

PICTURES AND STORIES OF OUR STUDY TRIP TO ITALY/FRANCE 2016



Bellagio, Como (Italy)

PAOLA BASILE

MAY 15TH 2016, OUR DEPARTURE DAY FROM A "SNOWY" CLEVELAND.
HERE WE ARE: ANNA, DAVID, SOMMER, JONATHAN, MARY, KATHERINE, TRACEY, MARY JO,
CECE, AND PAOLA.



ARRIVAL IN MILAN AT 9:00 A.M. PRIVATE BUS TRIP TO COMO (APPROXIMATELY ONE HOUR AWAY FROM MILAN).



COMO

Built by the Romans at the end of the *Piemonte* road, it was an important communication point between Rome and its northern territories. In more recent times Como became famous for its silk. The area around Lake Como, is pretty characteristic. In the shadow of the snow-covered Rhaetian Alps, *Lago di Como* is one of the most spectacular of the lakes. Shaped like an upside-down letter Y, measuring 120km all up, its squiggly shoreline is scattered with villages, including exquisite Bellagio, in the center of the inverted V on the lake's southern shore. It has been appreciated for its beauty and uniqueness for ages, and even as early as the Roman Times. Its atmosphere and natural surroundings have been the inspiration for an important part of the creation of Naboo, in the Star Wars movies.

A student: *The plane ride was long and gave a feeling comparable to sardines still in the can. Upon arriving in Como, we walked around the town looking for a currency exchange and getting a feel for the town. Como was absolutely beautiful and so was Lago di Como. The large mountains and the beautiful town and lake created a surreal environment much different than any American cities....*

A student: *Once we got onto the bus heading to Como, I breathed a sigh of relief and actually fell asleep! I was so content and happy to be in Italia again. We checked into the Hotel Borgo Antico, which was quaint and cute. The weather was so serene and calm. The group of students were relaxed and overall mature. I enjoyed their energy and for the most part, we all got along really well. We took a walk down to Lago di Como. The first thing I noticed was the color of the lake and the huge swans! I also noticed I understood more of what people were saying, even when I was just passing by. We walked the streets of Como and went inside the Duomo there. I stopped outside and That excited me!*

A student: *As a novice traveler, I was so pleased that Como, Italy was my first place to visit internationally. It was so comforting and I felt safe everywhere I went. I think one of the best*

parts of being in Como... is being able to walk everywhere. In Ohio and where I live, it is not possible to walk down the street for 20 minutes to the square, to the store, or a restaurant. Multiple things about visiting Italy have shaped the way I see the world now. To begin, the food is honestly indescribable. My favorite dish I had was Penne alla arrabbiata. The noodles were cooked perfectly along with the sauce just creamy enough and not too spicy. My gelato in Bellagio was my favorite, although all the gelato I had was incredibly tasty.

A student: we came upon lake, which was very beautiful! The sun hitting the lake just right making it sparkle and brightening up. Making the surface underneath the water glow. And the wild life just swimming, walking and sleeping around. It was spectacular and breathtaking! My group and I walked for a little while, taking in the view until we hit a memorial. We discovered it was a memorial for WWI & WWII. It was very impacting. And what made it more impacting and memorable was the poems written in stone and talking about the people who died will never be forgotten. Which was very cool, but what made it grand was the many languages in which the poems were written in; such as English, Italian, French, German, Japanese, etc. After, everyone was hungry and we started to look for food, until people remembered that people here in Italy only take Euros not US money so we also went to a bank. The food after some of the group got money, was incredible! It was better than eating our dishes at home. The fresh bread, cheeses, and herbs! So good!









SECOND DAY: COMO IN THE MORNING





The “Tempio Voltiano” the science museum dedicated to the physicist Alessandro Volta (1745-1827), who was born in Como and invented the electric battery (volt) in 1799, and discovered methane gas.



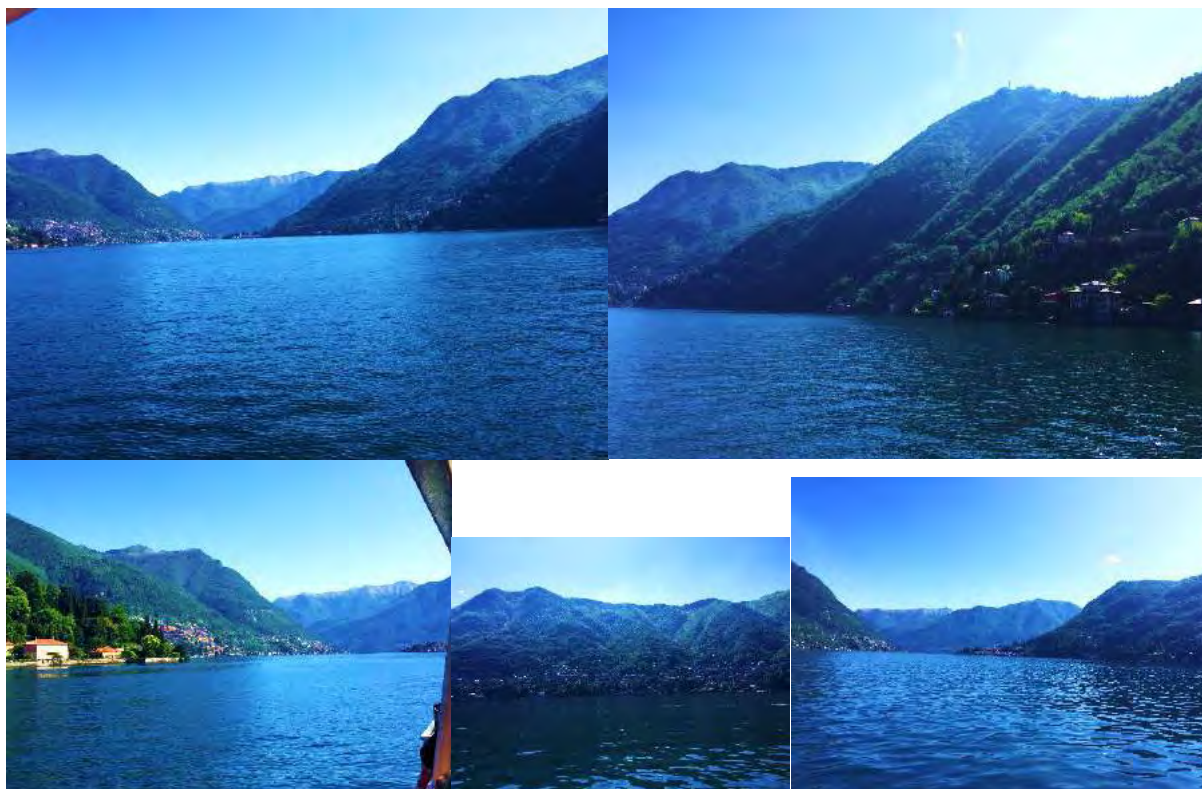


BOAT TOUR ON *LAGO DI COMO* FOR BELLAGIO, AND VILLA MELZI.

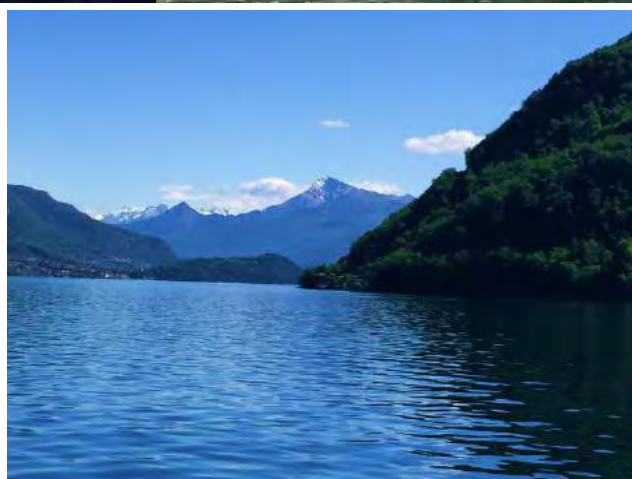
A student: *Dave and I woke up early and went for a run around town and ended our run at Villa Olmo. It was a beautiful run and was absolutely spectacular to run along the lake at sunrise. We ran about 2 miles and returned to the hotel to begin our day and to try the breakfast. The Italian breakfast was so good that I made a lunch out of it and packed it for our trip to Bellagio. We then gathered the group and embarked on our day trip down the Lake. Lago di Como only became more enchanting the more we saw of it. We rode by mountains with snow at their peak and water falls cascading down the hills. There was always a cool breeze and the blue skies escorted us around. We toured a gorgeous villa (Villa Melzi) and then wandered around the little picturesque town of Bellagio and then boarded the boat to return to Como. We dined at a restaurant that fed us much more food that we could have asked for. The first course was the appetizer consisting of meats and cheese and vegetables. The second course or primary plate consisted of pasta and the third course or secondary plate was sausage. By the time the secondary plate came around everyone was full...*

