

'Southern Passion' – Southern Italy & Sicily - 2014 & 2016

"What an amazing trip...filled with so many unexpected extras

Bev H - Melbourne

2016 : What a trip this was. Starting in tranquil Ravello, high above the Amalfi Coast we luxuriated on the terrace of our wonderful hotel overlooking the Bay of Naples and enjoyed incredible hospitality from the owners and the nearby restaurant run by Maria. Here we wondered through the magnificent gardens of the Villas and also travelled down to Naples for a performance at the Teatro San Carlo. From here we moved into Basilicata, seeing the World Heritage site of Matera and its houses built into the caves and the on to Martina Franca, where we based our self for visits to the Trulli Houses of Puglia, private performance by Salerno's famous Pizzica group, Alla Bua and touring around this fascinating town and area. Then it came time to travel down and across the Straits of Messina into Sicily. Our experience started in the incomparable



and fashionable town of Taormina, high up overlooking the Mediterranean.

We took a fabulous trip out into the Bay of Naxos with our captain, Antonio and relished the opportunity to live the Dolce Vita, wondering the streets of the town, stopping for a drink and enjoying fine food at places like Il Viccolo Stretto (the thinnest entry to a restaurant we have seen). From Taormina, we moved through to Palermo via our friend Franco's 'Borgo', where we dined like kings eating food all produced by our host. We also travelled out to see his father's small hut in the countryside, where he makes the peccorino cheese from the day's goat's milk production. Once in Palermo, the options are endless and we relished the energy of this dynamic city. We were invited to visit the Palace of a noble family, whose ballroom was used for the famous scene in the classic film 'The Leopard'. While in Palermo we also enjoyed the guitar and voice of Toto and the expected visits such as the Cappella Palatina. Then onward to the charming hilltop town of Erice via a little-known museum for the classic Sicilian wine cart and onwards (*to be continued !!*)



2014 : What a varied and fascinating region of the world this is! From all the grace and elegance of musical Ravello to the round, stone Trulli houses and harsh cave dwellings of Puglia and Matera. Fabulous wines and local produce were abundant with one highlight an outdoor lunch on a farm where everything had been produced by the farmer...from cheese and bread to meats, veges, wine and stunning ricotta-stuffed cannoli! We saw fabulous opera and Greek theatre productions, impressive ancient sites, we lived 'la dolce vita' in the picturesque seaside towns of Taormina and Siracusa, enjoyed marvellous dinners often complete with enthusiastic local entertainers who played and sang as we dined...(or some of us danced!) In short it was wonderful and even snow-capped Etna stayed calm, not wishing to disturb as she watched over our activities! If you've only visited Italy's North, you will be truly surprised and fall in love with the treasures of the South. This tour was a stunner!