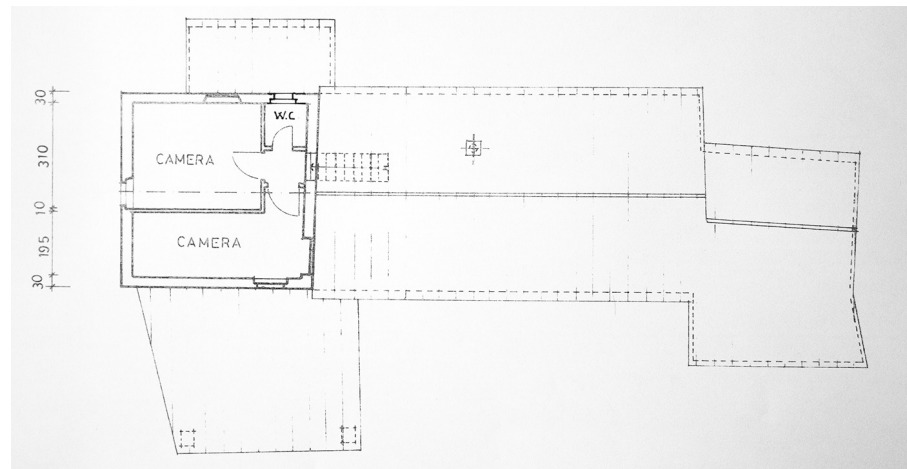


Floorplans: Staff quarters

Ground floor



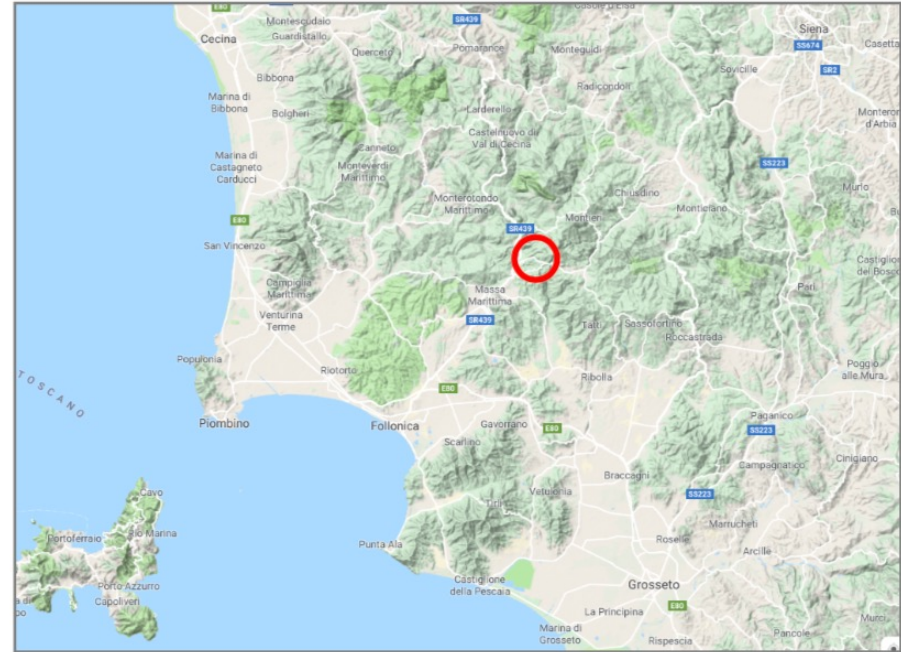
First upper floor



Location

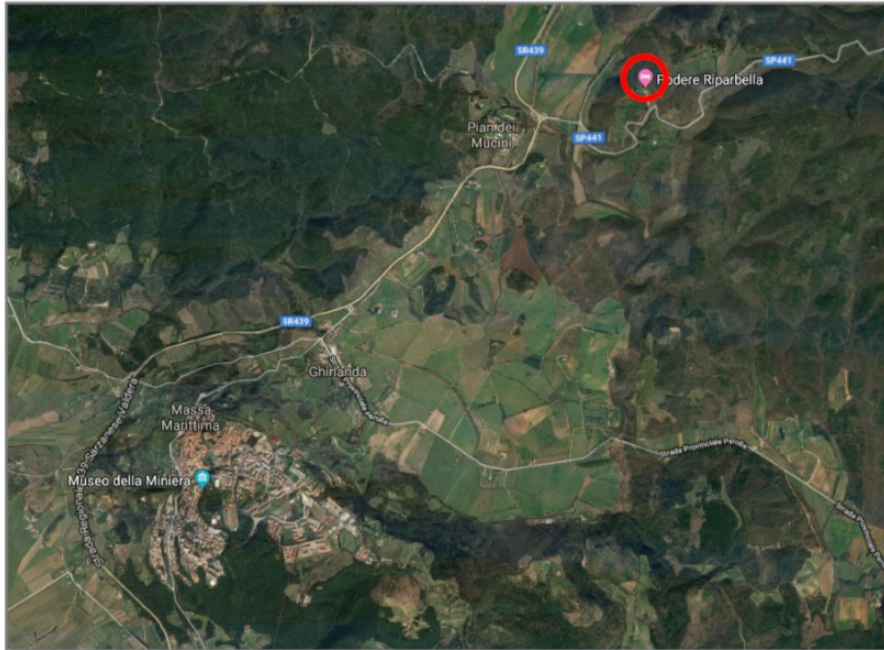


