



**HOLIDAY TOUR: NEW YEAR'S IN FLORENCE**  
**VILLA LE BALZE, FIESOLE, ITALY**  
**December 27, 2009 - January 6, 2010**

The transition in Western Europe from the Medieval to the Renaissance periods both contributed to and was shaped by new modes of expression in Florentine art, literature, philosophy, and spirituality. Through a first-hand observation of some of the most important of these intellectual and artistic creations in their original historical settings, this tour will seek to give participants a rich and lively understanding of one of the most fascinating episodes in human history - the Florentine Renaissance. It will in addition provide a first-hand experience of Florence today, a city still small enough to walk through in thirty minutes and yet one of the centers for contemporary Italian intellectual and artistic innovation.

We shall reside at the Villa Le Balze in Fiesole, a lovely hill town overlooking the city of Florence, and visit the relevant historic, artistic, and architectural treasures of Florence and its environs. Ordinarily, we shall visit the city in the morning by private bus and return to the Villa for pranzo, the midday main meal; there will also be some afternoon excursions focusing at times on today's city and its activities. There will as well be time free for individual explorations. On some evenings, after cena, the lighter supper meal, there will be presentations and discussions to allow participants to broaden and share their appreciation of what they are seeing and experiencing. There will be day trips to the nearby medieval city of Siena, Florence's traditional rival, and the unique Tuscan hill town of San Gimignano and to Pisa to visit the famous Cathedral and its associated buildings.

An additional special feature of the Holiday tour is a focus on becoming familiar with a broader spectrum of authentic Tuscan foods and wines than tourists ordinarily sample. A series of special events, including tasting-suppers with menus coordinated with appropriate wines, is designed for education as well as delectation.

The **tour leader** will be Professor John Pfordresher, abetted by Sissy Seiwald a longtime resident of Florence.

The **total cost** of the tour is **\$ 5,300.00 per person**. It includes accommodations at the Villa in Fiesole, most meals (see below for particulars), ground transportation, entrance fees, and tours as indicated in the itinerary and subject to the specified conditions. For those participants taking the tour for academic credit, tuition is also included in the price of the tour.

## ITINERARY

### **Sunday, DECEMBER 27**

Welcoming reception and dinner at the Villa Le Balze, followed by an introduction to the Villa.

### **Monday, DECEMBER 28**

This morning we begin with a tour of the Palazzo Vecchio, the town hall and seat of government of Florence for more than 800 years, rich with both history and works of art by figures like Michelangelo and Donatello guided by the Director of Education Signora Vivarelli.

Our day continues in the afternoon with a walking tour of Florence. The evening meal will include a tasting of several wines from Chianti.

### **Tuesday, DECEMBER 29**

Today we travel by motor coach to two lovely medieval hill towns. In Siena we will visit the Palazzo Pubblico with its late medieval frescoes by Simone Martini and Ambrogio Lorenzetti and then explore the city's Cathedral, the associated Baptistery, and Museum all rich with works by Medieval and Renaissance artists. Lunch is on our own.

Then in the afternoon we go on to the walled town of San Gimignano, its medieval fighting towers, and its elaborately decorated Collegiate Church. We return to the Villa in time for dinner.

### **Wednesday, DECEMBER 30**

This morning Ms. Vivarelli rejoins us to guide us through the world-famous Uffizi gallery, arguably the richest collection of Italian art in the world, and particularly celebrated for its collection of masterpieces by Botticelli.

The afternoon will feature, for those who are interested, a visit to the workshops of some of the skilled artisans on the far side of the Arno who carry on today the artistic and craft traditions of earlier centuries. Participants return to the Villa at their leisure.

### **Thursday, DECEMBER 31**

This morning we visit the most well-known sites associated with Michelangelo in the city of Florence: the Galleria dell'Accademia to see the David and the Bound Slaves; the Church of San Lorenzo and the Medici Chapel with its extraordinarily powerful tomb sculptures.

In the afternoon, we take a short excursion to one of the most scenic spots from which to view the city, the Church of San Miniato, the oldest and, many would say, the most striking of the city's great Churches. The early evening is free to prepare for our New Year's Eve celebration, the traditional Cenone (big supper!) di Capo d'Anno, at a celebrated local restaurant. We will then return to the Villa for a table full of desserts and our second tasting featuring sparkling wines, while the city spread out beneath us celebrates with a myriad of local firework displays.

### **Friday, JANUARY 1**

This is a national holiday and no private bus service will be available. Public transportation can take participants to the city for those wish to stroll or attend the feast day religious services in the Cathedral. In the late afternoon we gather for a slide presentation on the works of some of the main Florentine and Sienese artists we are encountering, including the Medieval painter Duccio and the Renaissance master Michelangelo.

