

# Springtime in Tuscany

## A Herbal Journey

May 25 ~ June 5, 2019

### Saturday, May 25th Rendezvous in Firenze (Florence)

**2 pm Arrival at Villa Certano & Lunch** Located just minutes from Siena, this 400 year-old villa is owned by the Baldassarrini family. Get settled into your room. A hearty lunch will be offered in the "Parlor" off of the 500 year old Villa kitchen.

**3 Rest Time**

**4 Opening Circle & Introductions**

**6 Italian Feast** at the villa. After dinner, Annalisa Baldassarrini will present an informal talk on Siena and Villa Certano.

### Sunday, May 26th

*\* Morning tea and Coffee will be available*

**7:30 am** Join Natalie for an hour of stretching, Pilates & yoga.

**8 ~ 9 Breakfast at the Villa.**

**9:30 Hike the Tuscan countryside.** This morning's walk will depart from the villa and wind through the beautiful Tuscan countryside to a beautiful old chapel. We'll plan our hike in time to arrive for the noon mass and experience the angelic singing in the chapel. Along the route we will explore the many familiar and unfamiliar plants of Tuscany.

**1 Lunch at the villa** There will be an Italian speaking table for those wishing to converse with Annalisa.

**2 Tour Villa Certano.** Join Annalisa for a tour of the 100-acre 400 year-old Villa Certano. This ancient setting has 20 acres of olive trees, 20 acres of grape vineyards, a 1200 year-old church nestled between the villa & the winery, a formal rose garden and much more.

**4:30 Edible and Medicinal Herbs of Tuscany** Join Jane for a walk around the villa discovering Italy's rich herbal heritage.

**7 Dinner at Costafabrizi.** We will be dining together in one of Tuscany's traditional eateries.

### Monday, May 27th

**7 ~ 8 Breakfast at the Villa**

**8 Depart for full day trip to Volterra and the Exploration of the Tuscan countryside.** The "magic and mysterious" city of Volterra has its roots in three thousand years of history. The ancient city walls, the imposing Porta all'Arco, the Necropolis of Marmini and the numerous archaeological finds conserved in the Museo Etrusco Guarnacci bear testimony of the pre Roman Etruscan period. The alabaster craft whose history is inseparable from that of the history of the city, represents another point of interest. Volterra stands on a rocky hill some 1770 feet above the sea level, located between the rivers Bra and Cecina, and is surrounded by strong walls. The district is rich in alabaster, the working of which was an important industry of the city, and in mineral waters, such as those of S. Felice and the Moie, or salt springs. Still more important are the Soffoni of Larderello, from which boric acid is extracted, the sulphur lake of Monterotondo, the copper springs of Caporciano, and the baths of Montecatini.

**9 ~ 12 Guided Hike to Monte Nero** The area of Monte Nero, just a few kilometers from Volterra is distinguished by the great mass of molten rock sculptured by the waters of the Strolla into narrow valleys, deep gorges and picturesque water falls set amidst lush vegetation. Our guides Lamberto and Marco are well versed in the plants and geological features on this hike.

## **1 ~ 2 Picnic lunch**

**2 ~ 4 Guided Tour of outdoor Etruscan sites and Etruscan Guarnacci museum in Volterra** The richness of the Etruscan finds made in and near Volterra make it a mecca for enthusiasts of all things Etruscan, with an unparalleled collection of Etruscan antiquities being displayed.

**4 ~ 7 Free time in Volterra** Volterra, a haven of Etruscan, Roman, Medieval and Renaissance art, dominates the Cecina Valley, 550 meters above sea level, affording a spectacular view. The city still retains traces of its majestic past, which gradually unfurls as you wander through the narrow streets and explore the Etruscan Museum, The Art Gallery and Museum of Sacred Art. And yet Volterra's charm not only lies in its ancient history but in the surrounding countryside, a slow traditional way of life and its age-old tradition of alabaster carving.