In Italy



In Tuscany

Immediate Area

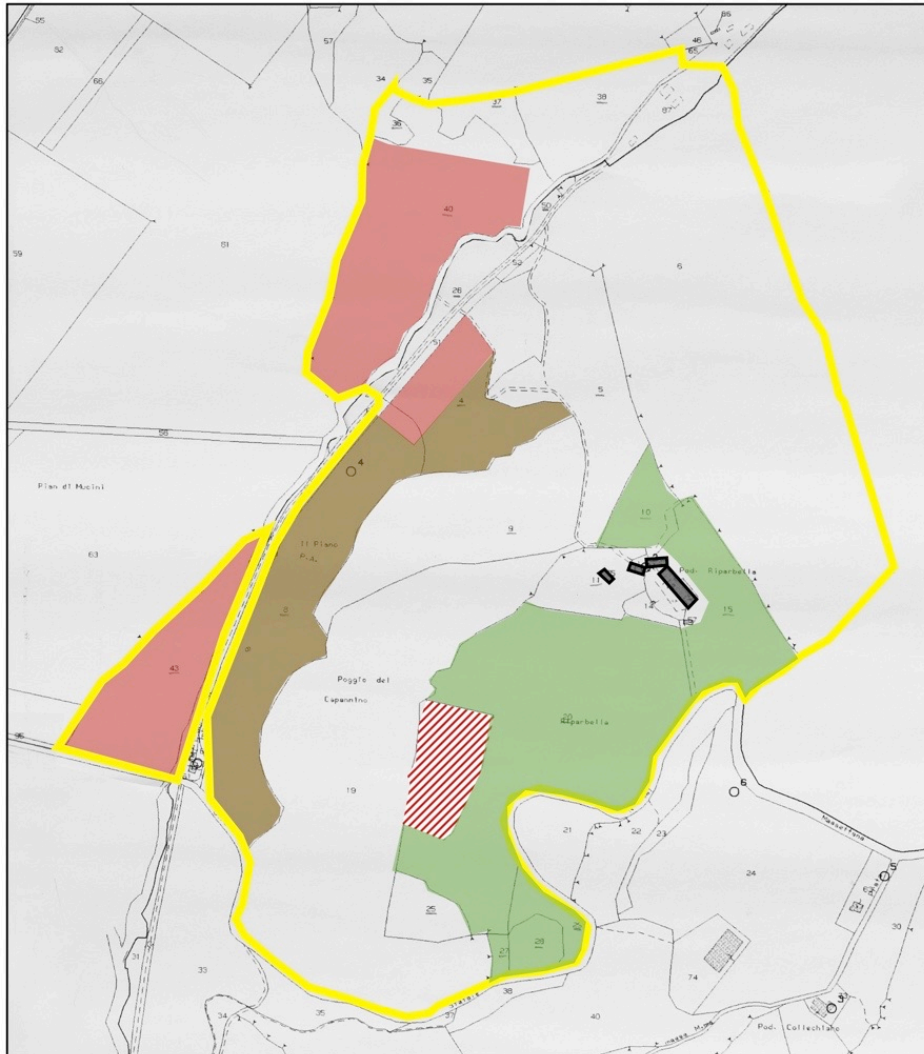


Satellite photo of Massa Marittima and neighboring Podere Riparbella



Aerial photo of Podere Riparbella

