

Passport to Sicily!

CAMPAGNA
RESTAURANT

NicheItaly
The Five Senses of Italy

Experience Paradise in the Mediterranean

Sept 9-17, 2017

Hosted by
Elizabeth & Joe Montemarano
and Marco Scapagnini



Breathtaking View from Venus Castle Near Trapani

9/9 Arrive in Palermo

Arrive at the Palermo airport where Denise and Marco will welcome you to the island. We arrive at a 4-star hotel, located right in the city center on the Viale della Libertà, a main street renowned for its luxury stores, yet it is surrounded by greenery, including the English Garden. We will have our dinner in the unforgettable Art Nouveau décor of Liberty Hall restaurant with a selection of Mediterranean meals.

9/10 Arab and Norman Influences in Sicily: Monreale and Palermo

Meet in the lobby for our guided tour of the exciting city of Palermo and visit the colorful Capo and Vucciria Markets, the Cathedral, Piazza Pretoria, the Norman Palace and the Palatina Chapel. At lunch we experience the Palermitano street food with a tasting of small arancini (fried rice balls with cheese, sometimes stuffed with meat) and other specialties. We then explore Monreale to see where the Arab-Norman art and architecture reached the pinnacle of its glory with the Duomo. Built in 1174 by William II, it depicts scenes from the Old and New Testaments all in breathtaking golden mosaics. Return to Palermo and our hotel. In the evening, we meet in the lobby to take a short stroll to a 17th-century Palazzo just behind the old city ramparts, home to the Duchess Lanza Tomasi and her husband. The Palazzo has been part of Palermitano society for 250 years. The husband is the adopted son of the prince of Lampedusa, who was a gentleman scholar

with a passion for English and French Literature. He was a rare breed of Sicilian aristocrat with a rather international upbringing who led a very private life. Prince Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa is the celebrated author of "Il Gattopardo" ("The Leopard" is akin to "Gone with the Wind" in U.S. literature. Burt Lancaster starred in the movie.) The prince died in 1957, a year before his only novel was published, never knowing the acclaim that would be given to it. We will view the original manuscript and the actual costumes used in the film. After the private tour of the Palazzo and a lecture from Gioacchino Lanza Tomasi, Nicoletta will invite the guest to join the family table for an unforgettable Gattopardo-style dinner.

9/11 Saline and Erice

After breakfast, we head to Segesta for a visit of the most unique Greek Temple in Sicily and the old acropolis. Later in the morning, we visit Erice, a mysterious medieval town made famous in ancient times as the birthplace of Venus. Here, we stop to visit Maria Grammatico's



Vineyard Etna

pastry shop to see and taste the variety of local sweets that Erice is known for. We have the afternoon to wander the town's cobblestone streets and to have lunch at your leisure. We can walk up to a local ceramic workshop and to the castle where we can see the island of Favignana on a clear day. Afterwards, we will visit an old salt mill – the Saline Ertole and Inversa – to learn how salt is extracted using a technique dating back to the Punic times.

We will see the salt pans and the windmills that dot the landscape. The salt museum will provide us with a sweet and salty tasting of different salts paired with various fruits. Following our visit, we will then drive to 4-star Hotel La Foresteria, a beautiful resort in the hallmark of the hospitality of the Planeta family, one of the most famous ambassadors of Sicily for its fine wines and oils that are sold throughout the world. We will enjoy our dinner at the outdoor terrace with a remarkable panoramic view.

9/12 Food and Wine

Breakfast is followed by a cooking class for those interested. Chef Angelo Pumilia will teach us about Sicilian herbs, including their use, availability and history. Along with the Chef, we cook several recipes using the herbs. We will partake in a glass of Planeta wine, expertly paired with one of the recipes. If you do not want to join is the demonstration, you can relax by the pool or enjoy free time in this lovely setting. We will enjoy an aperitivo with some of the preparations done during the cook-



Temple Ruins

ing class. Late in the morning, we will visit Ulmo Winery near Sambuca di Sicilia. There, we will enjoy a wine tasting of three wines with Chiara Planeta. Lunch is in Ulmo's 16th Century "Baglio," featuring local specialties plus three Planeta wines to match the menu, along with an insightful

introduction by Chiara Planeta, the owner of the winery. In the late afternoon, we will return to La Foresteria with time to relax by the pool. Dinner that night will be at the very typical fisherman restaurant, right on the beach, featuring the famous tuna carpaccio and octopus salad.

