

***Book NOW!!***  
***A Deposit Will Hold Your Place.***  
***Tuscany Calls!!!***  
***Spend 13 Days Painting and Visiting Tuscany***  
***With M. E. "Mike" Bailey***  
***July 17-30, 2009***



High on a hill in the charming medieval village of Casole d'Elsa we will "invade and occupy" the Verrocchio Arts Centre. This center is the home studio of famous British Sculptor, Nigel Konstam.

There, overlooking the Tuscan hills and valleys we will turn up the 'relax dial' and settle into the Italian lifestyle. We will open our souls and minds to the personal enjoyment of the fruits of life itself while taking in the atmosphere of one of Europe's most celebrated regions. What could be better than to spend our days painting, napping, reading and, of course, absorbing the foods and wines of Tuscany in this little rustic get-away?

Located less than 20 miles from Siena and not far from Florence, we will where artists from all over the world come to study and retreat. Evening meals, expertly prepared on the premises, are served under the Tuscan sky (weather permitting) among convivial company, citrus trees and extraordinary scenery beyond and below our terrace. Of course, the meals are accompanied by local wines that will help us further appreciate our surroundings. Evening meals are the place for stories of the day, art discussions and recounting sites experienced during the day or week. Expect uproarious laughter and gaiety as Mike (being his usual mischievous self) will

keep things from becoming boring. Just ask previous travelers who have been part of the French or Spanish trips! Every day is made into absolute fun!

Casole d'Elsa is, in itself, a charming, off the beaten path, village. Not large, it was one of Tuscany's fortified hill towns and is now an overgrown village with a healthy mix of agriculture, industry and tourism. The village stands 1,300 feet above sea level and commands magnificent views over the surrounding countryside. Two banks, a post office, pharmacy, pizzeria, 3 bars and an enoteca /trattoria specializing in fine wines make up the heart of the village. The locals are very friendly, welcoming the artists from the Verrocchio Art Centre, sprinkled through the village painting, sketching or journaling. One of the most inviting spots in the summer months is the Roman style indoor plunge for a warm day's refreshment. Then, of course, there is always the irresistible opportunity wander through the village, find a nook with a glass of wine or cool drink to while away the afternoon with nothing to



accomplish or worry about. Also, there are various open air events organized in the village from concerts to amateur theatre.

Non painters find the village to be 'a little piece of heaven' away from home and are often enticed to walk the trails that weave through the surrounding area of the village. There is plenty to entertain oneself if a partner is busy painting. And, don't forget the option of visiting the surrounding villages either alone or on one of our planned side trips.



Beyond our digs in Casole d'Elsa, we will be taking occasional side trips to such places as Florence, Siena, Volterra and San Gimignano. We will witness Roman ruins, and historic buildings and villages dating to the 12<sup>th</sup> century. We will see, first hand, paintings and sculpture most of us have only been exposed to in text books! You will see some of the world's finest art treasures, as they are here in this region. Florence is truly a destination for seeing extraordinary art masterworks. In fact, Florence and Siena should be on one of those 'life lists' of must visit!

As for painting, any medium is welcome. Whether you paint with acrylic, watercolor, oil or pastel, the lessons during the classes will be quite meaningful. There is a grand studio in which to spread out and paint while the countryside and village beckon to the plein aire painters. Lessons and demos will be given daily, even on the days of our side trips. There is a small art supply store available on the premises for

'essentials' either forgotten or unable to pack. Things such as watercolor papers, oil solvents, paints etc. are on hand to serve the artists.

Last, lodging consists of simply appointed single or double rooms with shared bathrooms. While somewhat 'rustic,' we are assured by others who have stayed in some of the various rooms that the rooms are restful, quiet and comfortable. For anyone requiring more separate, luxurious accommodations, there are 2 hotels nearby which can be booked on request.

## Book Now!

You will find the cost to be most reasonable, too! A deposit of \$500 will reserve your place. The remaining amount of \$2,800 will be due by June 1, 2009. This cost, of course, does not cover your air fare, but does include lodging, ground transportation, Breakfasts and Dinners for 13 days and nights and tuition for the workshop.

**An early deposit is important in order to hold the reservations at Verrocchio Arts Center.**

More information is available directly from Mike. Contact information follows:

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