Travel with the World Affairs Council of Charlotte

Travel to the Magical Lakes of Northern Italy

September 18th – 27th, 2016 (10 days)

*Optional two-day extension in Venice available (see below)

Please contact Ljubomir (L.J.) Stambuk, President & CEO of the World Affairs Council of Charlotte via email or call 704-687-7760 if you have questions or need more information about the trip.

If you’re interested in traveling with the World Affairs Council of Charlotte, confirm your interest via email or call 704-687-7762.

Prices for the trip are on Page 15 below.

A deposit of $500 is due no later than July 1st, 2016 to secure your seat for the trip. Full payment is due by August 5th, 2016.

*Please note that we have received a lot of interest in this trip, so please secure your seat as soon as possible to ensure a spot!

**We will offer an optional, two-day extension in Venice. Please let us know as soon as possible if you are interested in this exclusive opportunity. The cost of the extension will be determined by the number of participants.
Day 1: Sunday, September 18th, 2016

Depart from Charlotte-Douglas International Airport via American Airlines at 2:27 p.m., arriving in NYC-JFK at 4:18 p.m. The group will connect here with American Airlines non-stop to Milan/Malpensa Airport, departing at 6:16 p.m. and arriving the following morning at 8:20 a.m.

Time-appropriate meals and in-flight entertainment will be offered en route.

Day 2: Monday, September 19th, 2016

Arrive at Malpensa Airport in Milan at 8:20 a.m.

Welcome to Italy.

Travelers will have a private transfer to Stresa on Lake Maggiore upon arrival at Malpensa Airport. They will arrive at the historic five-star Grand Hotel des Iles Borromees, the group’s hotel for the next four nights.

The five-star Grand Hotel des Iles Borromees is located in Stresa. It lies on the shores of Lake Maggiore and combines sumptuous elegance and tradition with the charm of the Italian luxury Grand Hotels.

Spend the next four nights at this beautiful and elegant hotel. Our guests will have the luxury of staying in garden-view rooms. A supplement applies for an upgrade to lake-view rooms.

After having time to check in and freshen up, the group will enjoy an independent lunch before walking across the boulevard to the jetty opposite the hotel, where they will meet their local guide and private motor launch.

Independent lunch.

The group will sail away on Lake Maggiore to Isola Bella and the magnificent Palazzo Borromeo and its world-famous gardens. The group will continue the afternoon with a visit to Isola dei Pescatori (The Fisherman’s Island), the only one of the Borromean Islands to be inhabited year-round.
Forming Lake Maggiore’s most beautiful corner, the Borromean Islands (Isole Borromee) can be reached from various points around the lake, but Stresa and Verbania offer the best access. Three of the four islands – Bella, Madre and Superiore (aka dei Pescatori) – can all be visited. The Borromeo family, a noble family from Milan, has owned these islands (they own six of the lake's nine islands) since the 17th century. Read More

The excursion to the Borromean Islands will be followed by a welcome dinner with wine.

Complimentary dinner included.

Overnight at the Grand Hotel des Iles Borromees.

Day 3: Tuesday, September 20th, 2016

Locarno/Lugano

Complimentary breakfast included.

After a complimentary breakfast in the hotel, don’t forget to pack your passport before a motor coach ride to Domodossola at the foot of the Simplon Pass, deep in one of the most famous Alpine valleys. Here, the group will board the Centovalli Train.

The nearly-60-kilometer, narrow gauge railway leads across the impressive heights of viaducts, past deep ravines and thundering waterfalls, through sunlit chestnut forests and fertile vineyards, and takes the rider on hairpin bends and deep tunnels. The train will lead the group straight through the Centovalli (Hundred Valleys) region, from Domodossola, Italy to Lucarno, Switzerland, in just two hours. The scenery will allow you to view the wild Melezza River as well as numerous valleys that are densely forested and strewn with jagged rocks.

