

My restaurant experiences in Florence

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- **Cantinetta Antinori, Piazza Antinori 3**
Housed in the 15th century Antinori mansion, this small establishment showcases Antinori wines and food grown on their estates. Antinori has been making wine since the 14th century, and they currently boast their 26th generation winemaker. The menu is limited and seasonal, but both the quality of the ingredients and the preparation are first class. The wine list is fabulous. Antinori wines available by the glass from Eu 3 to Eu 30, and an even larger selection in bottle. The Pietra Bianca, Castel del Monte at 4.50/glass is the best white I've had in Italy, and is also among the least expensive. The pasta is probably the best I've ever eaten. The dishes are a bit more expensive than some other places on this list, but not much, and the wine is significantly cheaper. This is my top recommendation.
- **L'Osteria di Giovanni, Via del Moro 22**
This has the best service I've experienced in Florence. A complimentary glass of prosecco upon arrival, plus some fresh toast with nice olive oil. Likewise Vin Santo and cantuccini are complimentary at the end of the meal, as is a take-away packet of cantuccini. The waiters were the most charming and helpful I've encountered. The food was pretty good too. The usual range of Tuscan dishes are on offer.
- **Ristorante de Frescobaldi, Via dei Magazzini, 2-4/R**
Like Antinori, the Frescobaldi family started making wine in the 14th century, and make a full spectrum of wine. Their restaurant is based on the same principles as Antinori above, but offers a wider range of dishes, though the preparation and quality, based on my one visit to each, is not quite as good here. It is also extremely noisy, making conversation difficult. But high quality food and an excellent, well-priced wine list.
- **Trattoria Pallottino, Via Isola delle Stinche, 1 R**
This place is a bit cheaper than those mentioned above, and offers very good typical Tuscan fare at very fair prices. The house wine is quite palatable, which is not always the case. Definitely worth a visit, though not a detour.

- Cibreo Trattoria, Via de' Macci 122r,
Not to be confused with the slightly more up-market restaurant Cibreo, which is across the road, this is a popular spot where it is a pleasure to sit outside and watch the passing throng. The owner is an utterly charming young man who could sell ice to eskimos. He insisted we have the house antipasto, even though I didn't particularly want it, and his table-side presentation leads you to believe you are his most important customer. Wines by the glass are quite expensive. Food is good, without being outstanding. I'd choose Pallottino over this, but it's not bad.
- Osteria di Cinghiale Bianco, Borgo San Iacopo, 43
This is an extremely popular tourist trap. They do at least two and up to four sittings at each table, and I have never felt so rushed. The menu is thrust into your hands almost immediately upon arrival, then the waiter returns to take your order about two minutes later, and the first course arrives about 5 minutes after that and tastes like it. I had a pasta with truffles, and the pasta was of various temperatures and degrees of softness, all leading me to believe that the dishes were large pre-cooked and just warmed up. The truffle offering was meagre compared to other establishments. Only one white wine by the glass is available, an almost undrinkable trebbiano, and there are four reds by the glass. The chianti was just drinkable. The waiter whisked away one of our table's glasses of red before it was even finished, and had rushed us through three courses in less than an hour. Unless you enjoy being treated like a damn nuisance, and fed on indifferent food and wine, I'd give this a miss.
- Antica Osteria L'Agania, via Mazzini 10, 52100 Arezzo
We went to Arezzo one weekend and had a superb meal at this modest little place. The pasta was excellent, the house wine surprisingly palatable for the price (Eu 5 for 750ml), and the service warm and friendly. As good as anything on the above list except Cantinetta Antinori, and very modestly priced. Definitely another reason to visit Arezzo.