

Verde Italia

JOURNEY THROUGH UMBRIA

2024



*“In Umbria, each
moment is a poem, each
landscape a painting,
each hill a sanctuary”
- Unknown*



Day 1 - Journey to Umbria

Benvenuti! We - Melanie and Anthony - look forward to meeting you in Rome and welcoming you aboard our luxury minivan to head north on your Umbrian adventure.

This morning you'll meet your fellow travellers as we journey to our first stop, the captivating hilltop town of Todi. It's a charming and historic town with expansive views of the Tiber River Valley. Its narrow cobblestone streets lead to delightful piazzas, medieval buildings, inviting cafes and boutiques. We've chosen a favourite local trattoria for lunch and we think you'll really start to feel the magic of Umbria as you take in the beautiful views while tasting the fresh, local produce.

We then get to walk off that lunch! Elisa, our professional local guide, will share her passion for Todi as she takes us on a walking tour through this fascinating town. Highlights include the Palazzo dei Priori, a stunning Gothic palace, and the Cathedral of Todi, a masterpiece of Romanesque design. After the tour, you will have some time to wander, take photos or shop. (Don't worry if you run out of time because we will be back!)

Then it's time to head to our elegant and comfortable home for the week: *Villa Podere Masale*. It's only 20 mins away in the tiny village of *Pesciano*. (See the website for accommodation details and photos.) Now it's time to settle into Umbrian holiday mode as you relax at this beautifully renovated traditional private residence. Check out the pool and the large surrounding terraces - or simply lap up the sweeping views as you share an aperitivo. Dinner tonight highlights another theme that distinguishes our tours: getting to know some of the locals. Tonight's delicious meal will be prepared by Francesca, our friend and a long-time cooking teacher. We think you'll sleep well tonight!



Day 2 - Civita di Bagnoregio

We'll start each day with a leisurely fresh breakfast at the villa. It'll then be time to visit a fairytale village! We'll take a scenic drive to one of the most spectacular hilltop towns in Umbria: Civita di Bagnoregio.

Accessible only by a steep footbridge across the Calanchi valley, this tiny medieval hamlet is perched on a rock hill. Centuries of erosion have slowly reduced its size, leading to it being known as 'the dying town' - despite the Lazio region having spent millions in shoring up the foundations.

Tourism today has revived this hamlet. It dates back to the 6th Century BC and time of the Etruscans. You can check out the town's charming buildings, arches and other stone structures then be amazed as you look out on the breathtaking views of the Tiber River valley and surrounding countryside, and wonder at the enormity of the job of creating that village. One of the joys of exploring this small town is getting lost in its little alleyways and buildings: with each dead end, you're greeted by another spectacular view! You might even spot musician, Harry Styles, who is rumoured to have a home here.

After earning our lunch, it'll be time for another wonderful meal - this time at *Alma Civita*, a long standing family run outdoor restaurant serving traditional cuisine and local wines. We think you'll then be ready to return to our villa for a well-earned rest and relax in one of the many beautiful spaces the villa offers.

You're in for another dining treat tonight: an excellent traditional dinner with a local family in their home. It's such a special opportunity to experience true Italian hospitality and speak with local people about their culture and way of life.



Day 3 - Discovering Orvieto

After another relaxing breakfast, we'll be off to explore the magnificent medieval city of Orvieto.

