

# Pittura a Firenze

EXPLORE A WEEK OF ART AND CULTURE IN TUSCANY!



This unique adventure promises to be unlike any other trip you have ever experienced!

Friday, October 4 to Friday, October 11, 2013

Limited to a maximum of 12 people

Are you curious to discover your artistic nature? Would you like to travel to Florence, Italy, and discover or rediscover this centuries-old, inspiring part of the world while you immerse yourself in luxury at a five-star historical villa? Being a small group allows us to have access to exclusive and distinctive art adventures, culinary secrets, estate wine tastings and excursions to lesser-known, breathtaking Tuscan villages that surround Florence. Your creativity will be stimulated by new friends and inspired by the incredible surroundings.

Guests of *Pittura a Firenze* will be staying at the 5\* *Villa Tolomei Hotel and Resort*



7 nights at the 5-star Villa Tolomei Hotel and Resort located on the edge of Florence--- close enough to walk to the famed Ponte Vecchio but far enough from the noise of the city. This spectacular, newly opened hotel (April, 2013) is surrounded by 40 acres of vineyards and olive groves and has all the 21<sup>st</sup> Century amenities--- concierge services, air conditioning, free wi-fi in all areas, two restaurants, bar, 24-hour front desk, in-room safe, soundproof rooms, swimming pool, ironing service and currency exchange --- all of this set in the magical silence and greenery of a splendid, Tuscan estate that combines the comfort of a hotel with the privacy of an exclusive, restored 14<sup>th</sup> Century Renaissance villa.



View from Hotel Entrance



Frescoes throughout the Villa



Terrace Dining...and no, those are not paintings!



Formal Dining



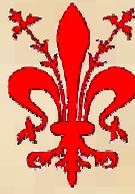
Bedroom



Bathroom



Entrance to Villa



## Itinerary

(B)~Breakfast (L)~Lunch (D)~Dinner)



**Thursday, October 3** ~ Departure from USA



**Friday, October 4** ~ Arrive in Florence, Italy. Check-in at Villa Tolomei Hotel and Resort

### WELCOMING DINNER (D)



**Saturday, October 5** ~ In the morning, we will go to the Pitti Palace and meet Gene Baldini, an American artist who has lived in Tuscany for 25 years. Gene will inspire and inform us by explaining *alla prima* painting. We will have a conversation about this style of art by viewing the paintings "up close" with our own distinguished expert. This technique, which allows anyone from beginner to advanced to complete a painting in just one day, will be the specialized instruction Gene will teach us on Sunday to create our masterpieces! After our **one-hour introduction**, feel free to linger and explore The Pitti Palace, formerly the residence of the grand-dukes of Tuscany and later of the King of Italy. The Palace houses several important collections of paintings, sculpture, costumes and other works of art, besides providing a magnificently decorated historical setting which extends to the Boboli Gardens, famous for its fountains and grottoes.



In the afternoon, after lunch on your own, we meet up and embark on a Sex, Drugs and Renaissance Tour~ A walking tour led by a historian that reveals the shocking lifestyles of the rich and famous and the seedy underbelly of Florence's past. Hear about the scandals that rocked the Renaissance as you step back in time to a past woven throughout hidden alleyways. Curtains are drawn back on the boudoir of Florence's past, where the world's oldest occupation was Florence's biggest business. Discover how famous artists became prisoners to anonymous betrayals. From Popes to peasants to prominent psychopaths, learn about the social, political and religious terrors springing from alchemy, pharmacy and witchery. See the sometimes cheeky, sometimes crude messages built into Florence's grandest monuments. Visit the sites of massacres, where bodies were thrown into an ancient well that still stands to this day, and where superstitious locals still fear to tread. This is Florence in all her glory, the City as you've never seen her before! (B)



**Sunday, October 6** ~ Hone your present artistic talent or take a chance and reveal the secreted artist in you. Using inspiration from the Pitti Palace, and conveniently on the grounds of our hotel, our fun, painting instruction under the experienced direction of Gene Baldini begins! We will create our own *alla prima* paintings under Gene's skilled instruction at our Villa Tolomei. **ALL SUPPLIES WILL BE PROVIDED! (B,L)**



