

Wander & Sketch: Travel Journals of Umbria

Instructor: Teresa Bonner

June 8th - 15th, 2026

CASA DELLA ZIA, VALLO DI NERA



TRAVEL DAY: (travel from US begins June 7th, the day before arrival)

DAY#1: Monday, June 8th

Morning Arrival Rome Fiumicino Airport

Pick up with two vans/sedans

Stop at Bar/Cafe halfway on 2 hour drive to Casa Della Zia for snacks and coffee

MIDDAY

Arrival in Vallo Di Nera 1-2pm

Unpack, freshen up

Snacks and drinks available at house

5:00pm - 7:00pm

Welcome party at Bordone Buffet Style - Vallo

Taglieri, bruschetta, other assorted hor-devours, wine, aperol spritz

Snacks and drinks available in the house all day/evening

Running tab for retreaters at local taverna/hotel for coffee

Workshop Introduction

The first day will include a session to review objectives with the group, establishing a foundation for the week. Continuing objectives will be introduced during each evening's review session to support ongoing growth. In addition, Teresa will be with the group during travel sketching sessions for tips and guidance, especially for beginners / novice.

DAY#2: Tuesday, June 9th

Breakfast items available in the house daily:

- Fresh coffee
- Yogurt
- Muesli
- Cereal
- Eggs
- Toast
- Juice

Coffee also available through guest tab at Bordone/Cacio Re - Vallo

10:00am

Short Tour of Vallo including:

- Walled town
- Church of Santa Maria with 14th century frescos
- Fontana where people (including me) used to wash clothing
- Visit Franca (a villager and have coffee in her home)

1:00pm

Light lunch/gathering at the house

2:30pm

SKETCHING OP!!

Visit Spoleto (approximately 20 minutes from Vallo Di Nera)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spoleto>

Spoleto is a historic town in Umbria, Italy, renowned for its stunning blend of Roman, medieval, and Renaissance architecture. Its iconic landmarks include the ancient Roman theater, the Ponte delle Torri aqueduct, and the majestic Duomo di Spoleto, all set against a backdrop of rolling hills and lush landscapes. The interplay of light and shadow on its cobblestone streets, picturesque piazzas, and panoramic views from the fortress of Rocca Albornoziana make Spoleto a dream destination for artists. Its rich textures, vibrant colors, and timeless charm provide endless opportunities for sketching.

We will also visit the renowned art store in Spoleto: Paoluzi's, where we'll meet the owner, Riccardo.

6:30pm

Gather in the Casa Cantina to review the day's work

7:30pm

Dinner Cacio Re (hotel) - Vallo

Snacks and drinks available in the house all day/evening

Running tab for retreaters at Bordone/Hotel for Coffee

DAY #3:

Wednesday, June 10th

Breakfast items available in the house

Coffee Available at Bordone/Cacio Re - Vallo

9:30am - 1:30pm

SKETCHING OP!!

A Walk to the Vallo di Nera Cemetery (approximately 20 minute walk, car ride available)

A stroll to the Vallo di Nera cemetery, dating back to the late 1800s, is a journey through history and emotion. Perched on a hillside overlooking the tranquil Umbrian landscape, this rural Italian cemetery is a serene and reflective space.

Rural Italian cemeteries are unique in their intimacy and artistry. They are often adorned with intricately crafted shrines, statues of saints, and beautifully maintained gravestones, each telling a story of devotion and remembrance. Family tombs, adorned with photographs, candles, and fresh flowers, create poignant tributes to loved ones.

The Vallo di Nera cemetery, with its weathered stone walls and quiet charm, offers artists countless opportunities to capture the interplay of vibrant life with the inevitable finality of it amongst the heartfelt details of personal memorials, and the peaceful union of art and nature in this timeless setting.

1:30pm - 3:30pm

SKETCHING OP!!

A Unique Sketching Opportunity: Giacomo & Anastasia's Focaccia Tradition

Capture the magic as Giacomo and Anastasia, natives of Vallo di Nera, bring a 200-year-old outdoor oven to life in the garden. The antique oven, steeped in history, becomes the centerpiece of a culinary tradition as Giacomo carefully tends to the flames, creating the perfect heat for baking.

Anastasia joins him to prepare a variety of traditional Umbrian focaccias, from classic rosemary and olive oil to toppings inspired by the season's freshest ingredients. The process is a visual feast: the rustic charm of the stone oven, the glow of the fire, and the hands-on artistry of kneading, topping, and baking.

As the golden focaccias emerge, steaming and fragrant, the scene provides countless opportunities to capture the essence of Umbrian life, blending tradition, craftsmanship, and the simple joy of sharing a meal.

4:00pm

Gather in the cantina to review the day's work

7:00pm

Leftovers from Lunch for Dinner

Snacks and drinks available in the house all day/evening

Running tab for retreaters at Bordone/Cacio Re for Coffee

DAY #4: Thursday, June 11th

Breakfast items available in the house

Coffee Available at Bordone/Cacio Re - Vallo

9:30am - 1:30pm

SKETCHING OP!!

