



Art Seminar Group presents:

The Heart of Italy – the Art and Architecture of Umbria and the Marche

Wednesday, May 5 to Thursday May 13, 2027

Umbria and the Marche are full of treasures from the Middle Ages and Renaissance, and many of them can still be found in the church, convent, or palazzo they were designed for. Also known as the 'green heart of Italy', Umbria contains a vast and varied array of what visitors most love about central Italy: ancient streetscapes crammed onto hilltops, exquisitely undulating countryside of olive, cypress and vine, and an abundance of wonderful art. Rarely can the spirit of the Middle Ages be so potently felt as in the hill towns of central Italy. That such small communities could have built dwelling so massively, raised churches and public buildings of such magnificence and created works of art of such monumentality, inspires awe bordering on disbelief among today's visitors.

Many of the most important and beautiful of Italy's incomparable patrimony of paintings and frescoes are included on this program. The great Giottoesque cycle at Assisi stands at the beginning of the modern era of art, and the Last Judgement frescoes by Luca Signorelli in Orvieto are on the cusp of the High Renaissance, while in the field of architecture, Romanesque and Gothic predominate, there are many major Renaissance buildings, including the centrally planned church at Todi. The small Italian hill town of Urbino became, for a short time during the Renaissance era, one of the major cultural centers of Europe. Today, the historic center is defined by its Renaissance walls that survive virtually intact, complete with bastions.

The man-made environment melds with the natural in a picturesque union of intense beauty. It is a landscape of rumpled hills, sometimes rugged and forested, sometimes tamed in the struggle to cultivate, always speckled with ancient farmsteads, fortified villages and isolated churches. Even from the central piazza of many of these towns there are views of the countryside which seem scarcely to have changed for centuries.

Program Cost:

Double Occupancy: \$6,380.00

Single Occupancy: \$7,350.00

Accommodations:

Perugia: Brufani Palace Hotel (5 nights)

Piazza Italia, 12 - 06100 Perugia, Italy

<https://www.sinahotels.com/>

Hotel Brufani Palace, a 19th-century grand hotel on Piazza Italia full of comfy lounges, terraces, and sweeping views.

Farmhouse outside of Urbino: Agriturismo Tenuta Santi Giacomo e Filippo (2 nights)

Via S. Giacomo in Foglia, 7, 61029 Urbino PU, Italy

<https://www.tenutasantigiacomoeofilippo.it/>

An ancient 18th century Borgo, embraced by the gentle hills of the Marche region, the Tenuta Santi Giacomo e Filippo is a natural oasis in the green heart of the Montefeltro area, just outside of Urbino.

Rome: The Bettoja Hotel Massimo D'Azeglio (1 night)

Via Cavour 18, Rome, Italy

<https://www.romehoteldazeglio.it/en/>

Four-star hotel a 3-minute walk from Termini Station in Rome.

Meals:

Daily breakfasts, 5 lunches, 3 dinners, 3 receptions, 1 wine tasting

Transportation:

Private coaches and mini-vans

Expertise:

Elaine Ruffolo, Renaissance Art Historian and longtime travel program instructor

Program fee:

Includes: transportation in a private coach, all entrance fees, group meals, tips, donations, 8 nights in 5-star and 4-star hotels, instruction, and tour manager. The fee also includes small group transfers from Rome airport to Perugia on arrival day.



Itinerary

Wednesday, May 5

Rome-Perugia Arrival

Fly to Rome Fiumicino airport and transfer by private minivans to Perugia (3 hours) with a rest stop along the way. Check into the five-star luxury Hotel Brufani Palace for five nights. Afternoon orientation walk through the center of Perugia.

Gather in the lobby for a welcome reception followed by dinner at La Taverna.

(Reception and dinner)



Thursday, May 6

Perugia

Perugia, the capital of Umbria, is one of Italy's largest and most beautiful hill towns. It boasts an impressive blend of major artistic and architectural landmarks while retaining the vibrant, centuries-old atmosphere of a thriving market town.

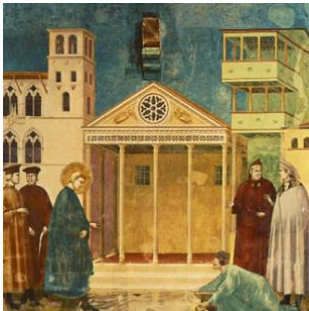
Our morning tour will include a visit to Palazzo dei Priori, the medieval town hall that now houses the National Gallery of Umbria, as well as a historic merchants' hall. Expect to see masterpieces by Fra Angelico, Piero della Francesca and Raphael. We will then continue on foot to explore the city's rich history, stopping at the imposing Etruscan city gateway, the medieval walls, and impressive Papal fortifications.

