

# Growing Up Tuscan

Born and raised in Pistoia, Italy, Alessio Giannuzzi grew up on his family's farm less than 50 kilometers from Florence. The oldest of four children, Alessio helped tend the family's olive trees, Sangiovese vineyards and countless farm animals. Young Alessio spent most summers in Puglia helping out at his uncle's gelateria, a young boy's dream summer job if ever there was one.

Alessio graduated from the prestigious Instituto Alberghiero di Montecatini Terme at age 17. After the required military service, he felt ready to be a chef – and his parents were first in line to hire him. The Giannuzzis opened a pizzeria on the Tuscan seaside in tiny Forte di Marmi where Alessio and his brother manned the ovens. During the off-season, Alessio honed his skills at the world-famous Grand Hotel La Pace in Montecatini. Vacationing Italian chefs who had worked in the United States quickly noticed this young talent. Alessio was recruited to Raffaello's, a tiny yet renowned Italian restaurant in Carmel-by-the-Sea, California.

After several years, Alessio moved on to The Covey at Quail Lodge, one of California's few Mobil Guide five-star resorts. While there, he became friends with the Managing Partner of Il Fornaio in Carmel. After a while Alessio became the Chef Partner.

"I love it here in Carmel," Alessio says. "It reminds me in so many ways of Tuscany – the beautiful land, the best fresh produce, the nearby ocean and its treasures. And with our wood-fired rotisserie and pizza ovens, I have the perfect kitchen to create authentic Tuscan food!"

In 2005 Alessio started a Tour of Tuscany where a group of Tourists traveled with him as a Host through 9 cities, dining in different restaurants everyday and visiting winery and tasting wines from Morellino, Chianti, Brunello to Supertuscan.

During their tour, the group stayed at Il Pianaccio, the Giannuzzis' bed & breakfast in Montale. Their completely restored 400-year-old farmhouse is situated on a 35-acre hillside estate, with 1,800 olive trees and a clear view of Florence. Elisa, Alessio's sister and chef of Il Pianaccio, cooks only with the produce, wine, olive oil and meats that



**Sergio Trinci and Elisa Giannuzzi**  
Alessio's uncle and sister at Il Pianaccio

come from the estate. Alessio frequently returns to his family's Agriturismo to "refresh his taste" of Tuscan cooking and flavor. **Mezzelune Cacio e Pere** is just one of several recipes that were tested and brought back from Italy during the 2005 Tuscan Tour.



**Alessio Giannuzzi**

Where I'm from, cooking begins with careful attention to the selection of raw ingredients of the best quality, then we prepare them with a minimum of sauces and seasoning. The epitome of this philosophy is Il Pollo Toscano. This wood-fired rotisserie chicken is so popular and so essentially Tuscan that we offer it every day.

"Tuscany was the cradle of the Renaissance, the home of Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, and the famous di Medici family. We Tuscans have always been passionate about the good things in life. Our food has a straight-from-the-garden flavor about it – the herbs are always fragrantly fresh, the salads often hand-picked wild greens. Here, you can eat well in most any little country trattoria."

"Olive oil is one of the ingredients of Italian cooking in which we specialize - Tuscan olives produce amazing amounts of high-quality oils. Tuscan farmers excel in the production of olive oil and Tuscany is generally considered to produce some of the finest olive oil in the world.

If you would like more information on Joining Alessio on one of his Tuscan Tour please visit:

[www.foodwineandfun.com](http://www.foodwineandfun.com)

Alessio is also a teacher of wood-fired oven. If you like to learn the ancient technique or purchasing a wood-fired oven imported from Tuscany, please visit:

[www.mugnaini.com](http://www.mugnaini.com)

Buon Appetito!



*Visit the Giannuzzis' Agriturismo*

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