



American Horticultural Society
Travel Study Program

HILL TOWNS AND GARDENS OF UMBRIA AND SOUTHERN TUSCANY

June 6 – June 15, 2022

WITH AHS HOST SUSAN KLEJST, TOUR LEADER
SUSIE ORSO OF SPECIALTOURS, AND GUEST
LECTURER, ART HISTORIAN NIGEL MCGILCHRIST

Dear Friends of the American Horticultural Society,

The Hill Towns and Gardens of Umbria and Southern Tuscany explores and celebrates beauty — artistically and horticulturally — in a region that's the envy of the world. Brilliant gardens, epic works of art, gastronomic delights, and private gardens await us as we resume the Society's Travel Study Program.

I am personally inviting you to share this profound and moving experience with us in this most beloved and rewarding destination. Here are just a few highlights of this extraordinary journey.

The principal cities that we'll visit — Perugia, Assisi, Todi, and Siena — are each outstanding in their own right and are some of the most popular travel destinations on the globe. We will also explore smaller and well-preserved towns, each a charming architectural gem: Monterchi, Montefalco, Spello, and Sansepolcro.

The art and architecture we'll view on this tour are among the most important in Western culture. The Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, holds the profound and groundbreaking frescoes by Giotto that laid the foundations for the Renaissance. The collections at the National Gallery of Umbria feature a wealth of important medieval and Renaissance works by such artists as Arnolfo di Cambio, Nicola and Giovanni Pisano, Duccio di Buoninsegna, and Piero della Francesca, with special attention paid to Umbrian artists Perugino and Pinturicchio.

Roses abound on this tour. Our visits to Centro Rose, Quando Fioreranno Le Rose, and the private collection of Helga Brichet, a rose expert and past president of the World Federation of Rose Societies, will be delightful.

Several hosts will grant us access to their varied and interesting private gardens. Doors will be opened for us, illustrating the leverage of an AHS Travel Study Program.

Our host is the Society's own Susan Klejst, the AHS's Vice President of Development, who manages our travel program and has co-hosted previous tours to Italy.

Our tour leader, Susie Orso of Specialtours, is familiar to many of our members, having led dozens of AHS Travel Study programs. A resident of Tuscany, her experience and personal contacts will enhance this already remarkable itinerary.

We'll welcome back renowned art historian Nigel McGilchrist, a longtime Umbrian resident, who will be enriching this tour with his profound knowledge.

The accommodations are befitting a tour of this quality. Relais Todini is, picture this: a country hotel sitting on a hilltop surrounded by vineyards. The well-being center features a Turkish bath, and the outdoor heated Jacuzzi is blessed with views over Todi. Located in the heart of Perugia, the Hotel Brufani is close to all the city's iconic attractions. The property has hosted celebrities such as Charlie Chaplin and the British Queen Mother, and now you! Borgo Scopeto will reward us with views of nearby Siena. Set in pristine countryside, the property has a spa and wellness center to pamper us.

The Hill Towns and Gardens of Umbria and Southern Tuscany, an exploration of one of the world's most popular and desirable destinations, is sure to sell out quickly, possibly within days. So please make your reservations today! For your convenience, a reservations form is enclosed in this brochure. Join us.

Cordially,



Terry Hayes
Chair, AHS Board of Directors



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Join AHS host Susan Klejst, tour leader Susie Orso of Specialtours, and guest lecturer, art historian Nigel McGilchrist for this once-in-a-lifetime garden travel experience.

Itinerary Highlights

JUNE 5- DEPART UNITED STATES

This itinerary includes the Italian cities of Assisi, Perugia, and Siena, as well as several lesser-known hill towns that are equally charming and beautiful. The city center of Siena is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, as is the Basilica of St. Francis, which houses historic and stunning frescoes by Giotto. Rose lovers will blush from visits to Cento Rose; Quando Fioreranno Le Rose; the private garden of the past president of the World Federation of Rose Societies; and the iconic Villa La Foce gardens. And what of Tuscan culinary traditions? A cooking demonstration at Badia a Coltibuono, formerly a monastery, will delight our palates, while the Italianate garden there will charm us. Another star not to be taken for granted is the picture-perfect countryside, and we'll be treated to breathtaking views at many points throughout our visit. And those are just a few highlights of this journey to one of the world's most storied and longed for destinations.

