



THE VERSAILLES FOUNDATION, INC.

“2022 ROYAL SICILY ESCAPADE I”

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17TH

TO

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27TH

PROGRAM SKETCH:

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17TH: PALERMO!

It is not a typically European city nor even an Italian one. A mixture of panache and neglect, a place of beauty that can be hideously ugly, it has no equal on the planet when it comes to its stunning Arabo-Norman legacy.

You will be picked up at the airport by individual car



& driver. Dropped off at our just so located comfortable hotel which was a convent then the Stock Exchange.



Noon to 3:00 PM: Welcome buffet in the courtyard

4:00PM: Screening of Luciano Visconti's "The Leopard" in the reserved Ducrot Room designed in the indigenous Sicilian Art Nouveau: "Liberty".

7:30 PM: Dinner hosted by the Duke & Duchess of Palma in their XVIth Century Palace. This was the last residence of "The Leopard's" ("Il Gattopardo") author, Guiseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa - The Duke is the late author's cousin and adopted son. It will be highly edible as the energetic Duchess heads in situ a great culinary school.



SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 18TH:

9:15 AM: We leave on foot with our Guide Extraordinaire: Madame Maggio for

10:00 AM- 11:00 AM: Mass in the Palatine Chapel masterpiece apex of the Arabo-Norman collective artistic genius. Walking tour before and after lunch of central Palermo.

8:00 PM: Dinner not far from our hotel in a restaurant I like, opened just for us. The owner is the cook.



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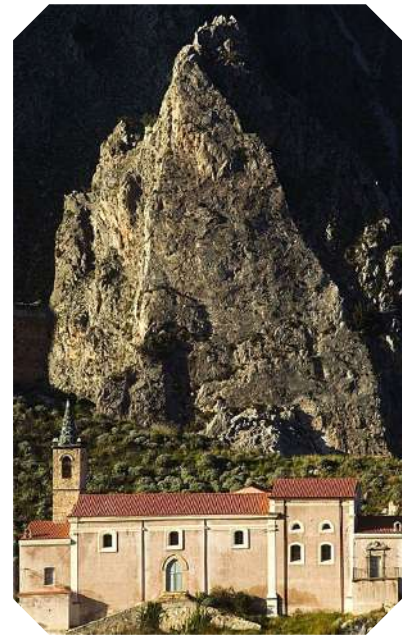
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 19TH:

10:00 AM: Departure by Petit Bus to environs of Palermo through the extraordinary landscape of the Madonia Mountain Park with Princess Carine Vanni Mantegna di Gangi. We are all on a secret mission with her and the surprise lies within a village known to her.

We will then together lunch in the beautiful town of Castelbuono nearby and end with the famous Fiasconara Panettone as dessert. I guarantee you that we will load up then and there for many a morning breakfast whilst in Sicily!



8:00 PM: Dinner "en ville"



TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20TH:

10:00 AM prompt: Visit of the Martorana to be seen in the morning light playing on George of Antioch's mosaics ordered in 1143. In turn vibrantly golden, spring green, ivory, azure blue, grape red... Next to it San Cataldo with its Saracenic bulbous red domes often compared to a Eunuch's hat !

Further on we introduce you to Sicily's XVIIIth century unique natural genius of a sculpturer: Giacomo Serpotta.



It would have been and is next to impossible to concentrate on penance, prayer or rosary with such eye boggling hilariousness, sensuality, theatricality, naughtiness, plumpness and bubbling perfect allegorical vignettes

in clouds and clouds of a white sheen that looks like marble but ain't. Yes, pure genius and ...wonderfully kitsch!

Lunch somewhere in all of this will calm our eyes.

7:30 PM: Dinner, hosted by the ravishing, née Française, Princess Carine Vanni di Gangi in the, rarely by appointment only, famous Palazzo Valguarnera-Gangi.

We will dine in it's sumptuous, words fail me, Room of Mirrors. This is the ballroom setting in Visconti's film "The Leopard".

Just the tiled floor itself is wild!

Cocktail Attire/ Jacket and Tie are "de rigueur" per favore.



WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21ST:

Last night's baroque splendor gives in today to the epitome intrinsic Sicilian Art Nouveau Style named: "Stile Liberty" (1900-1914)

10:00 AM: The Villa Malfitano was built in 1886 by Giuseppe Whitaker, nephew of the Englishman Ingham who made a fortune from steam ships and Marsala Wine. Its contents are intact and it is fun to visit knowing also that General George Patton stayed there while planning his invasion of Southern Italy.

