

Wyllys Professional Travel – Susan Weissberg

Rome, Florence and Venice

Day 1

Arrival in Rome and Private Transfer to the Hotel

Upon your arrival at Rome airport you will have a private transfer with English speaking chauffer to your hotel.

Check in at **Il Palazzetto** – www.ilpalazzettoroma.it

Exclusively located at the top of the Spanish Steps (entrances both on Piazza Trinità dei Monti and Vicolo del Bottino), Il Palazzetto and the International Wine Academy of Roma were created by Roberto E. Wirth, owner and general manager of the nearby Hotel Hassler, and share one of the most spectacular hideaways in the very heart of Rome. The very same area where the spectacular banquets of Lucullus once took place.

Built in the 1500s, Il Palazzetto was for many years the retreat of a noble Roman family that preferred to reside here instead of at their historical palace in Piazza Mignanelli, due to the uniqueness and prestige of the building, an architectural jewel or rare beauty and historical value.

In 1999, **Roberto E. Wirth**, owner and General Manager of the **Hotel Hassler**, acquired Il Palazzetto with the intention of expanding the brand name of the historical hotel located two steps away at Piazza Trinita dei Monti. Roberto Wirth decided to unite his hospitality skills with his love for good wine, and with a group of friends established Il Palazzetto and the International Wine Academy as a meeting place for wine lovers, similar to a club, of which he remains president.

Il Palazzetto includes Il Palazzetto Restaurant & Wine Bar, **four boutique hotel rooms** and the 4th and 5th floor Terraces serving **lunch and dinner** (weather permitting) and cocktails in the **evening**.

Il Palazzetto offers four exclusively furnished boutique hotel rooms located on the 3rd and 4th floors, three of which overlook the Spanish Steps. Their simple yet luxurious beige and cream-colored hues with accents of velvet and satin, personally decorated by Mrs. Astrid Wirth, offer guests maximum comfort along with the sensation of being in their own private residence with the added luxury of impeccable service and incomparable location.

As a guest of the Palazzetto, you also enjoy full use of the nearby Hotel Hassler's facilities (Continental breakfast at the restaurant, the Amorvero SPA, 7th floor panoramic guest terrace, business center, etc.), just a few steps away at the top of the Spanish Steps.

All our rooms are equipped with all modern comforts: Satellite TV with plasma screen, direct phones, computer and fax links, safety box, minibar, air conditioning, and direct Internet access at the nearby Hotel Hassler .

Day 2

Guided tour in Rome – Ancient Rome and Baroque Rome – 6 hrs

You will be picked up by your English speaking guide.

You can take a taxi to move around in Rome (at your own expense).

You will walk to the majestic Imperial Forums Avenue to reach the “**Roman Forum**”, the centre of ancient Rome’s political and religious life; this incredible and interesting ensemble of ancient ruins reminds the 12 centuries of history of Roman civilization.

You will then reach the **Colosseum**, the symbol of the Eternal City: built between 75-80 A.D., it represents the eternity of Roman civilization. With its three superimposed classical orders, this monument is no doubt a masterpiece of classical architecture. This enormous amphitheatre was large enough to seat 80.000 spectators at such Roman events as gladiatorial combats and the martyrdom of Christians.

From the Colosseum you will head up to some of the most famous attractive sights of Rome. You will start your walk including the elegant **Via Condotti**, the shopping shrine in town, a shadowy narrow street claiming the smartest, most exclusive boutiques and shops of the city and its charming “Caffe’ Greco”, one of the oldest in town, favourite spot of ancient artists and poets; the most celebrated “**Piazza di Spagna**”, dominated by 16th century Trinità dei Monti Church, and shaped like a crooked bow tie.

The Piazza is surrounded by tall shuttered houses painted in muted shades of ochre, cream and russet. With its curious “Barcaccia” fountain by Bernini’s father, this area, also known as “**Spanish Steps**”, has been representing for almost three centuries the chief meeting place for people visiting Rome and one of the glories of late Baroque Rome. In front of the “Palazzo di Spagna”, the early 17th century residence of the Spanish Ambassador to the Vatican, stands a 19th century column commemorating the dogma of the Immaculate Virgin.

Walking through the Via Propaganda, you will pass by the Church of **Sant’Andrea delle Fratte**, a superb work of Baroque Art. You will continue on down Via del Tritone leading to the world famous **Trevi Fountain**. See this glorious and majestic fountain where you will have the chance to follow the tradition and toss a coin to ensure your return to Rome; from there, a short walk will take you to **Via del Corso**, so called because the Romans used to race horses down it, until this became hazardous for pedestrians.

