

## Unveiling Sicily's History, Cuisine, and Culture

June 6-14, 2015

### *Detailed Itinerary Exclusively for Yale GALA*

*Sicily has attracted gay artists and researchers and other sexual progressives for more than a century. In the 1880s the German-born Baron Wilhelm von Gloeden established his studio in Taormina, where for more than twenty years he took his iconic nude photographs of Sicilian young men, usually in classical poses, which he sold throughout Europe, and where his prominent visitors included Oscar Wilde. The gay avant-garde filmmaker Kenneth Anger escorted Alfred Kinsey through Sicily in 1955, visiting Taormina and the Abbey of Thelema to the west, where Aleister Crowley had established a queer commune in the 1920s. The gay filmmaker Visconti loved Sicily and filmed much of *The Leopard* in Palermo and surrounding estates.*

*Join us for a unique and enchanting journey across Sicily that will explore the enduring fascination of its distinctive culture, its magnificent Greco-Roman sites, and its extraordinary food and wine. Yale GALA and Professors George Chauncey and Ron Gregg, working with Authentic Sicily, have arranged this tour that will last nine days and nine nights in upscale accommodations. The tour takes place at a relaxed pace with plenty of time to savor the best of Sicily's food, wine, friendliness, and beauty.*

### **DETAILED ITINERARY**

#### **Saturday, June 6: Arrival at Palermo Airport**

- If you are arriving at Palermo's Falcone Borsellino Airport from the US, all checked bags will need to go through Customs. Look for the Customs sign towards the back of the Baggage Claim area (Dogana, in Italian) and pick up your baggage. Once you pick up your baggage, you will have to put it through an x-ray machine as part of the Customs procedures.
- Once you clear Customs, Authentic Sicily representatives will be waiting for you in the Arrivals Hall, right outside the Baggage Claim area. The transfer to Palermo will take about 40 minutes.
- Check into your hotel, Grand Hotel Piazza Borsa, where you will stay for three nights.
- Welcome cocktail and meet and greet with your tour escorts from Authentic Sicily and Professors George Chauncey and Ron Gregg in the early evening. Program presentation and overview.
- Dinner at a local restaurant.

#### ***Overnight #1: Grand Hotel Piazza Borsa 4\****

#### **Sunday, June 7: Palermo/Monreale**

- Our first full day includes a tour of Palermo and Monreale with our private guide, who will take us through the city's amazing history and sights.
  - Our tour starts with Palazzo dei Normanni, which was the seat of the Kings of Sicily during the Norman domination (12<sup>th</sup> century) and served afterwards as the main seat of power for the subsequent rulers of Sicily. Today it is the seat of the regional Parliament of Sicily. In the same complex is the

Cappella Palatina, a showstopper in its own right, which served as the royal chapel of the Norman kings.

- Other landmarks and monuments include the Palermo Cathedral, Quattro Canti, Church of the Martorana, Piazza Pretoria, and if time permits, Teatro Massimo opera house and Church of San Giovanni degli Eremiti (a former mosque distinguished by its resplendent red Moorish domes).
- After lunch in Palermo, we will head up to the historic town of Monreale, which overlooks the capital city, to visit its world-renowned cathedral, Santa Maria la Nuova, a dazzling mixture of Arab, Byzantine and Norman mosaic styles framed by traditional Romanesque architecture. The beautiful mosaics in the cathedral are said to be one of the world's largest displays of this art.
- A typical Sicilian banquet will be served this evening at the noble 14<sup>th</sup> century Palazzo Raffadali. The Palace is still lived in today by the family of the Prince of Raffadali and continues to be a much loved family home cared for by the Prince and his descendants.
- Before coming to Sicily, you are encouraged to watch the gay filmmaker Luchino Visconti's masterpiece, *The Leopard* (1963), starring Burt Lancaster, Alain Delon, and Claudia Cardinale, which portrays the upheavals of civil war and the transformation of Sicilian class society during the mid-19th century. After dinner Professor Gregg will lead a discussion of the film and give a PowerPoint tour of the sites in Palermo where the film was shot, many of which we will have seen that day.