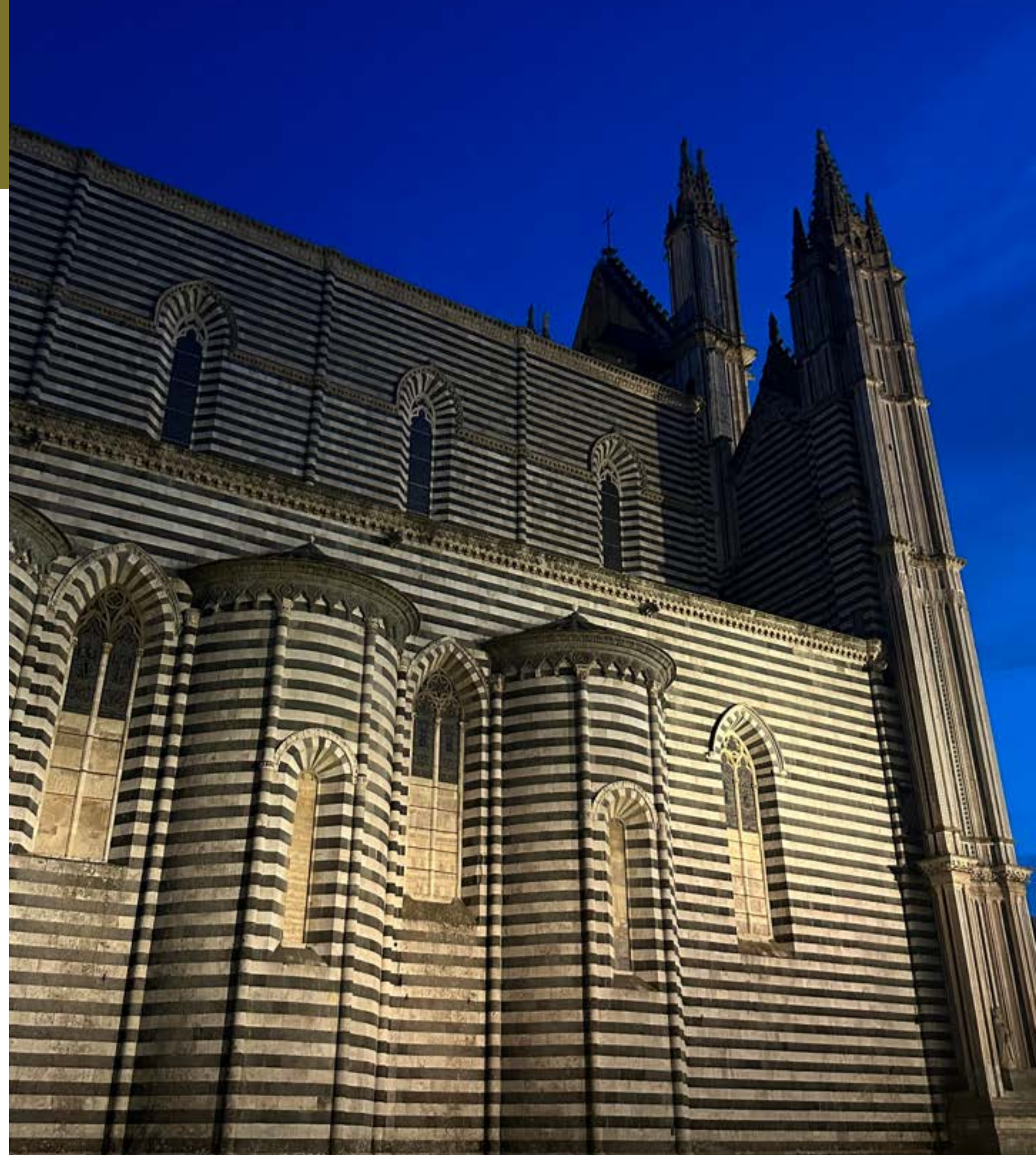
The whole ancient town centre is filled with narrow streets, beautiful churches, a historic palace and more. Our professional guide will help us learn more about Orvieto's architectural beauty and cultural heritage. These include major sites such as the majestic cathedral *Duomo di Orvieto*, *Pozzo di San Patrizio* (St Patricks Well) and the *Piazza del Popolo*. This splendid piazza is one of Italy's most beautiful and has featured in many movies.

We'll also learn about the fascinating ancient underground world: a maze of tunnels and caves. Naturally, there'll be more spectacular panoramic views which we think you'll agree, never get tiring!

After all that walking, we'll certainly deserve lunch! Now that you know about the 'underside' of Orvieto, it's fitting that you'll be part of that history when you dine in the heart of a cliff. There's evidence of the Etruscans using this cave, but in more recent times it was a rope-making workshop and now it's a very special restaurant.

