

RENAISSANCE REVISITED

VENICE, PADUA, MODENA,
FLORENCE & MILAN

OVERVIEW

The Renaissance was one of the most dynamic periods in Italy's history, a time when generous patronage fostered brilliance in art, architecture and scientific innovation. But this brilliance didn't begin, nor end, there and while the centuries which followed saw some darker times, Italy welcomed in the 20th century with a new burst of creativity.

This new 17-day tour, designed for members of the Royal Society of NSW, begins in Venice, then takes us to Padua, west to Modena and Florence, then north to Milan. As we go, we learn of the artists and powerful patrons who defined the Renaissance and whose legacy still illuminates these lovely cities.

Complementing this historical journey, we explore contemporary achievements in automobile design and production, in fashion and in architecture where names such as Ferrari, Maserati, Armani, Prada and Renzo Piano have set a new standard.

Led by Vince Di Pietro, our tour takes us to the palaces, cathedrals, gardens and museums that exemplify the history of each city, often with special access to sites and collections. Tour manager Dr Eireann Marshall, raised in the Veneto, will provide commentary on the regions visited as we travel. Four-star hotels and select regional meals complete the experience.



TOUR LEADER

Vince Di Pietro is an independent consultant. Vince draws upon 40 years of service in the Royal Australian Navy specialising in aviation, education and international diplomacy.

TOUR DATES

April 28 - May 14, 2025 | 17 Days

TOUR PRICE

\$13,380 per person, twin share
\$3,440 single supplement

TOUR DEPOSIT

A **\$1,000** non-refundable deposit is required per person to confirm your booking on tour.

GROUP SIZE

Maximum number of **16** in group

ITINERARY

Venice (3 nights), Padua (3 nights),
Modena (4 nights), Florence
(3 nights), Milan (3 nights)

INCLUSIONS

16 nights' accommodation in centrally located 4-star hotels. Airport-Hotel transfers as indicated. All breakfasts, 6 lunches and 5 dinners. Services of an expert tour leader and an experienced tour manager throughout. All ground transport, entrance fees and tipping.





DETAILED ITINERARY

Start & Finish

The tour starts at 4.00pm on Monday 28 April, at the Al Codgea Hotel, Venice.

The tour ends after breakfast on Wednesday 14 May, followed by a coach transfer to Milan's Malpensa Airport for departing flights.

Included meals are indicated with B, L, D.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

Venetian Splendour

Enjoy the treasures of a city state and maritime republic which once ruled a vast maritime empire and was Europe's premier trade and finance hub.

The Brenta Riviera

Travel from Venice to Padua along the Brenta Riviera, visiting the magnificent villas and gardens of the merchants of Venice which line the waterways.

Humanism in Padua

Appreciate the legacy of Padua's famous university, the intellectual base of Venetian society, renowned for its studies in anatomy and medicine.

Modena & The Motor Valley

Explore the fascinating history of a region which not only produces world famous cheese, balsamic vinegar, ham and wine but is also the heart of technical and engineering design.

Renaissance Florence

Admire the city that was the cradle of the Renaissance, ruled by the Medici dynasty whose patronage established a banking system which serves the Western democracies to this day.

Treasures of Milan

Experience this dynamic northern city whose Renaissance past was shaped by the powerful Visconti and Sforza families and is today the headquarters for Italy's luxury brands.

Monday 28 April

Arrive Venice & Orientation

Flights arrive in Venice in the mid-afternoon. A transfer to the hotel by private water taxi will be arranged by Academy Travel. After time to check in and freshen up, we take an orientation stroll of the district around our hotel followed by a welcome dinner in a local restaurant. Overnight Venice (D)

Tuesday 29 April

The Heart of Venice

Our first morning in the extraordinary city of Venice begins at the Doge's Palace - a Gothic masterpiece filled with canvases by Tintoretto, Veronese and others. The heart of political and public life in Venice, the layout of the palace reflected the complex structure of the Venetian government itself. We then head to the nearby Biblioteca Marciana, a classically beautiful 16th-century library designed by Jacopo Sansovino and holding over a million volumes. Here, on our private visit, we will be shown some of the priceless, ancient manuscripts and incunabula in the collection. After a break for lunch we make our way to the Rialto Markets. Once Europe's premier trade and finance hub, the Rialto is still a bustling complex of narrow alleyways with a fascinating array of providores supplying the merchants and residents of Venice. Returning to the hotel the evening is at leisure. Overnight Venice (B)

