

TUSCANY

a. GREAT GARDENS OF TUSCANY.

Armchair tours of eight major gardens situated around Siena, Florence and Lucca with its special water effects as water is more plentiful there. We look at design elements of Renaissance formal gardens and visit the magnificent late Renaissance villas of Malia and Mansi with their water gardens and statues; the magnificent La Gamberaia near Settignano with its water mall derived from the Romans and Lorenzo di Medici's favourite villa, Poggio a Caino and Villa Torregiani with its sunken garden near Lucca, where Henry James *Portrait of a Lady* was shot and the current Princess Torregiani lives in summer. In this lecture we examine the elements that formed the Renaissance 'secret garden' and compare them with England's Elizabethan 'knot gardens'.

b. TOWNS AND HILL VILLAGES OF TUSCANY

This lecture examines the structure of the typical Tuscan village and how much of Tuscan life today including the white bullocks still used on the land is owed to the original Etruscans. We visit Lucca, that most underrated of ancient Tuscan cities with its Renaissance ramparts where traffic has been banned and see some of its great mercantile palaces. From Lucca we go to what was once the powerful city state of Pisa, famous as a trade centre in the Middle Ages, we visit the recently restored so not-so leaning tower of Pisa and its what is known as 'the Campo dei Miracoli, with its great baptistery, one of the finest works of late medieval art combination of *campanile*, the gleaming white marble baptistery and cathedral with its pulpit by Pisano. From there we visit the great piazza of the medieval town of Siena with its Gaia fountain and Palazzo Pubblico, the rival of Florence whose population never recovered from the plague of 1348 and is still less than in those days. We watch the excitement of the *palio* in the narrow traffic



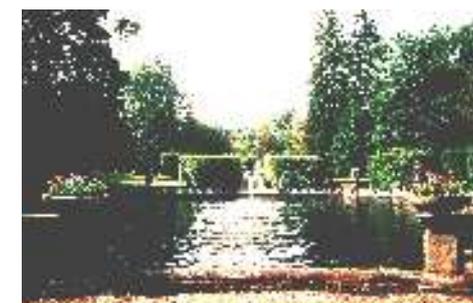
LIBRARY TUSCANY NEAR LUCCA



SECRET GARDEN AT - GROTTA ATTORIGIANI



TUSCANY VILLA NEAR LUCCA



FORMAL GARDEN IN THE GARDENS OF VILLA



TUSCANY VILLA NEAR LUCCA

free streets, explore the magnificent black and white marble cathedral with its marble font by Ghiberti.. We visit that most romantic of walled Tuscan villages, San Gimignano, once a thriving town nearly as big as Siena which was decimated by the Black Death, which is why San Gimignano has a magnificent cathedral and art museum. We enjoy from our armchairs a memorable walk around its ramparts before leaving by the great gates in San Gimignano's ancient walls.

c. THE MEDICI: THEIR PALACES AND TREASURES

The role of the Medici as patrons —from sculptures of Donatello to paintings by Botticelli and ducal portraits by Bronzino. We follow the fascinating history of the dynasty from Cosimo di Medici the Elder and his relationship with Michelangelo and Lippi Lippi to the treasures of Lorenzo the Magnificent that you can see today at the Pitti Palace. We tour the palace and learn how it was extended by Duke Cosimo and his beautiful Duchess Elena de Medici. We make an armchair tour of the ducal apartments in the Palazzo Vecchio and the Pitti Palace, a triumph of the High Renaissance. We see the fabulous jewels of Duchess Eleanora di Medici and learn her sad story, tour the magnificent Boboli gardens and learn their history and see the portrait of Duke Cosimo di Medici by Bronzino, one copy in Florence the other in the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

d. FLORENCE: CRADLE OF THE RENAISSANCE AN OVERVIEW OF ARCHITECTURE, ART AND HISTORY

This great city which has nurtured generations of great artists can be overwhelming to visit without some preparation. No other city can rival Florence in its riches of art history. In an hour filled with unforgettable sights and the knowledge of a lecturer who has lived and studied here, we visit the Baptistery, earliest building in Florence with its great mosaic ceiling designed by Byzantine craftsman and



the 'doors of Paradise' designed by Ghiberti, its Donatello statues in the Cathedral Museum and the Bargello, the cathedral itself and those buildings associated with the Medici. We pay an exciting visit to the monastery where some of the finest works of Fra Angelico can be seen, (something you must not miss as it is off the beaten track) the newly restored Masaccio frescoes in the Brancacci Chapel, reckoned by man to be the most important works of the early Renaissance and other beautifully frescoed churches. We visit Brunelleschi's Foundling Hospital, see the newly cleaned David and Michelangelo's 'slaves' in the Academia This lecture takes you through the narrow streets and great piazzas bisected by the wide avenues along the River Arno. We find hidden corners you will want to visit as well as the three main palaces associated with the Medici. An unforgettable tour of a city which is an art lover's paradise and is wonderful to visit in the autumn, winter and spring when there are fewer tourists.



TERRETTED GARDENS AT UFFIZI



"A TO NO" GARDENS AT CAPPONI NEAR FLORENCE