In the afternoon, you are free to explore this beautiful town. Orvieto has wonderful boutiques and stores to wander through and many great cafes to sit and people-watch.

We return to the villa late afternoon for a few hours to put our feet up. Dine tonight in a delightful restaurant, on food lovingly prepared with locally-sourced ingredients by one of our favourite leading Italian chefs, Stefano Coccetti. Situated just outside of Todi in the small village of Ripaioli, the ambience is one of a cosy Italian dining room, decorated with antiques and memorabilia from the chef's childhood. Stefano manages to bring a modern twist on traditional Italian fare. We have returned to his restaurant many times as we appreciate the chef's innovative menu. Make sure to leave room for dessert!



Day 4 - Cooking with Francesca & Deruta

Enjoy breakfast at the villa and a late morning start as we'll not be travelling far.

Today we start with a cooking class. We'll spend a few hours cooking with Francesca in her Umbrian country house discovering some of the secrets behind her delicious meals. In this up-close and personal experience, Francesca brings her passion, plus years of tradition handed down by her mother and grandmother, to show us how to whip up some authentic Italian favourites! Of course, she uses fresh local ingredients, traditional recipes and lots of experience, in our hands-on cooking class. Another insight to local Italian living!

Our reward? Sitting together to enjoy our delicious meal, paired with local wines.

After lunch, we drive to the pretty town of Deruta. This small town in the heart of Umbria is world-famous for its fine ceramic art. Deruta ceramics and pottery follow centuries-old traditions and are known for their intricate designs and craftsmanship. The town of Deruta itself has a historic centre with beautifully preserved narrow cobblestone streets, historic churches and numerous workshops and stores where you will find all the beautiful ceramics and pottery. We will meander the little shops where we can watch and talk with local artisans as they delicately create their intricate ceramic designs. We find Deruta ceramics and pottery worth buying and remember, you can always ship things home!

After a short rest at the villa, we'll enjoy a traditional Italian meal at a highly regarded nearby restaurant.



Day 5 - Gubbio

It's a big day today as we're off to Gubbio after breakfast. Our May guests will attend one of the biggest events on the Gubbio calendar: *the Festa dei Ceri*. This centuries-old tradition takes place each May 15th, the eve of the Feast of Sant'Ubaldo, the town's patron saint. It centres on carrying three enormous wooden structures - ceri or candles - each some 5m tall and weighing several hundred kilograms. The highlight is the *Corsa dei Ceri* or Running of the Candles through the streets of Gubbio from Piazza Grande to the cathedral. We will work our day around the events, allowing time to experience the festa, then enjoy lunch together.

While guests in our September & October trips do miss the festival, you can still immerse yourself in the medieval splendour of this enchanting Umbrian town. Gubbio has many fabulous sites to explore; begin at Piazza Grande, where the Palazzo dei Consoli and the Cathedral of Gubbio captivate with their historic grandeur. Ascend Mount Ingino via a private cable car (a stand-up structure like a birdcage that rides up the mountain) to explore the Basilica of Saint Ubaldo, home to the iconic Ceri and spectacular views. Stroll through the historic quarter, pausing at artisan shops for exquisite locally crafted goods. Descend into the ancient Well of Gubbio for a unique historical experience. Explore the Roman Forum's archaeological wonders.

There's so much to explore in Gubbio and you will be invited to do this at your own leisure.

We will return to the villa in the late afternoon to put our feet up and have some relaxation time. We shall travel locally tonight for an enjoyable dinner at a popular local trattoria.



Day 6 - Todi

Italy is famous for creative people of all kinds and today you're in for a special artistic surprise!

After enjoying breakfast at our villa, we head to further explore our local town of Todi.

