

SEPTEMBER 28TH 2019
TO
OCTOBER 5TH 2019

7 NIGHTS / 8 DAYS
FROM US\$ 4995



THE TREASURES OF TUSCANY AND ITS GARDENS

Our program has a lovely combination of historical and contemporary gardens, villas, and palaces which we plan to visit while also enjoying the culinary delights of this land, complete with a farm-to-table cooking class experience.

There may be slight modifications or rotations in the itinerary to accommodate changes in opening hours, and private visit confirmations.

A final itinerary will be sent to participants prior to departure.

Breakfast is included everyday with lunches and dinners indicated as follows:

B = breakfast, **L** = lunch and **D** = evening meal.

Tuscany is renowned for its culture, delicious cuisine and breathtaking art and beauty. It is also the ideal setting for a garden tour! Led by garden specialist Amy Kupec Larue, this carefully crafted itinerary has been designed for the Pacific Horticulture Society exploring the charms of this cherished land.

Single supplement US\$ 950, available upon request. Rates guaranteed with a minimum of 14 paying guests.

DAY **Arrival**

SATURDAY

1**28**SEPT
2019OVERNIGHT
D

Group meeting at the Florence airport.

We will travel by private coach directly to the charming walled city of Lucca (1.5 hours) where we will be staying for 2 nights. The old center is still surrounded by defensive walls constructed during the Renaissance which have been turned into a lush tree-lined promenade.

After settling in we will meet in the lobby for a short orientation walk through the quaint allies and backstreets concluding with a visit to the elegant and privately-owned Palazzo Pfanner, a baroque garden where portions of Portrait of a Lady were filmed.

Afterwards enjoy an Italian welcome aperitivo and then a group welcome dinner in an upscale local restaurant.. (Overnight in Lucca at San Luca Palace or similar).

DAY**2****29**SEPT
2019OVERNIGHT
B L**Lucca Gardens**

Our tour commences exploring the hillsides around Lucca where a concentration of countryside villas dating back to the 17th century were built by wealthy noblemen having made their fortunes in the textile trade.

Near Caponnari we will discover the colorful Torrigiani villa with its ochre façade and white marble statutes. The surviving garden illustrates the refined harmony between an aristocratic villa, the surrounding countryside and Italian garden design. After a break for lunch in a countryside venue we will carry on to the Villa Grabua, which is entirely furnished with period pieces and paintings and surrounded by a botanical park. The park is divided into different garden rooms and punctuated with fountains, majestic old trees and botanical rarities.

Return to Lucca and dinner at leisure.

(Overnight in Lucca at San Luca Palace or similar).

DAY**3****30**SEPT
2019OVERNIGHT
B L**Cooking Experience in Chianti with arrival in Southern Tuscany**

We depart from Lucca this morning by private coach to travel towards the very picturesque Val d'Orcia area of Tuscany.

Its gentle, cultivated hills are punctuated with vineyards, olive trees, farmhouses, and charming villages which have been captured by the finest painters through the centuries. It is in this area that we will stop at a local farm and winery for a culinary adventure. Here we will learn the intimate story of Chianti's famous wine followed by a cooking demonstration of regional specialties using seasonal, locally grown ingredients.

Afterwards, continuing south of Siena, we arrive at our hotel in the small village of San Quirico d'Orcia. This town was an important stop on the Medieval pilgrims' route to Rome.

Dinner can be enjoyed in the town at your leisure.

(Overnight Val d'Orcia at Villa il Capitano or similar).

DAY**4****1**OCT
2019OVERNIGHT
B L D**Siena Gardens**

Villa Chigi Cetinale is our first destination today, nestled against the Montagnola hills among plentiful olive groves and vineyards. Carlo Fontana transformed this Tuscan farmhouse for the Cardinal Chigi by placing it at the center of his north south axis with views stretching from the cypress lined main entrance to the valley below.

The estate now belongs to an English couple who are restoring the grounds and have added a romantic cottage garden as well as a collection of espalier fruit trees. Afterwards enjoy an authentic Tuscan meal in a countryside agriturismo farm.