**7 ~ 9 Dinner Together in Volterra** We will dine at the fantastic Le Vecchio Lira owned and operated by our trekking guide Lamberto.

## **Tuesday, May 28th**

**\* Morning tea and Coffee will be available**

**7:30 Yoga** Join Natalie for an hour of stretching, Pilates, and yoga.

### **8:30 Breakfast**

**10 ~ 12 Aromatic First Aid Class: Mindy Green** Learn the basics of using pure plant essential oils to treat life's little emergencies. With a basic kit of ten versatile essential oils one can address numerous ailments that are commonly treated at home. We will outline safety guidelines, dilutions and applications, and how essential oils can enhance herbal treatments and be safely employed as palliative adjuncts to conventional medical care

### **12:30 Lunch at the villa**

**3 ~ 7 Visit to San Giovanni Terme at Rapolano.** Tuscany has a rich tradition of taking the waters. We will be visiting a hot-springs resort where we will be soaking in the healing mineral waters. The spa has a wide assortment of hydrotherapy modalities. For those who wish, optional treatments of massage, beauty treatments and hydrotherapy will be available. You must sign up ahead for spa treatments. The precious spring waters which bubble up from the ground at San Giovanni have notable therapeutic properties, recognized by the Italian Ministry of Health. They are particularly effective in dealing with complaints relating to articulation of the joints, the respiratory system, dermatological ailments, and muscular problems.

**7:30 ~ 9:30 Dinner** We will dine together at the lovely restaurant L'Olivio at the San Giovanni Terme.

## **Wednesday, May 29th**

**\* Morning tea and Coffee will be available**

**7 ~ 8 Yoga** Join Natalie for an hour of stretching, Pilates and yoga.

### **7:30 ~ 8:30 Breakfast**

**9 Siena Market.** Enjoy a morning in this bustling local market. Free time at the market to shop as you like!!

### **12 Lunch on your own in Siena**

**2 ~ 4 Guided tour of Siena's most treasured sites.** Siena is a Gothic walled city with the same number of people today as 700 years ago. Its red brick lanes cascade everywhere. It was the first European city to eliminate autos from its main piazza (square). Sitting atop a hill, the IL Campo, is Siena's great central piazza. Its gently tilted cobblestone floor provides the perfect invitation to sit and people watch. Siena's Duomo (cathedral) is as Baroque as Gothic gets. The heads of 172 Popes peer down from the ceiling over the fine inlaid art on the floor. Wandering the streets and "loitering" in the square is magical. Grom's at Piazza Salimbeni has delicious organic gelato.

**4:30 A visit to the Orto Botanico of Siena.** Siena's Botanical Gardens "Orto Botanico" has over 3000 species and is contained within the walls of Siena. Part of Siena's university we will tour the gardens and museum. Dr. Claudia Perini curator of the garden will guide us through this garden.

**7 Dinner** We will be dining together at one of Siena's traditional ristoranti.

## Thursday, May 30th

### **7 Early Breakfast**

### **8 Depart for Day Excursion to Florence.**

**10 ~ 12 Guided Tour of Simplers Botanical Gardens.** IL Giardino dei Semplici was started in the 1500's. At that time it was the teaching garden for the medical students. Today it serves as an education and research facility as well as a repository of rare and endangered plants and trees. The Director Dr. Paolo Luzzi will share his passion of the healing plants of Tuscany with us.

**12:30 Lunch** We will have lunch together at a local trattoria

**2:30 Tour the Pharmacy of Santa Maria Novella** Adjacent to the Piazza Di Santa Maria Novella is one of the world's oldest pharmacies established by the Dominican fathers in 1221. Since that time the Pharmacy of Santa Maria Novella has been producing perfumes, potions, powders and pomades. The structure, energy and art has not changed in the intervening centuries except for the installation of a modern cash register.

