



Il Bosco di Puck

Puck's Grove

Il Bosco di Puck is situated near **Cortona** in eastern Tuscany: more than 4 hectares (10 acres) of oak forest with activity structures and a 400-sqm Tuscan villa that also offers B&B accommodation in an idyllic setting. Our complex is specially designed for activities involving animals and their beneficial interactions with humans: in pet therapy, motor-skill activities and dog-training. It's a place where flora and wild fauna, domestic animals and people try to live together in harmony and to their mutual benefit.

Il Bosco di Puck is an officially recognised *university research centre*, studying the conditions in which natural environments and animals can have a positive effect on the health and wellbeing of human beings, and where staff are developing innovative therapy interventions. In cooperation with the Affective Ecology Laboratory at the University of the Valle d'Aosta (IT) (*il Laboratorio di Ecologia Affettiva dell'Università della Valle d'Aosta*), il Bosco di Puck collaborates on the international research project "NEWH: Nature, Environment, Wellbeing and Health", coordinated by the University of Surrey (UK). In particular, the staff of il Bosco di Puck have been entrusted with defining and developing therapeutic activities and programmes carried out in natural environments with and without animal assistance.

Il Bosco di Puck is a *Green Care Laboratory*, where children and adults can experience nature in a way that today's lifestyles have made ever more distant and unknown. By 'Green Care Laboratory', we mean personal experiences that foster awareness of and deepen our relationship with the natural world: the more we understand and the more personally we experience nature, the better we can take care of nature and nature can take care of us, in myriad ways. Research has shown that activities can be more effective in improving health and wellbeing if they take place in an appropriate natural environment and even more so if they are carried out with animal assistance: in educational, therapeutic, rehabilitative and motor-skill-focused activities, among others.

In addition, il Bosco di Puck is a well-equipped *dog-training centre and kennel club* where dogs and their human companions can learn to live together with greater pleasure and serenity, to their mutual benefit – but above all, a place where they can discover many ways to have fun and improve their health together. Our canine centre is quite innovative for Italy, promoting those dog-owner initiatives that in other countries have proven extremely effective in improving quality of life both for humans and animals, raising environmental awareness, promoting health, facilitating relationships, and enhancing the value of our territory.

The preparation of a dog-owner pairing, therefore, must take into account all those aspects described above in such a way that the training programme and methods used are in harmony with them.

In addition to the usual activities of basic instruction and obedience training, several other types of courses are available, for example: the human-dog way of life, dog walking groups, country agility training, experiential and sensory trails in the woods for both dogs and people, dog-owner hide-and-seek games to hone dogs' skills and add mental challenge in a fun way, and so on.

We can also help people with special needs – for example, children or the elderly and their families – in the choice, adoption and individualised training of their new four-footed companion.

Specific protocols and specialized professionals are also dedicated to the selection and training of dogs that can be of assistance to persons with psychophysical issues or specific pathologies, while respecting and ensuring the dog's wellbeing.

Training courses on all these themes are currently available at our present site in the woods, which can also host people and their dogs in *Bed & Breakfast* accommodation.