A student: *The boat ride to Bellagio was probably my favorite part of the trip. I was in awe of how large the lake was. It took 2 hours, but it was a beautiful 2 hours. The breeze and sunshine were perfect. The soft air lulled me and I almost fell asleep (again!). The estates along the lake were incredible. I have a difficult time imagining what they do for a living. A lot of money is needed to live there! Although, I noticed that the architectural differences make the homes appear so much more beautiful and elaborate. They all look like historical landmarks. I loved how some of the locals waved at us on the boat. I wanted to sit alone to take in all of the beautiful sights. I loved the energy that was floating around the boat filled with happy vacationers from all over the globe. Listening to all of the languages made me happy.*

A student: *Another thing I like about the Italian trip was the clear water you could see from the boat ride. You could almost see all the way down it was so cool!*







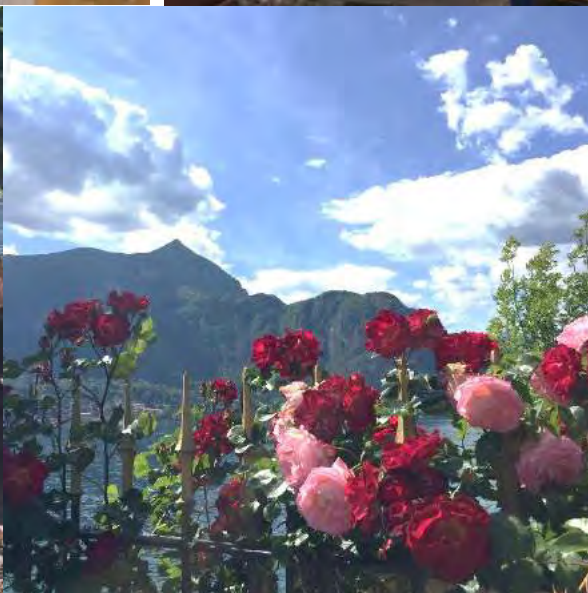


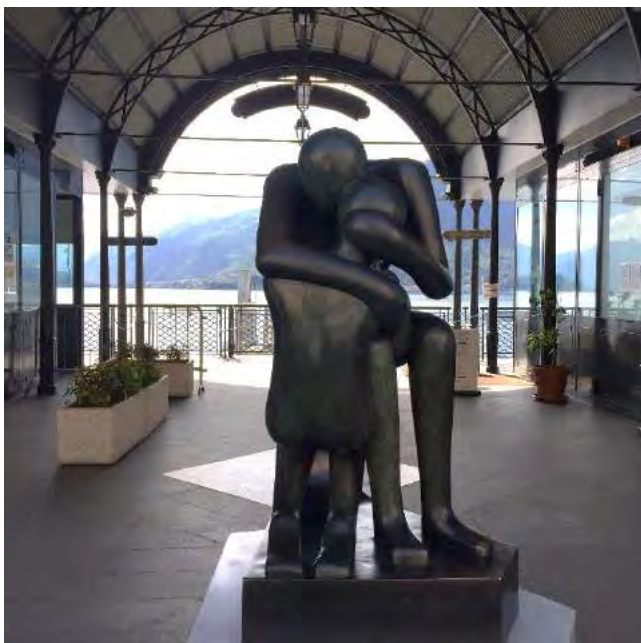


BELLAGIO: a small picturesque village at the tip of a long hilly promontory between the two southern branches of Lake Como. It is called the “Pearl of the Lake” and it provides the perfect place to soak up the lake's famous panorama. The village is characterized by century-old buildings, stone lanes and picturesque cobbled stairways filled with shops showcasing the finest Italian wares.

A student: Bellagio looked like all of the postcards I had seen. The business owners in one of the shops were so friendly and accommodating. I was trying to speak my best Italian and they were trying to speak English. It was very cute. I bought some post cards from a local artist. I walked up one of the alleyways and saw a sweet Pug.... We had gelato and a delicious lunch.







VILLA MELZI: It was built between 1808 and 1815 by the architect Giocondo Albertolli for Francesco Melzi, Duke of Lodi. The Gardens stretch out along the lake shore and are harmoniously inserted into hilly scenery of Bellagio. In such surroundings, enriched by monuments, sculptures, artefacts (amongst which are a Venetian gondola transported to Bellagio and two precious Egyptian statues), are rare exotic plants, ancient trees, hedges of camellias, groves of azaleas, gigantic rhododendrons, etc., the villa, the chapel and the glass house constitute an ensemble in which the neoclassical style reaches one of its highest peaks.

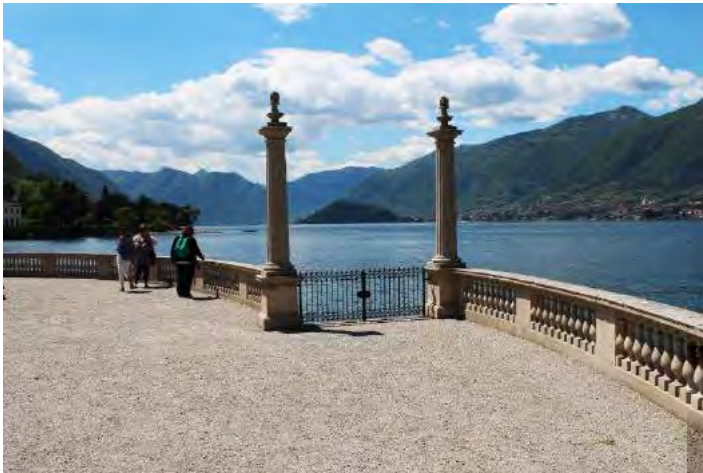
A student: The short walk to I Giardini di Villa Melzi was quiet and peaceful. The grounds looked like a storybook. I loved all of the varying species of trees from around the world. I saw Japanese Maple, Ginkgo Baloba, Neroli and Fig trees. I wanted to jump into the lake. It was so beautiful.

We ate at a local restaurant and had more good food. This trip I ate what I wanted...didn't even worry about it. I couldn't believe how delicious the wine was. I tried two different Moscatos and quickly found a favorite. So much food allowed me to continue to drink, which was a good thing! When in Rome....well, Como...hahaha.

