The Association of Former Students of Texas A&M

VILLAGE LIFE®
around the

ITALIAN LAKES
Lago Como • Lago Maggiore • Lago d’Orta

May 2-10, 2020
Howdy, Ags!

Buon giorno!
One of the world's most captivating destinations, northern Italy's fabled Lake District beckons with its sublime landscapes of shimmering glacial waters, soaring Alpine peaks, charming waterfronts and colorful towns overflowing with Mediterranean flora. The region's ancient history echoes through towns embellished with lavish Renaissance and Gothic architecture and imbued with the distinct bella figura Italian style that has inspired poets, composers, musicians, artists and philosophers for centuries.

Join our small group of travelers in the quintessentially Italian città di Como—your picturesque "home" for a full week for this one-of-a-kind VILLAGE LIFE® around the Italian Lakes soggiorno, an exceptional way to experience the authentic delights and genteel ambiance that have lured visitors to the beautiful regions of Lombardy and Piedmont since the days of the "Grand Tour." Our carefully designed, expert-guided excursions explore the artistic and architectural treasures commissioned by Roman aristocrats, medieval lords and Renaissance princes, including a specially arranged viewing of Leonardo da Vinci's renowned masterpiece, The Last Supper, in the UNESCO World Heritage-designated Santa Maria delle Grazie. Trace the legacy of Milan's outstanding artistic heritage, and visit the impossibly enchanting town of Bellagio and the romantic Borromean Island of Isola Bella, crowned by the baroque Palazzo Borromeo, famed for its lavish ornamentation, priceless artworks and terraced Italianate gardens.

Enriching presentations and the exclusive VILLAGE LIFE® Forum, featuring local residents, offer you personal perspectives on Lombardy's cultural heritage and contemporary life. You will taste the bold flavors of northern Italy's acclaimed cuisine and Lombardy's acclaimed sparkling wines.

Your accommodations for this comprehensive program are in the heart of charismatic Como in the ideally located, lakeside PALACE HOTEL, just steps away from the city's Gothic-style Duomo. This historic hotel overlooks stunning Lake Como and welcomes guests with warm Italian hospitality and impeccable service.

Indulge in the refined traditions of the Italian Lake District and join us on this unique program, where you unpack only once in one of Italy's loveliest settings. It has sold out every time it has been offered, so I encourage you to book now while Early Booking Savings and space are still available.

Ciao!

Jennifer Bohac '87, Ph.D.
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No funds donated to The Association of Former Students or to Texas A&M University have been used in the production or mailing of this travel brochure; all such costs are covered by our tour supplier.

Cover photo: Enjoy a private boat ride across the tranquil waters of Lake Orta, the hidden gem of the Italian Lake District.

The epitome of Lombardy's old-world charm, Bellagio enchants with its authentic Italian ambiance.
Experience firsthand the authentic character and fairy-tale landscapes of Italy’s romantic Lombardy and Piedmont regions from the shores of picturesque Lake Como. During this specially designed small group itinerary, explore the alluring lakeside città (towns) and villaggi (villages) that dot the coasts of Lake Como, Lake Maggiore and Lake Orta. Stay in the center of medieval Como, falling into the daily rhythms and centuries-old traditions of Italy’s ancient towns, and enjoy custom-designed CULTURAL ENRICHMENTS. Visit the UNESCO World Heritage-designated Sacro Monte di Orta, the exquisite Italian Villa del Balbianello and secluded Isola Bella, the summer residence of the ancient aristocratic Borromeo family. Experience the architectural riches and artistic verve of Milan and enjoy a specially arranged viewing of da Vinci’s unrivaled painting, The Last Supper, a fixation for scholars since its inception. Engage with local Lombardi during the exclusive VILLAGE LIFE® FORUM, gain keen insights from a Como scholar and lifelong resident and sample savory regional specialties and celebrated local wines. This signature VILLAGE LIFE® program will immerse you in an intimate travel experience at just the right pace and includes ideally located accommodations, specially arranged meals and all excursions—truly an excellent value.

