



Flying HIGH IN Tuscany

What could be more romantic than a gentle balloon ride over the rolling hills of Tuscany? Or more exhilarating and exciting?

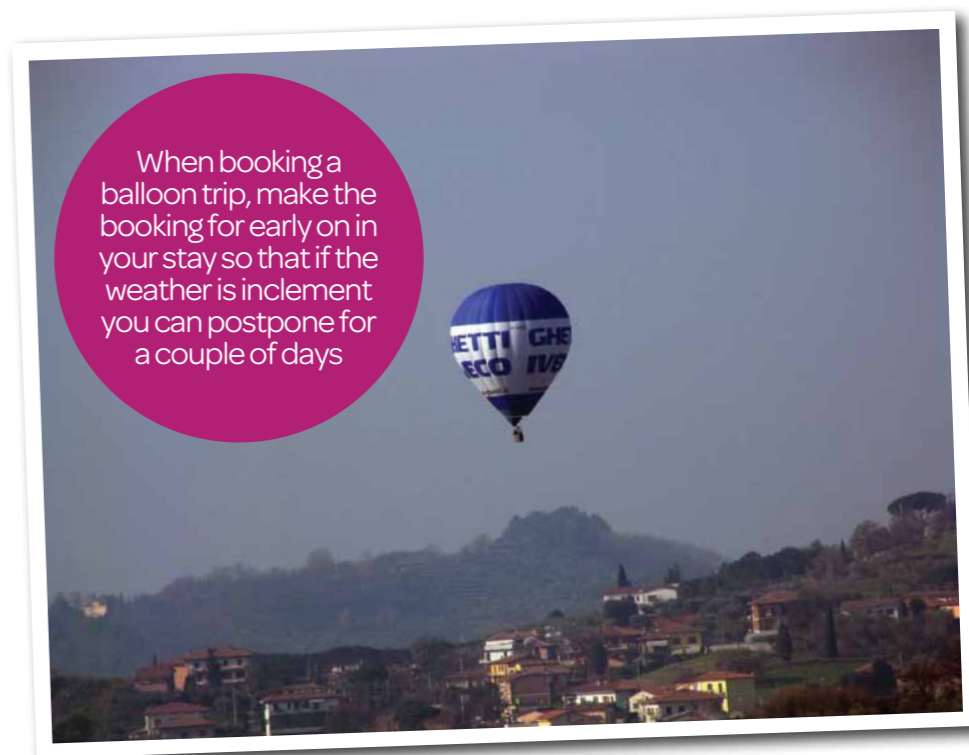


One man brought ballooning to Tuscany and his name is Massimo Raffanti. Initial research disclosed that he is a journalist and balloon enthusiast who initiated the balloon club just outside Lucca (based at the tiny airstrip, Tassignano).

Upon meeting Massimo, you find that this wonderfully friendly and vital man has so many stories and adventures to tell that it will require a good few hours and more pages here than I

have to recount them all. In brief, Massimo is a pioneering extreme sportsman who was one of the first in Tuscany to introduce skydiving, parascending, white water canoeing and extreme skiing – all about 30 years ago before this scene became as massively popular as it is today. Massimo made it happen for us in Tuscany and continues to promote these sports in Tuscany.

As for ballooning, he says that after his son was born he had to calm things down a bit and take



When booking a balloon trip, make the booking for early on in your stay so that if the weather is inclement you can postpone for a couple of days

fewer risks so he started ballooning rather than throwing himself off cliffs!

Today, he offers some of the most romantic, scenic and thrilling trips that you can take in Tuscany (and that is saying something, for Tuscany is chock full of romance and beauty – though perhaps the thrills are only to be found off the beaten path).

Why does Massimo love ballooning so much? “To live without boundaries, to be free, that is what the sky offers you.” And freedom you certainly will have if you take a balloon ride with him. You set off from just outside Lucca early in the morning when the light is sublime and the world is quiet. The scenery is unforgettable.

Steering the balloon is done by rising and descending into different air drafts, which are normally travelling in different directions. However, you are somewhat at the mercy of the winds so your trip may take you anywhere in this lovely countryside. Massimo finds a picturesque place to set down and you stop for a sublime lunch somewhere secret and lovely. Then the backup team arrives (after having followed your progress with a high tech sat nav tracer) to pick you and the equipment up and deliver you back home.

This really is a trip of a lifetime. If you do one very special thing during your stay in Italy, make this it – you won't regret it.

Book your balloon trip online at www.luccaballoonclub.it



Massimo offers ballooning holidays with accommodation included.

email him for more details at: **maximo87@alice.it** or visit his website at: **www.coloritoscani.it**