

**Castles, Vineyards and Ancient Sites
in this Sun-kissed South-East Corner Of Sicily**

A Wine Tasting Tour in the Ragusa Region of Sicily

19 - 24 September 2019

Ragusa Ibla, Sicily



The Tour visits the South East corner of Sicily, a beautiful, unspoilt region. Backed by the Iblei Mountains which descend gently south to the sea, they are ideal for wine production and the region has some of the best vineyards in Sicily. With viniculture going back to Greek and Roman Times, our visits to some vineyards combine excellent wines with some outstanding historical sites.

Our hostess is Laura D' Andrea an artist belonging to one of the ancient Sicilian families, who with her local knowledge has organised for us to meet the owners of vineyards which are part of their estates. In this way we will appreciate the character of the area on a social as well as on a touristic aspect.

It is no accident that the Italian State Television chose the region for their series on Montalbano and we include one of his favourite Restaurants and a view of his house in the Tour.

ITINERARY:

Thursday 19 September

Flight to Catania, transfer to our hotel Relais Parco Cavalonga, an elegant 4 star hotel set in the countryside and surrounded by its own park of 18 hectares.

8 pm Dinner in the hotel's Restaurant "I Paladini"

Friday 20 September

10 am Departure by bus to Villa Tellaro, a recently restored Roman Villa with the most beautiful mosaics, comparable to those of Villa Romana del Casale but on a much smaller scale. We then visit the town of Noto, renowned for its outstanding Baroque architecture, now a World Heritage sight, and Italy's most famous Ice cream Coffee Bar known for its exotic flavours.

Wine tasting at Cantina Planeta, lunch at Villa del Casale, owned by Baron Modica di San Giovanni. On his property we will visit the Museo della Tonnara di Porto Palo.

On our return by bus on the coastal road, we will see the Tonnara where the fisherman leave and return by bringing back their huge Tonni (Tuna Fish).

7 pm Montalbano evening: We will have dinner at one of his favourite restaurants, Da Carmelo and enjoy the dishes that were shown during the TV series. After dinner we will stroll on the beach to Montalbano's house on the sea.

Saturday 21 September

11 am Departure by bus to Acate, view the Medieval Castle of Prince Paterno, followed by wine tasting and lunch at Cantina Valle dell'Acate owned by the family Jacona from Vittoria.

3.30 Return to hotel to enjoy a rest or a swim in one of its two pools.

7 pm Transfer to Villa Kamarina, the D'Andrea's family home, for a Gala evening (dress code: long white dresses or kaftans for the ladies; elegant trousers and shirts for the gentlemen.) The 18C house is built on the ruins of a sacred area the Acropolis of the ancient Greek town Kamarina with magnificent sea views. It is adjacent to the Greek Archaeological Park. Among the guests will be local friends of the Hostess Laura D' Andrea. The dinner will have a menu of authentic Sicilian dishes from recipes of Laura's Grandmother including Cous-Cous with fresh seafood and fish; ricotta and veal in mint sauce accompanied by fine wines.



Sunday 22 September

12 noon Depart for Vittoria, wine tasting and lunch at Cantina S. Tresa.

5.30 pm Depart for Chiaramonte Gulfi, known as the Balcony of Sicily for the wide ranging views south to the sea and north to the Iblei Mountains and in the far distance Etna. Wine tasting in the Cantina Gulfi and afterwards dinner at Restaurant Majore where for 200 years they have offered a menu of ancient recipes.

10.30 pm Return to hotel.

Monday 23 September

8 am Depart for Villa Romana del Casale, which we will visit, hopefully ahead of the crowds. The villa is a most amazing reconstruction of a dwelling thought to have been a royal residence, certainly owned by a famous and wealthy Roman. The Mosaics represent many African animals and scenes of Roman aristocratic life. They are extremely extensive throughout the Villa and truly magnificent. They were beautifully restored over ten years and uncovered only two years ago.

Lunch in a charming restaurant near the entrance to the Villa. We will then visit briefly the medieval town of Piazza Armerina and enjoy wine tasting at Cantina Feudo del Pisciotto, which has undergone an imaginative restoration of a Norman Country House. Return to hotel.

8 pm Dinner in hotel.

Tuesday 24 September

9.00 am Depart to Ragusa Ibla, one of the more picturesque towns in Sicily. Destroyed by the earthquake of 1693 the town has mainly Baroque Architecture. One of the most magnificent examples is the Palazzo del Barone Arezzo di Donnafugata where we will be entertained to lunch by members of this illustrious family.

Departure to Catania Airport for return Flight to London.

PRICE £1520 for Members £1600 for Friends £1690 for others No single supplement
Deposit £400

The price includes: 5 nights hotel B@B, all meals including wine, wine tasting, transport throughout, guiding and entrance tickets; **FLIGHTS NOT INCLUDED**