

JACQUELINE COATES ARTS & GARDEN TOUR 2010

With Tuscany Under the Skin

12 night/13 days

Friday 21st May - Wednesday 02 June 2010



*Above Right; Jacqueline in a poppy field.
Barbara & Ugo Mariotti at a picnic farmhouse lunch.*

'Following last year's extremely enjoyable Art and Garden tour to Italy with 'Tuscany Under the Skin', bookings are now open for eight places only for 2010.

Tour guides and Italian specialists Barbara and Ugo Mariotti and myself have created the itinerary which has a particular leaning towards beautiful gardens, the arts, great food and charming inclusions.

As part of a small group, accompanied by the caring and thoughtful and highly informed Barbara, you will experience the Italy that many tourists will never get to see. From a pasta cooking lesson at farmhouse 'Trove' with an Italian mama, to exquisite lesser known gardens, unique accommodation in an old palazzo in a hilltop town, to the delights of a perfumery created in the days of the Medici. It's an unforgettable tour.

We have visited and planned the special places that make up this fabulous 2010 itinerary. Three painting lessons are included in gorgeous settings with Tuscan based artist Liz Cochrane. Even if you have never painted it is a great and relaxing way to absorb the magnificent surrounds you will find yourself in. There are optional opportunities for sketching, and painting throughout as I will provide convenient handbag size watercolour and paper sets for you. There is time to shop and explore additional highlights you can add of your own. Although I won't be travelling on the 2010 trip it means we have eight places to offer instead of seven, and I can assure you, you will be in excellent hands with Barbara and Ugo. It's a wonderful itinerary.

The pace is relaxed yet rich with culture and beauty. There are many inclusions and some free time. 2009 tour participants called it the trip of a lifetime and they'd do it all again tomorrow.

See below for the itinerary, and be sure to book in with your deposit quickly if you wish to secure a place."

Jacqueline Coates SEPT 2010

DAY 1 - Friday 21st May, 2010.



Transfer from Rome Airport to Florence for clients arriving directly from Australia to be met by Barbara. Arrival by independent travellers at Hotel Universo by 13.00. Your hotel is central, minutes away from all the main attractions.

Perhaps no other city in the world has so much history, art and culture in such a compact area. This afternoon we take a familiarization walk including Santa Maria Novella, the ancient Perfume factory, the Duomo, Battistero, San Lorenzo Church and street markets, Palazzo Vecchio and San Marco before visit

of the Uffizzi Galleries with a guide who will make this amazing collection of art an open book for us.

At dusk we stroll along the Arno River to the Ponte Vecchio and check out the location of the Pitti Palace with its Galleries, the Boboli Gardens and Bandini gardens. We enjoy an aperitif before a Welcome Dinner at the famous restaurant 'I Paoli', a restaurant full of Florentine character and frescoes.

Dinner included

ACCOMMODATION: Hotel Universo, Florence



Above Right; Night falls on a Florentine Bridge . Watercolour by Jacqueline Coates



DAY 2 – Saturday 22nd May, 2010.

This morning we take the local bus up to the picturesque town of Fiesole, overlooking all of Firenze - a chance to admire this classic view before our transfer by taxi through the high stone walls and narrow winding lanes to the beautiful Italianate garden of Villa Gamberaia. (below right)

This afternoon is at your leisure. An opportunity to explore enchanting Fiesole itself rich in history - you may choose to visit the Roman Forum and its Etruscan/Roman/Lombard museum or the delightful shops before taking the small bus back to Florence. Or you may choose to return to Florence itself and explore all it has to offer.

*Breakfast & Lunch inc.
Dinner own arrangements*

ACCOMM: Hotel Universo, Florence



DAY 3 – Sunday 23rd May, 2010.



Morning visit to Poggio a Caiano, once a residence of Lorenzo il Magnifico, designed for him by the architect Giuliano da Sangallo. The 15th Century villa is set in a parkland garden and is famous for its museum of exquisite Still-Life paintings of flowers and fruit which we will visit, together with the villa itself and the garden. Afternoon at leisure.

*Breakfast included
Dinner own arrangements*

ACCOMM: Hotel Universo, Florence

Day 4 – Monday 24 May

Today we transfer to Montepulciano, the highest town in beautiful Southern Tuscany. En route we visit San Gimignano whose amazing medieval towers still dominate the skyline. Stroll through the town and the evocative Piazza della Cisterna where perhaps you should enjoy one of Sergio Dondoli's award-winning gelatos. You can explore the old fortress or climb one of the towers. Visit the Collegiata with its famous fresco cycles of the Old and New Testaments. San Gimignano is still a town of artists and artisans who often work in their shops and are happy to talk to you. The town has a wealth of interesting shops.





