TREASURES OF ITALY’S FAR SOUTH: Exploring Puglia, Basilicata & Calabria

September 24 – October 3, 2021
Dear Alumni and Friends,

We are pleased to announce this unusual and exclusive journey, tailored especially for Vanderbilt Alumni, exploring the wonderful yet largely “undiscovered” treasures of Italy’s Far South. The regions of Puglia, Basilicata and Calabria are rich in history and natural beauty, with ancient cities that feature glorious architecture, important archaeological remains, and bucolic villages that have changed little through the centuries.

Known in antiquity as Magna Graecia (“Greater Greece”), this part of Italy, along with Sicily, is an area that attracted Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Normans, and others for its fertile land and the potential for trade. We begin our travels in Puglia, in the heel of Italy's boot, and explore the incredible village of Alberobello, a UNESCO World Heritage site that features over 1,500 ancient trulli buildings. In the neighboring region of Basilicata, we visit another UNESCO site in Matera’s old town called the Sassi. Its labyrinth of cave houses includes frescoed churches and chapels carved out of limestone rock. In Calabria, the toe of the Italian boot, we tour ancient hilltop villages including Rossano, Gerace, and Santa Severina, which house treasures in their cathedrals and other sites revealing Calabria’s long rich history. We conclude in Reggio di Calabria, which guards the Strait of Messina, the narrow waterway that separates mainland Italy from Sicily. Reggio’s superb museum exhibits the incredible Riace Bronzes, two outstanding bronze statues from the Greek Classical period (5th century BC). Throughout the journey you will enjoy fine accommodations as well as superb, authentic regional cuisine for which Italy is famous.

Accompanying our small group will be an expert professor from Vanderbilt who will enrich your educational experience. We invite you to travel with alumni and friends to discover the history, monuments, and art of this largely undiscovered and fascinating region in Italy’s Far South.

Sincerely,

Cary DeWitt Allyn
Director, Vanderbilt Travel Program

For further information and reservations, please contact the Vanderbilt Travel Office at 615-322-3673 or e-mail alumni.travel@vanderbilt.edu with your questions or to make a reservation.
ITINERARY

Friday, September 24, 2021
DEPART THE USA
Depart the United States for Bari, Italy.

Saturday, September 25
BARI, ITALY / MARTINA FRANCA
Arrive Bari, the capital of Puglia, the region in the heel of the Italian “boot.” Transfer to Martina Franca, an old and graceful town located in the Valle d’Itria, where we will spend the next three nights at the Relais Villa San Martino, a lovely country hotel, located just outside the town. Gather this evening for a Welcome Dinner.
Meals: D

Sunday, September 26
ALBEROBELLO and THE TRULLI VILLAGES
Meet this morning at the hotel for an introductory lecture. This afternoon explore Alberobello, a UNESCO World Heritage site, that features over 1,500 trulli buildings. These remarkable white-washed structures have pyramidal, conical or domed roofs built of corbelled local limestone without mortar, using a prehistoric building technique that has survived to this day. Continue to nearby Locorotondo, rated as one of the most beautiful towns in Italy. Set on a hilltop, the stone-paved streets lead to the pedestrian historic center, where the lovely public garden offers panoramic views of the Valle d’Itria, the surrounding valley. Independent dinner in Martina Franca.
Meals: B

Monday, September 27
MARTINA FRANCA / MATERA, BASILICATA / MARTINA FRANCA
In the morning, drive into the region of Basilicata to reach Matera, one of the most extraordinary cities in Italy. Inhabited since prehistoric times, Matera’s old town is situated on the edge of a ravine and it consists of the Sassi, a labyrinth of cave houses, churches, frescoed chapels, alleyways and staircases carved out of the limestone rock. Explore this incredible and unusual place, now a UNESCO World Heritage site, and also visit other landmark buildings outside the Sassi area, including the fine 13th-century Romanesque cathedral, with its richly decorated chapels; the Palombaro Lungo, a grand underground cistern with arches carved out of the rock; and the Museo Nazionale d’Arte Medievale e Moderna della Basilicata, housed in a 17th-century palazzo and exhibits sacred and contemporary art, including paintings by Carlo Levi. Lunch will be served in Matera.
Meals: B, L

Tuesday, September 28
MARTINA FRANCA / SIBARI, BASILICATA / ROSSANO, CALABRIA / CROTONE
Leave in the morning for Sibari, the ancient Sybaris, founded in 720 BC by settlers from the western Peloponnese. The luxurious and excessive lifestyle of its citizens gave us the words “sybarite” and “sybaritic” to connote