You will keep on walking passing by the **Pantheon** to reach one of the most marvellous squares in the world, **Piazza Navona**, the old Domitian Stadium, with its magnificent Fountain of Four Rivers by Bernini.

Day 3

Guided tour in Rome – Vatican Museums and St. Peter’s Basilica – 4 hrs

You will visit today the **Vatican City** with the **Vatican Museums** and **St. Peter's Basilica** and Square. The Vatican Museums are one of the most famous and renowned cultural institutions of the Holy See. They are known everywhere because of the masterpieces which the Roman Pontiffs have commissioned, collected and preserved during the ages. Together with the immense heritage of movable works of art, sculptures and paintings, which are displayed in the galleries, the itineraries of the Vatican Museums include the most important and artistically significant rooms of the Vatican Apostolic Palace, such as the "Stanze" painted by Raphael and, of course, the Sistine Chapel with frescoes by Michelangelo.

The tour will continue with the inside visit of St. Peter's Basilica, the biggest church of the world where more than 20 thousand persons can pray. It is 193 meters long, 132 meters high and it occupies 22 thousand square meters. The immense Michelangelo dome dominates over everything, it is the biggest and the most majestic work of art in masonry which has ever been created. Yet there is another work of Michelangelo called La Pietà. He engraved one of his famous works in 1499 at the age of 24 years of one entire marble block.

Private Transfer from Hotel to Railway Station in Rome

Private Transfer from Railway Station in Florence to Hotel

Your English speaking driver will pick you up at the hotel in Rome and he will drive you to Rome Termini Railway Station.

You will take a Eurostar Train (first class with reservation) to Florence.

At Florence Santa Maria Novella Railway Station another driver will pick you up to transfer you to your hotel.

Check in at **Palazzo Niccolini al Duomo** - www.niccolinidomepalace.com

Recently, the residence was completely renovated without altering its features and maintaining the fascination of its past history.

Rooms are large, have high painted ceilings, frescoed walls and are elegantly decorated. All rooms have "en suite" bathrooms, fitted in marble. The whole residence is air-conditioned.

The Palazzo was originally built by the Naldini's, an important family of Florentine merchants and bankers. It remained in the Naldini family until 1891, when the last descendant, Cristina, married Marchese Eugenio Niccolini di Camugliano and brought into this family as part of her dowry.

The present owners, Filippo and Ginevra Niccolini di Camugliano, personally supervised the renovation works and oversee the residence in all details, in order to ensure that guests be offered a top quality treatment, comparable to that of a luxury hotel.

Day 4

Florence Half Day Guided Tour – 4 hrs – & Free Time

A very knowledgeable local guide will meet you at your hotel and with her you will discover the beauties of Florence. **Florence** is known all over the world as the city of art, the capital of the Renaissance and one of the most important centres of literary and scientific culture.

You will start from the **Galleria dell'Accademia**, which houses the masterpiece of Michelangelo: David.

David was commissioned in 1501 by the Cathedral Works Committee (Opera Del Duomo). At the age of 26, Michelangelo was given a leftover block of marble that came from the mountains of Carrara, one which had previously been worked on by various other artists. The piece was intended as a monumental work, a testimony to the city's republican pride, not one for close confinement, but was moved to the Accademia in 1873 (from outside the Palazzo Vecchio, where a replica now stands) to protect it from the ravages of time and the weather.

You will then continue to the **Piazza del Duomo**.

The **Florence Duomo** is dedicated to Santa Maria del Fiore and is typical of Italian Gothic architecture. The present building was designed by Arnolfo di Cambio (c. 1245-1302), one of the greatest architect-sculptors of his age, who considerably enlarged the existing structure. This was finished in around 1367 and was completely covered with coloured marbles like the earlier Baptistery, although the uncompleted facade was given its covering in the nineteenth century. The Cupola remained unfinished, and in 1421 the polygonal base was erected. Two architects won the competition to design the dome, Lorenzo Ghiberti (1368-1445) and Filippo Brunelleschi (1377-1446), but it was Brunelleschi who actually built it using remarkable technical knowledge to achieve the uniquely beautiful results we see today. Completed in 1436, the Cupola is the most characteristic feature of the Florentine skyline, symbolizing a great cultural tradition and the city's civic awareness. It will then be time to visit **Piazza della Signoria**, which has been the political heart of the city from the Middle Ages to the present day.

