

Hello Woofer !

It's always difficult to explain how we live, what we do and how our place looks and feels like to people who have never been to our farm and it needs a bit of description.

Let's try:

### **About us and the farm:**

We live 1km south of Roccatederighi in the hills with a beautiful view over the tuscan Maremma towards the sea. We live together with gunthers parents on the farm, but have two households. gunthers mother has alzheimer and we take care of her. The parents have a bigger house and Nicole and Gunther two small little single room houses, but mostly we live outside.

We work about 9 hectares of diversified land. We have olives, vines, woodland, fruit trees, chestnuts, almonds, vegetables, herbs, rabbits, chickens, ducks, bees, a dog and cats. We follow the ideas of biodynamic farming. We do the dynamisation and spraying and preparing of compost. We don't burn the cuttings but shredder them for mulch. We try to preserve the natural surrounding and "wildness" of the place.

We are not a producing farm, all we do is for ourselves: selfsufficiency or exchange with friends. We make really high quality olive oil and a little wine.

We also have a mechanics-, woodwork- and blacksmith-workshop:

We try - and do - as much as possible ourselves: grow our own food, carry out building works, repairs, solar off grid electricity, water, home and unschooling.

During the summer we live completely outside. We have an outdoor kitchen and livingroom under the trees. There is a shower outside but there is also a simple, spartan bathroom with shower in parents house.

Often we host guests and friends and wwoofers, trainees and international volunteers.

We eat mostly vegetarian, if possible our own stuff, otherwise if possible organic. We also like meat, but its no problem to avoid it. We are used to cook vegetarian or vegan. We can't spend too much money on food, but we like to cook and eat.

We speak German, Italian, Swiss German, English and a little French.

To prevent some misunderstanding:

Someone is looking for italian lifestyle: We are not italian. We wont say we are or not, of any kind of nationality but we are not a typical italian family. We mostly speak german at our farm. But also italian, french and english with many friends. Our culture is mixed, Gunther grew up here. We eat good, genuine and local food but not typical italian cuisine as in the books. (absolutely not german either) We don't want to scare anybody, just wanted to say, we are not right out of an italian movie.

For us wwoof is an exchange of lives, powers, different cultures, experiences languages, and ideas.

You and us are free members of the same cultural association wwoof. It is not a buissiness as: You work for us and we give you food and bed.

So we don't expect you to work a certain amount of hours. The goal is to get something done, keep the farm running and work togheter. We are not really strict at all.

Enthusiasm and enjoyment should also be a leading force. The important thing is to find a way of staying together.

We work on an idea and a project which is our land and life and you can be and live and share it with us for some time. For sure alternative landlife is also hard life for us where our existence depends on. If you are in to it, it will be a big help.

We live together. We work together. We cook and clean up together. We eat and drink and party together.

### **Work:**

January: could be cold, sometimes rainy, but It's usually a beautiful season here. Main work: cutting trees, cutting wood for next year, bringing it under the roof, winery pruning and maintenance, repair and building of wine pergolas and fence posts, repair fences. Cleaning land. If it rains some work in the workshop, or digging for the part still under construction.

February, March, April: sometimes cold, often rainy, work as above and starting some work in the fields and vegetable garden: preparing, garlic, onions, potatoes planting, wine cutting, olive trees cutting and cleaning. Making compost piles and prepare them biodynamically. Water irrigation system building, cleaning land, beginning of vegetable garden work.

May, June, July: beginning of beautiful season, heat sometimes and sometimes short rains, full vegetable garden work, working in winery. Artichock harvest and processing, (3 days work full time, then 2 days off). Cherry harvest and making jams and marmelades. Garlic and onion harvest.

July, August, September: full summer heat, working mostly in the early morning and late evening. Siesta after lunch. Watering the garden. Long nights after dinner. Potatoes harvest, blackberries, apples, plums, peaches... making jams and marmalades, juice, dry fruits. Tomatoes harvest and processing, (3 days work full time, then 2 days off),

October: Garlic, planting. Wine harvest (only one day, work all day, big lunch and some days of preparing before and after) fermentation process controlling... Cleaning land under the olive trees, preparing for harvest (end of month). Making compost.

end of October November, (December): Olive harvest! It's a nice and calm work in the oliveyards. We don't work with machines. We try to start as soon as humidity permits (usually between 8 and 10am and if It's raining, as soon as it stops and dries. We have good lunches together under the trees and continue picking until almost darkness. Then we take the tractor to bring up the olives to the farm, clean them from the leaves, weigh and store them. The big goal is to make 400kg as soon as possible, best in 2 days for high oil quality. Next day in the morning we go to the oil mill, taste the new green oil and take the rest of the day off. If it rains, days are off. This is our rhythm, if you do not feel like following it. We can talk about it.

December: wood work, some lumbering, land cleaning.

All year: some work we have wanted to do for a long time but have never had the time: building a glass house for earlier and later vegetables and a winter bath tub. Cutting out an old VWBus from the blackberry bushes and fixing the roof and furniture. (it was a nice accommodation place some years ago and could become it again). Cleaning some land long time abandoned. Making fire wood. Rebuilding old natural stone walls in the terraces.

And always: playing with Olmo: staying with the kids is a big help and is considered as work. (two days a week there are more of them due to our unschooling project).

