

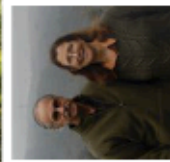
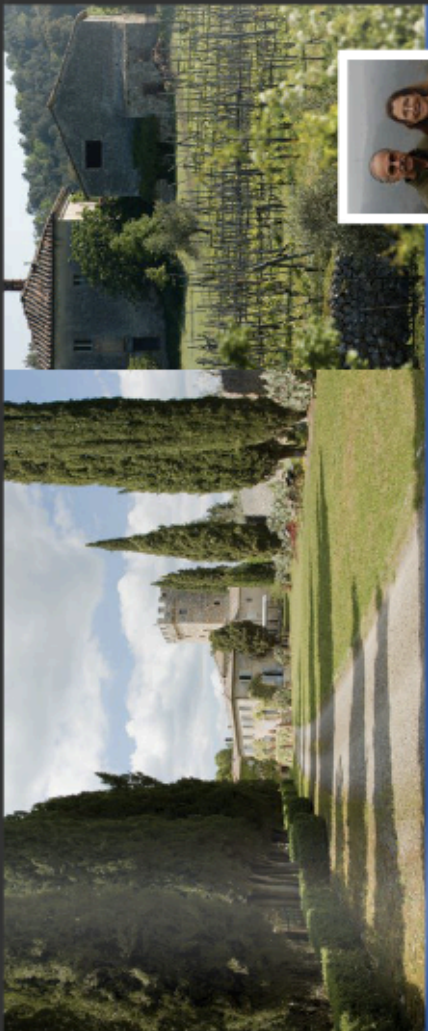


Global

Alumni

University Liggett School alumni are making an impact on every part of the world.

By Claire Chorlton



In the Rural Italian Countryside

Francesca Cinelli Stratton '70 finds a peaceful life in Italy.

Francesca Cinelli Stratton '70 spends her days doing what many can only dream about. Literally at the heart of her Florentine roots, Cinelli, together with her husband, Randall Stratton, lives on and manages a 1,100-acre organic agricultural estate in Siena, Italy, called Tenuta di Spannocchia.

In the rustic beauty of Italy's countryside, Stratton welcomes vacationing guests to relax in Tuscan farmhouses and a warm B&B. Their working organic farm serves as a cultural, historical and educational base to preserve the natural landscape and foster an active, engaged community.

The couple's educational organization, The Spinnecchin Foundation (www.spinnecchin.org), is a center for students, scholars, artists and individuals dedicated to research and environmental conservation of the agriculture and cultural history of the region. With a focus on sustainability, farm-based learning, traditional land management practices and local ecology, the foundation embraces rustic simplicity to build and support community and provide for the needs of the landscape.

Stratton took some time out to share a little about her life in the Italian countryside.

What grades did you attend Liggett?
10th through 12th.

What did you do after that?
After graduating from Liggett, I spent the next two years in Florence, Italy, where my father grew up. The first year I attended a "finishing school" called Le Fleuron, and the second year I studied at the "School for Foreigners." That was the beginning of my love of Italy.

Where did you go then?
The summer between those two years in Florence I spent at my family's property outside of Siena, Italy. Then I moved to New York City where I lived for six years. But I spent my vacation time in Italy at the property. In 1992, my husband and I moved to the farm estate to manage the farm and guest operation.

What do you enjoy most about living in Italy?
The way of life! It is slower than in the States. And, of course, the food!

What do you admire the most about the Italian culture?

The fact that when Italians are on vacation, they really are on vacation.

What is challenging about living abroad?

We are a long way from family and friends. Here in Italy, working with the bureaucracy is very challenging. One learns patience here.

Can you share one thing about life in Italy that might surprise Americans?
The importance of the Italian rural culture still continues here.

Something you miss about life in the U.S.:
Movies ... and family

Favorite leisure travel destinations:
Venice and Cinque Terre

Spurge-worthy food:
Truffles

Currently reading:
American by way of Venice! crime novelist Donna Leon, and the magazine "The Week"

On American carbophobes:
People should just eat a balanced meal and not over do with the pasta.