



19 Park Avenue, Avalon Beach, NSW, Australia 2107
m. 0405340499 gregpashley@gmail.com
www.europeanwalks.com.au



2015 Exploring the Italian Coast

Version 1 - 24th March 2014

DAY 1 Sun 17 May Milano After arriving in Milano check in at the Una Hotel Century Via F. Filzi 25/B Stazione Centrale, Milano from 1400 on. You may choose to relax in the hotel or do some sightseeing in this vibrant city - a centre of fashion and innovation. Highlights include the Duomo, the Opera House, Leonardo da Vinci's 'Last Supper' (**must be booked in advance**) and the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele. The afternoon and evening are free to explore the city. We are staying for 1 night at the UNA Hotel Century in Milano

DAY 2 Mon 18 May Milano to La Spezia 1000 leave the UNA Hotel Century. We will then head south on A1 towards Parma, stopping for lunch in **Cremona**. Taking A15 we will drive south west across the Appenines to La Spezia, a major naval base. The afternoon and evening are free to explore the city. We are staying for 3 nights at the Hotel Firenze e Continentale in La Spezia **B**

DAY 3 Tue 19 May WALK 1 Cinque Terre 5km Grade 2 After breakfast we will take the train to **Riomaggiore**, the southernmost of the 5 villages of the Cinque Terre. We will then walk along the coast on Sentiero Azzuro (the Blue Trail) to **Manarola** and **Corniglia**, past vineyards and orchards that cling to the steep slopes. This is one of the most spectacular coast walks in Europe. The villages are picturesque and the true beauty of the Cinque Terre can only be appreciated on foot. There will be plenty of time to explore the villages and we should be able to take a cooling swim in the azure Mediterranean. In the afternoon we will take the train back to La Spezia and our hotel. **B D**

DAY 4 Wed 20 May WALK 2 Cinque Terre 6km Grade 3 This morning we will travel by train to Corniglia. The Sentiero Azzuro continues on to the village of **Vernazza**, with its tiny harbour and colourful architecture. Then an invigorating climb will take us up and over to the final village: **Monterosso**. After a short exploration we will board a boat to cruise the length of the Cinque Terre, via Portovenere, back to La Spezia. **B**

DAY 5 Thu 21 May La Spezia to San Gimignano Leaving La Spezia we will head south past Carrara (the source of the finest marble in Italy) to the beautiful city of **Lucca**, rated in Lonely Planet – Best 10 Cities in the World. After lunch our destination is **Pisa**. We stop to see arguably the most impressive collection of Renaissance buildings in the world. The Campo dei Miracoli contains the Duomo, Baptistry and Campanile (Leaning Tower). After that we head up into the hills of Tuscany to San Gimignano, a beautiful hill town, famed for its amazing towers. We are staying for 4 nights in the nearby village of Pancole, at Hotel Le Renaie. **B D**



Riomaggiore - on the Cinque Terre



Capri from the Villa San Michele



Campo dei Miracoli – Pisa, Tuscany

DAY 6 Fri 22 May WALK 3 San Gimignano - Tuscany 5km Grade 2 The walk starts in Pancole and follows the Via Francigena pilgrim route. Our first stop will be at the pilgrims' church in Pancole, then on through vineyards and olive groves, past secluded Tuscan villas to the main road leading to San Gimignano. You will then have the rest of the day to explore one of the finest walled towns in Tuscany. When you are ready our vehicles will return you to our hotel in Pancole. **B D**

DAY 7 Sat 23 May Firenze An hour's drive will take into the centre of the magnificent city of Firenze (Florence) which we have a day to explore. A focal point should be a PRIVATE walking tour of the city. There is so much to see in this Renaissance city – the Academia with Michelangelo's David, the magnificent Duomo, the Ponte Vecchio, the great churches of Santa Croce and Santa Maria Novella. This is the city of Dante, the Medici and Machiavelli. Once back in Pancole we can have dinner at the hotel or in San Gimignano **B**

