Italy: Gardens of Campania
4 – 9 May 2018

May 4  Naples ( D )
Arrival in Naples airport and private transfer to your 4 star hotel Santa Lucia

Time at leisure and dinner at the gourmet restaurant of the hotel where you will taste the best of the Neapolitan cuisine.

May 5  Naples, Santa Chiara cloister, Botanical Garden ( B )
This morning you will meet your guide at the hotel, then you will reach by bus the Cloister of Santa Chiara. The gardens of the cloister of Santa Chiara are of not only horticultural but also great historical and cultural interest. The cloisters are located behind the Gothic Church built in 1320. You have very little information about the origins of the cloister gardens as the Monastery allowed its nuns very little contact with the outside world. In the 1700’s, life in the Monastery changed significantly and the Mother Superior engaged the Architect Domenico Antonio Vaccaro to decorate the cloister which was in that time used also for parties and concerts. Vaccaro built the gardens as we see them today including the 72 tile covered pillars of the pergola, the tile covered benches and fountains, tiles being a traditional form of art in Campania. The plantings in the raised flower beds are representative of the antique monastic tradition with vegetables and citrus fruits as well as ornamental plants. Then your guide will lead you on a short walk through the street of “Spaccanapoli” and you will reach Piazza San Domenico where you will taste the Naples’ typical pastry “Sfogliatella” with a legendary Espresso. Then you will reach by bus the Naples Botanical Garden. The Botanic Gardens of Naples are built on 12 hectares of land and contain over 9,000 species of plants. The gardens and greenhouses which have been recently restored are some of the most important in Italy, with an impressive collection of tree ferns and a microclimate created by high water sprays and fountains.

Transfer back to the hotel and lunch on your own .

May 6  Ischia, La Mortella Garden ( B, D )
Meeting with the guide, pick up by bus and transfer to the port of Naples where you will take the hydrofoil for Ischia Island ( it takes about 1 hour ), you will visit La Mortella Garden. On the beautiful island of Ischia, Susan Walton, the wife of composer Sir William Walton enlisted the help of English landscape architect Russell Page to build the gardens of La Mortella. The gardens are divided into two areas: the Valley Garden designed by Page in 1956 and the Hill garden designed by Lady Walton after her husband’s death in 1983. The garden contains plants from all over the world which are complimented beautifully by the local flora and the garden design which links the various rooms of the two main garden areas. The exotic plants, water features, terraces with sea views, and the many paths wandering through this garden paradise create a dreamlike atmosphere. Time at leisure for lunch and for the visit of Ischia then transfer back to the hotel in Naples.
Tonight you will taste one of the best Pizza in town at a local Pizzeria, walking distance from your hotel.

**May 7 Pompei, the Gardens of Pompei and Ravello, Villa Cimbrone and Villa Rufolo (B)**
Meeting with the guide and departure by private bus for a full day excursion to Pompei and Ravello. You will stop in Pompei for the visit of the archeological site **The Gardens of Pompei**
Although the city was destroyed during the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 AD, many of the 500 gardens in Pompei were miraculously preserved. These gardens are an important page in the history of garden design. The garden elements such as the atrium, peristyle court, fountains and statues were all used in the designs of gardens which would be built in the Renaissance period when many garden layouts were influenced by a revival of the Roman and Pre-Roman styles. Many of the plant roots have been found by archeologists digging on site which has allowed them to faithfully reconstruct not only the ornamental structures but the horticultural species present in these ancient gardens. Then you will drive to Ravello, on the Amalfi coast, where you will have time at leisure for lunch on your own. After lunch you will visit **Villa Cimbrone and Villa Rufolo**.
The gardens of **Villa Cimbrone** were once part of a large estate dating back to the twelfth century. When Ernest Beckett bought the property in the beginning of the twentieth century the elements of the original garden were incorporated into what today are famous for being the most magnificent and extensive English style gardens in Southern Italy. Vita Sackville-West and Gertrude Jekyll both contributed to the design of these spectacular gardens built high on a hill with a breathtaking view of the Bay below. The vegetation combines local flora, exotics and northern European plantings to create a singular and fascinating effect.

**Villa Rufolo**
The Villa is one of the oldest existing Palaces in Italy having been built in the 13th century by the wealthy and powerful Rufolo family. Boccaccio wrote of the Palace in his work Il Decameron. In 1851 the complex of buildings was bought by the Scotsman Frances Neville Reid who carried out many important modifications to the garden including an irrigation system which also served the surrounding community. Many restorations of the gardens have taken place but the garden today presents itself much as it would have during Reid’s time. The position and views of the surrounding hills and sea make a visit to this spectacular garden a must. Transfer back to the hotel in Naples

**May 8 Capri and Anacapri, Villa San Michele (B)**
Pick up by private bus from the hotel and transfer to Naples port, there you will take the hydrofoil to Capri (it takes about 50 minutes) where you will meet your guide and you will take a tour of an island by minibus. You will first reach Anacapri village where you will have a private visit of Villa San Michele.

**Villa San Michele** in Anacapri was the home of the Swedish physician, Axel Munthe. Built on the ruins of an ancient Chapel dedicated to San Michele, the villa now belongs to the Axel Munthe Foundation and has been transformed into a Museum. The gardens of the villa, home to a great variety of Mediterranean plants and a charming little mediaeval chapel, which Munthe restored himself, are as beautiful as any of the exhibits inside the museum. From here, a magnificent view of the Bay of Naples can be seen. Then you will reach Capri village where you will have time at leisure.
Transfer back to the hotel in Naples

May 9 Villages of Sorrento peninsula & Positano (B, L)
After breakfast, departure by bus, you will visit some hidden villages of the Sorrento Peninsula and we will discover the green heart of Amalfi Coast. We will discover lemon groves and how to make Limoncello, then we will visit a cheese farm where we will have a Mozzarella demonstration and a tasting of typical products. Then, you will proceed to for the Amalfi Coast. The lush green terraces, suspended over a sparkling sea, the wealth of art and the architectural characteristics, make it one of the most celebrated places on earth. Wild, daring and romantic, the Coast is an obligatory stop in any journey to Italy. Set into the mountain, surrounded by rich Mediterranean vegetation, Positano is so picturesque as to seem a spontaneous stage setting. The town develops vertically. The homes, one on top of the other, are characterized by arched porticos that give onto the sea and are painted in pastel colors, giving in the look of a multifaceted precious stone.

Back to Naples and evening on your own.

May 10 Departure Pick up and transfer to Naples airport

Prices
- $3,975 per person (double occupancy)
- +$600 single supplement
- $6,550 per person (double occupancy; add $750 single supplement) Campania and Liguria Tour (5/4/18 – 5/16/18)

Included
- 6 night accommodation in Naples, breakfast included, sea view room on request (with an extra cost)
- 2 dinners, drinks not included
- 1 lunch and mozzarella demonstration
- private guide: 5 full days from May 5 to May 9
- private transfers and excursions by minibus with air conditioning
- reservation and entrance: Chiostro Santa Chiara, Orto Botanico, La Mortella, Villa Cimbrone, Villa Rufolo, Villa San Michele
- hydrofoil return tickets to Ischia and Capri islands

Not included
- International flights
- Gratuity for guides
- Travel insurance
- Meals and drinks other than those specified