

ITALY WITH FRIENDS "MAGICAL VISTA'S " TOUR

April 27 – May 9, 2019

(Itinerary is subject to change and variations with and/or without notice.)

Day 0 - Depart USA - Friday, April 26, 2019 - You will fly into Milan's Malpensa airport. (Remember you will arrive in Europe the day after you depart the USA.)

Day 1 - Arrival Day - Benvenuto! - Welcome to Italy - Saturday, April 27, 2019

Welcome to Italy! Arrive into Milan Malpensa Airport for pickup and transfer by 2PM to the town of Stresa, which sits on the banks of Lake Maggiore, one of the most beautiful spots in Italy. Lake Maggiore is ringed by mountains and dotted with the Borromeo islands. Here you will have time to relax and enjoy the natural beauty that surrounds you from your hotel balcony or from the wonderful rooftop terrace of Hotel Palma. We will explore the small town of Stresa and enjoy a welcome dinner that you will remember forever. We will hop a boat for Isola del Pescatori, or Fisherman's island. Here we will dine under the stars and enjoy delicious food and wine of the Piedmont region. (D) Light

Day 2 - Lago Como and Bellagio, the Pearl of the Lake - Sunday, April 28, 2019

Today we make an excursion to Lake Como, in the Lombardy region. Lake Como is a hazy, lazy lake lined with lovely villas, and crowned with snowcapped mountains. It has been the home to the rich and famous and a major holiday destination for centuries. We will visit the town of Como, known for its silk production. From here you can hop a ferry to visit other sites and towns on the lake. Bellagio, self-proclaimed "Pearl of the Lake" is beautiful. You will have plenty of time to immerse yourself in this beautiful setting. We will take time to enjoy lunch together in this lovely setting.

We will return to Stresa and you will have time to enjoy more of this lovely lakeside village. (B) (L) Moderate

Day 3 - Lago Maggiore and the Piedmont region - Monday, April 29, 2019

We will spend the morning exploring this magical setting. We will take a ferry ride on the lake and visit the Borromeo Islands, with a stop at Isola Bella where you find the amazing 17th century Palazzo Borromeo. There will be time to tour inside the palazzo and stroll the grounds, maybe even see the white peacocks.

We will then head southwest to another famous wine region of Italy, the Piedmonte. We will pass through northwest Italy and the fertile plains of the Piedmont region where you will see many fields of rice. We will stay in a pretty little hotel that sits high on a hill. You will fall in love with the views that surround you, especially the hill town of Castiglione Falletto in the distance. Hotel Tota Virginia is the perfect place to relax a bit after the busy lakes region. We will enjoy dinner together in the hotel's fine restaurant. (B) (D) Moderate

Day 4 - Piedmonte villages and the Italian Riviera - Tuesday, April 30, 2019

We will spend the morning exploring two of the UNESCO World Heritage villages in this area known as the Langhe hills. Both La Morra and Barolo are picturesque villages serving up some of the most famous wines in the hills. We will also take time for a visit of the 13th century Castle of Grinzane Cavour. This will definitely be a day of picture perfect vistas all around you.

We then head further south to the region of Liguria and another beautiful area of Italy, the Italian Riviera. We will pass close to Genoa, hometown of Christopher Columbus. The seaside village of Sestri Levante will be our home for the next two nights. The Hotel Vis a' Vis enjoys a stunning, panoramic view of the blue-green Mediterranean. You will love the comfort and elegance of this hotel,

but the exceptional view will be what makes you never want to leave. You will have access to a relaxing pool and fitness center with a Sauna and massage room. Sestri Levante is a typical European resort town and you will find many shops and restaurants to enjoy. You will enjoy strolling along the beach and just exploring the town. You will have time to settle in before we meet on the hotel terrace to experience that magnificent view and perhaps enjoy a refreshing cocktail. We will then get acquainted with Sestri Levante and enjoy dinner along its lovely promenade.

Later, do not miss the chance to enjoy a nightcap with those amazing views from the hotel terrace bar. Salute! (B) (D) Moderate

Day 5 - La Dolce Far Niente (The sweetness of doing nothing) - Wednesday, May 1, 2019

Today you will have the entire day for your own pursuits. You can stay in Sestri Levante and enjoy all of the amenities of the Vis a' Vis hotel or visit one of the private beaches in town. You can take a boat ride to Portofino, the playground of the rich and famous. You could even visit Genoa, about an hour train ride away.

One of the most popular day trips in the region is the Cinque Terre, a string of five path-connected villages along the Mediterranean Sea. The tiny fishing villages cling to the seaside cliffs overlooking the breaking waters below. These villages are full of simple charm and natural beauty. Each has a personality of its own as well. You can visit all five villages by train, boat or by hiking the paths. The easy path between the villages of Riomaggiore and Manarola is called the Via dell' Amore. Vernazza, is known as the jewel of the Cinque Terre. Corniglia sits high on the cliff and has magnificent views. Monterosso al Mare has a wonderful beach that you can enjoy.

