



## Taking Tuscany by two wheels

BY ROBERT NORDVALL (ISSUE NO. 111/2009 / NOVEMBER 5, 2009)

### Riding the new bike path

There's a new 62-kilometer bike path running from Arezzo to Chiusi along the Canale Maestro della Chiana. Details about the path are available at [www.sentierodellabonifica.it](http://www.sentierodellabonifica.it) (in English and Italian), and a large brochure is available at the tourist information offices in Arezzo (adjacent to the train station; 057/5377678) and Chianciano Terme (Piazza Italia; 67 057/8671122).

The web information and brochure contain a detailed map of the path, the location of rest and water stops, as well as other points of interest. Places to rent a bicycle are also noted. What these sources cannot provide is the rider's first-hand account of the experience. So come with me as I take Tuscany by two wheels.

First, one can reach the north or south starting point of the Sentiero della Bonifica by train. In Chiusi the trail starts in town about a half-mile from the train station. In Arezzo, I had to ride about four miles from the train station, unfortunately on a busy road. When I rode this path, the folks at the tourist office could not suggest an alternative route to the starting point that would avoid the traffic.

Also, the map will show a straight line from start to end: not true. The path takes some twists and turns, but in general the route is well marked. On my ride, the only unmarked turn was over a bridge between km 34 and 33. There is marker for each km point on the path. When I wondered if I was still on the right path, I just rode at least one kilometer to the next marker. If I didn't find a marker, I turned back.

There is not much shade on the path. The water stops are not close together. Stopping to get food usually requires leaving the trail for a nearby town. So it is wise to take food and liquids (I suggest two bottles) with you on the bike, along with sun block cream.

The pay-off: there are 19 specific points of interest highlighted along way. Some of these are directly on the path: others involve slight detours. I also passed orchards, vineyards, olive trees, farm fields and even a solar energy farm. On the heights adjacent to the trail are lovely isolated homes and attractive hill towns. The scenery is not stunning, but it is quite pleasant and attractive.

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