

## PORTRAIT



### **LaSelva organic fine food & wine:**

#### **Tuscan passion for nature and pleasure.**

The organic fine food pioneer Karl Egger has been farming in the Maremma since 1980. LaSelva now produces 200 Tuscan speciality foods and 15 wines.



**Germany & Tuscany, 2017:** *“I wanted to be outside, to experience the seasons and to enjoy foods that deserve their names and that taste as I remember them in my childhood: natural, intensive, and genuine”* recalls the Bavarian owner of LaSelva and one of the founders of the Association for Organic Agriculture “Naturland e.V.” looking back at the turning point of his life. In 1980 Karl Egger moved from Munich to southern Tuscany where the organic foods pioneer found his first soil for cultivation.

The lack of taste in food, the loss of variety in crops, the degradation of soils by the agrar-industry brought him to the Maremma region where he knew he could grow fruit and vegetables in a natural way. Soon, he was looking beyond selling fresh fruit and vegetables and tomato “passata” in milk bottles to friends. The first organic specialities came onto the market 11 years later: all according to traditional Tuscan home recipes where freshly harvested tomatoes are prepared into polpa, passata, salsa and pelati.

#### **LaSelva: “the wilderness” in the Maremma.**

From a start with seven hectares, there are now 791 hectares of high quality naturally fertile land being managed. Three kilometres from the Tyrrhenian coast and near the “Parco Regionale della Maremma” nature protection area, the LaSelva business prescribes organic farming with emphasis on the protection of the diversity in nature and the animal world. The granary which Egger bought, built in the 17th century by the Spanish, still carries the name “LaSelva”. It means “forest” or “wilderness”.



#### **Tradizione & passione: the intensive taste of the harvest – without anything added.**

Egger’s personal taste for food is the foundation of the company’s philosophy, now operating internationally as “LaSelva Bio-Feinkost” (LaSelva Fine Organic Food). LaSelva wants to capture the intensive, genuine taste of freshly harvested ripe produce in the jar for the consumer. “Nothing left out, nothing added” is the motto and the guiding principle for cultivation, recipe development, manufacturing and processing. All this is

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achieved with a commitment to hand craft and Tuscan cuisine, with a passion for nature and enjoyment.

### **Specialità toscane: 200 organic specialities and 15 organic wines.**

LaSelva is proud of the tradition and the core competence of using tomatoes. It has built on this creating since the 1990s organic products from many other vegetables, herbs and fruit.



Today, nearly the entire range is free of gluten, yeast and lactose and offers 200 vegan organic specialities and 15 wines. Whether it is vegan or “free from”, LaSelva is drawing on tradition to meet contemporary demands and trends.

The diverse foods from LaSelva range from the multi purpose tomato, to olives, anti-pasti, conserved vegetables, fine jellies, pesto, vinegar and olive oil. International prized wines, prosecco and spumante, espresso coffee, passito and grappa, cantucci, pasta, pizza bases and confectionary complete the Italian fine food offer.

LaSelva Toscana Bio-Feinkost serves the home market (Italy), Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Scandinavia, France, Poland, Czech Republic, Romania, Japan and the USA. LaSelva products are in specialist organic food stores, in health food shops and in delicacies and wine stores.

### **Una famiglia: cultivation, processing and agriturismo.**

**LaSelva is genuine and transparent.** The business has developed over decades in the Maremma. This connection to the region not only secures jobs for local families over generations, it also inspires new Tuscan recipes. These often come from employees or from Italian friends.

**The international LaSelva team** comprises a total of approx. 100 permanent employees at LaSelva società bioagricola a r.l. (including the processing plant) in Italy and LaSelva Toscana Feinkost-Vertriebs-GmbH in Germany. Up to 160 local seasonal workers paid according to official tariffs are also employed in field work and processing.



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LaSelva in 1984 was the **first “Naturland” farm outside Germany that had a closed production cycle with its own livestock.** Dr Richard Storhas, the first head and president of Naturland e.V., and the agronomist Mario Turri from the University Padua advised Egger when he was setting up the business. They focused on how this land can be farmed organically.

The **cantina LaSelva**, also certified by Naturland, has become another branch of the business with internationally prized and vegan wines ([www.laselva.wine](http://www.laselva.wine)). Crop processing takes place in the **factory on the farm and in a modern processing plants** in the nearby Donoratico. With on-farm tours, wine tasting and through farm holidays (**agriturismo**), LaSelva fans get a real look behind the scenes. You can sample our products at the **farm shop**, which is well frequented by people from the region. (Reservations: Tel.: 0039 0564 8848-1, e-mail: [agriturismo@laselva.bio](mailto:agriturismo@laselva.bio))



**In cooperation with Italian organic farmers** and through **long-term cooperation with certified suppliers**, some for as long as 15 years, LaSelva has secured raw material supplies to meet a large demand. **The purchase of raw materials from abroad** is restricted to organic ingredients that are difficult to source or not available in Italy, such as dried fruit, spices and capers.