MONDAY, JUNE 6 — TODI (L, D)

Benvenuti a Roma! We'll arrive in Rome, landing at Leonardo Da Vinci airport. As we disembark, we'll claim our bags and meet our hostess Susie Orso in the arrivals area. Our adventure begins in Todi, a popular small Umbrian hill town with traces of both the Etruscan and Roman civilizations. The country hotel Relais Todini will be our home for a two-night stay. This charming property dates from 14th century and stands in a splendid setting overlooking the countryside and the city of Todi itself. We'll take lunch on the restaurant's terrace with its panoramic views. This afternoon, we'll have the choice to unwind at the hotel or take an optional visit to Todi. All of the city's main sights are within a few minutes' walk of each other and easily accessible on foot. If we decide to stay in, the hotel features an outdoor swimming pool, a tennis court, and a gym, in addition to a wellbeing center. The heated Jacuzzi with views of Todi will surely be popular. This evening, we'll christen this tour with welcome drinks at the hotel and enjoy an introductory talk by Nigel McGilchrist, an art historian who has taught at the University of Rome. Dinner at the hotel will follow.

TUESDAY, JUNE 7 — TODI (B, L, D)

A private garden in nearby Monticello is first on the agenda. The modern garden, created by owner Gabriella Lizza, embodies her interest in horticulture and design, and was inspired by a book by Vita Sackville-West, a poet and writer who penned a weekly article on gardening. Then it's on to Montefalco where we'll visit the San Francesco church and museum with a fresco cycle dedicated to St. Francis. We'll have lunch in a restaurant before we continue to Santa Maria in Portella for a close and personal visit that will be a gift to our senses. Helga Brichet, a rose expert and past president of the World Federation of Rose Societies, will guide us through her fascinating collection of wild and Chinese roses. In her five-acre garden, she has collected the largest number of Chinese roses in Europe. Tonight, we'll return to the hotel where we'll enjoy dinner.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8 — PERUGIA (B, L, D)

Our ultra-eventful day will begin as we depart Todi (with baggage) for Fonti del Clitunno. Known for its tranquility, its shores are surrounded by thick vegetation, particularly weeping willows and poplars. The next stop will be Foligno, where we'll visit the private garden of Cento Rose, by kind arrangement with owner Andrea Emiliani. Cento Rose specializes in David Austin roses and is one of the largest rose collections in the world. There are also 110 varieties of irises and 200 peonies, along with daylilies (*Hemerocallis*), delphiniums, chaste trees (*Vitex agnus-castus*), and more. The medieval hill town of Spello will be next. The Church of Saint Maria Maggiore's chapel, Cappella Baglioni, was frescoed by Pinturicchio between 1500 and 1501. We'll enjoy lunch at the highly regarded Cantinetta di Spello. This afternoon we'll be immersed in Assisi. The Basilica of St. Francis is an experience to savor, as we'll soak in the groundbreaking frescoes by Cimabue and Giotto. Recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site, the basilica was built two years after the saint's death as a place to receive his remains. Then we'll take a walk in the center of this holy town and see the Temple of Minerva, one of the best-preserved examples of Roman architecture. Our journey will continue with a visit to the nursery Quando Fioreranno Le Rose, designed by Michael Marriott and Richard Stubbs. Get your camera ready: this superb rose collection is visually enhanced by the backdrop of Assisi. Dedicated to Saint Francis and Saint Clare, this nursery reproduces English and ancient roses, chosen for their delicate color shades and intense fragrances. Our day will wind down at our new accommodations, the Hotel Brufani in nearby Perugia. Its panoramic views show off the Umbrian valley. We'll take dinner in the hotel.

THURSDAY, JUNE 9 — PERUGIA (B, D)

This day to remember will begin at the National Gallery of Umbria. The collections feature a wealth of important medieval and Renaissance works by such artists as Arnolfo di Cambio, Nicola and Giovanni Pisano, Duccio di Buoninsegna, and Piero della Francesca, including the latter's great altarpiece of St. Anthony with its celebrated "Annunciation." Special attention is reserved for the Umbrian artists Perugino and Pinturicchio and their pupils. The city's centerpiece, the Fontana Maggiore, was built and decorated by Nicola Pisano and his son Giovanni between 1277 and 1278. We'll take lunch independently, with the afternoon at our leisure to explore Perugia. The Piazza IV Novembre is the main square in the center of the city and an ideal place to begin

any walking tour. In addition to the Fontana Maggiore, the piazza also contains the Duomo di Perugia, the Palazzo dei Priori, and the Comune di Perugia. Later this afternoon we'll set out on foot to the church of San Bernardino. The façade depicts the miracles performed by that saint. Dinner this evening will be at Le Tre Vasselle in Torgiano. After our meal, we'll stroll Torgiano's calm streets before returning to the hotel.