JOURNEY HIGHLIGHTS

Explore Italy’s far south to discover riches most travelers to the country miss.
Visit sites that reveal the continuity of culture from antiquity to the recent past.
Walk the streets of Alberobello, lined with the extraordinary trulli.
Discover the cave city of Matera, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
Admire the magnificent bronze Riace statues, among the finest examples of ancient Greek sculpture.
century BC. Taking advantage of its strategic
position, Locri flourished by developing
commercial contacts with other Greek cities in
southern Italy and Sicily. The first Greek city to
develop a written code of laws, Locri was praised
for its good government, and continued to
prosper until the Roman period. The extensive
remains of the city include temples, a theater,
other public buildings and city walls. The
museum displays a collection of artifacts.

Following lunch, drive along the southernmost
part of mainland Italy to Reggio di Calabria,
stopping en route for a stroll in Scilla, rising on a
rocky cliff at the Strait of Messina. Check in at
the **Grand Hotel Excelsior** for two nights.

Meals: B, L

**Thursday, September 30**

**CROTONE / STILO / GERACE/SIDERNOS**

Depart Crotone in the morning and proceed
along Calabria’s Ionian coast, we find the
11th-century church of Santa Maria della
Roccella, a majestic monument, despite its
ruined condition. Continuing along impressive
coastal scenery, we arrive at Stilo, a hill village
that retained its Greek character well into the
modern era. Stilo’s 10th-century Byzantine
church, the Cattolica, is considered one of the
best examples of its kind in Europe. On to
Gerace, another attractive village, founded in the
9th century by refugees from the nearby coastal
city of Locri. The well-preserved medieval town is
built in a defensive mountain crag. Gerace’s
11th century cathedral is the largest church in
Calabria, indicating the importance of Gerace
during the Middle Ages. Nearby is the church of
San Francesco d’Assisi, which contains a
beautiful inlaid marble altar. Overnight at the
Grand Hotel President, a beachfront property in
Siderno, near Locri.

Meals: B, L, D

**Friday, October 1**

**SIDerno/ LOCri / SCILLA/ REGGIO DI CALABRIA**

This morning depart our hotel for Locri
Epizephyrii, founded by Greeks in the late 8th
century BC. Taking advantage of its strategic
position, Locri flourished by developing
commercial contacts with other Greek cities in
southern Italy and Sicily. The first Greek city to
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Meals: B, L

**Saturday, October 2**

**REGGIO DI CALABRIA**

Formerly ancient Rhegion, the earliest Greek
colony, Reggio di Calabria is home to the superb
National Museum of Magna Graecia, one of the
best collections of ancient artifacts in the world,
which we visit this morning. Included are finds
from several sites we visited. The highlight of the
collection is the celebrated Riace Bronzes, two
larger-than-life Greek warriors dating from the
5th–century BC that were found in 1972 by
divers off Riace on Calabria’s Ionian coast. The
statues are perhaps the finest surviving
examples of Greek bronze statues of the Classical period. It is believed that they were built by Athenian sculptors after the victory over the Persians at the Battle of Marathon (490 BC), and dedicated at Delphi. Spend the afternoon at leisure. The Lungomare, a coastal street, offers magnificent panoramic views that extend beyond the Strait of Messina to Sicily. In the evening, enjoy a farewell dinner.

Meals: B, D

Sunday, October 3  
REGGIO DI CALABRIA / USA  
Transfer to the airport for the return flight home.  
Meals: B

OPTIONAL EXTENSION TO SICILY:  
October 3-6, 2021  
Travel via ferry from Reggio di Calabria to Messina, Sicily, and enjoy a three-night stay in Taormina at the Excelsior Palace Hotel. Our program includes sightseeing of Taormina including its Greco-Roman Theater and a full day excursion to Syracuse, one of the largest and most important cities of Magna Graecia. Included in addition to the hotel and sightseeing are three breakfasts, two lunches and a group transfer to the Catania airport on October 6.

RATE:  
$1,780 per person, double occupancy.  
Single room supplement: $290.

