

# BACKROADS OF THE ALPS & THE OBERAMMERGAU PASSION PLAY (Italy, Austria & Bavaria) MAY 24 – JUNE 4, 2010

*On the occasion of the unique Oberammergau Passion Play in the Bavarian Alps that takes place only every 10 years, we are offering an equally unique and memorable tour experience set in the glory of the Alps of Bavaria, Austria and Italy.*

*Stunning mountain scenery, charming villages, cultural highlights and fascinating historic sites make for an enriching encounter with alpine cultures in three countries.*

*Springtime is the most spectacular time of year in the Alps: green meadows studded with wildflowers roll beneath mountain peaks laced with snow. The sights and sounds of this tour program will prove to be unforgettable!*

## Itinerary:

**Monday, May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2010**      We depart the USA for Munich, Germany.

**Tuesday, May 25<sup>th</sup>**      Upon arrival at Munich Airport in the morning, we transfer by coach to the **Italian Dolomites** where we check into our hotel at **Vilandro** in the mountains. After free time to unpack and relax, we'll enjoy a welcome drink in our hotel followed by a dinner of Italian and Austrian specialties.  
Overnight in the Italian Dolomites.

**Wednesday, May 26<sup>th</sup>**      After breakfast, we'll travel to the spa town of **Merano** to visit the vast **botanical gardens** around **Trautmannsdorf Castle** that now houses a fascinating **museum** dedicated to the history of tourism in the Italian Alps. In the afternoon we'll visit the tiny castle in the town center and enjoy free time to explore this lovely resort formerly favored by Europe's aristocrats, as well as the rich and famous. Dinner of Italian and Austrian specialties at the hotel.  
Overnight in the Italian Dolomites.

**Thursday, May 27<sup>th</sup>**      After breakfast, we'll travel up to the **peaks of the Dolomites** to visit the handsome **woodcarving village** of St. Ulrich and to gape at some spectacular views. Later, we'll enjoy an included lunch at the attractive **Novacello Monastery** featuring local wines, cheeses and hams. In the afternoon, we'll visit the **charming town of Bolzano** with its attractive shops tucked away under shady arcades. Here we may also visit Europe's oldest inhabitant, Oetzi, also known as "frozen Fritz". This famous 5,300 year old mummy is carefully preserved in the town's museum. Late afternoon, we'll take a **cable-car** up back up into the heights for some spectacular views of the Dolomite peaks. Dinner at our hotel.  
Overnight in the Italian Dolomites.

**Friday, May 28<sup>th</sup>** After breakfast, we'll travel north, first stopping at the surprising **Swarovski Crystal Worlds Museum**, followed by free time to browse through the Swarovski showroom. We'll also stop in the striking town of **Innsbruck** where we'll have free time for lunch. In the afternoon we'll continue up into the **Austrian Alps** to the pleasant **resort town of Seefeld** where we check into our hotel and enjoy dinner.

Overnight Seefeld.

**Saturday, May 29<sup>th</sup>** After breakfast we'll cross over into the **Bavarian Alps** to visit **King Ludwig's charming Linderhof Castle** and **Venus Grotto** before continuing on to the spectacular **church and monastery at Ettal**. After lunch we transfer to the nearby village of **Oberammergau** to attend the world-famous and moving **Passion Play**. During the evening break we'll have a bite to eat and enjoy some **free time in the village** before watching the second part of the play.

Overnight Seefeld.

**Sunday, May 30<sup>th</sup>** After breakfast, we'll travel to Prien on **Lake Chiemsee** where we'll board a boat that will take us to **Herrenchiemsee Island**. This is where King Ludwig constructed a **sumptuous palace** resembling the Chateau of Versailles in France. After the guided tour we'll have free time to enjoy lunch on the neighboring "**Women's Island**" famed for its ancient convent. We'll pursue our journey south into the Bavarian Alps to the delightful **town of Berchtesgaden** occupying a privileged position at the foot of majestic peaks. After free time to enjoy the pedestrian old town center, we'll be served a dinner of regional specialties at the hotel.

Overnight Berchtesgaden.

**Monday, May 31<sup>st</sup>** After breakfast, we take a trip out to the **Lake District of Austria (Salzkammergut)** to discover the unusual village of **Hallstatt**. Known as the **cradle of Celtic culture**, Hallstatt boasts a history that goes back thousands of years. We'll explore this history "in depth" by visiting its ancient **salt mines**, as well as its interesting historic museum. Our next stop will be at the colorful village of **Mondsee** where we may visit the "wedding church" used in the Sound of Music. This evening we'll be served a meal of regional specialties at the hotel.

Overnight Berchtesgaden.

**Tuesday, June 1<sup>st</sup>** After breakfast, we'll **tour the Obersalzberg area**, once Adolf Hitler's second seat of power. Our visit will include a tour of the **underground bunkers** and a breathtaking bus ride to the **Eagle's Nest** located on a mountain peak. After free time for refreshments at the summit, we'll tour the **back roads of the Berchtesgaden area**, including a tour of the **local distillery**. This evening a farewell dinner will be served at our hotel.

Overnight Berchtesgaden.

**Wednesday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>** This morning we transfer to Munich airport for our return flight home.