**Monday, October 7** ~ We meet with our gastronomic guide who will share her passion for food and Florence with us on a gourmet Walking Food Tour which offers the perfect combination of a guided tour through one of Florence's most enchanting areas with authentic local food and wine tasting. It covers the Repubblica Square and Tornabuoni Neighborhood down to the San Lorenzo Market, famous for its fresh produce and traditional, Florentine gourmet offerings. From cappuccino to wine and truffles to gelato, we will savor secret, culinary delights we would never find on our own, leaving the **afternoon free for exploration! (B,L)**



**Tuesday, October 8** ~ Masterpieces of the Uffizi Gallery plus Exclusive-Entry Vasari Corridor Tour- Led by an expert art guide, we will have skip-the-line entry to the Uffizi and have exclusive-entry access to the Vasari Corridor. On this fascinating guided Uffizi Gallery tour, hear great stories about the artists who changed art forever. See the gallery's most famous masterpieces. Hear about the mysterious and stunningly beautiful models in paintings like Botticelli's famous "Birth of Venus". Experience the flowering of Leonardo Da Vinci's genius. Learn techniques that will change the way you look at art. The Uffizi Gallery then becomes our entry point into the Vasari Corridor. The Vasari Corridor allowed the ruling families and other important figures to cross the city safely from their grand palace home to their magnificent seat of government, the Palazzo Vecchio. Closed to the public for many years, we can now explore one of Florence's most significant pathways, as its important, sometimes humorous and always fascinating history is revealed. Built in the mid-1500s, its positioning above the Ponte Vecchio made way for the 'King's Passage'. Walk in the footsteps of the Grand Duke of Florence and Tuscany. Enjoy spectacular views while passing through, over and above an ancient church, famous Ponte Vecchio bridge, and medieval towers. **Afternoon on your own--- perhaps to shop on the Ponte Vecchio!**



For dinner, we will have **A Cooking Experience in Montagliari**, a village in the province of Chianti, on a small, family-owned farm that has been producing wine using the most traditional methods since 1720. We will have a tour of their cellars which will include tastings of their Chianti Classico, Chianti Classico Riserva, and Brunesco di San Lorenzo. Our hands-on cooking class will consist of a three-course dinner accompanied by their wines. After our dinner lesson, each "chef" will receive a bottle of wine to take home and a Participation Certificate issued by Fattoria Montagliari! (B,D)



Tuscany Cooking School



**Wednesday, October 9 ~ A Full Day of the Best of Tuscany**. After breakfast at Villa Tolomei, we will travel to **San Gimignano, Siena and Monteriggione**, three remarkable medieval towns in the Chianti region. To facilitate our enjoyment on the way, our private tour guide will explain the history and highlights of each fascinating hill town while we enjoy the very beautiful and aptly famous Tuscan landscape. Upon arrival at each town we will have free time to explore the best places to see artisans' studios, local producers of typical Tuscan products, 'people watching' cafes and each village's highlights. During our travels, we will savor a delicious, gourmet Tuscan lunch.



Dining with Baron Mauro Neri del Nero at the Castle Petraio in

Monteriggione. At the end of our last stop in Monteriggione, we will go to the Castle Petraio where, after a short tour of the Castle, we will dine with the Baron Mauro Neri del Nero, a Cesarino member of the Italy Home Food Association. The Italy Home Food Association is sponsored by the Ministry of Agricultural Politics of Italy and is in collaboration with the University of Bologna. Its mission is to emphasize and spread the culture of traditional food interwoven with the culture of the typical products of a particular region. In this spirit, we will be the guests of this noble Italian family and taste foods cooked in the time-honored culinary ways and methods of the territory. The Cesarines see traditional food as the creator of culture. (B,L,D)



**Thursday, October 10** ~ After a week of sharing the passion for "la dolce vita", we will find out how Florence has transformed us. After being immersed in four of the most exciting and fundamental aspects of Italian culture: art, architecture, food and wine, we will once again, under the masterful direction of Gene Baldini, create another alla prima painting that will capture the memories of an enriching and exciting holiday. The afternoon will be free--- to relax, do last minute shopping or museum-hop. Our last evening in Florence, at our Farewell Dinner, we will say "Ciao!" to new and old friends and marvel at the wonders of Florence that will enthrall us forever! (B,D)



**Friday October 11** ~ Depart for USA



## Optional Activities

Call or email for prices



**Shopping the Designer Outlets!** Shop at the various discount malls featuring designers such as Prada, Gucci, Armani, Ferragamo, Yves St. Laurent, Valentino, Loro Piana--- and many others--- with discounts up to 50%. A great opportunity to have fun and spend .....oops---I mean ... save!