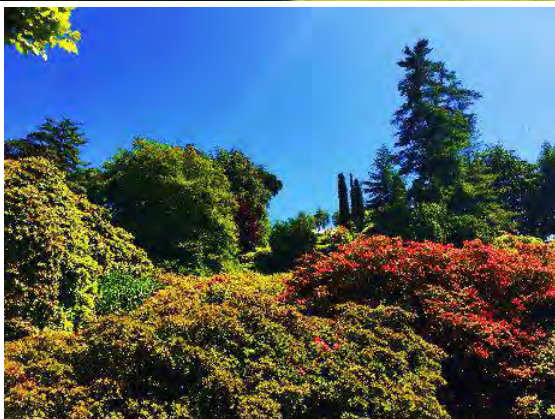








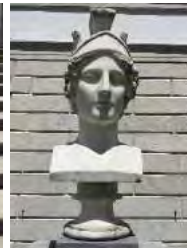
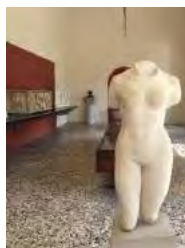
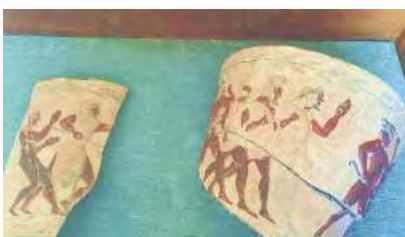
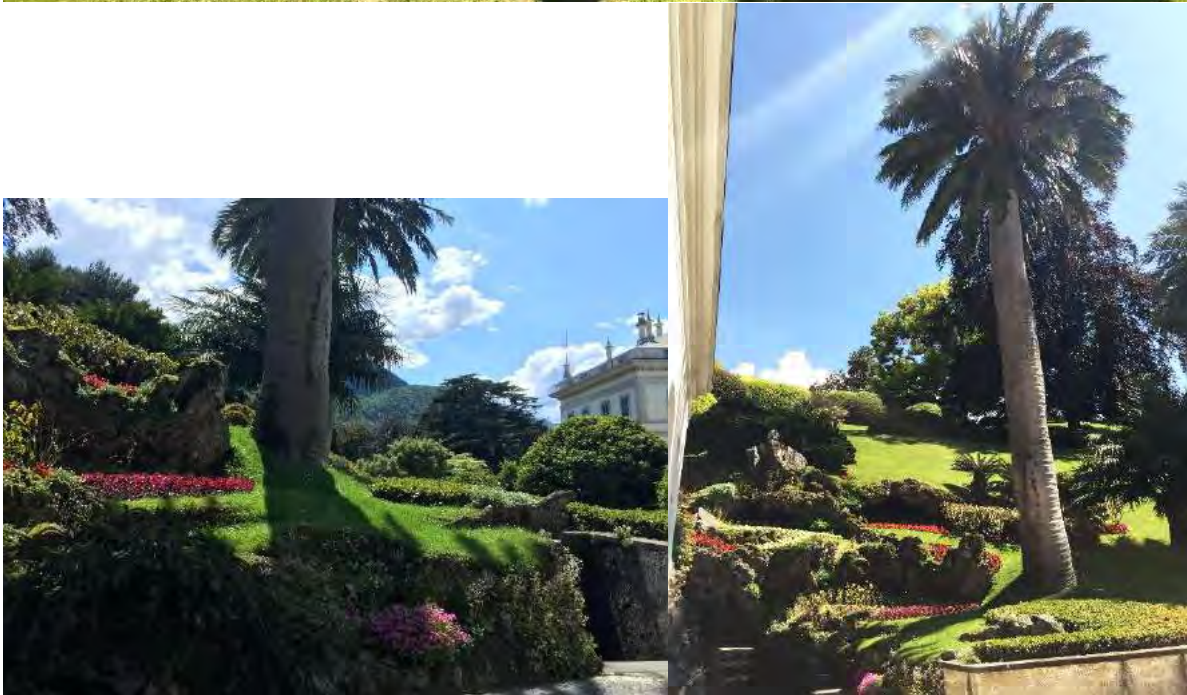
The Villa Melzi gardens, enriched with sculptures, were designed by the architect Luigi Canonica, and by the botanist Luigi Villoresi. The whole complex was shaped like a place of rare harmony & beauty and was admired by many famous national and international authors and artists. Here is the famous statue of *Dante e Beatrice* completed in 1810 by the sculptor Giovanni B. Comolli

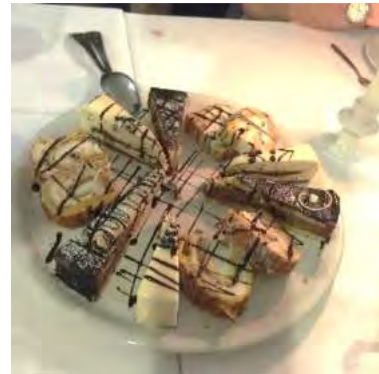




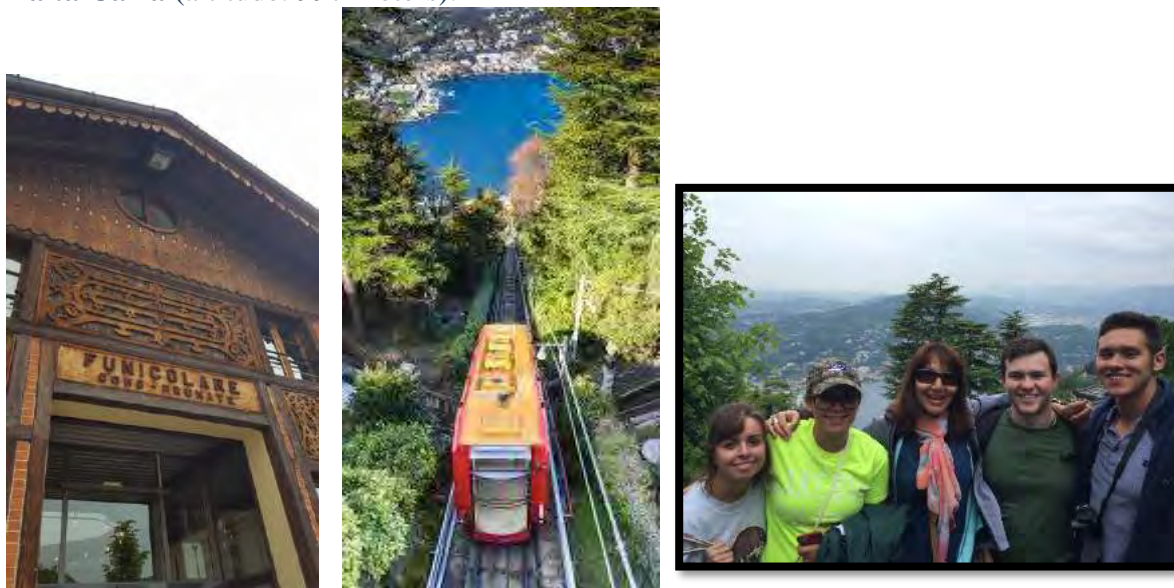




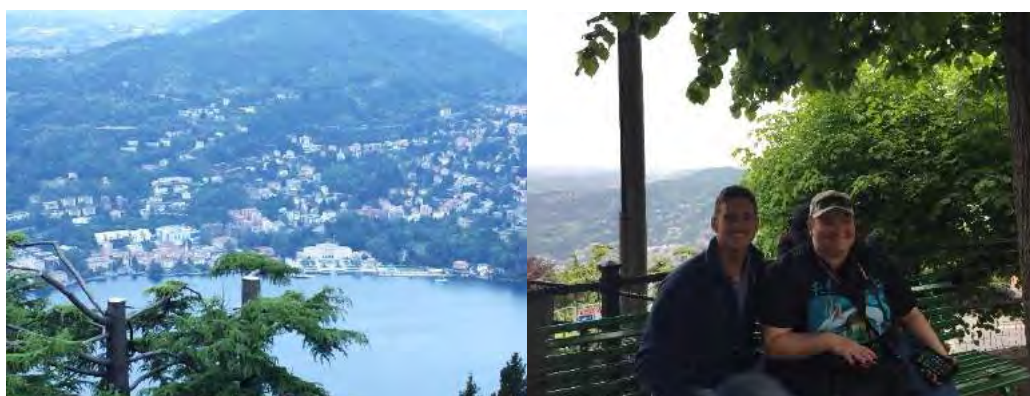




THIRD DAY: Funicolare Trip to the picturesque town Brunate (altitude: 715 meters) followed by a great hike to the **Volta's Lighthouse** (altitude: 906 meters). A few of us continued to **Baita Carla** (altitude: 997 meters).



A student: *Today was a challenge, but a good one. We walked around Como to the Funicolare and then went on a beautiful ride up to the top of a hill and a little town called Brunate. The hike to see Alessandro Volta's lighthouse was brutal, but worth the trip. I felt like I accomplished something. "Stunning" seems an inappropriate adjective to describe the view from the top of the hill. It was surreal to look down onto Lake Como. After the walk, we ate a snack at a little stand and spoke to two cyclists preparing for the "Giro". The rest of the group met up and we all ate a proper lunch at Hotel Paradiso. Brunate was known for their polenta and wild boar. We sat in literal Paradise and took long, deep breaths....The walk down the hill proved to be just as challenging, but again, so worth the effort and time. On the way back down, we stopped at the Alice Bar and bought some souvenirs. The owner was out front, singing Beatles songs in Italian! I stopped and sang along in English. We had a couple of laughs.*











A student: *I was particularly happy in Brunate and our hike to the lighthouse, we earned our way to the best view.*

A student: *As a group we walked to the funicular and began our ascent up the mountain. This was one of my favorite parts, we rode up and saw a great view of the city. Of course, pictures were taken. The hike to the Faro Voltiano was long but well worth the climb. We kept positive attitudes and got the whole group up to the top. There were some awesome pictures taken at the light house. One the climb back down Dave and I noticed a castle tower that we just had to climb. We descended the rest of the mountain without incident and continued our day. We had made reservations for a little restaurant near the hotel that turned out be fantastic. This was my favorite restaurant, the prices were reasonable and the food was homemade and fantastic. Day three was a great day followed by many more.*



