



# Amber Road Tours

Small group journeys through the best bits of Italy

Life In Italy

September Newsletter 2011

## 2012 Tour Calendar

### Veneto/Alto Adige

May 18-29  
Sept 7-18  
Sept 28-Oct 9

### Sicily

April 12-23  
May 3-14  
May 10-21  
Sept 20-Oct 1  
Oct 4-15  
Oct 18-29

### Week In Tuscany

June 3-9  
Sept 2-8  
Oct 21-27

### Tuscany/Umbria

May 3-15  
May 17-29  
May 24-June 5  
Sept 6-18  
Sept 20-Oct 2  
Oct 4-16

### Tuscany/Liguria

June 6-14  
Sept 12-20  
Oct 3-11

### Amalfi/Puglia

June 1-13  
Sept 7-19  
Sept 21-Oct 3  
Oct 5-17



The masterpieces in sculpture of Antonio Canova (1757-1822) are conserved in the best museums of Italy and Europe. Canova, regarded as the greatest artist of his time, first modeled in clay prior to sculpting in gypsum and then marble. The above photo is from one chamber of the Canova Museum in Possagno (Veneto). The pallid beauty of so many extraordinary works in gypsum conveys a classical and sensual afterlife populated by mythical heroes and historical personages.

### Napoleon's head

In 1802, at the personal request of Napoleon, Canova went to Paris to sculpt a bust of the first consul which became the head of the 11 foot tall *Mars the Peacemaker* statue that Napoleon described as too athletic.

Canova went on to sculpt all of Napoleon's family, most famously his sister Paolina whose semi-nude pose in marble now decorates the Galleria Borghese in Rome.

Paintings of Napoleon fail to transmit what must have been an impactful presence.

What did this man have that changed the face of Europe, made hundreds of thousands pick up arms and charge off to war? What intelligence to transform confusion into order and servitude into equality?



Canova's bust of Napoleon is something different - it captures the power, charisma, intellect and beauty of the man - someone that might attract crowds.

Other than creating an empire of 70 million people, building roads and infrastructure Napoleon left behind a legacy that strongly affects us in our present day. Some of his accomplishments:

*His revision of laws in France, the Code Napoleon, instituted in 1807 is still the law in France, Luxemburg and Belgium and has left an enduring mark on those of other European nations and Japan and Bolivia as well.*

*His reign marked significant advances in representative government, education, taxes and public works. He abolished feudalism and ended practices of inhuman punishment.*

*He introduced street lighting (gas).*

*In Rome he restored the Pantheon, had lightning rods installed on the roof of St Peter's and ended the practice of castration of promising young singers.*

He instituted alternating odd and even street numbers on opposite sides of the street. (In Naples on the popular Via Chiaja there still exists the confusing old style numbering system - 1 to 120 up one side and 121 to 240 back down the other.)

Napoleon's genius didn't help him from letting it all go to his head - crowning himself emperor and blundering into Russia. Canova begged him not to plunder the artistic treasures of Italy, a plea that went ignored as priceless treasures were hauled off to the Musée du Louvre.

In 1815 Canova was commissioned by the Pope to superintend the transmission from Paris of those works of art which had formerly been looted under the direction of Napoleon. By his efforts he managed to have them returned to their original collections.

*Side notes:* Napoleon's sister *Elisa Bonaparte* ruled the city of Lucca in Tuscany from 1805 to 1814. During her reign she revived marble quarrying and sculpture at Carrara and by 1808 orders of busts of Napoleon along with replicas of Canova's colossal statue were the items most in demand.

*Mars the Peacemaker* found its permanent home in 1817 at the London residence of Duke Wellington.

You can see Napoleon's head and other master works at the *Gipsoteca* (Canova Museum) in Possagno on our Veneto/Alto Adige tour.

### **Puccini**



#### **Birth house of Giacomo Puccini**

The world's most popular composer was born in Lucca on December 22, 1858.

His home has now been meticulously restored as a museum of his life and times that includes his manuscripts, music and paintings.

Puccini was the brilliant composer of such lasting works as *Madama Butterfly*, *La Fanciulla del West*, *La Rondine*, *Turandot*, *La Bohème* and *Tosca* - the latter two being more frequently performed in major opera houses than works by any other composers.

Open from September 2011.

### **Did you know??**



*Piano* means slow or soft. *Forte* means strong or loud.

Bartolomeo Cristofori was an early 18th century harpsicord maker from Padua who was hired by Francesco de' Medici of Florence to care for his large collection of musical instruments.

While in his employ Bartolomeo developed a new instrument that overcame the deficiency of the harpsicord - the incapacity to vary loudness. He did this by substituting the plucking mechanism with hammers and adding foot pedals, one for softening the tone and the other for prolonging it. This revolution in music is called the *pianoforte*.



### **Prego?**

The driver opens the car door for you and he says *prego*.

Someone opens the restaurant door and you say thank you. He says *prego*.

The maitre d' says *prego* and leads you toward a table.

The waiter comes to take your order and he says *prego, mi dica*.

He doesn't understand what you said so he says *prego?*

You are talking too much so your date says *ti prego, stai zitto!*

Leaving, you arrive at the door simultaneously with another client and he says *prego!*

What do all these pregos mean?

*Please.*

*You're welcome. Don't mention it.*

*This way please.*

*Please, tell me.*

*Pardon? Sorry?*

*Please, shut up!*

*After you.*

### **Language Corner**



**Ricetta** (recipe) from Treviso (Veneto)

## Breast of guinea fowl with pomegranate and radicchio. recipe for 4 persons

*Ingredients:*

600gr of breast of guinea fowl  
1 pomegranate  
1 twig of sage and 1 of rosemary  
50gr of butter  
1 tablespoon of oil  
2 heads of Treviso red radicchio  
1 tablespoon of mustard  
1 small glass of cognac  
2 drops of Worcester sauce  
2 cloves of garlic  
salt and pepper to taste



*Preparation*

Remove the skin from the breasts. Place them in a pan with oil, butter, garlic, sage, rosemary, salt and pepper. Leave them to cook for five minutes on each side. Remove the breasts, cut them into slices and keep them warm.

For the sauce strain the cooking juices, add the mustard, Worcester sauce, cognac and lastly the pomegranate. Cook until the mixture is very glossy and amalgamated. Lay the radicchio, cleaned and divided lengthwise into 6 parts on a plate. Place the guinea fowl breasts on top and cover with the sauce. Serve hot.

*Suggested Wine:* Cabernet Sauvignon

*Buon Appetito!*  
*Jonathan & Sonya*  
*Amber Road Tours*

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