## ***Overnight #2: Grand Hotel Piazza Borsa 4\****

### **Monday, June 8: Segesta/Erice**

- Today, we will go on an excursion to visit Segesta and Erice, two of the major cities of the mysterious Elymians, one of three indigenous people of Sicily (along with Sicanians and the Siculians).
  - At Segesta, we will visit and walk into the perfectly preserved, but never completed Doric-columned temple. You will learn why the temple was oddly constructed outside the city walls. We will then proceed to climb Monte Barbaro to its summit to visit the Roman amphitheater with its stunning views of the Sicilian countryside as well as the dazzling blue Tyrrhenian Sea.
- After Segesta, we move on to enchanting Erice, which are historically connected to each other.
  - At this ancient, hilltop town, the cult of the love-goddess was celebrated and worshipped at the Temple of Aphrodite, where the Elymians believed in making men sweat for their free sex! At the town's summit was the temple of Astarte, famed for its sacred prostitution during the Phoenician period. In Virgil's Aeneid, Aeneas visits Erice, or Eryx, where he forms an alliance with the wise King Acestes. Before leaving Eryx, Aeneas supposedly built the Temple to honor his mother Aphrodite (later, Venus).
  - There's not much that survives of the Temple and the site is now occupied by a medieval castle (aptly named Castello di Venere). From Erice's summit, you can see the city and salt pans of Trapani, the Phoenician island of Mozia, and the Egadi Islands to the East, and, on a crystal clear day, you can see Tunisia to the South. Today, Erice is an international destination dedicated to the sciences and is well known for its delectable pastry shops and upscale stores that line its bewitching and winding medieval streets.
  - Lunch will be in Erice at a local restaurant.
  - Return to Palermo, where Professor Chauncey will lecture about why Sicily played such a large role in the gay imagination for more than a century, from 19th-century scholars who reinterpreted the role of homosexual love in Greco-Roman society and

photographers, such as the German Baron von Gloeden, who photographed its young men in classical poses, to 20th-century researchers such as Alfred Kinsey and avant-garde artists such as Kenneth Anger.

- Dinner is on your own this evening.

### ***Overnight #3: Grand Hotel Piazza Borsa 4\****

#### **Tuesday, June 9: Agrigento**

- We say goodbye to Palermo this morning and head South to Agrigento to visit the showpiece of Sicily: The Valley of the Temples. Known as Akragas to the ancients, the city was one of the largest in *Magna Graecia* during the golden age of Ancient Greece. Lunch will be included.
  - The archaeological park, known as The Valley of the Temples (Valle die Templi), encompasses ruins of numerous temples, necropoli, houses, streets and everything else one would expect to find in an ancient city. There is a small amphitheater, as well as several auditoria, and a fine archeological museum. Part of the Temple of Juno, built around 450 BC, is still intact. The Temple of Concord, built around 440 BC, is one of the best-preserved temples of antiquity, partly because it was protected when it served as a Christian church for centuries.
  - The Via dei Templi (Road of the Temples) runs past the Temple of Heracles, the Temple of Concord, and the Temple of Juno. The colossal remains of the Temple of Zeus cover an area of 7000 square meters, making it one of the largest temples of the ancient world (a man can stand in the flutes of its columns). Nearby are the Temples of Demeter and Persephone, as well as the iconic four-columned Temple of Castor and Pollux (the Dioscuri—young sons of Zeus). In the heart of the Valley of the Temples lies the agricultural and archeological jewel known as the Kolymbetra Garden, now protected and converted into a typical ancient garden.
- Check in at Rocco Forte's gem, the Verdura Resort. Spend some time relaxing and enjoying the many amenities of the resort: world-class spa, infinity pool, private beach, and golf course.
- Dinner this evening will be at the hotel, where a gourmet, 3-course meal will be specially created by the resort's award-winning chef.