Montepulciano is the home of the *Vino Nobile*, one of the most famous of the Tuscan wines. It has a strong artist/artisan tradition offering a wide range of handcrafted goods and its workshops welcome an interested visitor. Your accommodation for the next 6 nights will be at *Il Borghetto* in the centre of town. Towards evening we do a familiarization visit of the town including use of the shuttle bus, Laundromat and internet place, the museum and excellent shops. We sip an aperitif at the pretty Art Deco Cafe Poliziano, (in watercolour left) looking over the valley and lakes below before a dinner of local specialities at 'Acquacheta'.

Breakfast & Dinner included

ACCOMM: Hotel Il Borghetto, Montepulciano

Day 5 – Tuesday 25 May

Morning at leisure. In the early afternoon visit the garden of 'La Ragnaia' (below left) a very interesting forest and field garden that is being created by artist Sheppard Craige with a mix of the traditional Italianate garden, Zen concepts, and sculpture.



Later, your first watercolour lesson with well known local artist Liz Cochrane (above right) at her studio in the small hilltop village of Montisi. Elizabeth is primarily a landscape painter influenced by the French Impressionists and Turner. She found the combination of the light and rhythms of the landscape of Tuscany the perfect environment for her work and has for many years been a 'local' in Montisi. Dinner Montisi village.

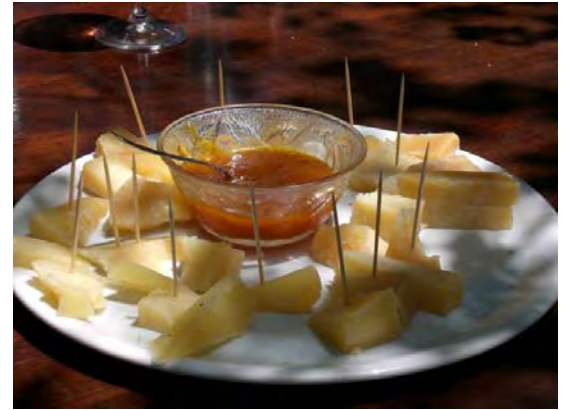


Breakfast & Dinner included

ACCOMM: Hotel Il Borghetto, Montepulciano

Day 6 - Wednesday 26 May

This morning we visit Pienza, the tiny Renaissance town created for Pope Pius II by the architect Rossellini. The town and the great Val d'Orcia below it are Unesco World Heritage listed. Both have been the location of important films. The town is also famous for its Pecorino (sheep) cheese. Take time to stroll along the walls and through the streets of this charming town. Then we take the high road near Vignoni Alto in the Val d'Orcia and enjoy a walk with panoramic views to a local farm for a winetasting lunch in the countryside. Afterwards visit picturesque Bagno Vignoni, an ancient spa village once used by the Etruscans and Romans who knew the value of its curative waters.



In the late afternoon a visit to "La Foce", (left) a garden created by Anglo-American writer Iris Origo whose insightful biographies and moving accounts of WWII are much in demand. Iris' own story and that of her Italian husband Count Antonio Origo will add extra depth to our visit of their delightful garden that reflects the mix of their cultures.

*Breakfast & lunch inc.
Dinner own arrangements.*

ACCOMM: Hotel Il Borghetto, Montepulciano

DAY 7 - Thursday 27 May

In the morning transfer to the Mariotti farmhouse "Trove". The farm is surrounded by vineyards and olive groves. Here we will participate in a 'hands on' cooking lesson on how to prepare a typical Tuscan farm lunch including the local pasta 'pici'. After lunch there will be an opportunity to work with your teacher Liz on your painting in the beautiful Tuscan countryside with magnificent views from Mariotti garden toward Pienza and Sant' Anna in Camprena where some of the scenes from The English Patient were filmed. Dinner own arrangements though unlikely you will want any after the lunch feast! A lovely relaxing day.



*Breakfast & lunch inc.
Dinner own arrangements.*

ACCOMMODATION: Hotel Il Borghetto, Montepulciano

DAY 8 - Friday 28 May



Take the back roads through the 'crete' clay hills, with many photo opportunities, to the ancient Gothic and World Heritage listed town of Siena. The Sieneese have proudly maintained old traditions including 'lo struscio', a leisurely lunchtime and evening walk through the winding streets down to the 'Campo', the beautiful rose-gold square where twice each year they run the 'Palio', a medieval bareback horserace. Our guided tour of this enchanting town this morning will include a visit to its

famous Duomo and will give you a familiarization of its galleries and museums.