FRIDAY, JUNE 10 — PERUGIA (B, L)

Our day will kick off in Sansepolcro to see the recently restored "Resurrection" by native Piero della Francesca in the Picture Gallery. We'll give silent thanks to the British army officer who halted an Allied artillery attack on the city during World War II to save the fresco. Within its 16th-century walls, Sansepolcro contains numerous ancient and beautiful buildings that include palaces, museums, and churches. Then it's on to Monterchi to see Piero's "Madonna del Parto," in the Museo della Madonna del Parto. The survival of this fresco is similarly miraculous. It was painted for the 13th-century Church of Santa Maria di Momentana, which was destroyed by an earthquake in 1785 that spared only the wall with the fresco. After being moved to another church, it narrowly escaped being destroyed in another earthquake in 1917. We'll lunch al fresco at the Ristorante La Vecchia Pieve near Monterchi. After lunch, we'll visit the site of Pliny the Younger's villa at San Giustino. Pliny, a Roman politician, magistrate, and prolific writer, is likely the first person in Western literature to write about garden design. Before returning to Perugia, we'll complete our day by visiting the recently restored Italianate gardens of Castello Bufalini. Dinner independently tonight will allow us to explore the City's eateries.

SATURDAY, JUNE 11 — PERUGIA (B, L)

Today we'll depart for Sant'Arcangelo near Lake Trasimeno. Our destination will be the garden of Daniela Fè D'Ostiani, garden designer and passionate plant collector, whose garden has been a labor of love for more than 30 years. Most prominent are the herbaceous borders, a grapevine pergola, and a decorative vegetable garden. In Castel del Piano we'll have a private lunch, possibly under the trees at Villa Aureli. Free time this afternoon will allow us to further explore Perugia, or perhaps we'll be

tempted to visit — if time allows — a nearby institution known the world over: the Perugina Chocolate Factory. A tour will show us the production line in operation and we'll get to sample some mouth-watering chocolate. If we have not had our fill of chocolate, we'll take dinner on our own.

SUNDAY, JUNE 12 — CASTELNUOVO BERARDENGA (B, L, D)

We'll leave (with luggage) for Montepulciano to visit the 16th-century architectural masterpiece of the Church of San Biagio. We'll see the fresco, the "Enthroned Madonna and Child," dating back to 14th century. Legend has it that the fresco possesses miraculous powers. Perhaps we'll see if that's true. Parco Villa Trecci, our next stop, is an eco-sustainable Mediterranean garden with a variety of horticultural highlights, including a large flowerbed, a lake with aquatic plants, a lemon tree glasshouse, and centenary olive trees. Of note is the rose garden, which the designer has bestowed with symbolic meaning. We'll continue to La Foce for lunch at Ristorante Dopolavoro. La Foce lies on the Via Francigena, the ancient road and pilgrim route running from France to Rome. Its beautifully maintained gardens were designed by the late Cecil Pinsent, an English architect and garden designer who created several other gardens in Italy, and Iris Origo. Our next stop, Pienza, has an interesting angle: it's one of the earliest examples of Renaissance urban planning. We'll visit the hanging gardens of Palazzo Piccolomini and see its rectangular flower beds decorated with fruit trees and flowering shrubs. The panoramic view over Val d'Orcia was key in the design of this garden, as a place where architecture and nature come together. We'll arrive in Castelnuovo Berardenga for a three-night stay at the Relais Borgo Scopeto. This property is a textbook beauty, set perfectly in the Tuscan countryside with views of the city of Siena beyond rolling hills. Dinner will be in the hotel tonight.

MONDAY, JUNE 13 — CASTELNUOVO BERARDENGA (B, L)

Chianti anyone? Yes, this morning will find us traveling by coach for Gaiole in Chianti. Yes, we know this region for its classic wines and olive oil, but the castles and churches are not to be outdone. Speaking





of culinary treats, we'll spend the morning at Badia a Coltibuono to participate in a cooking demonstration in the abbey and visit the well-maintained Italianate garden. The cooking school was created in 1983 by Lorenza de' Medici, the internationally known author of books on Italian culture and cooking. Together with the chef, we'll prepare a four-course meal — using local, seasonal ingredients — which we'll then enjoy for lunch, along with their world-class organic wines. After lunch, we'll kick back with coffee and grappa in the living room. The gardens are classical in layout but they have characteristics of a monastic garden with a wide range of medieval medicinal herbs planted among the box hedges and topiary. We'll return to the hotel to relax and enjoy the hotel property and its memorable views, perhaps with a wine tasting, sampling the hotel's own Chianti Classico and its other wines. Dinner will be on our own tonight.

