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*Buon Anno from Rome! It's been seemingly forever since I've put out a newsletter. In fact, the last one I sent out – via US Mail – was in Spring of 2004. It's been more than four years since my companion Tom Lalor's untimely death. And while that terrible event will always be with me, I find I'm now looking ahead to my own future. Rome is my base now, though I miss New York and often contemplate a return. I will see. Without going into detail, I will say that actually living most of the time in Italy is far different from visiting as a tourist, no matter how frequently.*

*All future newsletters will be distributed via email. I'm an old-fashioned guy. I strongly prefer a paper newsletter that you can hold in your hand. But an electronic newsletter has too many advantages, and not just the obvious economic ones. For example, I particularly like being able to insert immediate clickable links to detailed information on the Vacanza Bella website. You can be apprised of interesting developments almost instantly. So please do keep Vacanza Bella on your own master email address book, and advise us immediately of any email address changes.*

*Daniel*

## Vacanza in the Veneto

We couldn't believe Paris when we were there in May of this year. It had been fully 15 years since we were last there. If there's a place that has been utterly ruined by mass tourism, Paris is it. Formerly charming areas like the Marais and the Ile St. Louis are now overrun. We stayed in the Bastille area, and the changes there, not for the better, are astounding. The next time we go to Paris, we'll confine ourselves entirely to 2-digit arrondissements and leave the rest to the hordes!

This is meant as a preliminary comment on Italy: Rome, where we spend most of our time now, was once able to absorb mass tourism. It can no longer do so. The Vatican is impossibly unpleasant, and so is the Spanish Steps area. Still, there are some areas in the center of

Rome – unlike Florence – which have remained beautiful and peaceful. We'll write about those in a future newsletter.

Italy as a whole is a magnet for mass tourism. But as in Rome, you can achieve some reasonable facsimile of genuineness if you try just a little. So if you've already got some experience in Italy under your belts – if you've “done” Florence, Rome, Tuscany, Amalfi – and now you want something more authentic, you might want to give serious consideration to the Veneto.

Surprisingly, the Veneto, with wonderful things to see and do [see our [sample itinerary](#)], is, with the obvious exception of Venice itself, remarkably pristine territory.

And Vacanza Bella has a variety of options from which to choose.

# Four Holiday Homes in the Veneto

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## Option 1: Villa Jacopo

[Villa Jacopo](#), a fantastic property in the heart of Palladio country, sleeps up to 8 persons in luxury.

If your reaction isn't "Wow!" to this image of Villa Jacopo as well as those on [our webpage](#) for Villa Jacopo, you're too jaded even for us! This is the wing of a genuine Villa Veneta, in the heart of Palladio country close to Venice, Padova, and Vicenza. There's tons to do here, and the resident owners make every possible effort to see that you enjoy yourselves thoroughly. Again, take a look at the [sample itinerary](#) for the Veneto and begin to imagine the possibilities.

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## Option 3: Regina

You're a family with children and want good access to a beach? Consider [Regina](#), a beautiful agricultural estate on below-sea-level reclaimed ground along the coast about an hour north of Venice.

Regina features several simple – but air-conditioned – accommodations for individual couples and a larger wing of the main villa for up to 5 to 6 persons. The estate has a gorgeous swimming pool and many mountain bikes to rent. And beautiful beaches are just a short drive away. This part of the Veneto attracts other European visitors. You're not going to find many North Americans in this part of the world! Regina offers a truly cosmopolitan experience in an unusual part of Italy.

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## Option 2: La Terrazza

What if you're just two of you? You don't want to rent a car? You want an in-town experience? Take a look at [La Terrazza](#), a flat with a **private terrace** in the heart of untouristy Verona, one of our favorite medium-sized cities in all Italy.

You're taking your maiden aunt or teenager? In fact, with a generously proportioned single bedroom in addition to the master – plus a second bath -- La Terrazza sleeps up to three persons in style. You can walk to everything Verona has to offer, and the bus to the train station stops directly in front of the building. What more can you ask for?

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## Option 4: Villa Vittoriana

[Villa Vittoriana](#) is an incredible estate less than 15 minutes' drive from Padova and a 30-minute train ride from Venice. If you're just a couple, or a family with children, or if you're multiple couples traveling together, Villa Vittoriana offers above all flexibility, from 2 persons to large parties of up to 14-16 persons. All bedrooms are air-conditioned. Plus there's a brand-new swimming pool so new it's not mentioned on our webpage for the property.

Isn't that gorgeous? The owners are particularly welcoming. It's a very special experience. See the webpage for [Villa Vittoriana](#) for the full story.

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# Umbria briefly

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*Villa Molinazzo*

[La Rosaccia](#) and [Villa Molinazzo](#), our two favorite properties ANYWHERE, now have air-conditioning in all bedrooms, as well as wireless internet capability throughout. Stefania and Mirella, the women who tend these properties, have proven to be extremely popular cooks. In addition, in the off-season you can enjoy these generously sized properties as a group of 2, 4, or 6 persons, at a significantly reduced cost – see the [Rosaccia Piccola](#) and [Molinazzo Mini](#) on our website.

And speaking of cooking, read on:

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## *The BEST pasta we ever ate*

When we ourselves were up at Villa Molinazzo over Christmas last year, we had occasion to dine at **Da Crispino**, a simple little family-style place in **Montecchio**, a gem of a village just a few miles from the house. About 8 tables set out behind the village coffee bar, in essence.

The whole meal was good, but the pasta course was truly outstanding. It was called “cappelli del prete,” or “priest’s hats,” shaped like the wide-brimmed, sombrero-like black hats you used to see priests wearing in Rome. These were cooked to al-dente perfection in a butter/wine sauce, with

the centers stuffed with a mixture of five different cheeses including Gorgonzola and Emmenthal, and topped with shavings of black truffles. Divine!

See you in 3 months or so. In the meantime, do browse our website, [www.vbella.com](http://www.vbella.com), for Italian travel ideas.

*Daniel*