

The Coselli Collection villas, located in the enchanting countryside of Lucca, Tuscany, are meant to appeal to extremely well heeled guests who desire an elegant place for top notch entertainment, open spaces, fresh air amid lush greenery and privacy. *MillionaireAsia's* **Brian Yim** enjoyed the pleasures of staying in noble residences.



From left: Nichola, Andrea, Lenka and Luca

Photo Credit: Shaun Yim

Tantalising Tuscan Villas

It was not love at first sight. Years of neglect had left a cluster of medieval hamlets, renaissance villas and sprawling gardens located in the Province of Lucca, Tuscany, in a derelict state, overrun with weeds and undergrowth. "It looked like a jungle," recalls Andrea Fanucchi, the owner of the villas together with his Croatian born wife, Lenka Mudrazija.

Andrea and Lenka own Alival, one of Italy's largest milk and cheese companies and the largest producer of buffalo milk mozzarella. What started out as a search for a home for family and friends to enjoy led to the acquisition of a total of eight villas and investment in millions of euros to create their own paradise.

This later spawned into a new line of business for the family on the request of friends and business associates who wanted to continue to stay at the villas. The custodians of the Coselli villas are Luca and Nicola Fanucchi, the sons of Andrea and Lenka. The family now runs what is widely regarded as some of the finest and most luxurious villas in Tuscany.

It all started some 15 years ago in 1993, when friends alerted Andrea that a historically rich 17th century villa then owned by Leonora Gonzales, the daughter of a former president of Columbia was put up for sale. The villa was rarely used as the previous owners spent much of their time in South America.

Andrea saw a paradise in the making, decided to buy it and went about to engage teams of architects and craftsmen to painstakingly restore the villa to their former glory. He then went about acquiring the surrounding seven other villas to create what is now called "The Coselli Collection".

Lenka's enthusiasm and passion for the villas started to grow after the acquisition and restoration of the first villa, as she lent her personal touch and taste to transform the villa cluster into the finest in Italian luxury living in Tuscany. "Mommy really started to fall in love with the place," explained Luca as he recalled his mother's labour of love to acquire

antiques, furniture, handpicking the intricate tapestry and regal table settings and crockery.

The Coselli Collection villas are meant to appeal to extremely well heeled guests who desire an elegant place for top notch entertainment, open spaces, fresh air amid lush greenery, privacy and who enjoy waking up in the morning to the sounds of birds chirping and clear water from the flowing stream running beside the villas. Your meals are expertly prepared to perfection by award winning chef, Valentino Pestritto and his assistant, Larissa Laudat.

While most of its guests come from America and Europe, an increasing number of Asians are choosing to experience staying in luxury Italian villas. Its recent guests include a young real estate developer from China and two Malaysian princes and their extended families.

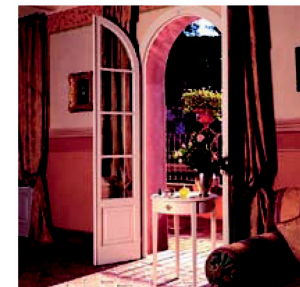
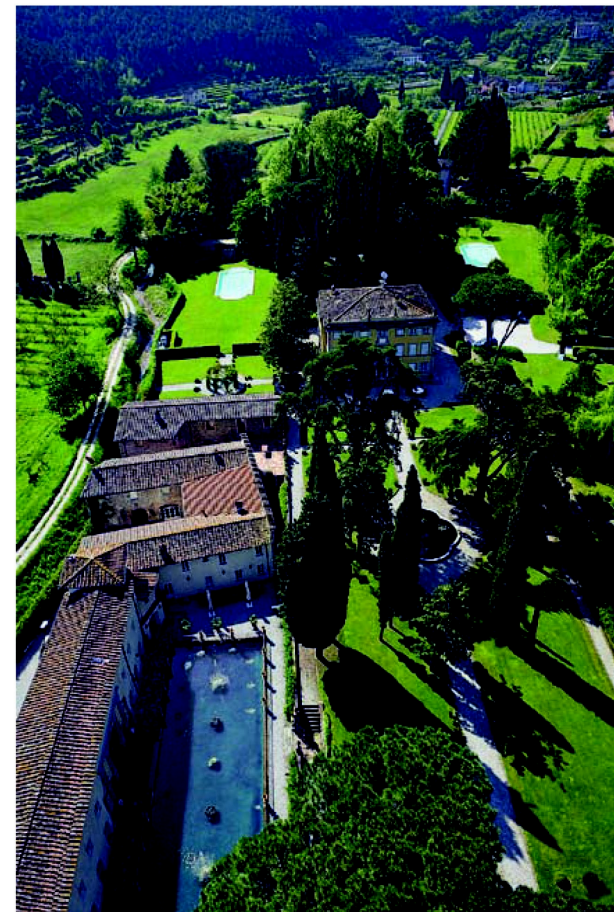
In terms of location, the Coselli Collection villas are right at the heart of Tuscany, a mere 20 minutes drive to Pisa, 45 minutes to Florence and 20 minutes to the beach.

Take Your Pick Of Exclusive Villas

Borgo Bernardini

This is one of the most charming and impressive villas in the entire Coselli Collection, which my family and I experienced and relished. We had the entire 12-bedroom mansion with a grand styled banquet hall complete with low lying crystal chandeliers, billiard room, library wine cellar, formal living room, butler and maid service, huge ornamental fountains and gardens with weeping willows and a floodlit swimming pool, to ourselves. It was truly a charmed existence in an exquisite 17th century estate that can easily accommodate up to 24 guests.

