

Created by: Debra C. Argen

## Sonesta Castello di Santa Maria Novella



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From the time I was a small child, my father always called me his Princess, so when Edward F. Nesta and I were invited in October 2004 to dine at the 10th century castle, **Sonesta Castello di Santa Maria Novella**, ([www.sonesta.it](http://www.sonesta.it)) ([www.toscanaitaly.com](http://www.toscanaitaly.com)) located in the heart of Tuscany, in Marcialla, I felt right at home. Of course you needn't be royalty to experience the Sonesta Castello di Santa Maria Novella, but it is certainly fit for a Prince or Princess.



Located on 250 acres of land in the heart of the Chianti region, which is known as Chianti Colli Fiorentini, the property is surrounded by olive trees and Chianti vineyards. It is a private place where guests can enjoy the medieval atmosphere with modern-day comfort. Although the hotel is not open to individual guests, the entire castle may be rented to groups, or if you are lucky enough to be staying at **Il Borgo di Villa Bossi-Pucci**, ([www.sonesta.it](http://www.sonesta.it)) you can have the opportunity to dine at the castle on Sunday evenings, as the same owner owns both of these outstanding properties.



We arrived at the castle gates and were warmly welcomed by the General Manager, Fernando Guerrieri. Under a starry sky, we took a moonlight tour of the outside of the castle, as well as a tour of the former wine cellar, which is now used as a dining room for guests. Once inside, we went for a short tour, followed by dinner in the former kitchen of the castle. There were two large round tables in the dining room set beside an enormous medieval fireplace large enough to stand in. Although the chef did not prepare our meal there, the fireplace is still used on occasion to cook. Since we were in Chianti country, we drank an Antinori Pèppoli Chianti Classico DOCG, 2001, 13% alcohol, made of 90% Sangiovese grapes, and 10% Merlot and Syrah. It was very aromatic with a ripe fruit nose, and was well balanced on the palate. We dined on melon wrapped in prosciutto, a rich lasagna and a pasta pesto which was served in a hollowed out wheel of Reggiano Parmigiano, a mixed green salad with shaved Reggiano Parmigiano, and a rustic dish of sausage with greens that were drizzled with olive oil that was made at the castle. For dessert, we had biscotti, which was served with an excellent Vin Santo. We were instructed that we should dunk the biscotti in the Vin Santo, so when in Rome, or this case, Tuscany, we dunked the biscotti and savored the sweet taste of the Vin Santo, which was made at the castle. Although dinner at the castle was excellent, it was made even more memorable by the company as well as the ambience of dining in a castle. Unlike

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Cinderella, at the end of the evening our driver drove us back to Il Borgo di Villa Bossi-Pucci, and we did not have to worry about our carriage turning into a pumpkin.

For information on **Il Borgo di Villa Bossi-Pucci**, please read our article in **Hotels & Resorts**. For other articles on Tuscany, please read our articles in **Destinations, Restaurants, Chefs' Recipes, Gastronomy** and **Wine Cellar** sections.

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