



CICERONI
T R A V E L

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS: CONNOISSEURS' ROME

TUESDAY 2 – SUNDAY 7 MARCH 2021 (6 DAYS)

LECTURER: TOM DUNCAN

£2750

- **Exceptional level of private access to spectacular palaces, villas & collections**
- **Rare opportunity to visit the Sistine Chapel, privately, at night & with no others present**
- **Our group will be received as guests in several magnificent private palaces & villas**
- **Explore the unprecedented riches of Villa Borghese with its six Caravaggio paintings & the finest collection of Bernini's sculptures**
- **Visit based in the very comfortable 3* Superior Albergo del Senato located just by the Pantheon**



Annibale Caracci, *Two putti spy on a pair of Heavenly Lovers*, Palazzo Farnese, Rome

OVERVIEW

If all roads lead to Rome, not all organised visits open the doors of Rome's many private palaces and villas! This visit is an exception as it is almost entirely devoted to a series of specially arranged *private* visits. We shall enjoy extraordinary levels of access to some of the most important palaces, villas and collections in Rome.

How is this possible? Over the years CICERONI Travel has built up an unrivalled series of introductions and contacts in Roman society, both sacred and secular. This allows us to organise what we believe to be the finest tour of its kind available. It is an opportunity which you are cordially invited to participate in as our guests. The overriding theme of the visit will be to allow you to enjoy a level of access to remarkable buildings and their collections, whilst recreating the perspective of an earlier, more privileged world.

These visits will chart the transformation of Rome during the Renaissance and Baroque periods as a succession of remarkable Popes, Cardinals and Princes vied to outdo each other. All the great names of Renaissance and Baroque Rome will be encountered: Raphael, Michelangelo, Bramante, the Carracci family, Caravaggio, Bernini and Borromini - possibly the most exciting chapter in the history of western art?

Your physical comfort is guaranteed: our chosen hotel is the very comfortable **3* Superior Albergo del Senato**, just by the Pantheon and situated in the heart of the historic centre of the city. Throughout the visit we shall use a series of Mercedes 'people carriers' thus ensuring a truly door-to-door service for all visits.

ITINERARY OUTLINE

Day 1: Tuesday 2 March – We fly from Heathrow to Rome's Fiumicino airport and continue into **Rome** to our hotel, the **3* Superior Albergo del Senato**. Later that evening we have our first dinner in a local restaurant – wine, water and coffee are included with all group lunches and dinners.

Day 2: Wednesday 3 March – We begin our first day as the guests of a noble family visiting their private sixteenth century **Palazzo**, built by Giacomo della Porta and Carlo Maderno and which contains excellent interiors together with an important collection of remarkable Florentine paintings. The owner, whose family have lived here since the seventeenth century, will be our guide. We continue to nearby **San Luigi dei Francesi** to see the famous **Contarelli Chapel** with the cycle of paintings by Caravaggio devoted to the life of St Matthew. We cross the Tiber into **Trastevere** for a group lunch after which we visit privately the exquisite **Villa Farnesina**. Built for Agostino Chigi, the rich papal banker and treasurer, it contains some of the finest frescoes of the High Renaissance by Raphael and his contemporaries. Following our visit, we cross the **Ponte Sisto** on foot and conclude the day with a late afternoon private visit to the most magnificent renaissance palace in Rome, **Palazzo Farnese**. This was begun by Pope Paul III and involved several architects, including Michelangelo. Its glory is the most important and splendid frescoed secular reception room in Italy, the famous **Galleria**, carried out by

Annibale Carracci and his team from Bologna. The palace is now the French Embassy and is normally difficult to visit. Following a busy day of private visits, we return to our hotel where the evening will be free.

Day 3: Thursday 4 March – We spend this morning visiting two important private villas situated in the **Ludovisi** and **Salaria** districts of Rome. We begin at **Villa Ludovisi-Boncompagni**, where a member of the family will host our private visit. The small villa contains celebrated frescoes, notably Guercino's *Aurora* and, a true rarity, the only ceiling fresco ever painted by Caravaggio. Following a short break, by special arrangement we continue to one of the truly great Roman villas, a veritable 'temple' to the Grand Tour where we shall see some notable works of art and arguably one the world's foremost collections of antiquities still in private hands. Very much not open, the owners have asked for further details not to be published. We continue to the **Spanish Steps** area where you will have time for lunch, not included. It is likely there will be no formal visits this afternoon and the remainder of the afternoon and evening should be free for private explorations.

Day 4: Friday 5 March – This morning we walk the short distance to visit a church normally not accessible to the public, **San Giuliano dei Fiamminghi**. This is the Flemish Church in Rome, under the protection of the King of the Belgians. It contains William Kent's only known fresco in Rome, which he carried out before he returned to England. We continue beyond the **Corso** for the remainder of the morning to visit privately **Palazzo Colonna**, the most magnificent of all Roman palaces, where we shall visit both the State *and* the rarely seen private apartments. Its frescoed spaces display a bewildering array of pictures, decorative arts and furniture of breath-taking quality. These culminate in *the* grandest of all grand Galleries from eighteenth century Italy. Following lunch, not included, we visit the **Capitoline Palace** complex to see the temporary exhibition of some of the famous **Torlonia Marbles**, usually housed in the Villa Albani Torlonia, which is not open to the public. Recently restored, these have not been seen, even by scholars, for a very long time indeed. You will also have time to explore the main museum independently, after which the evening will be free.

Day 5: Saturday 6 March – We drive up to the exclusive **Aventine Hill** for a private visit to see the **Villa of the Knights of Malta**, where we visit the remarkable **Church** designed by Piranesi and the surrounding gardens. After coffee we drive on to the **Janiculum Hill** to visit **San Pietro in Montorio** where in the cloister Bramante designed the first building of the Roman High Renaissance, the remarkable **Tempietto**. We end the morning with a private visit to the **Villa Lante al Gianicolo**, with perhaps the finest balcony view looking down on the city? We return to the centre for lunch (not included) and some free time for private explorations. Later in the afternoon, we regroup for our private evening visit to **The Vatican Museums** to see the **Sistine Chapel** and other highlights of the papal collections including Raphael's *Stanza* after which we have a final group dinner.

Day 6: Sunday 7 March – We begin with Borromini's masterpiece, **San Ivo della Sapienza**, rarely available to view but this morning we shall visit it. We end our week at **Villa Borghese** which contains Rome's finest art collection, including all of Bernini's early sculptural masterpieces such as his *David, Apollo and Daphne* and *Pluto and Proserpina*. It has marvellous paintings by Raphael, Titian and no less than six major paintings by Caravaggio. After some free time for lunch, not included, we continue to the airport for our return flight to Heathrow.

PRACTICALITIES

Price £2750 **Without flights** £2595 **Deposit** £395

Single Supplement £349 (Double Room for Sole Use)

Room Upgrades Pantheon View £245 per room (sharing), subject to availability

Hotel 5 nights with breakfast at the 3* Superior Hotel Albergo del Senato

Flights British Airways

Outward: **BA560** Depart London Heathrow (Terminal 5) **1250** arrive Rome Fiumicino **1625**

Return: **BA559** Depart Rome Fiumicino **1655** arrive London Heathrow (Terminal 5) **1840**

Price includes 2 dinners & 1 lunch with water, coffee & wine, all entrances, including private visits (including Palazzo Farnese and the Sistine Chapel), all local transfers, entry fees, gratuities & City tax, the services of Tom Duncan & Tour Manager James Hill

Not included Travel to/from Heathrow, 3 dinners and 4 lunches



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