



# HARVARD

Alumni Association

## PORTRAIT OF ITALY

SEPTEMBER 13-28, 2018

From the breathtaking Amalfi Coast to timeless Venice, experience the ancient sites, art, and stunning scenery of Italy. Start in colorful Amalfi with the spectacular view from the Ravello hilltop. Visit Pompeii, the wonderfully preserved Roman town that tells a tale both tragic and fascinating. In Rome, witness monumental St. Peter's Basilica and see the Sistine Chapel in Vatican Museums. Travel through the rolling hills of Umbria and attend a cooking demonstration and dinner at a Culinary Art Institute in Orvieto's historic district. Tour Siena, another gem of Tuscany, and Florence, city of Renaissance artists and thinkers. Depart from Venice, the floating city with its famous canals.

**GROUP SIZE:** 12-24 guests

**PRICING:** To be announced

**STUDY LEADER:**

**LINO PERTILE**, an Italian linguist, is the Carl A. Pescosolido Professor of Romance Languages and Literatures at Harvard University. Born in Italy near Padua, he taught at the universities of Reading, Sussex and Edinburgh, prior to moving on to Harvard.

His specialty is Dante scholarship, a field in which he has published widely. Pertile also studies the Italian 20th-century novel. In 2005, he was named Harvard College Professor, a special teaching recognition awarded to those faculty members who have most invested their time and energy in teaching undergraduates. Pertile is a former Master of Eliot House, and he served as director of Villa I Tatti, the Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, from 2009–2015.

## SCHEDULE BY DAY

*B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner*

### THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

DEPART THE U.S. FOR NAPLES

### FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

ARRIVE NAPLES / TRANSFER TO AMALFI

Arrive in Naples this morning and transfer to your hotel, just a short drive from the town of Amalfi. Along the way, get your first glimpse of the glorious southern Italian coast. Amalfi has been noted as a seaside resort since Edwardian times when it was popularized by the British, and it makes an ideal base for excursions along the coast. Tonight enjoy dinner together at the hotel.

Overnight: *Hotel San Francesco (D)*

### SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

AMALFI / RAVELLO

Begin the day with an exploration of Amalfi, the largest of the coastal towns. Pass by the *Duomo*, which dominates the main piazza, and then you are free to wander as you please through Amalfi's atmospheric waterfront or browse in the small shops that surround the square. After lunch on your own, continue on to Ravello, once described as being "closer to the sky than the seashore" by French author André Gide. It's widely agreed that, at 1,100 feet above sea level, the view from Ravello is stunning: you can see a splendid panorama of the entire Amalfi Coast. Return to your hotel late this afternoon and relax before dinner together.

Overnight: *Hotel San Francesco (B, D)*

### SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

POMPEII / AMALFI COAST / SORRENTO

Today's full-day excursion begins in Pompeii, the preserved Roman town that tells a tale both tragic and fascinating. Just before Mt. Vesuvius erupted in 79 CE, many citizens of Pompeii heeded the warning signs and fled the town. But some 2,000

remained to be caught in the eruption's wake, and they became engulfed in volcanic ash. The ash "froze" the town in time, leaving exquisite ruins that show how these ancient Romans lived: vivid frescoes, a forum, and one of the largest surviving Roman amphitheaters in existence. After a walking tour of this incredible site, eat lunch on your own before continuing to another spot equally renowned: the world-famous Amalfi Coast, the 31-mile stretch of coastline from Sorrento to Salerno. Make several photo stops along this spectacular coastline and also in Sorrento. After a full day, return late this afternoon and enjoy dinner at the hotel tonight.

Overnight: *Hotel San Francesco (B, D)*

### MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

AMALFI / MONTECASSINO / ROME

Transfer today to noble Rome. On the way, visit the town of Montecassino, whose Abbey is the mother church of the Benedictine order and a center of medieval art. A German stronghold during World War II, the hilltop Abbey was destroyed by Allied bombing and later rebuilt as a replica of the 17th-century original. After a tour of the Abbey, continue on to Rome, arriving mid-afternoon. Take an informal walking tour of the neighborhood surrounding your well-located hotel. Dinner tonight is on your own in this sophisticated city with a multitude of restaurants.

Overnight: *Empire Palace Hotel (B)*

### TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

ROME

From St. Peter's Square to the Spanish Steps, the Forum to the Trevi Fountain, Rome is filled with some of the greatest monuments and museums in Western civilization. This morning's tour takes you to the ancient city to explore the Colosseum and the temples of the Forum, once the seat of Rome's political power. This afternoon is free to do as you like: perhaps visit the Spanish Steps or Trevi Fountain; walk through the ancient Jewish Ghetto; or learn more about Rome's ancient history at the Museo di Roma. You also have a wonderful selection of restaurants for lunch and dinner on your own.

Overnight: *Empire Palace Hotel (B)*

## WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

ROME

Begin the day with a visit to monumental St. Peter's Basilica, the most important church in all Christendom, and see Michelangelo's "Pieta," considered one of the greatest sculptures of all time. Visit the Vatican Museums and the restored Sistine Chapel, whose ceiling is another Michelangelo masterpiece. The afternoon is free to experience Rome's myriad of delights as you wish. For solitude, the grounds of the Villa Borghese offer a respite from the bustle of the city. For shopping, fabulous designer stores can be found at the famed Via Veneto or the Via del Corso. Piazza Navona is the perfect spot to sit at a sidewalk café and soak up the vibrant atmosphere of the city. Lunch and dinner today are on your own.