The group will have an hour or so to stroll through the ancient downtown district in Lucarno, around the Piazza Grande, and then enjoy an independent lunch in one of the many lakeside restaurants.
With its palm trees and 2300 hours of sunshine a year, Locarno has attracted pasty northerners to its warm, Mediterranean-style setting since the late 19th century. The lowest town in Switzerland, it seemed like a soothing spot to host the 1925 peace conference intended to bring stability to Europe after WWI. Long before, the Romans appreciated its strategic position on the lake. Read More

**Independent lunch.**

In the afternoon, travelers will board the private motorcoach to continue to Lugano, set on the shore of the lake bearing the same name. A variety of exclusive shops are lined along the central streets in Via Nassa, Via Dogana Vecchia, Via Pessina and beyond.

Lake Lugano is nestled between Lake Maggiore and Lake Como and lies partly in Switzerland and partly in Italy. Its footprint straddles the Swiss-Italian border with 67% of its surface area falling within the Canton of Ticino, Switzerland, and 33% of it in the Lombardy Region of Northern Italy.

Although the smallest of the three lakes, Lake Lugano lacks for nothing in beauty, character or charm and its Mediterranean type climate ensures it remains popular all year round with visitors from around the world...these characteristics and the myriad of picturesque Venetian-style villages found clinging to its rugged shoreline are some of the very things that make Lake Lugano the popular tourist destination that it is today. Read More

On the way back to Stresa, the group will cross the border at Ponte Tresa for customs clearance and then continue to Laveno to board a short ferry ride back to the hotel.

Travelers will have the evening free in Stresa.

**Independent dinner.**

**Overnight at the Grand Hotel des Iles Borromees.**
Complimentary breakfast included.

After a complimentary breakfast at the hotel, travelers will experience a morning at leisure by the lakeside, or perhaps take an optional ride on the gondola to reach the top of Monte Mottarone, located directly above Stresa. From here, travelers will be able to enjoy a 360-degree view of the Alpine district.

Independent lunch.

After an independent lunch, the group will head out for a half-day excursion to Lago D’Orto, including a boat ride to San Giulio Island.

Lake Orta is a small lake often referred to the “secret little sister” of Lake Maggiore and Lake Como. Highlighted by both the *NY Times* and *The Guardian* as a place of extraordinary beauty and a bastion of Italian authenticity, the lake has been a favorite of such authors as Friedrich Nietzsche, Samuel Butler, Lord Byron, Honore de Balzac, and Robert Browning, all of whom made Lake Orta a destination of intent in the 19th century.

It is astonishing how few people—even Italians—know about this beautiful secret. What sets Orto apart is not its beauty—though the lake is enchantingly pretty—but rather, the lake’s mysterious, ethereal, almost supernatural quality. There is something for the soul here as well as for the eye.

San Guilio Island, nestled quietly in the middle of this little secret sister, is described as “enchanted,” “sumptuous,” “sacred,” and “meditative,” among other luxurious adjectives. Steeped in history and primarily untouched by tourism, San Guilio boasts a Benedictine monastery, a bevy of villas and palazzos, and the beautiful Sacro Monte.
Most telling is Edward Docx of The Guardian’s description of one of his visits there:

_The last time I was there, the villas and palazzos on the shore were lit by a low-slung evening sun in colours of pale sand and amber and terracotta and the lake was sparkling and swallows were wheeling on the water and I could smell the flowers hanging from the balconies and trailing in the lake. (No, honestly, it really is like that)._  

Travelers will return to the hotel for a free afternoon and evening in Stresa.

**Independent dinner.**

**Overnight at the Grand Hotel des Iles Borromees.**

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**Day 5: Thursday, September 22nd, 2016**

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**Lake Como/Bellagio**

**Complimentary breakfast included.**

After breakfast, travelers will embark on a full-day excursion to Lake Como, with a boat ride to Bellagio. The drive to Como will include its most famous Western shore, including the tiny enchanting villages of Cernobbio, Moltrasio, Argegno, and Lenno, among others. Due to the breathtaking beauty, multiple stops will be made for pictures of the scenery.

