

Blog #67 - Massa, Italy

Monday, 9 October 2017

The day after my arrival in Massa to stay with Giulia was Saturday, the 16th of September.

This day Mario, Giulia, myself and Giulia's lovely housekeeper, Maria, all travelled by car up into the hills/mountains above Massa to the quaintest of villages. Leaving the car (with all other villagers cars in the carpark at the bottom of the hill) we wandered through the narrow flagstone streets with three-story stone adjoining homes towering on either side of us until we came to a doorway which had '1604' impressed into the stone lintel above the door - not the address, but the date the building was built! Mario & Giulia's summer house.

Pictured is their doorway and the doorway of a permanent neighbour / resident.

Whilst Giulia & Maria went inside to "open up" the house and for Maria to prepare lunch, Mario took me along other streets to the church and showed me the ancient path below leading up through the hillside vegetation from the sea away in the distance and through the village - the path the early Romans used when travelling from the sea to Rome. Oh - so much history!

And then we wandered to another area of the village and overlooked the densely bush covered hills below and all around and Mario explained that there was where all the partisans / resistance fighters had hidden during the Second World War.

At a small village square we stood in front of the 'Wall of Remembrance' on which was a plaque engraved with the names of the local villagers who had been shot there by the Germans for their resistance to them or those who were innocent to intimidate the villagers. So sad. Also listed on another plaque were those villagers who lost their lives in the First World War.

The other sad thing about the village is that it is now mostly occupied by elderly people. All the young ones have left the village to work elsewhere or travel the world.

As for Giulia & Mario's summer home, they have recently redecorated the internal rooms. Just gorgeous. So quaint and full of history. When in the kitchen I couldn't help but wonder how many dishes had been washed in the marble sink and placed on the marble bench to dry.

Here are a few pics of downstairs inside the home which is three-story : 2 rooms wide the lounge area just inside the front door, through the dining area, to the back door the kitchen (to the right of the dining table)

Upstairs there are bedrooms and bathrooms/toilets, but outside - out the back - there is also the original toilet.



A lovely day.

The next day Giulia had to leave for a town several hours drive away to attend a four-day medical conference.

And so time for farewell hugs and kisses and to thank her for her awesome kindness and friendship. Goodness knows how I will ever repay her.

Here we are pictured in the back garden in front of the cottage and with Giulia's lively companion, Burma.



After she had left, Mario and I wandered around the township of Massa and enjoyed a cup of coffee at a local café while Maria prepared lunch. I spent the afternoon looking at all Giulia's wonderful dolls she has created, stitching more of my letter design, and repacking my bags in preparation for my return trip home the following day.

Here are a few pics of Giulia's beautiful dolls in her display cabinets. Absolutely gorgeous.



All of the dress designs for these exquisite dolls are available from the Needlework Gallery.

Next day Maria & her husband took me to the railway station to catch the train from Massa, to Milan, to the airport.

As per usual, the train was late - almost an hour. So stressful. At Milan, too late for my next train to the airport and so had to hire a taxi. After a days travel I was pleased to board the plane for Dubai and therefore relax for the next few hours. After a restful layover in the Emirates lounge boarded the plane for New Zealand and slept most of my return journey to New Zealand. Bliss. Didn't have to worry about missing a "stop"! However, due to the flight being over an hour late leaving Dubai, missed my connecting flight from Auckland to Napier. Had to wait several hours for another flight.

The "joys" of travelling !!

I was especially touched by what Keith had done for me before my arrival home.

Beside my stitching chair is a small side table on which I always have a vase of flowers - and he thoughtfully had picked some flowers from our garden and placed them in a vase which he then placed on the little table for my homecoming.

Camellias, cherry blossom, freesias & Maidenhair fern.

I truly am very spoilt and I know and am always being shown that I am loved by him.

That's all for the moment.

I do hope you have enjoyed sharing my trip with me.

