



Tuscany

13 Days – Rome to Milan
8 to 20 May 2009

Twin Share \$17,990

Single Supplement \$2,400

The richness and splendour of Italy lies in the striking landscape from the Alps to Sicilian beaches, in the architecture and artistic creations found in her famous cities and in the regional cuisine and character of local villages both inland and by the sea.

The tour focuses on two of the country's most beautiful regions. Enjoy seven nights in a beautiful 'Castello' in the Tuscan countryside and 4 nights in Lake Como at the foot of the alps in the stunning Lakes Region.

ITALY

Rome, the Eternal City, has been a centre of Western civilisation for centuries. Today, it is an archeological archive that has undergone many transformations, through Imperial, Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque periods to today. Rome is cosmopolitan, chaotic, fascinating and frustrating, but ultimately it is a romantic and beautiful city.

Tuscany encompasses Italy's greatest collection of art, breathtaking countryside and exquisite fresh produce and wines. Florence, the region's spectacular capital, is considered one of the most beautiful cities in the world. With an abundance of architectural and artistic masterpieces, this medieval city has been a patron to Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo. Some of the best-marketed wines come from the vineyards located amongst the rolling hills and valleys of Il Chianti in Central Tuscany. Siena, one of Italy's most enchanting cities, also welcomes visitors to Central Tuscany with its Gothic buildings, array of small museums, historic treasures and traditional Tuscan cuisine.

Further north near Como, a series of beautiful glacial lakes at the foot of the Alps form one of the most picturesque natural destinations in Italy. Visitors from all over Europe re-visit their favourite destination every summer to enjoy the blue-green waters of this captivating region.

Just south of Como lies Milan, a thriving centre of art and fashion, of sophistication and style. Italy's economic centre and the world's design capital, Milan rivals Paris as the leading fashion centre and shopping mecca.

Grand Hotel de la Minerve Rome

Since it opened at the end of the 1700's, the 5 star Grand Hotel de la Minerve has remained one of the most luxurious hotels in Rome. The hotel has been completely refurbished and features a breathtaking grand hall that houses Rinaldi's magnificent marble statue of Minerva. Located in the heart of historical Rome, the hotel is close to the Pantheon, Spanish Steps and Trevi Fountain.

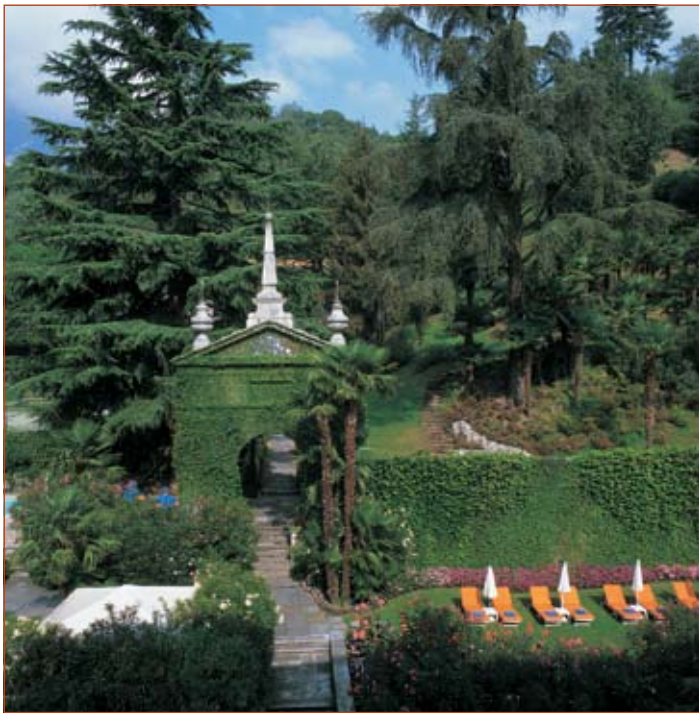
Castello Di Tornano Chianti

Discover the fragrances of Tuscany's Il Chianti region from the grounds of the stunning Castello Di Tornano, a castle-hamlet which is the country home of the Selvolini family. We have exclusive use of the property, with lavishly furnished bedrooms located in the castle and tower and a swimming pool built into the castle moat. Enjoy delicious home cooking each night overlooking a landscape of rolling hills, vineyards and olive groves.

Grand Hotel Tremezzo Palace Lake Como

Dating back to the beginning of the last century, Grand Hotel Tremezzo Palace is one of the oldest hotels on Lake Como in Italy's famous northern Lakes Region. The palace windows reflect the lake and provide enchanting views of the surrounding landscape. Rooms are decorated with vintage furnishings which preserve the glamour typical of the Belle Epoque hotels.





Itinerary

Day 1 – Friday 8 May – Arrive Rome

Our J&H Tours escorted Singapore Airlines flight ex Sydney arrives in Rome early this morning. We transfer to the luxurious Grand Hotel de la Minerve, located in the heart of historic Rome, where we have arranged an early check-in. The day is yours to relax and enjoy your surrounds and lunch at leisure in the hotel. This evening we meet for a pre-dinner drink prior to our first dinner together in the hotel's La Cesta Restaurant.

Day 2 – Saturday 9 May – Rome to Tuscany

This morning our panoramic tour of Rome includes famous monuments of the Colosseum, Piazza Venezia, Circo Massimo and a visit to St Peter's Basilica. We depart north to Tuscany, stopping en route to enjoy lunch in Sacrofano, a small medieval village in the region of Latium. This afternoon we arrive in beautiful Tuscany, home to the country's greatest collection of art, stunning landscapes, fresh produce and best-known wines. Our Tuscan home for the next seven days, is Castello Di Tornano, located in the 10th century village of Gaiole in Chianti in central Tuscany. Spend the afternoon becoming familiar with your surrounds until we gather tonight to dine on the first of our specially prepared gourmet meals.