### ***Overnight #4: Rocco Forte Verdura Resort 5\****

#### **Wednesday June 10: Selinunte/Planeta Estate**

- Enjoy a relaxing morning at the Verdura Resort.
- This afternoon, we venture to Selinunte, one of the most progressive Greek cities in Sicily. The city's name is derived from the word for wild celery, which grew rampantly in this part of the island. While the city was not as large as Agrigento, the archaeological park is the largest in Europe and is in a tranquil setting, sitting on a high plain overlooking the glistening Mediterranean Sea, and making it, arguably, the most evocative of the archaeological sites in Sicily.
  - The city was founded in the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC and its glory lasted for two centuries. While the city was often embroiled in battles with the Elymians of Segesta, it tried to retain neutrality as Agrigento and Siracusa combatted and succeeded in ousting the Carthaginians from Western Sicily, who were allies of the Elymians. Ultimately, the neutrality proved fatal and resulted in the destruction of the city by the Carthaginians in 409 BC.
  - Selinunte is divided into two sections. First, you will visit the impressive temples outside the city gates, the most intact one being the Temple of Hera that was re-erected in modern times. The city proper sits higher up on the acropolis, and is now

largely a promontory filled with rubble from the original city, a haunting reminder of the glories of the past.

- Following the visit of Selinunte our group will head to Planeta winery, which makes some of the most respected and innovative Sicilian wines. The Sambuca estate is a 17th century farmhouse that stands between the ruins of an Arab castle, Lake Arancio, and a mountain range. The vineyards "Ulmo" and "Maroccoli" extend over a total of 94 hectares, surrounding the first Planeta winery where high quality wines are produced. We will enjoy a typical Sicilian dinner and wine tasting at the estate.

### ***Overnight #5: Rocco Forte Verdura Resort 5\****

#### **Thursday, June 11: Piazza Armerina/Taormina**

- After breakfast, we head East to Piazza Armerina for a visit of the Villa del Casale, recently restored to its ancient glory. The 4<sup>th</sup> century Roman villa contains the richest, largest and most complex collection of Roman mosaics in the world and is one of 49 UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Italy.
  - The Villa, which was built as a huge agricultural estate, has thousands of square feet of mosaics on its floors, and some surviving wall paintings. Many of the structure's walls are still standing. The art itself is impressive, but you will be also struck by the size of the villa, with an architectural style that differs markedly from that of urban dwellings such as those of Pompeii. Don't miss the Bikini Girls, one of the most iconic mosaics, giving Victoria's Secret catalogues a run for its money!
  - The Villa was abandoned in the 12<sup>th</sup> century after a mudslide covered most of it, leaving it almost entirely forgotten until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century when excavations went into full throttle and the mosaics came to light, astonishing archaeologists and visitors alike.
- After lunch, we will head to romantic Taormina to check into Belmond's Grand Hotel Timeo, recently listed in *Conde' Nast's* top ten best hotels of the world.
- Dinner will be at the *Michelin* starred La Capinera Restaurant.

### ***Overnight #6: Grand Hotel Timeo 5\****

#### **Friday, June 12: Siracusa**

- Today, we round out our tour of ancient sites by visiting the most powerful city-state in *Magna Graecia*—Siracusa—another UNESCO World Heritage Site and the birthplace of preeminent mathematician and engineer, Archimedes.
  - This 2,700-year-old city played a key role in ancient times, when it was one of the major powers of the Mediterranean world. The city was founded by Ancient Greeks from Corinth and was allied with Sparta and Corinth, exerting tremendous influence over the entirety of *Magna Graecia*. Described by Cicero as "the greatest Greek city and the most beautiful of them all," Siracusa equaled Athens in size during the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC and was considered the "New York" of the ancient world by many historians.
  - The city is notable for its archaeological park, its catacombs, and the ancient and Medieval section known as Ortigia, whose cathedral encompasses the ancient Temple of Athena. As you cross the threshold into the church, you enter a perfectly preserved 5<sup>th</sup> century BC Greek temple—a great way to complete the grand tour of ancient Sicily!
- Lunch will be included, and if it time permits, you may wander the streets of Ortigia. Consider visiting the mikvah in the Jewish Ghetto, the largest ever discovered in Europe. The Jewish presence in Sicily was widespread and Jews prospered until 1492, when the Spanish, who ruled over Sicily, forced them to either convert to

Christianity or be sent into exile. Regrettably, very little is left of what once was a rich Jewish presence.