Once at Cadenabbia, the group will ferry across to Bellagio, a short 10-minute ride.

_In the shadow of the snow-covered Rhaetian Alps, Lago di Como (also known as Lago Lario) is the most spectacular of the lakes. Shaped like an upside-down letter Y, measuring 120km all up, its squiggly shoreline is scattered with villages, including exquisite Bellagio, in the centre of the inverted V on the lake’s southern shore. Where the southern and western shores converge is the lake’s main town, Como. Lecco, the other large town on the lake, sits where the southern shore meets the lesser-explored eastern shore._ **Read More**
In 1818, Percy Bysshe Shelley said of Lake Como: “This lake exceeds anything I ever beheld in beauty, with the exception of the arbutus islands of Killarney. It is long and narrow, and has the appearance of a mighty river winding among the mountains and the forests.”

Bellagio is a municipality on the lake, located at the very point that splits Lake Como into two.

*It’s impossible not to be smitten by Bellagio’s waterfront of bobbing boats, its maze of steep stone staircases, red-roofed and green-shuttered buildings, dark cypress groves and rhododendron-filled gardens. Like the prow of a beautiful vessel, it sits at the crux of the inverted Y that is Lake Como; the Como and Lecco arms of the lake wash off to port and starboard. Wander out of the old town centre to Punta Spartivento and gaze north up the third arm towards the Alps. In Roman times, Pliny had one of his favourite villas here.* Read More

**Independent lunch and dinner.**

Travelers will return to the hotel for a free evening in Stresa.

**Overnight at the Grand Hotel des Iles Borromees.**

### Day 6: Friday, September 23rd, 2016

**Milan**

**Complimentary breakfast included.**

After breakfast, the group will depart from Stresa, travel over the Alpine lakes in Northern Italy, and arrive in the bustling and cosmopolitan city of Milan. The group will enjoy a comprehensive guided tour of the city and its most important monuments, including La Scala, Duomo, The Galleria, and a queue-less admission to Da Vinci’s The Last Supper.

Home to Italy’s stock exchange and one of the internationally-recognized homes of haute couture, Milan is the epitome of class and elegance. Previously the Imperial Roman capital, the city boasts art collections, unparalleled shopping, brilliant cultural attractions, and an incredible cache of history.
WACC travelers will visit the Teatro alla Scala, the world-famous opera house. Inaugurated in 1778, La Scala is considered one of the leading opera and ballet theatres in the world.

Travelers will also see the Duomo de Milan, a breathtaking cathedral that defines Milan’s cityscape. Construction took nearly six centuries to complete, and it is the second largest church in Italy and the third largest in the world. Dedicated to St. Mary of the Nativity, it is the seat of the Archbishop of Milan. Until recently, the Duomo de Milan was the tallest building in the city.

Also included on the tour is the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, or more simply, “The Galleria.” The Galleria, named after the first king of the Kingdom of Italy and designed by Giuseppe Mengoni, is one of the world’s oldest shopping malls- and one of the most beautiful.

Finally, the group will see The Last Supper, Leonardo da Vinci’s masterwork mural hidden in the wall of the refectory adjoining the Basilica di Santa Maria delle Grazie.

At the end of the tour, the group will have some time to explore the city independently. Travelers may want to visit the brand-new Armani Silos museum or the medieval Basilica di Sant’Ambrogio. Travelers might also want to take advantage of some of the best shopping opportunities in Italy and Europe.

The group will continue eastward to Lake Garda and the beautiful town of Sirimione, located on its banks. Travelers will check into their hotel for the next three nights, the elegant Villa Cortine Palace Hotel (five-star) on the edge of the Sirimione peninsula.
The Villa Cortine Palace Hotel, open as a five-star luxury hotel since 1953, is the precious House on the Hill, where you can come and rest, where you can search for your inspiration and find your charge, where you can cheer up your mood and discover a once-romantic soul. Read more

Independent lunch and dinner.

