

Tuscany Rome Lenola 2020

September 5—17, 2020

Highlights: Florence / Tuscany / Wine Tasting / Verrazzano Castle / Truffle & Wine Pairing / Rome
Vatican Tour / Monumental & Ancient Rome / Lenola / Terracina / Feast of La Madonna del



Dear Friends;

Once again, the time has come to make a voyage to Lenola; our roots. It has been almost 17 years since our trip in 2002 when we spent some fun and glorious days in that little village of our ancestry. Much has changed since then, it has come further into the 21st century yet still retaining the old world charm and hospitality. In 2017, the Shrine of La Madonna del Colle was named by Pope Francis a Minor Basilica.

[A minor basilica is a Catholic church building that has been granted the title of basilica by the Holy See or immemorial custom. Presently, the authorizing decree is granted by the Pope through the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments.] In the heart of the old town you can now find a small museum dedicated to many archeological findings from in and around Lenola. In Ambrifi excavations of the ancient city, abandoned in the 15th century, have begun. There are many new and interesting things to see and do AND, as always the food is impeccable and delicious; comfort foods from our past that our nonnas made. We will spend a few days in Lenola during the annual feast of La Madonna del Colle. As in 2002, we will book a hotel in Terracina since there is no hotel closer that is large enough to accommodate a larger group.

Prior to arriving in Lenola we will spend a few days in Tuscany, wine and food tasting along the way. We will then travel to Rome to visit the Eternal City and culminate the trip with Lenola as our grand finale.

We sincerely hope that you will be able to join us on this memorable adventure back to our roots.

Sincerely,

Lou Falconeri

Fratelli & Company Group Travel, LLC

Day 1—USA to Florence

This evening's trans-Atlantic flight to Rome, Italy will depart from Newark Liberty International Airport. Meals and entertainment are aloft and arrival in Rome. Time schedule TBA.

(There will be a "group flight" to Italy. Anyone wishing to book their own air, please contact our office ahead before booking for schedules and arrival meeting point. Please refer to page 12, "Airfare & Transfers")

Day 2 — Arrival Rome Fiumecino Airport

Upon arrival at Fiumecino, Leonardo daVinci Airport, we will clear customs, baggage claim, and meet our motor-coach and driver. We will proceed north today to Florence, the Renaissance city. When we arrive at our hotel, we will check in and have some free time to freshen up before leaving for this evening's welcome drink and dinner in a lovely restaurant with regional cuisine and local wines. Afterwards, we will retire for the night for a good rest before beginning tomorrow's excursion. **Dinner (included w/wine & water & coffee), overnight in Florence.** *For those still energized we can take a walk around city center in the evening to catch some of the sites beforehand.*



Day 3—Florence Full day City Tour (walking)

Today, after breakfast, we will begin our walking tour of Florence. Florence is one of the few cities around the world whose entire historical center is considered a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The reason is it offers hundreds, maybe thousands, of monumental arts and architecture. We will begin our day with a visit to the Accademia to see some of Michaelangelo's greatest works, especially the "David". Afterwards onto the Duomo, Santa Maria del Fiore, Brunelleschi's masterpiece. Here will we also see Giotto's Bell Tower and the Baptistry with its "Gates of Paradise" doors. We will continue on to Piazza della Signoria and Ponte Vecchio. There will be a break for lunch before continuing on our walk to Santa Croce. The Basilica of Santa Croce is also

known as the Temple of the Italian Glories, as many important artists, writers and scientists, including Michelangelo Buonarroti, Galileo Galilei, Gioachino Rossini, Ugo Foscolo and Leon Battista Alberti are buried here.

Dinner (included w/wine & water & coffee), overnight in Florence.

Florence was a centre of medieval European trade and finance and one of the wealthiest cities of that era. It is considered the birthplace of the Renaissance and has been called "the Athens of the Middle Ages". A turbulent political history includes periods of rule by the powerful Medici family and numerous religious and republican revolutions. From 1865 to 1871 the city was the capital of the recently established Kingdom of Italy. The Florentine dialect forms the base of standard Italian and it became the language of culture throughout Italy



Day 4— Full Day Chianti Region

This morning, after breakfast, we will leave Florence for the Chianti Wine Region. We will be traveling along the “Chianti Road” or “Chiantigiana”. The Via Chiantigiana is one of the most enjoyable motoring routes in Italy. It runs directly south from Florence to Siena through the middle of the Chianti Classico wine zone of Tuscany, one of the most instantly recognizable landscapes in the world. After passing Ugolino Golf Course, the oldest golf club in Italy, the Chiantigiana runs upward and follows the ridges between the Val d'Elsa and the Valdarno, wandering from one farmhouse and villa to another, from time to time passing through villages and small towns. The territory traversed by the Via Chiantigiana has been one of the most important wine producing regions in Italy for over two centuries. In fact, it was the Habsburg-Lorraine ruling family, most notably Leopold I, Grand Duke of Tuscany, who, during the 18th and 19th centuries, began cultivating the grapes that would become modern Chianti. Since the 1920s, this territory has been the official area of production for the



