



The American Friends of Versailles

Invite you to a sensational benefit trip to the Lake Region of Northern Italy

September 27 - October 4, 2022

under the remarkable, gracious guidance of S.A.R. la Princesse Béatrice de Bourbon des Deux-Sicules.



She curated this one-of-a-kind, benefit tour filled with illuminating visits to 'must see' sites, as well as uncommon entrees to impressive private locales, via invitations from her family and friends. It promises to be another very memorable time together. There may be slight edits to this itinerary including surprise, wonderful additions. **If you are unable to subscribe, kindly know donations of any size are greatly appreciated.**



Lake Como

With its unparalleled natural beauty, inspiring writers, poets and painters for centuries, the Lake Region of Northern Italy is of glacial origin, dating back to the last Ice Age, around 10,000 years ago. It remains famous for its breathtaking, romantic views of the Alps and scenic shores. This area is also known for its textile and silk industry, furniture design and manufacturing. Although many tourists visit here every year, each town maintains its charming, 'small-town' feeling so that the lakes never appear too crowded. *For privacy purposes, the names of many of our marvelous hosts are withheld.



Villa Monastero to be visited



Villa Carlotta to be visited

HISTORY: The Northern Lake Region was a very affluent place in Roman times (under Emperor Augustus), as it became an important trade connection between the Po Valley (the location of modern-day Milan) and the Rhine Valley in the north (modern-day Germany) thanks to the passes in Switzerland, which enabled travelers to cross the Alps. **It came under Frankish rule when the Longobards (northern Italians) were defeated by Charlemagne's army in 774.** In the 12th century, nearby Milan became jealous of Como's prosperity and power changed hands between Milan's wealthy Visconti and Sforza families. This was the time when many of Como's magnificent Romanesque churches were erected, such as the San Carpoforo, Sant'Abbondio, San Fedele, San Giacomo, and the San Provino. The Visconti and Sforza families were also responsible for creating the Paderno Canal, which widened Lake Como's Adda River to enable waterway transportation with Milan.



Milan and Lake Region of Northern Italy

After another short rule by the French, Como fell under oppressive Spanish rule for two centuries (1535-1713) where citizens were subject to heavy taxation, resulting in a declining economy. When Como next fell under Austrian rule by Charles VI, the oppressive tax regimes were ameliorated, which greatly helped Como's industry. **Napoleon ruled Como for a short period between 1796-1815 until power was restored to Austrian rule after the Congress of Vienna.** It wasn't until 1859 that Lake Como area joined the Kingdom of Italy under the House of Savoy after Giuseppe Garibaldi defeated the Austrians at the battle of San Fermo.

Following the end of WWII, many people were quite uncomfortable about visiting Lake Como after dictator Mussolini and his mistress Claretta Petacci were captured in Dongo and later shot in nearby Mezzegra in 1945. However, the region's gorgeous panoramic views with unspoilt rugged mountains, turquoise water, old stone walls, and blooming flowers have, over time, drawn many visitors back to savor its enchanting atmosphere again.

CLIMATE: The Northern Italian Lakes' position produces a humid subtropical climate, allowing for mild winters and summers, releasing heat in the colder months and giving way to a cooling water breeze in the warmer months. **Typically, the daytime temperatures are mid to upper 60 degrees and mid to lower 50 degrees in the nighttime during the first week of October.**



Villa Olmo on Lake Como to be visited

OUR GRACIOUS GUIDE: Her Royal Highness Princess Beatrice of Bourbon Two Sicilies is absolutely charming and very knowledgeable on European history. **She is a direct descendant of the Bourbon Kings and Queens of Two Sicilies, who reigned throughout Europe. Among them, there were King Ferdinando and Queen Maria Carolina who was Queen Marie-Antoinette's sister.** Grand Prefect and Grand Cross of Justice of the Sacred Military Constantinian Order of Saint Georges, she is the mother of Their Imperial Highnesses Caroline and Jean Christophe Napoléon. Princess Beatrice is also the founder of "Tesori delle Due Sicilie" (Treasures of the Two Sicilies), dedicated to the promotion of Southern Italy through the organization of special events, heritage travels, safeguarding of arts and crafts. Our sincerest appreciation to Her Royal Highness! **We are extremely honored that she is a member of our distinguished French Board of Directors.**

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO: Comtesse Serge de La Bédoyère, our dear friend, who serves on AFV's French Board of Directors and also kindly helped arrange visits for this trip. Her family is the former proprietor of the famous Villa d'Este Hotel along Lake Como. We are so fortunate to have her assistance.

Trip Highlights. List incomplete.

- 5 Star, Hotel Villa Cortine on Lake Garda for 2 nights.
- 4 Star, Hotel Villa Flori on Lake Como for 3 nights.
- 5 Star, Grand Hotel des Iles Borromees on Lake Maggiore for 2 nights.
- Visit to Isola Bella, one of the Borromean Islands of Lake Maggiore, with its magnificent baroque palace and terraced gardens that slope to the lake.
- Lunch on Isola dei Pescatori in Lake Maggiore, with an incredible panorama, fragrant flowers, brilliant blue water, romantic narrow lanes. This fishermen's island is ultimately enchanting and peaceful.
- Tour of Vittoriale degli Italiani, a hillside estate in the town of Gardone Riviera overlooking Lake Garda. The numerous Italian gardens here are a "must see".
- Visit of San Giulio Island and the village of Orta.
- Walking tour of the city of Como and a Lake Como boat excursion with stunning landscape views and visits of the famous Villa del Balbianello, Villa Mlezi, Villa Olmo, Villa Erba and Villa Monastero.
- Aperitif at Teatro Sociale di Como and season opening performance of Don Giovanni Opera.
- Dinners in elegant, marvelous private Palazzos graciously hosted by friends of Princesse Béatrice de Bourbon des Deux-Siciles and Comtesse Serge de La Bédoyère.
- A Lake Garda Boat tour to Punta San Vigilio and its Villa Guarenti.
- A scenic coach tour and wine tasting in Franciacorta, to discover this beautiful wine route in Lombardy, a hilly landscape and natural vineyard paradise located near the southern end of Lake Iseo. Franciacorta has been compared to Champagne and been called "Italy's Hidden Gem" by Wine Enthusiast.
- Visits of the Hermitage of Santa Caterina del Sasso cliffside monastery on Lake Maggiore.