Overnight at Villa Cortine Palace Hotel.

Day 7: Saturday, September 24th, 2016

Complimentary breakfast included.

After complimentary breakfast in the hotel, the travelers will enjoy a full-day guided tour of Verona.

Two households, both alike in dignity,
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene...

The location of Shakespeare’s infamous Romeo and Juliet and a protected UNESCO World Heritage Site, Verona is as timeless as that piece of literature and as steeped in history as any city harkening from as far back as the Roman era.

The historic city of Verona was founded in the 1st century B.C. It particularly flourished under the rule of the Scaliger family in the 13th and 14th centuries and as part of the Republic of Venice from the 15th to 18th centuries. Verona has preserved a remarkable number of monuments from antiquity, the medieval and Renaissance periods, and represents an outstanding example of a military stronghold. Read More

A guided tour will introduce this artful town’s major sites, including the Roma, Arena di Verona, Juliet’s balcony, the market square of Piazza delle Erbe, the cathedral of San Zeno, and more.

Independent lunch.
After lunch, the group will continue to Vicenza. A learned expert will tell you about the hometown of Andrea Palladio, the Renaissance architect whose style so deeply influenced the architecture of the Southern States in America in the 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries. A visit to one of the villas and to the Teatro Olimpico will showcase his art and style.

Vicenza was a prosperous town under Venetian rule, and its pride was demonstrated in fine architecture, much of which still survives. Its 'unique appearance,' largely owing to the work of influential sixteenth-century architect Andrea Palladio, has led to the town's designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site: City of Vicenza and the Palladian Villas of the Veneto. After Palladio, Vicenza is most famous for its trade in precious metals, it's also known as the 'City of Gold'. Read More

The group will return to Sirimione for an independent dinner.

Independent dinner.

Overnight at Villa Cortine Palace Hotel.

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**Day 8: Sunday, September 25\textsuperscript{th}, 2016**

Complimentary breakfast included.

After breakfast, the group will experience a morning at leisure in Sirimione. Travelers will have a chance to visit the 2000-year-old spa, located around the corner from the hotel.

In the afternoon, the group will take a quick drive south to the town of Mantua. Known as Italy’s \textit{la bella addormentata}, or “sleeping beauty,” Mantua remains remarkably unaltered, and
Complimentary breakfast included.

After a leisurely breakfast, the group will leave the lakes and head east. First, travelers will pay a visit to a wine estate in the Valpolicella district. This is home to famous wines and, together with Chianti and Barolo, is one of the top three Italian wine districts. A tasting session will tell the group all about the differences.

Home of the wonderfully unique Amarone della Valpolicella wine, Valpolicella is one of the most prestigious winemaking areas in the Veneto and is located northwest of the elegant Roman town of Verona. Valpolicella’s red wines were in fact popular in Roman times, when the sweet Recioto wine was in vogue. Made up of a myriad of lush, verdant valleys that spread like fingers on an open palm as they stretch out of the Lessini Mountains, Valpolicella is an intensely beautiful region, whose name comes from “val polis cellae” and means “valley of many cellars”, and is characterized by the steep, vine-laced ridges that run alongside its gurgling mountain streams. Read More

Independent lunch and dinner.

Overnight at Villa Cortine Palace Hotel.

Day 9: Monday, September 26th, 2016

Asolo

Complimentary breakfast included.

After a leisurely breakfast, the group will leave the lakes and head east. First, travelers will pay a visit to a wine estate in the Valpolicella district. This is home to famous wines and, together with Chianti and Barolo, is one of the top three Italian wine districts. A tasting session will tell the group all about the differences.

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Independent lunch.

In the late afternoon, the group will continue to Asolo and their hotel for the night, the luxurious and picturesque Hotel Villa Cipriani, former villa of the English poet, Robert Browning.

