

# TODAY'S NEWS

## Anne and Jim's Story of Italy

### Arrival in Italy

Wendy Dunham hosted 38 Canadians on an adventure of a lifetime. Everyone left Canada on September 26, 2015, arriving in Rome on September 27. Our tour Director, James Thomson, met the group at the tour bus with our driver, Fabio Rea.

Our first hotel in Italy was the Hotel Ergife Palace, Via Aurelia.

### Touring Rome Independently

The group spent the afternoon on their own. Some stayed at the hotel and utilized the pool area, while others toured the city. We walked to the Vatican City and found a sidewalk cafe for lunch and wine.

### Welcome Dinner

The Ristorante 'La Locanda di Pietro' opened their doors just for our group and served a fabulous dinner. We drank great Italian wine and ate authentic Italian cuisine.

### Italy

Lying in the heart of the Mediterranean, Italy has a history dating back 40,000 years. Throughout past and modern history, Italy has become known for its architecture, cuisine, fashion, music, theatre, literature and visual arts, such as Michelangelo's David.



Italy is also famous for its olive oil and wine. During this adventure, we saw, heard and tasted much of what Italy has to offer. We hope you enjoy our rendition of Italy as we tour ancient towns, cities and countrysides with new friends introduced to us by our travel guide, Wendy Dunham.





## Rome Sightseeing

### Rome - Roma Capitale

Rome is a city more than two and a half thousand years old, steeped in history, religion and culture. Touring Rome takes more than a day but we got to see some of the highlights. Trafalgar Tours arranged for a local expert, Carmela, to tour with us.



Part of exploring is learning about, and engaging in, local history. Italy offers visitors insight into ancient Roman times and the importance of the Vatican City in Rome's past and present. Jim's father, Art, fought in Italy in WWII. He was at St. Peter's Basilica with his infantry in 1945. It was great to be in the same spot 70 years later.

Dinner was served at Ristorante 'Il Giardino di Albino' with music accompaniment by Umberto. Sixteen plates of food arrived, along with several bottles of fabulous Italian wine.



### Highlights of Rome

The morning took us on a walking tour to see the Vatican Museums, Sistine Chapel and St Peter's Basilica.

In the afternoon, we drove through the city to see Piazza Venezia, the wonderful Vittorio Emmanuel II Monument, Capitoline Hill, La Bocca della Verità and Circus Maximus.

To finish off the afternoon, we toured around the Colosseum and the Roman Forum.



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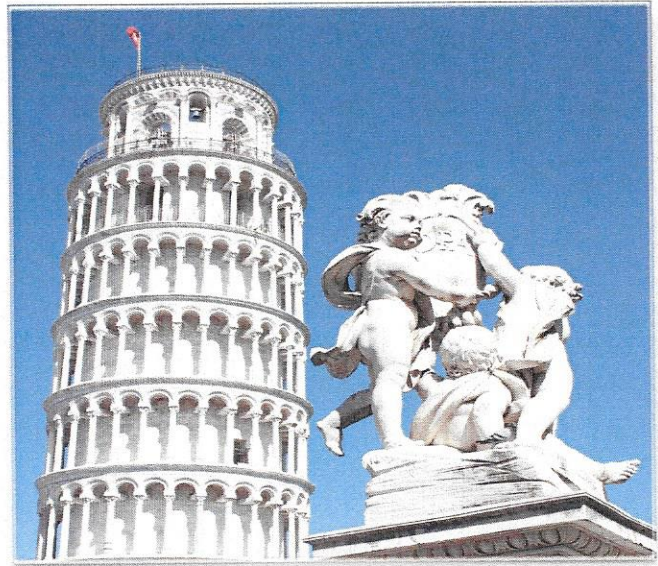
## Rome - Pisa - Florence

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### Pisa

What's a trip to Italy without seeing the Leaning Tower of Pisa! This structure was built as a bell tower for the Pisa Cathedral and Baptistry situated in the same walled in community of Pisa.

Construction of the tower started in 1173 and took 199 years to complete. It started its tilt almost immediately due to the foundation on one side being built on soft ground. It now leans 3.99 degrees, down from 5.55 degrees after restoration was done in the 1990's. The height of the tower is 55.86 metres from the ground on the low side and 56.67 metres on the high side. The top of the tower is displaced horizontally 3.9 metres from the centre.



### Ever Eat in a Count's Residence?



Tonight's dinner was at a place once owned by a Count, then was home to a group of resident monks. It now belongs to a family run business that produces world famous olive oil. This is the grounds of the beautiful Ristorante 'Lo Spaccio', Fattoria di Maiano, located in the Tuscany Valley. The farm is totally organic with 110 hectares of farmland and 20,000 olive trees.



