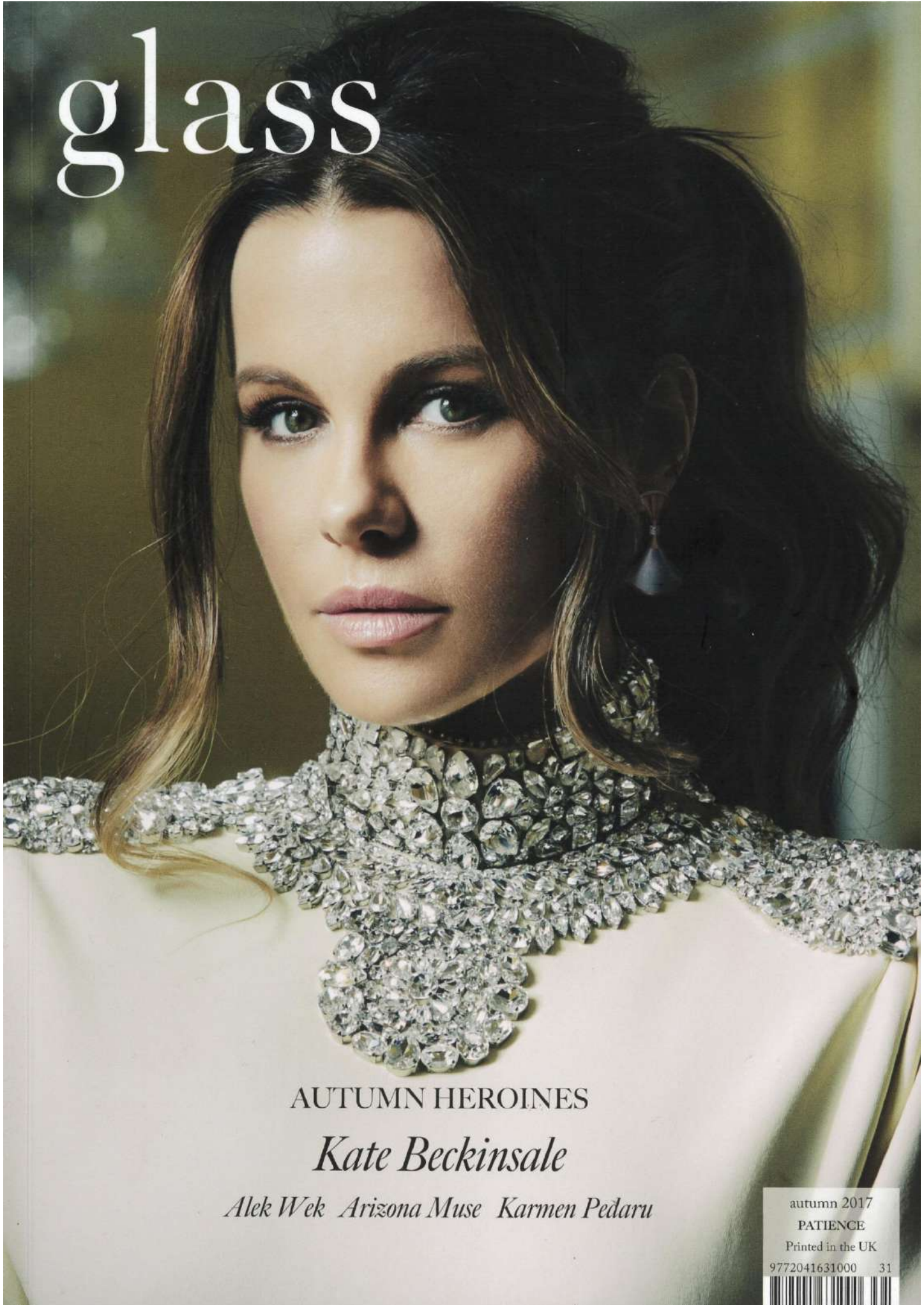


# glass



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## VILLA POGGI

Tuscany, Italy

### BUCOLIC AND WINSOME

Villa Poggi is set among the rolling hills of Italy's Maremma region in Southern Tuscany, a picturesque two-and-a-half hour drive from Pisa into ever more remote countryside. All the famous Tuscan signifiers are present and correct: blissfully bucolic panoramas dotted with serried rows of cypress trees, medieval walled towns, castles, and, of course, superlative food and wine.

The family-sized villa is winsomely rustic. Think high stone walls lost to jasmine in full bloom; with beamed ceilings; terracotta-tone interiors and tiled floors. Languid, unaffected and romantic, it's quintessentially Italian. Sunny climes encourage alfresco barbecues in the glorious giardino as dramatic sunsets paint a daily-changing picture: a dramatic splash of vivid Montepulciano one evening, a delicate watercolour the next.

Despite our initial concerns – “but what will we do here?” (the nearest town, Scansano is seven miles away) – we quickly slip from our frenzied London state into an altogether more relaxed rhythm. A morning swim in the heated infinity pool, lunchtime picnics on clover-dappled lawns, followed by a siesta or a few chapters from a classic novella from the well-stocked library. Villa Poggi's well-equipped kitchen is manna for aspiring chefs. A pleasure rather than a London late supper chore, even I manage to whip up a surprisingly good seafood risotto.

We amble into Scansano via taxi one day, if only to snap out of our sun-basking lizard-like torpor. Famed for its wine and olive oil, it's a picture-perfect hill-top town criss-crossed by atmospheric cobbled alleys. At the heart of this medieval tapestry is the ancient piazza embroidered with hanging baskets in full bloom, beneath which docile cats slumber in the midsummer heat. Our most pressing decision? Which osteria to choose for lunch.

For the more active, Tuscany Now & More will arrange tours of Chianti's famous vineyards by dinky Fiat 500, or truffle-foraging for foodies. The spectacular Monti dell'Uccellina is less than an hour's drive away: an utterly unspoilt three-mile strip of white sand and sparkling Mediterranean sea, saved from development and accorded nature reserve status. I stay put: Negroni at hand on Villa Poggi's elegant poolside terrace, watching dragonflies hover over the infinity pool and dreaming of a Tuscan bolt-hole of our own one day.

– By Thea Lewis-Yates

*Tuscany Now & More (tuscanynowandmore.com, 0207 684 8884) offers I Poggi from £4,121 per week for up to 16 people on a self-catering basis. Tuscany Now & More features a range of properties across the region and Italy and can provide private chefs, excursions and other services upon request.*

*The Art of Leisure (theartofleisure.com) is also available for custom-tailored private tours and activities throughout Italy.*

