

# Urban Patterns & Tuscan Towns

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The region of Tuscany embodies an interesting balance in that it is a highly populated region where most of the landscape has been shaped and developed by human hands, dotted with dense urban towns, and yet its countryside remains. There is a quality of life there and a close relationship between the urbanity of the hill towns and the countryside that surrounds them that is, in many ways, unique and has helped to drive the region's character, quality of life, and the quality of its works. While the region of Tuscany is not perfect, many of the hill towns in the region are remarkable examples of urban spaces where the quality of life, work, and craft exist side by side with each other. These towns are living and working urban centers that have, for the most part, been continuously inhabited since the Medieval period (if not longer in many places) and have been developed according to the natural needs and patterns of the people who live and work within them. During our time in the region this year we were presented with the opportunity to study four of these hill towns closely. Over the years of the study we have visited dozens and these first four represent a sampling, rather than a definitive list. We attempted to find and understand the urban patterns that have shaped them, and how these patterns make the towns and region what it is, as well as how these patterns can point us to the ways that strong neighborhoods and urban spaces may be designed in urban settings here in Canada as well as other towns and cities around the world. These patterns and the ways that these towns and cities work can serve as models and inspiration that can inform the ideas and designs that we bring to our own cities, homes, lives, and projects. In observing these towns we have been able to learn about many of the qualities that drive effective neighborhoods and public spaces, as well as how this particular part of Italy is operating as a center of creativity, innovation, and design.



Cortona



San Gimignano

Though no town in Tuscany is so far away from another that it cannot be reached within a few winding hours on today's roads, each developed very separately, and one can easily read significant differences in towns no more than 20 kilometers apart. The people in these towns are fiercely of that place, "Sienese" or "Cortenese" even before "Italian", and their towns physically reflect these differences. It is what makes Italy such a fascinating tapestry. It is what Italians themselves call, "campanilismo", that one's imagination, reality, extended only so far as one could the next town's bell tower, or "campanile". But how are they different? Exactly? Is this observable? How can we compare them? Is this measurable? Sustainable?

In years past during the field study we have looked closely at the larger Italian cities and how they operate as creative urban centers. The cities have served as case studies that allow us to learn more about the Italian approach to design and innovation and how these places serve as creative and cultural engines. In this year we have had the opportunity to conduct a close study of four hill towns in the region of Tuscany where we examined and observed the design and the patterns that have shaped the towns while also observing how these urban patterns have shaped the activities and interactions of the people within the towns as well as the ways that these patterns arose in response to the actions and needs of those who lived there. One of the aspects of the various towns in Tuscany that made them both interesting and useful as sites to study is that it is possible to reach,



Streets of Cortona

observe and study towns and cities, which have developed in a variety of different eras and manners – and within days compare several directly. Some have medieval origins, others Roman or Etruscan. In many cases “these cities did not develop based on plans but rather evolved through a process that often took many hundreds of years, because this slow process permitted continual adjustment and adaptation of the physical environment to the city functions.” (Ghel, 2006.) This continual, iterative development often resulted in the cities forming around natural and stable urban patterns. Patterns that continue to live on in many of the towns, which provides us with the opportunity to study these patterns in use and attempt to understand how, they work. Other towns in the region (most notably Pienza) reflect the ideals of the renaissance and allow us to study some of the first examples of intentional urban planning. In all such cases though, these are towns and cities that are designed and patterned around human interactions, activities, and experiences and it is these interactions and this focus that needs to be preserved here in Tuscany, and understood and applied to our designing, thinking, and living here in North America. As Jan Ghel has stated in his book *Life Between Buildings* “The city was not a goal in itself, but a tool formed by use.”



In the case of Pienza and the other towns one of the first patterns that drove the siting of the town was the choice to build the town on the hill overlooking the surrounding countryside. In Alberti's renaissance treatise on building he stated that the hilltops were the ideal location for building. "Let the site [of the city] therefore have a dignified and agreeable appearance, and a location neither lowly nor sunk in a hollow, but elevated and commanding. Where the air is pleasant and forever enlivened by some breath of wind." and while this choice was often initially made for defensive purposes, which one is reminded of upon observation of the defensive walls that still ring the towns, it has since proven to be a valuable choice even after the need for a fortified vantage point fell away. Indeed, the pattern of settling on top of hills goes back to the very beginnings of Italian settlements, both in the Etruscans choosing sites like Volterra, Cortona, Chiusi and Tarquinia and indeed in Romulus choosing the Capitoline Hill to found his new city of Rome.