**Itinerary**

1. Depart the U.S.
2. Milan, Italy/Como
   - Check into the **Palace Hotel** in Como.
3. Como
   - Walking tour of Old Como.
   - Cultural Enrichment:
     - Lecture by Como scholar.
4. Lake Maggiore/Borromean Islands/Stresa
   - Private cruise on Lake Maggiore around the Borromean Islands.
   - Explore the charming strade (streets) of Stresa at your own pace.
   - Cultural Enrichment:
     - Tour of Isola Bella’s magnificent 17th-century palazzo and gardens.
5. Milan
   - Guided tour of Milan.
   - Cultural Enrichment:
     - Visit to the UNESCO World Heritage site of Santa Maria delle Grazie to see da Vinci’s The Last Supper.
6. Lake Como/Villa del Balbianello/Bellagio
   - Private scenic cruise on Lake Como.
   - Explore charming Bellagio at your own pace.
   - Cultural Enrichments:
     - Specially arranged tour of the Italian National Trust’s Villa del Balbianello.
     - Exclusive VILLAGE LIFE® Forum.
7. Lake Orta
   - Private boat ride across Lake Orta to visit the beautiful Isola San Giulio.
   - Walking tour of medieval Orta San Giulio.
   - Cultural Enrichment:
     - Guided tour on Sacro Monte di Orta.
8. Como
   - Day at leisure. Opt to stroll Como’s colorful market and mingle with Lombardi.
9. Como/Milan/Return to the U.S.
   - **Tesori di Verona e Venezia** Post-Program Option*

*Available at additional cost.

Photo above left: The Teatro Massimo boasts the extravagant beauty of the Isola Bella gardens.

Photo below: Enjoy Como’s world-class architecture, including the 14th-century Duomo di Como, financed by a prospering silk industry.
Como
Founded by the Romans in 196 B.C., Como has been internationally known for its silk-weaving industry since silkworms were first imported here in the 14th century. At one time, Como was the largest European silk producer—dyeing, weaving and designing fabrics to be shipped to the fashion houses of Milan, Paris and London. Enjoy ideally located accommodations for the entire week in the Palace Hotel on the shores of Lake Como and in the centro storico (old town) of this timeless Italian citta. Stroll beside medieval towers and walls, Renaissance palaces and churches, neoclassical 19th-century villas and small family-owned negozi (shops) leading to the Piazza Cavour and the tranquil lakeside promenade. See the magnificent Duomo di Como, considered the most beautiful cathedral in Lombardy, which took nearly 400 years to complete, reflecting a seamless blend of Gothic and Renaissance styles. Visit the 12th-century Romanesque Basilica di San Fedele, with stunning frescoed naves and apses and an exquisitely sculptured choir, carved by Comacini masters.

Cultural Enrichments: A local scholar of Como from the Roman era to the present, and resident art historian Giuseppina Lucini will present private, expert lectures. During the exclusive Village Life® Forum, residents will discuss contemporary life in the dazzling and historic Italian Lake District. Savor the delights of a northern Italian dinner in a local ristorante.

Lago Maggiore
Beloved by Lombardy’s nobility, Lake Maggiore is Italy’s second-largest lake and a natural boundary between the regions of Lombardy and Piedmont. A close rival to Lake Como as the most spectacular in the Lake District, Lake Maggiore’s mild climate allows gardens to grow rare and exotic plants beneath the high Alps, particularly on the remarkable Borromean Islands. Enjoy a private boat cruise amidst the charming islands that inspired Flaubert, Wagner and Goethe.

Borromean Islands
Cruise among Lake Maggiore’s enticing islands, graced with elegant villas and striking natural beauty. Isola Bella, Isola di San Giovanni, Isola Madre and Isola dei Pescatori are collectively known as the Borromean Islands, named after the powerful Borromeos, a dynasty of counts, cardinals and warriors. During the 16th century, swathes of what is now North Central Italy were known as the Borromeo State, and the family wielded absolute political and military power.

Cultural Enrichment: Visit the crown jewel of the Borromean archipelago, Isola Bella, entirely occupied by the

Visit Isola Bella’s 16th-century villa and stroll through its lush gardens, filled with topiary perfection.
17th-century Palazzo Borromeo. Walk through its splendid Italianate gardens, a baroque botanical masterpiece ablaze with roses, gardenias, azaleas and rhododendrons, described by Edith Wharton as a work of “Renaissance poetry.” Commissioned by Count Carlo Borromeo III in 1632, this secluded Baroque retreat is dedicated to his wife, Isabella, and its extravagant halls and opulent salons are filled with priceless masterpieces by old masters such as Rubens, Titian and Van Dyck. See the Sala di Napoleone, where Napoleon and Josephine slept in 1797 and the unforgettable grotto, decorated entirely with marble- and lava-studded mosaics of marine life.

