



# My Secret Garden

BY SUSAN HUSTON | PHOTOS COURTESY OF STEPHEN SVACINA

GIARDINO TORRIGIANI WAS HOME TO ITALY'S FIRST FASHION SHOW.

**F**LORENCE, Italy--You never know when you will find a hidden gem in a historic city.

As a family, we love gardens. My husband and I had already been to the famous Boboli Gardens in Florence. However beautiful, the hordes of people in the garden was not what I wanted. Since, Florence was one of our stops, with a little research I came upon Giardino Torrigiani, a 16-acre garden in the heart of the city. Pouring over the Torrigiani family's website, viewing photos and reading about the largest privately owned English-style garden in Europe, I knew this was meant for us.

The "giardino," Italian for garden, is off the beaten path, located in the Oltrarno section of Florence but still within minutes of the hectic historic city center.



After inquiring about a tour through the garden's website, I was surprised and delighted to hear via e-mail from the Marquis Vieri Torrigiani Malaspina, one of the two noble families that still own and live in this magical place.

Imagine my surprise when the Marquis

Owner Marquis Torrigiani guides the tour. (Above) The garden dates back to the 16th Century.

Torrigiani messaged me with the details of the tour that he noticed I was in the fashion business. "I want to tell you only one story, because you write about

fashion. Do you know Italian fashion was born in my garden?" he wrote me. OK, he had my attention. To be able to actually see the very place that Italian fashion was born would be a double treat!

The Marquis Torrigiani told me about a tenant who had lived in their villa in the early 50's—Gio-

vanni Giorgini. He was friends with the great Italian designers: Pucci, Sorelle Fontana, Fabiani, Simonetta, Carosa, Capucci and others. Giovanni decided why should buyers go to Paris to see fashion shows celebrating Italian designers when a fashion show could be produced in Italy in the villa of Giardino