Mixed Media Abstract Tuscan Landscape Mosaics with Karla Duterloo

Sep 29 - Oct 7, 2027

About this trip

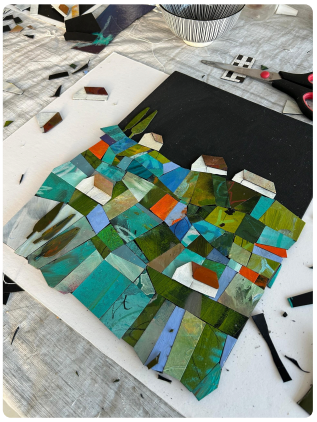
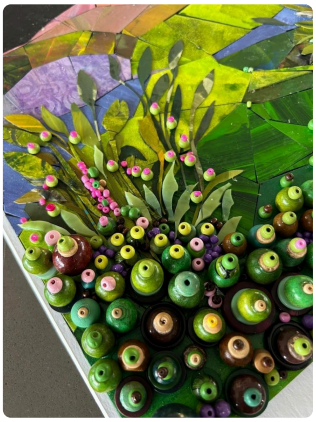
Dear Mosaic Lovers,

We are excited to announce a new mosaic retreat at La Volpaia (the fox's den), in the heart of Tuscany in late Sept / Oct 2027!

You'll spend eight glorious days in Tuscany learning to create colorful, dynamic multi-media abstract Tuscan landscape mosaics in a five day workshop with mosaic master Karla Duterloo, eating fresh seasonal meals prepared by our own private chef, exploring some of Tuscany's gems, wine tasting in local, family owned vineyards, building new friendships and so much more!

All you have to do is get to Florence, birthplace of the Renaissance, where you will be picked-up and transported to Chianti in Tuscany, and Mia's private 500+ year old villa and studio, where you will learn to see with new eyes and translate your vision into reality with the ancient artform of mosaic.

Come join us!

Tuscany Mixed Media Mosaic Workshop

In this workshop, we will create an abstract Tuscan landscape that may just inspire you to explore many more abstract designs and subjects in the future. We will work with a unique combination of mosaic and mixed-media materials in one artwork. The foundation of the mosaic will be handmade painted tesserae cardboard. You will learn how to paint your own sheets of card to mimic the beauty and variation of glass, before cutting them into your own tesserae. Along the way, I'll share simple painting tips and tricks that anyone can do—even if you don't consider yourself a painter. Together we'll create beautiful colour palettes, adding patterns and textures to make every mosaic truly unique.

On the flat background foundation, we'll build our layers to create texture, depth, and visual interest. You can enhance your mosaic with polymer clay elements, beads, traditional glass, or other mixed-media materials. The possibilities are endless, although sometimes a few creative limitations lead to the most interesting results. Everything you learn during this workshop can be applied to future mosaic projects, but also to painting and other art forms. Once you understand colour, texture, and composition, every creative medium becomes connected.

Our theme is the Tuscan landscape, interpreted in an abstract way. You can stay close to the colours of Tuscany, or let your imagination take over with bold, unexpected colours. The design can be as expressive or as subtle as you like. The goal is not to copy the landscape, but to capture its atmosphere and elements and transform it into your own personal artwork. You will also discover a completely different way of looking at landscapes—breaking them down into shapes, colour, texture, and rhythm instead of simply recreating what you see.

The main material we use is 1000-gram cardboard, which is surprisingly strong yet easy to cut with heavy-duty scissors into any shape or size, just like traditional mosaic tesserae.

You'll leave with:

- A unique mixed-media mosaic inspired by Tuscany.
- A fresh approach to creating mosaics.
- New painting techniques and colour ideas.
- Skills you can use in future mosaics and other art forms.
- Plenty of inspiration, confidence, and new creative possibilities.

This workshop is all about discovering new materials, experimenting without fear, and finding your own creative voice while creating a beautiful memory of Tuscany.

"This is not about replacing traditional mosaic materials—it's about expanding your creative toolbox and discovering that mosaic can be made from almost anything."

Meet your Instructor Karla Duterloo

Karla is an award-winning mosaic artist with a passion for wildlife conservation and vibrant color. With over 30 years of experience, her mosaic animal series highlights the beauty of nature while raising awareness about threats to South Africa's wildlife where she lives.

In addition to creating abstract 20 x 20 cm mosaic blocks, Karla is a skilled abstract painter who seamlessly merges painting and mosaic techniques. Her innovative creations include bird's-eye-view seascapes and vibrant bead and mosaic projects.

Her artwork has been showcased in galleries worldwide and is part of private and corporate collections in over 20 countries.

Karla is also dedicated to community impact, leading global and local mosaic charity projects, including initiatives in London, Nepal, and Cape Town.