Wednesday 30 April

The Arsenale & Lazzaretto Nuovo

Making our way by water taxi to the Castello district we visit the historic Arsenale, home to the powerful navy of the Venetian Maritime Republic and to the shipping industry which supported its trading empire. In the Naval Museum, housed in what was originally the city's granary, we learn about Venice's illustrious naval history and view original artefacts and scale models of Venetian built vessels, including Peggy Guggenheim's opulent gondola. After a break for lunch we take a vaporetto to the island of Lazzaretto Nuovo, called the "doorway" to Venice thanks to its strategic position on the lagoon and once a quarantine station for ships arriving



Palazzo Bo, Padua



Scrovegni Chapel, Padua

from the Mediterranean, suspected of carrying the plague. We then continue on to Sant'Erasmus, the "garden of Venice", whose vineyards and vegetable gardens once supplied the city. The island is now a relaxed destination, renowned for its quiet beaches and natural environment. Returning to the hotel the evening is at leisure. Overnight Venice (B)

Thursday 1 May

The Villas of the Brenta Riviera

Departing Venice this morning we join our river boat, or *burchiello*, travelling through the Brenta Riviera to Padua. En route we visit some of the magnificent villas which line the waterways including the lovely 16th-century Villa Foscari, designed by Andrea Palladio and richly decorated with frescoes reflecting the pleasures of villa life; the Villa Widman, a late Baroque jewel built as a summer retreat, and Villa Pisani, a monumental country palace built for the noble Venetian Pisani family in the early 18th century. We enjoy lunch onboard and a talk from our tour leader before disembarking in Padua. After time to check-in to our hotel we meet for dinner in a local restaurant. Overnight Padua (B, L, D)

Friday 2 May

Padua

Our walking tour today begins in the "ghetto" district near our hotel. Established in 1603 it is now a picturesque maze of alleys full of elegant stores, workshops and wine bars. We then make our way to the Palazzo Bo, the historic centre of the University of Padua and home to the anatomical theatres where the great Renaissance physician and anatomist Andreas Vesalius famously carried out some of the first public dissections. After a break at the famous Caffè Pedrocchi, proudly serving the Paduan locals for over 200 years, we continue to the 14th-century Basilica Sant'Antonio, built to accommodate the growing number of pilgrims who flocked to Padua to venerate St Anthony, the city's patron saint. We continue to the adjacent Oratorio San Giorgio whose austere façade belies an interior filled with vivid 14th-century narrative frescoes, depicting scenes from the life of Jesus and Saint George. After time for lunch we stroll to the lovely UNESCO World Heritage listed botanic gardens, created in 1545 and still serving their original purpose as a centre for scientific research. Returning to our hotel the evening is at leisure. Overnight Padua (B)

Saturday 3 May

Padua's Frescoes

Padua's world heritage listed frescoes are our focus today and we begin at the Baptistery of Saint John, whose interior is brought gloriously alive by its 14th-century frescoes by Giusto de Menabuoi. On the nearby Piazza delle Erbe, the city forum in Roman times, we visit the Palazzo della Ragione, the medieval town hall and palace of justice, where we see the magnificent series of allegorical 14th and 15th-century



Galleria Ferrari Museum



Modena Cathedral

frescoes which cover the walls of the great hall. This evening we visit the Scrovegni Chapel where we admire Giotto's extraordinary fresco cycle depicting the lives of Christ and the Virgin Mary beautifully illuminated. Overnight Padua (B)

Sunday 4 May To Modena

After a relaxed morning we depart Padua for Modena, a city whose medieval history has been somewhat eclipsed by its status as the heart of Italian high performance and racing engines and luxury car and motorbike production, including Ferrari, Lamborghini, De Tomaso, Ducati and Maserati. On arrival in Modena we'll have lunch in a local restaurant before visiting the Enzo Ferrari Museum, a complex which combines the Ferrari founder's original house and workshop with an ultramodern exhibition space, displaying some of the company's most influential cars, connected with Enzo Ferrari and his development of automobile manufacture. Tonight we enjoy dinner in a local restaurant. Overnight Modena (B, L, D)