Also, do not forget that dining in Italy is one of life's great pleasures. It takes on a whole new meaning here along the coast. Do not miss the opportunity to savor the excellent food and wine from this region. The restaurants offer some of the best seafood you will ever taste. Fishing has been the lifeblood of the area residents for centuries. You can count on enjoying a good seafood dinner every night in this area with seafood fresh off the boat. Pesto is also a local product and is used on many dishes and is delicious. The focaccia bread is another local delicacy. There are also some very good wines made here along the coast. All these products are available at little shops throughout the area. (B) Light to Strenuous, your choice.

Day 6 - Lucca, a Tuscan Treasure - Thursday, May 2, 2019

Take some time this morning to enjoy one last look at that awesome view from your hotel in Sestri Levante.

Today we make our way to Tuscany and our first stop will be in Lucca, to visit one of Italy's most impressive fortress city which is encircled by a perfectly intact wall. The Roman grid streets are filled with Romanesque churches and towers, one with a tree on top. Lucca is easy to enjoy, and you will have time to do just that on your "Delectable Tour". You will have a walking tour to see its historic monuments along with stops at traditional shops that feature local food products. Afterwards you will have some free time to enjoy Lucca to the max! We will stay at Villa Alexandra for the night and enjoy dinner together inside the city walls. (B) (L) (D) Moderate

Day 7 - The Heart of Tuscany - Friday, May 3, 2019

We will begin our day with a stop to visit one of Italy's most famous sights, the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Pisa sits near the coast on the Arno River. The Field of Miracles complex includes the leaning bell tower, a beautiful cathedral and a very interesting cemetery. You will have time to enjoy everything.

Then we will make our way deeper into this beautiful region of Tuscany. We will take time for a stop at the American Military Cemetery located just outside of Florence. The compelling sight of endless rows of white marble crosses recalls the heroism of the young Americans who fought so valiantly to free Italy from the grips of fascism during World War II. The 1940's may seem very long ago, but during

WWII this area was terribly ravaged by the fighting. I feel it is an honor and our duty to take time to pay our respects to these brave soldiers.

Then you are in for a very special treat. This group will have the opportunity to stay in one of my favorite "little slices of Tuscan Heaven". La Corte dei Papi Relais is an oasis of quiet and peace in a small valley near Cortona. This country house has been restored by David and Gabriella Papi with love and respect to create a romantic, luxury hotel. Its restaurant is renown with dishes prepared with the freshest of ingredients and elegantly presented. We will spend the next two nights here where you can relax a bit and soak in all of Tuscany that you can. After time to settle in, we will enjoy dinner together in this very special setting. (B) (D) Moderate

Day 8 - A Wonderful Day at the Winery - Saturday, May 4, 2019

Savor some time to relax this morning before we continue our Tuscan exploration. We will wind our way through some of the lovely countryside filled with vineyards and tiny hamlets to the Avignonesi Winery for a tour of their ancient ageing cellars followed by lunch. This unforgettable gourmet lunch will be accompanied by estate wines; and the setting is spectacular! Believe me, you will not be in any hurry to depart. Afterwards, we will drive into the high hill town of Cortona for a visit. Who hasn't seen "Under the Tuscan Sun"?? (B) (L) Light

Day 9 - Umbria, the Green Heart of Italy - Sunday, May 5, 2019

This morning we will head to the region of Umbria, known as the Green Heart of Italy. It is another beautiful area filled with forests and stunning hill towns. Orvieto sits majestically atop an outcrop of volcanic tufa stone with thousands of caves underneath the city, dug out during Etruscan, Medieval and Renaissance times. Orvieto was once an important Etruscan city. Today it is famous for one of Italy's most beautiful Gothic cathedrals with a miracle behind its construction, and a delicious white wine, Orvieto Classico.

You will have plenty of time to enjoy this grand hill town. You must visit inside the Duomo, 300 years in construction, with its San Brizio Chapel covered in frescos by Luca Signorelli. There will also be time for a tour of the fascinating Orvieto Underground to see thousands of years of archaeological history. You will have use of the Orvieto Unica Card that gets you into all sorts of places, museums, etc. There are plenty of things in Orvieto to see. If you like, you are only a bus ride away from Civita de Bagnoregio, a tiny village perched high on a pinnacle in a huge canyon. Of course, shopping is wonderful in Orvieto. There will also be time for a tasting of the regional wines including the famous Orvieto Classico.

Hotel Virgilio is a lovely little hotel located right in front of the Orvieto Duomo. We will meet for dinner at the Trattoria Tipica Etrusca which specializes in Etruscan dishes and hides a secret underground chamber. (B) (D) Moderate

Day 10 - Ancient Pompeii and the Sorrentine Peninsula - Monday, May 6, 2019

Today we head to Southern Italy for a visit to one of the most beautiful areas in Italy. The Divine Coast south of Naples is truly memorable. Here mountains erupt from the Mediterranean and pastel-hued villages cling to their sides. This area is filled with dazzling antiquities like Pompeii and breathtaking natural wonders. We will spend 3 days in this picturesque region.