Consorzio del Vino Chianti Classico Gallo Nero wine makers consortium. Our first stop today will be village of Greve. Greve's history is connected to the beautiful Castle of Montefioralle located above the town, when it served as the castle's marketplace in the 13th century. The strategic position at the crossroads of three important pilgrimage roads - the Chiantigiana road, the road to Valdarno and the road to Val di Pesa - favored its economic growth. At the beginning of the 1500s, the curious shaped square was already built and was later described by the Grand Duke Leopold I as "a beautiful square where every Saturday a big market of livestock and foods takes place". While in Greve we will have our first wine tasting with lunch (included) in the **Verrazano Castle**. **In the Castel Verrazzano** we are talking about the famous explorer who on April 17, 1524, at the age of 39, was the first



European to discover the New York Bay. The castle, in Val di Greve, was the abode of his aristocratic family of origin, the Verrezzanos. In one of the letters Giovanni da Verrazzano wrote to King Francis I of France, at whose service he had started his adventures on the coasts of North-America – the great seaman wrote: “We often went five or six leagues into the interior, and found the country as pleasant as is possible to conceive, adapted to cultivation of every kind, whether of corn, wine or oil...” Words we might borrow to describe the luxuriant Tuscan hills of Chianti Classico, where the Castle rises with its 16th-century cellars and its 220 hectares of land, which have produced excellent wine for almost a millennium. A place that was, and is to this day, “as pleasant as is possible to conceive”. **Tonight supper on your own and overnight in Florence.**

Day 5—Monteriggioni & San Gimignano

Today, we continue our journey south of Florence along the Chianti Road to the medieval village of Monteriggioni. Monteriggioni represents one of the most important walled castles in the territory. It has incredibly preserved an intact structure as if time had never passed on the hill from which it elegantly dominates the surrounding landscape. Its perfect circular perimeter makes one suppose it to be an artificial construction while, in actuality, it was created by just following the curves in the natural ground. The castle was built by the Sienese between 1213 and 1219 for defensive purposes; its strategic location atop a hill overlooking the Cassia Road allowed the castle to control the cities of the Val d'Elsa and Staggia and be on the lookout for any armies approaching Siena.



The intact fortified wall presents 14 towers along which the guards used to walk and patrol the walls and 2 gates, one called the Roman Gate which faces Rome and the other known as the Florentine Gate since it heads toward Florence. The “well” in the center of the square is the well described in Dante’s *Divine Comedy*. Here in Monteriggioni we will have our first wine tasting of the day.

Later we head to San Gimignano, the city of Bell Towers. Encircled by 13th-century walls, its old town centers on Piazza della Cisterna, a triangular square lined with medieval houses. It has a skyline of medieval towers, including the stone Torre Grossa. The Duomo di San Gimignano is a 12th-century church with frescoes by Ghirlandaio in its Santa Fina Chapel. The “Historic Centre of San Gimignano” is a UNESCO World



Heritage Site. The town also is known for saffron, the Golden Ham, and its white wine, Vernaccia di San Gimignano, produced from the ancient variety of Vernaccia grape which is grown on the sandstone hillsides of the area. There will be some free-time to explore this fascinating city on your own before heading out of the city limits to an “agriturismo”,

Podere La Marronaia, for delightful supper of Truffle and Wine tasting.



Podere la Marronaia is a little jewel set on a hill, surrounded by vineyards and olive trees, a few kilometers from the historic center of San Gimignano, in a very scenic location.

The unique architecture of the property, which immediately drew the attention of the present owners, Luigi and Silvia, was the old watch tower, located in the central part of the building.

From the information found in the historical archives of the town, it was discovered that this tower was part of a larger group of fortifications, towers, built around 1200 to defend the city of San Gimignano. Already at that time the property reported as “Magronaja”, due to the current “Marronaia”. In the XIX century Podere la Marronaia was owned by the Monastery of St. Jerome. Today the building is named among the “special historical and artistic interest” heritage of the city.

The guest of honor of this tasting with dinner is the famous Tuscan truffle. A guided tour to discover the sharp accents of Tuscan truffles, harmonized throughout the meal with local products: extra virgin olive oil, wines, appetizers and assorted dishes. Later back to Florence. Overnight in Florence.



