

# NAPLES & SORRENTO



## ITINERARY:

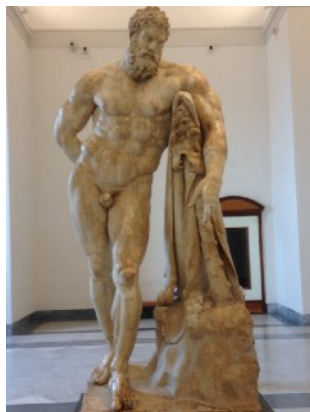
Our **7 nights/8 days Naples and Sorrento trip** starts at our Naples hotel and ends at Naples Airport. In terms of history, art and architecture this ancient city is quite simply the richest in Italy and, with its surroundings, has the largest number of UNESCO world heritage sites in the world! It would take months to see all that it has to offer and so this trip is designed to give you a flavour of what there is and of the city's unique character. We have specifically chosen not to cover the more 'obvious' sites, such as the better known museums, as these can be easily done independently at any other time. An integral part of this trip is also sampling some of the Campania region's great culinary and winemaking traditions, not to mention being plied with regular doses of coffee and ice-cream, all of which we shall do throughout. We are accompanied for most of the trip by our excellent guide Ludovica, who is also a passionate historian.

### Day 1

Meet on arrival at our hotel: San Francesco al Monte (4 nights), a converted Franciscan monastery perched on the slopes of the Vomero district and affording stunning views of the city below. We contract the larger rooms; the unusual feature of this hotel is the wonderful garden terrace it has on the top floor. Its location is also strategic, allowing easy movement in every direction. Depending on time of arrival, Anthony will walk the 'early birds' down to Via Toledo (15 minutes) for a light lunch and to stroll along one of the city's main thoroughfares. We eat out while in Naples, so shall be going to dinner by taxi.

### Day 2

Today we spend the day exploring and experiencing Naples' historical centre, visiting what has been the 'heart of the city' from ancient Greek times. The whole area is a treasure trove of art and architecture, from ancient to Romanesque, Norman to Gothic, Renaissance to Baroque, all mixed and superimposed. We shall visit some of the greatest churches and stroll the bustling and colourful lanes. After a traditional lunch at a renowned trattoria, we head for the Archaeological Museum, one of the greatest Roman art collections in the world.



### Day 3

We head north out of the city, to the coast of the Phlegrean Fields: Pozzuoli, Bacoli, Cumae, Baia. The coastline is a series of collapsed extinct volcanoes that form inlets and give safe anchorage, it was the headquarters of the Roman fleet and Patrician villas dotted its cliffs. We visit various sights, including the Piscina Mirabilis, an immense vaulted cistern that supplied fresh water to the Roman fleet and the Aragonese castle of Baia built on the remains of Julius Caesar's villa. Lunch will be in Pozzuoli where we shall also visit the superb amphitheatre.

### Day 4

A second full day in the city, this time in the hilltop residential quarter of the Vomero. We visit the stunning Charterhouse of San Martino, one of the biggest and richest in the world. After lunch we stroll in the public Bourbon Villa Floridiana to a terrace with some of the best views over the city. For those who want more, a ride in the metro takes us to the Cathedral of San Gennaro, an art treasure-house, containing possibly the 1st baptismal font in the Western World (Contemporary to Constantine), the largest single collection of silver in the world, fine Gothic marble facade, some of the best preserved funerary monuments from the Medieval period, ... the list goes on!

### Day 5

Today we depart Naples for Sorrento. On the way we visit Herculaneum, the Patrician 'gated city' where finds are better preserved and of finer quality than those of Pompeii. The site is extensive and we shall cover the 'highlights'. Then on to Stabiae where we visit the surprisingly little-frequented Villa of Poppea, Nero's 2nd wife. The quality of the original Roman frescoes are simply

unique! We then continue just past Sorrento to Relais Regina Giovanna, our lovely boutique accommodation (3 nights) set in 50 acres of olive and lemon groves. This 12 rooms property offers wonderful views of the Gulf of Naples and was the site of an ancient Roman seaside villa. Dinner at the hotel's excellent restaurant serving their own produce.

### Day 6

We spend the morning exploring historical Sorrento on foot. Despite the crowds there are many hidden lanes, beautiful palazzi, rich churches, and quiet corners. After lunch in town there is time to: explore independently, shop, or go back to our hotel for a swim at their private beach, lounge in its beautiful ground, or do whatever takes your fancy.

### Day 7

Today we visit the Amalfi Coast. The stunningly scenic drive from Sorrento over the Monti Lattari to Amalfi is one of the best coastal routes in the world (UNESCO) and has been the backdrop to numerous films. In Amalfi we visit the Basilica of St Andrew, a superb example of Medieval architecture, and stroll its narrow lanes. The town was the first Maritime Republic, its bishops were the Papal legates to the Greek Orthodox Emperors of Byzantium, and it was the port through which the compass, paper and gunpowder first arrived in Europe. We then head up to Ravello for lunch. Afternoon visit of Villa Rufolo with its world-renowned panoramic views of the coastline from its landscaped gardens.

### Day 8

Morning group transfer to Naples Airport