Farmland surrounding Pienza



From an agricultural perspective this location for the urban zones was also a natural choice. "Since the arable land which can be used for farming lies mainly in the valleys, it is essential that the valley floors within our urban region's be left untouched and kept for farming." (Alexander, 1977). Although it is more difficult to build on hillsides and plateaus than it is to build in the valleys, it is harder still to repair or reclaim arable land that has been overrun by a city's development. This simple choice to situate the towns on the hillsides of the region has had far reaching effects and is one of the foundation elements that have driven many of the other patterns and qualities at both the municipal and regional levels.

The related patterns that are discussed in Christopher Alexander's book *A Pattern Language* can be observed in the proximity and relationship between the urban towns and the countryside that surrounds them. In nearly all of the towns we studied there was no sign of the sprawl that afflicts many modern cities (Milan included). In these towns the farmland and countryside flows all the way up to the town walls and allows for a relationship between urban and rural interactions and experiences that are difficult or impossible in most modern cities. In the current development of the region that is currently ongoing this balance between the needs that the urban and agricultural spaces serve is in a state of flux, with results both positive and negative being observable. The attempt to maintain the economic viability and environmental integrity of the



Pienza

countryside presents a double edge. The economic benefits of the rise in tourism and the “agriturismos” that are described in the 2007 ItaliaDesign paper, “the Hill Towns of Tuscany”, by Taylor, are an essential part in maintaining and revitalizing the working farms and country villas but that same tourism threatens to damage the balance by overrunning existing towns and also giving rise to modern resort towns that rarely incorporate any of the patterns, thoughtfulness, or instinct of the older hill-towns. The hilltops were not the easiest places to locate an urban community however and one of the most pressing difficulties that many of these towns faced was in maintaining ready access to water. Unlike Florence and Rome these towns did not grow out from the banks of rivers and although there are many places in Tuscany where towns and the people within them live close to streams, rivers, lakes, and other bodies of water the towns that we visited during our study were not like this. On one hand the need to have ready access to water is a purely practical one and it is unnecessary to attempt to convince anyone of the importance water plays in terms of a person’s survival. It is partially because of this fact that people feel a powerful connection to water however. “We need constant access to water, all around us... But everywhere in cities water is out of reach” (Alexander, 1977). In the hill towns we studied the points of public access to water became the focal points around which the towns themselves and the neighborhoods within them formed. The wells in the towns were natural gathering points for the populace. In both Pienza and San Gimignano many of the main and historic piazze of each town is focused around large, ornate wells. This move is both a natural and practical one in terms of the needs and patterns of human use, as well as being a





political and theatrical one on the part of the town's governing powers. In the case of Pienza the main well sits directly beside the palace of the Piccolomini family who were instrumental in the redesign of the town's core, and serves a very similar political purpose to the theatrical fountains and "mostras" of Rome. Indeed the established urbanism of the ancient Roman period runs very deep in Italian towns, the urbanism they exhibit now a descendant of that long passed civilization. The Romans settled all of Italy with their engineering and sense of civitas, it has clearly remained and lies at the heart of many of these observable patterns. But also remains the political message read in the "miracle" that the state made water flow from a spot well within a city, high upon a hill, where no natural source can be found. Make no mistake – the "quaint" well at the center of the town was understood in this way in these towns.



Piazza and Well (San Gimignano)



Piazza and Well (Pienza)

And so this very basic practical pattern of needs began to drive the siting and planning of much of the rest of the town. According to Christopher Alexander "A town needs public squares; they are the largest, most public, rooms that the town has." They are the gathering and meeting places for the neighbourhoods they support. In the hill towns the spaces which surrounded the wells served this need for outdoor public rooms and thus these piazze became the focal hub for identifiable and cohesive neighborhoods, as well as the primary centers for the political, social, religious and mercantile infrastructure of the towns and cities we studied. With Pienza, the first of the towns that we studied, the entirety of Pienza's historic core existed on a scale similar to one of Siena's many neighborhoods, which made it an ideal initial space to begin studying the patterns and affordances for urban interaction at a manageable scale. Allowing us to take a close look at a specifically designed main street and piazza that worked on the scale of neighborhood and city, before we moved on to the more organically developed streets and piazze of Cortona and San Gimignano and then studied how a network of these neighborhoods comes together in a larger city such as Siena. In addition Pienza is, of all the towns we studied, the one whose streets, spaces, and buildings were the most intentionally designed. This design was imposed upon the existing medieval plan of the town of Corsignano by Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (later Pope Pius II) and is believed to "be the first built example of the Renaissance desire for an ordered classical environment." (Mayernik, D. 2003) And is also in many ways an example of some of the first humanist renaissance urban planning. And the focal core of this plan centered around the town's main street and piazza. In this redevelopment the public infrastructure of the town was focused into a