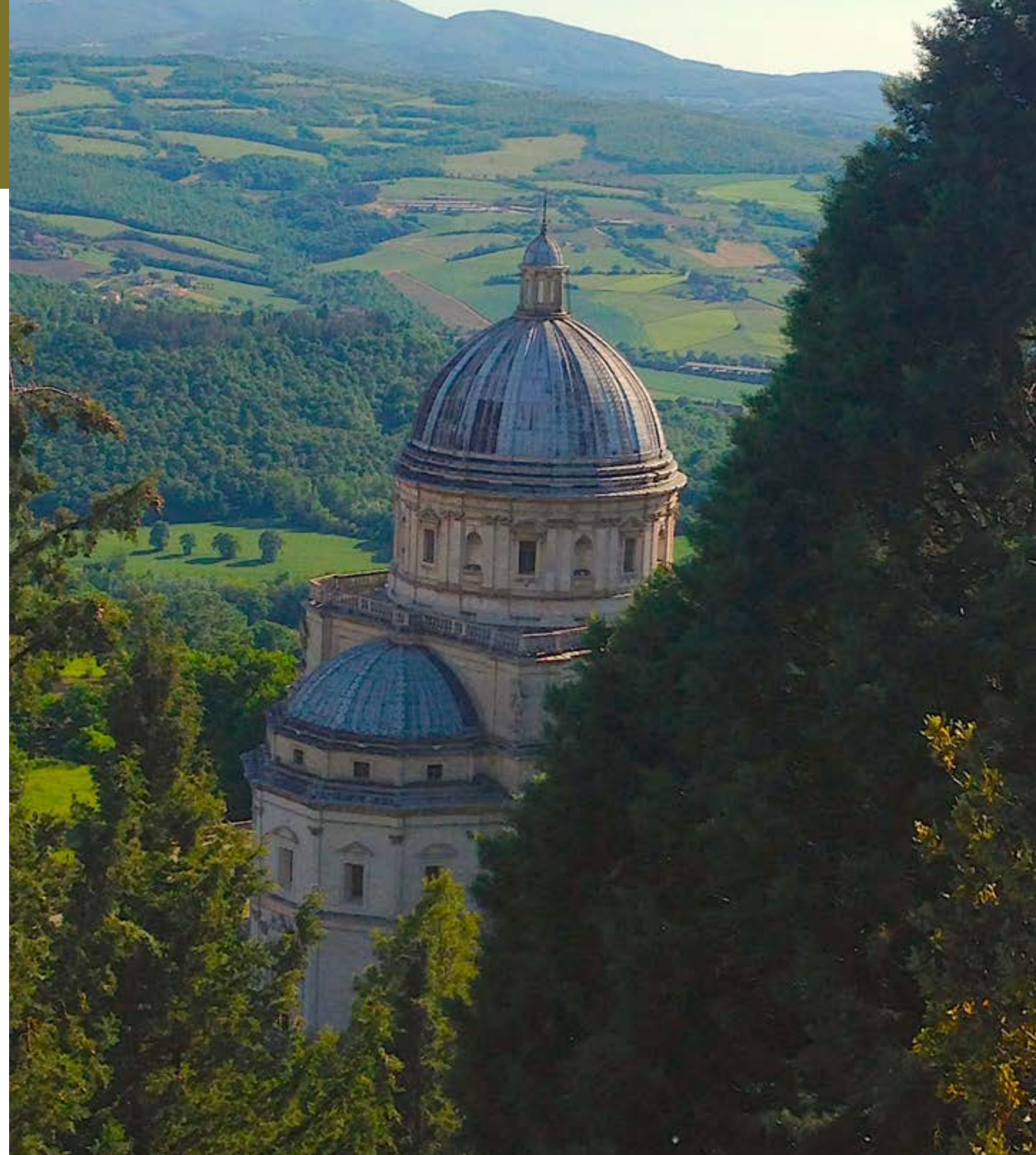
Todi is a well known artistic centre for many artists, making it a cultural hub and an inspiration for creatives. The town's artistic significance is evident in its architecture, exhibitions and galleries, artists in residence and workshops.

Today we have a special art experience curated for you in conjunction with ArtEX. ArtEX is based in Todi and undertakes a wide range of activities and services to support and encourage the building of a broad artistic community throughout the region of Umbria and open to the world.

We will find your creative side and be prepared to have some fun! Our lips are sealed on this one.