**Opera at St. Mark's** ~ In the beautiful and intimate setting of St Mark's Church, only a few metres away from the performers, you will be captivated by the dramatic stories unfolding before you. The **evening** performances are complete operas, apart from one or two slight adaptations to suit the intimate setting. With drinks available to purchase in the interval, an English explanation of the opera at the beginning, and "programme" notes in English, the stage is set for a wonderful and memorable Night at the Opera in Florence!



**David and Accademia Museum Visit** ~ Enjoy learning about the greatest sculpture in the world with an expert guide whose outstanding expertise makes history and art come alive with a **one-hour tour**. Hear all about the miserly genius that was one of the greatest masters of the Renaissance.



Before traveling, I will be sending many recommendations regarding reading material, museums, galleries, ballets, nightlife, restaurants, and shopping as well as invaluable travel tips!



## Pittura a Firenze

### (Inclusions)\*



7 nights accommodation at five-star Villa Tolomei Hotel and Resort



Buffet Breakfast Daily



4 Dinners



3 Lunches



Tuscany Cooking School Instruction



Bottle of Wine from Fattoria Montagliari



Wine, Olive Oil and Balsamic Tasting in Montagliari



Gourmet Walking Tour in Florence (inclusive of wine and tastings)



1 ½ days of Painting instruction *inclusive of all supplies*



Tours of three hilltop villages in Tuscany inclusive of guide and transportation



Sex, Drugs and Renaissance Tour



Private Tour of Uffizi Gallery and Vasari Corridor inclusive of admission fees



Private tour of alla prima paintings at Pitti Palace inclusive of admission fees



All transportation to and from planned activities as specified in itinerary

*\* International airfare, airport transfers to/from Villa Tolomei Hotel, travel insurance, (highly recommended) tips for drivers and guides and unspecified meals and activities are not included.*



## Trip Details

LIMITED TO 12 PARTICIPANTS

Call or email for your Reservation Form

**☎ 310.273.9596**

 [ArtandCulturalJourneys@QuickCulture.com](mailto:ArtandCulturalJourneys@QuickCulture.com)



### Cash or Check

\$3995. based on double occupancy- cash or check

\$4520. based on single occupancy (\$75. extra per night) - cash or check

If payment is by check, please make payable to: Ellen Greenberg and mail to:

*Ellen Greenberg  
Art and Cultural Journeys  
9190 West Olympic Blvd. Suite 125  
Beverly Hills, CA 90212*

*These prices reflect a 3% discount for cash/check.*



### Credit Card Payment

\$4115. based on double occupancy - PayPal credit card payment

\$4655. based on single occupancy - PayPal credit card payment

*Credit card payment is accepted using PayPal. If you decide to make payment via PayPal ([www.paypal.com](http://www.paypal.com)) please use [Ellen@QuickCulture.com](mailto:Ellen@QuickCulture.com) in the "To" space.*



DEPOSIT: \$500. per person is required to reserve your space. (Fully refundable before July 31)

BALANCE DUE: AUGUST 15



## About Us

### *Ellen Greenberg*



Ellen Greenberg began her career in art as a Production and Costume Designer for projects that ranged from music videos and episodic TV to theater and feature films.

Ellen's latest film as Production and Costume Designer is *In the Key of Eli*, winner of 6 Film Festival awards. In addition, she has been an instructor at the Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising, as well as guest lecturer at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Ellen has also co-authored an art book, *Inside Chocolate*. Presently, she is the co-owner and founder of Quick Culture, an art appreciation and tour company that provides tours and travel experiences that focus on art and culture.

### *Gene Baldini*



Gene Baldini is an American artist who has been living in Florence for 25 years. He holds an M.F.A. from the Hoffberger School of Painting at the Maryland Institute where he studied with Grace Hartigan and Salvatore Scarpitta.

He is the recipient of diverse awards including a Fulbright grant to Italy.

His teaching experience includes Sarah Lawrence College, New York, Polimoda - Politecnico della Moda, Florence, CETItalica and others.

He has exhibited regularly and his work can be found in both Public and Private Collections in Europe and the U.S.