## Sightseeing in Florence

### *So Many Statues*

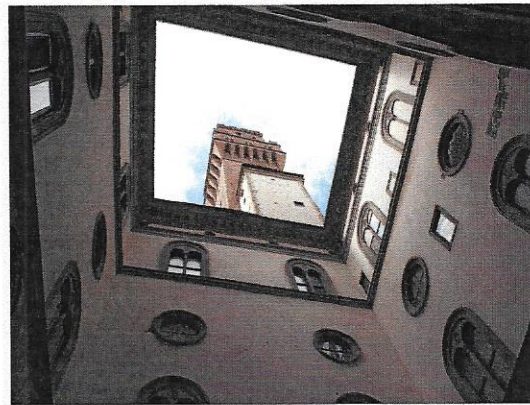
Trafalgar arranged for a local specialist to give us a walking tour of Florence. Madeline walked us through narrow cobble stoned streets to the heart of Florence, passing by museums, churches, shops and restaurants to finish at the Cathedral of Santa Maria dei Fiori (Il Duomo di Firenze), Giotto's Bell Tower and Piazza della Signoria.



The group saw a demonstration of fine leatherwork at Peruzzi and then enjoyed free time for lunch and wine.

### *Architecture*

The architecture in Florence is an amazing sight to see. Everywhere you look you see craftsmanship that took lifetimes to



complete. And churches are everywhere!

Piazzas are a central gathering spot for locals and tourists. The air is vibrant with dialects from many countries. Lunch just isn't eating, it's exploring.

Many of our group went with Madeline to see to see Michelangelo's David at the Accademia Gallery. For us, we enjoyed seeing a rendition of the statue in the Piazza.





## The Meal of all Meals



*Wine and Music in the Tuscan Hills at 'Il Poggio'*

This was a meal like no other. Picture this...Sicily... Oh, sorry, wrong story. Picture driving through the Tuscan Hills after a great day of touring Florence. The bus pulls up to a gate. Just a gate. Walking through, you are transported back in history to a family run vineyard, complete with tractors, barrels, wine presses and horse drawn plows.

Then walk through the cellar doors to barrel lined walls, long oak tables and platters upon platters of food. And wine. Lots of wine.



**It's All About the Meal**

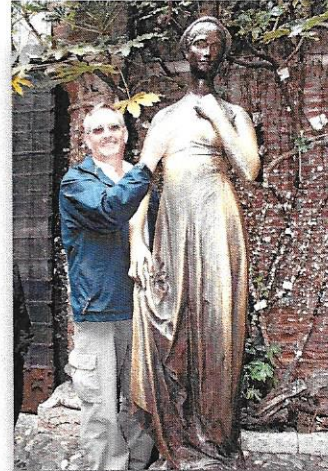


## Verona

### *O Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou Romeo?*

In William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, a long feud between the Montague and Capulet families disrupts the city of Verona.

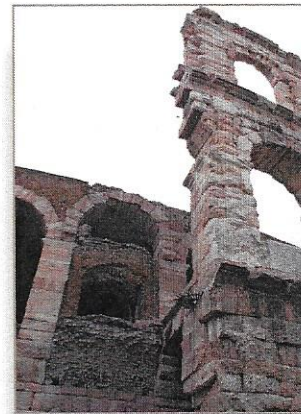
The feud causes tragic results for Romeo and Juliet, becoming one of the world's most romantic but tragic love story. While in Verona, we visited Juliet's balcony at Casa di Julieta. The Casa also has a statue of Juliet. There's a legend that if you rub Juliet's bronze breast, your luck with love will turn around.



Jim had to fight his way through the crowd to get his turn. He wanted to make a Christmas card this year and label it "Breast Wishes From Jim. Merry Christmas".

### *Verona Arena*

The Verona Arena, built in the first century, is still in use today. Opera performances are given here four times a year between June and August. The forum is one of the best preserved structures of its kind. It was originally built from white and pink limestone but the rock from the outside ring was repurposed in 1117 after a major earthquake. The amphitheatre could host more than 30,000 spectators in ancient times.



### *Interesting Fact About Verona*

During World War II, Verona was one of the most bombed cities in the area due to its strategic position and the presence of ministries of the Italian Social Republic. In April 1945, the fleeing Germans destroyed all the bridges. Verona was awarded a Gold Medal of Military Valor for its support to the partisan war during the conflict.

