

Villas and Vines
Presents

An Italian Food and Wine Adventure on Italy's Alluring Amalfi Coast September 2008



Sunday

Arrive at the Rome airport, followed by a group transfer to the village of Amalfi, stopping en-route for a visit to Naples.

The beauties and surprises of Naples have been praised by innumerable poets and writers. The lovely bay, with its horizon bounded by islands, the Sorrento Peninsula, and lofty Vesuvius, is one of the most beautiful in the world. Its fame has also been enhanced by the area's attractive climate and the special atmosphere evoked by the street life, a world of fantasy and superstition, magic and fate.

The city of Naples, and very specifically Pizzeria Brandi founded in 1780, is the birthplace of Italian pizza and the *Pizza Margherita*. We stop for a bite at this classic restaurant tucked away on a lively Neapolitan alley-way. "When in Naples, your first meal must be pizza!"

With our guide we will see the landmarks, including the Castel Nuovo, Galleria Umberto I, the Piazza Trento e Trieste, and the Teatro San Carlo.

Arriving in Amalfi, the village which has given its name to the beautiful Amalfi Coast, is breathtaking. Witness a rather Moorish-looking little town with its tall houses built on slopes facing the sea in a wondrous setting. Amalfi enjoys a very mild climate, making it a popular holiday resort. For us "foodies", Amalfi boasts delicious traditional cuisine that takes advantage of its abundance of fresh ingredients native to the area, namely lemons and seafood.

Check into the 4-star Hotel Marina Riviera, our home-away-from-home for the next 6 nights where every room is guaranteed to have a small French balcony and full views of the Mediterranean Sea.

Our “Welcome Dinner” in Amalfi is at one of our favorite restaurants “*Donna Stella*”. Germana, our hostess has been preparing wonderful regional dishes for years with her family and tonight we are lucky enough to enjoy their warm hospitality and delicious cuisine!

L,D



Monday

Amalfi is Italy's oldest republic, founded in 840; by the end of the 9th century it came under the rule of the doge and today our guide provides an excellent overview of our village. Amalfi enjoyed its greatest prosperity in the 11th century, when shipping in the Mediterranean was regulated by the Amalfi Navigation Tables, the oldest maritime code in the world. Amalfi traded regularly with the Orient, in particular Constantinople, hence you will notice many Turkish and Middle-Eastern styles in the churches, art, and architecture.

Rupert, our guide for the week, is a local favorite and friend to all in Amalfi. This morning he leads us through the village itself and also the secret alleyways, pointing out interesting facts of this historical village as we go.

This morning we have several special treats. Amalfi has a long and passionate history of paper-making. The hills above Amalfi provide the hardwood, and the stream flowing through (and under) the village provides the power to create the finest writing paper in the world! We witness the process, see the mills, and even create our own paper.

Next on to the famous lemons. *Limoncello* will soon become your favorite digestivo. We will visit the local producer, learn their secrets, and tickle your senses. Of course we will sample, purchase souvenirs (and sample again).

On the way back through Amalfi and to the hotel, we take the “scenic route” through the many secret passageways, arriving at the main square.

St. Andrea (St. Andrew) is the patron Saint of Amalfi. The Basilica is at the heart of the village. Founded in the 9th century, relics of St. Andrew lie underneath the cathedral. The staircase alone is one of the grandest in Italy – count how many weddings you see during the week!

Lunch will be together in one of Amalfi's many colorful cafes, enjoying local specialties.

After lunch we have the entire afternoon free. You may choose to lounge on the beach, read a book, shop, take a nap – or all of the above! The choices are endless!

Before dusk we gather and board our private vessel for a special cruise on the sea. We meet our personal captain, Andrea, for an extraordinary experience like no other. Be sure to bring sea-faring shoes, healthy thirst, hearty appetite, and sense of adventure (and camera)!

B, L, D



Tuesday

*T*oday we discover Pompeii, the opulent town which was buried in AD 79 in one of the most disastrous volcanic eruptions in history (Mt. Vesuvius), provides important evidence on the ancient way of life. The extensive and varied ruins of the Dead City, in its attractive setting, movingly evoke on a grand scale a Roman city at the time of the Empire. Join our exclusive, local, English-speaking guide for an intensive immersion into the Roman way of life.

*L*unch is on the way home in a cozy local restaurant high in the hills between Pompeii and Amalfi.

*R*eturn back to Amalfi in time to explore more on your own, go to the beach or pool, lounge on your balcony - just relax and soak it all in!