Day 6 — Perugia / Perugina Chocolates / Rome

Today we proceed into the Umbrian Hills to Perugia. A university city with one large university and a smaller one catering to foreign students. The student population gives the city a more youthful feel than a city as old as Perugia might otherwise depict. The University for Foreign Students brings a distinct foreign presence, even if there aren't as many tourists. The city's history dates back to pre-Roman times, some Etruscan ruins from that era still exist today. Here in Perugia we will have some free time to explore and take in the sites of this magnificent old city on our own. Visit the many shops of chocolatiers or have a leisure lunch (on your own). Be sure to visit the underground city.

Later we will have a tour and taste of the world famous Perugina



Chocolates (Baci) originating from this ancient city. Perugia has long been considered the Italian capital of chocolate, even more so since it started hosting the annual Euro-Chocolate exhibition, the chocolate industry's most important trade event. Upon arrival in Rome, you will have some time to freshen up and relax.

This evening, supper included with wine, water and coffee. Overnight in Roma

Day 7 — Ancient & Monumental Rome

Today, after breakfast, we will begin our tour of some of the most important and popular sites of Ancient & Monumental Rome.



Coliseum, Located just east of the Roman Forum, the massive stone amphitheater was commissioned around A.D. 70-72 by Emperor Vespasian of the Flavian dynasty as a gift to the Roman people. In A.D. 80, Vespasian's son Titus opened the Colosseum—officially known as the Flavian Amphitheater—with 100 days of games, including gladiatorial combats and wild animal fights.

Capitoline Hill: The Capitoline Hill is the smallest among the seven hills of Rome. Even though it is the smallest it played a huge part in the religious and political aspects of Rome since the founding of the city center.



Pantheon: The Pantheon is the best preserved building from Ancient Rome and was completed in 125 AD in the reign of Hadrian. Its magnificent dome is a lasting testimony to the genius of Roman architects and as the building stands virtually intact it offers a unique opportunity for the modern visitor to step back 2,000 years and experience the glory that was Rome.



Piazza Navona: The main attraction of Piazza Navona is the trio of fountains that adorn the square. The central and largest fountain is the Fontana dei Quattro Fiumi (Fountain of the Four Rivers). It was constructed between 1647 and 1651 on request of Pope Innocent X.

Fountain of Trevi: It is the largest Baroque fountain in the city and the most beautiful in the world. A traditional legend holds that if visitors throw a coin into the fountain, they are ensured a return to Rome. The *Trevi Fountain* is situated at the end of the Aqua Virgo, an aqueduct constructed in 19 BC by Agrippa, the son-in-law of Emperor Augustus.



Spanish Steps: The elegant staircase of 135 steps was inaugurated in the Jubilee Year of 1725 by Pope Benedict XIII, originally used to link the Bourbon Spanish Embassy to the Church of Trinità dei Monti. The name comes from the Spanish Embassy to the Vatican that has been located in the piazza since the 1600s.

Much of today's tour will be on foot, please wear comfortable shoes and clothing.

This evening dinner (included) with music, wine, water and coffee included in Rome. Overnight will be in Rome.

Day 8 — Rome—Vatican City & Sistine Chapel

Today after breakfast we will visit Vatican Hill; one of the Seven Hills of Rome where the seat of Christianity; St. Peter's Basilica is located atop it. At 22,067 square meters, (approx. 210,000 square feet) St. Peter's is the world's largest church; regarded as one of the holiest Catholic shrines, it is a popular place of pilgrimage, even though it is neither the Mother Church nor a cathedral (San Giovanni in Laterano is both). It is hard to grasp its proportions until you have seen it. Particularly impressive is its height, 136 meters from the ground to the top of the magnificent dome, the tallest in the world. According to Catholic tradition, the Basilica is the burial site of the apostle St. Peter, the first Pope and Bishop of Rome. St. Peter's tomb is said to be below the high altar. Many popes have been buried here since the Early Christian period. A church has been on this site since Roman Emperor Constantine the Great.



Construction of the present basilica, which replaced the basilica of the 4th century, began on 18 April 1506 and was completed in 1626. St. Peter's Basilica is also famous as a magnificent work of art, to which major Renaissance artists, including Michelangelo, Bramante, Raffaello, Sangallo and Giacomo della Porta contributed. Gian Lorenzo Bernini designed the ample staircase and elliptical square surrounded by columns, which "introduces" the basilica, with the façade by Carlo Maderno. Inside the Basilica you will visit Michelangelo's famous "Pieta", the Baldacchino Altar and crypt where the many of the popes are buried and much more. Later we will continue onto the Sistine Chapel to see one of the world's most famous masterpieces by Michelangelo—"The Ceiling". Afterwards, we will have a pizza lunch before departing the Eternal City and heading south along the coast to the magnificent seaside resort of Terracina. **Dinner (on your own) overnight in Terracina.**

Day 9—13—Terracina /Lenola Festa della Madonna del Colle.—September 13—17.