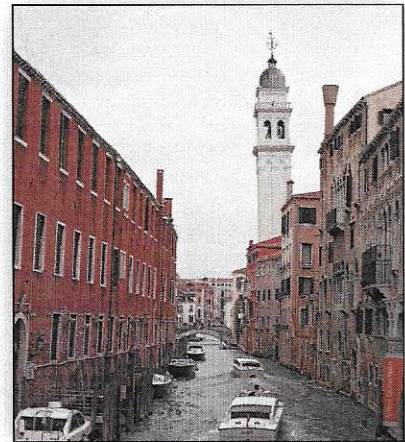


## Venice



### *Water Everywhere!*

Venice was spectacular! We took a private launch to Piazza San Marco and saw all of the major sights - Bridge of Sighs, Doges Palace and the Byzantine Basilica of San Marco. The islands are man made with the land supported by loosely spaced wooden piles. Over time, a lot of the piles have settled, leaving quite the tilt to a lot of the taller structures.



### *Water Taxis*



*Definitely a place to revisit*



## Venice - Perugia

### *A City of Many Churches - Where do People Park?*

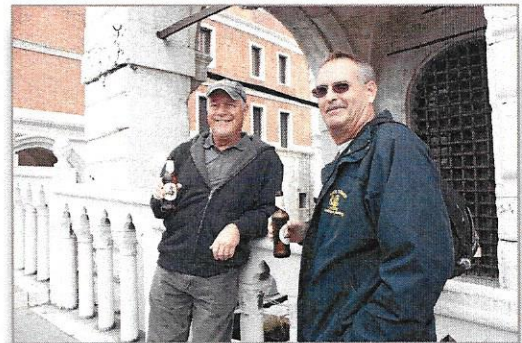
There are no parking lots in Venice. Venice is made up of 118 small islands separated by canals and linked by bridges. People take water taxis everywhere. And of course, gondolas are popular too but probably more for tourists. The city is listed as a World Heritage Site, along with the Venetian Lagoon.



### *Having a Drink With New Friends*



Where best to have a drink than in Venice! We found a wonderful cafe down a quiet canal. Then Mike and Jim found beer along the main plaza. Then it was off to Perugia for an overnight stay.





## Perugia - Assisi

### *St. Francis of Assisi*

Trafalgar Specialist Viana took us on a tour of the Basilica di San Francesco, better known as St. Francis of Assisi. Francis was one of the most religious figures in history. He was an Italian Roman Catholic friar and preacher. He founded the men's Order of Friars Minor, the women's Order of Saint Clare, the Third Order of Saint Francis and the Custody of the Holy Land.



### *Francis' Home Forever*

Assisi, the Basilica of San Francesco, is a World Unesco Heritage Site. It was closed for two years after a 1997 earthquake that caused major damage. The burial place of St. Francis was found in 1818 in a crypt under the lower basilica. He rests in an ancient stone coffin with iron ties, enshrined in an open space above the altar.



Hilltop Church



## Pizza in Sorrento

### Traditional Neapolitan Evening at 'La Sorgente'

The Marciano family runs a self sustaining farm on the outskirts of Sorrento and invites tourists to dine on home made pizzas and mozzarella cheese made by Maria. The farm is four acres in size, and grows all kinds of vegetables, in addition to olive, lemon, orange, mandarin and walnut trees. They also raise a variety of livestock.

The group met with Maria and Rosella and were treated to a mozzarella cheese making demonstration.

### *How Real Mozzarella Cheese is Made*

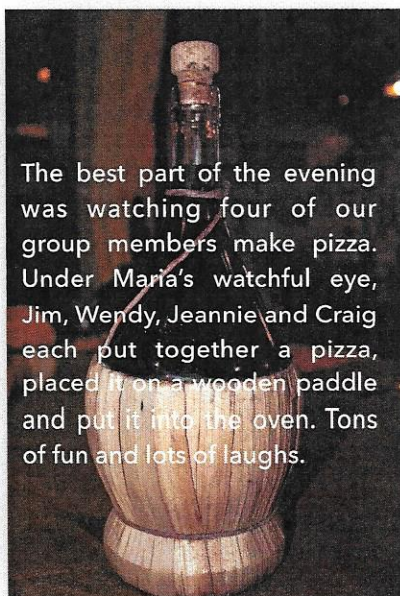
Seeing and eating real mozzarella cheese was quite a surprise. Its not like our North American variety. Maria has been making it for many years and has it down to a science. It was quite tasty.



