



'Someday' arrives for mother and daughter

By Valerie and Wayne Graczyk

In September of 1212, Wayne and I led a trip for Kevin Miller and the Windhover Center for the Arts. This was a most unique travel experience for all 35 fortunate people who joined us as we all experienced the art, wine and foods of Tuscany. It was this trip that we met and enjoyed the company of a mother and daughter traveling together, Robin Speidel and her mother Kerm Giles. Robin was willing to share her story of what this trip meant for her and her mother, so here is her story in her own words.

"Someday, Robin. Someday I would love to go to Tuscany." I heard those words from my mom many times over the years. Then, in September 2011, after reading a travel column by Valerie and Wayne Graczyk about an upcoming trip to Tuscany, the phrase quickly became, 'I can't believe it, Robin! We're going to Tuscany.'

To celebrate both her birthday and my 'later in life' college graduation,

my mom and I toured Tuscany and Rome with 'Someday Travel' and the Windhover. Our first tour meeting in Fond du Lac revealed friends from the area, and many new friends to be made. Our next meeting gave us the opportunity to meet with Tuscan artist Andre Bucci at the opening night reception of his exhibit at the Windhover. Mom and I asked him, 'What is the number one thing we can't miss on our trip to Tuscany?' His response was 'There are many things to experience but what I hope you enjoy most of all is the experience of the senses: the sights, the tastes, the sounds and the feel of Tuscany'. And we have!

Our trip was filled with sensuous food, delicious wine and beautiful sights. However, one lovely mountain-top village, named Volterra, brought us an unusual experience. As a high school teacher I was especially excited to learn about the Etruscans. They were civilized people in the Tuscan region before the Romans took control. Etruscans were spiritual and believed in an afterlife. They were artistic and we had the pleasure of viewing some of their gold jewelry and statues. They believed in and practiced equality among women. In their culture, women were able to own property and were able to be visible in public. While standing in a museum filled with decorated urns and hearing about the Etruscans from the tour guide, my mom and I looked at each other and said, 'I feel like I'm home'. If you've never travelled and experienced this feeling there is no way to describe it; it's a gift that is given and felt deeply. We found it together at the same moment in that small village of Volterra.

The Graczyk's were wonderful tour leaders, willing to adjust the schedule when the group was tired or itching

If you love gardens, grand estates and watch the PBS series "Downton Abbey," Wayne and Valerie will be sharing stories in future columns about their travels to the British Isles and also look forward to returning to England in May, 2013.

to explore in a new direction. Their professional care allowed us to focus on enjoying the trip instead of concerning ourselves with details of transportation, waiting in lines for tickets or arranging our own tours. All common travel issues that can rob a person of time and expense and leave one frustrated and drained were taken care of for us. What a delight and additional bonus to our traveling experience.

I took many pictures and notes to share with my students in the classroom and was able to create a presentation that tied in perfectly to the early civilization unit I was teaching. When mom and I first returned from our trip and people asked us about our travels, we found that Andre was right. Tuscany was a sensory experience forever to be held within our hearts. Now, when mom sees a movie or reference to Tuscany she says, 'Robin, we were there!' and I could respond, 'YES, we were there together Mom!'

We invite you to share your travel stories with us. Email your ideas to somedaytravel@charter.net and be sure to include your contact information. ♦



Robin Speidel enjoys the delicious foods of Tuscany with her mother, Kerm Giles.
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