



**Here we are again...** Another year reaching its close - already!! Where does the time go? I guess for many of us, it has been another challenging year, yet there does seem to be some glimmers of light coming - long may that continue ☺

**Here are the highlights of 2014 at La Serena - enjoy!**

The weather this year has been 'molto strano' as they say in these parts, with our neighbours complaining there has not been a proper summer, so they don't want to have a winter! ha ha! Of course, it is all relative, yet they are right in that we did not have the extended hot & dry summer to which we have become used. Never mind - next year will be great..

**Still, Umbria is well-and-truly living up to its name of 'The Green Heart' of Italy!!**

Derek was asked to do another couple of catering events too - one was a 70th birthday and the other a 60th.. Sadly, we were too busy to take many photos, here are just 3.



A display of bruschette, with traditional and original toppings



Derek's famous gorgonzola-filled steak with buttery fondant potato



Steph's version of a melon and grape 'sunflower'

Family-wise, it's been a mixed year too with Steve not being well, yet a celebration for Lizzie & Scott moving into their own house in April, now the proud owners of two gorgeous kittens. Lindsay and Andy are in the middle of their own 'Great British Bake-off'! We were lucky to taste some of their results when they came to stay last month - yum.

Lizzie & Scott also came to stay in the summer with their friends - Steph even had time to get a bit of a tan! Emma & Lee came too - another lovely week sharing our piece of heaven with family ☺



As usual, you can see our 4-legged family has a really hard life! Sonny is actually lying in our (ex!) fruit bowl on our sun-terrace dining table..

Steph's been busy on the creative-side too. She was lucky enough to be asked to take on several dressmaking commissions this year. As you know, it is her first love and she still runs her dressmaking holidays here at La Serena.

To the right are a few examples of her work.



Steph was on her travels again this year.

Photos are (left) Shanghai & Malmö (Sweden). To the right are Budapest & Singapore.

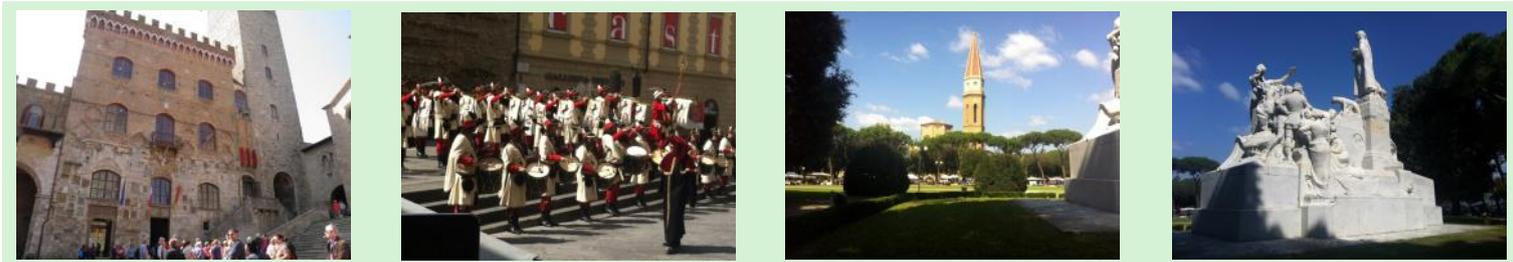


Not all was for work.. 2014 is the centenary of Brownies.. so Steph just HAD to get involved. Here are some of the results... She's realised, though, it seems more tiring than it used to be!





We still had time to do some more exploring too, taking in two towns we had not explored before: Arezzo and Spoleto - they are so different, yet both very beautiful. Every month, Arezzo has a massive antiques and bric-a-brac market - lovely!



Four different views of Arezzo - the two on the right are the park at the very top of the town, where the antiques market is held.



Four different views of Spoleto - the second photo is of a garden that is dedicated to Lord Baden Powell(!) and in the fourth one, you can see Derek - if you look carefully enough!



A view of Spello from the car - another beautiful local town.



Summer Festival in Citta della Pieve, complete with jazz band.



Two views of San Gimignano in nearby Tuscany - nice and bright even in November - with Derek, Andy & Lindsay.



La Serena guests enjoying our Olive Harvest Holiday. This was an unexpected challenge as this year the Umbrian and Tuscan crops failed due to Olive fly & too much rain! However, our guests made the best of it and

learned all about pruning olive trees!

Next year, the outlook is much better - come and find out for yourselves!



Christmas fun and Presents Market in Perugia



Our Christmas Tree

**We wish you a wonderful Christmas and a happy and successful 2015.**

We hope you will come and see us (or return...) next year. If you can't come yourselves, please do tell all your friends & colleagues all about La Serena!



Never too old for Sparkler fun ☺



Steph's attempt at an Umbrian Christmas speciality: Torciglione

With our love & best wishes,

*Steph & Derek*  
XX