Monday 5 May Stanguellini to Ferrari at Maranello

A short bus ride this morning takes us to central Modena and the Stanguellini Museum, a private collection devoted to the fascinating history of the local Stanguellini family who gradually turned their musical instrument making business into the prolific but little heralded production of motorbikes and hand-built racing cars, renowned for their super lightweight components, engines and bodywork. From here we make our way to Maranello, in the south of the city, where Ferrari's production plant and Formula 1 racing team are based. It is fitting that in recognition of the 'Gestione Sportivo' our visit to Maranello begins with lunch at the famous Ristorante Montana, located opposite the Fiorano test track and filled with Ferrari memorabilia. After lunch we visit the Galleria Ferrari Museum in Maranello, focusing on the company's racing history and achievements, with time to shop for your own Ferrari collectables. Returning to Modena the evening is at leisure. Overnight Modena (B, L)

Tuesday 6 May Panini to Pavarotti

This morning we take a coach to the Panini Collection. This priceless collection of rare and vintage Maserati automobiles is considered part of Modena's heritage and was saved from overseas buyer dispersal by the Panini family in 1996. Rejoining our coach we travel to the home of Luciano Pavarotti, one of Modena's most famous sons, where we enjoy a guided tour of the house and celebrate the legacy of the opera superstar. Returning to Modena the afternoon is free to enjoy a 'passeggiata' in town and a meal at one of the many local eateries. Overnight Modena (B)



Antico Setificio Fiorentino



Officina Profumo-Farmaceutica di Santa Maria Novella

Wednesday 7 May

Art & Gastronomy

Our walking tour this morning takes us to Modena's lovely Romanesque cathedral with its soaring belltower, accorded UNESCO World Heritage status in 1997. It was here that Luciano Pavarotti's funeral service was held in 2007. In anticipation of our afternoon program we also visit the Mercato Albinelli, the beautiful art nouveau style covered food market in the heart of Modena. Joining our coach, we make our way to the town of Castelfranco Emilia where we enjoy lunch and discover how the region's famous balsamic vinegar is made. We then continue to the Societa Agricola Fienilnuovo, where we learn about another famous regional delicacy - Parmigiano Reggiano - and of course, sample the product! Returning to our hotel the evening is at leisure. Overnight Modena (B, L)

Thursday 8 May

Artisans of Florence

After a relaxed start we depart Modena for Florence. On arrival, there is time for lunch before our walking tour takes us to the river Arno and across the medieval Ponte Vecchio, originally populated with butchers and tanners but the sole province of high-end jewellers and goldsmiths since 1565 when authorities sought a more sanitary tenant. Our walk continues to the Antico Setificio Fiorentino, a silk workshop creating beautiful bespoke fabric and accessories through time-honoured processes. In the afternoon we visit the church of Orsanmichele, originally built as a grain market but converted in the late 14th century and subsequently used as a chapel by the city's powerful trade and craft guilds. Afterwards we admire the bronze *Gates of Paradise* on the famous Baptistery, stunning replicas of Lorenzo Ghiberti's 15th-century originals now kept in the Duomo Museum, before returning to our hotel. Dinner this evening is in a local restaurant. Overnight Florence (B, D)

Friday 9 May

Museums of Florence

This morning our walking tour takes us to the Da Vinci Museum, an interactive space dedicated to the prodigiously talented inventor with working replicas of his machines and mechanisms made entirely of wood, and then to a museum showcasing the discoveries of another visionary, the Pisa-born scientist and astronomer Galileo Galilei. After a break for lunch we visit Santa Maria Novella, Florence's first great basilica, whose chapels include works from many of the great names of the Renaissance such as Ghirlandaio, Brunelleschi, Vasari and Ghiberti. We also visit the Officina Profumo Farmaceutica di Santa Maria Novella, the perfumery and herbalist shop preserving the traditional, artisanal methods of production and high-quality ingredients established by the business in 1612. Returning to the hotel the evening is at leisure. Overnight Florence (B)