- You are on your own this evening to discover Taormina's thriving social scene. The town is famous for its *dolce vita* atmosphere, and Corso Umberto is Taormina's main street with chic boutiques and bustling cafes. You may want to take a ride up to the vertiginous town of Castelmola with its sweeping views of Mt. Etna and the Ionian Sea (both of which you will be able to see from your hotel). In Castelmola, you will find Bar Turrisi, famous for its collection of penises. While seemingly shocking at first, the bar has an interesting history and its collection of penises in all shapes and sizes and in all kinds of materials is, perhaps, a remnant of ancient Greek culture, where the penis was oftentimes used to represent fertility. The fact that the bar's owners had three sons in five years is no coincidence, we would argue!
- Taormina has endlessly winding medieval streets and tiny passages, each with its own secrets. Some of these intriguing places are secluded gardens hidden by stonewalls; others are set on terraces overlooking the coast or in more public but equally pleasant squares. Taormina is beautiful by day but in the evenings its atmosphere is simply enchanting, whether you stroll the illuminated streets or indulge in the view of the coast over a delicious dinner.

### ***Overnight #7: Grand Hotel Timeo 5\****

#### **Saturday, June 13: Taormina**

- Your last day will be spent in its entirety in Taormina, Sicily's resort town par excellence.
- You will have one final guided tour this morning to visit one of Sicily's grandest sites: the Greco-Roman Amphitheater with sweeping views of the Mediterranean and Mt. Etna (likely smoldering as it has been for many months). Built in the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC, the amphitheater is still used today to showcase a range of talent from ancient Greek tragedies to modern rock concerts.
- Our farewell dinner will be a gourmet four-course meal at the legendary Hotel Timeo, overlooking Mt. Etna.

### ***Overnight #8: Grand Hotel Timeo 5\****

#### **Sunday, June 14: Departure Catania airport**

- Transfer to Catania's Fontanrossa Airport for departures.

## **TERMS & CONDITIONS**

### The package includes:

- Bi-lingual tour guides and escorts
- Upscale/luxury hotel accommodations for 8 nights (including baggage handling)
- All breakfasts, 4 lunches and 6 dinners, including wine
- All entrance fees to monuments and archaeological parks
- Wine tastings, folklore show, and other surprises
- Transportation by private air-conditioned bus for the entire trip (including airport transfers)
- Gratuities for wait staff and guides
- All taxes (VAT and city taxes)
- Lectures by Professors Chauncey and Gregg on LGBT history

### The package does not include:

- Airfare
- Airport transfers in Sicily for those not arriving on designated dates
- Travel Insurance
- Meals not specified in the itinerary
- Dishes/beverages not included in the meals
- Room service
- Other items of a personal nature

### Payment Policy

- Payment of \$1000 per person is due for the deposit. A credit card may be used for deposits.
- Payment of the balance is due by March 2, 2015 as follows: \$5950 per person (based on double occupancy). Single supplement of \$1950 applies.
- All registration forms must be signed and forwarded to Yale Educational Travel by January 15, 2015.

### Cancellation Policy

- Cancellations made after January 15, 2015 will not receive a refund of the \$1000 per person deposit.
- Cancellations more than 60 days prior to the program start date will be eligible for a 50% refund.
- Cancellations less than 60 days prior to the program start date will not be eligible for a refund though the participant(s) can find replacements to join the tour in his/her place.

### Disclosures

- Sicily is a traditional society but is considered a gay-friendly destination. However, please be sensitive to local culture and respect the need for discretion.
- Yale and Authentic Sicily reserve the right to update pricing if the US Dollar depreciates by more than 10% between October 14, 2014 and ten days before the final payment is due. You will be informed in writing of any change in pricing prior to the date payment is due. Yale and Authentic Sicily will use a trusted source such as *The Wall Street Journal* to determine exchange rates.

***As participants make their flight arrangements, please ensure that arrivals must be at the Palermo airport on June 6 and departures must be from Catania airport on June 14. If arrival and departure airports are different then required, participants will be responsible to arrange for their own airport transfers to join the group.***

***Authentic Sicily would be pleased to arrange pre and post itineraries for any participant either in Sicily or in other cities and regions of Italy***

For more information about this tour contact:  
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