

# Il Bollettino di Gina's Italy~~~~February 2015

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As I head into my Spring Tours I think back to all the groups I have escorted to *La Bella Italia*. I am very lucky to still be in contact with many of my past travelers. Often they become repeat travelers trekking through the little towns, experiencing the true Italian culture and discovering Italy. ... Really discovering Italy. From driving through the countryside to local transportation in the cities, we learn much about Italy, its people and its customs. Meeting and talking to local producers about their trade immerses the traveler into the world of Italy. The Italians welcome visitors in a warm way that draws you closer. Thank you for the moments and memories you have helped create on my tours. Each one is unique and loved. Here are a few fond memories captured in photographs:



Gina's Italy Travelers take home more than train tickets and museum stubs. They take home stunning views of countryside and architecture, unique souvenirs from local artisans after learning about their craft, fond memories of outstanding cuisine and hours of laughter as we travel like an Italian. Taking the time to understand and to feel how the locals live is what makes Gina's Italy tours distinctive. Let's take a look at the upcoming tours:

## Springtime in Italy

The **Grand Tour** begins in Rome on April 11<sup>th</sup>. Our days will include the must do items like the Vatican, the Colosseum and the Forum. We will experience the Metro as we go to and fro from our hotel near the Basilica to Saint Peter. As we meander the expanse called Rome we will stop at the Trevi fountain and throw our token coin, we will walk down the ritzy Via Condotti as we follow the path used by the pilgrims in the 1300's. After our 1<sup>st</sup> class train experience to Florence, we will begin our days with the visit to its civic and religious center. No visit can be complete without experiencing what brought Florence into the Renaissance, namely the dome built by Filippo Brunelleschi. Florence is the city of artisans. We will step into a goldsmith's shop and see him create lovely pieces from small bits of gold

and/or silver. We will capture stunning views of Florence after our climb from the Oltrarno. Once we arrive to Venice we experience a tranquil town with no sounds of car horns or motors. This is a town of walking. We walk across bridges galore connecting the islands of this exceptional city. Up next will be Murano, the island known for its impressive glassworks. Our days will include lovely rides on the local transportation system of vaporetti. As we wave “ciao” to Venice we will relish all the little things that become big memories.

**Puglia the Pearl** begins May 19<sup>th</sup>. Meeting at the Bari airport we will drive to our Masseria, a working farm which sits out in the countryside with the view of the imposing castle of Castel del Monte. Our days are filled with stops at towns made famous by the crusaders and pilgrims. We will enjoy Puglia’s passion: food and wine. This region offers sites that are unlike anywhere else in Italy. Hundreds of castles abound in this region, many of which were built by Emperor Federico II in the 1200’s. History is alive in Puglia with deep religious roots. We will visit a former Roman town, walk through towns built in the early 1000 and finish in the Baroque center of Lecce. Each day will be packed with events with the local artisans and guides. Waving “ciao” in the boot causes one to yearn for more. More? More wines, more favorite cheeses, and vegetable platters.

**2016 Sneak Peak**~~~~How would you like to awaken your inner artist while visiting the countryside of Tuscany? Gina’s Italy teams up with Northwest Award winning water colorist for a weeklong experience in Southern Tuscany. Each day will offer sights and opportunities in different locations that you will transfer to paper in your beautiful personalized journal. Each evening our resident artist will teach techniques to help craft memory of sounds, smells, sights and events onto paper. *Stay tuned.* More to come in the next ***Il Bollettino di Gina’s Italy.***

Thank you again for your interest in Gina’s Italy happenings. Next time you’ll hear about what is upcoming in the fall 2015 and early 2016. Feel free to share this issue of Il Bollettino. Referrals are the best flattery anyone can receive. I look forward to meeting new friends.

Ciao a Tutti (everyone)

Gina

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