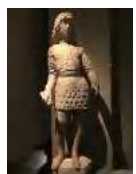
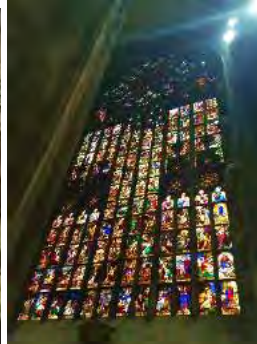
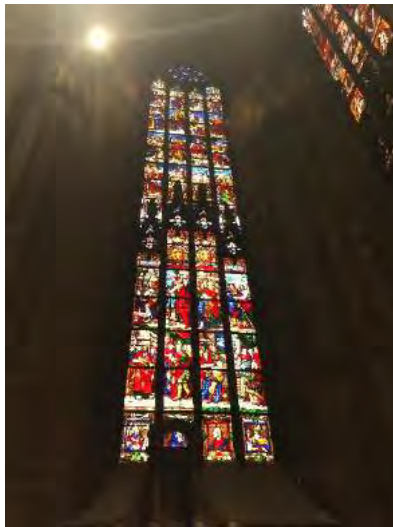
FOURTH DAY: TRIP TO THE COSMOPOLITAN CITY OF MILANO

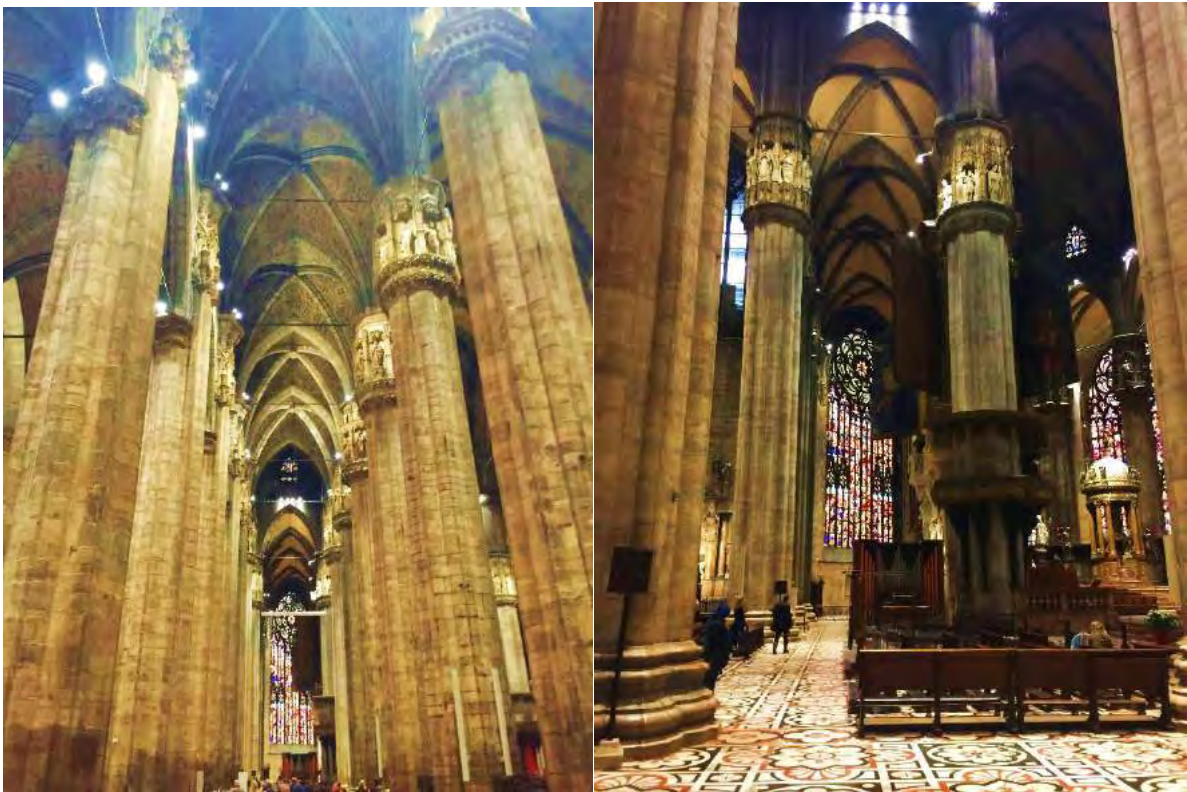
A student: *We boarded the bus and headed toward Milano. We moved on into the main square, Piazza del Duomo. The view was fantastic. The cathedral stood taller than the other buildings in the area and was patrolled by men with big guns. The truly medieval 1300 “Duomo” (cathedral) looked like the largest, most beautiful drippy castle I have ever seen. Due to the gothic style of the building the many spires and arches reminded me of creations from the beach. The group passed through security and toured the inside of the cathedral until every inch had been seen or photographed. The group then headed up to the top of the Duomo and enjoyed lunch and a beautiful view. Next came the shopping. Dave and I decided that we could not visit the fashion capital of the world and not update our fashion just a little. We perused the stores and acted like we had money to the ears. Even though we were window shopping in Versace, they treated us well and we were baffled by the prices. We moved on to more affordable venues and made a couple of purchases in Italian designer stores.*

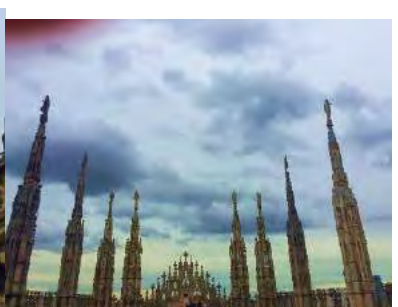
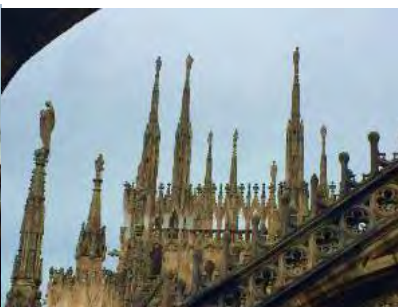
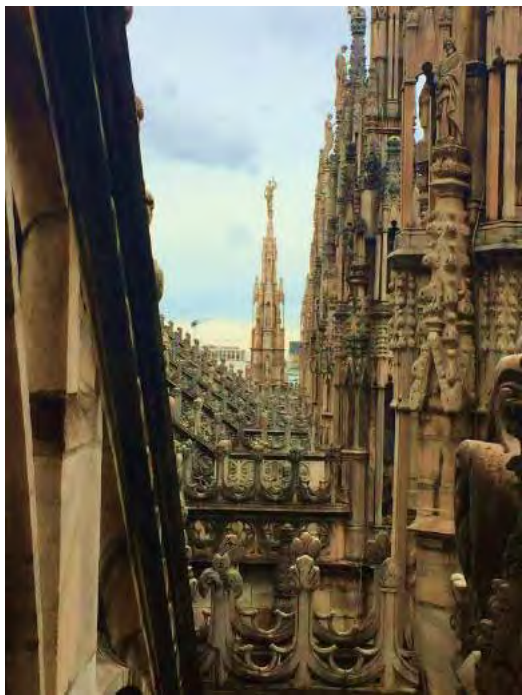
A student: *The churches in the United States don’t give me the feeling like I had when walking into the ones in Italy. Il Duomo in Milan was the most incredible though. To think how old it is, to know billions of people walked through those doors and that one man’s dream a long time ago became the outstanding building that stands there today. I loved the stained glass all over and the statues too. Lastly, all the frescoes in the churches, on the ceilings and walls... were remarkable.*

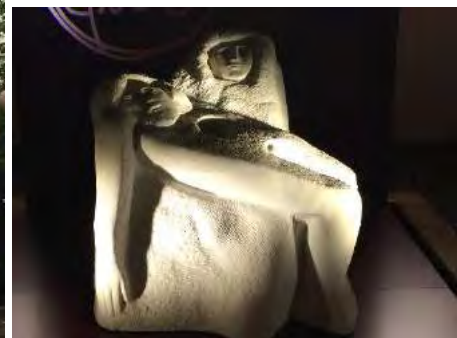
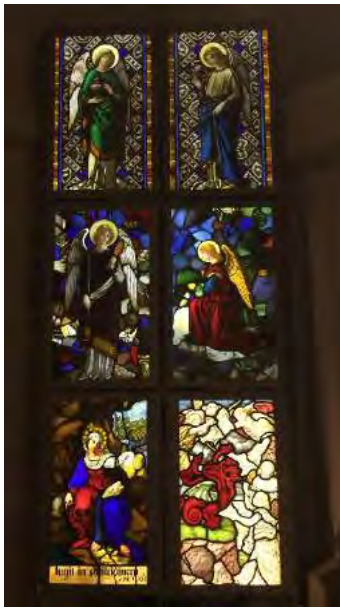












A student: *I was able to experience something very few people ever get to experience in a lifetime. I saw THE Cenacolo. The REAL Last Supper!! Who gets to do that???*

I'm not a religious person, but was moved by the masterpiece. The windows he supposedly used for lighting were still intact. Seeing the first examples of chiaroscuro and sfumato! So exciting. I learned about Cenacolo in Art History Class...20 years ago! This was cool. The kid in me could only be in awe of the fact that I was there. The detail in the painting was astounding-impressive. WOW I enjoyed seeing the castle where he resided while he was working on the painting was beautiful.