Enjoy lunch on the 'Campo. Your afternoon will be at leisure to explore the town and perhaps enjoy some of the wonderful shopping opportunities before returning to Montepulciano.

Breakfast & lunch inc.

Dinner own arrangements.

ACCOMMODATION: Hotel Il Borghetto, Montepulciano

Day 9 - Saturday 29 May



Today we travel to the famous little town of Cortona. More recently subject of Frances Mayes "Under the Tuscan Sun", Cortona is an absolute jewel of a hill-top town, Etruscan in origin, with one of Italy's best views from its walls, and is well-known for its antiques, jewellery, linen and other speciality shops. It is the birthplace the famous Tuscan artist Luca Signorelli whose paintings are among other famous works in its small museum. We recommend you don't miss "The Annunciation" of Beato Angelico. The town also has an excellent Etruscan museum.

We enjoy a lunch of local specialities. In the afternoon we meet our teacher Liz for a third lesson.

Breakfast & lunch inc.

Dinner own arrangements.

ACCOMMODATION: Il Borghetto, Montepulciano



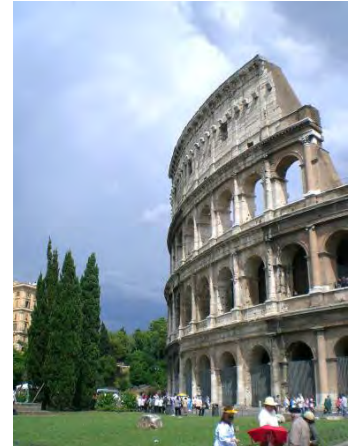
Day 10 - Sunday 30 May



Transfer to Rome by private coach. En route pass by the small village of Bagnaia and visit the classic garden of the Villa Lante.

Somebody said a lifetime would not be enough to know Rome. The Holy City is filled with art treasures and continues to be a mine of new discoveries. Each time work begins on a carpark, an underground station, a watermain, ...something unimagined pops up.

We take a familiarisation walk through central Rome to see the Piazza di Spagna, Piazza del Popolo, the Pantheon, Piazza Navona and the Trevi Fountain. As we walk along any street our gaze reveals elements not noticed before: a shrine, a fresco, a terrace full of flower pots, a bell tower. The recent development of 'Isole Pedonale' (pedestrian only zones) allows for quieter, more relaxed exploration. Then there are the fountains of running water, clean and fresh - a chance to drink and to soothe tired feet. In the back streets there are places to sit and try a good coffee or taste bruschetta with fragrant tomato and a glass of the famous white 'Castelli Romani' wine.



Enjoy and aperitif and dinner together in this romantic city.

Breakfast & Dinner included

ACCOMMODATION: Hotel Priscilla, Rome

DAY 11 - Monday 31 May



This morning a private coach tour of lesser known Rome including Rome-style public gardens. Three hours including the Gianiculum Rome's tallest hill overlooking the whole city and surrounds and nearby the statues of Garibaldi and his wife Anita (a great story); the Aventino Hill to the Piazza dei Cavalieri di Malta where you can peep through the keyhole for a surprise view of Rome and walk through the Orange gardens nearby with another lovely view; the Caracalla Baths; a stroll along the Appia Antica; the fascinating San Giovanni square, site of the original Vatican. The tour finishes at the Borghese Gardens which you can explore on

your own. Afternoon and evening free.

Breakfast included

Dinner own arrangements.

ACCOMM: Hotel Priscilla, Rome



DAY 12 – Tuesday 01 June



Day at leisure to explore on your own. Perhaps revisit some of the sites you saw on the city tour, catch up on some shopping or simply sit and sip a coffee and watch the passing parade. Farewell Dinner.

Breakfast & Dinner included

ACCOMMODATION: Hotel Priscilla, Rome



Day 13 - Wednesday 2 June

Independent departure from Rome.

Breakfast included

HOW TO BOOK:

Booking Form provided on request. Contact Jacqueline Coates on: jac@jacquelinecoates.com or call 0412 587 438 or 08 8566 3827.

See www.jacquelinecoates.com for information

TOUR PRICE:

Euros €4122 p.p. or \$6990.90 AUD* plus airfares.

Single supplement: €538 or \$912.14 AUD.

** Australian equivalent as of Sept 14, 2009*

The tour is charged in Euros and charged at the bank selling rate on the date of payment. Price subject to change if fewer than 6 paying passengers.