**4 ~ 9 Free time to shop, experience Florence and have dinner on your own:** Visit the famous outdoor markets of Firenze. Wander the streets, sample the gelato, rub the bronze pig's snout fountain for good luck, and stand on the Ponte Vecchio, Firenze's most famous bridge. Discover a small eatery on your own or with a friend or join members of our group to dine together at any of Florence's fabulous restaurants.

### **9:30 Travel Back to Villa Certano.**

## Friday, May 31<sup>st</sup>

\* Morning tea and Coffee will be available

**8 ~ 9 Yoga** Join Natalie for an hour of stretching, Pilates & yoga

### **9 Breakfast**

**10 ~ 12:30 Spa morning at Villa Certano with Jane** Join Jane and Natalie for a delightful morning making herbal products, experiencing herbal facials, and exchanging hand and foot massage.

**1 ~ 2 Lunch at the Villa-- There will be an Italian speaking table for those wishing to converse with Annalisa**

**3 Herb walk through the Tuscan Countryside** A countryside walk discovering Italy's rich herbal heritage with Jane and local Tuscan herbalist Zora Keller. Zora is an Italian herbal specialist who has learned all about edible Tuscan plants/herbs from her parents/grandparents and many Tuscan elders.

### **5 Pack up and Free time**

**7 Group Prepared Dinner at the Villa and time to enjoy our last night at the Villa.** Join Annalisa Baldasarrini in preparing typical Sieneese food for our grand feast. Jane invites those interested to help pick wild herbs for dinner.

## Saturday, June 1st

**7 ~ 8 Early Breakfast** Today we depart Villa Certano and head off on our next adventures. Be sure to have all your belongings packed and ready to go. Remember to hand in your apartment key.

### **9 Depart for Guided Tour of Lavanda del Chianti**

*Lavanda Del Chianti in Casalvento is a paradise of essences and perfumes. Presently under the direction of Lorenzo Domini, a doctor by profession, who, together with his wife Donata and his son Alessandro operate this Essential Oil business. The estate was acquired in 1950 by his father Giovanni, university professor and rector in Siena and in 1962 began the adventure with the cultivation of lavender, helichrysum, roses, iris and many other medicinal plants and with the purchase of the first distiller began extracting essential oils and hydrolates. In Casalvento, they cultivate nine different types of lavender, thyme, rosemary, sage, elicriso, hyssop, broom, Damascus rose, and iris. Dr. Domini will guide us through the fields of medicinal plants, and into the distillery. A typical Tuscan lunch will be served.*

**5 Check into Cenacolo Hotel.** This ancient Franciscan Hotel of Santa Maria degli Angeli is just minutes from Assisi.

**6 Explore Assisi and Dine On Your Own** Around 1200 a simple friar from Assisi challenged the decadence of the church with the powerful message of non-materialism, simplicity, and to 'slow down and smell the flowers. Francis'

message of love and sensitivity to the environment has a broad and timeless appeal. The Basilica of St. Francis, the centerpiece of the "Hill of Paradise", is one of the artistic highlights of medieval Europe.

## **Sunday, June 2nd**

### **8 Breakfast at the Hotel**

**9 Silent Pilgrimage to St. Francis of Assisi's Mountain Retreat** We will visit the Grotto and original Chapel of St. Francis. As pilgrims, we will travel up into the hills of Assisi, experience a silent pilgrimage, and walk to the caves in which St. Francis meditated. Be prepared to experience the profound and sacred. This hilltop chapel with its live oaks is the true (rather than another) shrine to St. Francis.

### **11:30 Depart for Sansepolcro and Aboca**

### **12:30 Lunch together in Sansepolcro at one of its fine Trattorias**

**2 Guided Tour of Aboca Herbal Museum and Medicinal Herb Gardens** Aboca Herbal Museum is a great cultural project housed in the magnificent 18<sup>th</sup> Palazzo Bourbon Del Monte in the quaint town of Sansepolcro. Its mission is to recover and spread the traditional use of medicinal herbs. Displays and exhibits showcase the history of the relationship between people and medicinal plants on the theological, philosophical, mythological and literary levels. The botanical library, Bibliotheca Antiqua is a remarkable collection of valuable ancient books dealing specifically with the subject of medicinal plants over the ages. There are separate rooms dedicated to History, Pottery, Weighing Scales, Glassware, Herbs, an Apothecary Shop, a Phytochemical Laboratory, Poison Cellar and a 19<sup>th</sup> century Pharmacy. We will also be guided through Aboca's extensive medicinal herb gardens.