1:30 PM/1:45 PM: Light lunch at my favorite Spinnato (1860). Light on the entrées but heavy on the best Baba au Rhum, patisseries and gelato's ever!

Petit Bus back to hotel: Pack for tomorrow's departure.

8:00 PM: Dinner on the square in front of the Palazzo Gangi itself. No longer outsiders, we!



THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22ND:



9:30 AM: Early departure from Palermo in bus to Syracuse. Midway we stop off at the Villa Romana del Casale built in the IIIrd Century AD by a wealthy patrician as his hunting lodge. The Roman mosaics discovered here are among the most splendid from the ancient world. The Villa's Forty rooms are "carpeted" with 37,800 sq. feet of some of the most magnificent mosaics in Western Europe. It is a romp of birds, plants, wild animals

even the chariot race at Rome's Circus Maximus is clearly seen. In the "Salla delle Dieci Ragazze", ten young women athletes wearing strapless two-piece bikinis, play ball, weight train, discus throw...

Late lunch at the renowned Mecca of Sicilian cuisine run by the most wonderful couple of Chef and pastry Chef!

Evening arrival in Syracuse at our water's edge hotel.

That night: Room Service!



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FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23RD:

We are staying on the Ortygia Island of Syracuse. Once a formidable competitor of Athens in it's heyday it dared take on Carthage and even Rome. Birthplace of the Greek physicist/mathematician Archimedes, so absent minded that he would forget to drink, eat and bathe. His servants would forcibly drag him to the baths and there was rinsed: "Eureka" The Archimedes Principle! That a body immersed in fluid, loses weight equal to the weight of the amount of fluid it displaces.



10:30 AM: Leave hotel on foot with Madame Maggio to check out the Market and spend a wonderful day meandering the old town. We halt for a super casual no reservation lunch at a string of little wood tables to devour the yummy Calapiada's on the quiet Via Santa Teresa.

6:00 PM: Harbor "golden hour" tour in Signor Carmelo's red canvas top boat before...



8:00 PM: Dinner in a very simple locanda.



SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24TH:

10:30 AM: departure in Petit Bus for Noto, 45 minutes away. A gem of creamy tufa stone baroque architecture constructed like a stage set. Walk through this perfect town, stop off at a recently renovated Palazzo on our way to a rather refined lunch.



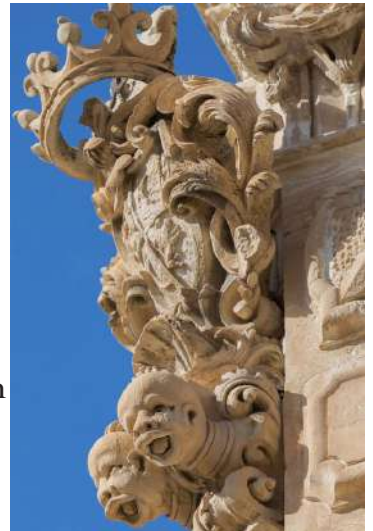
8:00 PM: Dinner that night back in Syracuse is hosted by the delightful Baron and Baroness Beneventano in their Palazzo. Cocktails on the Piano Nobile overlooking the most beautiful square in Italy followed by dinner in their secretive "Cantina"...

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SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25TH:



11:00 AM: Pop in to the tiny "Papyrus Museum" with views to the water and the fort. To my surprise I found it fascinating. The Cyprus Papyrus grow in Egypt and also, known from antiquity, in Syracuse from which paper is derived. It has kept its name in many languages: papier



(French and German), papel (Spanish), paper (English).

Lunch aboard with Baron Beneventano for a most personable cruise...!

Evening cocktails bathed in the beauty of the view followed by a panoramic dinner.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 26TH:



10:00 AM: departure by Petit Bus to Ragusa Ibla through a memorable and eerie landscape often invoked in Sicilian literature and cinema. We enter and exit through its lovely "Giardino" walk about this charming medieval and baroque town before lunch at a Baglio. A typical Sicilian courtyard restaurant with amazing food. Home to pack for next day final departure.



Dinner in the rustic-chic restaurant "du jour"-

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27TH:

Morning Departures from Syracuse Algila Hotel to Catania Airport forty five minutes away. You will be taken to the airport by individual car and driver.

Au revoir and Godspeed!!

Your delighted and grateful,

Barbara de Portago!