Final payment due to TUSCANY UNDER THE SKIN by Friday 19 March 2009.

INCLUSIONS:

- Fully guided each day by Ugo or Barbara Mariotti
- Transportation in private air-conditioned 9 seater vehicle
- Transfers between cities by private coach
- Taxi Fiesole to Villa Gamberaia
- Accommodation Florence: Hotel Universo with private facilities
- Accommodation Montepulciano: Hotel Il Borghetto rooms with private facilities
- Accommodation Rome: Hotel Priscilla with private facilities
- Italian continental breakfast daily (B)
- 8 meals with wine (1/4 bottle each) (L, D)
- 3 aperitivi
- 1 wine tasting lunch
- 1 cooking lesson & farm lunch at Trove (L)
- Refreshments with art lessons
- 3 painting lessons with local artist
- 1 city tour Siena
- Guided tour of the Uffizi Museum in Florence including entry
- Private coach tour of Rome
- 3 entries - Uffizi Gallery; Poggio a Caiano Still Life Museum; Siena Duomo
- 5 gardens - Gamberaia; Poggio a Caiano; La Ragnaia; La Foce; Villa Lante
- Luggage transfers
- Porterage in and out of hotels
- And Cotman water colour pocket palette ideal for travel plus watercolour paper provided by Jacqueline Coates prior to your departure.
- Opportunity to meet with Jacqueline as a group once numbers are confirmed for an introductory painting practice lesson plus meet and greet pre-tour.

All due care will be taken to ensure inclusions will be delivered as agreed. In case of changes beyond our control, we will provide viable alternatives.

NOT INCLUDED:

- Laundry, telephone calls and other items of a personal nature
- Gratuities

TOUR BOOKING CONDITIONS:

- A non-refundable deposit of €350 p.p is payable to TUSCANY UNDER THE SKIN on booking.
- Travel insurance is compulsory and in the interest of each passenger, to cover medical emergencies, loss of luggage/bookings and in case of cancellation.
- The Tour Manager reserves the right to decline to accept any person as a member of a tour.
- The passenger must declare that they are not travelling against any medical advice.

CANCELLATION POLICY:

Deposit is non-refundable

39 - 30 days prior to tour 30%

29 - 16 days prior to tour 50%

15 - 0 days prior to tour 75%

BOOKING CONDITIONS:

Provided on the booking form.

BOOKING AGENT:

Tegan Peters

Windsong Travel Pty Ltd

License Number 2TA4062

IATA Number 02342734

45 Byron Street

Inverell NSW 2360

Australia

Phone (61) 2 6722 3011

Fax (61) 2 6722 2402

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SUGGESTED READING LIST:

Under the Tuscan Sun - Frances Mayes

Bella Tuscany - Frances Mayes

The Hills of Tuscany - Ferenc Mate (about Montepulciano)

Dolce & Salata (A bittersweet adventure in Tuscany) - Malena de Blasi

War in the Val D'Orcia - Iris Origo

Images and Shadows Iris Origo

The Italians Luigi Barzini

Etruscan Places D H Lawrence

Tuscan Cookbook Stephanie Alexander

Tuscan Elements Alexandra Black & Simon McBride

Within Tuscany Matthew Spender

Guide Books:

Lonely Planet, The Green Guide, Eyewitness Guide (Dorling & Kindersley)

SOME DESCRIPTIONS:

Bagno Vignoni:

This tiny medieval spa village dates back to Roman times. The hot sulphurous water bubbles up into a picturesque pool, built by the Medici in the town's main square. Some 36 springs cook up at 51 degrees Celsius to collect in the pool. Famous people who have sought a cure in Bagno Vignoni include St Catherine of Siena (who suffered from a form of tuberculosis) and Lorenzo the Magnificent (to relieve his arthritis).

Montepulciano:

Montepulciano occupies a remarkably picturesque setting on top of a hill separating two valleys and, at 605 m (1,950 feet) above sea level, it is one of the highest of Tuscany's hilltop towns. Inside the city walls the streets are crammed with Renaissance-style palazzi and churches and a long winding street called the Corso climbs up to the main square. On the Corso is the well known Art Deco Caffè Poliziano. One of the most famous red wines of Tuscany is the VINO Nobile di Montepulciano, made from Sangiovese grapes grown on the hills around the town.

Pienza:

A superb example of Renaissance architecture, this town was designed and built in the mid-15th Century by the Florentine architect Bernardo Rossellino on the orders of Pope Pius II, Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, who was born there in 1405. The Pope even had the town's name changed from Corsignano.

