

Divine Sicily Spring 2012 Food & Wine Tour

April 14 – April 23, 2012

Arrive Catania: Saturday April 14

Depart Trapani or Palermo: Monday April 23

Day 1

Saturday, April 14: Arrive Catania airport and transport to the Tenuta located near the town of Linguaglossa on the northeastern side of Mt. Etna. The farmhouse and cellars date back to 1815 and are surrounded by organically cultivated vineyards. This beautiful agriturismo in one of the most diverse and picturesque regions of Sicily will be our home for our first 3 days. Get settled in and relax before we sample some of the wines from the estate. Dinner at the farmhouse.

Day 2

Sunday, April 15: In the morning after breakfast, we travel to the tiny town of Solicchiata, for a wine tasting/discussion with Frank Cornelissen. Frank uses local grape varieties from ancient ungrafted vines that express territorial identity. The opportunity to meet this controversial master promises to give you a completely different view of winemaking. Then, on to the nearby town of Randazzo – this medieval jewel has remained undisturbed by the eruptions of Etna. We'll visit a coppersmith and stroll the narrow streets where the churches are built from blocks of lava. After lunch at a local trattoria, we'll have time to relax at the farmhouse before heading out to spend the afternoon at nearby picturesque Taormina. Tonight – pizza pie for dinner!

Day 3

Monday, April 16: For our last day on the east coast of the island, we'll take a drive down the coast to catch the Circumetnea train. As the train circles around the huge volcano, we'll have breathtaking views of the Ionian Sea, with some stops in some of the little towns that cling to the sides of the largest volcano in Europe. After lunch, we'll make our way back to the farmhouse for a special cooking class with Carmela. We'll enjoy what we made in class for our dinner that night.

Day 4

Tuesday, April 17: After an early breakfast, we say farewell to our hosts at the Tenuta and make our way to the southeastern part of the island. We'll stop for lunch along the way at a vineyard then on to Palma di Montechiaro, where we'll be staying at the olive estate and agriturismo, Mandranova. We'll tour the Mandranova estate with the proprietors Giuseppe and Silvia di Vincenzo, get

settled, relax, sit by the pool and take a swim if it's warm enough, and have dinner there at the farm.

Day 5

Wednesday, April 18: After breakfast we'll take a trip to the lovely vineyard/winery, Feudo Principi di Butera, for a wine tasting and light lunch. We'll return to Mandranova for a cooking class and a special tasting of their fine mono-cultivar olive oils pressed there at the estate. Dinner at Mandranova, and then off to bed.

Day 6

Thursday, April 19: Breakfast, then depending how energetic we are, you'll have a choice of relaxing by the pool or we can arrange a tour of nearby Agrigento – The Valley of the Temples and Archeological Museum. This is one of the most important archeological sites in the world, founded as a Greek colony in the 6th century BC. We can also arrange a visit to the nearby town of Palma di Montechiaro, which is famous for the novel "Il Gattopardo" (a great read – "The Leopard" in English) and the Castle di Montechiaro perched on a cliff overlooking the sea. We'll have our dinner at Mandranova.

Day 7

Friday, April 20: Breakfast at Mandranova and then on to west coast of the island near the city of Marsala. The Baglio, surrounded by vineyards, where we'll stay for the last three days of our adventure, is beautifully situated on a hill overlooking the Egadi Islands. This part of Sicily is closer to Tunisia than to the mainland of Italy so the food culture and architecture deeply reflect a North African-Arab influence. We'll get settled and then take a tour of the cellars with wine-maker Giacomo Ansaldi. Dinner there and then off to bed.

Day 8

Saturday, April 21: After breakfast, we will take a short drive to the nearby ancient salt-flats first started by the Phoenicians and still operating today as it did thousands of years ago. Then on to the ancient walled city of Marsala, which takes its name from the Arabic, Mars-al-Allah, meaning the harbor of God. We'll visit the open-air Mercado, have a Marsala wine tasting along with a light lunch, and then head back to the Baglio for a cooking class with Fabio. We'll enjoy what we've made in class for dinner that night. More wine!

Day 9

Sunday, April 22: For our last day on the island, we'll take a day trip to Bosco Falconeria near the town of Alcamo, to meet esteemed food writer and historian, Mary Taylor Simeti. We will be able to taste the wines of their family estate and enjoy a light lunch with products grown there and on nearby farms. I highly

recommend reading any work of Mary Taylor Simeti's before coming on our journey. A few of my favorites are, "On Persephone's Island: A Sicilian Journal", and "Pomp and Sustenance 25 Centuries of Sicilian Food". From there we'll drive to Segesta to view one of the best-preserved Greek Temples in the world. We'll head back to the Baglio for a special farewell dinner.

Day 10

Monday, April 23: Breakfast, then transfer to Trapani or Palermo airport. Arrivederci to Sicilia!