She has collaborated with South African artisans, particularly within the beaded community, where her paintings have been translated into thousands of tiny beads. This work has helped empower makers through creative expression and shared artistic practice.

Karla's vibrant creations continue to inspire and bring joy globally.

Meet your Host Mia Tavonatti

Benvenuto! My name is Mia Tavonatti, and although I am a recent transplant to Italy, I have had a deep love and appreciation for all things Italian, especially its art and cultural history, since I was a child making pasta with my nonna. I have made La Volpaia my home and hope to share my love of the land, La Volpaia's rich 500-year-old history and traditional Tuscan comforts with you. I am a lifelong professional artist, so La Volpaia enjoys a uniquely creative spirit and welcomes all who want to dig deeper into their own creative pursuits, or just relax by the pool and take in the sunsets with a good glass of wine! I am no chef, but I can certainly provide the vino :)

Your Destination - La Volpaia

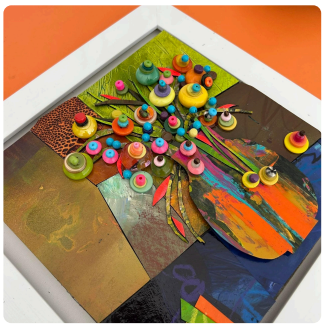
Nestled in the heart of Chianti, La Volpaia is a captivating 20-acre property with a rich history. Built in 1521 by an aristocratic family still residing in the area, this enchanting villa has been meticulously restored by an architect/ artist. Surrounded by 240 olive trees producing organic extra virgin olive oil, and 1000 lavender plants, it offers a taste of Tuscan authenticity.

Featuring six bedrooms, each with its own en-suite bathroom, a well-appointed kitchen, two living rooms, and a dedicated office/reading room, La Volpaia seamlessly blends comfort and rustic elegance. The 20 acre property

boasts a lavender field, an infinity pool with spectacular sunset views over vineyards and the Apennine mountains, an outdoor bbq kitchen and bocce court, and numerous outdoor spaces for relaxation, exploring, communing with nature or quiet contemplation.

Situated on a tranquil hilltop amidst vineyards and olive trees, La Volpaia provides a private, intimate escape, while its central location between Florence, Siena and San Gimignano ensures convenient access to Tuscany's cultural gems. This haven invites you to unwind, surround yourself with art, savor organic delights, and immerse yourself in the timeless beauty of Chianti and the Tuscan countryside. La Volpaia, hosted by an award-winning painter and mosaic artist, is a living masterpiece. The 500-year-old walls bear witness to original artworks by esteemed artists, while the former barn serves as both an operational art studio and gallery. Internationally acclaimed artists teach painting and mosaics to students who journey here from across the globe. Sculptures punctuate the scenic landscape, making every moment at this ancient farmhouse a source of inspiration, fueled by the vibrant essence of creativity.

Photo gallery



What's Included

What's included

- ✓ **Accommodations:** 8 nights single or double occupancy accommodation in a fully furnished traditional Tuscan villa. Each room has an ensuite bathroom except one which shares a bathroom with Mia.
- ✓ **Private Chef!:** Delicious, healthy and seasonal meals prepared by our own Chef and other refreshments (dietary restrictions may be accommodated with advance notice)
- ✓ **Tuscan Excursions:** Two full days exploring the heart of some of Tuscany's famous countryside and most popular destinations complete with a delicious lunch at a local vineyard.
- ✓ **Ground Transportation:** Group transfers to and from Florence Airport or train station are provided based on this itinerary, as well as luxury ground transportation for all excursions
- ✓ **Materials:** All materials will be provided, but please bring a journal and tools. A tool list will be provided later.
- ✓ **Pizza Party!:** Tonight you will go out to dinner at one of Mia's favorite local restaurants. Chef Giulio will prepare pizza magic while you relax and enjoy a night out in a lovely ancient mideavil town.
- ✓ **Mosaic Workshop:** 5 day stained glass mosaic workshop (35 studio hours) with Mia Tavonatti
- ✓ **WiFi**
- ✓ **Tourist Taxes**

- ✓ Studio apron
- ✓ Infinity pool :)

What's not included

- ✗ **Airfare:** Airfare to and from Florence or any other means of transportation or hotel stays before or after the retreat are not included
- ✗ **Individual transport:** Transport expenses outside of scheduled times can be arranged but will be an additional fee. Transport schedules will be provided well in advance of your flight planning.
- ✗ **Tips:** Staff gratuities (Drivers, guides and staff)
- ✗ **Tools and Journal:** A Materials / Tools List will be provided
- ✗ **Unfinished Work Glass:** While you will be able to take your small scraps home, you will not be provided with glass to finish work after the retreat, since finishing the work is not the priority for this workshop :)

Pricing

Packages

Double Occupancy — **€5,332**

Deposit: €700

All rooms are comfortable and complete with two single beds and an ensuite bathroom. The host will do her best to partner you with a compatible roommate if you choose to come on your own. Many lifelong friendships have been made this way :)

Cancellation Policy for Retreats

* In case of cancellation by La Volpaia 1521, all fees paid, minus any credit card or transfer fees paid, will be refunded in full.

