

Liguria, An Appetiser

Day 1: Thursday 26th November 2009.

Lunch: Trattoria Armanda, Castelnuovo Magra. Focaccia, pancakes, baccala, lardo and bread, beans and sausage, soufflé, stuffed cabbage soup, crepes, bread/oil, fish or meat main course, chestnut soufflé, espresso, wine

Grappa. Evening Meal in Volstra: swordfish carpaccio, anchovies tomatoes bread, deep fried baccala, seafood in tomato sauce, seafood pasta, fish with potatoes & olives chestnut pudding, espresso.

Day 1 saw us arriving in Pisa from Heathrow and meeting Marco, and the minibus, who immediately whisked us away to Castelnuovo Magra for a 'quick lunch'. Arriving at the restaurant around 2ish we finally left at around 4ish for a lightening tour of the village – a fascinating historic hill town on the border of Tuscany and Liguria, which could act as a classic Tuscan town, without the hefty location fee! The light was rapidly going as we returned to the bus so it was decided to forego the pleasures of the naval base in La Spezia and head straight for Riomaggiore, the first of the Cinque Terre National Park towns along the Liguria coast, where we were to stay for the night.

Day 2: Friday 27th November 2009. Lunch: Ristorante Tender, Moneglia, tuna, swordfish and anchovies, squid, prawn salad, mussels

Cuttlefish with potatoes & lemon, prawns, anchovies, seafood ravioli with squid ink pasta, soft sugar dusted torte de casa, apple nut torte and custard, coffee, lashings of wine. Evening Meal: Lovely restaurant in Genoa – only 3 courses, everyone ordered from the menu – I had lobster, pasta with pesto Genovese and zabligone.

Day 2 dawned clear and bright and we set off to walk off the previous days food. We explored the charming village of Riomaggiore on foot venturing a little way on the famous Cinque Terre costal path and then hopped on the local train, which took us to Vernazza and Moneglia, where we had another 'quick' lunch. Spirits were high as we hopped back on the bus and headed for Sestri Levante. Again we were fighting the light so headed straight for Genoa without seeing Lavagna and Camogli. We had a warm welcome at Villa Bombrini, the headquarters of the Genova -Liguria Film Commission. It houses the new Cineporto, which provides production and studio space, as well as crew accommodation.

We were very grateful to finally get to the Hotel Savoia for a half hour rest and a chance to freshen up for our evening in Genoa.

Day 3: Saturday 28th November 2009. Lunch at the local council chambers in Noli, various types of local focaccia and the local fruitcake. Evening Meal: Ca'Mea in Badalucco: mushrooms; mushrooms with steak tatare, mushrooms with parmesan, onion ricotta with bread, mushroom tortilla, hot soft cheese, mushroom tagliatelle, mushroom risotto, lamb chops, leg of lamb, t-bone roast, breaded mushrooms mushrooms sautéed in garlic, tiramisu in chamber pots, forest berries, grappa, limoncello espresso, lots of local wine. (In case you missed it the speciality of this restaurant was mushrooms!).

The morning of Day 3 was spent in the wonderful city of Genoa. Where the Via Garibaldi offered us an unspoilt Renaissance street and palaces and a modern and vibrant city. It

also offered up what is probably beyond doubt the best sweet shop in the world, Pietro Romanengo, and the wonderful Mercato Orientale, full of fresh produce. It was so enticing that Mick bought some wonderfully fresh anchovies for us to enjoy on the trip to the new recycling and landfill site at the brick works in the hills outside Genoa.

We were running a little late by now as we rushed to Noli, a lovely medieval coastal village. I think we were all dreading lunch, simply because we were still so full for all of the wonderful meals of the past couple of days. However our fears were unfounded as we were warmly welcomed in Noli with a wonderfully light selection of local breads. Again the light was being lost rapidly as we wandered around the hill top village of Terzorio, set amongst the basil growing hills of Liguria. Some discussion was had as to the best course of action. It was decided to head straight to Sanremo via the 'pista ciclabile' (bike path) which is the longest in Italy and runs along the coast between San Lorenzo al Mare and Sanremo.

Day 4: Sunday 29th November 2009. Lunch La Capanna da Baci, Apricale; pork with tapenade and bread, cheese croquettes, spinach pastry parcels, polenta triangles, cheesy quiche, dumplings main course was a choice of rabbit with polenta/ carpaccio/fish, zabligone with sweet dough cakes, espresso & lashings of local wine.

Day 4 brought the heavy rain which had been forecast for the majority of our visit and which we had been lucky to avoid. The Noble House and the modern station in Sanremo were welcome shelters from the rain and then we headed up into the mountains. It was such a pity that the splendour of the hillside towns of Dolceacqua and Apricale was a little lost in the heavy rain and misty atmosphere. I would love to return and explore the area in better weather. After a wonderful lunch we returned to the coast where the weather was no better and a few brave souls visited the botanical garden of Villa Hanbury and the old border crossing with France. It was a rather damp end to what had been a wonderful trip.

Our hosts were wonderful – a big thank you to Andrea, Marco and Patricia and all involved with making our brief taste of Liguria such a pleasure and one I hope to repeat very soon! www.genovaliguriafc.it/eng_index.htm





The team from Genova > Liguria Film Commission with members of The Guild of Location Managers – Nov 2009