### **5 Depart Aboca**

### **7:30 Dinner together at the Cenacolo Hotel**

## **Monday, June 3th**

**7 Early morning breakfast (We will also be packing our picnic lunch)** We will be departing Assisi and need to be sure we have are packed and ready to go.

**8 Depart Assisi and travel to Camaldoli for a full day of hike through ancient beech wood, oak and fir forests.** This is one of the highlights for many of us on previous trips. Camaldoli, one of the great monastic centers of the forest, is tiny and set in densely wooded mountains. The austere hermitage houses monks who live under the vow of silence. The monastery contains a 16<sup>th</sup> century ancient pharmacy where the monks prepare and sell herbal preparations. The walk starts through ancient beech and fir woods. It then ambles through high mountain meadows and mixed woods. It offers one of the most panoramic views of Tuscany. We'll spend the day hiking, ending up at the Granduca Lodge in Campigna for dinner. For those who don't wish to hike, the bus will take you the Granduca for a relaxing day at this beautiful mountain lodge set deep in the forest (short day hikes, jacuzzi and spa facilities available at the Granduca).

### **7:30 Dinner Together at the Granduca Lodge.**

## **Tuesday, June 4th**

**7:30 ~ 8:30 Yoga** After hiking our muscles are so ready for a good stretch

### **8 ~ 9 Breakfast in the lodge.**

**9 ~ 12 Relax, sleep in, enjoy the peace and quiet of this mountain lodge. Optional morning activity;** Jane will be offering a class on Traveler's First Aide from 10:30 until 12 noon. \*Bring your first aide kits with you

### **1 ~ 2 Lunch together at the Granduca.**

**2 ~ 4 Botanical Keying** Join us as we play our Botanical Keying Game. Not to be missed, a highlight of every journey.

### **4 Free Time to Pack, take a short hike, write those last postcards and/or just relax.**

**5:30 Closing Circle** An opportunity to reflect on our time in Italy 'living the good life' and our journey together, highlights, blessings, and lessons. Let's rejoice and create ceremony and honor this magical time we have shared.

### **7:30 Final Dinner Celebration**

## **Wednesday, June 5th**

**Be sure to pack all of your luggage and have your suitcases in the lobby before you come down for breakfast. Don't forget to hand in your room key.**

**7:30 ~8:30 Breakfast**

**9 Depart the Granduca for Florence Airport**

**12 noon Arrive Florence Airport**

*"Birthplace of the Renaissance, the region gets its name from the Etruscans, the most powerful civilization of pre-Roman Italy. Its walled cities, cypress lined roads, and patchwork hills have been written about and photographed with such unrivaled enthusiasm that the image of the place seems to have insinuated itself in the public consciousness, even in the minds of those who have yet to set foot on its fertile soil. A cynic might expect the 'real' Tuscany to disappoint, for how could it ever live up to all the attention it received? And yet whenever I come home to the Tuscany ~ even after the shortest absence ~ its startling beauty, its richness and abundance strike me with a freshness that belies the many years I have spent here" ~ Lori de Mori*

### **Lodging information:**

**Villa Certano: 53010 Costalpino Siena Phone: 0577 349108**

**Hotel Cenacolo: Viale Patrono d'Italia 70 Assisi Phone: 07580 41083**

**Granduca Hotel: Via Spinello Centro 3, 47018 Campigna Phone 0543 980051**

Richard's email address: richardliebmann@gmail.com

**Richard's Cell: TBD**

**Itinerary Subject to Change**

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