



# **TREASURES OF ITALY'S FAR SOUTH:** Exploring Puglia, Basilicata & Calabria

*September 26 – October 5, 2023*





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).

Accompanying our small group will be expert guides throughout who will illuminate travelers on unique history, culture, and culinary traditions of the region including abundant opportunity to enjoy the foods and wines that are unique to Southern Italy.

One of the great pleasures of the trip is the magnificent countryside through which we will travel, replete with vineyards, ancient olive groves, and picturesque hill towns overlooking the Ionian Sea. Life has changed little through the centuries in many of these villages, and in some, a dialect derived from ancient Greek is still spoken. We will feast on the local cuisine, including fruits and vegetables fresh from the garden, and regional specialties, including cheeses and wines. Our leisurely lunches and dinners – many of which are included – are sure to be among your fondest memories of your travels. Throughout the trip, our expert guides will provide insight into the history and culture of Puglia, Basilicata and Calabria, which make this part of Italy so special.

For those who are able to extend their stay, we are pleased to offer an optional three-night extension in Sicily, with accommodations in elegant Taormina, with its important Greco-Roman theater looking out to Mount Etna, and its promenade lined with stylish shops and boutiques.

We hope you will join us on this memorable exploration of Italy’s Far South.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Cary DeWitt Allyn'.

Cary DeWitt Allyn  
Director, Vanderbilt Travel Program

**P.S.** Our tour operator for this program is Thalassa Journeys, which brings over four decades of experience in operating distinctive educational journeys in Italy and throughout the Mediterranean. Vanderbilt Alumni can anticipate a truly unique and rewarding experience on this custom-designed journey.

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









Scilla castle with pizza and wine, Calabria

## ITINERARY

Tuesday, September 26, 2023

### DEPART THE USA

Depart the United States for Bari, Italy.

Wednesday, September 27

### BARI, Puglia, Italy / MARTINA FRANCA

Arrive in 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

Thursday, September 28

### 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

Friday, September 29

### 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



Cattolica, Stilo's 10th-century Byzantine church



Landscape in Calabria





Gerace

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. 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

*Saturday, September 30*

**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 opulent luxury and the pursuit of excessive pleasure. Very little remains of the city, which was destroyed by Croton in 510 BC, but the museum exhibits artifacts from the excavations. Enter Calabria and stop at the hill town of Rossano to visit its cathedral, which houses the celebrated 6th-century *Codex Purpureus* (Purple Codex), believed to be the oldest illuminated gospel. Then on to Croton, which occupies the site of

ancient Kroton. Founded in 710 BC, Kroton rose to become one of the most important and powerful cities of Magna Graecia. Here Pythagoras founded his famed school of philosophy. Check into the *Hotel Lido degli Scogli* for two nights.

Meals: B, L, D

*Sunday, October 1*

**CROTONE / SANTA SEVERINA / CROTONE**

This morning tour Croton, including its castle, archaeological park and museum. After an independent lunch, proceed to the medieval hill-top town of Santa Severina, dominated by its castle, which dates from the period of Norman domination. Of notable interest are the remains of a Byzantine church with frescoed walls and of a necropolis of the same historical period. Return to Croton for overnight.

Meals: B, D

*Monday, October 2*

**CROTONE / STILO / GERACE / SIDERNO**

Depart Croton in the morning and proceed along Calabria's Ionian coast, where we find the 11th-century church of Santa Maria della Roccella, a majestic monument despite its ruined condition. View impressive coastal scenery, before arriving 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



Al fresco lunch in Matera



beautiful inlaid marble altar. Overnight at the *Grand Hotel President*, a beachfront property in Siderno.

Meals: B, L, D

*Tuesday, October 3*

**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 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

*Wednesday, October 4*

**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, during which you may wish to stroll along the Lungomare, a coastal street that offers magnificent panoramic views that extend beyond the Strait of Messina to Sicily. In the evening, enjoy a farewell dinner.

Meals: B, D

*Thursday, October 5*

**REGGIO DI CALABRIA / USA**

Transfer to the airport for the return flight home.

Meals: B

## OPTIONAL EXTENSION TO SICILY:

*October 5-8, 2023*



### *Taormina*

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:**

\$1,880 per person, double occupancy.  
Single room supplement: \$330.



*Crotone*

## RATE

\$5,190 per person, double occupancy.

Single room supplement: \$790

## PROGRAM INCLUSIONS

- Three nights at the *Relais Villa San Martino*, Martina Franca; two nights at the *Hotel Lido degli Scogli*, Cortone; one night at the *Grand Hotel President*, Siderno; two nights at the *Excelsior Palace Hotel*, Reggio di Calabria.
- American breakfast each morning at the hotels.
- Four lunches and five dinners, with wine or beer.
- 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.

**NOT INCLUDED:** Airfare; travel insurance; expenses of a personal nature; any items not specified in the itinerary or in the Program Inclusions.

FOR INFORMATION,  
PLEASE CONTACT  
VANDERBILT  
TRAVEL OFFICE  
AT  
615-322-3673  
OR

[alumni.travel@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:alumni.travel@vanderbilt.edu)

## REGISTRATION

Enclosed is my check or credit card no. for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (\$1,000 per person) as a deposit to hold \_\_\_\_\_ place(s) on on *Treasures of Italy's Far South*, Sept 26 – October 5, 2023 with Vanderbilt Alumni Association. I understand that final payment is due June 28, 2023, ninety (90) days prior to departure and is payable by check or credit card.

Please make check payable to and mail with this registration form to:

**Thalassa Journeys**, 8815 Conroy-Windermere Rd., Suite 406, Orlando, FL 32835  
Phone Toll-Free: (866) 633-3611

**For further information, contact Vanderbilt Travel Office at 615.322.3673 or e-mail [alumni.travel@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:alumni.travel@vanderbilt.edu).**

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### Preference at hotels:

Double accommodation     Double Bed     Single Bed

Single accommodation     *Bed configuration cannot be guaranteed.*

FIRST                      MIDDLE                      LAST                      (AS ON YOUR PASSPORT)                      DOB                      CLASS YEAR

FIRST                      MIDDLE                      LAST                      (AS ON YOUR PASSPORT)                      DOB                      CLASS YEAR

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TELEPHONE (DAY) \_\_\_\_\_

(EVENING) \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

**Each participant must sign below: I/We have read the "General Information" section and agree to its terms.**

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**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:** In the event of cancellation, deposits will be refunded in full until November 29, 2021, after which a \$300 per person administrative fee applies. 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. Thalassa Journeys acts 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 these 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 thereto. Resolution of any disputes arising hereunder shall be affected exclusively in the state or federal courts presiding in Florida, pursuant to applicable Florida 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.

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**Join Vanderbilt Alumni on an exclusive Journey of Discovery  
and Learning to Italy's Far South**  
*September 26 - October 5, 2023*

Scilla

**For Reservations and Information,  
please contact Vanderbilt Travel Office  
at 615.322.3673**