R A T E  
$4,995 per person, double occupancy.  
Single room supplement: $790

P R O G R A M  I N C L U S I O N S  
- Three nights at the Relais Villa San Martino, Martina Franca; two nights at the Hotel Lido degli Scoglì, Cortone; one night at the Grand Hotel President, Siderno; two nights at the Grand Hotel Excelsior, Reggio di Calabria.  
- American breakfast each morning at the hotels.  
- Four lunches and five dinners, with wine or beer.  
- Program of lectures by accompanying Vanderbilt professor  
- Transportation by air-conditioned, Wi-Fi equipped motor coach.  
- Tours and excursions as described in the itinerary with professional English-speaking guide.  
- Airport/hotel transfers at designated times in Bari on September 25 and Reggio di Calabria on October 3, and handling of luggage.  
- Entrance fees to museums and historic sites.  
- All local taxes and service charges.  
- Gratuities to drivers, guides and porters.  
- The services of an experienced Thalassa Journeys trip director.  
- Complete pre-departure material.

N O T  I N C L U D E D : Airfare; travel insurance; expenses of a personal nature; any items not specified in the Itinerary or in the Program Inclusions.

G E N E R A L  I N F O R M A T I O N  
PAYMENT SCHEDULE: A deposit of $1,000 per person is required to reserve your space on the tour. Final payment is due 90 days prior to departure. Payment can be made by personal check or charged to a credit card.

CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS: All cancellations are subject to a $300 per person administrative fee. Cancellations received 61-90 days prior to departure will be assessed a penalty equal to 50% of the total program cost per person. Cancellations received within 60 days of departure are subject to 100% cancellation penalties. Requests for cancellations must be made in writing. No refunds will be made for any part of this program in which you choose not to participate.

INSURANCE: We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance, which is available for coverage of expenses in conjunction with cancellation due to illness or accident. Baggage insurance is also recommended. In the event that you must cancel your participation in a travel program, trip cancellation insurance may be the only source of reimbursement.

ITINERARY: The itinerary, accommodations and arrangements are subject to change at the discretion of Thalassa Journeys. RESPONSIBILITY: Please read carefully the following terms and conditions, which constitute the sole, legally enforceable agreements between the traveler and Thalassa Journeys and the tour’s sponsoring organization. Thalassa Journeys and the tour’s sponsoring organization act solely as agents for the traveler with respect to all transportation, hotel and other tour arrangements. In that capacity, we exercise all reasonable care possible to ensure the traveler’s safety and satisfaction, but, we neither assume nor bear any responsibility or liability for any injury, death, damage, loss, accident, delay or irregularity arising in connection with the services of any ship, airplane, train, automobile, motor coach, carriage or other conveyance, or the actions of any third-party, involved in carrying the traveler or in affecting these tours. We are not responsible for damages, additional expenses, or any other losses due to cancellation, delay or other changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, civil disturbances, acts or threats of terrorism, travel warnings or bans, termination or suspension of war risks or other carrier insurance, quarantine, acts of God or other causes beyond our control. All such losses must be borne by the traveler, and tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. In the event of cancellation, delay or rescheduling mandated by any of the aforesaid causes beyond our control, the traveler shall have the option of accepting in lieu of the original tour such rescheduled tour or other substituted tour(s) as may be offered by us, or else, receiving a refund of as much of such advance tour expenditures as we are able to recover on the traveler’s behalf from carriers, third-party tour vendors, etc., but, we shall not have any obligation or liability to the traveler beyond the foregoing. We reserve the right to make alterations to the tour’s itinerary and to substitute hotels, transportation methods, or lecturers if this is required. We reserve the right to cancel, delay, or reschedule any tour prior to departure, and, so long as this is not due to any of the aforesaid causes beyond our control, the traveler shall be entitled to a full refund of all monies paid to that point if he/she so desires. No refund shall be made for any unused portion of any tour. By forwarding their deposit(s), the traveler certifies that he/she and/or their dependents, minors or others covered thereby do not have any mental, physical or other condition of disability that could create a hazard for them or other travelers. We reserve the right to decline to accept or to decline to retain any person as a member of any tour should such person’s health, condition or actions adversely affect or threaten the welfare or safety of other travelers or impede the tour. Baggage or valuables brought on the tour shall be transported, handled or stored at the traveler’s risk entirely, and, we shall bear no liability or responsibility for any damage or other loss therefrom. Resolution of any disputes arising hereunder shall be affected exclusively in the state or federal courts presiding in the City of New York, pursuant to applicable New York law.

RATES: Tour costs are based upon current airfares, tariffs, and currency values. While we do everything possible to maintain the listed prices, they are subject to change.

For further information and reservations, please contact the Vanderbilt Travel Office at 615-322-3673 or e-mail alumni.travel@vanderbilt.edu with your questions or to make a reservation.

Riace Bronzes, National Archeological Museum of Magna Graecia, Reggio di Calabria