Castel San Felice and Scheggino (2 and 9 kilometers from Vallo Di Nera)

(We can opt to hike, either through the mountains or on the level rail trail in the valley from Vallo di Nera to Castel San Felice. Hike time is 2 hours by mountain, 1 hour by rail trail)

umbriatourism.it/discovering-the-valnerina

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abbey_of_San_Felice_and_Mauro

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scheggino>

Nestled in the verdant Valnerina valley of Umbria, Castel San Felice is a charming hamlet known for its Romanesque church of San Felice, surrounded by serene countryside. Its quiet beauty, with stone buildings and lush hills, offers a perfect setting for capturing tranquil and timeless scenes.

Nearby, the riverside village of Scheggino enchants visitors with its winding streets, stone bridges, and the crystal-clear waters of the Nera River. The reflections of historic buildings on the water, vibrant flowers adorning balconies, and the golden light of sunset create a haven for artists seeking idyllic and intimate landscapes.

2:00pm - 3:30pm

Light Lunch - Bordone - Vallo

4:00pm

Gather in the cantina to review the day's work

7:30pm

SKETCHING OP!!

Dinner in Scheggino with opportunity for evening sketching, exploring the qualities of available lighting after the sun sets.

Snacks and drinks available in the house all day/evening

Running tab for retreaters at Bordone/Cacio Re for Coffee

DAY #5: Friday, June 12th

Breakfast items available in the house

Coffee Available at Bordone/Cacio Re - Vallo

9:30am - 1:00pm

SKETCHING OP!!

Day one of **Fior Di Cacio Festival** in Vallo di Nera

- Festival focus: Cheese, local artisans, medieval streets, and pastoral life of the Valnerina.
- Sketching: Capturing the warm Umbrian stone, shifting shadows, and flowers spilling from windowsills.

1:30pm

Light lunch Cacio Re (hotel)

5:00 pm - meet Maura in Assisi for 2.5 hour guided tour

SKETCHING OP!!

Exploring Assisi with Maura: A Travel Sketcher's Dream

Step into the spiritual heart of Umbria with a guided two-hour tour of Assisi, led by the knowledgeable and charismatic Maura. This historic town, the birthplace of St. Francis, is a treasure trove of architectural wonders, winding streets, and breathtaking vistas.

From the grandeur of the Basilica of St. Francis with its world-famous frescoes to the charm of medieval piazzas and hidden alleys, Maura will guide you through the stories and secrets that bring Assisi to life.

For artists, the interplay of light on ancient stonework, the serene countryside views from the hilltop, and the vibrant details of everyday life offer endless inspiration. Whether capturing iconic landmarks or quiet, reflective corners, Assisi promises unforgettable images.

After our tour, we'll decide where to spend time sketching.

8:30 pm - Dinner in Assisi

Snacks and drinks available in the house all day/evening

Running tab for retreaters at Bordone/Cacio Re for Coffee

DAY #6: Saturday, June 13th

9:30am - 1:00pm

Gather in the cantina to review yesterday's work

1:30pm

Light lunch, Bordone

5:00 pm: Visit Spello

SKETCHING OP!!

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spello>

Nestled in the heart of Umbria, Spello is a picturesque hilltop town known for its ancient stone streets, vibrant flower displays, and breathtaking views of the valley below. Its golden-hued walls glow beautifully in natural light, creating stunning contrasts with vibrant doors, windows, and blooms. Every corner offers a unique shot—from charming alleyways to panoramic vistas over olive groves. With its blend of history, art, and nature, Spello is a treasure trove for artists seeking timeless beauty.

****Everyone on their own for dinner in Spello**

Snacks and drinks available in the house all day/evening

Running tab for retreaters at Bordone/Cacio Re for Coffee

DAY #7: Monday, August 25th

Breakfast items available in the house

Coffee Available at Bordone/Cacio Re

LA LECCETA

SKETCHING OP!!

Breakfast items available in the house

Coffee Available at Bordone/Cacio Re - Vallo

10:15am:

Departure for La Lecceta with

- Hosts: Daniela & Roberto
- Full day - Sketching Opportunity

- Several course meals/snacks/drinks

A Day at La Lecceta and a Stop at Ponte Fonnaia

www.homerestaurant-lalecceta.it

https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g783940-d8657780-r313073777-Ponte_Fonnaia-Massa_Martana_Province_of_Perugia_Umbria.html

Bask in the tranquility of La Lecceta, a picturesque horse farm nestled in the lush Umbrian hills, where Daniela welcomes you to a feast of the senses. Begin with a delightful aperitivo—seasoned sausage skewers, bresaola bundles with arugula and parmesan, bruschetta drizzled with golden estate olive oil, and pizza topped with capocollo, all perfectly paired with estate wines.

The culinary journey continues with a sumptuous five-course meal that celebrates Umbrian tradition, featuring handcrafted pastas, roasted meats, and desserts like homemade crostata and tozzetti cookies. Each dish, accompanied by carefully selected wines and liqueurs, is a reflection of the region's rich culinary heritage.

On the way back, stop at the historic Ponte Fonnaia, an ancient Roman bridge that spans the Nera River. Its timeless arches, set against the serene Umbrian landscape, offer a perfect moment to reflect on the beauty and history of the region—a fitting end to an unforgettable day.

