



## **TREASURES OF UMBRIA: FROM ASSISI TO PERUGIA**

*4-night (5 day) itinerary for Moor Park Dfas*

**SEPTEMBER 23-27 2019**

Discover the heartland of Italy with this tailor-made tour for Moor Park Dfas, visiting some of Umbria's most beautiful towns and best-kept secrets. The rich green landscape is punctuated with many medieval villages, where one has a sense of being transported back in time to the days of proud communes, feuding families and competitive art patronage. The region is full of artistic treasures, and we will follow in the footsteps of painters such as Giotto, Raphael, Perugino and Piero della Francesca, exploring exquisite works which remain in the places for which they were commissioned.

The holiday is being organised by Siân Walters who runs a tour company, *Art History in Focus* and organised our last holiday to Toledo and Madrid in 2017. Siân will also be our tour lecturer and manager, and accompany us throughout the week.

### **INTRODUCTORY STUDY DAY**

For those who are able to come, there will be an introductory tour at the National Gallery (the date will be confirmed nearer the time) giving us an opportunity to meet other members of the group and explore works by Umbrian artists in the National Gallery collection. We will examine a number of paintings designed for various cities on our itinerary, tracing their provenance and history. These include Raphael's *Mond Crucifixion* which was designed for Citta di Castello, Piero's *Baptism of Christ* which was once in Sansepolcro, and Raphael's *Ansidei Madonna* commissioned for a chapel in Perugia. Siân will lead a guided tour lasting about 1.5 hours, following complimentary tea and coffee in the gallery café.

### **Monday 23 September**

We travel with British Airways from London Heathrow T5 (departure 08.00) and arrive at Bologna airport where we transfer by private coach to Città di Castello, an attractive, non-touristic walled town which is perfectly placed for exploring the region (the journey time is approx. 2 ½ /3 hours but we will stop for lunch). Our centrally-located and elegant 4-star hotel looks out onto a small square and the monumental church of St Francis, for which Raphael painted his famous *Marriage of the Virgin* (Brera, Milan). There will be some time to rest on arrival after which we reconvene for a delicious dinner with local Umbrian wines (included), served in the hotel's excellent restaurant.

## **Tuesday 24 September**

This morning we begin with a gentle introductory walking tour through the town centre when we will learn about its medieval history, visiting the church of San Domenico where Raphael's *Mond Crucifixion* (National Gallery) once hung as well as the local Pinacoteca or art gallery, housed in an elegant 15th century palace which once belonged to the ruling Vitelli family. Here we see masterpieces by artists who worked in the town, from Signorelli to the young Raphael.

We then drive to nearby Sansepolcro (about 15 minutes away), the home town of Piero della Francesca which contains his recently restored Polyptych of the Misericordia as well as arguably his most famous painting, *The Resurrection of Christ*. It is this painting, situated in what is now the Museo Civico, which the writer Aldous Huxley famously described in an essay of 1925 as "the best picture in the world". After lunch in an excellent local trattoria (optional) we stroll past Piero's house and visit the Duomo which has a beautiful 14th century altarpiece which probably influenced Piero's *Resurrection*.

Dinner with wine is included this evening in the hotel's restaurant.

## **Wednesday 25 September**

We spend the entire day exploring Assisi and learning about the life of the city's most famous saint, San Francesco. After Francis's death in 1226 his home town suddenly became a great focus of attention. The construction of a basilica dedicated to him (his canonisation took place in 1228) was a huge and expensive affair and no expense was spared in its decoration, whereby many artists were employed. It is here that we find the famous series of frescoes dedicated to the life of St Francis, traditionally attributed to Giotto.

After a break for coffee, we stroll back to the upper part of town passing a number of beautiful monuments *en route* such as the church of Santa Chiara and the central Piazza del Comune dominated by the vast façade of the Roman Temple of Minerva. There will be some free time for an independent lunch and to explore at leisure, after which we reconvene and drive to a lovely family-run vineyard at the bottom of Assisi. Here we will enjoy a private wine-tasting followed by an al fresco picnic in the vineyards (we sit at tables, under a canopy). The views of the town are beautiful. We will return to the hotel in the early evening.

## **Thursday 26 September**

Città di Castello was the birthplace and home of one of the most important Italian artists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Alberto Burri, and the most comprehensive collection of his works can be found in a museum created during his own lifetime within the town's old tobacco factory, which the artist acquired in order to create some of his largest pieces. It is the world's largest museum dedicated to a single artist. We have arranged a private opening and guided tour, where will be introduced to the breath-taking work of this pioneering artist.