### *Making Them Work For Their Pizza*

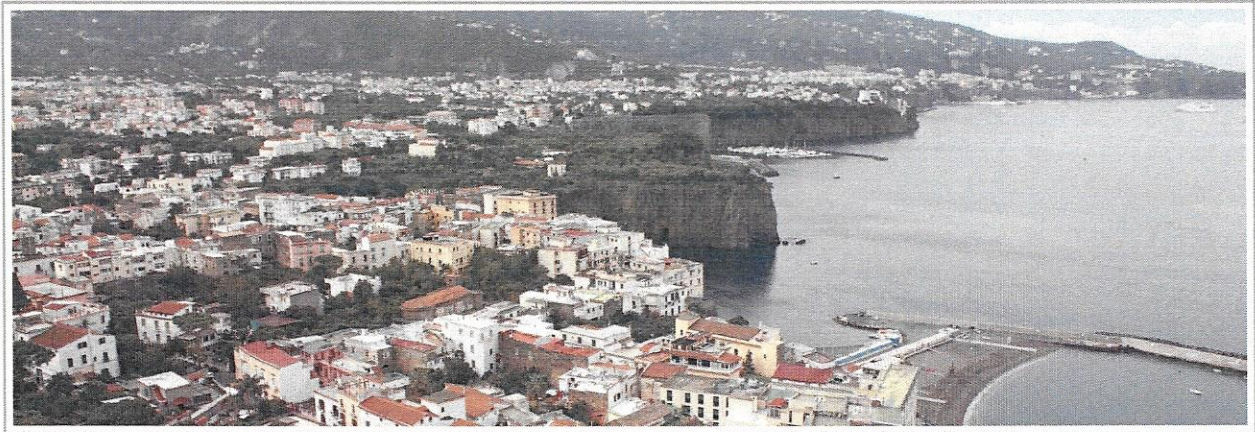
Our four actors were all good sports. They had to don quite the flattering Italian aprons before Maria would show them how to make top quality pizza. True Italian pizza at it's best.

The best part of the evening was watching four of our group members make pizza. Under Maria's watchful eye, Jim, Wendy, Jeannie and Craig each put together a pizza, placed it on a wooden paddle and put it into the oven. Tons of fun and lots of laughs.





## Sorrento



Sorrento overlooks the Bay of Naples and is situated at the start of the Amalfi Coast. Not far off the coast is the Isle of Capri. The oldest ruins in town from the Oscans date back to 600 BC.