The most important buildings are grouped around Piazza Pio II, very close to our hotel. The square was designed by Rossellino, who left nothing to chance. The available space was limited, so to increase the sense of perspective and dignity of the great edifices that would grace the square, Rossellino set the Palazzo Borgia and Palazzo Piccolomini off at angles to the cathedral.

San Gimignano:

The "City of Beautiful Towers" is one of the best preserved medieval towns in Tuscany. Its stunning skyline bristles with tall towers dating from the 13th century: 14 of the original 76 have survived. These windowless towers were built to serve both as private fortresses and symbols of their owners' wealth. In the Piazza della Cisterna, ringed by a jumble of unspoilt 13th and 14th century palazzi (town houses of stature), is a wellhead built in 1237. Shops, galleries and jewellers line the two main streets, Via San Matteo and Via San Giovanni, which still retain their medieval feel.

The distinctive skyline of San Gimignano must have been a welcome sight to the faithful in medieval times, for the town lay on the main pilgrim route from northern Europe to Rome. This gave rise to its great prosperity at that time, when its population was twice what it is today.

Siena:

Siena is without doubt one of Italy's most enchanting cities. The principal sights are found in the network of narrow streets and alleys around the fan-shaped Piazza del Campo. The buildings around this square symbolize the golden age of the city between 1260 and 1348, when wealthy citizens contributed to a major programme of civic building.

Scarcely any street is level as Siena, like Rome, is built on seven hills. This adds to the pleasure of exploring: one minute the city is laid out to view before you and the next you are in a warren of medieval houses. Packed into Siena are the 17 contrade (parishes) whose animal symbols are everywhere on carvings, plaques and car stickers.

The Etruscans:

The Etruscans appear to have founded settlements as early as the 9th century BC and by the 6th century had become the dominant power in central Italy. Territory in their control stretched from Rome in the south to the Apennines. The Etruscan settlements were largely independent of each other and they are said to have formed a league, the 12-city Dodecapolis for the celebration of annual religious festivities more than anything else. In times of conflict they helped each other out. Starting in the 7th century BC the Etruscans embarked on repeated campaigns of conquest across the peninsula and they helped make Rome the centre of power in Latium. Whatever control the Etruscans had over the Latin towns evaporated by 392 BC when the Romans rebelled and took Veio, an Etruscan stronghold 15km north of Rome. Shortly afterwards all of southern Etruria was under Roman influence and in 351BC the Etruscans sued for peace.

La Foce:

"This is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful modern gardens in Tuscany. It is probable that the owner Iris Origo, a refined writer and author of the historical novel "The Merchant of Prato", perceived this place as a landscape marked by striking contrasts. In the late 1920s she and her husband Antonio bought an abandoned estate and transformed it into a magnificent villa with a model farm. The English architect and landscape artist, Cecil Pinsent, a friend of Iris Origo, was commissioned to carry out the work, in a project that went on until 1939. He created the garden in different stages, but always according to a unitary logic, drawing inspiration from the formal gardens of classic Italian tradition. Pinsent also renovated the building and designed the limonaia (lemon garden) and other annexes.

In 1927 the first formal garden, bounded to the south by a wall with a fountain and a green grotto concealed by a dome of laurel, was built in front of the house. From here a path leads to the lemon garden, begun in 1933. It is adorned by box trimmed in spherical shapes and bordered along the sides by herbaceous plants and splendid peonies. The transverse axis of the garden continues, rising along an avenue of cypress trees to the top of the hill.

In 1939 the monumental geometric garden was laid out below the lemon garden. It is reached by descending a stairway built of Rapolano travertine. Below the stairway is a grotto. Bordered by great box hedges, dominated by four magnolias and enclosed by high walls of cypresses, the triangular space ends in a pool and a statuary group. A long pergola of wisteria bounds the formal garden at the top, while on the other side of the berceau runs a narrow terrace containing a rose garden with borders of lavender and herbaceous perennials, among which emerge clumps of aubretia and alyssum.

Following the wisteria pergola we arrive a strikingly panoramic spot overlooking the broad landscape of the Val d'Orcia, marked by the avenue of cypresses planted by Iris Origo in homage to Florentine 15th Century painting.

Continuing up the slope we find an informal garden with aromatic and Mediterranean plants where the geometric structure of the garden gradually drifts off into the woods. Near the woods is a little family graveyard where Iris' son, who died at the age of six, is buried."

Excerpt from "Gardens of Florence and Tuscany" by Mariachiara Pozzana