single main piazza that lay along one edge of the main street of the town, which acted as the spine of the town and linked all of the smaller residential streets to this main road. This piazza became the town's focal point and the location of the seat of both the local government and the church. This space was designed and laid out with very specific principles, both aesthetic and practical, that set up a clear hierarchy to the space and the importance of the buildings that ringed the piazza. At the pinnacle of this hierarchy was the cathedral which occupied the entire eastern side of the piazza. On either side of the cathedral sat the palace of the Piccolomini family and the residences of the bishop and clergy. Facing the cathedral and palaces lay the smaller and less extravagantly faced palace of government and the artisan's house. This piazza and the streets that link to it were meticulously designed, even going so far as to design the aesthetic experience of the spaces and the views, angles and affordances within them. Everything from the slightly offset angle of the Piccolomini palace, which enhanced the sense of space in the main street while simultaneously creating space for an expanse of stair-seats along the palace wall, to the choice to orient the cathedral east/west in order to allow the cathedral, piazza and crossing streets to be bathed in the light of the sun while also creating glimpses of the view of the countryside on either side of the cathedral which expand theatrically into breathtaking expanses as one moves along those streets and along the town walls. And although the design of Pienza provides an incredible aesthetic and intellectual experience the town lacks a certain vibrance and liveliness in the way the patterns of social affordances play out in the central street and piazza that becomes all the more visible when one looks to the main streets and piazza's of nearby Cortona.

In Cortona we observed a different style of main public street than can be seen in Pienza. Pienza's main street has a more reserved and formal feeling and energy to it. The design of the main street, the piazza, and the streets that spray off from it seem primarily focused upon the feel of the space, the experience of it, and this is even reflected in the distribution and type of shops that open onto the town's main street. In Pienza the main street is lined almost entirely with shops whose primary focus is inside the buildings. Their wares are displayed in windows, and myriad scents waft out into the street to entice residents and visitors off of the street and inside. In Cortona on the other hand one can see a main street where a much greater portion of the focus and interaction is occurring out in the street itself and where many of the public patterns begin to show up. "Experiencing other people represents a particularly colorful and attractive opportunity for stimulation. Compared with experiencing buildings and other inanimate objects, experiencing people, who speak and move





about, offers a wealth of sensual variation... The number of new situations and new stimuli is limitless. Furthermore, it concerns the most important subject in life: people.” (Ghel, 2006) Street side café’s line this highly public, pedestrian only main street and contribute to the street’s role as a public stage. Cortona’s main street is a place to see and be seen, both for the residents and for the town’s visitors, both long and short term, and this contributes to the sense of vibrance and life that pervades the space. The café’s and alcoves that line this main street provide opportunities for people to see others and to be seen themselves. They provide natural activity nodes and points of contact that run along the length of the street drawing the eye and the attention ever towards a string of piazze that serve as social, municipal, commercial and religious hubs for the town. “Wherever there are people – in buildings, in neighborhoods, in city centers, in recreational areas, and so on – it is generally true that people and human activities attract other people... They gather

Main Piazze



Pienza



Cortona

with and move about with others and seek to place themselves near others. New activities begin in the vicinity of events that are already in progress.” (Ghel, 2006) Unlike the planned street and piazza we see in Pienza, Cortona’s main piazze feel much more organic, both in their shape and in the buildings that surround them and the people within them. The primary piazza, Piazza della Repubblica is ringed by a wider variety of buildings that function as café’s, shops, and houses and all face the wide, theatrical expanse of the stairs that lead up to the house of government, the Palazzo Comunale.



Despite the fact that many of the core underlying patterns remain the same in each town the public life and public space of each town is quite different. This difference illustrates the fact that these urban patterns and spaces do not have automatic human activities inherent within them. Even well applied, sustainable urban patterns do not create particular activities or automatically lead to a specific kind of public life. Urban space, and the patterns that exist within such space should instead be considered to be affordances that make particular actions and interactions possible. The patterns act as a scaffold upon which the life of a space may be built. The buildings surrounding the central piazza of Pienza are lined with wide ledges of soft stone that invite people to sit upon them. They do not themselves automatically make the piazza into a public room for the town but they make that state more natural. At the same time the fact that most of the main street lacks seating out in the street is part of what focuses this street more upon travel and sitting and shopping occur indoors or off this main street.