Lake Garda Hotel information

27 - 28 September 2022 (2 nights). Hotel Villa Cortine is a 5 Star hotel.

<https://www.hotelvillacortine.com/>

“This hotel was created from an aristocratic residence and is surrounded by acres of gardens and parkland with a view of the lake. It is nothing short of extraordinary. Located on a narrow peninsula extending from the southern shore of Lake Garda, Villa Cortine sits on a hill above the town center, offering both seclusion and unparalleled access to the lake. Rooms are divided between the original Palladian villa and an addition that dates back to the opening of the hotel in the Fifties. Throughout, however, the style is resolutely old-world, with 18th-century furniture and Murano glass chandeliers. ”



Hotel Villa Cortine

“The Hotel is stunning. From the moment you pull up to the front gates, the building and its surrounding gardens are breathtaking. The hotel itself is luxurious and it’s tastefully decorated throughout to include the rooms, which are perfect.”



Hotel Villa Cortine

Lake Como Hotel information

29 September - 1 October (3 nights). Hotel Villa Flori is a 4 Star hotel.

<https://www.hotelvillafiori.it/en/the-hotel/>

“When you enter Villa Flori’s lobby, you are welcomed with ample windows overlooking the world’s most beautiful lake, Lake Como. Enjoy the spectacle. Hotel Villa Flori, is a perfect marriage of the romantic and the contemporary. It likes to flaunt all its 19th-century elegance and original furnishings, artfully restored: the stuccoes, floral frescoes, wooden floors are all original, and wear their age well. But, the hotel also enjoys showing off its modern details: a lounge bar with contemporary furnishings, efficient service and a well-equipped spa so you can disconnect and relax now and then. ”



Hotel Villa Flori

“Like a romantic novel, but it’s a true story. In 1859, the Marquis Giorgio Raimondi decided to expand the existing Villa Flori and offer it as a wedding gift to his daughter Giuseppina and her groom, General Giuseppe Garibaldi, hero of the unification of Italy. As the story goes, after the ceremony, it was revealed to Garibaldi that young Giuseppina had previously enjoyed relations with other men, and the marriage was annulled the very same day. Indeed, you can still sense the aristocratic intrigue and romance in the atmosphere of Villa Flori, whose restaurant bears the name of its original owner, Raimondi.”



Hotel Villa Flori

Lake Maggiore Hotel information

2-3 October (2 nights). Check out morning of October 4. The Grand Hotel des Iles Borromees is a 5 Star hotel.

<https://www.borromees.com/en/>

“The Grand Hotel des Iles Borromees is a majestic structure with a beautiful époque atmosphere, magnificent decorations and marvelous, tailored gardens. Its spectacular views of the lake have welcomed tourists for more than 150 years. This luxury hotel was inaugurated in 1863, establishing itself immediately as "The Grand Hotel" of Lake Maggiore, attracting in a short time the most prestigious clientele from all over Europe.”



Grand Hotel des Iles Borromees

“Throughout its history the Grand Hotel des Iles Borromees has seen within its walls many famous guests: Leopold II King of Belgium, the King of Sweden Oscar II, the maharaja of Burdevan of Bengal, King Charles of Luxembourg, the American magnates Rockfeller, Morgan and Vanderbilt. Also, Ernest Hemingway was a guest of the hotel, arriving for the first time in 1918 in convalescence for a war wound. Mindful of the beauties of the place, it has been said that he set part of his famous novel "Goodbye to Arms" here.



Grand Hotel des Iles des Borromees

Itinerary

Tuesday, September 27 ARRIVE IN VERONA AIRPORT

Arrive at Verona International Airport.

Check in at the 5 Star, Hotel Villa Cortine on Lake Garda for 2 nights.

Evening Welcome Cocktail Reception on the Koseritz Terrace and Dinner in this beautiful hotel with views of Lake Garda (Lago di Garda).



The Koseritz Terrace of Hotel Villa Cortine

Wednesday, September 28 LAKE GARDA

“Lake Garda is a world apart. It’s right in the middle of Northern Italy, shaped like a ladle reaching upwards into the mountains. Towns and villages on the lake shore enjoy a milder climate compared to the rest of the region – you’ll see lemon trees, olive groves, and palm-fringed lakeside walkways with a stunning backdrop of snowcapped mountains. It’s the most diverse of Italy’s big lakes. It differentiates itself from the manicured beauty of Lake Como and the decadent atmosphere of Lake Maggiore.”

Depart hotel for a **fabulous full day tour and visit of...** ***For complete itinerary information** please contact the American Friends of Versailles office at 312.943.0173 or info@americanfriendsofversailles.org \$20,000 per person. For Single Occupancy: Goods and services to be received is appx. \$8,500 USD and the Tax deductible portion is \$11,500. For Double Occupancy: Goods and services to be received is appx. \$17,000 USD and the Tax deductible portion is \$23,000.

The American Friends of Versailles is a 501 (c) 3 charitable organization and its Employer Identification Number is 36-4237214.

980 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 1400 Chicago, IL 60611