We then drive to Perugia, an elegant city situated on hills overlooking the Tiber Valley. Here life centres around a beautiful medieval square dominated by the Fontana Maggiore, sculpted in the 13th century by Nicola Pisano, pre-eminent in the Italian revival of the classical Roman sculptural style. After coffee (which has been arranged in the famous café Sandri) we pop in to see Perugino's beautiful frescoes in the tiny Collegio del Cambio: Perugino was greatly influenced by Piero della Francesca, and taught the young Raphael.

After an independent lunch we then visit the Palazzo dei Priori, the impressive medieval town hall which now contains the National Gallery of Umbria, famous for its works by

Perugia's famous son Perugino as well as Piero's *Polyptych of St. Anthony*. After a guided tour there will be some free time for independent exploration before returning to our hotel.

Dinner with wine is included this evening in the hotel's restaurant.

### **Friday 27 September**

Today there is a short drive to the beautiful city of Arezzo where we see Piero della Francesca's famous frescoes dedicated to the Finding of the True Cross in the 13th century church of San Francesco. Much of the information we know about Piero is found in Giorgio Vasari's *Lives of the Artists*, and since this famous author and architect himself came from Arezzo we will also visit a local church which he designed as well as the Vasari Loggia which dominates the picturesque piazza.

After lunch in the piazza (optional) we drive to Bologna airport and return to London Heathrow T5. Our flight departs at 18:50 and arrives at 20.10



## FURTHER DETAILS

Itinerary: A final itinerary with up-to-date timings and historical notes will be provided nearer the time and all reservations made where necessary. Please note that publicised flight times are subject to change. All will be done to ensure that the details of the trip remain as indicated, but in the unlikely event of changes being made we will always make every effort to organise alternative arrangements.

Accommodation: 4 nights' half board accommodation in Hotel Tiferno (4-star), well-located in the centre of the town. The hotel is located in a 17th century palace that was once the monastery of the church of San Francesco, and it is a friendly place with delightful staff (I have been coming here for 17 years!). Rooms are well-appointed and superior upgrades have been arranged for all the group. Singles are double-for-single rooms. There is fitness area and spa/sauna/steam room, hotel restaurant and bar area. The hotel also has a number of older artworks as well as an important collection of Alberto Burri.

Price: The price will be **£1219** per person for those sharing a twin or double room with a single room supplement of **£145**. Please note that we have been allocated a limited number of single rooms (double-for-single use), so you may like to consider sharing with a fellow traveller. Single rooms will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis when booking opens. You may wish to check single room availability with Anne before booking.

The price will include:

- Scheduled flights and taxes with BA from London Heathrow
- 4-star accommodation for 4 nights, with breakfast and 3 dinners (including coffee, Umbrian wines and water) in one of the town's best restaurants
- Wine-tasting and light picnic supper in Assisi
- All transfers and excursions in Italy by private coach
- Fully guided tours each day with Siân and her local colleagues - we will sometimes divide the group into two to make things more comfortable for you
- Microphone and mini-headsets for guiding where required
- Pre-tour study day with Siân at the National Gallery, with refreshments
- Historical notes and suggested reading list provided by Siân for each guest to accompany the tour
- Reservations and all entrance fees in the itinerary
- City tax
- Gratuities

It does not include lunches (although these are pre-arranged in Sansepolcro and Arezzo at a reasonable price for those who would like to join the group), personal spending and insurance. Comprehensive travel insurance is essential to cover you in case of cancellation or other unforeseen circumstances.

The tour is being organised for us by *Art History in Focus* Tours - please refer to our Terms and Conditions for booking this trip (attached). Art History in Focus is run by art historian and Arts Society lecturer Siân Walters who will be accompanying us. Siân is also a lecturer at the National Gallery and her specialist areas include 15th and 16th century Italian Art and Spanish Art and Architecture.

Participation and Booking: Booking will open on 10<sup>th</sup> October. If you would like to join the trip please complete the attached booking form. **If you have access to a computer please fill in the form by typing as this is easier for us to process than handwritten forms and it also enables you to save a copy. Thank you.** Please then print off the completed form, sign and date it and return to Anne Harris at **57 Leas Drive , Iver , Bucks , SL0 9RB** with a cheque for £225 per person. This is a non-refundable deposit required at the time of booking. Cheques should be made payable to Art History in Focus.

We will then confirm your booking and send you a receipt and ATOL certificate. **For all queries regarding the tour please contact Anne Harris who will be accompanying the trip. Tel 07855 371869 email kateah62@virginmedia.com**

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