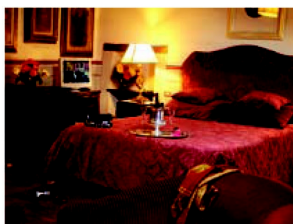
Borgo Bernardini was once the hunting lodge retreat of Count



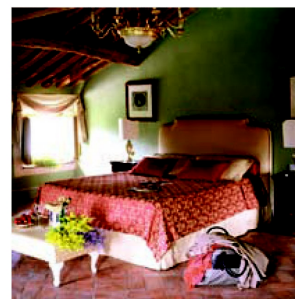
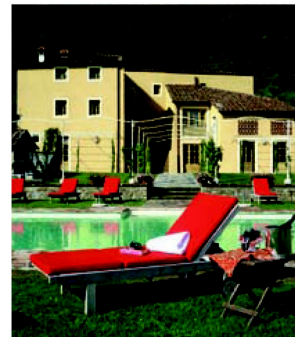
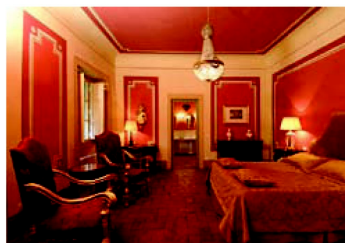
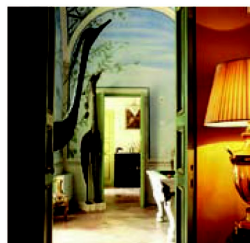
Cosimo Bernardini of Lucca who would spend his weekends in the country. The Bernardini family were nobles and aristocrats from the 14th to the 18th century in the Republic of Lucca.

Villa Lenka

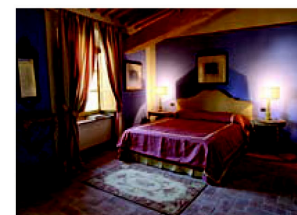
Built in 1624, Villa Lenka was also once the summer residence to Count Cosimo Bernardini whose family owned several palazzo's in the city centre as well as many villas in the hills that surround the city. Villa Lenka houses seven large double bedrooms (one king bed, three queen beds and three twin beds) each with en-suite bath/shower-rooms, an aristocratic living room with hi-fi, cinema system, satellite TV, DVD, cosy TV lounge with fireplace, four kitchens (one on each floor) and ancient wood burning oven in the cellars. The main kitchen on the ground floor is fully equipped Tuscan style – a large, formal dining room and a separate breakfast room, library, wine cellar, card room and billiard room, swimming pool and sprawling Italian style gardens with two small lakes and several ponds and fountains.

**Villa Controni**

Villa Controni was built as the summer residence of the Controni family who were noble merchants in the 17th century. In 1692 Carlo Controni invited Prince Frederick of Denmark and Norway as a guest whilst he was visiting Lucca during his Grand Tour of Italy. For many years the fertile estate which provided housing for workers, a chapel, stables and an olive oil press, was used for the cultivation of rare flowers. Villa Controni has 11 large and spacious double bedrooms with en-suite bathrooms (one of which can be either queen or twin); grand banquet hall; elegant drawing room with fireplace; video library, billiard room, fully equipped Tuscan style kitchen, wine cellar and wine tasting room, a gymnasium, swimming pool, gardens with fountain, camellia and azalea trees and even a private chapel available for weddings and other special celebrations.

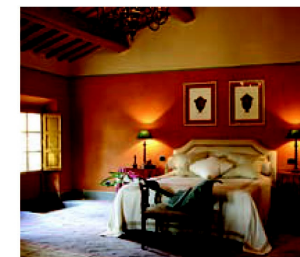
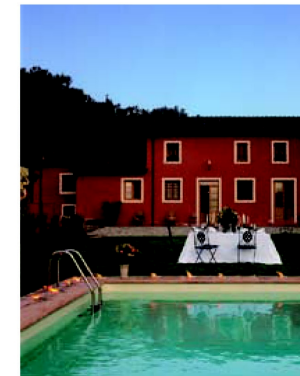
**Villa Del Fattore**

The charming Villa del Fattore was added to the Controni estate in the 19th century as the family became renowned as a wine and olive oil producer shipping to Italian descendants in South America and Argentina. Villa Del Fattore includes Seven spacious double bedrooms (one of which can either be queen or twin) and one single bedroom each with en-suite bath/shower-rooms, one single and three double bedrooms in the cottage for larger groups of up to 20 guests, banquet hall, two housekeepers for daily maid service, Al fresco dining patio, fully equipped Tuscan style kitchen, outdoor swimming pool and in the cottage a fully equipped kitchen, dining room, sun lounge with satellite TV.

**Casa Matteucci**

Casa Matteucci holds a wealth of history, tradition and culture within its walls as it was once home to Felice Matteucci (1808 –1887) who, in the summer of 1854, invented the first stroke engine, a prototype to the modern day motor car, in his on-site workshop.

Casa Matteucci has six sunny and spacious double bedrooms each with en-suite bath/shower-rooms, banquet hall and fully equipped Tuscan style kitchen, lounge with satellite TV, DVD and fireplace and a large swimming pool.

**Villa IL Frantoio**

Olives have been collected from the terraced hillsides that surround IL Frantoio for centuries. Dating back to the 16th century as the private press for the Controni family who resided in the villa during the summer months, the frantoio was fully functional until 1997 collecting olives from the villagers of Vorno and pressing some of the best olive oil that Lucca has to offer.

During its restoration, large and ancient terracotta vases were found embedded in the cellars that at one time would have held the freshly pressed oil which was a valuable and prized commodity. Guests staying at Villa IL Frantoio can enjoy four cosy double bedrooms each with en-suite bathrooms, Living room with satellite TV, fully quipped kitchen and swimming pool. ■

SPECIAL VILLA PROMOTION FOR MILLIONAIREASIA READERS

For enquiries, please contact: info@millionaireasia.com