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L'EROICA, A VINTAGE BIKE RIDE THROUGH THE AMAZING SIENESE COUNTRYSIDE

"It's certainly not for everyone" - David Millar (Scottish former professional road racing cyclist)

This is what we call **an unconventional Tuscany tour**: a vintage bicycle ride on those picturesque, dusty and unforgiving *strade bianche* criss-crossing the countryside near Siena. Usually held every first Sunday of October (mostly on steep gravel roads) **L'Eroica** is a unique cycling race that has been taking place since 1997; to enter this bizarre competition, you must have a **pre-1987 road bicycle** equipped with **down tube shifters**, **external brake cables** and **pedals with toe-clips**. Participants from different nations can choose between 4 possible routes, according to their fitness level:

a) Chianti Classico short route (38 km – approximately 3 hours)

b)

Chianti Classico medium route (75 km – approximately 4 hours)
c) Terre di Siena medium-long route (135 km – approximately 10-12 hours)
d) Terre di Siena long route (209 km – more than 15 hours)

All routes start and finish in **Gaiole in Chianti**.

If your eyes are twinkling and you are considering enrolling in the competition, you can find a complete listing of all rules and regulations at www.eroica.it - here is also a direct experience that might be of your interest.

Should you be afraid to take on the challenge, you can enjoy the race as spectator and experience the thrill and excitement of simply watching **the greatest amateur cycling event in the world**.

L'eroica attracts a huge number of visitors every year, all riders are encouraged to wear **classic merino jerseys**, **wool shorts**, **goggles**, **leather cycling shoes** and **weird bicycle helmets** (a special prize is awarded to the first 10 *eroici* who complete the 209 km long route with vintage racing bikes and particularly interesting outfits...).

An opportunity to hark back to the glory days of **Coppi** and **Bartali**, admire **antique cars & motorcycles** and wash down a Tuscan breakfast, lunch or dinner with a **big**, **big red**.

Would you like to simply ride a bike in Chianti and perhaps enjoy a typical Tuscan lunch at a winery? Visit www.ciaoflorence.it for details -