Then we will be off to see a magical contemporary woodland garden. Bosco della Ragnaia is a garden created by American artist Sheppard Craige. The park was recently awarded a certificate as a finalist in the category of Innovative Contemporary Design by the European Garden Heritage Network.

Return to Val d'Orcia in the late afternoon and enjoy a group dinner at the hotel restaurant.

(Overnight Val d'Orcia at Villa il Capitano or similar).



SIGNATURE ITALY
TOURS

US\$ 4995 per person land only for PHS member
US\$ 5085 per person land only for non-members

Rates are based on double occupancy
Single supplement US\$ 950 available upon request



WEDNESDAY
DAY 5
2 OCT 2019
OVERNIGHT B L

La Foce and Pienza

Today's program will start at the enchanting La Foce villa overlooking the Orcia valley and Amiata mountains. Built in the 15th century, it served as a hostel for travelers before being purchased by Antonio and Iris Origo in 1924. In addition to possessing one of the finest gardens in Italy, they developed farming activities and schools in the area, improving the local economy and living conditions greatly. The impressive garden is one of the masterpieces designed by the English landscape architect Cecil Pinsent. Following a Tuscan buffet lunch with local specialties we will travel on to the town of Pienza. The Piccolomini family put this village on the map when the poet and diplomat Aeneas Silvius became Pope Pius II. Its town center was one of the first to implement Renaissance design principles and has served as a model for urban planning. A visit to the Palazzo Piccolomini will illustrate the importance of the relationship between architecture and the natural landscape. In the late afternoon we will continue to our hotel in Florence, with its remarkable rooftop terrace overlooking the city. Dinner can be enjoyed at your leisure.
(Overnight in Florence at Hotel Plaza Lucchesi or similar).

THURSDAY
DAY 6
3 OCT 2019
OVERNIGHT B

Fiesole Gardens

The Fiesole gardens will be the focus today's travels beginning first with the Anglo-Italian style garden made popular by expatriates in and around Florence. The Villa Le Balze is now owned by Georgetown University and has been maintained for three decades as a study center overlooking Florence. Despite its awkward shape, Cecil Pinsent was able to create a garden with interlocking, enclosed spaces and long perspectives. We will then move on to see one of the earliest Renaissance gardens in Italy, that belonged to the Medicis in the 15th century. Chosen for its amazing views across the Arno Valley, there are a series of terraces with emerald lawns, potted lemon trees and geometrical parterre beds linked together by a raised pergola. Afterwards time to enjoy lunch on own and explore the town of Fiesole. We will end the day at nearby Gamberaia, one of the most famous Florentine villa gardens. It has a savant combination of the simplicity of an early Renaissance garden complimented by the rich decorations from the baroque style. Features include one of the finest "bowling greens" in Italy, punctuated with statues on one side of the villa along with a lemon garden, fountains, magnificent topiaries, a nymphaeum and two grottos.
(Overnight in Florence at Hotel Plaza Lucchesi or similar).

FRIDAY
DAY 7
4 OCT 2019
OVERNIGHT B L D

Florence Gardens

For our final day together, a private guide we will share with us the treasures, charms and masterpieces of Florence starting in Piazza della Signoria with the 13th century Palazzo Vecchio, the courtyard of the Uffizi and the Ponte Vecchio. Crossing the bridge we will explore the understated Oltrarno, home of artisans, craftspeople and fashionable cafés. A special, private visit has been organized with the owner of the Torrigiani gardens, one of Florence's finest gems and the largest privately owned garden situated within city limits in Europe. Known from the 16th century for its botanical collections, today it reflects the 19th century additions and alterations. Following a light lunch, we will finish the afternoon in the grandiose Boboli gardens, where the majestic fantasy of the Florentine princes reached its apogee... amphitheater & tunnels, pools & fountains, grottos & statues, enclosed gardens & groves... these ancient hunting grounds were transformed to display all the splendors of the Florentine court, in one of the most remarkable Italian gardens. We will return to the hotel in the late afternoon, ending our week with a special farewell dinner.
(Overnight in Florence at Hotel Plaza Lucchesi or similar).