*All deposits are fully refundable (minus any credit card, instructor or transfer fees) until the date the **SECOND** deposit is due. After that, all fees paid, including the deposit, any extras or installment payments are only refundable if your reservation can be filled.
Your spot may be gifted to someone else for this retreat only.

*In case of a medical emergency, you will be credited for a future retreat as long as a doctor's note is provided. This credit may be used for any of La Volpaia's retreats within the next TWO years from this retreat, and does NOT guarantee a workshop with the same instructor. You may also gift your spot to someone else within those two years.

Single Occupancy with Private Bathroom

€6,044

Deposit: €700

Comfortable room with a beautiful sunset or garden facing view over vineyards and mountains. This room has a queen sized bed and private bathroom.

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Single Room with Shared Bathroom

€5,866

Deposit: €700

This is a very quiet room in the adjoining apartment which shares a bathroom in the hallway with the property owner / host Mia Tavonatti. It has lovely countryside views and a comfortable queen bed.

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Student with a Non-Participating Guest

€8,537

Deposit: €1,400

If you would like to have a non-participating person join you on this retreat, they will be included in all excursions, meals and laughter and can play by the pool or read a good book while you are in class, but priority is given to workshop students. You will share one room with a private bath, either with one queen bed or two singles. These spaces are at Mia's discretion and student participants are given priority for the limited number of rooms.

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Bring a Friend and SAVE 10% ! 🤩

€4,799

Deposit: €700

Two students who sign up together AND share a room will enjoy a 10% ($500) discount per person 🤩
All rooms have an ensuite bathroom.
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Your spot may be gifted to someone else for this retreat only. If one of you cancels, the other will be assigned another roommate.

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Add-ons

TCM Session with Donatella Tita

€150

Discover the true power of your body's ability to heal itself. Take your Tuscan transformation one step farther, with a private session with Donatella Tita, Master of all things Traditional Chinese Medicine. She will address any health concerns you may have and set you on a path for perfect health and emotional well being.

Private Massage €150

For those who really want to relax and enjoy a one hour private massage during your siesta break!

See Availability

Package and add-on availability may change at any time. Scan the QR code or click here to see real-time availability and book your trip.

Arrival and Welcome!

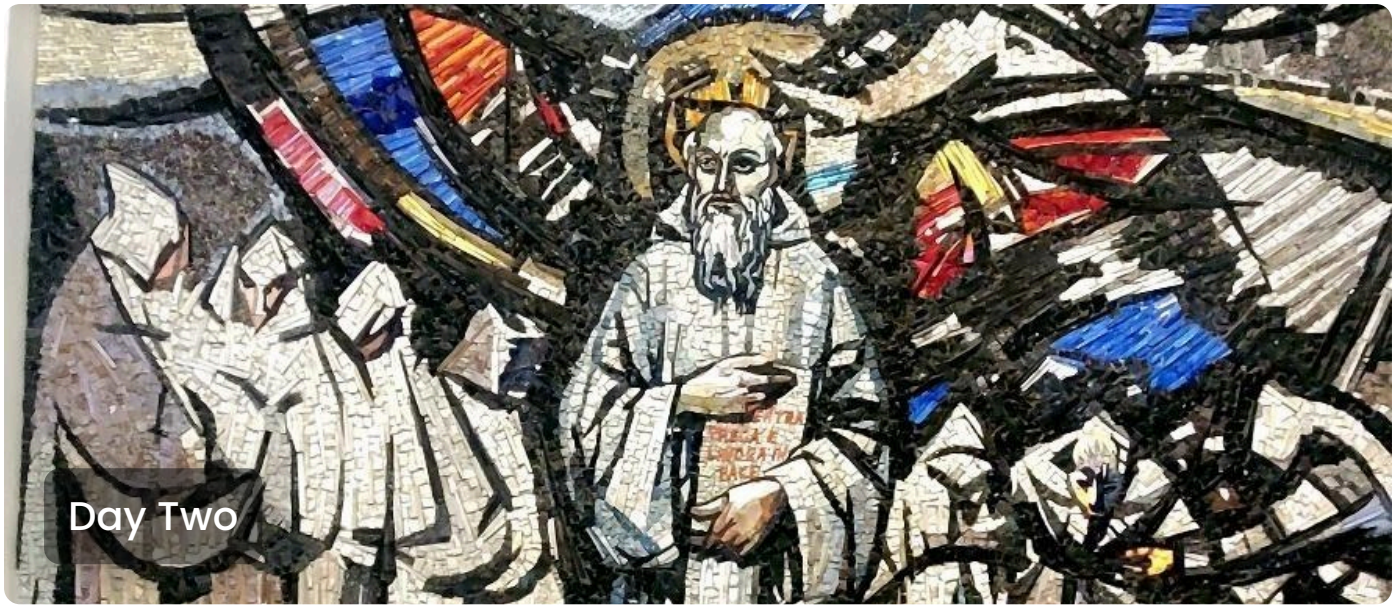
Airport transfers from Florence Airport or train station