This morning you will awaken to the breathtaking sight before you; the magnificent Seaside Resort of Terracina. Terracina will be your home for the next several days while we are visiting Lenola. The picture at left is the Hotel Approdo which we will be booking for this stay. Lenola, unfortunately, does not have accommodations enough for a group, therefore we will make this beautiful resort town our home and travel by bus to and from Lenola about 30 kms away for the festivities of the Annual Festa della Madonna del Colle.



*In the year 1628, when the works inside the Sanctuary could be defined completed, the Bishop of Fondi established that the feast in honor of the Madonna del Colle should be celebrated solemnly on days **14, 15 and September 16th**. The tradition and the cult of the Lenolese people and of the neighboring towns and cities of the Madonna del Colle are alive and deep, that triduum of celebrations that was then established comes today, with profound faith, solemnly celebrated. Personality of the religious and cultural worlds have been present in ancient history and more recently in the celebrations in honor of the Madonna del Colle. The Rector in collaboration with the Committee every year promotes an itinerary with liturgical celebrations and an itinerary with civil celebrations that together make up the great annual feast of the Madonna del Colle, the pride of the Lenolese people and of all the residents abroad who are many, from all over the world, return to their homeland in September to honor the Virgine del Colle*

On September 13th each year the Zizzo Family, Salvatore, Rosanna and their children; Noemi, Vasco and Ludovica host the most amazing and sumptuous dinner for all immigrants (those of us coming from afar) visiting Lenola for the annual feast.



It is their way of giving back to the community and thanks to La Madonna del Colle for their success in business in Lenola. The family are Lenolese natives who began working hard together as a family with a tiny restaurant to the magnificent restaurant and banquet rooms they have today.

There you will enjoy the regional cuisine of Lenola, the “Ciociaria” region of Italy. Salvatore and Rosanna will serve you comfort foods that you will remember that “nonna” used to make in the typical Lenolese traditions. The restaurant is located in what was once a working farm, then developed into an “agriturismo”, today, a magnificent restaurant that resembles a resort. It has been owned and operated by Salvatore and Rosanna since the early 1990’s. All the produce served is locally grown and meats are locally raised. The wines, olives, cheeses, olive oil,

cured meats etc. are prepared or produced by the owners and their families. All the pastas are homemade on the premises. Dining at “I Pozzi” is truly a magnificent and memorable experience. You truly feel as though you are dining with family.

Each evening in the town square “La Piazza” there is entertainment and music abundant! Throughout the days there are events happening and religious ceremonies at the shrine Basilica. The actual Feast Day is the 15th with religious and civil ceremonies throughout the day. The highlight, of course, is the magnificent procession of the Madonna up and down the hills, streets and alleyways of the medieval village. Carried by men throughout the procession preceded by the orchestra and followed by the hundreds of faithful singing throughout the procession. The evening culminates at dusk with grandiose fireworks at the courtyard in front of the Basilica as the Statue of La Madonna del Colle, once again, enters through the portico of her sanctuary for another year.

Continued next page

The Festivities and Events

Throughout the days we spend in Lenola, we will be mostly on our own to enjoy the entertainment and other events of the week. We will have a bus available to make at two trips per day up and down the mountain from Terracina. For those who would like to go up to Lenola early in the day there will be a departure. For those who would like to enjoy the beach and town of Terracina, there will be a later afternoon departure. In the evening there will be one return time and meeting point given to return to the hotel for the night.

During the daytime hours we will guide you through Lenola, visiting the medieval walled village where your parents or grandparents were born and grew up. Time to visit the 11th century Parish Church where they were most likely baptized and perhaps married. Amazingly, the church has archived records that date back to the 13th and 14th century with the same surnames that you will recognize today. There will be time to visit the small local museum which houses artifacts found in Lenola from the Roman times. Remember that Lenola was property of the Roman Empire and the Caesars. There are many historical facts about Lenola that you will learn. We will discuss the devastation that occurred and the loss of civilian lives during World War II when Lenola suffered greatly from the aerial bombings and the atrocities at the hands of the Moroccan allies.