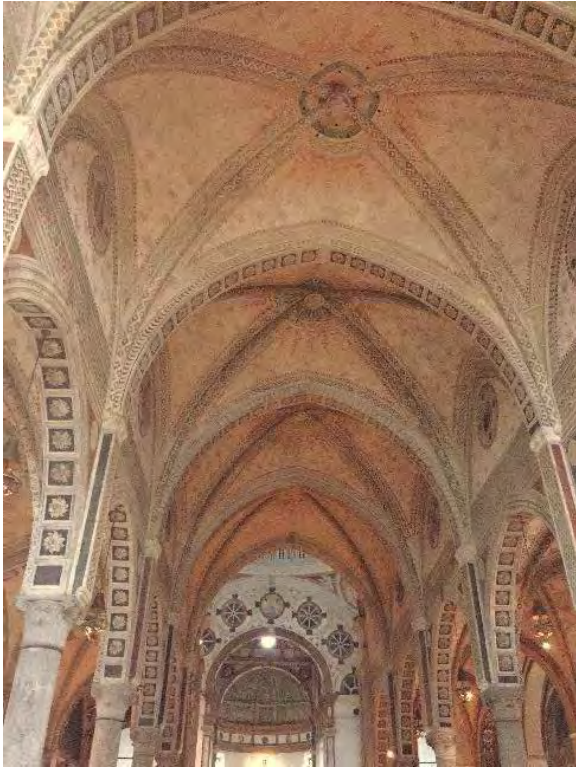
Milan had a few surprises for me. I loved seeing the biological project with the apartments and trees [the Vertical Forest]. I'm glad I was aware of it prior to visiting Italy and so glad I got to see it, up close. I wish every city did this. Such a great idea and so wonderful to look at.

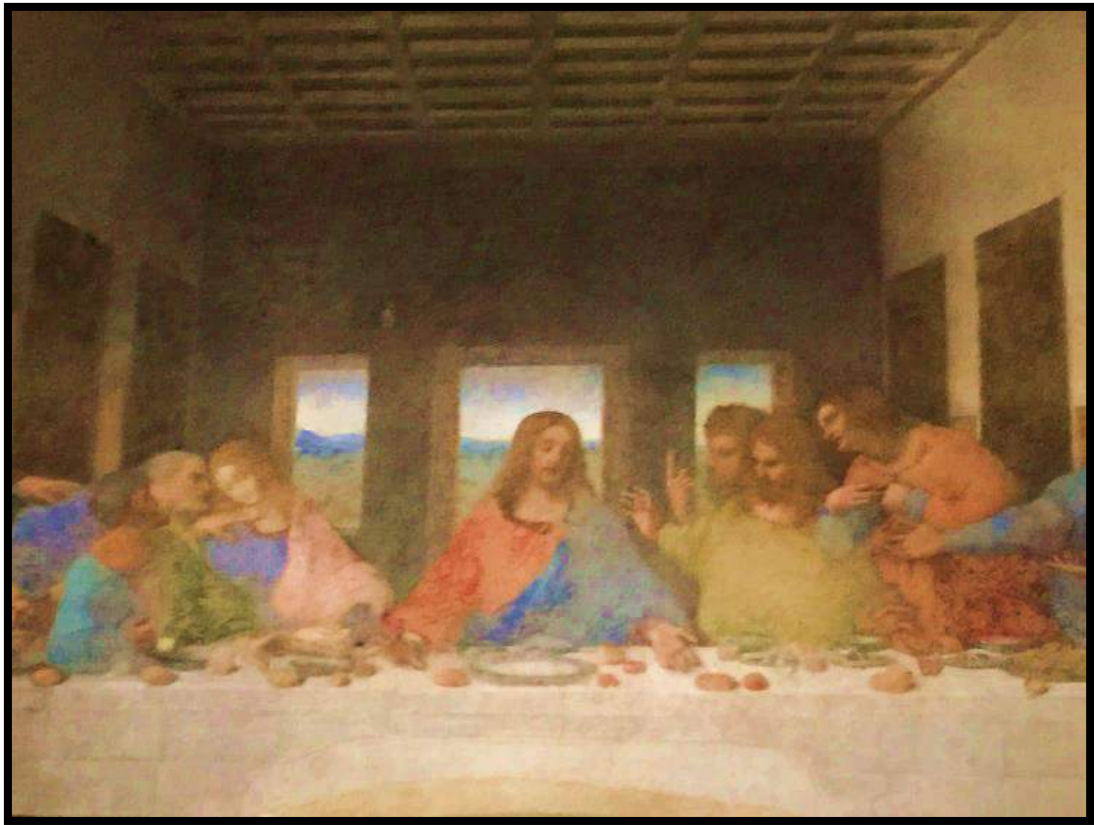
Walking through Vittorio Emanuele Galleria was phenomenal. The arcade was filled with marble floors and gold ceilings. The art there impressed me the most. I was in awe of the architecture and beauty.... The Duomo is an architectural champion. I enjoyed going down into the archaeological site where the tombs were founds. - Great dinner in Como by our hotel.

A student: *Post our shopping experience the ten of us regrouped and headed to see one of the highlights of the trip, Leonardo Di Vici's world famous "The Last Supper". The piece was incredible. The history and mysticism behind it, even more so. It was said that during World War 2 the building was bombed and the whole building collapsed except for the wall that the last supper stood on. That wall remained untouched and still standing.*

We returned to Como for dinner and enjoyed the same restaurant as the night before and it was still amazing the second time. I had been working on my Italian and was able to ask for the bill for the group, that I quickly passed on to Dr Basile.











FIFTH DAY: PRIVATE BUS TRIP TO STRESA, BOAT TOUR TO *ISOLA DEI PESCATORI*, AND TO *ISOLA BELLA* ON LAKE MAGGIORE (PIEMONTE) TO LEARN ABOUT (AND SURELY ENJOY) THE MARVELOUS AND SUMPTUOUS BORROMEAN PALACE AND GARDENS!





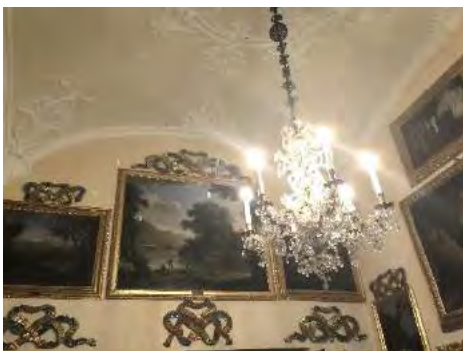


A student: *Dave and I woke and decided that today was the day to make it to Castello Borgo, the castle on the top of a nearby mountain. The run was difficult but the work was well worth it since we watched the sunrise over the mountains and the lake and stood on top of the mountain overlooking a beautiful scene of serenity. We boarded the bus for our day trip to Stresa and Isola Bella. Stresa was a beautiful town and we travelled around by boat on Lago Maggiore. The whole day was absolutely captivating. Dave and I enjoyed a packed lunch along the edge of the water and chatted about life overlooking the picturesque view of the mountains and the water. The group toured gardens and villas and was captivated by the style of life these ancient peoples enjoyed.*

A student: *This was the Piemonte region of Italy. I loved Stresa and wished we would have more time there. I'd love to return. We visited Isola Bella and Pescatori. The boat ride to each island were great. I felt like a local. I enjoyed exploring the towns on my own and stopped to taste the local truffle and olive oils. I ended up purchasing some as souvenirs for my family. I ate lunch at a local cafe and enjoyed some affogato and local goat cheese. YUM! Isola Bella was gorgeous with its lush gardens and great aromas of Neroli, lemon and honey blossoms. I could have stayed there all day. The poppies were brightly colored, happy, little flowers that seemed to smile in the sunshine. It was surreal to stand in such pristine gardens. I got to see my first white peacock! That was pretty neat. I didn't know they existed. I found my way to the gift shop and purchased some Neroli perfume and honey from the island. I stopped on my way out and admired the vast, blue lake. I was completely at peace.*





















