



## **ART AND LIFE IN RENAISSANCE FLORENCE** **And why it continues to matter**

**October 30 – November 6, 2011**

Come to the source for a full immersion experience of the Italian Renaissance. This rebirth of learning based on classical sources occurred throughout most of Europe at the turn of the fifteenth century but emerged first in the Italian city of Florence and continued to be more pervasive there than anywhere else. The city's economy and its writers, painters, architects, and philosophers all made Florence a model of Renaissance culture.

During our time together, we will engage with the artistic masterpieces of Michelangelo, Leonardo, Botticelli, Fra Angelico and others in an unhurried and attentive way. Sean Forester, a classical painter who resides in Florence, will help us better understand how composition, style and symbolism of individual paintings work on our emotions. We will even try our own hand as a painter in a private fresco workshop. We'll meander through the streets of Florence where Dante's poetry is carved on buildings and Brunelleschi's Duomo, the largest brick dome ever constructed, crowns the cathedral and the entire city. We will retire to a formal Renaissance garden to try to discover why Machiavelli is considered the father of modern political science. And we will probe the life and work of Leonardo da Vinci, the quintessential Renaissance Man -- an incomparable master of "both" worlds of art and science.

Together, we will learn about the forces that brought about the Renaissance, to relish, first hand, many of its consummate creations and to appreciate its continuing legacy. And, of course, we will enjoy the fresh and incredibly varied regional cuisine and stellar wines with typical Tuscan *gusto* and *convivialità*.

### OUR ITINERARY

#### **Sunday, October 30**

Participants will make their own arrival arrangements. Please contact us for any assistance with your flights or information on arriving in Florence. Please arrive to the hotel by 2.00pm today so that you can join our afternoon walk. We'll stay in a single hotel on this trip and while Florence can often seem overwhelmed by tourists, our late fall week long stay should ensure that we enjoy the city in relative tranquility.

This afternoon will plunge into our exploration with a visit to the Uffizi Museum for an overview of Florence as the cradle of the Renaissance. This is Italy's most important art gallery, which has masterpieces by every major Florentine painter. Initially

conceived by Cosimo de Medici I as magistrates' offices (hence the Italian name *uffizi*), it soon became home for the Medici family's fabulous art collection. We'll discuss the political and social context of several key works in the gallery as an introduction to life in Renaissance Florence. Our discussion will carry on over dinner this evening.

*Overnight: Hotel Silla*

*Meals: Dinner*

### **Monday, October 31**

Our day is devoted to a study of Dante in literature and in life. Born in Florence in 1265 A.D, Dante is Italy's greatest poet and the first author to write in the vernacular that became modern Italian. This morning we'll discuss *The Divine Comedy*, an epic journey through Hell, Purgatory and Paradise. This afternoon, we'll follow Dante's path. Many buildings in Florence have plaques with quotes from Dante. We'll decipher them and learn about the places and people that inspired his work. Our walk takes us to the Baptistery where Dante himself was baptized and into the neighbourhood where he lived and worked. We'll see his first home and the church where he encountered Beatrice, for whom he wrote *The Divine Comedy*. At the end of the day there will be an optional trip to San Miniato to hear Gregorian chant. San Miniato one of the most beautiful churches in Florence has a panoramic view of the city.

*Overnight: Hotel Silla*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch*

### **Tuesday, November 1**

Our day begins in the Dominican monastery of San Marco, rebuilt by Michelozzo during the decade from 1436 to 1446 by appointment of Cosimo de Medici the Elder. Michelozzo's renovation succeeded in using much of the walls of the old building to create a monastery whose rooms and layout are in line with a completely modern criteria of functionality. Here we will see the remarkable frescoes by Fra Angelico. During the Renaissance, fresco painting was considered the true test of an artist's skill, since one had to finish before the plaster dried in order to ensure the adhesion of the image to the wall, allowing for only truly skilled artists to create beautiful and harmonious frescoes.

This afternoon we'll try our hand at fresco painting in a three-hour workshop. The session takes place in our fresco artist's workshop where we are guided through the steps of preparing a surface, drawing and transferring a drawing and finally applying the paint. We'll take home our own fresco at the end of the session. We'll be using the same materials and techniques of the Renaissance masters.

*Overnight: Hotel Silla*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch*

### **Wednesday, November 2**

The evolution of Renaissance architecture was driven most significantly by Brunelleschi. The creator of the dome of the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore changed the face of architecture with this monumental accomplishment. This morning, our walk will focus on Brunelleschi's works as an architect, mathematician and engineer. Enjoy some free time this afternoon to stroll the streets on your own or visit artist's studios with Sean.

*Overnight: Hotel Silla*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch*

### **Thursday, November 3**

The works of Michelangelo and Donatello are the focus of today's walk. We'll take a good look at Donatello's St. Mark and other Renaissance statuary at the church-cum-granary of Orsanmichele. We will visit Casa Buonarroti, Michelangelo's Florentine home that houses his youthful works. Then will be compare two great statues of David: Donatello's and Michelangelo's in the Bargello and the Accademia.

