



Program

Third Florentine Weekend Friday, 19 October – Monday, 22 October 2012 Grand Patrons: Mr. and Mrs. Thomas J. Embrescia

Thursday, 18 October - pre-program

7:00 pm

Aperitivo hosted by Lowry and Diana Bell in their Apartment at the Palazzo Tornabuoni to Honor Contessa Maria Vittoria Rimbotti.

Palazzo Tornabuoni
Via degli Strozzi, 8

Friday, 19 October

8:00 pm

Welcome dinner at Palazzo Tornabuoni



Palazzo Tornabuoni, a 15th-century palace in the heart of Florence, is today a very special owners-only private residence club. It played a key role in the Renaissance boom of Florence. Its original owner, Giovanni Tornabuoni, whose sister was the mother of Lorenzo the Magnificent, was a leading banker and patron of the arts. And in the 1590s a subsequent owner, Jacopo Corsi, would leave his mark on the city's cultural scene by commissioning composer Jacopo Peri to write the musical entertainment “Dafne” that scholars consider to be the world's first opera.

A meticulous four-years' restoration between 2004 and 2008, conducted under the supervision of the Superintendence for the Artistic and Historical heritage of the city of Florence, has brought back the Palace to the splendor of its Renaissance origins, restoring magnificent Mannerist statues to their pristine state, uncovering hidden frescoes, and revealing elaborate stucco ceilings. Artistic highlights of the Palazzo include a stunning Baroque fresco cycle by Agostino Ciampelli (1578-1640) representing the Biblical story of Esther and Ahasuerus, and the marble statue of Diana the Huntress by Gherardo Silvani (1579-1675) which greets visitors at the foot of the Palazzo's imposing pietra serena staircase.

Saturday, 20 October - Michelangelo Day

10:30 am

Exclusive private guided tour of the Museum of the Medici Chapels and the Laurentian Library

The Museum of Medici Chapels is part of the vast complex of the Basilica of San Lorenzo, which was the parish church of the Medici family and therefore very richly decorated. Since the mid 15th century the Chapels were the burial place of the most important members of the Medici family, and are especially renowned for the New Sacristy which Michelangelo designed for the tombs of Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici, creating one of the masterpieces of architecture and sculpture of the Italian Renaissance. The tour also covers the Chapel of the Princes, the monumental octagonal mausoleum of the Medici and Lorraine grand-dukes entirely faced with semi-precious stones and rare polychrome marble inlays; here is also the funerary monument of Cosimo the Elder, "*Pater Patrie*" (Father of the Nation).



The Museum includes part of the precious treasure of the San Lorenzo Basilica, with reliquaries vessels and objects of the most refined Renaissance and Baroque goldsmith's art. The tour continues with the visit to the Laurentian Library, a double wonder as not is it considered the most important and prestigious collection of antique books in Italy, but it also one of the most important achievements of Michelangelo as architect. Giulio de' Medici commissioned Michelangelo to build the library to house the collection of over 11.000 rare ancient books and precious illuminated manuscripts gathered by Cosimo de' Medici and greatly enlarged by Lorenzo il Magnifico, and building works began after Giulio was elected as Pope Clement VII in 1523. Completed by Vasari and Ammannati, in 1571 the Library was opened to the public by Grand duke Cosimo I.

Lunch and afternoon: free time

7:15 pm

Exclusive private opening and guided tour of the Galleria dell'Accademia



The private opening of the Accademia Gallery, with a guided tour behind closed doors, is an exclusive privilege for the most chosen few. The day devoted to the artistic genius of Michelangelo Buonarroti continues where he is the absolute authority, with some of his most famous sculptures: the Prigioni, the San Mathew, but first and foremost the celebrated David, that in 1873 was transferred from Piazza della Signoria to this specially designed Tribune.

In the adjacent rooms, part of two old convents, important works of art were collected in the 19th century from the Academy of Design, the Academy of Fine Arts and suppressed monasteries. They are mostly religious paintings by the greatest masters active in and around Florence between the mid-13th and the late 16th centuries. The collection is particularly notable for its unique gold-ground panel paintings, and the sequence of splendid late-gothic polyptychs, complete in all their parts.

There is also a peculiar plaster casts collection by the 19th-century sculptors Lorenzo Bartolini and Luigi Pampaloni, and a section of Russian icons. Recently the Gallery has been further enriched by the important Medici and Lorraine collections of old musical instruments from the Cherubini Conservatory.