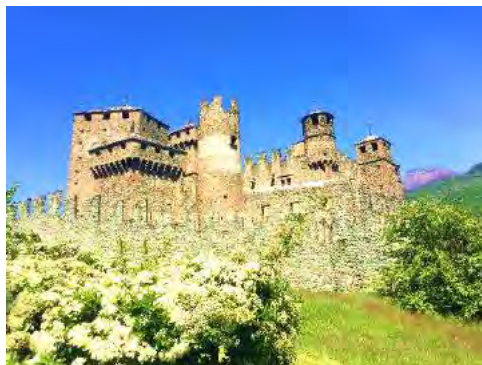


SIXTH DAY: VALLE D'AOSTA (ITALY) AND CHAMONIX IN FRANCE. Private bus trip to Valle d'Aosta, a small region in nonwestern Italy with the highest peaks of the Alps, and many castles! First stop in Fenis to see the beautiful medieval castle: *Castello di Fenis* that was built in a number of steps from the 12th century up to the 15th century (9 to 6 centuries ago!) Followed by lunch in the city of Aosta by *Monte Bianco*. We then ventured in the tunnel that connects Italy to France inside Monte Bianco/Mont Blanc! We stopped and had a great walk in Chamonix, France, by *Mont Blanc*!

A student: So we drove to AND THROUGH the Alps! That was quite a trip. We stopped in Aosta, which I had been eager to see. I had read about it on line, prior to the trip. I was excited to be in the farthest, Western point in Italy. Castel de Fenis was a traditional Medieval castle. It looked like a King and Queen would have lived there. The surrounding nature was right out of a fairy tale. Those were some of my favorite pictures to take. The Alps reminded me of the Rockies, but the villages nestled against them in the valley, were so cute and quaint. I had the best pizza in Aosta! Not sure why it was the best, but I could taste the hearth it was cooked in. I drizzled olive oil all over it and sat back and took it all in. Loved every bite. Chamonix was cute and only the second French town I have ever been in. It was much better than Paris ever was. The town people were sweet and friendly. I loved walking down the street and enjoying seeing the Alps peering through the openings of the buildings. The water there, rushing under the city was so beautiful and a shade of blue like the sky.