Located in the heart of the graceful town of Asolo, the Villa Cipriani offers to its guests the timeless charm and atmosphere of a patrician residence. The city has maintained a suggestive medieval look, located between the very old walls and dominated by the millenary "Rocca" on the top on the hill, protecting the City. Read More

The group will gather tonight in the hotel dining room for a gourmet farewell dinner.

Overnight at the Hotel Villa Cipriani.

Day 10: Tuesday, September 27th, 2016 Asolo/Venice/Charlotte

Complimentary breakfast included.

Travelers will have an early departure for the Venice Airport. American Airlines departs Venice nonstop for Philadelphia at 12:15 p.m., arriving in Philadelphia at 3:45 p.m.

Once travelers clear customs and immigration, they will connect to American Airlines departing Philadelphia at 7:30 p.m. and arriving back to Charlotte at 9:19 p.m.

Welcome Home!
Day 10: With Optional Extension: Tuesday, September 27th, 2016

Complimentary breakfast included.

After breakfast travelers will transfer to the five-star Hotel Baglioni Luna via a private motor launch.

*Ideally positioned a stone’s throw from Piazza San Marco, right in the heart of Venice facing the San Marco Basin and the island of San Giorgio, the Baglioni Hotel Luna, hotel in Venice, is situated a short distance from the most famous historical and artistic attractions of the city.*

*This historic Venetian hotel, member of the Leading Hotels of the World and Fine Hotels & Resorts, is housed in a magnificent, aristocratic Venetian palace and offers its guests an intimate, welcoming atmosphere combined with impeccable service.*  [Read More]

Independent lunch and dinner.

Overnight at the Hotel Baglioni Luna.

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Complimentary breakfast included.

After breakfast at the hotel, the group will experience a walking tour of Venice (no entrances included).

*Venice is the consummate magician. It makes marble palaces vanish into silent fogs, labyrinthine calli (streets) disappear at the whim of moody tides, and can even turn the most pedestrian of people into fantastical, masked creatures. Just like its world-famous Carnevale, Venice thrives on mystery and awe.*  [Read More]

Afternoon and evening at leisure in Venice.

Independent lunch and dinner.

Overnight at the Hotel Baglioni Luna.
Complimentary breakfast included.

This morning, transfer to Venice Airport via private motor launch for a flight to Charlotte, with a transfer in Munich.

Welcome Home!

See Pricing Below
**PRICE PER PERSON BASED ON DOUBLE OCCUPANCY**

*Single occupancy rate available for an additional $1,185
*International airfare from Charlotte (and back) included

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Travelers must be members of good standing with the World Affairs Council of Charlotte. If you are not a member, please contact Kristina Drye, Program and Membership Manager, via e-mail at kdrye@worldaffairscharlotte.org or call 704-687-7757 or go to our website and sign up online. Individual membership starts at $50 and is a tax-deductible donation.

****As always, air/government taxes and fuel surcharges will be billed at the prevailing rate at the time of ticketing. The current total for tax and fuel is $625.00.

- Single occupancy is available upon request (*Single occupancy rate: $1,185). The single-occupancy supplement is higher due to the fact that in Italy, a single-occupancy room is actually a double room from which a bed is removed, as they do not offer a classic single.
- If you are traveling alone, but would like a roommate, please let us know as soon as possible and we will work on matching you with another traveler.
- Business or First Class air travel is available. Please contact Jeff Knight (jknight111@hotmail.com) as soon as possible if you are interested in an upgrade.
- Air/government taxes and fuel surcharges will be billed at prevailing rate at the time of billing. Current total of taxes and fuel surcharge is approximately $625.
- A deposit of $500 is due no later than July 1st, 2016 to secure your seat for the trip. Full payment is due by August 5th, 2016.
- Please note that a 3% bank charge will be added to your payment if you choose to pay by credit card due to travel agency requirement.

*We will offer a customized, two-day extension in Venice. Please let us know as soon as possible if you are interested in this limited-edition opportunity. The cost of the extension will be determined by the number of participants. The optional trip to Venice will occur if there are enough participants. The more people that sign up, the lower the cost.