Boboli Gardens, Florence



Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II

Saturday 10 May Palazzi & Gardens

Today we stroll through some of Florence's beautiful gardens and palaces, beginning in the Boboli Gardens, a harmonious fusion of greenery, statuary, lakes and fountains created for the Medici family in the 16th century. We also visit the Pitti Palace, filled with an extraordinary collection of fine and decorative art from the Medici collections. After a break for lunch we make our way to the Piazza della Signoria, an imposing square which was once the political focus of the city, where we see the city's imposing town hall, the Palazzo Vecchio, and explore the adjacent Loggia dei Lanzi, filled with statuary including Benvenuto Cellini's wonderful figure of Perseus. Our day ends at the Palazzo Medici Riccardi, designed by Michelozzo di Bartolomeo for Cosimo de' Medici in a style that strongly influenced later Florentine buildings. Here we can see the beautiful Magi Chapel, lavishly decorated with frescoes by Benozzo Gozzoli. Returning to the hotel the evening is at leisure. Overnight Florence (B)

Sunday 11 May To Milan

An early departure from Florence this morning as we head north to Milan. On arrival we check-in and enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before our afternoon program takes us to Milan's Museum of Science and Technology, located in a former monastery. Named for Leonardo da Vinci, who spent many years in the city under the patronage of the powerful Sforza family, the extensive collection takes us on a thematic and interactive journey from Leonardo's inventions through to modern military technology. We then head to the Museum of Decorative Arts, whose exceptional collection, held in the former Sforza Castle, covers the evolution of decorative and applied arts from ancient to modern times. The evening is at leisure. Overnight Milan (B, L)

Monday 12 May Art & Fashion

Our morning is dedicated to one of Leonardo's greatest works of art - the beautiful *Last Supper* on the walls of the dining room of the former convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie. After our visit we tour Milan's Duomo, whose spectacular façade is covered with over 4,000 statues, gargoyles and figures. From here it's a short walk to the stylish Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, a dazzling four-storey shopping arcade where we find some of Milan's oldest and most celebrated retailers, cafes, restaurants and bars. The afternoon is at leisure. Overnight Milan (B)

Tuesday 13 May Alfa Romeo Studio

Joining our coach this morning we drive to the north of the city, where we round off our celebration of Italian technology, design and engineering through the lens of its automobile

HOTELS

Hotels have been selected principally for their central location. All hotels are excellent four-star standard.

Venice, Hotel Al Codega

(3 nights)

www.hotelalcodega.com

Padova, Hotel Majestic Toscanelli

(3 nights)

www.toscanelli.com

Modena, Phi Hotel Canalgrande

(4 nights)

www.phihotelcanalgrande.com

Florence, Hotel Berchielli

(3 nights)

www.berchielli.it

Milan, Hotel Manin

(3 nights)

www.hotelmanin.it

WEATHER

April is usually a very pleasant time for travelling in Italy. The average day time temperature is around 17-20°C and one can usually enjoy blue skies and sunshine. The average nighttime temperature is around 7-10°C. We recommend clothing that you can layer, a coat for the cooler evenings and a rain jacket and umbrella in case of showers.

FITNESS REQUIREMENTS

Grade Two

This tour is designed for people who lead active lives. You should be able to comfortably participate in up to five hours of physical activity per day, including walking at a regular pace with only short breaks. For all requirements, please visit:

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history with a visit to the Museo Alfa Romeo, located in their former factory building in Arese. The company was established in Milan in 1910 and the museum has six floors dedicated to their iconic automobiles from the earliest tourer to their Formula 1 contenders. We then make our way back to central Milan for lunch and a visit to the Pinacoteca Brera, an art gallery whose superb collection includes masterpieces of Italian and international art dating from the 13th century to the present day. Returning to our hotel there is time to relax before we meet this evening for our farewell dinner. Overnight Milan (B, L, D)

Wednesday 14 May

Departure

Our tour ends after breakfast, with a mid-morning transfer to Milan's Linate or Malpensa airport. (B)



ENQUIRIES & BOOKINGS

For further information or to secure a place, please contact **Jamal Fairbrother** on 9235 0023 (Sydney) or 1800 639 699 (outside Sydney) or email:

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