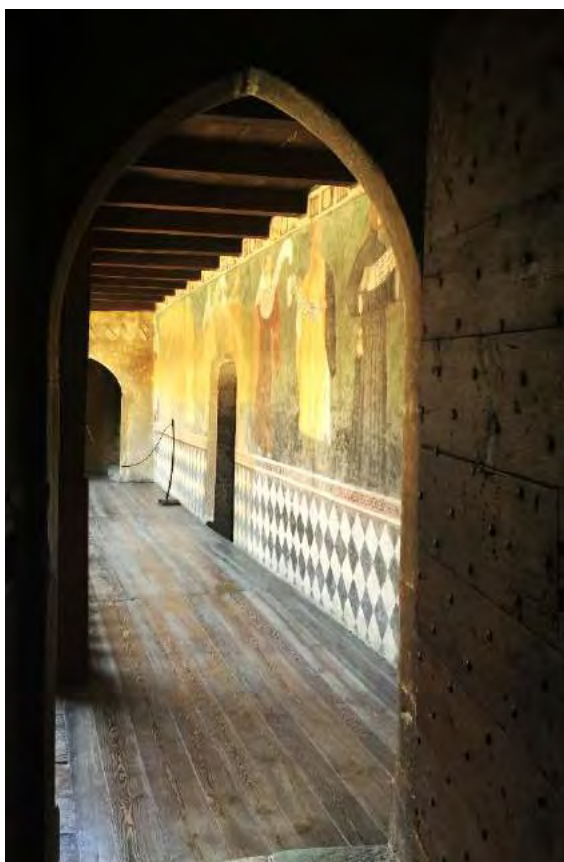






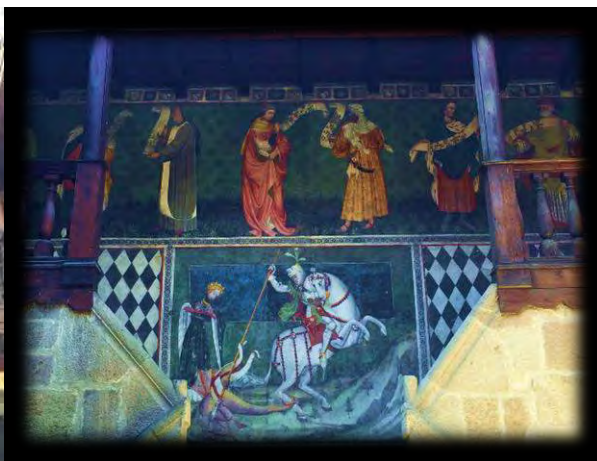


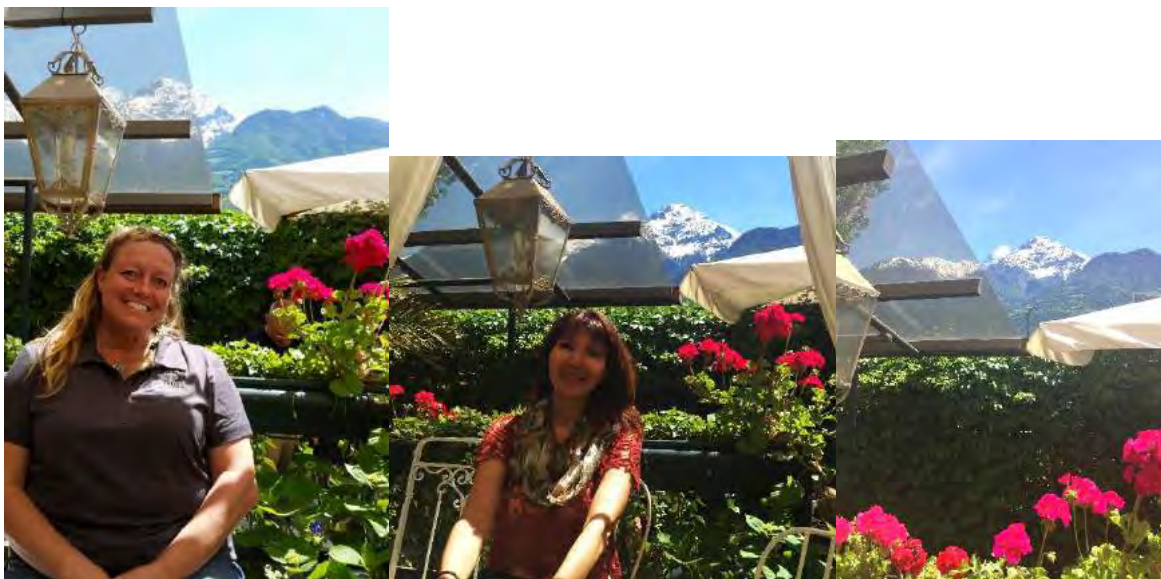












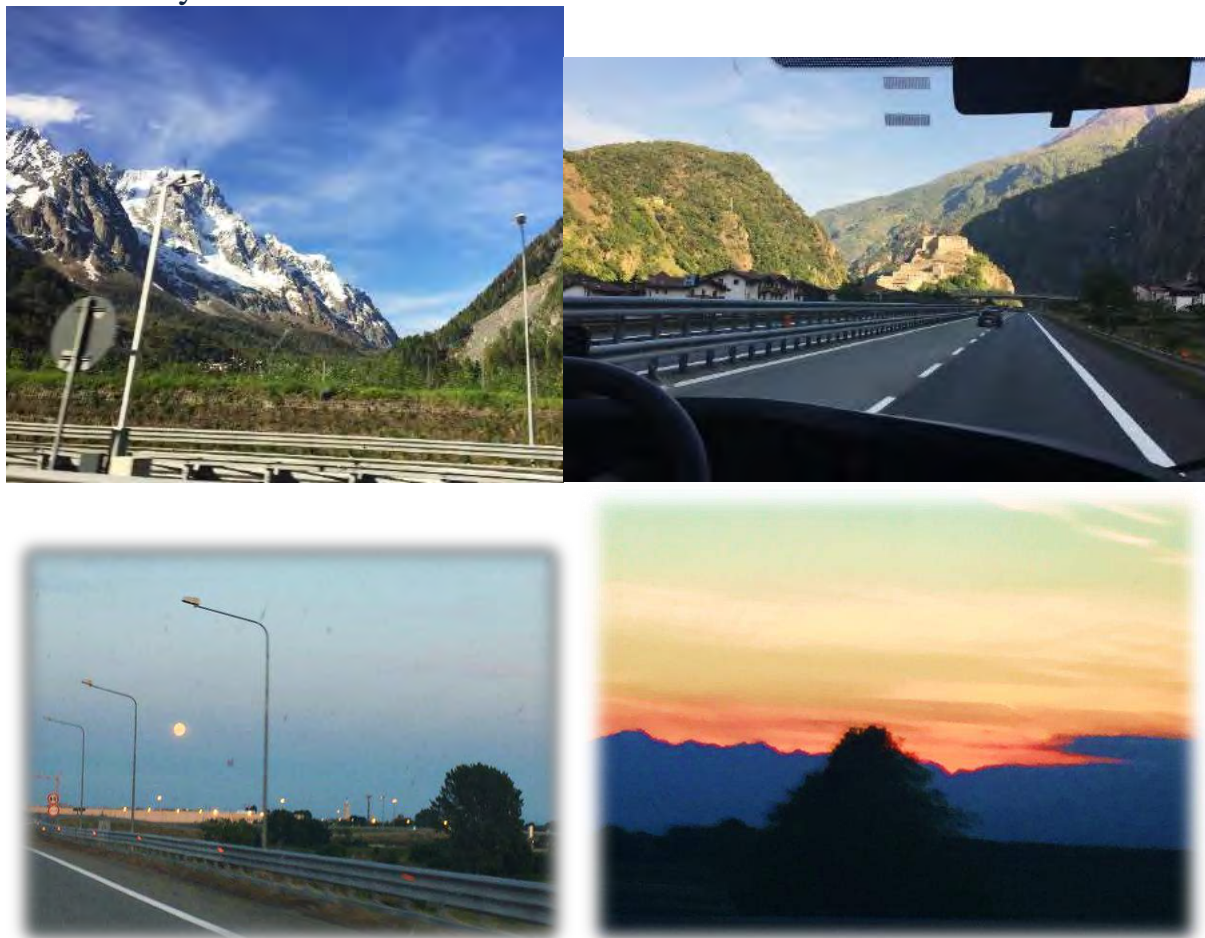


Here we are (below) inside Monte Bianco/Mont Blanc in Italy exiting in **France**!





Back in Italy



SEVENTH DAY: BOAT TOUR ON *LAGO DI COMO* FOR TREMEZZO, AND VILLA CARLOTTA

A student: *Really good food and gelato here. Villa Carlotta was impressive. I loved the detailed ceilings and Canova statues. Canova's Amore e Pische was something I had been wanting to see for a long time. The grounds were beautiful and I could never see enough lemon and orange trees. I was tired though, so relaxing was a priority and I did just that. I walked and experienced everything, but I made sure not to rush anywhere. Smiles abounded every shop we went into. Happiness and calm were found, once again.*

A student: *Sunday started and we boarded the boat again to travel down Lago di Como to see the small town of Tremezzo. A small town that housed a beautiful villa. Dave and I sat and enjoyed lunch out on the veranda among the greenery and scenery. It was a perfect moment. [We] finished exploring all of Tremezzo and then sat down in the water drinking wine and enjoying our last moments away from real life and sharing the dread that was about to be when we returned. I couldn't be near so much water without going in for at least a little bit. I waded around in the water and enjoyed the cool rejuvenating effects that the lake had on me. When it*

was time we all boarded the boat and headed back to Como, to enjoy the last dinner with way too much food. It was delicious and wonderful as always.







The magnificent ***Villa Carlotta*** was built at the end of XVII century by the Milanese marquis Giorgio Clerici in a natural basin between lake and mountains, in the picturesque town Tremezzo. It is a superb architectural masterpiece surrounded by a breathtaking Italian garden decorated with sculptures, stairs and fountains. The villa became a temple of XIX century art with works of Canova, Tadolini, Thorvaldsen, and Francesco Hayez. *Palamede*, *Amore e Psiche*, *La Maddalena Penitente*, *Terpsichore*, *The last kiss of Romeo and Juliet* are only some of the masterpieces that enrich the extraordinary collection.

The villa was sold in 1843 to Princess Marianne of Nassau, Albert's of Prussia wife, who gave it as a present to her daughter Carlotta. Hence the name Villa Carlotta.



Palamede is one of the most famous masterpieces of Antonio Canova. Palamedes, king Nauplio's son, was the inventor of chess and dice games. This sculpture arrived in Tremezzo in 1819; it was located in Villa Carlotta in a room with mirrors on the walls in order to show up its formal perfection.

In the center of the room it's possible to admire the marble group ***Amore e Psiche*** (*Eros and Psyche* reclining) by Antonio Tadolini, one of the best Canova's scholars. It's a replica taken from the original model of Antonio Canova. Made from a block of Carrara marble of exceptional beauty, this sculpture arrived in Tremezzo in 1834 where it became a real icon of sensuality and passion.

The last Adieu of Romeo and Juliet, 1823, oil on canvas by Francesco Hayez (1791-1882) is a manifesto of the Italian Romantic painting. Inspired by the famous Shakespearean tragedy, this painting was commissioned by Sommariva in 1823. The scene - in the house of Juliet, the young woman is embracing Romeo for a last kiss in the pink light of dawn - is characterized by an interesting structure and the chromatic expression was inspired by the ancient Venetian tradition of coloration.

The **gardens** of Villa Carlotta chiefly owe their reputation to the rhododendrons' and azaleas' spring flowering, consisting of over 150 different sorts. The gardens offer old varieties of camellias, century old cedars and sequoias, huge planes and tropical plants, the Rock garden and the Ferns valley, the Rhododendrons wood and the Bamboos garden, the agricultural tools museum, and the wonderful views on the lake and mountains. It is still today considered "a place of heaven".