DAY 8 Sun 24 May WALK 4 Vines and Views – Gambassi Terme 6km Grade 2 After a late breakfast we will do a walk from Gambassi Terme to Pancole through vineyards and woods. The afternoon could be spent around the pool or in the gardens at the hotel or in San Gimignano. In the evening we will drive to the hill town of **Certaldo**, which I believe rivals its better known neighbour. If you wish you can have dinner in the old town at **Ristorante L'Antica Fonte**, with panoramic Tuscan views. **B**

DAY 9 Mon 25 May San Gimignano to Spoleto After breakfast we will drive to Monteriggioni, a fortified village and then to **Siena**. We will have the morning and afternoon to explore the historical centre around Piazza dei Campo. Don't miss the Duomo, with its famed pink, green and white marble pillars, the Palazzo Pubblico and the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo with its collection of Siennese paintings. In the late afternoon we will have to leave Siena and travel east past Lake Trasimeno and Assisi to Spoleto. We will stay for 3 nights in the Palazzo Dragoni in Spoleto. **B**

DAY 10 Tue 26 May Spoleto A day to explore the city the poet Shelley described as "the most romantic city I ever saw". The medieval upper town is beguiling + you should really visit the Duomo and one of Italy's oldest churches – San Salvatore. The Rocca and the Ponte delle Torri are impressive. **B D**

DAY 11 Wed 27 May WALK 5 Assisi Heritage walk - 5km Grade 2 An hour's drive from Spoleto is **Assisi**. This beautiful medieval town has been an important pilgrimage site since the 13th century with the focus being the Basilica di San Francisco. The narrow streets of Assisi and wonderful views of the Umbrian countryside make the town a perfect place to wander at leisure. Our walk will take us to the Rocca (a ruined fortress) to the Basilica and then to the central piazza with the Roman Temple of Diana. We will return to Spoleto via the Hermitage and Spello **B**

DAY 12 Thu 28 May **Spoletto to Sorrento** Farewelling the hills of Umbria and Tuscany, today involves a fair drive south to Sorrento and the Amalfi Coast. We will use the A1 to bypass Roma and travel through the province of Lazio. After stopping for lunch on the autostrada we will enter Campania. In the afternoon we will bypass Napoli before finally reaching the **Sorrento Peninsula**. The wonderful sea views and steep cliffs will provide a spectacular welcome to the south of Italy. We will be staying for 4 nights at the Hotel La Tonnarella in Sorrento. **B D**



A tricky landing at Manarola



Excavations at Herculaneum



Hotel Le Renaie, Pancole, Tuscany

DAY 13 Fri 29 May **Capri** An early start to beat the crowds will see us boarding a fast boat to Marina Grande on the Isle of Capri. **Walk 6 Villa Jovis 4km Grade 3** will be our first activity before the heat of the day sets in. Winding uphill past exclusive villas it leads to Villa Jovis, from where Tiberius ruled the Roman Empire. Once you have explored the ruins, the day is yours. You could find your way back to the main town, Capri, with its stylish shops and pricey cafes but I prefer Capri's second town, **Ana Capri**. From Ana Capri you can take a chairlift to the highest point on the island for great views of the Bay of Naples and I Faraglioni. Nearby is the Villa San Michele, made famous by Alex Munthe's novel. Other attractions on Capri include the Grotta Azzurra (Blue Grotto). Later that afternoon or evening you will take the boat back across to Sorrento. **B**

DAY 14 Sat 30 May **WALK 7 Vesuvio 6km Grade 2** Heading north towards Napoli, we will drive to Torre de Greco and then turn east towards the volcano. The car park is unimpressive but soon we will be walking up the switchback path to the crater rim. The walk up may leave you breathless but the view of the Bay of Naples will take your breath away! The afternoon will be given over to visiting the ruins at nearby **Herculaneum**. The site is smaller than Pompeii but better preserved. In any case we will be returning to Sorrento later in the day and you will be free to explore the town or do whatever takes your fancy. Make sure you try a limoncello! **B**