Welcome Dinner 7:30 o'clock

All airport arrivals must arrive prior to your **4:30 pm** pickup.

If you arrive before our 1st day, there will also be a pickup at Santa Maria Novella train Station at **1 pm.** (Exact location will be sent to you well in advance of your travel plans).

Any transport required outside of these times will be paid by the guest, so please book your arrival and departure times carefully 😀



Abbey of Monte Oliveto Maggiore Day Tour

To let you get acquainted with your retreat mates and rest after your long journey to La Volpaia, your first full day in Tuscany will be spent relaxing and exploring one of Tuscany's gems. You will explore a unique dialogue between historical masterworks and mid-century sacred glass art at the Abbey of Monte Oliveto Maggiore. Your journey begins at the monastery's threshold, greeted by a monumental contemporary mosaic. This piece is meticulously executed using traditional, hand-cut Italian smalti. Inside the luminous, Baroque-renovated abbey church, the creative inspiration deepens beneath a spectacular cycle of stained glass windows designed by Venetian painter Lino Dinetto between 1965 and 1972. These striking windows cast vivid, kaleidoscopic pools of colored light across the nave, interacting dynamically with the monumental 16th-century inlaid wooden choir stalls by Fra' Giovanni da Verona. Surrounded by the dramatic, raw contours of the clay calanchi cliffs and the timeless narrative rhythm of the Renaissance frescoes in the Great Cloister, participants will find an unparalleled sanctuary to study color theory, light interplay, and multi-era craftsmanship while deeply nourishing their own studio practice.

In the Studio

Today is your first full day of your five day mosaic workshop where you will learn to create multi-dimensional abstract landscapes with Karla Duterloo

Studio day! Followed by a Night on the Town!

After a full day in the studio pushing the bounds of your creativity, you will enjoy a lovely dinner at one of Mia's favorite pizza restaurants in the mideavil center of Barberino Val d'Elsa

Full day in the studio!

A full days work in the studio with a three hour lunch / siesta to relax and enjoy the surrounding beauty of La Volpaia.

Day Six

Niki de Saint Phalle Tarot Garden

On this day you will continue your exploration of one of Tuscany's true gems, the extraordinary Tarot Garden by Niki de Saint Phalle!

Inspired by Antoni Gaudi's Parc Guell in Barcelona and the Mannerist park Sacro Bosco in Bomarzo, Niki de Saint Phalle created her sculpture park in Garavicchio, in the southern-most part of Tuscany. In this vast garden, the 22 cards of the tarot's Major Arcana are represented in the form of enormous sculptures, 12 to 15 meters high, made of painted polyester and reinforced concrete, covered with mirrors, mosaics, multicoloured ceramics and Murano glass. This enchanted world was, for her, the ultimate achievement of her oeuvre, its culmination.

Your day will also include a lunch / wine tasting in a lovely winery in the beautiful countryside before returning to the welcoming arms of La Volpaia for a sunset dinner al fresco.

Studio day

Today you will spend you fourth full day in the studio learning more about color theory, composition and SO much

more as you progress on your mosaic surrounded by other mosaic lovers.

Final studio day and Celebration Dinner

Sadly, all good things must come to an end...BUT not before you put in your last full studio day under the constant expansion of your vision through Karla's teaching. Your success will be celebrated with our "L'Ultima Cena", featuring a tradional Tuscan BBQ featuring a 3 course dinner and finally, a Certificate Ceremony.

Morning Departures for Florence

This morning you will bid your farewells to La Volpaia...until next time 😘

Departure from LV for the airport will be at 6:30 - 7 am.

For those extending their trip in Italy or elsewhere, there will also be a transport to the train station in Florence at 9 am.

Any transport required outside of these times will be paid by the guest, so please book your arrival and departure times carefully 😀

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We recommend you purchase travelers insurance to cover any unforeseen circumstances.

A. Strada di Vico 5, Barbarino Tavarnelle , 50028 Strada di Vico 5, Barbarino Tavarnelle , 50028