### *Street Scenes*

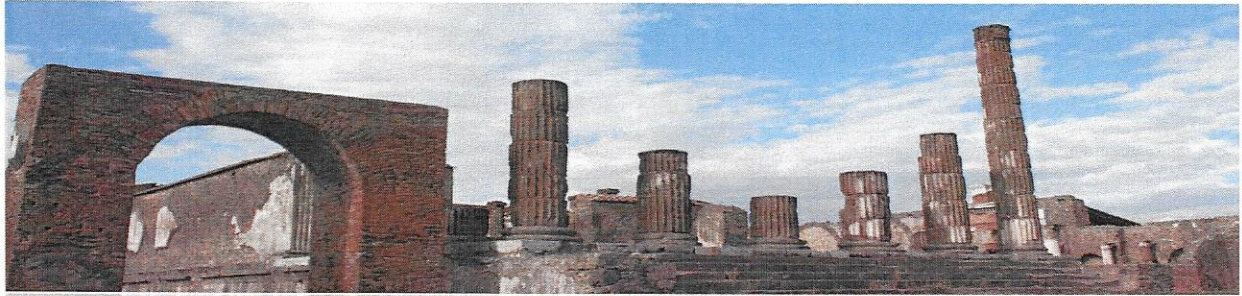


Old Old Old





## Pompeii

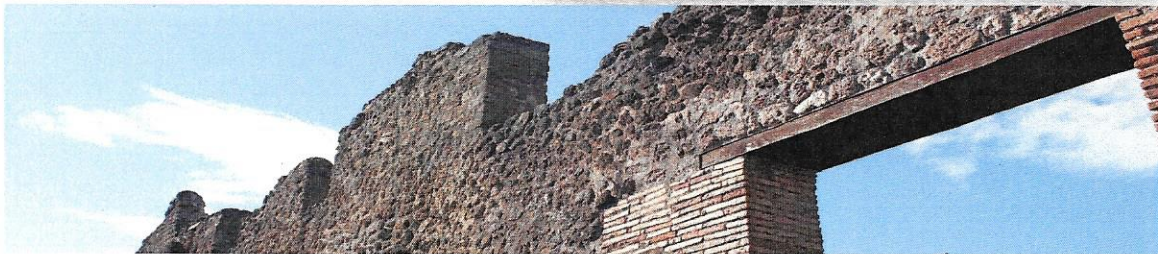


### *History of Pompeii*

The city of Pompeii was an ancient Roman town near Naples. Pompeii, along with many villas in the surrounding area, was mostly destroyed and buried under four to six meters of ash when Mount Vesuvius erupted in 79 AD. At that time, the city had a population of 11,000, and the city had a complex water system, an amphitheatre, gymnasium and a port. The ruins of Pompeii were discovered in 1599 but excavation wasn't started until 1748.



The aqua ducks provided water for more than 25 street fountains, at least four public baths, and a large number of private houses and businesses. The picture here is of the original pipe works.





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## Monti Cassino

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### *The Abbey of Monte Cassino*



In February of 1944, The Abbey was heavily bombed. It was almost completely destroyed by American-led air raids. The bombing was conducted because many reports from troops on the ground suggested that Germans were occupying the monastery, and it was considered a key observational post by all those who were fighting in the field. However, during the bombing, no Germans were present in the abbey. The only people killed in the monastery by the bombing were 230 Italian civilians seeking refuge there. Only after the bombing did the German paratroopers occupy the monastery because the ruins provided excellent defensive cover, aiding them in their defence.



### *Cassino War Cemetery*

Our group visited the Commonwealth cemetery in Monti Cassino. More than 4,200 Commonwealth graves are located here, of which 200 are unknown and 855 are Canadian. Also in the cemetery is the Cassino Memorial, unveiled in 1956, which commemorates the more than 4,000 Commonwealth war dead of the Sicilian and Italian campaigns who have no known graves.



## Monti Cassino

### *It's All About Family*

#### *Phyllis and Wallace*

Our new friend, Phyllis, came to Italy with a plan to find her uncle's grave. And she found him.

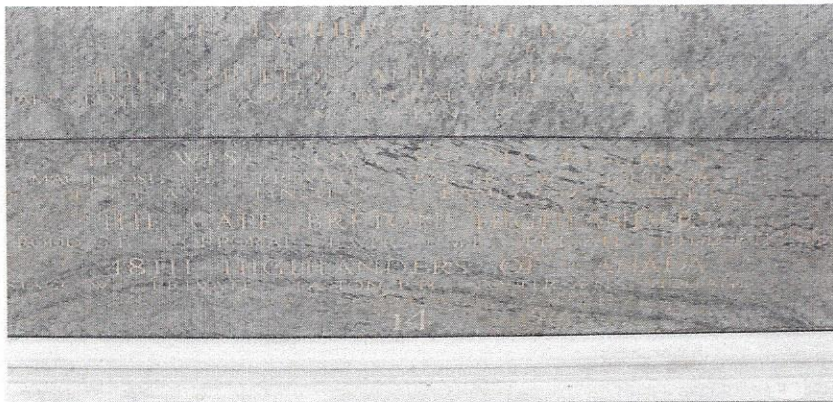


Lance Corporal Wallace McPhee died on May 25, 1944. With assistance from the online Canadian Virtual War Memorial site, she was able to locate the exact row and grave marker so that she could pay homage to his memory by leaving a token from Nova Scotia on his grave.



#### *Jim and Art*

Jim's father belonged to the 48th Highlanders. He fought and survived the battles at Cassino. Many of his fellow soldiers who died at Cassino are buried here. The names of 192 Canadians are inscribed on its 15-foot high slabs of green marble.





## Goodbye Italy

### The Italy Gang

Wendy Dunham  
Shirley Baker  
Frank Cameron  
Chris Cameron  
Frances Ferguson  
Alice Fitzpatrick  
Bob Fitzpatrick  
Carl Gates  
Lorraine Gates  
Anne Greeno  
Jim Greeno  
Ian Hart  
Louella Hart  
Paul Himelman  
Sandra Himelman  
Gordon Jessome  
Shirley Jessome  
Roman Labecki  
Carol Langridge  
Katherine Little  
Bev Lynch  
Phyllis Macgillivray  
Brent Manthorne  
Celeste Manthorne  
Margaret Murphy  
Pearl Newcombe  
Marion Pryor  
Roland Pryor  
Craig Rees  
Linda Rees  
Frank Smith  
Nancy Smith  
Jean Sullivan  
Michael Sullivan  
Joe Uher  
Hilda Visser  
Walter Westwood  
Henryk Ziabek