After our special art event, we'll lunch in Todi before heading back to the villa for another special event for dinner.

Our long time friend *Mario Santoro of True Umbria* is putting together an authentic experience for us to remember. Mario is not only an artist living in Umbria but also a local food and wine specialist with a strong connection to local organic farms. This will be a night to remember!



Day 7 - Assisi

After an early breakfast, we embark on a captivating journey of Assisi, where the whole town is recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Assisi is said to be the spiritual heart of Italy, beckoning with its timeless beauty, spiritual significance, and medieval charm. It's internationally famous as the birthplace of St Francis, Italy's patron saint. Whatever your spiritual beliefs, St Francis's message of respect for nature and its creatures, is very fitting in today's world. We will visit the awe-inspiring Basilica of St. Francis and the serene Basilica of St. Clare, with expert guides providing insights into the profound spirituality and artistry of these sacred places.

You'll learn more about Assisi's rich history with our professional guide who will lead our walking tour - there is so much to see. Assisi's narrow, winding medieval streets, fortress and temples, Roman ruins and squares that have been well-preserved give us a charming glimpse into medieval Italy.

We will indulge in authentic Umbrian lunch at a local trattoria known for its fresh local produce.

You'll now have time to wander further and discover Assisi at your own leisure.

Late in the afternoon we'll travel back to the villa to relax and enjoy a home cooked meal (by one of our special local cooks) after a big day.

Take some time to pack this evening ready for next day departure.



Day 8 - Montefalco Winery & Spello

Soak in the views and ambience of our Villa as we will be checking out after breakfast.

We're off to Montefalco, in the heart of wine country where Sagrantino grapes have thrived on these fertile plains since Roman time. Our first stop is a leading winery where we discovered some great Umbrian wines; the renowned Arnaldo Caprai estate. A Wine Educator will lead us on a tour of the estate, from the vineyards to the cellar, discovering what's involved in making good wine, from fermentation to ageing and bottling. This winery pioneered the use of modern techniques to improve the quality of the dry wines. Since then, wine makers have flocked to the area.

Our specially-curated wine tasting is in an exclusive room of the Enoteca Monte della Torre overlooking Montefalco and the Sagrantino vineyards. These grapes are used to create the outstanding Montefalco Sagrantino dry and Montefalco Rosso. Sit in comfort, lap up the views and enjoy the wines and a selection of local appetisers.

After our tour, we will head to Montefalco itself to enjoy a relaxing lunch before the short journey to one of our favourite little towns, Spello. There, we'll visit the incredible Spello Villa of Mosaics. It is one of Umbria's most extraordinary archaeological discoveries yet was only uncovered less than 20 years ago. This one-of-a-kind archaeological site from the Imperial age still contains exquisite mosaics and remnants of ancient frescoes and plasterwork. It is a well put together house full of mosaics illustrating the wealth of Spello in its heyday.

From there, you are free to wander through Spello, one of the smaller hilltop towns, less crowded and very quaint. The town provides a quieter and more intimate alternative to some of the larger, more touristy destinations in Italy. We will enjoy an early dinner near Spello before heading back to our new accommodation, Le Cappucinelle Spa & Suites.



Day 9 - Day Spa/Golf & Perugia

This morning we wake up in our new accommodation, Le Cappucinelle Suites & Spa, which is a decadent agriturismo set amongst greenery just outside of Perugia. The property has an authentic feel but is very modern, featuring an oversized swimming pool and many outdoor areas to unwind and relax. We breakfast at the property and then the morning is yours to enjoy either the spa facilities or a round of golf.

The day spa is modern and luxuriously appointed. We have the use of the facilities daily which include indoor heated swimming pool with lumbar hydromassage, cervical waterfall and underwater hydromassage beds, finnish sauna, steam bath, emotional shower, cold fog, ice fall and salt room. Additionally, we have this morning for you to choose & book any practitioner sessions with their highly professional therapists (at your own expense).

