

# Il Bollettino di Gina's Italy

April 2014

With this Bollettino I take the opportunity to wish you a Happy and Blessed Easter. In Italy this is a time preparation and celebration. Religious processions of all types occur during the week leading up to Easter. Palm Sunday begins with the blessing of the Palms which starts Holy Week. In the Piazza of the



Basilica to Saint Peter, the Pope celebrates an outdoor Mass. This is only one occasion where he will lead the faithful in prayer leading up to Easter. On Good Friday he prays the Stations of the Cross around the Colosseum. After the Easter Mass held in the main square he gives his Easter message along with his blessings to all present. Traditional Easter foods include lamb, artichokes, Easter breads in the form of a dove, and chocolate eggs. Pasquetta or Easter Monday is also a holiday in Italy. It is common for families to go on picnics to the countryside or seashore. Whatever your plans I wish them memorable and meaningful. Buona Pasqua!

## What's up?

*Gina's Italy* begins touring with **The Grand Tour**. Our little group meets in Rome on April 22, 2014 and begins days filled with art, monuments, museums, and most of all people. We will be meeting artisans and locals alike. From Rome to Florence to Venice, each day will be a mixture of delights for all the senses. What makes this tour different? Gina is on hand the whole day to guide, assist, facilitate and fill in culture gaps. Participants enjoy TLC for more than a scheduled guide's visit of 4 hours per day.

**Circle of Friends** winds its way from Florence on May 21, 2014 through the hills of Tuscany and to the Tyrrhenian Sea and continues on to a vintner's B&B for great food, wine and a cooking class until it completes its journey in Rome. Our friends will enjoy the special opportunity to visit the excavations under the Basilica of St. Peter. From below the Basilica we will see the foundations of the original church from the 300's and also the Roman constructed burial sites. It wasn't until much later than cemeteries were allowed within the city walls. For this reason it is not a surprise to find the mausoleums under the present day Basilica.

**Puglia the Pearl** begins in the capital city of Bari on September 14, 2014. Our group will experience and investigate this unfrequented region. Besides castles, lovely towns on the Adriatic Sea, they will watch the production of sea salt in an area prized by the ancient Romans and mentioned by Pliny the Elder in his writings. Puglia is also renowned for good cheese. Of course our visit would not be complete without a visit to a cheese maker. Other highlights will include the Trulli houses of Alberobello, not found anywhere else in Italy. Our day trip to Egnazia founded by Greeks and Messapian settlers will take us back some 3,500 years. It was founded in the Copper Age. More fun is in store as we savor recipes echoing the history and products of the area. Add some delicious Primitivo or Negroamaro wines and each day will be perfect. Group two arrives September 27, 2014 for its turn at discovery.

**Tuscan Adventure 2014** completes this year's tour cycle. Our band of photographers, artists and lovers of all that is Italian begin their visit on October 15, 2014. Florence will be our first and last base. We will seek out medieval towns south of Florence and to the west as well as the southern area of Tuscany. Our villa in Southern Tuscany will be our refuge after days of adventure. Set up above the road we will gaze upon sunrises and sunsets off into the distance. Our hosts Marcello and Maria Pia will make sure every detail is perfect. Extraordinary occasions await us like outdoor picnics at a winery. No visit to Tuscany would be complete if a stop at a Pecorino maker was not included. An artisan anticipates our visit and will share samples galore. By the time we return to Florence for our farewell, our travelers will have tasted, touched, felt, and seen as much as there is that is Tuscan.



### Facebook

If you are a Facebook fan I would invite you to LIKE *Gina's Italy* from the website. Merely open up [www.ginasitaly.com](http://www.ginasitaly.com) and hit the LIKE button on the lower left hand side of the first page. Although I am not a frequent user, I do post some fun facts about Italy from time to time. Also I make some announcements about tours or offers. Most recently I asked former travelers for their thoughts about unique experiences of our tours. I invite all former travelers to add a sentence.

### Tours and More

The principal activity of *Gina's Italy* is to develop tours from scratch and lead small groups of 8 participants to different regions in Italy. Private groups of even three travelers can comprise a tour. Family tours with children of various ages can be arranged allowing parents to really enjoy their visit and not worry about the details. There is no limit to possibilities. In 2015 *Gina's Italy* plans to repeat the captivating tour into Puglia and continue to offer exceptional excursions into Tuscany. The Grand Tour will be scheduled early spring or late autumn. October 2015 is already slated and ready for Puglia. Travelers interested in one of these tours might wish to add their name to a sign up list. No obligation is intended; just the option for your first choice tour. Write me at: [info@ginasitaly.com](mailto:info@ginasitaly.com)

### Grazie – Thank You!

Thank you for this opportunity to connect with you. If I have not had the occasion to travel with you I hope you consider *Gina's Italy* for your Italian travel experience. In the company of 8-10 people *Gina's Italy* is the true small group choice. This year I am celebrating 24 years of personalized touring. Along the way it has been wonderful to share Italy's culture with my travel friends.

### Ciao until next time, Gina

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