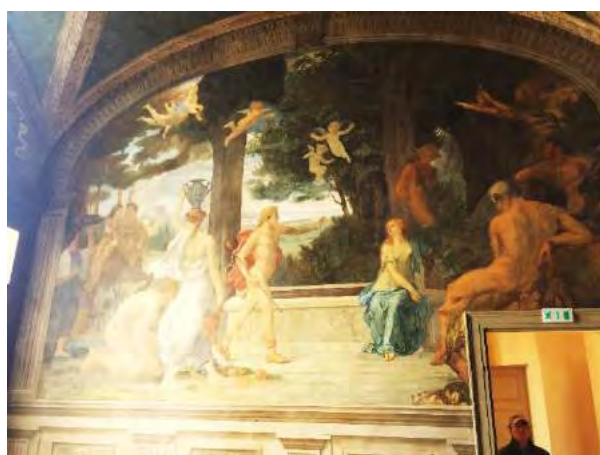






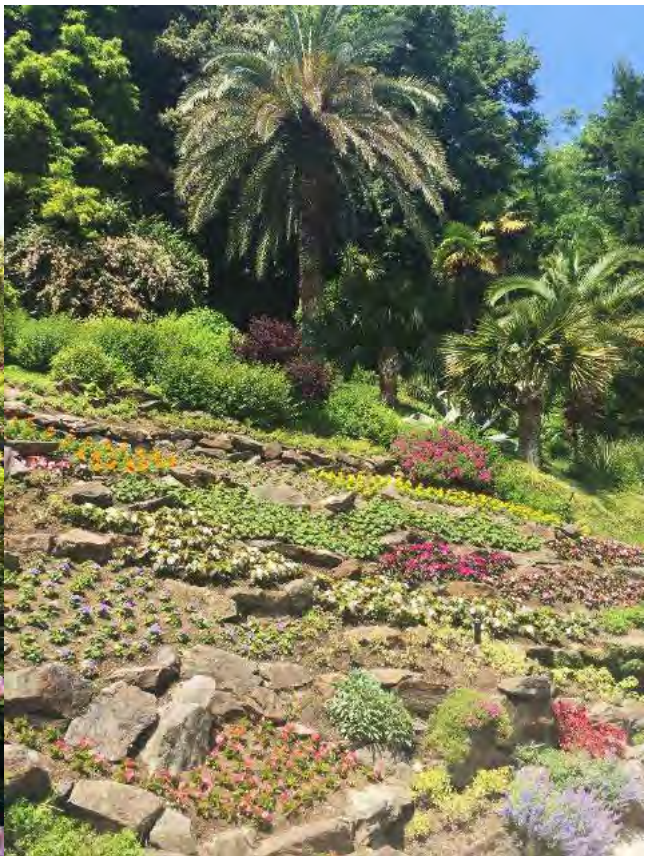






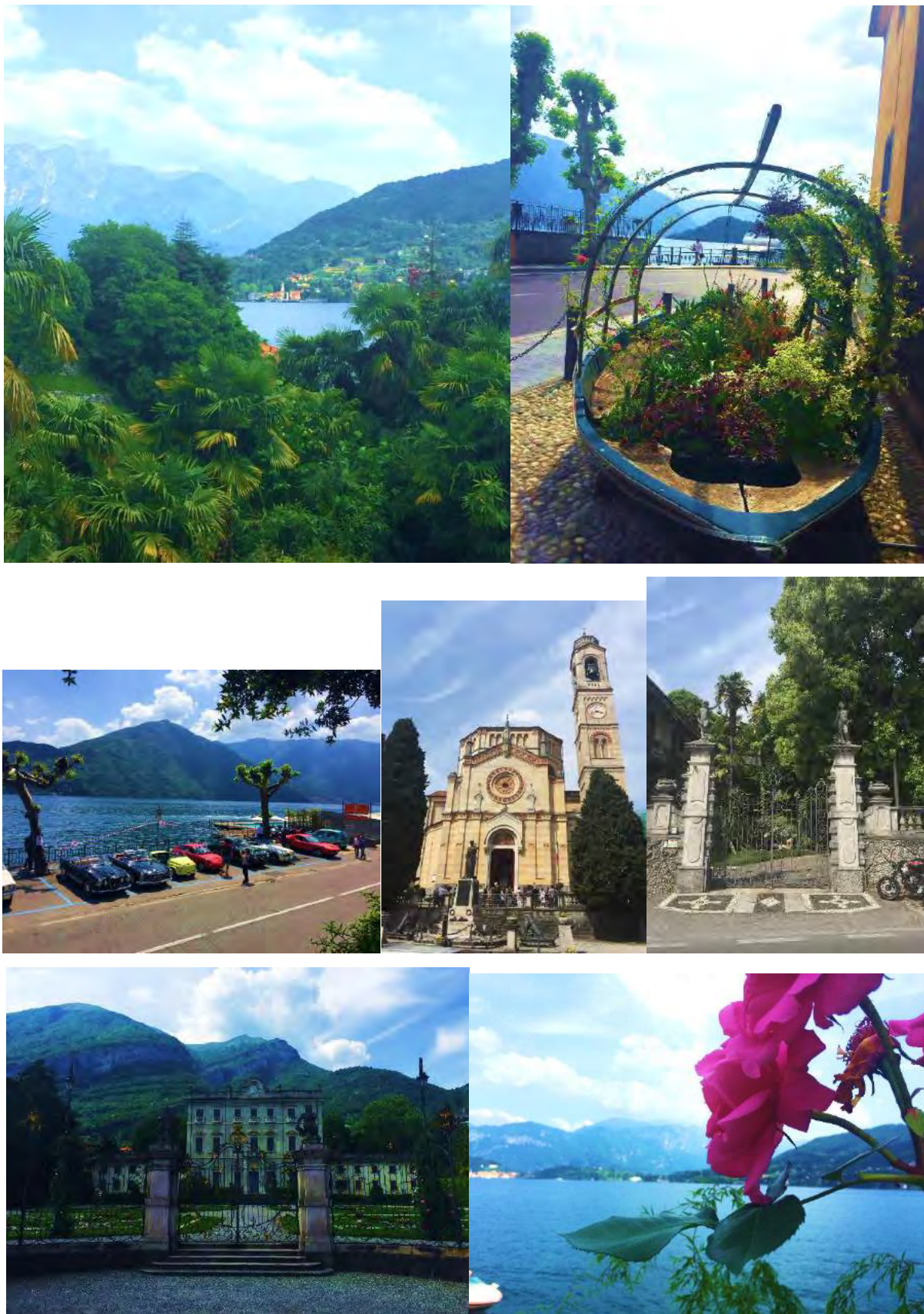




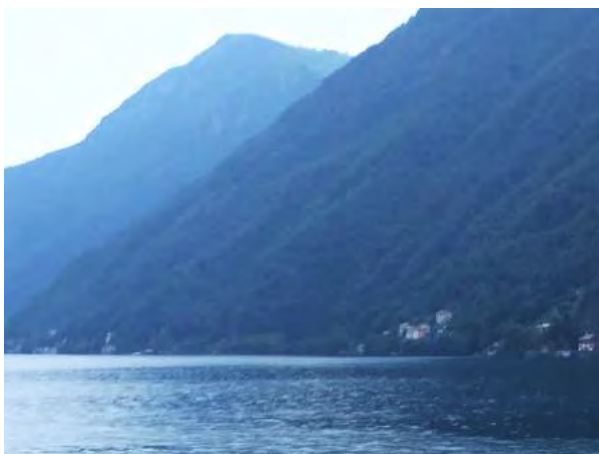


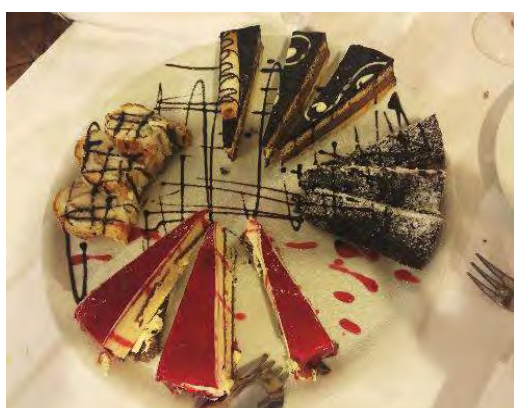


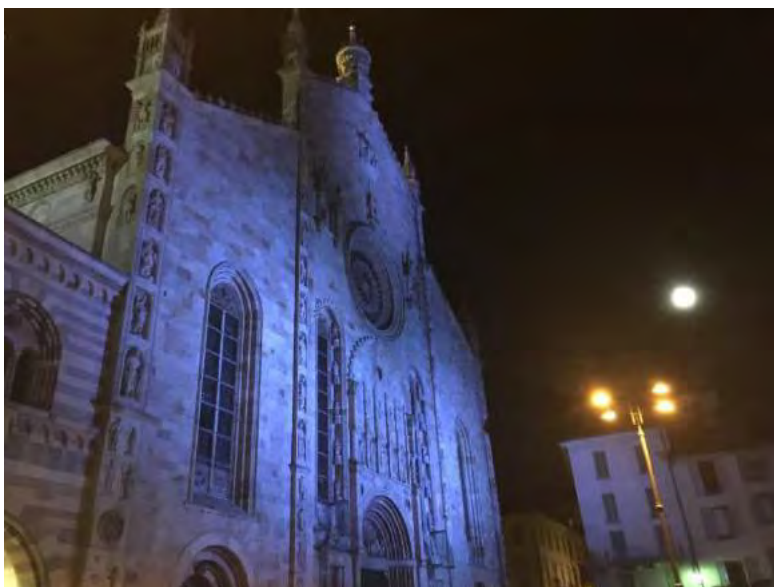














- *Dr. Basile, Thank you for a fantastic trip. Thank You so much for this wonderful experience and the opportunities you provided us with.*
- *This trip opened my eyes and I was so glad I could experience a different culture, a more relaxed and slow pace culture. It has inspired me to continue trying to learn.... I also enjoyed all the company I had on this trip.... and it was out of my comfort zone to go on a trip with a handful of strangers to emerge at the end as good friends who shared the same once in a life time experiences. Thank you again Dr. Basile for the opportunity to come on this trip.*
- *First and foremost, I was so happy to have made a new, shared memory with each and every person on the trip, and to Dr. Basile, I am eternally grateful for all the hard work she has put into creating a wonderful trip and educating a group of students as we made our way around Lake Como.*
- *I enjoyed my trip to Italy very much and I had a great time with the whole experience. I have been to Italy before but never to this area. The group and the area were absolutely wonderful. I am truly thankful to have been a part of this trip. I am under the belief that while you can always go back to the same area you can never duplicate a trip. This trip was a prime example of that. It would not have been the same without the people that participated and the laughs that we shared. Thank You Dr. Basile!*
- *It is an experience I will never forget, and hope to go back to Italy someday! Thank you Dr. Basile...*
- *I am incredibly appreciative of this experience that not only improved my Italian and showed me a new culture that opened my mind, but gave me new friends and memories that I know I will have for a long time!*
- *I was able to experience something very few people ever get to experience in a lifetime.... WOW!*