Alternatively, for those who are feeling active, a round of golf at one of Italy's best golf courses, Antognolla Golf Course. Known to be one of the most spectacular and challenging golf courses in Italy, the eighteen-holes at Antognolla feature long, cliff-lined fairways, beautiful water hazards and large, undulating greens. Created by renowned designer Robert Trent Jones Junior, the clever layout makes Antognolla an exciting and satisfying course for golfers of all abilities. The scenery is breathtaking!

After our slow paced morning, we take a short trip into Perugia to step back in time on a private tour and special lunch at Palazzo Sorbello. A few steps from the Cathedral and the Etruscan Well, the Palazzo is an ancient palace dating back to the 17th century and houses a precious collection of paintings, porcelain, printed works, manuscripts and embroidered fabrics. Feel part of a past world as you discover what 'home' was like for the Marquises Bourbon of Sorbello.

After lunch, Perugia (the capital of Umbria) awaits as we head out on our guided walking tour to discover Perugia's history and breathtaking buildings. Perugia is a city that effortlessly blends historical charm, cultural richness, and modern vibrancy. After being educated on Perugia's past and present, you'll then have some free time to wander this town at your own pace. We will indulge in one of Perugia's top rated restaurants before heading back to Le Cappucinelle.



Day 10 - Truffle Hunt & Chiesa del Carmine

Enjoy your breakfast at the villa before we journey north to the beautiful property of Chiesa del Carmine for a very relaxing day! Chiesa del Carmine is the ancient church at the centre of the Carmine Estate, just 20 minutes north of Perugia and close to the Tuscan border.

The Estate is privately owned (by an Australian-English couple) and has been lovingly restored over the past 10 years. Where there was once an abandoned valley, there is now a thriving organic farm - including ancient terraced olive groves, a 5.7 hectare vineyard and a truffle wood and pasture. We have the privilege of meeting David, the owner who will tell us the fascinating story of how he developed this estate into the success it is today.

We then discover the real, earthy taste of Umbria on our truffle hunt while we take in the beautiful scenery. You will be led by our expert truffle hunter, his truffle dog and an English-speaking guide.

After the hunt, it'll be time for a truffle degustation lunch by an award-winning chef at the Chiesa del Carmine winery. Naturally, this will be paired with their award winning wines, expertly chosen by their sommelier. What an excellent way to relax and reflect on our week together!

We head back for an afternoon of relaxation at Le Cappuccinelle and a final dinner together in the property's acclaimed restaurant "Settedue". The inspiration behind the contemporary cuisine served is the climate and seasonal produce of the Umbrian region. Every day, the restaurant serves dishes made using its own produce, produce from local farms or products processed in the region of Umbria.

Sadly, it'll also be time to pack our bags for next day's departure. Arrivederci - and safe trip onwards.



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Day 11 - The journey ends

Today we say goodbye! We enjoy our last breakfast together at Le Cappucinelle Suites & Spa.

We will take you to your local departure point within Perugia - bus, train, car or airport.

Arrivederci!



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Journey Includes;

- Luxury accommodation for 10 nights at Podere Masale Villa and Le Cappuccinelle Suites & Spa Resort
- Pick up in Rome, drop off in Perugia
- All meals including regional wines
- Local transportation in luxury mini van and supplementary car
- Full time Tour Leader & host
- Professional Tour Guide for 4 historic towns
- 4 hour private cooking class & lunch
- Montefalco wine tour & tasting
- Chiesa del Carmine truffle hunting experience & degustation lunch
- Private art event
- Use of day spa facilities at Le Cappuccinelle Spa & Suites
- Optional round of golf at Antognella Golf
- Entry fees to all attractions on guided tours
- Gratuities for local guides and drivers

2024 Journey Dates

MAY 11th-21st

\$11,800 AU

SEPT 21st- OCT 1st

\$12,800 AU

OCT 12th-22nd

\$12,800 AU

Deposit on booking 30%
Balance due 90 days before trip

Cost based on twin share
Single room supplement 5% surcharge

Please note that the October trip includes an olive harvest event, so one of these listed events will be substituted

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To Book

Scan this code to view our full terms and conditions and request to book form



Have a question?

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