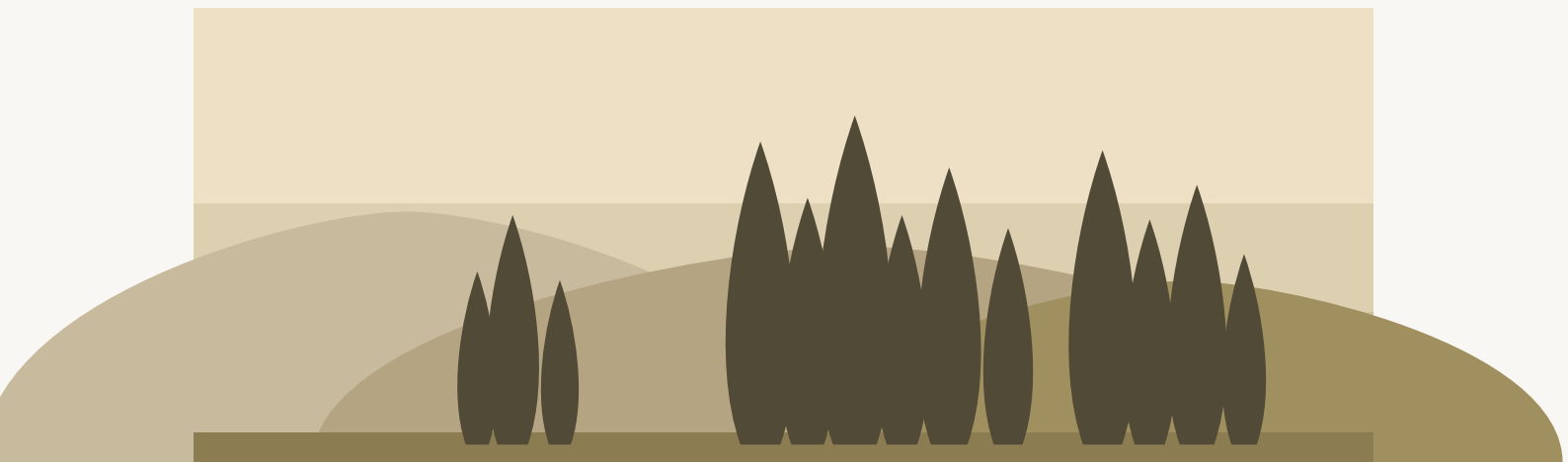


Working with Studio Feri Associati

A guide for international clients

Architectural design · Interior design · Restoration of rural heritage · Tuscany, Italy



Studio Feri Associati · Via Trasimeno n.1, 53042 Chianciano Terme (SI) · www.studioferi.net



Val d'Orcia, Siena province – UNESCO World Heritage Landscape

The Challenge of Buying and Restoring in Tuscany

For an international buyer, the idea of owning and restoring a farmhouse in Tuscany is compelling. The reality of doing so can be unexpectedly complex – not because it is impossible, but because the process involves a specific combination of legal, administrative, technical, and cultural layers that are difficult to navigate without local expertise and professional continuity.

REGULATORY FRAGMENTATION

Building regulations in Italy are distributed across national law, regional landscape plans (Piano Paesaggistico Regionale), and municipal urban instruments. For rural properties in Tuscany, these layers overlap and require case-by-case interpretation. Understanding what applies – and what it permits – requires direct experience with the system.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

Permits involve multiple public authorities – municipality, landscape office, heritage office – that do not always communicate efficiently. Timescales are genuinely hard to predict. Knowing how to anticipate problems and move within the system is essential to keeping a project on schedule.

IRREGULAR BUILDING HISTORIES

Many rural properties carry complex planning histories: incremental changes over decades, some permitted and some not. Before any new works can begin, the legal status of the existing building must be fully established – and past irregularities resolved where necessary.

DISTANCE AND LANGUAGE

Managing a project remotely requires structured communication in the client's language, and a local professional presence that represents the client's interests continuously – not only at key milestones. All Italian permitting, correspondence, and site management is conducted in Italian.

