

Three Sisters Embrace Tuscan Roots

At Puscina Flowers, it's all about family at the farm.

By **Christine Wright**



In the Tuscan countryside, there's a place in the rolling hills where the soft sunlight makes one feel as if floating inside a painting. A wide open farm where three sisters grew up playing hide and seek among the trees and finding flowers as treasures. They knew every inch of this land and their roots ran deep.

Today, sisters **Mara Cugusi, Laura Cugusi and Teresa Cugusi** are all grown up and have come back home to **Puscina Farm**. With the help and support of their family, the sisters have created a working flower farm and thriving floral design studio and have the distinction of being the first all-organic flower farm in Italy.

During our trip to Tuscany, the team at *Florists' Review* had an opportunity to visit the three sisters at **Puscina Flowers**. On a sunny Mother's Day afternoon, we were greeted in a reimagined shed—painted deep green—at the edge of the property, now used as the Puscina Flowers design studio. Plant-dyed silk ribbons, rustic baskets and antique farm implements adorn this sweet space.

After some great conversation and a strong Italian espresso, we took a walk through the outdoor gardens and greenhouses with Mara, Laura and Teresa and learned more about their passion for plants.

Strolling among bursting pink peonies, sunshine orange poppies, deep purple irises, fragrant lavender and savory herbs, it was a journey of the senses, along with a lot of laughter and sharing of stories.

The sisters talked about the art of living in sync with this land and the flora and fauna that grow on it. They speak of the joys and struggles of this business, but ultimately of their belief that everyone must have flowers in their life and to be in touch with nature is to be fully alive.

Over 400 varieties of flowers and herbs are grown here, and the women strive to educate others on sustainable flower farming and the importance of supporting local businesses.

Puscina Flowers plants native seeds, sometimes ancient varieties that produce what they call “beautifully imperfect” blooms. Each year, they introduce new varieties of flowers on the farm and experiment with farming techniques and garden designs – always with the intention to maintain a wild and natural environment.

Most of the flowers grown at Puscina Flowers are sold direct to retail florists and designers; however, they are also used in their own wedding and event designs.

(Below, from left)

Teresa is the garden architect and is always designing and creating the best ways to grow organic flowers on the farm.

Mara is the main floral designer and enjoys losing herself in the gardens while looking for new ingredients and creating fresh designs.

Laura is in charge of customer relations and floral designs. Peonies and roses are her favorite flowers, and she loves using seasonal berries and branches in her organic designs.





Several classes and workshops are offered each month at the farm (which include children's classes) on organic farming, recognizing seeds, plant foraging, large-scale floral techniques and how to design with wildflowers.

The three sisters are also at the heart of the SlowFlowers movement in Italy, which is inspired by Slow Food, Slow Travel and **Debra Prinzing's** SlowFlowers movement in the United States.

Puscina Flowers, along with **Tommaso Torrini** of **La Rosa Canina** and **Sofia Barozzi** of **Il Profumo dei Fiori**, kicked off SlowFlowers Italy last year with an event to raise awareness of growing, purchasing and designing with locally grown flowers. The day was filled with music, food, workshops and of course natural, homegrown flowers. Their goal is to revolutionize the way Italians select and purchase flowers.

Mara tells us that Instagram is one the most powerful marketing tools for their business. They are able to connect easily with designers and customers around the world, and their online presence brings many people to the farm for a visit. They offer their beautiful space for educational events, along with weddings and parties.

At Puscina Flowers, three sisters share what it means to really listen to what flowers and plants have to tell us and to help people discover the joy of coming back home nature. ■