**Responsabilità: responsibility for enjoyment, people, animals and plants.**

**Since 1980: 7,000 trees, nesting sites, flowering meadows, wetland areas and 79 ha forest.**



For LaSelva, natural cycles and biodiversity are the foundation of the business. We are working closely with ornithologists to conserve and protect birds on the 451 hectare estate. LaSelva is supporting scientific projects on, amongst other species, the

European roller and the ground-nesting stone curlew.

The establishment of wetlands and the maintenance of 79 hectare Mediterranean forest, nesting sites and a pheasant reserve, decaying timber and compensation



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areas are important refuges for animals. About 7,000 planted trees of different species such as cork oak, wild cherry, rowan and cypress and several hectares flowering meadow for bees have been established alongside the cultivated area in the last 35 years.

### **Recognised: sustainable, ethical and regional engagement.**



Photovoltaic units, electric vehicles, water conserving systems and official tariff pay rates for seasonal workers are examples of how we support a sustainable and responsible approach to business. LaSelva is active internationally and regionally and this has received very special recognition. The estate in the Maremma has been honoured for competence in organic farming and for regional engagement by the Italian organisation “Legambiente” under the theme “Ruralità e innovazione in Maremma 2014” ([www.festambiente.it](http://www.festambiente.it)).

“**Nachhaltig bio!**”: As member of the BNN (Bundesverband Naturkost Naturwaren e.V. (Association of Organic Processors, Wholesalers and Retailers) LaSelva participates in the online campaign “Nachhaltig bio!” (<http://www.nachhaltigbio.de>).

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*Simple is not really so difficult: simple and genuine, natural and fresh. That is the secret of good Italian cooking and also the guiding principle of organic farming. Class instead of mass. Patience instead of speed.*

*Improvement, protection and conservation instead of plundering of nature.*

*Bio-quality, harvest fresh in the jar. Really very simple.*

### **Press service: [www.laselva.bio](http://www.laselva.bio)**

Pressinformation & images, films, interviews, press visits, cooperation.  
Online shop with product details, prices and lists of ingredients.

### **Contatto: Contact**

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### **International: LaSelva in specialist retailers.**

LaSelva Toskana Bio-Feinkost serves the home market (Italy), Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Scandinavia, France, Poland, Czech Republic, Romania, Japan and the USA. LaSelva products are in specialist organic food stores, in health food shops and in delicacies and wine stores.



Slow Food®  
Deutschland e.V.

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**Whether vegan, “free from” or low allergy: a large proportion of the about 200 organic fine food specialities and the 15 organic wines meet current demands.** The diverse foods from LaSelva range from the multi purpose tomato, to olives, anti-pasti, conserved vegetables, fine jellies, pesto, vinegar and olive oil. International prized wines, prosecco and spumante, espresso coffee, passito and grappa, cantucci, pasta, pizza bases and confectionary complete the Italian fine food offer.

**Organic awareness: organic identity, control and certification.**

The environmental awareness and responsibility in LaSelva is rooted in the co-founding of the Naturland Association by Karl Egger in the early 1980s. LaSelva was also the first foreign Naturland company. Since not all suppliers have Naturland certification, but still produce very good organic foods, LaSelva products are certified by ICEA (Istituto per la Certificazione Etica e Ambientale), partly by Naturland, and according to the EC regulation, depending on the share of their own and supplied raw materials 834/2007.

LaSelva, through its many years of experience in organic farming, places special demands on its partners, offers its customers transparency and guarantees additional personal control. The network is locally, regionally and nationally manageable and proven over many years. The purchase of raw materials from abroad is restricted to organic ingredients that are difficult to source or not available in Italy, such as dried fruit, spices and capers.

**At a glance: LaSelva società bioagricola a r.l., Albinia – Orbetello in Toscana (GR)**

**791 ha total area:** 84 % arable, 6 % grassland, 10 % Mediterranean forest.

**Crops:** 60 ha tomatoes, 6.7 ha basil, 2.6 ha other herbs, 31 ha vegetables, 6.0 ha fruit crops, 16 ha sunflower, 216 ha cereals, 293 ha forage, 31 ha vineyard.

**Livestock:** 130 Chianina cattle (cows and calves, young animals) and 80 Apennin sheeps.

**Winery:** 180,000 bottles of redwine, 30,000 bottles white wine and 5,000 bottles of spumante per year. In addition: prosecco, passito and grappa.

**Processing:** Manufacturing on the farm, processing plant on a 12,000 m<sup>2</sup> site in Donoratico.

**Organic certification:** Controlled according to EC Directive 834/2007, certified through ICEA (Istituto per la Certificazione Etica e Ambientale) and the LaSelva Estate is certified through the Naturland Association.

**Agriturismo:** Renting of rooms and apartments, also suitable for groups.

**Farm tours and wine tastings:** On request.

**Staff: LaSelva Tuscan organic fine food and wine international.**

Up to 260 colleagues work for LaSelva in sales, cultivation and production in several countries. The employees in cultivation and processing come from the local area and are paid according to agreed official tariffs.