

JULIA BRADBURY on the power of positive thinking

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MAGAZINE

GET YOUR MOJO BACK!

By reviving childhood passions

THE LIFE SCHOOL

- Bounce back from failure
- Create mindful goals
- Heal your broken heart

12-PAGE DOSSIER

AGONY AUNT

Feel calm

Overcome family resentment

COMFORT EATING?

Why you can't eat the pain away

HOW TO HAVE STAYING POWER

SPEAK UP WITH CONFIDENCE

Use your voice, be assertive and change your world
What's stopping you from having your say?



48 HOURS

Under a Tuscan sky

Ellen Tout cycles, cooks and recharges on a glorious agricultural estate in the sun-drenched Italian countryside



TOP Explore more than 2,000 hectares of fertile agricultural land at Toscana Resort Castelfalfi

LEFT Relax and read by the pool or find a vantage point with splendid views

BELOW Truffle hunting with expert foragers, Bianca and her best pal, Matteo

Toes hovering above the ground, I gingerly lift one foot and then the other onto the pedals of the e-bike. I haven't been on a bicycle since childhood, but with the rolling Tuscan hills beckoning, here's to hoping you really never do forget!

Formerly a medieval farming village, Toscana Resort Castelfalfi is an oasis of sustainably managed land in the heart of Tuscany. Gripping the handlebars, I meander along cobbled streets and through ancient olive groves and vineyards. As my confidence grows, I whizz down undulating hills, passing restored cottages and fields of yellow sunflowers, before taking a break to taste the sweet tomatoes and aromatic herbs grown in the estate's organic gardens. That lunchtime, the head chef teaches me to prepare a traditional caponata – a sweet dish made with pine nuts and vegetables sourced that morning from the allotment. Under his tutelage, I carefully chop the produce and can't help but blush when he exclaims that I have excellent knife skills.

La bella vita

From every point on the estate, its namesake castle is visible. Towering over the landscape, its atmospheric basement was used as the set of the 2002 *Pinocchio* film. Beautifully renovated, it now houses a restaurant and terrace where, that evening, I enjoy an aperitivo. Something of an art form to the locals, we start with olives, bread and oil, all produced onsite, followed by delicious little reimaginings of Italian dishes.

There is also an art to the hunt for truffles – the 'white gold' of the Italian mountains. The following day, I join truffle hunter Matteo Giuliani and his dog, Bianca. In the woods, she runs and plays, snuffing through leaves and mud as she goes. Abruptly, she stops and barks. We rush over and Matteo digs to find our first truffle.

After a yoga class, quiet walks and time spent reading in the sun, I head home from my short break feeling refreshed. What's more, my confidence on two wheels is renewed and I am keen to get back on my bike.

Is Tuscany calling you? Toscana Resort Castelfalfi, a member of the Preferred Hotels & Resorts group, offers hotel stays, villas and apartments. Rates from £277 per room per night; castelfalfi.com. Always check government guidelines before travel