8:30 pm *Exclusive Gala dinner in the rotunda of the David*

Sunday, 21 October - Siena Day

11:00 am

Private guided tour of the Cathedral of Siena and its Museum, with exclusive opening of the Palio tailoring workshop



Guided visit of the magnificent complex of the Siena Cathedral, which includes many of the landmarks of the European artistic heritage. The Duomo is one of the finest examples of Italian Gothic architecture, with a unique black-and-white striped bell-tower of Romanesque style.

The interior of the Duomo is a breathtaking sight, with its huge striped pillars, ornate decorations on every surface, and masterpieces by great art masters such as Michelangelo, Nicola and Giovanni Pisano, Domenico Beccafumi. The celebrated marble floor features etched and inlaid panels with subjects including sibyls and scenes from the bible and from Siennese history. The

brilliantly colored frescoes by Pinturicchio of the life of Pope Pius II entirely cover the walls of the Piccolomini Library, and the Museo dell'Opera boasts some of the most captivating treasures of Italian art, including the original stained-glass window from the Duomo, Duccio's glittering gothic Maestà - the largest altarpiece ever made - and the Madonna and Child tondo by Donatello.

The morning tour will end with the visit to a Palio tailoring workshop, usually off-limits to the public, where skilful seamstresses, jealously guarding their professional secrets and strictly Siennese, artfully make, sew and repair the costumes of the Contrade for the historical parades before the July and August horse races.



1:00 pm

Lunch at the Palazzo Pannocchieschi d'Elci in Piazza del Campo



During the Palio one of the most sought after patrician palaces by topnotch guests is the very Palazzo thrown open for us by Countess Pannocchieschi d'Elci. The Palazzo has an unparalleled view over Piazza del Campo; it is almost directly above the so-called Mossa, the start and finishing line of the Palio, and from the balcony on the first floor it is possible to hear the secret dealings between the jockeys of the Contrade. Originally built by the Alessi family and known as Palazzo d'Elci degli Alessi, it assumed its current name after becoming the property of the Counts Pannocchieschi d'Elci, who

restored the original 16th century building.

The exterior shows a tall, crenelated façade; the interior features a grand 19th century staircase, probably designed by Fantastici, and boasts two noteworthy works of art: a Madonna With Child Between St Giovannino and St Barbara, and a canvas of the Prophet Elijah, both by Daniele Ricciarelli da Volterra.

In the afternoon return to Florence

8:00 pm

Dinner at “L'Osteria di Giovanni” in the heart of Florence. Via del Moro, 22.



Osteria di Giovanni is a very well known restaurant in the centre of Florence, standing out for its excellent cuisine that focuses on the great Tuscan classics, skillfully blending traditional flavors to a modern touch, elegance with simplicity and authenticity with refinement.

Monday, 22 October - Vasari Day

10:00 am

Exclusive private opening and guided tour of the Uffizi Gallery



This is one of the most important museums in the world and was built between 1560 and 1580 by Giorgio Vasari, commissioned by Cosimo I de' Medici who wanted a majestic palace with two wings “over the river and almost suspended in the air.” It was meant to house the principal administrative offices of the Tuscan State, hence the name of Uffizi (Offices). The project planned by Cosimo I, to arrange prime works of art in the Medici collections on the piano nobile, was effected by his son Francesco I who commissioned from Buontalenti the famous Tribuna, where a selection of outstanding masterpieces was a star attraction of the Grand Tour.

The Uffizi Gallery houses an immense artistic heritage which includes thousands of paintings from the Middle Ages to modern times as well as many ancient sculptures, miniatures and tapestries. The collection of self-portraits is famous and in the course of time has grown through acquisitions and donations from contemporary artists. Equally remarkable is the collection of drawings and prints, known as the Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe.



The tour will focus on the masterpieces restored thanks to the support of the Friends and Amici: the ancient marbles in the Vestibule and pre-Vestibule; the Ognissanti Polyptych by Giovanni da Milano and the altarpieces by Filippo Lippi; the Laocoon, the Hercules and the Wild Boar at the end of the third corridor; the marble statues and sculptures in the corridors of the Gallery.

or in alternative

Exclusive access to the Secret Passages of Palazzo Vecchio

There are places inside Palazzo Vecchio - the heart of Florentine civil life and seat of the town hall - where time seems to have stood still and where modern-day visitors can experience an emotional connection with the past. Such places are normally closed to the public and can be only visited with authorized guides: the stairway of the Duke of Athens, a secret escape route built in 1342 inside the thick walls of the Palazzo, exiting from a tiny door in Via della Ninna; the so-called Tesoretto (little

treasure) and the Studiolo, which were the exquisitely elegant private writing rooms respectively of Cosimo I and Francesco I, epitomes of the refinement and culture of the Renaissance Italian courts; the Trusses of the ceiling of the Salone dei Cinquecento supporting the roof of the Hall, and the impressive gilt coffering on the ceiling of the Salone dei Cinquecento, showing the merging of art and science typical of the Renaissance Humanism.