*D*inner tonight is yours to discover among the wide array of restaurants in town. **B, L**



Wednesday

Ravello clings to the steep slopes of the Dragon Hill. Suspended between sea and sky the views are unforgettable and the blue hues of sky and sea are almost indistinguishable. The road from Amalfi climbs in hairpin bends up the narrow Dragon Valley, planted with vines, olive groves and lemon orchards. We discover this captivating village on foot with our guide Rupert, visiting the Duomo and the Villa Rufolo.

Just off the main square, tucked away on the hillside is the restaurant *Da Salvatore*. With the wood-burning pizza oven fired up, we have a lesson in classic Italian pizza-making. Everyone creates their own pizza for lunch! Oh yes, I forgot to mention the restaurant has incredible Mediterranean views!

After lunch we stroll through the passages to the Villa Cimbrone and its stunning gardens. On entering the grounds, a wide promenade leads through the garden to the belvedere, adorned with marble busts. Here is an immense panorama over the cultivated terraced hillsides, the dramatic coastline, and the entire Gulf of Salerno.

Return to Amalfi for time on your own to relax before dinner.

Dinner this evening is a special treat, as we are welcomed to the most interesting and special restaurant in Amalfi – an ambience you will surely remember for years to come! Hidden under the stairs of the St. Andrea Cathedral, you will find a treasure of local art and fun food created by the next generation of Amalfitanians.

B, L, D



Thursday

Capri, the Isle of Dreams, has always been an enchanting place, with its beautiful rugged landscape, mild climate and luscious vegetation. For the past 200 years the island has attracted numerous celebrities amongst artists, writers, musicians and actors. Today is our lucky day to visit such a paradise!

Upon our arrival, we board our private boat to the Blue Grotto, the most famous among the many marine caves on the island. The light enters, not directly, but by refraction through the water, giving it a beautiful blue color.

Lunch is together at one of the interesting, out-of-the-way restaurants on the island.

After lunch enjoy Capri, which is like a stage setting for an operetta due to its small squares, little white houses and its quite Moorish-looking alleyways. Capri boasts the most upscale boutique shopping on the coast. The enjoyable to walks curve along a flowery and shaded promenades. If time permits check out Ana-Capri far from the tourist crowd and on top of the island.

Late afternoon return to Amalfi.

Dinner this evening will be yours to discover in Amalfi. There is no shortage of options!

B, L





Friday

Our first destination today is the town of Sorrento. This important southern Italian resort, known for its many beautiful gardens, enjoys a particularly interesting spot, perched on a plain above the Gulf of Sorrento. Enjoy the abundance of orange and lemon groves in the surrounding countryside and even within the city limits itself! This morning we travel to Sorrento on the stunning Amalfi Coast cliff-side drive!

Sorrento is known for the fine craftsmanship of inlaid wood-working. We will visit the shop and discover the detailed process at the most famous of them all, namely Januzzi. This tradition has been handed down in the Januzzi family for over 3 generations.

After free time in Sorrento, our next destination is beautiful Positano, which we reach by boat.

Positano was once a sleepy fishermen's village, and is now one of the busiest resorts on the coast. The small white cubic houses which reveal a strong Moorish influence and set in lush gardens, are dotted on the slopes.

Lunch today is on your own, as there are so many options in this picturesque village.

There is ample free time this afternoon to wander through this colorful village, explore the shops and galleries, or simply enjoy the beach scene.

Return to Amalfi via boat for time on your own to relax and dress for dinner.

This evening brings our final Farewell Dinner in Amalfi. We'll enjoy the exquisite cuisine of the seafront *Marina Grande* restaurant with the gentle waves washing up to the terrace. Ahh, Paradise!

B, D

Saturday

After breakfast, we enjoy a leisurely transfer back to Rome and your hotel, where you can enjoy several days on your own in the Eternal City.

B

Italy's Alluring Amalfi Coast September 2008



Name(s) _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
Phone _____ Cell Phone _____
Fax _____ Email _____

***Italy's Alluring Amalfi Coast
\$2,995 per person, double occupancy.***

Single Supplement is \$750

***Deposit of \$500 per person is required to reserve space.
Final Payment is due by August 1, 2008.
Personal Checks accepted.***

***Please return this form and make checks payable to:
Villas and Vines
2450 Iroquois Avenue
Detroit, MI 48214***

***This tour includes all hotels, ground transportation, activates,
meals, and wines outlined in the program. Air is NOT included
to/from Rome.***

***CANCELLATION: If cancelled up to 60 days prior, there is a \$500 cancellation fee.
If cancelled between 60 – 30 days prior, the penalty is 50% of the total cost of the
trip. The trip is non-refundable if cancelled within 30 days of departure. Trip
cancellation insurance is strongly recommended.***

***If you have any questions at all, please feel free to contact Villas and Vines at
(800) 593-6350 or by visiting www.villasandvines.com***