Stresa
An 18th- and 19th-century “Grand Tour” of Europe was considered incomplete without a visit to Stresa to experience its spectacular mountain views, tropical gardens and the sparkling waters of Lake Maggiore. The quintessential dolce vita town, Stresa’s inviting piazzas, cobblestone streets and lakeside promenade are dotted with belle époque mansions. A young Ernest Hemingway, recuperating in Stresa during World War I, was inspired to make it the setting for Frederic Henry and Catherine Barkley’s famed reunion in A Farewell to Arms.

Milan
The recognized capital of the design and fashion worlds, Milan has an ancient cultural heritage that blends its ornate palaces, Gothic churches and venerable museums with vibrant contemporary life, a wealth of modern art, an abundance of haute cuisine and outstanding operatic traditions. Visit Milan’s exquisite late-Gothic Duomo, which dates to 1386, and the world-famous Teatro alla Scala opera house, a neoclassical jewel of sumptuous gilt boxes and glittering chandeliers, founded in 1778 by Empress Maria Theresa of Austria.

**Cultural Enrichment:**
By special arrangement, visit the UNESCO World Heritage site of Santa Maria delle Grazie to experience the enduring genius of da Vinci’s masterpiece, The Last Supper.

**Lago di Como**
Composer Franz Liszt romanticized, “When you write the story of two happy lovers, place them on the shores of Lake Como.”
Cruise by private boat across the sparkling waters of Italy’s deepest—and perhaps most spectacular—lake while learning more about its fascinating history and allure. Survey the quaint coastal village of Bellagio, a favorite retreat since the time of the Caesars, and the grand Renaissance villas, built on the slopes of snowcapped mountains.

**Villa del Balbianello**
Across Lake Como from Bellagio is the magnificent Villa del Balbianello and its unique terraced gardens. Built in 1787 by Cardinal Angelo Maria Durini, this consummate Italian lake villa was renovated in the early 20th century by an American veteran of World War I then purchased by Italy’s first explorer to summit Mt. Everest, Guido Monzino, who bequeathed it to the Italian National Trust. A paragon of authentic Italian luxury, the villa is a repository of 18th-century French and English furniture and an exquisite collection of Monzino’s Chinese, pre-Columbian and African art.

Experience the beauty of Bellagio, the “Pearl of Lake Como,” beloved by many for the colorful houses, exquisite gardens and lovely villas set against a scenic Alpine backdrop.

Admire the 14th-century Piazza del Duomo which marks Milan’s geographic, social and cultural heart.
The Palace Hotel

The ideally located, classic belle époque Palace Hotel is a delightful establishment with an ideal setting on the lungolago (lakefront promenade) overlooking Lake Como, just steps away from Como’s beautiful marble Duomo and the medieval, pedestrian-only town center. Venetian stucco artistry, Italian marble and antique furniture provide subtle touches of 19th-century elegance throughout the hotel. Its expertly landscaped gardens are the perfect setting to admire enchanting views across Lake Como. The Garden Bar Ceccato, with its summer terrace overlooking the lake, is an excellent place to enjoy the hotel’s renowned homemade ice cream or a cappuccino.

Each of the hotel’s 94 recently renovated guest rooms is tastefully appointed with a private bathroom, air conditioning, satellite television, minibar and hair dryer. Meals feature fresh seasonal Italian ingredients, local specialties and international cuisine. Regional wine selections accompany dinner. The hotel staff provides exceptional service.

Bellagio

Perched on a promontory punctuated by stands of cypress trees, Bellagio is one of the Italian Lake District’s most internationally well-known communes. In the 18th and 19th centuries, Milanese nobility flocked here to build elaborate villas and cultivate subtropical gardens. Medieval alleyways draped with bougainvillea wind above an idyllic waterfront promenade that affords spectacular Alpine vistas.

Lago d’Orta

Serene Lake Orta, nestled in the captivating Piedmont region of northwestern Italy, is the Lake District’s best-kept secret. A medieval mist rises above Lake Orta’s forested shores which are imbued with an ethereal stillness. Enjoy a walking tour of Orta San Giulio’s medieval village center, a cinematic tableau of gracefully aging ochre-hued houses woven with arabesques of decorative wrought-iron and flamboyant Baroque palazzos built by Italian nobility. Enjoy time at leisure in this beguiling village.

Cultural Enrichment: Atop the summit of Sacro Monte di Orta—one of nine sacred mountains in northern Italy and a UNESCO World Heritage site—amidst a picturesque landscape of forested hills, visit several small chapels dedicated to St. Francis of Assisi, decorated with elaborate frescoes built between the 16th and 18th centuries.