Land Registry Map



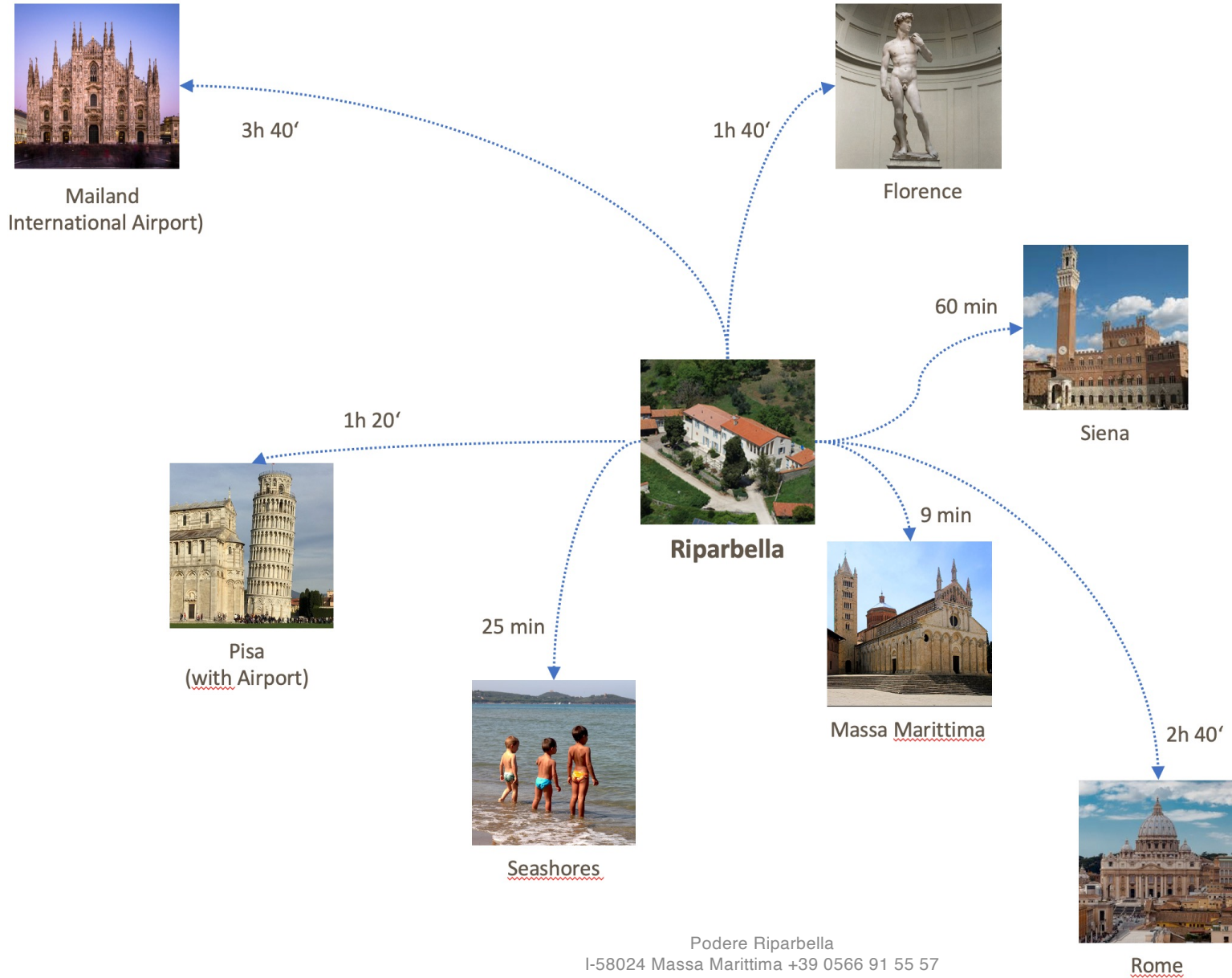
- 49,5 ha total area
- 4,2 ha vineyards
- 8,7 ha olive groves
- 400 m2 irrigated vegetable garden
- 100 m2 irrigated flowers garden