SATURDAY
DAY 8
5 OCT 2019
OVERNIGHT B

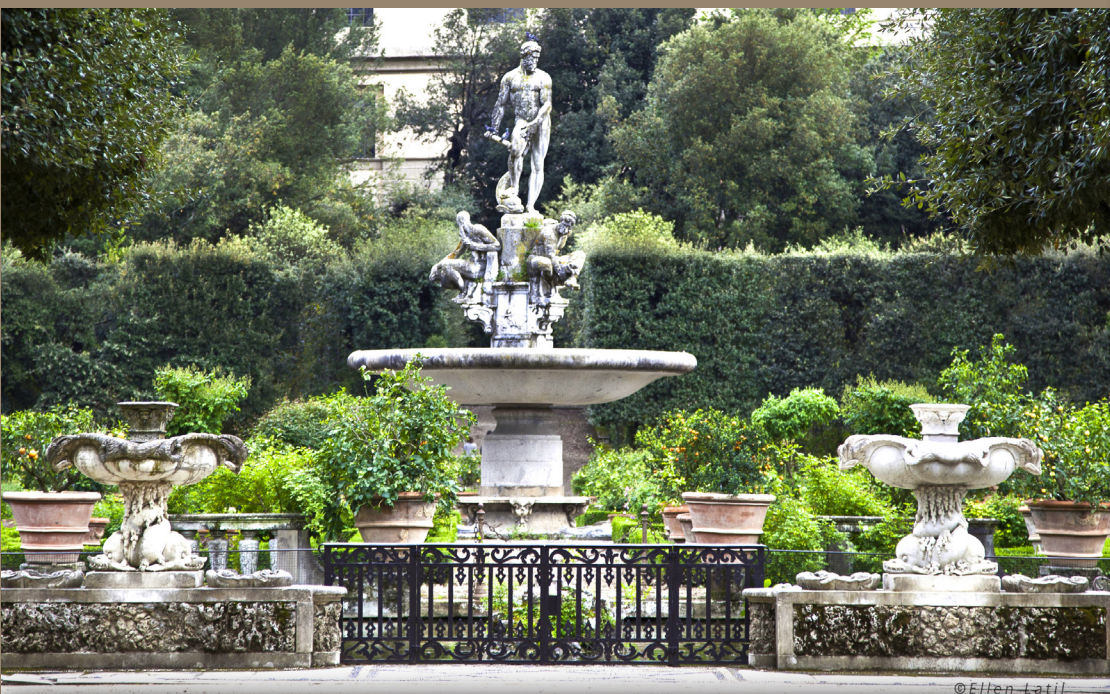
Departure

Breakfast and scheduled transfers to airport or train station.

Completion of enrollment form and a deposit of US\$ 470 per person is required to hold space on the trip. The deposit is refundable, minus a US\$ 115 cancellation fee, until July 1, 2019, at which time the non-refundable final payment is due.
Final payment: Final payment for each tour participant is requested 90 days before the date of the beginning of the tour (July 1, 2019). No cancellations will be accepted and no refunds will be paid after this time.



Connecting People with the Power of Gardens



**FOR MORE
INFORMATION
OR TO ENROLL**

Visit Signature Italy - <http://signatureitaly.com/garden-escape-tuscany-2019/>

Mail to Elizabeth Namack: elizabeth@signatureitaly.com
Amy Kupec Larue: gardenguideparis@gmail.com



The goal of the Pacific Horticulture Society (PHS) is to foster curiosity and respect for natural systems-pollinators and insects, the preservation of healthy soil, and the impact of a changing climate.

Since 1976 the Society has been publishing Pacific Horticulture, a trusted resource for West Coast gardeners, designers, and horticulturists.

The Society offers educational programs and inspiring garden events, as well as international and domestic PHS tours.



QR-CODE



SIGNATURE ITALY
TOURS

We craft high-quality experiences, highlighting not only the must-see sights but also adding in a touch of personal, local love. We are dedicated to showing guests the curiosities, places, people, habits and culinary nuisances that may otherwise be easily overlooked by the casual observer. We search out the small-scale, the local, the genuine and the sustainable. We want Italy to be loved by visitors whilst protecting it for future generations to do the same. Add to this our passion, expertise and years of professional experience and you have the Signature Italy approach.