12:00 pm

Exclusive visit of the artworks of the Loeser Bequest in the special rooms of the Mezzanino in Palazzo Vecchio



The American collector Charles Alexander Loeser, very famous for the large donations to the White House and to the Fogg Museum of Harvard University - respectively of Cézanne paintings and Old Masters drawings - on his death in 1928 made also a very generous donation to the Florence City Council. He set the condition that his collection be kept for ever undivided, in an arrangement contributing to the reconstruction of the ancient atmosphere of Palazzo Vecchio, looking not like a museum, but rather making each room appear “simply beautiful for the repose and enjoyment of the visitor”. The collection, that consists of over thirty works of art and period furnishing, is displayed in such a way as to evoke the typical furnishings of the aristocratic residences of Renaissance Florence. It includes works by very important artists such as Tino

di Camaino, Agnolo Bronzino (“Laura Battiferri” portrait), Pietro Lorenzetti (“Madonna con Bambino”) and others.

The tour will be guided by Mrs. Philippa Calnan, Mr. Charles Loeser's granddaughter.

Lunch and afternoon free

6.30 pm

Exclusive opening of the Uffizi Gallery for a private classical music concert in the Sala del Botticelli by musicians of the prestigious Scuola di Musica di Fiesole

This is the museum’s most important and prestigious hall. Rarely used for events, it houses the most remarkable paintings of the Italian Renaissance such as the world famous “*La Primavera*” (Allegory of Spring) and “*La Nascita di Venere*” (The Birth of Venus).



The great hall, built out of the ancient Medici theatre, still maintains its original ceiling. One side of this vast hall is occupied by a masterpiece of Flemish art, the Portinari Triptych by Hugo van der Goes.

This work of art arrived in Florence in 1483 and greatly influenced Florentine artists, starting with Botticelli. Nordic culture was also a source of inspiration for Domenico Ghirlandaio; three of his paintings are also displayed in this hall.

8:30 pm

Dinner hosted by Marquis and Marchioness Bernardo and Vittoria Gondi in their historical family palace in the heart of Florence, with the best view of the town



Gondi Palace in downtown Florence was built for the Gondi Marquis, in ca. 1490 by the architect preferred by Lorenzo di Medici, Giuliano da Sangallo. The palace is a classic example of urban architecture of the high Renaissance in Florence. Sangallo took inspiration from the other major stately buildings, Palazzo Medici and Palazzo Strozzi, but introduced innovative elements such as the design of the windows with the stones arranged in a radial pattern resembling the facets of a precious gem. At one point, several of the neighboring houses had to

be destroyed in order to expand the palace. Leonardo da Vinci had formerly lived in one of those buildings, where it is believed that he painted the Mona Lisa. Among the important decorative elements inside the palace are frescoes and rich stucco decorations. The monumental fireplace of the main hall is also spectacular.

Palazzo Gondi has been recently extensively restored and redecorated, and from the most beautiful terraces in Florence the privileged guests of Marchese and Marchesa Gondi will enjoy a breathtaking view of the town.

Tuesday, 23 October - Botticelli Day

11:00 am

Exclusive visit of Emilio Pucci Foundation, followed by a drink graciously hosted by Marchioness Pucci

The Emilio Pucci Archive Foundation was created in 2001 by the Pucci family to catalog and preserve the history of the family-owned fashion label, founded by the aristocratic dress designer Marchese Emilio Pucci, known as “the prince of prints” and “the man who put women in pants”. He brought color into fashion, and his optical fantasies of geometric shapes and fine lustrous ready-to-wear fabric became a must among film stars and fashionable *mondaine*. The Foundation gathers photographs, sketches, vintage dresses, accessories, historical garments such as printed terry kaffans, jersey dresses and tiny hot pants, as well as items worn by Marilyn Monroe, who was an avid fan of the brand back in the 50s.

After the visit Marchioness Pucci will host a drink in her private apartment within the family Palazzo, renowned for the collection of important paintings.

