

preplanned dinner. While in route to our dinner in *Barbaso* we stopped at the **Bottega el Grinolino** in the town of *Portacomaro*.

Bottega el Grinolino is a quaint bottega located in a nice restaurant. We toured their wonderful extensive wine cellar, tasted several varieties of wine and were treated to a wonderfully warm respite from a busy day. Our hosts at this stop were both the owner of the restaurant and a local young woman who represented the local wine producers association.

The day ended for us at a wonderful Agriturismo called **Cascinadimaggio** located in the village of *Barbaso*, just a few miles from our Bed and Breakfast in *Moncucco*. This Agriturismo is also a Bed and Breakfast as well as a working farm and winery. Our host for the evening, **Mr. Mario Casalegno**, prepared, cooked, as well as served our truly magnificent dinner. Our dinner was truly a memorable way to end our first full day in Piedmont.

The following morning we had once again a fantastic breakfast and discussed the day's itinerary with our gracious hosts. As this was our last day, Francesco had a full day planned for us with our final destination at the end of the day returning to Turin to our hotel prior to leaving the following morning for Munich.

Our day began with our driving to the village of *Sommarica Perno* to meet "Piero" a friend of Francesco's who was to personally guide us to *Pocapaglia* and the area of *San Sebastiano* where we hiked a trail to see the beautiful "rocche" and geologic marvels of the countryside. After our hike we drove to the town of *Serralunga d' Alba*. This beautiful town is situated on a hilltop with the surrounding hillsides completely covered by vineyards as far as the eye can see. Here we dined at a wonderful restaurant called **Cascina Schiavenza**. This trattoria had a wonderful wine cellar that was open to the public. Near the restaurant were the **Grinzane Castle**, and an abundance of very old churches to tour. The area was astoundingly beautiful with the spring flowers in full bloom.

We departed this area and toured the lush countryside, stopping at landmarks in the town of *Barolo* before arriving in the town of *Monforte d' Alba* where our hosts had arranged a private tour of the *Fantino* family winery. This winery produces a fantastic Barolo wine. We toured their private cellars as well as the bottling and labeling facilities. A spectacular tasting of many of the wines this family vineyard produces followed our tour. As the day was nearing its end, we reluctantly drove back to *Turin* to spend the night prior to departing on the train for Munich the following morning.

There are several suggestions I would like to make if you plan to explore the Piedmont Region. First, I recommend planning well in advance beginning with some research on the Internet. We sent e-mails to many of the wine cooperatives and Government agencies in the Piedmont area asking for brochures. The information we received was invaluable and free! Second, spend the money on some good detailed road maps. We used several regional maps produced by "Touring Club Italiano" and found them at a specialty map supplier in the States. While the main highways are well marked, without the detailed regional maps we had, we would have had serious problems driving thru the countryside. Third, we found it impossible to use a pay phone with cash. Purchase a local phone card, even if you think you will never use it. Fourth, most of the Agriturismo's only deal in cash, be prepared. Five, almost all businesses in the smaller villages are closed from noon to two, plan accordingly. Lastly, rely on the experience of your Bed and Breakfast hosts for local dining and off the beaten path touring. Our hosts, Ute and Francesco at **Cascina Le Roasine** were attentive to every detail and made our trip to the Piedmont area a truly memorable experience.

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