Snacks and drinks available in the house all day/evening
Running tab for retreaters at Bordone/Cacio Re for Coffee

TRAVEL DAY - DAY #8: Tuesday, August 26th

Breakfast items available in the house
Early Departure for Rome Fiumicino

THINGS TO DO IN VALLO:

- Hiking
- Churches
- Cemetery
- Eating :)

WEBSITES

Bordone:

<http://www.tavernadelbordone.it/>

Cacio Re:

<https://it.caciore.it/>

<https://www.e-borghi.com/en/village/Perugia/62/vallo-di-nera>

<https://www.umbriatourism.it/it/vallo-di-nera>

Food/Drink in the house:

- Mineral water
- Gassed water
- Red/white/frizzante wine
- Bruschetta breads/spreads
- Yogurt
- Breakfast pastries
- Ricotta
- Cheeses
- Cured Meats
- Olives
- Fruits
- Chocolates

Meals will be traditional Umbrian cuisine using area specialties like truffles, trout, cinghiale (wild boar), strangozzi. Red/white wines, waters and locally made liquori

Fireplaces/central heat in the house will be used if necessary

2 full baths with bidet: Stand up shower downstairs, bathtub upstairs with stand up shower

Sleeping (Casa della Zia):

- Downstairs off kitchen twin beds (2)
- Living room pull out twin bed (1)
- Upstairs small bedroom double bed (2)
- Upstairs large bedroom double bed (2) & two twin beds (2)

Available to Retreaters:

- 12 yoga mats
- 6 pairs of walking sticks for hiking
- 8 Painting easels

PRICING:

\$3,750 per person (based on multiple room occupancy in the Main House or in the Hotel Locanda Cacio Re)

Single occupancy, add \$750

The price includes accommodation at Casa Della Zia as follows:

The Main House features three bedrooms:

- One room with a double bed
- One room with a double bed and two single beds
- One room with two single beds

Once the house is full, guests will be booked into the hotel, Locanda Cacio Re, Vallo di Nera

All guests enjoy full access to the main house and all its amenities.

Price includes transportation and all meals, except during the visit to Spello.

All other fees included i.e., tour guide Assisi

Workshop Fee:

- \$650
- Art Supplies Fee TBD

Because of space limitations in the vehicles, carry-on only (see your airline for dimensions) and a personal bag. **If you bring a larger bag, you may have to take a train to the Spoleto station** as there will only be enough room for carry-on luggage and a personal bag.

We require a Travel Policy for the 8 day trip and we recommend this site for quotes (usually under \$50):

<https://vti.travel/get-a-quote/?aff=afns39w2wh>

You will be required to sign a Travel and Trip Risk Acknowledgment/Liability Waiver Form.

Casa Della Zia is located at the end of a lane which is approximately 60ft. that is on a 10 - 15% uphill grade and some locations we are visiting can be more than that. You **MUST** be in good enough shape to hike **medium difficulty** trails, as the grades are steep and the cobblestones can cause instability while walking.

If you cannot do this kind of walking you will not be able to walk in most of these medieval towns which are built on the sides of mountains.

Here's what the grade looks like going up to Casa Della Zia:



A video shot while walking up to the house:

<https://vimeo.com/957100231/fb61dfd660>

Selected photos from 2024-25 trips:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/M4QoFrUeRjkcIFPx8>

Casa Della Zia Accommodations:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/c47EKCBqh7zSdJSx7>

Cacio Re Hotel Accommodations:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/4hQuPbfmfEPbaiT58>

Hotel accommodations (7 nights)

8 Units available

Includes breakfast



Deposit: A deposit of \$1,000.00 is required immediately to secure a reservation. This deposit is composed of a non-refundable fee of \$500.00, with the remainder of the deposit refundable in accordance with the cancellation policy.

Full Payment: The balance of the trip price must be paid in full no later than May 15th.

Cancellation Policy: Cancellations made more than 14 days prior to the trip will result in a full refund of the trip price, less the non-refundable portion of the deposit (\$500). Cancellations made within 14 days of the trip will result in forfeiture of the full deposit.

Payment Installments: Payment can be made in 2 equal installments.

No Refunds for Missed Excursions or Events: No refunds will be provided for missed excursion events or activities. However, the host will make reasonable efforts to accommodate missed meals on-site.

STATEMENT FROM TERESA BONNER

Travel Sketching: Collections of Memories

Urban scenes, landscapes, random objects, people, musicians, food – there's no limit to what can be drawn with a quick sketch. Not ever perfect, not always realistic, travel sketching allows me to capture these moments. A sketch is personal and provides a memory. My small pocket-sized sketchbooks become collections of memories.

In this retreat workshop, you'll be introduced to a few techniques and styles through brief demonstrations and examples. You'll receive guidance and support throughout the week to develop technical skills and tap into your own creative voice. Maybe you've often thought about sketching while traveling but didn't know where to start. This is the workshop for you. While the approach is geared to beginners, all are welcome. (In other words, if you already sketch and looking to travel and draw in beautiful Italy – join us!)

Teresa Bonner, May 2025