DAY 15 Sun 31 May **Pompeii and Napoli**. This is a free day to visit the archaeological site of Pompeii, destroyed in the AD76 eruption of Vesuvius. Again, an early start is important to beat the crowds and the summer heat. We will be travelling by train and will meet our guide at the ruins. In the afternoon you may wish to take the train to visit Napoli. Some of the most important artifacts from Pompeii and Herculaneum are on display in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale. Napoli is quite an experience, daunting to some but not to be missed. Make sure you have a **Margherita Pizza**, possibly the best in Italy. We will return to Sorrento by boat. **B**

DAY 16 Mon 1 June **Sorrento to the Amalfi Coast** The road from Sorrento to Amalfi is one of the most scenic in Europe. High above the azure Mediterranean it clings to the steep cliffs. We will pass picturesque Positano before stopping for lunch in **Amalfi**. We are staying for 3 nights at Palazzo Ferraioli in Atrani. Atrani is my favourite village on the Amalfi Coast – authentic and not overrun by cruise ship passengers. Just a short walk from Amalfi but a world away. **B D**

DAY 17 Tue 2 June **WALK 8 Sentiera degli Dei – the Pathway of the Gods 8km Grade 3** This brilliant walk begins at Agerola and leads down towards Positano. The views are delightful and this will definitely be a highlight of the tour. After 3 hours we will reach the village of Nocelle and take the bus down into Positano, or walk the infamous 1100 steps. As you have lunch high above the Mediterranean you may like to compare the beauty of the Amalfi Coast with the allure of the Cinque Terre. After lunch we will take a cruise eastwards to Amalfi and then stroll back to Atrani **B**

DAY 18 Wed 3 June **WALK 9 Ravello to Atrani 4km Grade 3** The local bus will take us from Amalfi and to Ravello. Some say the views from this village are unsurpassed on this coast. Ravello is simply wonderful with two world famous gardens to explore, charming shops and beguiling alleyways. It is a great place for lunch, be it 5 star or budget. The walk down the gorge to Atrani is all downhill with quite a few steps but it is very interesting. Alternatively you can take the bus back to Amalfi. **B**

DAY 19 Thu 4 June **Amalfi Coast to Roma** As we drive to Salerno you can savour your last glimpses of the Amalfi Coast. We then join the autostrada at Stabia before continuing to Roma. We will stay for 2 nights at Little Rhone Suites, in Trastevere, Roma **B**

DAY 20 Fri 5 June **Roma** A free day to enjoy and explore Roma, the Eternal City". Roma is full of history and culture from the Etruscans, through the Ancient Romans, to the Renaissance and modern times. Included this morning is a guided tour of either your choice of **the Vatican, Sistine Chapel and St Peters Basilica** or **Ancient Rome** However there is much to do on your own. Capitoline Hill and the Roman Forum lead to the Colosseum and the Arch of Constantine and are easily explored on foot. The Capitoline Museums contains many great art works. Around Piazza Navona the *centro storico* is not to be missed nor are the Spanish Steps near Piazza di Spagna. A personal favourite is the **Villa Borghese**, a magnificent garden overlooking the city. Museums, churches and monuments dot the city of Roma. **B**

DAY 21 Sat 6 June **Tour ends in Roma 1000 B**

NB B = breakfast D = Dinner

INCLUSIONS

- **20 nights accommodation** Breakfast every day + 6 dinners
- **Travel by minibus**
- **the services of qualified English speaking guides and drivers**
- **9 guided walks** Comprehensive travel notes
- **ENTRY FEES** Florence – Academia Capri – Villa Jovis Mt Vesuvius Archaeological Museum in Napoli Pompeii and Herculaneum excavations
- **TOURS** Roma – Vatican Museum, Sistine Chapel & St Peters OR Ancient Rome Walking tour of Florence Guided tours of Pompeii & Herculaneum
- **EXTRAS** 3 day Cinque Terre Pass incl trains half day bicycle in Lucca chairlift in Anacapri
- **CRUISES** Cinque Terre return jetcat to Capri Positano to Amalfi Napoli to Sorrento
- **FARES** Capri -Bus & funicular Circumvesuviana train Amalfi coast – bus Sorrento – bus

17 May – 6 June 2015