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HIDDEN CORNER of ISTRIA, ITALY, CROATIA and SLOVENIA

June 22 – 27, 2010

Escorted by Sharie Sbrazza & Bob Parker

June 22 – Independent arrivals in charming **Udine**. Savor a *Welcome to Friuli dinner* with Gino's local cousin! Stay **tonight in Udine** at President Hotel or similar. Udine is a short train ride from Venice, Villach or Treviso—all wonderful places to visit beforehand. **D**

June 23 – Learn about San **Daniele del Friuli**'s sweet prosciutto. Cross the **Julian Alps** via Tarvisio to spectacular **Lake Bled in Slovenia**. Enjoy free time for lunch and a cruise to the chapel in this crystal clear lake. Continue to **Gulf of Trieste** for sunset drinks on the terrace at **Castello di Miramare**, an 1856 castle confection of white Istrian stone perched above the Adriatic. Stay a leisurely **4 nights in Trieste** at Hotel Continentale or similar. **B,T**

June 24 – After breakfast with locally-roasted Illy coffee, see **Trieste's Old Town**'s fortress, Roman theatre, basilica and waterfront piazza on a morning walking tour. The afternoon is at leisure: try a ferry to Muggia, a funivia to Villa Opicina's panorama or a stroll on the James Joyce or Italo Svevo literary trails. Visit museums galore: study naval, art, history, speleology, maritime, archeology or coffee exhibits. Sip a **Trieste toast** this afternoon! **B,T**

June 25 – On a day trip from Trieste, discover **Slovenia**, wedged between the Alps and Adriatic, with Germanic roots and independent only since 1991. **Ljubljana** boasts picturesque old town markets, unique Triple Bridge, National University Library and museums. There's free time to savor a Slovenian lunch of hearty specialties, or consider the quaint railway up to the castle for fantastic views. This capital is the next Prague! Cross the stark Karst plain to gorgeous **Postojna Caves**, as a train takes us underground: marvel at 100 foot tall lime stone stalagmites, stalactites and translucent curtains. These enormous, magnificent caverns draw admirers from around the world. Return to Trieste for a **Slovenia toast** this evening! **B,T**

June 26 – On a day trip from Trieste, let the world-famous Lipizzaner stallions awe us at **Slovenian Lipica Stud Farm**, which was founded in 1580 by Vienna's Hapsburg Court. These prized white horses will delight you! Then cross into **Croatia** and savor free time to lunch on the lovely **Gulf of Kvarner**. Explore the genteel past of

Opatija and **Lovran**, as belle époque seaside resorts during an afternoon walking-bus tour. The Hapsburgs created opulent mansions, exotic gardens and beautiful promenades along white sand beaches and azure coves. Return to Trieste for a **Croatia toast** this evening! **B,T**

June 27 – On a day trip from Trieste, discover **Istria**. This spectacular peninsula has Roman and Italian roots, but now belongs to Croatia. Meander the scenic coastal road to **Porec** and **Piran**. In charming **Porec**, which is almost 2000 years old, we visit the fascinating Euphrasian Basilica, built by a Byzantine bishop in the 6th century and is now under UNESCO protection. Stoll Piazza Tartini, a polished marble harborfront square in quaint **Piran**, which was founded by rural Illyrian tribes, well before the arrival of the Romans. In romantic **Rovinj**, there's time to explore medieval lanes, Venetian palaces, art galleries, batana boat shops and quayside trattorias for lunch suggestions. Drive along the breathtaking coast with its azure coves, fishing villages and enormous salt pans, mined since medieval days. Onto **Pula** for Temple of Augustus, built in 2 BC and boasting harmonious Corinthian marble columns. Pula's well-preserved Arena rivals the colosseums of Rome and Verona! Our guide traces Byzantine, Venetian and Hapsburg history at the forum, fortress, Sergius Arch and floor mosaics. Return to **Trieste** this afternoon, when our tour ends. You may wish to stay in this area tonight or take a quick train trip to spend time in magical Venice. **B**

Legend: B=breakfast, D=dinner, T=tasting

Custom Land Rate: \$995 per person sharing twin or double for 6 days of indicated sightseeing/admissions, 5 nights first-class lodging, indicated meals/tastings, bilingual guides, escorts, taxes, fees, orientation meetings and reunion.

Add: Mandatory trip cancellation insurance; premium based on age and trip cost.

Option: \$195 single supplement

Payment: \$500 deposit now, final check due 4-10-10.

Discount: \$50 per room if deposit received by 3-20-10

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