

2017 Reunion in Italy

After spending our last few Italy reunions in regions from north to south and east to west, we decided it was time to return to Tuscany. Roberto Bechi and wife Patti of Tours by Roberto have developed a new customized itinerary for us that we're certain will lure all of you back to this country we all love. Mark your calendars for October 2-9, 2017. Italy, here we come!

After our pickup at the Rome Fiumicino Airport, we will begin with four nights in the charming and much-loved city of **Lucca**, just north of Pisa on a plain at the foot of the Apuan Alps. Composer Giacomo Puccini was born there, and his house has been restored and converted into a small museum that we will be able to visit, along with the Historical Museum of the Resistance and other primary sites in the city.

From Lucca, we'll take short distance day tours to Pisa, to include the Leaning Tower of Pisa and The Field of Miracles, the **Sant'Anna historical site in Stazzema**, and the seaside village of **Viareggio**. On other days we will travel to the **Garfagnana** region, nestled in a valley between the Apennines mountains to the east/northeast, and the Apuan Alps to the west. This will also include a visit to **Villa Grabau** and a tour of the lovely hill town village of **Barga**. Included are lunches in quaint village restaurants and other special places that Roberto loves.

Then it's on to **Siena** for the remainder of the reunion and a stop en route to the lovely and renowned town of Etruscan origins called **Volterra**, with lunch and wine tasting at a local farm. In Siena, we'll be treated to a walking tour with a special private visit to the **Contrada Museum** where we will learn more about the annual festival and horse race, Il Palio. Even if you've visited this popular Tuscany destination previously (with the 2002 Italy reunion group, perhaps), there is still so much to do and see and learn! In Siena we also get serious about that wine thing with a wine tour in the **Brunello** region and lunch in **Montalcino**. (This is where Lynn may go missing in action in the winery!) On our final full day, we'll head to the **Montepulciano** and **Val d'Orcia** area visiting **Pienza** and **Monticchiello**—Roberto's favorite village.

Hotels selected are the **Grand Hotel Guinigi** just outside Lucca and the centrally located **NH Siena**. These are two excellent hotels where we will have breakfast each morning as well as dinner most evenings.



Full details of the reunion will be announced in Louisville, with deposits starting there. Future issues of the Afterburner will go into more itinerary details, of course, but what you need to know now are the basic itinerary and pricing information.

The price is 1425 euro per person based on a minimum of 40 attendees. (Single supplement is only 145 euro additional.)

As in the past, the reunion price includes roundtrip airport group transfer, and this time from Rome's Fiumicino Airport; seven nights in the reunion hotels, all tours and scheduled transportation while on the reunion, approximately 18 meals during the 7 days and nights of the reunion, museum entrance tickets per the itinerary, and other inclusions to be detailed later. Yes, vino with each evening meal and some lunches too!

Deposit is \$300 per person by check payable to ARA Ben Catalina and is due by October 31, 2016. Members attending the Louisville Reunion have first priority in depositing for this reunion, followed by members with the longest continuous ARA membership. This is done in case the signups exceed the maximum capacity of 80 people. Everyone who makes their deposit by October 31 will have their names entered into a special drawing for a \$250 credit for the 2018 reunion AND a \$100 cash prize, with both prizes to be awarded at the Business Meeting in Italy. Full details of the increment payment schedule, recommended air travel arrangements, and other information will be provided in future Afterburners as well as by email to all interested members.

Once the deposit is made, future payments will be as follows:

Jan. 15, 2017	\$500 per person due
Apr. 15, 2017	\$500 per person due
Jun. 15, 2017	Balance due, including single supplement if applicable

The balance due on June 15 will be computed using the euro exchange rate on that date and will be applied to the total per person price. **NOTE that there will be no refunds after April 15, 2017 unless we have another member(s) to take your place.**

Except for the deposits paid at Louisville, all check payments must be mailed to:

Ben Catalina
42 Roseheart
San Antonio, TX 78259