Isola San Giulio

Cruise across cobalt-blue Lake Orta in a private boat to diminutive and rarely-visited Isola San Giulio, taking in stunning views of picture-perfect Italian villas and gardens along the way. Robert Browning, Honoré de Balzac and Lord Byron all wrote of this intimate island’s sublime beauty. Visit the 12th-century Romanesque-style Basilica San Giulio, whose opulent interior is adorned with richly detailed frescoes painted upon the nave, chapel, vaults and aisles; then, stroll the monastery’s lush grounds.

Tesori di Verona e Venezia

Post-Program Option

Few cities have the power to enchant quite like Verona and Venice, UNESCO World Heritage sites. Verona is renowned for its well-preserved Romanesque and Gothic cathedrals, delightful piazzas and magnificent Roman monuments immortalized in Shakespeare’s timeless romance, Romeo and Juliet. See star-crossed Juliet’s famous balcony, the crenellated 14th-century Castelvecchio and the spectacular 2000-year-old Roman Arena. Discover the glories of centuries woven through a romantic tapestry of shimmering waterways crisscrossed by stone bridges that lead to Venice’s extraordinary confection of architectural treasures, including the Gothic-style Doge’s Palace. Cross the lagoon to the charming archipelago’s island of Burano, known for its skilled fishermen and colorful houses. Enjoy three nights in the Hotel Bonvecchiati, an 18th-century palazzo ideally located just a short walk from Venice’s famous Piazza San Marco.

The Post-Program Option is available at additional cost. Details will be provided with your reservation confirmation.
Included Features

In Como
◆ Seven nights in the charming Palace Hotel on the southern shore of Lake Como.
◆ Full buffet breakfast each morning.
◆ Three dinners in the hotel and one dinner in a traditional restaurant, featuring northern Italian specialties paired with Italian wines.
◆ Welcome Reception.
◆ Opportunities to explore local markets in Como at your own pace.

Expert-Guided Excursions and Exclusive Cultural Enrichments
◆ Walking tour of Old Como.
◆ Spectacular, full-day scenic tour of Lake Maggiore, featuring a private cruise of the Borromean Islands and time to experience Stresa’s spectacular views and tropical gardens at leisure.
◆ Visit to Lake Maggiore’s Isola Bella for a tour of the 17th-century Palazzo Borromeo and its luxuriant gardens.
◆ Full-day excursion to Milan to visit the world-famous Teatro alla Scala and the exquisite Duomo, with time at leisure to visit the historic Galleria.
◆ Visit to UNESCO World Heritage-designated Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milan, with a specially arranged viewing of da Vinci’s The Last Supper.
◆ Private boat cruise across Lake Como to medieval Bellagio, including time at your own pace to explore this romantic and most famous village on Lake Como.
◆ Specially arranged guided tour of the Italian National Trust’s magnificent 18th-century Villa del Balbianello.
◆ Specially arranged Village Life® Forum with local Lombardy residents.
◆ Excursion by private boat to Lake Orta’s island of San Giulio, including a visit to the 12th-century basilica, renowned for its medieval pulpit made of black Oira marble and a walking tour of the beautiful medieval village.
◆ Guided tour of the fresco-adorned chapels dedicated to St. Francis of Assisi on Sacro Monte, a UNESCO World Heritage site overlooking Lake Orta.
◆ Opportunities to savor northern Italy’s traditional cuisine during included meals and on your own.
◆ Italian language introduction.

Always Included
◆ Transfers and luggage handling abroad if your arrival(s)/departure(s) coincide with the scheduled group transfer(s).
◆ Experienced, English-speaking local guides for all included excursions.
◆ Gratuities to local guides and drivers on included excursions and transfers.
◆ Complimentary bottled water provided on motorcoaches during excursions.
◆ Hospitality desk in the hotel.
◆ Experienced Gohagan & Company Program Director at your service.
◆ Complimentary use of an audio headset during guided excursions.
◆ Automatic $250,000 flight insurance policy for each participant ticketed on flights by Gohagan & Company.
For centuries, Italy’s Lake District has seduced hearts, minds and souls, including those of Virgil, Napoleon, Byron, Stendhal, Wordsworth, Shelley, Wharton, Verdi, Puccini, Toscanini, Twain and Hemingway. Long before the Romans annexed the region 2000 years ago and began to build their well-ordered towns, it was settled by Etruscans and invaded by Celts. Following the Romans, Middle Ages and Renaissance, nobility built palatial holiday villas, filled them with priceless art and laid out extraordinary gardens. European aristocrats of the 18th and 19th centuries considered the Italian Lake District an essential stop on their “Grand Tour” of Europe.