CONSTRUCTION MARKET

Finding reliable contractors in rural Tuscany requires established local relationships. Quality craftsmen are in demand and not easily located from outside. Pricing rural restoration requires specific experience: costs vary significantly with structural conditions, site access, and material specifications.

DESIGN WITHIN CONSTRAINTS

Landscape and heritage regulations govern roof forms, window proportions, external finishes, and the treatment of ancillary structures. Skilled design navigates this tension between client ambitions and regulatory requirements – finding solutions that are both architecturally coherent and buildable.

None of these challenges is insurmountable. But they require a professional partner who is present, experienced, and consistently aligned with the client's interests – able to navigate the local context and coordinate all parties involved.

Who We Are

Studio Feri Associati is an architectural practice based in Chianciano Terme, in the province of Siena. The studio is led by Arch. Lorenzo Feri and Arch. Mira Barr, with the structural expertise of Ing. Stefano Feri.

We intentionally remain a small practice. This allows us to follow a limited number of projects at any given time and to maintain direct involvement at every stage – through design, permitting, construction, and completion.

During active construction phases, we are present on site regularly – typically weekly – and provide written reports with photographic documentation after each visit. Clients based abroad can follow the project in full transparency, at every step.

We operate as an independent studio and represent the client's interests throughout. Our role is to be a reliable and informed point of reference at every stage of the project, coordinating all professionals and parties involved.

Our Work

Our core activity is architectural and interior design for the restoration and recovery of rural heritage properties – farmhouses (casali), stone outbuildings, agricultural compounds – primarily as private residences in Tuscany. We also work on apartments in historic town centres and on small-scale hospitality.

ARCHITECTURAL & INTERIOR DESIGN

- Spatial analysis and layout
- Architectural design
- Material selection and detailing
- Finish schedules
- Lighting design
- Bespoke furniture and joinery

WORK SUPERVISION & PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- Preliminary property assessment
- Permit preparation and filing
- Contractor tendering
- Construction supervision
- Coordination with local craftsmen
- Cost control and reporting
- End-of-works documentation

SPECIALIST COORDINATION

- Structural engineers
- MEP consultants
- Landscape designers
- Geotechnical consultants
- Specialist craftsmen
- Cost estimators

Design Quality – Selected Projects

Our projects are driven by a consistent set of values: architecture rooted in the Tuscan building tradition, interiors that are precise and liveable, and a close relationship with local craftsmen and the landscape.



Il Poderino · Montalcino – exterior after restoration



Custom travertine sink – Podere Spigolio, Montiano (GR)

ARCHITECTURE

We work from the building's existing logic – structure, openings, circulation – and develop proposals that respect its original character while meeting contemporary standards of comfort. Natural light and the relationship between interior and landscape are primary design concerns.

Materials are drawn from the Tuscan building tradition – stone, brick, terracotta, lime plaster – and reinterpreted in a contemporary key where appropriate to the project and the client's brief.

INTERIOR DESIGN

Architecture and interior design are developed as a single, continuous process. Finish schedules, lighting, cabinetry, and furnishings are specified together with the spatial design – not added afterwards.

Our design language is contemporary. We work with materials drawn from the Tuscan building tradition – stone, terracotta, hand-finished plaster, reclaimed timber – reinterpreted in ways that are of their time without being disconnected from the place.

We work with local craftsmen for bespoke elements. Furniture – both designed-to-measure and selected from quality producers – is coordinated as part of the project.

Three recent projects – interiors, landscape, and outdoor spaces.

SELECTED WORKS



Podere Albergaccio

Pienza (SI)

Pool and outdoor works

Design of the pool area and surrounding garden within the constraints of the existing stone walls. Materials: travertine paving, Corten steel, mature olive trees.

Podere Madonna

Montefollonico (SI)

Interior design – kitchen

Bespoke kitchen designed to measure and built by local craftsmen. Integrated with the existing stone and beam structure of the farmhouse.



