

WESTVIG EUROPEAN FAMILY EXPERIENCE

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Two and a half months of journey...



From Gabby – 6 May – Siena and Montalto
 May 7, 2009 by westvig

OK, this is the deal: we have arrived and are not planning on leaving!!!

We're on a farm, staying in a real castle, dating back to 1100-and-something! Montalto is built on the top of a steep hill, with a wall all around it. Many battles were fought here and as a result, part of the castle was destroyed in the 1400's. It was rebuilt in the 1500's and 'recent' extensions were made in the 1800's. It is just magic here.

Megs and Kyle are debating how much it would cost to buy and renovate the abandoned farmhouse across the fields, in the distance, (which is also part of Montalto). We went exploring and heard wild boar in the woods. Two deer came cantering out and across the road in front of us.

They have given all the hens names and collected their eggs in the mornings. The poor cats even have new names, but they're not complaining. No sooner had we arrived at "our" beautiful castle, than Megs discover a Swallow's nest with newborn babies chirping loudly. We have to keep the doors closed otherwise the Swallows fly in to make nests. They are everywhere! In fact, today while I was out with Megs and Kyle at their horse riding lesson on the farm next door, swallows flew into our bedroom while Karl was reading his book. They left evidence on floor. Kyle is taking the task I gave him on our arrival, very seriously, and that is to rescue all the geckos out of the pool before they drown. He also visits with the hens regularly. Both he and Meghan feel so at home here.

This morning, we headed into Siena and made our way to the heart of the city, the Campo. It's known as one of Europe's greatest medieval squares. We headed up the bell tower, the Torre del Mangia of the Palazzo Pubblico, which is the 2nd highest medieval tower ever built in Italy. The views of the city were spectacular! Siena is a beautiful city. I think I've had my fill of churches and museums for the moment though and was happy just to walk through Siena's streets.

Karl has been cooking up a storm since we arrived. Very simple meals, but soooo delicious. Our kitchen is tiny, room for only one chef. While Karl is cooking, the kids collect wood and make the fire, and I whip the salad together. The dishes, the cleaning, the washing and ironing are also my job, by default and I have to admit, I'm loving it. The laundry is on the other side of the castle and is equipped with 3 washing machines. So no, I'm not trudging down to the river every day. Yesterday, while I was out and about, doing our laundry, a German family arrived and thinking I worked here, asked me if I would show them around. I did so gladly, explaining the little I had learnt about the castle thus far. They were very appreciative of my little tour. And then today, in the streets of Siena, I bumped into them. How's that for coincidence. So Karl chirped that I should offer to show them around Siena, knowing full well that I knew very little. Anyway, they were pleased to see me.

Tomorrow I'm booked to go on a 2 hour horse ride. I don't think I'll be walking too well on Friday. I'm sure my Darling husband will have some chirps about that.... I shall keep you posted.

Basta (enough!!!). Arrivederci, Gabby

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OUR WHOLE JOURNEY

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