

Girls on Tour Italy & Sicily 2010

My recent trip to Italy with 'Girls on Tour' was absolutely fantastic – a holiday of a lifetime – extraordinary, memorable, with many 'OMG how wonderful' moments, and extremely well organised.

Anything worth seeing - we saw; anything worth doing – we did; anything we mentioned to Judy was considered and usually organised with the group.

Judy's enthusiasm and gracious personality was delightful. I felt privileged to have Judy as our personal Tour Guide throughout the entire trip. From the moment that I had perused the Itinerary I could envisage a well organised and well informed trip, not to mention entirely trouble free. The week prior to leaving for Italy, Judy emailed me to advise that Italy had been having really bad weather with torrential rain and near 4° being the lowest temperature, so that I may need to take my winter overcoat and some heavy duty shoes. Judy, I believe, even organised for perfect Sunshine Coast weather whilst we were there – 'beautiful one day, perfect the next'. Every day we had beautiful sunny days with perfect blue skies and warm temperature - what more could you possibly ask for?

Hotel Cavaletto in Venice was the first hotel we stayed in. Just imagine arriving by water taxi to a hotel with water lapping at its front entrance surrounded by beautiful black gloss gondolas with shiny gold trim! This was just the best visual experience to start this wonderful, exciting holiday – it really set the scene! Not only was this hotel beautiful, but also so close to St Marco Square – and everything else Venice had to offer. Our room was situated at the back of the Hotel with a cobblestone laneway that led to St Marco Square, and just below was an intimate Theatre that we attended one evening. The show we experienced was about Venezia and told the history of Venice and the meaning and significance of the masks that are so widespread in Venetian shops and markets.

We then reluctantly left Venice to travel by bus to Milan travelling via Verona where we spent some time – and actually saw Juliette's balcony (Romeo & Juliette).

This entire trip was very carefully planned and exceptionally well organised; it took in the most beautiful destinations and breathtaking scenery that one could only wish for. All hotels were 4 star accommodations and as near as possible to the mainstream areas; all breakfasts were wonderful, and the company was delightful. Judy's main priority was ensuring that everyone on the trip felt included, unique, and that everyone was having a wonderful time. We took a boat trip up Lake Como, and on questioning the closeness of the Swiss Alps, and the desire for Swiss chocolate, we were able to cross the border into Lugano, Switzerland to buy some chocolate – totally unexpected - and then being able to say ... 'when I was in Switzerland to buy some Swiss chocolates ...'

Whilst at Cinque Terre and Amalfi Coast we experienced a bus ride, a train ride, a boating experience – all modes of transport had been considered so as to take in the ambience and magic of the place. The view from our Hotel in Sorrento took in the Bay of Naples, with Mt Vesuvius in the background. We travelled via cable car and bus up to Mt Etna (an active volcano) in Sicily – where we took in the most amazing scenery as we walked around the top of a crater that was still emitting steam. We tried all types of pasta, pizza, gelato, and the amazing pastries of each region, not to mention lots of wine and Lemoncello!

Alessandra, our Italian / English speaking guide was a delight to accompany us. She was perfectly matched with Judy insofar as being thoughtful, considerate, extremely well informed, obviously extremely stylish, and nothing was too much bother. She kept us enthralled with her knowledge and history of beautiful Italy, and answered our multitudinous questions.

I would highly recommend travelling with 'Girls on Tour', and look forward to my next trip with Judy. The overall journey was comprehensive, well organised and absolutely well worth the experience!

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