When Mount Vesuvius erupted in AD 79, the lively port city of Pompeii was perfectly preserved by the volcano's ashes. Pompeii has amazed visitors since its discovery in the 18th century. Exquisite mosaics and wall paintings among the ruins of theaters, shops, homes and temples offer total immersion into the ancient Roman world. We will visit the site with a local guide and enjoy a tour throughout the excavations.

We will then head to Sorrento, known as the city of orange and lemon groves, which you will see everywhere. The perfume of the citrus trees is a reminder to sample the local liqueur, Lemoncello. You will find panoramic sea views from many points in town, including from your balcony at Hotel Il

Nido. We will explore Sorrento and its narrow Roman-grid streets, then sit down and enjoy a delicious dinner. (B) (D) Strenuous

Day 11 - La Dolce Vita in Paradise - Tuesday, May 7, 2019

You will have time today to enjoy more of this heavenly location just as you like. You can spend more time in Sorrento. You could take a train or bus to other areas along the coast. Take a cooking class. You could hop a ferry to the magical Isle of Capri. Hire a private boat for fun in the Mediterranean. It is your day to spend as you like, enjoying "the good life." (B)

Day 12 - Picturesque Villages and Amazing Views along the Divine Amalfi Coast - Wednesday, May 8, 2018

Today will be a full day of discovery on a drive along the famous Amalfi Coast, the most amazing of all the Mediterranean shores. It has also been designated a UNESCO World Heritage site. You will visit the vertical town of Positano, where colorful houses cling to a hillside overlooking the sea. Continue to Amalfi, once a mighty maritime republic. Enjoy a walk through the town and a visit to the Duomo di Sant' Andrea which glitters when the sun strikes the gold mosaics on its pediment. If time permits, you can continue your scenic ride up to the charming town of Ravello, with those never-ending views of the turquoise blue sea. We will dine together one last time at the hotel's fine restaurant with those amazing views. (B) (D) Light

Day 13 - Arrivederci Italia! - Thursday, May 9, 2019

It is time to say "arrivederci". You will transfer to the Naples Airport to catch your flight home. Parting will be such sweet sorrow, but I know you will take along wonderful memories of time spent enjoying all those amazing Italian "Magical Vistas" with new friends. (B)

(Included meals are designated each day with (B) for breakfast, (L) for lunch, and (D) for dinner.)

*******There will be the opportunity to travel to Rome on Thursday, May 9th for drop off at the Rome Fiumicino Airport. That way you can spend a few days in Rome or just plan your air travel departing from Rome. Sometimes it is easier and less expensive to leave or arrive out of Rome.**

THE FOLLOWING IS INCLUDED IN YOUR ITALY WITH FRIENDS TOUR:

- 12 nights' accommodation in 3-4 star, centrally located hotels with private bath or shower.
- Many meals included: 12 breakfasts (B), 2 lunches (L), 8 dinners (D).
- All ground transportation in Italy during tour. (Does not include airfare.)
- Does include pickup from Milan Malpensa airport and transfer to Stresa during specified hours. Also includes transfer to Naples airport on departure date during specified hours. If you choose to arrive early or stay a few days, all transfers to and from airport or train stations will be at your own cost.
- Guided sightseeing and entrance fees to select sights, wineries and museums as described in itinerary.
- Local VAT taxes and government fees, gas, highway tolls and parking fees.
- Pre-tour visit with helpful travel information.
- Plenty of memories to last a lifetime.
- Surprises along the way.

NOT INCLUDED IN TOUR:

- Does not include airfare.
- Does not include remaining meals, alcoholic or non-alcoholic drinks at included meals.
- Does not include personal expenses such as internet use, laundry, mini-bar, or extra transportation in tour towns.
- Does not include travel insurance.
- Does not include city tax required in each hotel. Can range from 1 – 6 Euro per person per night.

ITALY WITH FRIENDS 2019 - LAND ONLY TOUR PRICES:

Tour begins in Milan and ends in Naples.

Tour is for 13days/12nights.

The total cost per person is **\$3950.00** with double occupancy.

(Includes Euro exchange rate adjustment. Does not include local city hotel tax)

Traveling solo? Sadly, most hotels only have a few single rooms, so many times they provide what they term "double for single use". They do however, charge a premium for the luxury of staying alone. I am faced with this all the time. If you cannot find a partner, I will be glad to match up single travelers if at all possible. Otherwise, the single supplement for this tour is **\$850.00** extra per person.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS:

Prepare for a physically demanding tour. (***Luckily, this particular tour is fairly easy.**) Age is not a concern so long as you are physically fit, a very good walker at an energetic pace, and able to stand for extended periods of time and climb lots of hills and stairs. All of the above could be done in all sorts of weather and temperatures. You are required to load and unload your bags into the van, and to carry your bag to your room. This sometimes could be a short distance from the hotel. Most days our sightseeing will cover anywhere from 2-8 miles of walking, sometimes over uneven surfaces. Plan to get in shape before you head to Italy.