Lombardy became one of the richest and most economically developed areas of Italy and Europe due to its agricultural production, trade and banking activities that extended throughout the continent.

To this day, the region remains of paramount importance to Italy. The mild climate and the snowcapped Alpine peaks descending to serene lake shores continue to lure the wealthy, as well as celebrities and travelers from around the world. From the deep-blue glacial lakes of Como, Maggiore and picturesque Orta to the enchanting Villa del Balbianello, and from colorful Bellagio—“Pearl of Lake Como”—to the modern sophistication of Milan, discover the exquisite gem that is the Italian Lake District.

The beautiful town of Stresa on Lake Maggiore has beckoned artists, authors and European aristocracy for centuries.
Nestled on the shores of Lake Como and surrounded by majestic Alpine peaks, the legendary Villa del Balbianello has one of the most beautiful and dramatic settings in all of Italy.

LAND TARIFF excluding taxes

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<th>Early Booking Tariff* through Nov. 13, 2019</th>
<th>Tariff* after Nov. 13, 2019</th>
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<td><strong>Per person, based on double occupancy</strong></td>
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Singles are available upon request for an additional $1,300.*

*Taxes are an additional $195 per person and are subject to change.

Send to: Traveling Aggies
505 George Bush Drive
College Station, TX 77840
(979) 845-7514 or (800) 633-7514
Fax: (979) 845-9263

Title Full Name (exactly as it appears on your passport) Class Year
Title Full Name (exactly as it appears on your passport) Class Year

Street Mailing Address (no P.O. Box number please)
City State Zip Code

Telephone (Home) (Mobile)

Email Address (Business)

Preferred Name(s) on Badge(s) Tour No. 068-05/02/20-104

Program reservations require a deposit of $600 per person and $200 per person Tesori di Verona e Venezia Post-Program Option. By reserving and depositing on this program, I/we agree to the Release of Liability, Assumption of Risk and Binding Arbitration Agreement as printed on the outside back cover of this brochure.

- Enclosed is my/our check(s) for $________ as deposit.
- Make checks payable to 2020 Village Life around the Italian Lakes.

- I/We authorize you to charge my/our deposit of $________ to:
  - Visa
  - MasterCard

Card Number Exp. Date

Signature as it appears on credit card

All FINAL PAYMENTS are required to be made by check or wire transfer by January 28, 2020.

Please make my/our reservation(s):
- Double occupancy (two twin beds).
- Double occupancy (one double bed).
- Single accommodations.
- I am reserving as a single but prefer to share accommodations and will allow you to select my roommate (shares cannot be guaranteed).

Please make my/our reservation(s):
Tesori di Verona e Venezia Post-Program Option
- Double at $1,745 per person.
- Single at $2,495 per person.
- I am reserving as a single but prefer to share accommodations and will allow you to select my roommate (shares cannot be guaranteed).
- I/We want you to book my/our air, at additional cost to be advised,‡ from:

- Economy Class
- Upgraded Economy
- Business Class
- First Class

‡Note: Airfare is subject to change and availability and is nonrefundable.
- I/We will make my/our own air arrangements.
Picturesque lakes, Alpine views and grand villas define not listed in the “Included Features” section of the brochure; transfers and specified; accident/sickness, trip cancellation, and baggage insurance; expenses such as laundry, telephone calls and Internet access unless otherwise for any loss of any kind as a result of any such changes. Ship schedules, port calls, time and for any reason, with or without notice, and Gohagan shall not be liable between you and the airline, even if purchased through Gohagan.

departure if you are arriving earlier or later than and/or departing earlier substitute vessels, hotels or attractions of a similar category for those listed in the flight arrangements or cancels the program. Gohagan reserves the right to carriers resulting from operational and/or itinerary changes, even if Gohagan makes or Advisories of any kind. Gohagan is not responsible for penalties assessed by air not required to cancel any program for any reason including without limitation, circumstances to refund the cost of any purchased travel insurance. Gohagan is not liable for any negligent or willful act or failure to act of any such person or entity or of any other third party.

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LUGGAGE: Luggage allowance policies are set by the airlines and may change without notice.

PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY: All programs require physical independence

LUGGAGE: Luggage allowance policies are set by the airlines and may change without notice.