Lunch in Perugia at Ristorante del Sole.

This afternoon visit Museo Atelier Giuditta Brozzetti, a special textile atelier housed in a 13th century Franciscan church.

Dinner in Perugia at your leisure.

(Breakfast and lunch)



Friday, May 7

Assisi and Spello

Drive to Assisi (30 min) and spend much of the morning at San Francesco, mother church of the Franciscan Order. Here is one of the greatest assemblages of medieval fresco painting, including the Giottesque cycle of the Life of St Francis. Walk through the austere medieval streets and visit the Romanesque cathedral.



Group lunch at Osteria Piazza delle Erbe.

After lunch, it's time to leave Assisi and head to the nearby town of Spello (20 min) where we will soak up the pleasant atmosphere and take in the sights. Flower-lined streets lead up to the Piazza della Repubblica, where most of the shops and restaurants are located, and just beyond is a terrace built over the old Roman forum that provides views across the valley below. Another one of Umbria's great works of art is here, in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, where Pinturicchio (the Little Painter) filled the Baglioni Chapel with delightfully detailed frescoes portraying the boyhood of Christ set against Umbrian landscapes.

Return to Perugia (40 min) and free for dinner on your own.

(Breakfast and lunch)



Saturday, May 8

Orvieto

Depart Perugia for Orvieto (1 ½ hours). Spend the entire day in this entrancing hilltop town, with its glistening marble Gothic cathedral. Among its treasures are the low relief sculptures by Lorenzo Maitani and the apocalyptic Last Judgement frescoes by Luca Signorelli (1505).

Lunch at Labirinto di Adriano followed by free time to explore.
(Breakfast and lunch)



Sunday, May 9

Todi and Torgiano

Depart Perugia for Todi (40 min) and visit Sta. Maria della Consolazione in Todi, a centrally planned Renaissance church influenced by Bramante's ideas. Free time to walk through the town, seeing the cathedral and the church of S. Fortunato, with its richly decorated central doorway and frescoes by Masolino.

Enjoy a special walk through the Beverly Peppers collection right on the edge of Todi.

Enjoy a group lunch in Todi.

After lunch, visit the famous Lungarotti vineyards (30 min) just outside of Torgiano for a wine tasting experience and stop by the Wine Museum to learn about the region's winemaking history.

Return to Perugia (20 min) for a free evening and dinner on your own.

(Breakfast, lunch, and wine tasting)



Monday, May 10

Gubbio and the Marches

Travel Northeast from Perugia to Gubbio (1 hour). Spilling down a hillside and offering sensational views across the Umbrian countryside, Gubbio is one of the most beautiful and well-preserved ancient towns in Italy. The Palazzo dei Consoli is an austere magnificent medieval town hall located beside a square with one side open to the view; it

houses the art gallery of the Museo Civico. Higher up, the Palazzo Ducale was built by warlord Federico da Montefeltro, one of the greatest patrons of the arts in the Early Renaissance.

Free for lunch on your own in Gubbio.



Depart Gubbio for our Agriturismo in the Marche (1 ½ hours)
Check into charming Tenuta Santi Giacomo e Filippo for 2 nights.

This evening enjoy a group buffet dinner on the grounds of the farm.

(Breakfast, reception, dinner)



Tuesday, May 11

Urbino

Drive 20 minutes into the hills to Urbino, a charming city once ruled by the Montefeltro dynasty. Visit the Palazzo Ducale, a Renaissance architectural masterpiece that evolved over 30 years into the ideal secular setting of its time. Inside, admire the beautifully crafted studiolo of Federico da Montefeltro and an outstanding collection of paintings by Piero della Francesca, Raphael, and Titian.



For those interested, an optional visit to the Oratorio di San Giovanni offers a chance to see its exquisite Gothic frescoes.

Free for lunch in Urbino on your own.

Return to the farmhouse in the late afternoon.

This evening, travel through the hills of the Marche for a festive

grigliata at a traditional Osteria Marchigiana. Be ready to eat!

(Breakfast and dinner)



Wednesday, May 12

Spoletto and Rome

Depart the Marche for Spoleto (2 ½ hours). Spoleto, a charming town in Umbria, Italy, offers a delightful blend of history, culture, and natural beauty. Our visit to Spoleto includes the Ponte delle Torri, a medieval aqueduct famously painted by Turner and finishes

at the cathedral square. One of the most imposing in Italy, it slopes like an auditorium towards the cathedral façade with its mosaics and rose windows; inside there are frescoes by Pinturicchio and Filippo Lippi.

Group lunch in Spoleto.

Depart Spoleto for Rome (2 hours)

Check into the Hotel and gather for one last brindisi this evening to say goodbye.

(Breakfast, lunch, and reception)

Thursday, May 13

Departure