There are many different varieties and characters of piazze, main streets, and other public spaces but they are all frequently the social hubs of their respective towns, or on another scale its neighborhoods as can be seen in larger urban areas such as



Palazzo Piccolomini and Cathedral of Pienza



Palazzo Pubblico (Pienza)

Siena. "These places have always been like street theaters: they invite people to watch others, to stroll and browse, and to loiter." (Alexander, C. 1977) but the affordances for interaction within the spaces of Cortona and, to a lesser extent, San Gimignano and the feel of how they are used are vastly different from that of Pienza. Cortona's piazze and main street are shaped by the pattern of social needs of the town's residents and have taken on the form of an urban promenade. "The promenade, 'paseo,' 'passegiata,' evening stroll, is common in the small towns of Italy... People go there to walk up and down, to meet their friends, to stare at strangers, and to let strangers stare at them." (Alexander, C. 1977) In Cortona this passeggiata has become a central part of what binds the town together as the towns residents (both native Italian and visiting students) flow into the street and steadily make their way down into the main piazza. This passeggiata has become a signature facet of the town's character and has become a way that the residents of the town can establish and maintain their local connections and local culture regardless of how many tourists and distractions litter their town. In his book, *A Timeless Way of Building*, Christopher Alexander describes successful urban and social patterns as ones that are naturally self-sustaining, and in the case of Cortona, the relationship between the passeggiata and the streets and piazze that support it seem to sustain each other and allow each other to live. It is an activity that in



some ways has likely shaped the patterns of the main streets and piazze but it is also a ritual that would have likely not occurred in the way it did without the affordances and social attractors of these spaces existence in the first place. These promenades, and the way that such vibrant social spaces can bind a neighborhood together are made possible by the patterns of the space and are no longer unique to Mediterranean cultures such as the cultures of Italy or Spain. It is through the development and design of viable and living urban spaces that public life and the character of neighborhoods in modern cities can be made possible and encouraged. Modern examples of these patterns have been designed into core pedestrian streets in northern European cities such as the Stroget in Copenhagen and Sauchiehall St. in Glasgow and while observation and study of these cities and streets is currently beyond the scope of this study Jan Ghel has reported in *Life Between Buildings* that these streets have



had a positive effect on the public life and the energy of the cities they exist within. Cortona's passeggiata, particularly the Sunday night ritual, is one of Italy's most positive examples of a well-scaffolded set of urban patterns that is brought to life by the social will of the town's populace. But make no mistake - a town must choose to enact these scaffolds and affordances.

The town of San Gimignano provides an example of how the feel of such spaces changes quite profoundly when the needs and context of the people in the space are considerably different from the pattern of the town's urban affordances. At the time of our study of the city the streets and squares were filled, not by the town's residents (of whom few could be found), but with tourists, drawn daily to the town for its history and beauty. With the exception of the people running the cafes and shops that lined the main street and central piazze, barely any locals appeared to be out and about and the tourists that flowed through the city had very different goals and needs than those of someone who lives in the city. Edge seating and focal centers of piazze were of less use as the interest for many faced outwards and upwards to the towers and buildings of the city. Seeing and being seen, chance meetings and conversations, people watching the activities of other people, quiet outdoor siesta's were rarely the goals or needs of the people in the spaces and so the pattern of their needs and the pattern of the affordances were in conflict. This conflict generally didn't hinder those within the spaces, but it meant that many of the affordances of the town went unused. For the residents of the city however this tended to result in the abandonment of the central core of the city for much of the day. In this way San Gimignano

seems to follow the pattern of Rome and Florence in being a place that doesn't fully awaken until the evening, with the locals retaking their city after the tourists have returned to the hotels from which they came. The streets and piazze of the town possess the same focal wells, shaded loggias, surrounding benches and stairs that focus energy into the center of the piazze. The piazze and streets still live but the flow of tourism has changed the timing and pattern of when and how they are used. In future iterations of this study we hope to return to San Gimignano and Siena in the evening in order to observe the way that these places change over time and the evening patterns of use for outdoor urban spaces. In other years of this study, time was spent in San Gimignano and Siena at night,



and it is clear that both places do indeed undergo a rather radical transformation – an almost “oz-like one, in which the “munchkins” come out after running from the visit of a certain “tourist” outsider from the west. Most tourists to Italy do not even notice this transformation and taking (and giving over of) of the public space. When they come to Italy they want to eat at six p.m. like they do at home, whereas Italians rarely eat in summer until after 8 or 9pm, and no Italian can understand why anyone would want to be out in the heat of the day between 1 and 4pm. On the other hand, if they will spend money while they're doing it, and then leave the space to the locals between 10pm and 10am, a deal can easily be struck!

