



# ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION of SMITH COLLEGE

## *A Connoisseur's Tuscany: A Week in Lucca* May 4 to 11, 2009

### **Preliminary Itinerary** (subject to amendment)

#### **Day 1 – Monday, May 4, 2009**

#### **U.S. Departures**

Depart for Pisa on flights from the United States.  
(*Appropriate in-flight meals*)

#### **Day 2 – Tuesday, May 5, 2009**

#### **Arrival in Tuscany**

- Arrive in Pisa, and transfer independently to the lovely four-star Hotel Ilaria in Lucca.
- Check into your comfortable room at the only four-star hotel in the beautiful historic center of Lucca.
- This evening, gather for a welcome dinner at the delightful Ristorante all'Olivo, tucked away in one of Lucca's most charming small squares. Full menu of authentic Lucchese cuisine, featuring the region's famous olive oil.

(D)

*Hotel Ilaria, Lucca*

#### **Day 3 – Wednesday, May 6, 2009**

#### **Lucca**

- Buffet breakfast is included this and every morning in the hotel's restaurant, a glassed-in terrace overlooking a 200-year-old garden with gorgeous old trees.
- Gather in the lobby after breakfast for an introductory walk along Lucca's most unique feature – the city's imposing circuit of Renaissance walls. Learn about the city's fascinating past from your great local guide, while viewing the city's monuments from on high.
- Continue your introduction to Lucca by visiting the city's two finest churches from its "golden age" as a pilgrimage city during the 1000s-1200s. The Duomo di San Martino and the central church of San Michele (situated in the old Roman forum) are both beautiful, frosting-white examples of Romanesque architecture, filled with interesting artwork and relics.
- We break for lunch at a classic old trattoria near the piazza where Giacomo Puccini was born and raised.
- In the afternoon, gaze in wonder at the Piazza dell' Anfiteatro, a sort of living stage set where the ancient Roman amphitheater has left way to a remarkable oval piazza.
- After a glance at the church of San Frediano, admire the stately gardens of the Palazzo Pfanner, marked by a pleasing rhythm of statues and fountains.

- To complete our day of discovery in Lucca, meet a prominent local organist who will share several historic organs that have been saved by preservation efforts, with a special recital at the church where Puccini had his first official position – on the very same organ!!!
- Dinner and the evening are independent.

*(B, L)*

*Hotel Ilaria, Lucca*

**Day 4 – Thursday, May 7, 2009**

**Cinque Terre: Beauty by the Sea**

- After breakfast depart the hotel for the Mediterranean coast of Tuscany, actually entering into neighboring Liguria. The string of five villages perched along the mountainous coast here has become known universally as the Cinque Terre, one of Italy’s most beautiful scenic corners (and that’s saying something!).
- Our tour begins with a guided stroll through the colorful port town of Riomaggiore, before beginning a 90-minute walk along the Via dell’Amore (Lovers’ Lane), past the village of Manarola, and onto Corniglia. The path is mostly paved and accessible to all ages, however contingency plans will be made for those with limitations.
- A well-earned lunch at a lovely restaurant with a panoramic view will be offered in Corniglia.
- Returning toward Lucca this afternoon, we will climb into the Apuan Alps for a private visit to an enormous marble quarry. This is where all Michelangelo’s marble was born, and it’s a fascinating chance to see the amazing process by which our decorative marble is created – you will realize it’s value more than ever after the visit!
- Returning to Lucca, the evening is independent.

*(B, L)*

*Hotel Ilaria, Lucca*

**Day 5 – Friday, May 8, 2009**

**Wineries and Villages of the Maremma**

The Maremma, the sparsely populated coastal region south of Lucca, for years was treated as a sort of Tuscan backwater, with little of interest to see or do. Times have quickly changed! The Maremma, with its tranquil, bucolic countryside wonderfully free of mass tourism, is now one of Tuscany’s hottest corners.

- Our day will begin with a visit to the gray-stone, perched hill town of Massa Marittima, with its beautiful cathedral and soaring medieval towers and palaces. In the last few years, the Maremma has gained attention with a series of new vineyards designed by star architects.
- Our first visit of this nature is to Renzo Piano’s low-slung Rocca di Frassinello, where we are guests for a special architectural/enological tour, and a tasting of Paolo Panerai’s fine red wines.
- In one of the cantinas, a charming light luncheon will be offered.
- This afternoon, after a brief walking tour of the graceful wine village of Suvereto (just a few miles from the Mediterranean), we visit another new architectural marvel. Mario Botta’s sculptural “Petra” winery has won numerous architectural accolades, and we will receive a special guided tour, followed by a private tasting of the estate’s best vintages.
- Returning to Lucca this evening, dinner is independent.

*(B, L, WT)*

*Hotel Ilaria, Lucca*

**Day 6 – Saturday, May 9, 2009**

**Etruscan Echoes: The Hills of Volterra**

- We strike out into the sweeping hills that 2500 years ago formed the political and economic heartland of the Etruscan civilization. In a particularly lovely corner of this countryside with rolling, ochre hills and wide horizons, the famous Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli has built a minimalist theater outside his hometown of Lajatico. The landscape is spectacular, an artwork in itself, but the huge bronze head by sculptor Igor Mitoraj adds a particularly striking touch.
- Not far away, gazing down on all the surrounding hills is the windswept hill town of Volterra, which was larger in size and population in 500 BC than it is today!
- Just outside the village, a warm-hearted local family will open their charming private villa for us, and prepare a lunch of Tuscan specialties grown on their own organic farm. To get there, a half-mile country walk through olive groves.
- In the afternoon, we follow a terrific local historian on a guided walk through Volterra town. Highlights will include the battlemented town square, the tiger-striped cathedral and baptistery, the ancient Roman theater, and several Etruscan monuments.
- Back in Lucca this evening, dinner is independent.

*(B, L)*

*Hotel Ilaria, Lucca*

**Day 7 – Sunday, May 10, 2009**

**Villa-Hopping in the Lucca Countryside**

Lucca is famous for its remarkable constellation of historic villas and gardens, dotting the surrounding countryside in nearly all directions.

- This morning, the Countess Colonna has invited us for a special early viewing of her gorgeous 17<sup>th</sup>-century home and garden – the Villa Torrigiani a Camigliano. The gardens are believed to have been designed by Le Notre, who also laid out Louis XIV's magnificent grounds at Versailles.
- Afterward, continue to another extensive garden paradise – the Villa Reale di Marlia, former home of Napoleon's sister Elisa, filled with delightful 18<sup>th</sup>-century follies and decorations.
- After some free time for lunch and packing/last-minute shopping, we will head to a tiny village outside Lucca for a special farewell visit.
- Two American authors have invited us to visit their award-winning garden, subject of their bestselling book.
- Tonight, celebrate our amazing week in Tuscany with a farewell dinner feast at Lucca's most respected restaurant, the Buca di Sant'Antonio, imbued with true old Italian charm.

*(B, D)*

*Hotel Ilaria, Lucca*

**Day 8 – Monday, May 11, 2009**

**Return to U.S.**

Independent transfers to Pisa airport for return flights to the U.S.

*(B, appropriate in-flight meals)*

**Trip Details**

**Duration:** 8 days

**Activity level:** Moderately active

**Cost:** \$3,295 per person, based on double occupancy

**Single supplement:** \$495 per person

**Deposit:** \$1,000 per person, payable to International Seminar Design

**Optional extension:** Florence post-program