

# Villa Toscana - An Italian secret affair

The drive to Villa Toscana took us up a long and winding road in to the hills behind a new residential subdivision at the Northern end of Whitianga.

Thankfully we had telephoned earlier and asked for directions as there are no signs along the way indicating the location of Villa Toscana. Clearly, it's the kind of place you escape to with some degree of premeditation because you wouldn't easily find it on a casual drive.

Eventually we arrived at a pair of imposing and ornate steel gates supported by large stone pillars.

On the right hand pillar was a discreet intercom button. We pressed the button and announced who we were.

A gentle Italian accented voice echoed back from the pillar.

Following a brief discussion the steel gates parted and we continued on higher in to the hills. One thing about this place, they won't be bothered by door to door sales people or kids on Halloween night. Everything about it says privacy and security.

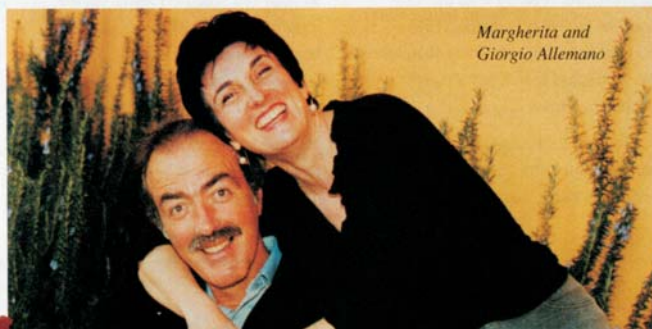
On arrival at Villa Toscana we were greeted by a smiling, dark haired man who

introduced himself as Giorgio Allemano. He had the kind of charm and confidence that seems peculiar only to European men.

We entered Villa Toscana through its rather grand double doors of and Giorgio introduced us to, Margherita Allemano, an equally charming woman with jet black hair, fair skin and a beaming smile.

I couldn't help thinking, "If this was an Italian styled luxury Lodge run by two Kiwis called George and Margaret it would feel like an empty experience right now." Everything about this place is genuine Italian. Not the romantic notion of some Kiwis recently returned home from their OE having fallen in love with Italy.

Giorgio took us on a tour of the Villa and explained how the place was built and what materials were used. Villa Toscana lodge and its appointments are Italian through and through right down to the very building materials the lodge is built from. Forget the common timber framing



Margherita and Giorgio Allemano



with "Italian plaster" finish that you find in so many new housing estates. In traditional Italian style this place is a solid masonry building. But it doesn't stop there. It's the fittings, the furnishings. The lot! Villa Toscana is the fulfilment of a dream

created by Giorgio, a marine biologist from Torino who married Margherita, a talented water colour artist from Lunigiana. Having sold a successful family business in Italy, Giorgio and Margherita travelled to New Zealand and spent five months touring **continued on pg 2**

## Villa Toscana continued...

in a campervan before finally choosing Whitianga as the ideal location to create Villa Toscana. Then it was back home to pack up and freight all their family possessions along with 13 tonnes of terracotta tiles, 12 square

metres of granite and Carrara marble tops, antiques furniture paintings and a pizza oven. The furnishings,

They have put it all together to create one of

New Zealand's most distinctive luxury lodges. While Villa Toscana's self contained suite offers luxury accommodation for up to 4 people, Giorgio said most guests are couples. The suite has its own private entrance, huge lounge, two double bedrooms and spa. The d'cor combines rustic Italian furnishings with a mix of stylish modern furniture. Its a blend that seems to work well. Walls within the suite, as with all of Villa Toscana, are lined with glorious old family photographs, embroideries and memorabilia.

Guests can choose to maintain total privacy and dine in the suite with meals prepared by a chef or dine in traditional Italian style with the Allemano family. Wines can be selected

from Villa Toscana's comprehensive temperature controlled cellar that runs the complete length of the villa. If you really want to spoil yourself and avoid the drive Villa has its own helicopter pad. It also has its own gymnasium and game fishing charter launch. Naturally, it's at the top end on the market for people wanting luxury, privacy and a very special experience. Tariff ranges from \$440 - \$640 for two people, with dinner an extra \$95 each.

You don't need to be a Head of State or a tycoon, but you'll feel like one after staying here.