In each of the towns we studied we found that these main streets and the piazze that they are linked to formed the backbone of the towns, providing ready access to quality outdoor spaces, social opportunities, and local shopping as well as identifiable local government. In a nested layering of degrees of publicness in a town or a neighborhood these focal points act as the most public of these layers. And in Siena we were able to observe how the existence of these resources and spaces can create cohesive and identifiable neighborhoods within a larger urban fabric. A fabric that then stitches these neighborhoods into the city as a whole through the use of the same backbone patterns on a larger scale. “Siena's three districts – the Terzi (“thirds”) of Citta, San Martino and Camollia – are draped over the ridges of a Y shaped group of hills, the principal streets following the contours and sloping gently, with the minor ones crossing them, rising and falling sometimes dramatically.” (Mayernick, D. 2003) These hills provided natural boundaries and paths that allowed the terzi to develop a sense of independent character from each other and nested within these terzi are still smaller neighborhoods. And what



stands out in Siena is how powerful and how visible these neighborhood's particular identities are. Most people who think of Siena do so because of the town's feature event, this twice annual "Palio" bare-back horse race. The Palio is the long-standing expression of rivalry between these neighbourhoods. When one visits Siena during Palio the town is decked out in colorful banners that represent the seventeen contrade, or smaller neighborhoods within Siena's Terzi. But throughout the year the colors and patterns remain in lighting features and flags that let one know that you are decidedly in "Onda", "Aquila" or "Lupa" territory. And if you think it's for show, you haven't seen the duel to the death nature of the Palio or other similar events such as Florence's annual "Calcio Storico". But while these urban neighborhoods feud, they also perform important unifying civic functions simultaneously.



Neighbourhood Emblem Graffiti



Neighbourhood and Terzi Churches

One of the key points in Alexander's book is the importance of identifiable and cohesive neighborhoods within the fabric of an urban space. He states that people have a natural wish to identify themselves and their place within the city that they live and that they "want to be able to identify the part of the city where they live as distinct from all others." (Alexander, C. 1977) This sense of distinct, identifiable and proud neighborhoods is one of most visible features of Siena and the relationship between these neighborhoods has shaped the design, character and history of the city over the course of centuries. The visibility and distinctness of the terzi and their neighborhoods is largely made possible by natural boundaries created by the ridges of Siena's hills and the paths taken by the resulting major roadways. It is these boundaries that make it possible for neighborhoods to maintain their uniqueness and sense of identity. In Siena, these boundaries are created by the larger, commercial streets that run along the line of the ridges and link the terzi together. These boundary streets serve a dual purpose by also forming the promenade paths and meeting zones where the neighborhoods can blend and come together while displaying their identity through emblems symbols and flags at these shared edges. The boundaries between neighborhoods becoming the main streets and piazze for the terzi which then flow into the focal point for the entire city at the central piazza and seat of the city's government. And at each of these scales the patterns and elements of the other towns can be seen. Small local places of worship, banks and public houses exist in each neighborhood along with local public squares and meeting points. This is then echoed again in a trio of large churches that sit upon the hills and look inwards towards the junction of the three hills where both the seat of government and the cathedral of Siena

reside. Further, each terzi has its own main square, and its own symbolic fountain or well. And in many cases this nesting is repeated further at the scale of the smaller contrade within each Terzi. This nesting was described capably by Drinkwater, Buxton and Thompson in our 2006 study of Siena (<http://www.sfu.ca/italiadesign/2006/infield/hilltown/team4/>). The central “Campo” square however edges all three terzi, and is shared by all, thereby acting to reunify the whole in a clear physical, permanent symbol of clear pride and mission shared at the civic scale. Difference in unity.