Day 3 – Sunday 10 May – San Gimignano & Monteriggioni

Il Chianti comprises the hills and valleys between Florence and Siena. Today we visit two of the region's well-known villages – San Gimignano and Monteriggioni – on a day of sightseeing. In medieval San Gimignano, we visit the Palazzo Comunale where you may climb the steps to the tower for a wonderful view. We continue to Monteriggioni, one of Italy's best preserved fortified villages, for lunch and sightseeing tour. We return to Tornano late afternoon with time to refresh before dinner.

Day 4 – Monday 11 May – Fattoria dei Barbi & Montepulciano

Today we extend our exploration of Tuscany to Fattoria dei Barbi (near Montalcino) where excellent wines have been produced since the Colombini family purchased the farm in 1892. Sample Brunello in the wine cellar before our private coach takes us to the quiet village of Montepulciano. Lunch in a typical local restaurant with free time to explore the village streets or main sights surrounding the Piazza Grande. The flavours of local cuisine and wines continue at our villa tonight.

Day 5 – Tuesday 12 May – Florence

We travel to the 'Cradle of the Renaissance' - Florence. Our special sightseeing tour includes the red-domed Duomo, Giotto's Bell Tower and the Accademia where Michelangelo's breathtaking statue of David awaits. Lunch and the afternoon is yours to enjoy at leisure, to explore the famous Ponte Vecchio area or shop in the city centre. Share your experiences tonight over dinner at our villa.

Day 6 – Wednesday 13 May – Arezzo & Cortona

Our full day excursion begins with a morning visit to Arezzo, best known for its antiques, Piero della Francesca's artistic masterpieces and Guillaume de Marcillart's exquisite stained-glass. Lunch is served in a typical Italian farm house followed by an afternoon at Cortona, a small village on a mountainside with fantastic views of the Chiana Valley. A relaxing meal awaits us at our villa tonight.

Day 7 – Thursday 14 May – Siena

Our private coach takes the short journey to one of Tuscany's most enchanting cities, Siena. Highlights of our tour includes the magnificent shell-shaped Piazza del Campo, Museum Opera dell'Opera Metropolitana and the famous zebra-striped Cathedral that is one of Italy's great gothic churches. Enjoy lunch and a continued exploration of the Gothic buildings, churches and small museums at your leisure this afternoon. Share a Chianti and evening meal with your travelling companions when we return to our villa in the countryside.



Itinerary

Day 8 – Friday 15 May – Castello di Tornano Cooking Class

Our final day in Tuscany is one for relaxation. We begin with a morning dedicated to cooking; under the guidance of our Tuscan chef you can create your favourite pasta dish for lunch with the aromas and flavours that have surrounded our stay. You may also like to bake Cantuccini biscuits for dessert. The afternoon is yours to enjoy your favourite activity at Tornano or visit the Prada outlet, The Mall, at nearby Montevarchi, where you may just find a bargain as leading designers including Armani, Fendi, La Perla and more, offer last season's apparel and accessories at warehouse prices. This evening we enjoy a festive medieval farewell. We dine 'al fresco' under the tower of Castello di Tornano, where strolling medieval musicians perform, offering an apt farewell to our Tuscan friends

Day 9 – Saturday 16 May – Tuscany to Lake Como

This morning we depart for Lake Como. Enroute we return to Florence to visit the Uffizi Gallery, housing the private art collection of the Medici family and the world's single greatest collection of Italian and Florentine art. Enjoy this Renaissance feast of paintings from artists including Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and Caravaggio. A light lunch is served at local restaurant Boccanegra before we travel north to Italy's famous Lakes Region. We check into Lake Como's vintage Grand Hotel Tremezzo Palace with time to refresh before dinner this evening.

Day 10 – Sunday 17 May – Milan

Today we travel to Milan; a city synonymous with style and renowned as the world's design capital. Our sightseeing tour includes the Gothic Cathedral, legendary opera house, La Scala, and Castello Sforzesco, home to some magnificent art museums. A visit to Milan would not be complete without visiting Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II. This spectacular four-story covered shopping arcade includes elegant shops selling everything from haute couture to books, as well as restaurants, cafés and bars. Soak up your stylish surrounds during lunch at your leisure and an afternoon free for shopping or further exploration. We return to Como by private coach in the afternoon and share dinner tonight at our hotel.

Day 11 – Monday 18 May –Lake Como

Board our private boat this morning for a sightseeing tour on the blue-green waters of Lake Como. Only a few kilometres from the Swiss border, this glacial lake is approximately 50 km long. The mountains around the lake are 2000 metres high and the lake up to 450 metres deep, making it one of the deepest lakes in Europe. We enjoy lunch at leisure and the opportunity to relax and absorb this enchantingly beautiful area. Enjoy one of the lake walks before we meet tonight for dinner at our hotel.

Day 12 – Tuesday 19 May – Lake Maggiore & Stresa

Today, we enjoy a relaxed journey to Stresa and Lake Maggiore. This beautiful picturesque alpine town was the inspiration and setting for Ernest Hemmingway's 'Farewell to Arms'. Our tour today includes an excursion by boat to Isola Bella and Isola dei Pescatori where we will enjoy lunch before an afternoon cable car ride to the glorious Giardino Botanico Alpinia (Alpine Botanical Gardens). Enjoy free time in Stresa before returning to our hotel and our final farewell dinner in Italy.

Day 13 – Wednesday 20 May – Lake Como to Milan

After a final breakfast together, we depart Lake Como by private coach to Milan where the land content of our tour ends. Guests travelling on our J&H Tours escorted Singapore Airlines flight from Milan depart at lunch-time today, arriving in Sydney on the evening of Thursday 21 May.