It gets its name of course from the most important monument there, **Palazzo della Signoria**, designed by Arnolfo di Cambio in 1298-99 for the seat of the Republican government and which was later to host the Gonfalonier of Justice and the Priors of the Arts (it was in fact at first called Palazzo dei Priori).

The square however is not just the "civil" centre of Florence, it is also a splendid open-air museum. The square of the Uffizi stretches out on the south side, towards the Arno, with the eye-catching Loggia dei Lanzi, (1376-1382), whose late Gothic roof covers 15 statues which also include Benvenuto Cellini's wonderful Perseus holding up the head of the Medusa.

The statues in the square deserve a chapter all to themselves. Apart from the great sculptures lined up in front of the facade of Palazzo Vecchio (among them the copy of David by Michelangelo), we can hardly avoid noticing the Fountain of Neptune by Ammannati and the equestrian statue of Cosimo I de Medici by Giambologna.

Close by to the Piazza della Signoria you will visit the **Ponte Vecchio**, the oldest bridge which crosses the Arno at its widest point. It dates back to Roman times and has often been re-built.

After the flooding of 1333 it was re-constructed with a double row of shops, passing from a defensive type of architecture to the actual public one. In 1565 the east-facing Vasariano Corridor above the shops was built and the back-shops were added in the seventeenth century giving the bridge its actual structure.

The last stop will be in the **Square of Santa Croce** (Holy Cross), one of Florence's largest squares, and traditionally one of the city's main arenas for ceremonials and festivities.

The rest of the day is at your leisure.

Day 5

Siena and Wine Tasting – 9 hrs

Your English speaking driver will meet you at your hotel and he will drive you to the beautiful city of Siena.

Siena is a medieval city of brick. From a vantage point such as the Palazzo Pubblico's tower, its sea of roof tiles blends into a landscape of steep, twisting stone alleys. This cityscape hides dozens of Gothic palaces and pastry shops galore, unseen neighborhood rivalries, and altarpieces of unsurpassed beauty.

In Siena you will meet your local guide.

You will visit the **Church of San Domenico** with the chapel of Saint Catherine and its frescoes by Sodoma, Via Banchi di Sopra with its elegant shops, the beautiful **Gothic Cathedral** and the **Libreria Piccolomini**.

Your visit will end in the shell shaped **Piazza del Campo**, which probably captures the most attention and fame. It has been seen in films, photographs, and advertising campaigns. The bricks cover the sweetly sloping land underneath and are witness to

many events in history, but the most intriguing is the “**Palio**” horserace, one of the most important things in the life of a Siena native. In the piazza on July 2nd and August 16th there is a bareback horse race that was first recorded in 1283, but may have had its origins in Roman military training. On those days mayhem takes over this small town and non-natives can observe local patriotism at its best and worst.

Any and everything will be done passionately to bring home the prize. The prize is the “Palio” a banner to be shown off with pride for the whole neighborhood it represents.

Afterwards you will continue towards the **Chianti area** where you will do a wine tasting in a local farmhouse.

This afternoon in the Chianti area will give you a good introduction to both this well-known wine-producing area and its excellent wines. The word Chianti, meaning both a geographical area and a wine, today renowned all over the world, is becoming a synonym of Tuscany too. The Chianti area lies in the hills in the provinces of Siena and Florence. It is a very green land dotted with farmhouses, villas and castles, symbols of a glorious and noble past, but also of the many battles that took place in the area. The landscape is hilly and the vegetation various: cypresses, sunflowers, vineyards and olive trees

Day 6

Private Transfer from Hotel to Railway Station in Florence

Arrival in Venice Santa Lucia railway station and Private Transfer to the hotel

Your English speaking driver will meet you at the hotel and he will transfer you to the railway station in Florence.

You will take a Eurostar train (1st class) to Venice.

At Venice airport a hostess will wait for you for a private transfer to your hotel:

Check in at **Palazzo Stern** – www.palazzostern.it

Day 7

Half Day Guided Tour of Venice – 4 hrs – & Free Time

Your English speaking guide will take you around Venice for a private visit.

St. Mark's Square was the political and religious centre of the city during the period of the Serenissima Republic.

At first you will visit the **Doges Palace** (private residence of the Doge, seat of Government and Court of Justice).

The original palace was begun in Byzantine style in the 9th century but during the centuries it was destroyed by fires several times .

In the 14th century the Palace was rebuilt in Gothic style.

