The art of slow travel: New learning & craft retreats in the heart of Tuscany

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In the sun-dappled hills of northern Tuscany, The Watermill at Posara offers a retreat shaped by craft, creativity and time honoured ways of working. Set within a beautifully restored 17th-century mill, this is a place where making by hand is central to the experience – a refined yet deeply human alternative to conventional luxury travel. For over three decades, the Watermill has welcomed artists, craftspeople, makers and thoughtful travellers seeking space to slow down, learn deeply and reconnect with the quiet satisfaction of skilled, mindful work.

The Watermill at Posara now unveils its 2026 programme of craft-led learning holidays, curated for those who value process over pace and depth over distraction. Set beside the gently flowing River Rosaro, the Watermill is known for its understated elegance, sustainable hospitality and immersive courses rooted in traditional and contemporary crafts, from drawing and painting to fibre arts, textiles and mixed media. Each week is designed around a shared belief: that craft is both a creative practice and a way of living more attentively.

Highlights from the 2026 Craft & Learning Holiday Collection include:

Knitting and 'La Bella Vita' with Debbie Abrahams (16-23 May 2026)

Featuring celebrated designer and tutor Debbie Abrahams, this retreat in the Tuscan countryside invites knitters of all levels to deepen their skills, work on creative projects and enjoy expert guidance amid the tranquillity of The Watermill. Set against inspiring Italian landscapes, the holiday includes full board, local excursions and convivial evenings in the historic mill, offering a perfect blend of craft, culture and 'the good life'.

Colourful & Expressive Oil & Watercolour with Maggie Renner Hellmann (23 – 30 May 2026)

A painting holiday with an award-winning California artist, this course offers inspiring instruction in oil, watercolour, travel sketching, acrylics and pastel. Maggie will guide artists of all levels through core fundamentals of design, colour, perspective and more, encouraging both beginners and advanced painters to expand their artistic confidence amid the stunning rural landscape.

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A Taste of Tuscany (18–25 July 2026)

A sensorial exploration of place through food, movement and daily ritual. Guests travel slowly through the landscape on a classic Vespa, visit local markets in Fivizzano and Forte dei Marmi, and experience the beauty of Cinque Terre. The week celebrates regional knowledge, seasonal produce and the pleasure of taking time, from hands-on encounters with local culture to long evenings spent around the table at Al Vecchio Tino.

Pastels & Mixed Media with Rebecca de Mendonça (12–19 September 2026)

Blurring the boundaries between fine art and craft, this course explores pastels alongside pen and ink, Conté crayons and pastel pencils. Through relaxed en plein air sessions and studio work, Rebecca de Mendonça supports students in developing a personal visual language while responding to the architecture, gardens and textures of the mill and its surroundings.

Each week-long learning holiday includes expert tuition, time-rich days for practice and reflection, gentle excursions to hilltop villages and markets, and seasonal, home-cooked Italian cuisine served communally. Guests stay in elegantly restored rooms overlooking the River Rosaro, the mill gardens and the rising Apennines, a setting that encourages quiet focus, conversation and creative exchange.

“Craft teaches us how to pay attention,” says Lois Breckon, Co-owner of The Watermill at Posara. “Here, learning isn’t rushed. Whether you’re drawing, knitting or simply sharing a meal, the experience is about honouring materials, skills and the pleasure of making something well.”

At The Watermill at Posara, creativity is shaped by materials, time and place. Learning is tactile, travel is intentional, and luxury lies in depth, focus and presence.

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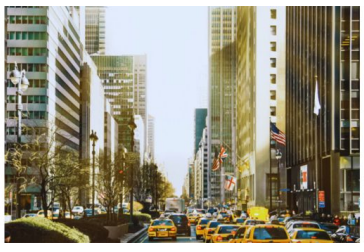

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