Time allowing, we can visit the ancient ruins of Ambrifi,; (The Hidden Lenola) once a thriving village and part of Lenola, but abandoned in the 15th century. The ruins of Ambrifi or, as Castrum de Ambrise was called in the past, stand on a hill 640 meters high between the villages of Lenola and Pastena. Recent excavations have brought to light the first inhabited nucleus dating back to the medieval period and some structures that suggest a pre-existing Roman settlement. The presence of the castrum is witnessed for the first time in a document dating back to the year 1072. Its elliptical walls extend over more than 400 meters and contain an area of about 13,000 square meters. At the highest points it reaches a height of 3 meters and inside it, beyond the foundations of numerous houses, there is also a tower with a square base, about 7 meters high, which has a stone face and at the corners square blocks and ruins of the Church of the Madonna de Ambrise. The castle, of which only the tower has remained, was located on the northwestern side of the ancient town. From here it was possible to keep under control the whole height and the valley below. The church, built near the castle, had a single nave and had a semicircular apse. Unfortunately only the ruins remain of this structure. However, what has come down to us from a fairly clear idea of how it should have appeared at the height of its functionality.

While in Lenola, hopefully, those who have roots here will find extended family. The Lenolese people are a warm and hospitable people. They love to delve into the past to find mutual relatives and family that have, long ago, emigrated to other parts of the world. They are a proud people who, over the centuries, have overcome many obstacles, poverty, invasions, wars and persecutions. They are ever faithful and ever grateful to La Madonna del Colle's intercession for their survival and progression into the 21st century.

Throughout the village, during these days, there will be local products on display and to taste. Olive oil; always a major product for the Lenolese as evident in the thousands of olive trees scattered throughout the surrounding hills and territory, the wines of their local vineyards, the wonderful cheeses made from the goats and sheep that pasture in the valleys and foothills, the breads and bakery products like your grandmother used to make! You will find kiosks stands run by locals with "on the go" foods and deserts and entertainment will abound daily.



The Sanctuary of the Madonna del Colle, located in the territory of Lenola, stands on a hill set in the splendid setting of the Ausoni Mountains and extends towards the valley of Fondi and the sea. The place was sanctified in the first centuries of the Christian era, by the blood of martyrs, victims of the persecution of Emperor Decius. The title Santa Maria Santissima del Colle is due to the conversion in 1602 of the young Gabriele Mattei, persuaded by the Madonna not to kill an elderly gentleman who had sharply reproached him. It is said that the Virgin appeared to Gabriel and invited him to climb the hill to look for her image which he found painted on the rock amidst cypress berries. The young man decided to amend his life and changed his name to Fra Deo Gratias. He became a pilgrim of Mary to raise funds to build the Temple to dedicate to the Madonna, an initiative that was supported by the bishop of Fondi, Monsignor Camparni, who venerated the image of the Madonna and Child found by Gabriele. The young man, dressed in the habit, left in the spring of 1603 for a long pilgrimage through Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, during which he healed the sick with the berries of the holy cypress. Gabriel procured many large donations with which he began the construction of the Sanctuary. The first stone was laid on 7 May 1607, on 10 September 1610 the Sanctuary of the "Madonna del Colle" was opened for worship by the faithful. In 1618 it was enlarged and in 1620 the Diocesan Seminary was built. The proclamation of the Sanctuary took place in 1626 with the Bull of Urban VIII.



The beautiful façade of the Sanctuary deserves special mention, a work by the Milanese artist Raffaello Franco, inaugurated in 1628. All in brick, it is intersected by large frames of local stone and carved flames with majestic fine elegance on the wide cornice to symbolize the ardent faith of those who contributed to the building of the Sanctuary. On the entrance portal you can admire three stone coats of arms: in the center, that of Gabriele Mattei, with the inscription "Charitas semper Deo Gratia"; to the left that of Mons. Gandolfo Bishop of Fondi, who had the altar of the Madonna built and the façade, to the right that of Lenola, with the flower called Enula Campana. Another attraction is the robust cypress branches nailed to the main cornice in 1628, which together with festoons of myrtle had only the task of embellishment for the inauguration of the beautiful façade. They are without roots and have been resistant to weather and drought ever since. The constant tradition of faith is recognized in this sign of these cypresses, the prodigy promised by the Madonna to Gabriele Mattei.



Day 13—September 17—Lenola /USA

Today, we bid not farewell, but ***Arrivederci*** (see you again) to Lenola and our roots as we transfer to Rome's [Leonardo DaVinci Airport in Fiumecino](#). Upon boarding our flight homebound, not only will we be carrying many kilos of Italy in our luggage, but many memories of fun days, wonderfully interesting meals shared with friends, a bit more culture to add to our already cultured consciousness, but above all the recollection of an impressive and wonderful journey on the **ITALIAN PENINSULA**. Dinner aloft and overnight at HOME!!!