Overnight: *Empire Palace Hotel (B)*

## THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

ROME / UMBRIA

Leaving Rome after lunch on your own, travel through the rolling hills of Umbria, known as the "green heart of Italy." Passing hill towns and valleys, reach Orvieto, perched atop a volcanic butte above a vineyard-clad plain. After checking in at your hotel in the heart of the city's medieval quarter, set out on an informal guided walking tour of the area. Orvieto is home to one of Italy's finest Gothic *duomos*, or cathedrals, which you'll see during your tour. Tonight enjoy a small group highlight as you attend a cooking demonstration followed by dinner at Ristorante Zeppelin, a Culinary Art Institute in the heart of Orvieto's historic district.

Overnight: *Grand Hotel Italia (B, D)*

## FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

ORVIETO

Embark on a guided walking tour of Orvieto. Visit the medieval *Duomo* featuring Luca Signorelli's masterpiece, "The Last Judgment." Next explore the formerly secret passages of Parco delle Grotte, a labyrinth of underground caves used since Etruscan times for such varied purposes as wine and olive oil storage, wells, and World War II

bomb shelters. The remainder of the day is free for independent exploration in this city known for its classic Orvieto white wine and its ceramics tradition dating back to the early medieval era. Today you can sample Orvieto's Umbrian cuisine with lunch and dinner on your own.

Overnight: *Grand Hotel Italia (B)*

## SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

ORVIETO / ASSISI

Travels through lovely scenery on the way to Assisi, the birthplace of Saint Francis. The town itself is stunning, with inviting plazas and narrow streets, and the highlight of the day is a tour of the famed Basilica of St. Francis, which has been fully restored after an earthquake caused serious damage to the upper church. Fortunately the lower church and much of the art, including priceless frescoes by Giotto and Cavellini, were not damaged. You will also visit the Church of St. Claire, displaying possibly the world's most famous cross. Stroll Assisi's *piazze* and enjoy local specialties for lunch on your own before returning to the hotel late this afternoon, stopping in Deruta for a demonstration of traditional ceramic decoration. Dinner tonight is also on your own.

Overnight: *Grand Hotel Italia (B)*

## SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

ORVIETO / SIENA, TUSCANY

On today's full-day transfer, leave Umbria for the celebrated region of Tuscany. Late this afternoon, reach Barberino Val d'Elsa and the Villa San Filippo, your base for touring Tuscany. There's time before dinner to explore the grounds of the villa with beautiful views of the surrounding countryside. This evening enjoy the Villa San Filippo traditional Tuscan fare for dinner.

Overnight: *Villa San Filippo (B, D)*

## MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

SIENA / FLORENCE

An hour's drive this morning brings you to Florence, city of Renaissance artists and thinkers, filled with unimaginable art treasures, splendid churches, smart boutiques, and an incredibly storied history. Since buses are not allowed in the city center, you are dropped off a short distance from the start of your walking tour, which includes Michelangelo's masterpiece "The David" at the Galleria dell'Accademia; the soaring *Duomo* with the dome by Brunelleschi; and the Piazza della Signoria, Florence's ancient main square. The afternoon is free for lunch and exploring on your own. Shopping, of course, is a popular activity here; leather goods and gold jewelry count among Florence's modern-day treasures. The city also has an abundance of museums and churches at which to admire the stunning art.

Walk back to the bus for the return journey to the Villa. Dine tonight at Villa San Filippo.

Overnight: *Villa San Filippo (B, D)*

## TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

TUSCANY / SAN GIMIGNANO / CHIANTI REGION

Comfortable shoes are the order of the day today—you are doing a lot of exploring and a great deal of it is on foot. This morning depart for hilly San Gimignano, where you have free time to explore this well-preserved medieval town and enjoy lunch on your own. Take note of the 13 remaining bell towers that have marked the skyline since medieval times. (*Please note that in San Gimignano the bus must wait outside the historic city center and you'll walk into town then back to the bus.*)

Following lunch, drive to a local winery to taste several vintages served with the appropriate hors d'oeuvres. This region may be best known for the *Vernaccia di San Gimignano*, a white wine made from grapes grown around Tuscany, and for the most well-known of all Italian wines, Chianti. Tonight dine at Villa San Filippo.

Overnight: *Villa San Filippo (B, D)*

## WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

SIENA / VENICE

This morning bid farewell to Tuscany as you travel through the Veneto region to Venice, city of drama and *doges*, canals and Canaletto. After an early afternoon arrival, the remainder of the day and evening is free to begin your explorations of this wondrous city. For dinner on your own tonight, you may wish to sample the seafood dishes for which Venice is known.

Overnight: *Carnival Palace Hotel (B)*

## THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

VENICE

This morning's guided walking tour reveals a host of Venetian delights: Piazza San Marco (St. Mark's Square), with its fantastic Basilica; the romantic Bridge of Sighs; the Rialto district with its bustling market. The afternoon is at leisure to enjoy this timeless city as you wish. This evening gather at a local restaurant for a farewell dinner to bid "*arrivederci*" to Italy and to your fellow travelers.

Overnight: *Carnival Palace Hotel (B, D)*

## FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 28

DEPART VENICE FOR U.S.

**PLEASE NOTE:** This trip involves considerable walking up hills or stairs, on uneven or cobblestone streets, and at sites of ancient ruins. In addition, Italy does not allow buses to enter many historic city centers, meaning that you will be walking to and from the tour bus, which must park in designated areas. You should be in good physical condition to enjoy this trip to the fullest.