It is not just the design of the towns that have influenced the patterns and lives of the people living within them however. As mentioned previously, many of these cities developed according to the needs of those living within them and so these towns have been shaped over centuries by their culture and the people who live in the region remain surrounded by this culture and maintain their connection to this past. As Franco Dominici, the founder of Tuscan furniture company Segis, said to us in our interview with him. “Without the culture, without the past, you might as well be dead.” Dominici is a proud Sienese by birth who now lives in san Gimignano and operates his business in the valley below on the outskirts of modern industrial town Poggibonsi. He is an innovator who broke the mold of his birthright by not only moving to san Gimignano but by not going into the family business, the business of Siena, back to the Renaissance – banking. Yet his inherited sense of “civicness” I clearly reflected in his company and how employees are treated as family, with a deep sense of respect for tradition within the innovation, and above all: the long view.



Tuscan hill towns founded upon pre-Roman, Etruscan origins maintain connection with these origins. The city of Siena has maintained links to its founding by the son of Romulus and was in constant competition with Florence and this competition has been maintained, to a lesser degree, into the present day. The region, especially in Siena and Florence carries the cultural history of being the origin point of much of the early renaissance, most especially early renaissance thinking and commerce. “The first bank was in Siena” (Dominici), and it was and the rise of the economic power of the merchant class and the banking families (the Guelphi) of Tuscany that made much of the renaissance possible. And during this rivalry between Siena and Florence the town of San Gimignano sat between them and had the fortune of being the point of meeting and trade between the two powers and the economic riches that came from this fueled the construction of the towers of San Gimignano and the explosive growth of art and culture in the region.



This existence within the fabric of a powerful and still tangible and observable cultural history is part of what drives the character of the entirety of Italy and the maintenance of skills and traditions over generations. The ways that the hill towns of Tuscany deal with the weight of the region's history is one that must be carefully balanced so that the town's and region neither stagnates in the bones of an unchanging museum, as Florence is in danger of doing, nor strives so eagerly for the new that the culture and tradition that gives the region its character are lost. This balance and the need to respect valuable history without being lost in it is an issue faced by many cities both old and young and should be of particular focus for young cities such as Vancouver as they age and develop.

In all of these towns though, and in many of the patterns that have been observed, a common thread can be seen. All of these patterns are part of a design and an urban fabric that is people-centric, created by, or designed to influence the needs and activities of people, and these patterns and affordances are not unique to this region. Though they are particularly strong and plentiful there. These towns were helped by the qualities of the region to be sure. The richness of the agriculture, the climate, and the views. The defensibility of the hilltops and the security from attack. The richness of a nearly unbroken history and culture tracing back beyond Rome. The richness of abundant trade, both in goods and in ideas, between powerful cities. All of these things have shaped the towns of Tuscany and are further factors that influence the quality of life and the quality of design and space within the towns. But the patterns and affordances that allow these activities and qualities to live can exist in other places and in other cities. It is clear that such improvements in public life make cities better and more pleasurable, attracting the new global creative and knowledge worker and often transfer such assets into productivity and sustained innovation. And it is this fact that most attracts us in doing this study – what we can learn from patterns and affordances of the Tuscan towns. What they can teach us. And we are not the first to be inspired in this way, to have learned from such places and made contributions elsewhere.



As an example, “Each quality improvement in the city of Copenhagen has been closely followed by an increase in the use of the public spaces. The improvements have - literally speaking - given room to a much wider range of human activities.” (Ghel, Y. 2006) And while the public space needs of modern cities cannot simply be solved through the creation of piazze and shopping streets in every metropolis the core that underlies these spaces does point towards the ways that modern urban spaces can move forward as they develop and become post-industrial. Whether piazza, park, street or otherwise the core of these places is a focus on people and a design of urban space with affordances at the human scale.

The hill-towns of Tuscany are urban treasures in many ways and an understanding of the influences and patterns that make these towns live will allow us to recognize the facets of the Tuscan fabric that must be celebrated and preserved, while also providing us with a living example of the possibilities for the applied use of human patterns and needs in other urban and public spaces. And these patterns are just a small segment of the variety of nested patterns and influences that come together in order to make these towns live and thrive. These observations and findings mark a first foray into a discourse about the design of urban spaces and public space and the ways that the choices made can affect the lives and patterns of activity of the people that live within them. One that will continue to be explored during further forays into these and other towns by the groups that follow. Immediately, the reader can see how this foundation was carried forward by the 2008 team in their studies of Rome’s working class neighbourhoods, now transforming as vital creative centers of innovation, and in the further iterations of this study in future years of our studies of the Tuscan Hill towns, in which we hope to study at least two new towns each year, while deepening our understanding of those you have read about in this report.



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