Late this afternoon we'll venture out to Fiesole and the Villa Bencista. We'll have drinks on the terrace with marvelous views over Florence and linger over our discussion of Machiavelli's *The Prince*. This masterpiece of realpolitik shows very different aspect of the Renaissance.

*Overnight: Hotel Silla*

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### **Friday, November 4**

This morning we'll have a special tour of the Vasari Corridor\*, which runs from the Palazzo Vecchio to the Pitti Palace, winding its way above the famed jewelry shops of the Ponte Vecchio. An architectural and political coup for the Medicis, who wanted a path between the palaces, the Corridor now houses two fascinating collections. One is a portrait of artists including everyone of importance and one of miniature paintings. At the end of the corridor is the Pitti Palace. This redoubtable Palazzo houses the Galleria Palatina with its outstanding collection of High Renaissance and Baroque paintings. Behind the Palace lie the extensive Boboli Gardens at the top of which is an 18th-century ballroom and garden overlooking olive groves.

*\* Please note that we require special permission to visit the Vasari Corridor. A visit is planned but not yet confirmed.*

*Overnight: Hotel Silla*

*Meals: Breakfast, Dinner*

### **Saturday, November 5**

This morning's lecture will focus on "Leonardo as the Renaissance Man". Widely considered to be one of the most diversely talented persons ever to have lived, Leonardo was a man whose unquenchable curiosity was equaled only by his powers of invention. Both an artist and a scientist, his work and ideas speak to us today. In this final discussion we will look back on what we have learned about the Renaissance and how it might apply to our lives. The afternoon is free to enjoy the city before we celebrate our Florentine sojourn over dinner together this evening.

*Overnight: Hotel Silla*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch*

### **Sunday, November 6**

#### **Depart Florence**

Participants make independent arrangements to reach the airport for departure flights.

*Meals: Breakfast*

*Note: Each evening, we will post the location of following day's discussions and talks and confirm any additions or changes to itinerary. We are a small group and will cover the material included below but we may decide together to alter the order depending on other opportunities and how we feel.*

## **TOUR COSTS AND DETAILS**

**Euro2295 per person, from Florence**

### **Deposit**

A non-refundable deposit of **CAN\$500** per person is required to reserve a space on this tour. Final payment is due 90 days prior to departure.

### **Single Supplement**

This trip is based on double occupancy. If you wish to have guaranteed single accommodation, the single supplement for this trip is an additional Euro300. Please note that if you are travelling alone, and we cannot match you with a roommate, you will have to pay the single supplement for this trip. This will be collected at 90 days prior to departure.

### **Currency**

This trip has been priced in Euro. Once you've made a reservation, we will invoice you in CAN\$ at the prevailing exchange rate.

### **Cancellation Policy**

All deposits are non-refundable. If you cancel within 90 days prior to trip departure, all associated trip costs are non-refundable. The tour price is quoted as a package. No partial refunds or credits will be given for services not used. In the event of a cancellation, you must notify Worldwide Quest immediately and in writing.

### **Tour Cost Includes:**

- Shared accommodations in hotels as specified or similar
- Meals as specified
- Sightseeing with qualified guides
- All entrance fees to monuments and parks
- All activities as described in the itinerary
- Hotels and local taxes
- Discussions as specified
- Texts and readings for the discussions

### **Tour Cost Does Not Include:**

- International flights
- Airport and departure taxes
- Airport transfers on arrival and departure
- Travel insurance
- Visa fees
- Excess baggage
- Items of a personal nature
- Additional arrangements due to any emergency or other situation

**THIS TOUR IS LIMITED TO 20 PARTICIPANTS**

### **A note on accommodation**

#### **Hotel Silla**

This delightful three star hotel is situated in a 17<sup>th</sup> century villa on the left bank of the historical Florentine river, in the center of the San Niccolo district. The large terrace with views over the river is a splendid spot for our discussions.

#### **Discussion Leader**

**Sean Forester** is a classical painter and Director of Art History and Humanities at the Florence Academy of Art. Originally from San Francisco, he has a B.A. from St. John's College's Great Books Program and an M.A. in English Literature from Cambridge University, where he studied on a Rotary scholarship. Sean has led several Classical Pursuits trips, including ones on Leonardo and Dante.

#### **Host**

Laurielle Penny, a co-owner of Worldwide Quest, lived and worked in Italy for many years and remains an Italian at heart.

#### **Please note:**

1. The itinerary described in these notes is intended as an example only. In the event of weather changes, logistical arrangements, or special events, we may make changes in the published itinerary or the accommodations.
2. Worldwide Quest is a full service tour operator and will be pleased to arrange your flights for this tour.
3. The tour cost does not include extra expenses incurred because of weather and logistical delays, or delayed departures of chartered or scheduled aircraft.

**For additional information about Worldwide Quest's terms and conditions, please refer to the current Classical Pursuits brochure or website.**



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*September 2010/lp*