

Shannon Venable's master's degree in medieval and early modern Italian history from UC Santa Barbara is responsible for more than a dozen trips she's made to the Mediterranean country. But it was listening to friends talk about the difficulty of entertaining their kids during trips that prompted the Santa Barbara-based academic editor to found *Arte al Sole* ("Art in the Sun"), a cultural day camp for young adventurers. "People take their whole family to Italy," she says. "But it's not much fun to cart the kids around to museums or wine tastings." And while villa stays can be a great way to experience the Tuscan countryside, the kids often miss their friends.

Venable has organized two day camps for children ages 6 to 17 in the majestic Lucca hills outside of Florence. The first session, July 9 through 13, teaches the Renaissance masters' scientific advancements that led to innovations in art. The July 16 through 20 session explores architecture, sculpture and craftsmanship of the region. "Each week, we sketch as well as do other arts and crafts projects, such as make puppets or miniature mosaics," she says. There are midweek excursions with opportunities to visit a woodworker, ironworker and sculptor. The camp offers a chance to build international friendships. "We teach simple Italian vocabulary," says Venable, who has two children of her own. "I'm focused on making it valuable for the kids, and I want them to have the time of their lives."