Villa Bel Colle

Scansano (GR)

Exterior – new construction

New residential building designed in dialogue with the local stone and tile tradition. Natural stone cladding, terracotta roof, steel pergola and contemporary window proportions.



How a Project Unfolds

The sequence below is typical for a rural residential restoration. Each phase is formalised in writing before it begins. Where a specific service is not offered directly by the studio, we identify, brief, and coordinate the appropriate specialist – who works under our direction as part of the project team.

01 Initial Consultation and Property Assessment

A first meeting – in person or remotely – to understand the client's intentions, the property's characteristics, and the likely scope of works. We provide an initial feasibility assessment: what is possible, what constraints apply, and what professional services will be required. No formal commitment is involved at this stage.

If the property has not yet been purchased, a preliminary feasibility opinion can support the acquisition decision.

02 Survey and Due Diligence

Metric survey of the existing building – floor plans, elevations, sections – with photographic documentation and a structural condition assessment. In parallel, we carry out full due diligence on the regulatory context: cadastral records, planning history, landscape constraints, heritage designations, and utility status. The output is a written report shared with the client.

This phase is the foundation for all subsequent design and permitting decisions.

03 Architectural Design

Design is developed in stages: schematic proposals (layout options, spatial concept, relationship to outdoor spaces) developed design (coordinated with structural and systems consultants) construction documentation (full drawing package, specifications, material schedules for permitting and tendering). Client review at each stage.

Structural design and MEP engineering are carried out by specialist consultants coordinated and briefed directly by the studio.

04 Interior Design

Developed in continuity with architecture. Finish schedules (floors, walls, ceilings), lighting design, joinery and cabinetry, furniture selection and procurement. Where the project includes landscape works, we coordinate with a landscape designer whose scope – garden layout, pool, paving, planting – is integrated with the architectural project.

All specialist consultants (landscape, lighting, acoustic) are selected in agreement with the client and coordinated by the studio.

05 Permit Filing – SCIA and Related Applications

All necessary permit applications are prepared and submitted in coordination with the relevant authorities. Depending on the scope of works, these may include: SCIA (Segnalazione Certificata di Inizio Attività), permesso di costruire, autorizzazione paesaggistica, heritage notifications, and end-of-works filing. Correspondence with public authorities is managed and monitored throughout.

Landscape authority approval typically requires 30 to 90 additional days beyond the building permit. Heritage reviews vary. Timescales are established upfront.

06 Construction Supervision

Following competitive tendering and contractor selection, we carry out regular site inspections – typically weekly during active phases – verifying execution quality against approved drawings and specifications. We issue formal site instructions, manage variations, and maintain a site record. Written progress reports with photographic documentation are sent to the client after each visit.

07 Project Management and Completion

Throughout all phases, the studio acts as the client's single point of reference: coordinating consultants, managing contractor relationships, controlling costs against the agreed budget, and tracking programme. At completion, we prepare all end-of-works documentation required by the relevant authorities – including the final SCIA agibilità where required – and accompany the client through final inspections.

CASE STUDY

Il Poderino – San Giovanni d'Asso, Montalcino (SI)



Il Poderino · exterior after restoration – traditional brick farmhouse, Crete Senesi

LOCATION	San Giovanni d'Asso, Montalcino (SI) Crete Senesi – Brunello di Montalcino wine zone	SERVICES	Architecture · Interior design Structural restoration · Project management
BUILDING	Traditional brick farmhouse (Podere) Original construction: late 19th century	SPECIALISTS	Structural engineer (external consultant) MEP engineer (external consultant) Landscape designer: Fabiano Crociani Furniture maker: Sestini & Corti Garden contractor: Special Giardinaggio
AREA	250 m ² gross floor area		
CLIENT	Private – United States		
COMPLETED	2023	PERMIT TYPE	SCIA · Autorizzazione paesaggistica

PROJECT PHASES

PHASE 01 **Survey and Due Diligence**

The project began with a complete metric survey of the existing building – floor plans, elevations, and sections – combined with a thorough assessment of the building's structural conditions. In parallel, we verified the full regulatory context: cadastral records, planning history, landscape constraints (the property lies within a PRP-protected area), and utility connections. A written due diligence report was shared with the client and their US-based legal advisor prior to finalising the purchase.