Cooking... doing kitchen and dishes... Usually there is you and we but sometimes there are other people: neighbors, friends, kids and parents of the unschooling project, parties... we lay out the table for everyone coming. And sometimes we become up to 24 people. So also kitchen work can be considered as working time.

Anyway, helping all around is always welcome.

Professional work: we also look for: plumbing: building hot water solar system, electrician: building fotovoltaik system. motor mechanic: dismantling landrover engine, replace engine.

That's all what gets on my mind right now, there will for sure be something to do for you. And we can talk about what you would like best or prefer.

### **Typical day:**

It depends on many things: we adapt to heat or rain, personal preferences, agricultural needs, parties, and work to be done.

In winter, when we are inside our little single room, usually we have a small breakfast together around 8am. And work can be done all through the day. Lunch is around 12:30pm, dinner between 6 and 7pm.

Summer is very hot. We have breakfast at 9am. Whoever is up earlier can work before and after breakfast, but the best working hours are early in the morning. Every one has different rhythms. (Gunther works from 6am to 1pm). Nicole and Olmo get up later. Lunch is about 1pm. Then siesta. Some garden work later in the evening. Dinner when it becomes dark around 8-9 pm. Usually you can choose if you prefer to work only in the morning or some in the morning plus some in the evening or all day with us.

Workingdays during the week change as needed.

Sometimes you will work with gunther, sometimes with nicole or sometimes all together. Sometimes there will be tasks you may do on your own and sometimes gunther is away for metalsculpture or theatre technics work.

Often after dinner we sit around the table or the bonfire with some good wine, have talks or listen someone playing guitar.

### **Accommodation:**

We have a room with a loft bed for two people (+ single bed if needed on the floor) and a room with a loft bed for two or three people (+ two mattresses on the floor if needed) (works well for families). Both in parents' house. And we have a room with two single beds at the back of the parents' house. All have independent entrances. All of the rooms are not empty guest rooms, some of our stuff is in there too.

There is one common spartan bathroom for all of us. There is also an outdoor shower and a compost toilet.

During the summer you can build up tents in the field or wood, there's plenty of space and beautiful spots and tent sites outside.

You don't need to bring bedclothes and towels if you are without a car.

We don't have grid electricity. We produce our own electric energy with solarpanels. Availability depends on the weather conditions.

There is no electricity (220VAC) in the rooms (but electric light 12VDC). When it rains for several days we have to use it very consciously. If you need to recharge your cellphone or pc, there is a 220VAC plug in the winterkitchen and in the workshop to be used in accordance with us and the sun, usually no problem in summertime.

Our landline phone can be used for brief calls. It's free to european landlines but not to cellphones.

It is possible to use free internet on wlan/WIFI in a small area or via ethernet cable in the winterkitchen on your own device. You cannot use ours.

Sometimes we do a washing machine (when the generator in the workshop is running) but normally clothes must be washed by hand.

Water is precious, we try not to waste it. Hot water in bathroom is for conscious use.

Due to past experiences we decided that pets are not allowed!

No smoking in house!

### **Roccatederighi**

Is a little village up the hill (1km, 15 min walk) there are all sorts of shops, services, restaurants, bars, bank, cash machine. There is also a bike hire but we live in the hills, cycling is sport. Roccatederighi has a beautiful medieval center. There is an old ruine of a medieval castle on top of the hill (40 min walk) and there are many historical sites around.

There is a little lake 20min walk down (up it takes longer) and a bigger one and a little river 30min by car.

Grosseto is 45km away. Beach 60 km. (We have a beautiful view all over the maremma towards the sea). Hot springs at Petriolo 40km. Hot springs Saturnia 60km. Siena 60km. Pisa 100km. Firenze 120 km. Roma 180 km.

Best way to move is by car. But there is a bus stop in the village with some busses to and from Grosseto where there is a bigger bus and railway station. There is a bus to Siena or Florence and one from Piombino (ferries to Elba).

When you arrive for the first time and when you leave, it might be possible for us to pick you up and drive you back to Grosseto or Montepescali railway station if it's not possible to get the bus.

### **Booking**

Minimum stay is two weeks. We have experienced that longer stays are better for both. You should be interested in farmwork, landlive, alternative living. All this takes some time. Farmhopping is also funny, but something different than wwoofing. If you're looking for a short stay you would better come for two or three days and be our guest. You would be welcome as well.

When you have booked please consider that we are counting on you as a guest and a worker and that we may have to reject other requests. So if you change your mind for whatever reason please tell us immediatly.

Tell us what period you would like to come, and we will see if we can arrange it.

In the meantime please tell us somethig about you:

**Some questions to you:**

(if you haven't already told us)

What are you looking for? holidays? farming? travelling? learning?

What are your expectations?

How many farms did you send your application to?

What are you usually doing when you're not woofing and traveling?

How old are you?

When and how long would you like to stay?

Are you a wwoof italia member? name on card and/or number ?

(please note: if you are two people you need two numbers)

Are you coming by car or train/bus, hitch hiking?

You are not afraid of mosquitos? (we have lots of them in summer)

You are not afraid of summer sun and heat? (only summer)

You are not afraid of Olmo (8 years old boy) and other kids?

You are not afraid of nude people? (in summer someone might shower outside)

You are not afraid of dogs and cats (my parents have one, also in the house, but not in the rooms)?

Do you have any food allergies, special needs, or preferences? (vegan, vegetarian)

So long.

Looking forward to hearing from you soon!

Gunther and Nicole

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