



Towns of Emilia-Romagna September 2010 – Seven Nights in Northern Italy

The Glasgow Art Club is pleased to announce preliminary plans for another members' tour, to Emilia-Romagna in September to explore its rich legacy of art and architecture, ancient mosaics and monuments. The format will be slightly different this year as we intend to include a more formal programme of privately guided visits, with appointments in place. This will be organised by Edinburgh based tour operator Osprey Holidays who will also make the travel and accommodation arrangements.

As the name of a district, **Emilia-Romagna** dates only from the Risorgimento (c.1860) but its use is derived from the Via Emilia, the great Roman road built in 187 BC by M.Aemilius Lepidus as a military thoroughfare from which to guard the newly conquered lands of Cisalpine Gaul. Emilia is the north and western part with Bologna as its chief town and the eastern and southern part of the region is Romagna. All the principal towns, except Ferrara and Ravenna, lie along the line of the Via Emilia at the foot of the Apennines. Although considered a single region from a political and administrative point of view, Emilia and Romagna each retains its own character, history and traditions.

Flight options are currently under consideration and our first preference is for a direct service from either Glasgow or Edinburgh; in any event, private return coach transfers will leave from and return to the centre of Glasgow. There is much to enjoy in this captivating area where we plan to stay for seven nights with hotel accommodation in or near Bologna or Ferrara. A private coach will support the schedule of visits and you may rest assured that care will be taken in the selection of the specialist local guide who will accompany us during the day. No doubt we shall also enjoy some of the excellent food and wines for which the province is renowned!

One of the oldest and finest cities in Italy and seat of a distinguished university, **Bologna** is fascinating and two or three days will be spent absorbing its treasures. Built almost exclusively of red brick, the old town has attractive porticoes along almost every street. Highlights are numerous and varied: the symbolic Due Torri, the two leaning towers which dominate the Piazza di Porta Revegiana, the splendid crenellated façade of the 14th century Merchant Palazzo, once the main trading area for the Bolognese merchants and an excellent example of Italian Gothic architecture; the university's Pinacoteca Nazionale, especially important for its collection from the Bolognese and Emilian schools and paintings by artists who worked in Bologna, including Giotto, Raphael and Perugino; also the outstanding Orto Botanico, the university botanical gardens founded in 1568 at the initiative of Ulisse Aldrovandi and now located in the old Collgio Ferrario.

The monastic complex of Santo Stefano is wonderful: an ancient, picturesque group of buildings mentioned as early as 887 and wholly dedicated to St Stephen the Martyr; Museo Morandi, containing the most representative holding of Giorgio Morandi's works in existence, donated to the city by his family and the elegant Piazza Marco Minghetti, named after the eminent economist and statesman. Other treats include the 14th century Gothic Santa Maria dei Servi Basilica with its remarkable courtyard, the Romanesque-Gothic style Casa Isolani, one of the few examples of 13th century civil construction in Bologna, the Palazzo Bevilacqua, not typically Bolognese in style and the Torre dei Catalani (Tower House of the Catalan family), a noteworthy and rare example of an early 13th century noble residence.



Ravenna

Mantua

Bologna

Bologna

Bologna

A day will be spent in each of three irresistible cities: Mantua, Ferrara and Ravenna. With so many of the early mosaics of Constantinople destroyed in the iconoclasm of the 8th century, those of **Ravenna** hold special importance. The mosaics of Ravenna include scenes from the Old Testament, of the life and miracles of Christ and the lives of the apostles. The city is often described as a showcase of Byzantine art. A garden surrounds Ravenna's famous monumental complex: San Vitale, the most precious example of Byzantine art surviving in Western Europe. The chief glories of the church are in the choir and apse where the mosaics and stucco decoration are exquisite.

The first great builder in the city was the formidable Galla Placidia, wife of the emperor Constantius II. A small oratory, once believed to be her mausoleum, is the earliest setting for surviving mosaics. Its exterior is quite plain but the interior, lit by alabaster windows, is famous for its astonishing, predominantly blue mosaics. A beautiful basilica to visit is Sant'Apollinare Nuovo where marvellous mosaics adorn the nave walls and just south of the city lies the basilica of Sant'Apollinare in Classe, consecrated by Archbishop Maximian in 549. The magnificent late 10th century campanile is the tallest and most handsome of all the towers of Ravenna and the mosaics of the apse are breathtaking.

Surrounded on three sides by the River Mincio (a tributary of the River Po), **Mantua** is an ancient town, birthplace of Virgil and famous for its associations with the Gonzaga under whose rule it flourished as a brilliant centre of art and civilisation in the 15th and 16th centuries. In its heart is the huge Palazzo Ducale of the Gonzago, celebrated for its Camera degli Sposi where the astonishing ceiling is frescoed by Mantegna. Other high points include the wonderful basilica of Sant'Andrea which remains the most complete architectural work by Leon Battista Alberti and his ducal church of San Sebastiano designed on a Greek-cross plan; also the dukes' summer villa and masterpiece of architect and painter Giulio Romano, Palazzo del Te and the Teatro Bibiena where Mozart gave the inaugural concert in 1770 at the age of 13.

Ferrara is famed as the residence of the Este dukes, whose court was one of the most illustrious of the Italian Renaissance. It is also the birthplace of a great sculptor, Alfonso Lombardi and of a great architect, Biagio Rossetti whose highest achievement was the 'Addizione', the northern extension of the city and one of the greatest feats of town planning of all time. The distinctly different southern district retains many cobbled streets and medieval houses. Not to be missed is the moated Castello Estense, the former dukes' palace where the Camerino del Bacchanali is frescoed by Camillo Filippi and his sons and the Chapel of Renée of France was one of the few Calvinist chapels in Italy to survive the Counter-Reformation; also the cathedral, dedicated to the Virgin Mary and St George, both of whom feature prominently on the façade. The Museo della Cattedrale contains good Flemish tapestries and from the old south doorway, charming 12th century reliefs of the *Months* may be seen (September, with the grape harvest is particularly notable). Begun by Rossetti, the multi-pinnacled Palazzo dei Diamanti takes its name from the diamond emblem of the Este, repeated 12,600 times on its façade and inside is the Pinacoteca Nazionale, especially noted for its paintings of the Ferrarese school. One of the most significant secular fresco cycles of the Renaissance is to be found in the Palazzo Schifanoia's Salon dei Mesi (these are now in rather poor condition but nonetheless, wonderful).

This promises to be an intriguing tour and we hope that you will be able to join us. There is no commitment at this stage. Comprehensive details and a booking form will be sent out at the end of April or very early May, with a view to receiving confirmed bookings by Thursday 20 May. **Members who would like to receive more information once plans are finalised should complete the reply slip below and return it by Monday 26 April 2010 to the Group Travel Department, Osprey Holidays Ltd., 5 Thistle Street, Edinburgh EH2 1DF**

Please send me details of the Glasgow Art Club visit to Emilia-Romagna in September 2010, once plans are finalised

Name/s: _____

Address including postcode: _____

Daytime telephone number: _____

Email address: _____

Number of places: _____