9/13 Agrigento, Valley of the Temples

After breakfast, we will check out of our hotel and head to Agrigento, one of the classical world's greatest cities. We will spend the day there, beginning with a guided tour of the Archeological Museum as well as the magnificent Valley of the Temples, which dates back to the 4th and 5th Centuries BC. These are some of the largest and most well-preserved Greek temples outside of Greece. We will also visit the lovely botanical garden, Kolymbetra, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. After our tour of the temples, we will dine al fresco under beautiful old trees in the old Greek Garden. In the afternoon, we will proceed to the Ragusa area. Our hotel is inside a natural reservation area, complete with golf course and a unique Mediterranean environment. A welcome dinner follows in the impressive Wine Bar with the best selection of the DOCG wines from Vittoria.

9/14 Modica

We savor another relaxed morning before heading to "gli Aromi" an award-winning botanical garden featuring the most rare and unique Mediterranean herbs and plants. Enrico and his wife will lead us into a cooking class, and an appetizing and colorful lunch experience. In the afternoon, we go to Modica, one of the most interesting baroque towns in Sicily. Modica is famous for its traditional chocolate production which originates from ancient Aztec recipes. We will visit the most famous and oldest chocolate factory and shop in Sicily, learning how they make their amazing chocolate. Later, we come back to the beautiful resort to enjoy the swimming pool and the Mediterranean lush garden. In the



Donnaufugata Castle

evening, we are set to enjoy a fisherman restaurant right by the water.

9/15 Noto and Syracuse

We depart from our hotel and travel to Noto, the UNESCO Baroque Heritage site. Walking into this open-air museum, we can stop at a cafe for a Sicilian pastries tasting and great coffee. We are then on to Ortigia to explore the fish market and to browse in some of the quaint cheese and spice shops. We then stay and eat in the market, enjoying local products from the booths. In the afternoon, we will meet our guide to explore this town – one that rivaled Athens as the most powerful Greek city and is still imbued with Greek influences. The tour of Ortigia includes the visit of the temple of Apollo, Archimedes' square, Duomo square and Cathedral and Arethusa spring. Among these monuments, we will also walk into the Jewish area and visit the Miqwah which dates back to the 5th century BC. Siracusa presently has a Jewish community and leverages a strong Jewish history. In the



Palermo

evening, we go to our hotel in Taormina, and we enjoy dinner at a local restaurant located in a real inhabitant house in the historic center.

9/16 Mt. Etna and Taormina

This morning, we are set to explore the incredible wine country that surrounds Mt. Etna. The volcanic explosions have enriched the soil and added a unique taste to the wines. We will visit one of Sicily's most notable vineyards for a tasting of four different wines, four varieties of olive oil, and a light lunch with Mt. Etna as our picturesque backdrop. We then drive to Taormina, the lively coastal town known for its famous Greco-Roman theater overlooking the sea. The day is yours to enjoy at your leisure. You may find yourself on Corso Umberto, a pedestrian shopping street in the town; visiting the Roman Greek Theater which dates back to the 3rd Century AD; taking the funicular to enjoy the beach; or getting lost as you meander around the impressive Villa Comunale, an English garden created about 100 years ago. There is a lovely passeggiata along the Corso and end up at a beautiful terrace overlooking the Duomo where we have a farewell cocktail party with light food before returning to our hotel.

9/17 Buon Viaggio!

Return to the US or stay longer in Italy.



Price for each participant is
\$4450 - Airfaire not included
 and \$449 (for single room Supplements)

What is included:

Hotels: All charming Mediterranean style hotels, 4 stars and beyond for 8 nights and 9 days.

Meals: 7 lunches and 7 dinners in the most Authentic Mediterranean restaurants.

Activities: 4 Winery visits and wine tasting, 2 cooking classes, local guides, archeological park entrance tickets and other visits. Bus and Transfer in grand tourism coach.