- Forest
- Arable land

Legend

- Yellow line: property boundary
- Olive area: Olive groves
- Red area: Vineyards
- Red/white area: Vineyard reserve
- Brown area: Farmland
- Uncolored areas: Forest or open spaces around the buildings

Riparbella Connections



Scenario 1: Acquisition by Private Individual

Starting Position

As a private individual you are looking for an attractive property in Tuscany with substantial surrounding acreage. Possibly you are looking for grape and olive plantations where you can also produce your own wine and/or oil. For your family, friends, or guests you need buildings with Italian charm and plenty of space offering a versatility of uses.

The property should be accessible to both national and international visitors yet offer a high level of privacy, quiet, and proximity to nature. A rich offering of art, culture, and places of interest should be within reach. You want the idyllic Mediterranean seacoast to be a short distance away.

Solution

Podere Riparbella is ideally suited to connoisseurs and lovers of the Italian lifestyle. Its structures were built and renovated according to Swiss standards. It can continue as a classic agritourism business or can be adapted to other, individual requirements. For agricultural use, building capacity could be increased by 30-40% -- for example for an expansion of the winery or the olive production infrastructure.

Since agricultural practices have followed consistent ecological standards for almost 30 years, a successor will profit from the high quality of the soil and the current organic designation.

«Riparbella» is a long-standing, carefully established brand in all three areas: Viniculture according to strict organic standards, olive oil production of multiple award-winning quality, and passionately prepared cuisine of the highest order.

Scenario 2: Corporate acquisition

Starting position

As a business, commercial association or organization, you are looking for a property outside of your usual sphere. It could be a training or conference center, a retreat for brainstorming, a place to foster customer loyalty or to recognize staff, a showroom for particular products or services, etc. The spot should be accessible and yet provide a high degree of privacy and discretion. Mediterranean climate, Italian charm, picturesque landscapes, and untouched nature will support your objectives.

For the accommodation and care of your target audience you need a small but fine facility that reflects your values. The surrounding area should offer cultural, scenic, historical, and touristic treasures, which can be useful to the achievement of your purpose.

Solution

Podere Riparbella represents a distinct contrast to the hectic lifestyle found elsewhere. The property is a world unto itself, where one can forget the everyday. Many and varied goals requiring this detachment can be met here simply and sustainably. The connection to nature and the land can be fostered, if and when it is appropriate.

The main building in its present form can accommodate 10-20 guests. Space for group activities is available. The adjacent buildings can be used to accommodate staff or for other purposes.

Agricultural areas can be included directly in the business concept or can be leased. The immediate and surrounding areas offer various possibilities as needed.

Scenario 3: Acquisition by a non-profit organization

Starting position

Profit is not foremost among your considerations. Perhaps you pursue philanthropic, social, and idealistic goals. Possible examples: Healthcare – addiction therapy – prevention – rehabilitation – training or retraining – professional integration. Conceivable also is a place for leisure activities or sport, for instance a venue for antique car buffs or cycling enthusiasts.

In order to realize your plans, you need a place with flexible potential away from the limitations of cities and towns. Because you value a natural, inspirational environment, an industrial area is out of the question. The property must nevertheless be accessible and located in attractive surroundings.

The existing agricultural business can be a direct or indirect part of your plan, or you may want to use the extensive grounds in another way – perhaps as gardens or a park.

Solution

Podere Riparbella was begun as an idealistic undertaking and has been operated for more than a quarter century to the delight of numerous guests and customers. The great positive energy invested here over many years is inseparably bound up in the property. An idealistic project can both benefit directly from this energy and continue to foster it.

The main building is suitable for the accommodation and hosting of about 20 people. The large common rooms can be used for diverse purposes. The extensive grounds offer nearly unlimited possibilities for outdoor activities.

If the connection to agriculture is preserved, the existing structures could be expanded by 30-40%.

Formulate your scenario and you will see that Podere Riparbella can either remain successful in its current form or thrive as something completely different.

Contact Information

This estate is a must-see!

Contact me if you desire further information
or to schedule a showing



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