



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **HOTEL CASTELLO DI CASOLE BECOMES THE FIRST ITALIAN PROPERTY TO JOIN VIRTUOSO®'S ELITE PREVIEW PROGRAM**

*Hotel Castello di Casole Ramps Up its Pre-Opening Efforts by Aligning Itself with Virtuoso in an Exclusive Year-Long Agreement that Provides Sales, Marketing and Even a Dedicated Virtuoso Travel Agent Advisory Board*

**NEW YORK (November 30, 2011)** – Slated for an April 2012 opening, **Hotel Castello di Casole** is proactively courting **Virtuoso®**, its elite agency membership and ultimately their highly desirable clientele by joining Virtuoso's Preview program. Designed to give hotels an advantage during the crucial pre-opening phase, the Preview program provides networking opportunities as well as participation in Virtuoso's advisor education programs, its award-winning marketing initiatives and, most importantly, targeted sales support. As part of this support system, the hotel will have a dedicated Virtuoso Travel Agent Advisory Board comprised of nine of the travel industry's most respected travel professionals. This brain trust provides input in matters that impact travel agents and their ability to sell the property effectively.

Typically, Virtuoso waits until a hotel is open for one year before extending an invitation to join its prestigious Hotels & Resorts Program, a collection of more than 900 of the world's best properties. Preview hotels are the exception to the rule, and each is carefully selected based on the unique attributes of the hotel, the reputation and experience of the opening team, its dedication to working with travel advisors and the hotel's ability to deliver an exceptional experience upon its opening. In exchange for having access to Virtuoso's membership and assets, **Hotel Castello di Casole** and all Preview hotels commit to a one-year exclusive relationship with Virtuoso, whereby hotels agree to not participate with other travel agency networks. As a result, clients of Virtuoso members receive unique benefits and offers not available anywhere else in the market.

Located in the Tuscan region of Italy, ever-popular for its gorgeous landscapes and rich artistic legacy, **Hotel Castello di Casole** has the distinction of being the first [hotel in Tuscany](#) and property in Italy to join the prestigious Preview collection, a move that will undoubtedly prove popular with Virtuoso's membership. The destination consistently ranks as a favorite in Virtuoso's Luxe Report advisor poll as well as its consumer-facing VIRTUOSO LIFE Travel Dreams survey.

Albert Herrera, vice president of hotels, destinations and tours at Virtuoso said, "The Preview program seeks out unique hotels in destinations that appeal to our members and their clients. Hotel Castello di Casole certainly meets the criteria, as well as the exacting standards we have for any of the preferred properties in our network. With the assistance of the Virtuoso Travel Agent Advisory Board, we look forward to lending insight, maximizing the network's assets and working with the team at Hotel Castello di Casole to create a successful opening and drive the highest sales figures possible."

Once home to Italian royalty, the recently renovated 10<sup>th</sup>-century castle situated on a 4,200-acre private estate in Tuscany, Castello di Casole will offer rustic elegance and stunning panoramic views of its surrounding vineyards and olive groves. The [Tuscan hotel](#) features five unique styles for a total of 41 suites, blending grand Italian design with custom Tuscan furnishings, reflecting the region's landscape and rich history. Other compelling features and amenities of the property include a 5,400-square-foot Essere Spa with a fitness center and outdoor spa garden; a restored 18<sup>th</sup>-century chapel, ideal for weddings and private dinners; Ristorante Tosca, for fine-dining; Pazzia gourmet pizzeria; as well as Bar Visconti, with its unparalleled wine and cocktail menu.

In addition to the beautiful suites, Castello di Casole offers travelers the opportunity to rent one of six remarkable countryside Farmhouses and live among the vineyards and sweeping hills of the historic estate. The secluded Farmhouses are peaceful, private homes surrounded by acres of open space. Available for weekly rentals, the Farmhouses accommodate eight to twelve guests.

For smaller groups seeking the Farmhouse experience, guests also have an enticing option with the Hotel Villas at Castello di Casole. These authentic homes feature conveniences such as spacious kitchens, sumptuous baths and outdoor dining areas. Hotel Villas are available for nightly or weekly rentals and can accommodate four to six guests.

“We are thrilled that Hotel Castello di Casole is joining the Virtuoso Preview program,” said David Burden, CEO & Founder of Timber Resorts. “I am extremely proud of the development of this property in particular, and I trust that it will truly benefit from Virtuoso’s assistance during its launch. The Preview program has proven to be a great success because of Virtuoso’s dedication and high-end service, which are both qualities that Timber Resorts values and shares. The advisory board will only strengthen the active role that Virtuoso will play in pre-opening sales and awareness when entering into such a competitive international market.”

As dedicated members of Hotel Castello di Casole’s Travel Agent Advisory Board, these Virtuoso advisors will collaborate with the property to ensure it appeals to and suits the needs of their discerning clientele. The following members have been hand-picked to participate on this dedicated board:

Stacy Small, Elite Travel International  
Audrey Gould, ProTravel International  
Linda Schuller, ProTravel International  
Annette Sordoni, ProTravel International  
Rudi Steele, Rudi Steele Travel  
Maria Olga Borgoño, Turismo Cocha  
Martha Gaughen, Sterling Brownell  
Sue Brown, Sue Brown Travel  
Judy Kurzban, Valerie Wilson Travel

For more information on Hotel Castello di Casole, please visit: [www.castellodicasole.com](http://www.castellodicasole.com).

For reservations, guests can contact a Virtuoso advisor by calling **855-570-3830** or by visiting [www.virtuoso.com](http://www.virtuoso.com).

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**About Virtuoso:**

**Virtuoso®** is the industry’s leading luxury travel network. This by-invitation-only organization comprises over 330 agencies with more than 7,200 elite travel specialists in 20 countries in North and South America, the Caribbean, Australia and New Zealand, as well as over 1,250 of the world’s best travel providers and premier destinations. The network’s member agencies generate over \$9.6 billion annually in travel sales, making the group the most powerful in the luxury travel segment. Their relationships with the finest travel companies provide the network’s affluent clientele with exclusive amenities, rare experiences and privileged access. Virtuoso is the exclusive network of travel services and benefits provided by MasterCard® for participating World Elite MasterCard® programs. To view Virtuoso’s latest video content, visit <http://www.youtube.com/user/VirtuosoTraveler>.

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