TUESDAY, JUNE 14 — CASTELNUOVO BERARDENGA (B, D)

This day will hold much to see and do, as we head for the city of Siena. The majestic Duomo di Siena is adorned with 56 etched and inlaid marble panels. Highlights include “St. John the Baptist” by Donatello, the rose window by Duccio di Buoninsegna, and the marble pulpit by Nicola Pisano. The library features frescoes by Pinturicchio and his workshop, which included the young Raphael. Highlights of the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo include Giovanni Pisano's dramatic sculpture of the “Crucifix” and Alberto di Betto's “Lamentation Over the Dead Christ.” In addition to being the political and cultural center of Siena, Palazzo Pubblico houses Siena's Civic Museum, featuring one of the most important secular fresco cycles from the Middle Ages, Lorenzetti's “Allegory of Good and Bad Government.” The magnificent palace sits proudly in one of Europe's most majestic medieval squares, the Piazza del Campo. (You may recall it as the place where the legendary bareback horse race, called Il Palio, is held twice a year.) Beside the Gothic duomo soars the majestic bell tower, the Torre del Mangia. We'll have lunch on our own for an opportunity to explore the flavors of Siena. Then we'll be able to wander Siena with some free time before we return to the hotel. There's so much to do, but some

suggestions include tossing a coin in the Fonte Gaia (Fountain of Joy); walking the city center, a UNESCO World Heritage Site; and climbing the Torre del Mangia for panoramic views. Tonight we'll raise a glass and bid farewell to our fellow travelers/horticulture lovers/newfound friends with dinner in the hotel.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 15

Arrivederci Italia! We'll leave via the Florence Airport for our return flights to the US.

Note: All private visits are subject to confirmation. While revisions of this itinerary are not anticipated, the AHS and its travel partners reserve the right to make changes, with or without notice, which may become necessary.





Announcing an American Horticultural Society Travel Program

American Horticultural Society
7931 East Boulevard Drive
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www.ahsgardening.org/travel

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HILL TOWNS AND GARDENS OF UMBRIA AND SOUTHERN TUSCANY:

Join us for this magical tour, including these highlights:

- The Basilica of St. Francis, a UNESCO World Heritage site, adorned with stunning frescoes by Cimabue and Giotto.
- The nursery Quando Fioreranno Le Rose's English and ancient roses, and views of Assisi as its backdrop.
- A cooking demonstration in the local Tuscan tradition in the Badia a Coltibuono Abbey, which also offers a well-maintained Italianate garden.
- A personal tour by Helga Brichet, past president of the World Federation of Rose Societies, who will guide us through her rose garden.
- The cities of Siena, Perugia, Todi, Pienza, and Assisi, each with its distinct allure, grandeur, and historic points of interest.

THE OUTSTANDING ACCOMMODATIONS FOR THIS PROGRAM ARE:

- Relais Todini is regally perched on a hilltop surrounded by the vineyards of the estate. The well-being center offers a wide range of massages and personalized treatments; from the outdoor heated Jacuzzi we'll have wonderful views of Todi.
- Located in the heart of the medieval city of Perugia, Sina Brufani continues to be a favorite of celebrities; it has hosted Charlie Chaplin, the British Queen Mother, and the Prince of Monaco, among others. Its swimming pool is built under medieval vaults and over Etruscan ruins, which you can see through the pool's transparent bottom.
- Borgo Scopeto is situated in the Tuscan countryside of our dreams with delightful views of the city of Siena, only a few minutes away. In harmony with its pristine natural setting, the hotel proudly offers its spa and wellness center.

Please refer to the enclosed reservation form for pricing and instructions for reserving your place on this AHS Travel Study Program tour. For more information about Travel Study Program tours, please contact development@ahsgardening.org or (703) 768-5700, ext. 127. Information is also available at www.ahsgardening.org/travel.

Designed with the garden-travel connoisseur in mind, the American Horticultural Society Travel Study Program offers exceptional itineraries that include many exclusive experiences and unique insights. Your participation benefits the work of the American Horticultural Society and furthers our vision of making America "a land of sustainable gardens, cultivated by a diverse population with a common passion for plants."