### **Saturday, JANUARY 2**

In the morning we will journey to Pisa, there to visit the Cathedral, Baptistery, and the celebrated burial ground the “Campo Santo” and to admire the world famous Tower.

Participants will then lunch on their own.

We will return to Florence and in the mid-afternoon visit the Convent of San Marco, a unique site decorated with frescoes and paintings by Fra Angelico.

### **Sunday, JANUARY 3**

Today we begin with the splendid early medieval town offices of Florence, the Bargello, which in modern times has become the National Sculpture Museum. There we will view the work of the young Michelangelo, some of the most famous works by Donatello and the unique terra cotta works of Lucca della Robbia.

### **Monday, JANUARY 4**

In the morning we visit the Museum of the Opera del Duomo, where we shall find, among many riches, panels from Ghiberti’s “Gates of Paradise,” Donatello's sublime Mary Magdalene and Michelangelo's Florentine Pieta. Then our bus will take us across the town to visit the celebrated church Santa Maria Novella, the site of Masaccio's revolutionary fresco, The Holy Trinity.

### **Tuesday, JANUARY 5**

In the morning we will explore the spectacular collections of the Palazzo Pitti galleries. We then continue with a visit to the church of Santa Maria del Carmine to see Masaccio's Brancacci Chapel frescoes. On then to a lunch at a local restaurant.

Some participants may wish to enjoy a free afternoon in Florence and to return to the Villa at their leisure or visit the nearby Church of Santo Spirito and return with the minivans to the Villa.

In the evening we gather for our final wine tasting and farewell feast.

### **Wednesday, JANUARY 6**

Departures from the Villa.

### **Program Notes**

**If you plan to take this tour for Georgetown course credit, you must register for it as a spring 2010 course through the Villa Le Balze Programs Office at the time of enrollment.** The graduate section is *From Medieval to Renaissance*, LSHS-423-62, 3 credits, Professor Pfordresher.

The undergraduate section within the BSLS program is for 4 credits, again listed under Professor Pfordresher.

All credit-seeking students should plan to attend two classroom sessions, mandatory for credit students (other participants invited), will be held on the Georgetown campus. Exact location and time will be announced in Early November.

**Air Travel:** Participants are responsible for arranging their own transportation to and from the Villa Le Balze in Fiesole (Florence), Italy. Participants should plan to arrive at the Villa on December 27, and depart from the Villa on January 6. (Directions to the Villa from downtown Florence are included in the welcome packet).

**PLEASE NOTE: The tour will officially begin at the Villa on December 27. You are welcome to arrive at the Villa beginning at 11 am on December 27. Our welcome reception will take place at 6:30 pm that evening, and cena, our evening meal, will begin at 7:00 pm. The tour will conclude at the Villa on January 6. No extension of stay at the Villa is possible after 10 a.m. on January 6.**

**Accommodations and Meals:** Cost is based on double occupancy at the Villa, except for one triple room at the Villa which may be requested, or which will be used if required to accommodate as many requests for space on the tour as possible. Since the Villa was originally designed as a private residence, room accommodations vary in style; all are comfortable and well-appointed. No single rooms are available at the Villa; most, but not all, rooms have a private bath. **Room assignments are made by the Director of the Villa Programs so as best to accommodate the needs and comfort of the group as a whole.**

Three meals a day, with wine, are included at the Villa. However, Lunches on the days of the trips to Pisa and to Siena and San Gimignano are at the expense of the participants.

**Level of Physical Activity:** The nature of the tour schedule and the type of sites which the group will visit make for a moderately strenuous routine; those who experience difficulty walking distances at a normal pace or otherwise need to limit their physical activity should consult with the tour leaders prior to reserving space. The Directors reserve the right to limit individual participation in group activities in cases where the group's interests might be adversely affected.

**Reservations:** Since accommodations at the Villa are limited, places on the tour will be reserved in the order in which deposits are received, and preference will be given to Georgetown alumni, students, parents, and friends. Places may be reserved by completing the reservation form and returning it with a deposit of one thousand dollars per person (payable to Georgetown

University) to: Villa Le Balze Programs, Poulton Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Georgetown University, Washington D.C. 20057-1006. **Payments may also be made by credit card. The balance must be paid in full by December 1, 2009.**

If you should have any questions regarding this tour, please feel free to call (202) 687-5624.

Please also feel free to visit our website, [www.villalebalze.org](http://www.villalebalze.org).

We look forward to welcoming you to the Villa Le Balze.

*All details of the itinerary subject to change based on availability of accommodations, changes in opening\closing schedules, acts of God and other conditions beyond the control of the tour directors.*