The offices used to be on the first floor, on the second there were four large meeting rooms for the members of some of the institutions of government and the private apartment of the Doge and, on the third, the great assembly halls.

You will be accompanied throughout the beautiful rooms with fantastic ceiling decorations and well-known paintings by Titian, Tiepolo, Tintoretto, Carpaccio and Veronese.

At the end of the visit from the Hall of Magistrature you will pass over the Bridge of Sighs, a covered passage over the canal between the palace and the ancient prison.

The **Cathedral of St. Mark**, built on the plan of a Greek Cross to house the body of St. Mark, which had been smuggled out of Alexandria, is the second part of your sightseeing.

The facades show traces of different architectural styles and on the main facade you can see the Four Horses, which were taken in Byzantium in 1204.

At the end of the guided tour time at leisure for shopping or for a coffee or an aperitif in one of the well-known Cafés (Caffè Florian or Quadri) enjoying the music of their orchestras.

The rest of the day is free to explore the wonders of Venice.

Day 8

Free time in Venice & Transfer from Hotel to Airport

A speaking hostess will meet you at your hotel for a private transfer by boat to the airport.

Price: Starting From Euro 3,082.00 p.p.

Based on 2 participants sharing a double room

Price includes:

- 2 nights stay at **Il Palazzetto** in Rome – 1 double room with view of the Spanish Steps / breakfast included
- 3 nights stay at **Palazzo Niccolini al Duomo** in Florence – 1 double deluxe room / breakfast included
- 2 nights stay at **Hotel Palazzo Stern** – 1 superior double room / breakfast included
- Private transfer from Rome FCO apt to Hotel in Rome with AC deluxe sedan car and English speaking driver
- 6 hrs private English speaking guide in Rome
- Entrance fee to the Vatican Museums with special reservation to avoid the line
- 4 hrs private English speaking guide in Rome
- Entrance fee to the Colosseum
- Private transfer with English speaking driver to Rome Termini railway station in Rome
- Private transfer with English speaking driver from Florence Santa Maria Novella railway station in Florence to Florence Hotel
- 4 hrs private English speaking guide in Florence
- Entrance fee to the Accademia Museum with special reservation to avoid the line
- Private AC deluxe sedan car with English speaking driver to Siena and Chianti
- 3 hrs private English speaking guide in Siena
- Entrance fee to the Cathedral
- Wine tasting in an upscale winery of the Chianti area accompanied by snacks (ham, salami, cheese and bread)
- Private transfer with English speaking driver from Florence Hotel to Florence Santa Maria Novella railway station in Florence
- Private transfer with English speaking assistance and private boat from Venice Santa Lucia railway station to Venice Hotel
- 4 hrs private guided tour in Venice with local English speaking guide
- Entrance fee to the Doge's Palace
- Private transfer with boat, private car and assistance from hotel to Airport in Venice

Price does not include:

- Meals
- Gratuities
- Private car at disposal in Rome
- Train tickets
- Anything not specified in "Price includes"

Please note

- Our drivers are all very knowledgeable and helpful with clients and our cars are always luxury cars
- Our English speaking guides have a perfect command of the English language
- If the program is confirmed we will be glad to provide a list of nice restaurants where clients can have their meals and eat a la carte
- We have an emergency number which is switched on 24 hours a day and the clients can use it for any occurrence during their trip

Cancellation Policy for the entire program:

- Possibility to cancel the entire program without any cancellation fee up to 30 days before the arrival
- If the entire program is cancelled from 30 days to 21 days before the arrival of the group 10% cancellation fee
- If the entire program is cancelled from 20 days to 15 days before the arrival of the group 10% cancellation fee
- If the entire program is cancelled from 14 days to 10 days before the arrival of the group 30% cancellation fee
- If the entire program is cancelled from 9 days to 3 days before the arrival of the group 60% cancellation fee
- If the entire program is cancelled from 2 days to arrival date 100% cancellation fee

Please note that Vatican Museum tickets are not refundable (euro 60.00) in any case. This means that once you confirm the reservations to our agency we cannot refund this amount for any reason.

Changes or additions to your holiday

If you want to change any part of your holiday arrangements after the invoice has been issued, we will do our best to make the change, but it may not be possible. Any request for changes must be made in writing by the person who made the original booking, or his or her travel agent. If it is possible to make the change, we will communicate it to you.

If the services you request are more expensive than those previously confirmed we will invoice you for the extra charge.

If the services you request are less expensive than those previously confirmed the difference in price will be subject to our cancellation policy.