



The bar at Villa Bordoni. Clockwise from above: The inn, in the Chianti countryside; olive groves on the property; the bar, which opens on to an Italian garden; valley views from the villa; a second-floor sitting area.

ITALY



Villa Bordoni

Restoring this bucolic manor in rural Tuscany was the work of knowing Scottish expats. Discovering the villa's exquisite restaurant, and a few shaded spots to unwind, was a job for T+L. *By VALERIE WATERHOUSE. Photographed by DAVID CICONI*



WHEN DAVID AND Catherine Gardner discovered a ruin at the end of a dusty track while driving through Chianti, they set about doing what any self-respecting, transplanted Scottish restaurateurs would: buying the place and transforming it into a charming wisteria-covered villa, with an intimate restaurant to showcase local wines and food—oh, and 10 rustic-chic guest rooms. Aiming for authenticity, the Gardners hired local interior designer Riccardo Barthel, who

juxtaposed historic features (wood-paneled ceilings; antique Vietri tiles in the bathrooms) with witty touches (curtain tassels made of straw; a wall hanging fashioned from a chicken coop). But it is the whimsically decorated restaurant, with walls featuring Scottish thistles and Tuscan vine leaves, that's the Gardners' pride and joy. Chef Francesco Finco whips up creative Italian dishes, such as squab with mashed celeriac and grape-must reduction, and traditional ones like *bistecca alla Fiorentina* with

Swiss chard picked from the villa's garden—all accompanied by liters of local Chianti. Using this inn merely as a stopover on a hectic Grand Italian Tour would be to miss out on its less obvious charms: swimming in the salt-water pool, reading for hours under the thatched pergolas, or wandering through the vineyards to the nearby village of Montefioralle before heading back for lunch or dinner. 31-32 Via San Cresci, Greve in Chianti; 39-055/884-0004; www.villabordoni.it; doubles from \$215. +