PHASE 02 **Architectural Design**

The existing building had been renovated in the 1990s. The architectural intervention focused on the reorganisation of the internal layout – improving spatial quality, natural light, and the connection between living spaces and the garden – while respecting the structural grid of the original masonry construction. New openings and a connection to the outdoor terrace were introduced within the constraints of the landscape authorisation. Structural design was carried out by an independent structural engineer coordinated by the studio.

PHASE 03 **Interior Design**

Interior design was developed in full continuity with architecture. The material palette – terracotta, lime plaster, natural stone, reclaimed oak – was selected to be coherent with the Crete Senesi landscape and the client's brief for a contemporary but grounded aesthetic. All furniture was designed to measure by Sestini & Corti, coordinated by the studio from design brief through to on-site installation. Lighting design – both architectural and decorative – was developed in-house as part of the overall interior design package.

PHASE 04 **Landscape Design Consultation**

The studio coordinated landscape designer Fabiano Crociani for the outdoor works: garden layout, planting design, external paving, and pool integration. The landscape scope was defined in agreement with the client and developed in dialogue with the architectural project. Garden works were executed by specialist contractor Special Giardinaggio under the landscape designer's direction and our overall project management.

PHASE 05 **Permit Filing – SCIA and Landscape Authorisation**

The permit package comprised a SCIA for the internal works and a separate autorizzazione paesaggistica for all external interventions, given the property's location within a landscape-protected area. All technical documentation was prepared and submitted in coordination with the relevant authorities. Correspondence was monitored through to final clearance. The authorisation process required approximately four months.

PHASE 06 **Construction Supervision**

Works were tendered to a shortlist of selected local contractors. We carried out weekly site visits throughout the construction phase, verifying execution quality against approved drawings and specifications. Written site reports with photographic documentation were sent to the client – based in the United States – after each visit. Variations to the contract were managed formally, with client approval, before any additional costs were incurred.

PHASE 07 Project Management and Handover

Throughout all phases the studio acted as the client's single point of reference, coordinating the structural engineer, MEP consultant, landscape designer, furniture maker, and general contractor. At completion, the end-of-works documentation was prepared and the formal handover coordinated. The client – an American family – has been using the property as their Tuscan holiday home since the summer of 2023.

Practical Information

LANGUAGE	Arch. Mira Barr is bilingual Italian/English and is the primary point of contact for English-speaking clients. All client-facing documentation – design presentations, progress reports, permit summaries – is provided in English. Official filings with Italian authorities are in Italian, with summaries provided to the client.
COMMUNICATION	We provide written progress reports with photographic documentation after every site visit. For clients based abroad, we schedule regular video calls at key project milestones and remain available for questions and decisions throughout the process.
SPECIALIST CONSULTANTS	Where a service is not provided directly by the studio – structural engineering, MEP design, landscape design, cost estimating – we identify, brief, and coordinate the appropriate specialist on the client's behalf. All consultants work under the studio's direction as part of the project team. Their appointments and fees are transparent and agreed with the client in advance.
INDEPENDENCE	We operate as an independent studio and our professional relationship is exclusively with the client. Our role is to coordinate all parties involved – consultants, contractors, suppliers – in the client's interest and with full transparency at every stage.
TIMESCALES	A rural restoration of moderate complexity – conversion of a farmhouse to a private residence – typically requires 18 to 36 months from initial survey to completion of construction, inclusive of permit timescales. Projects with heritage designations or complex planning conditions may require longer.

If you are considering a purchase or planning an intervention in Tuscany, we are happy to have an initial conversation without obligation.

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