babilonia

ITALIAN LANGUAGE & CULTURE

taormina, sicily

GET
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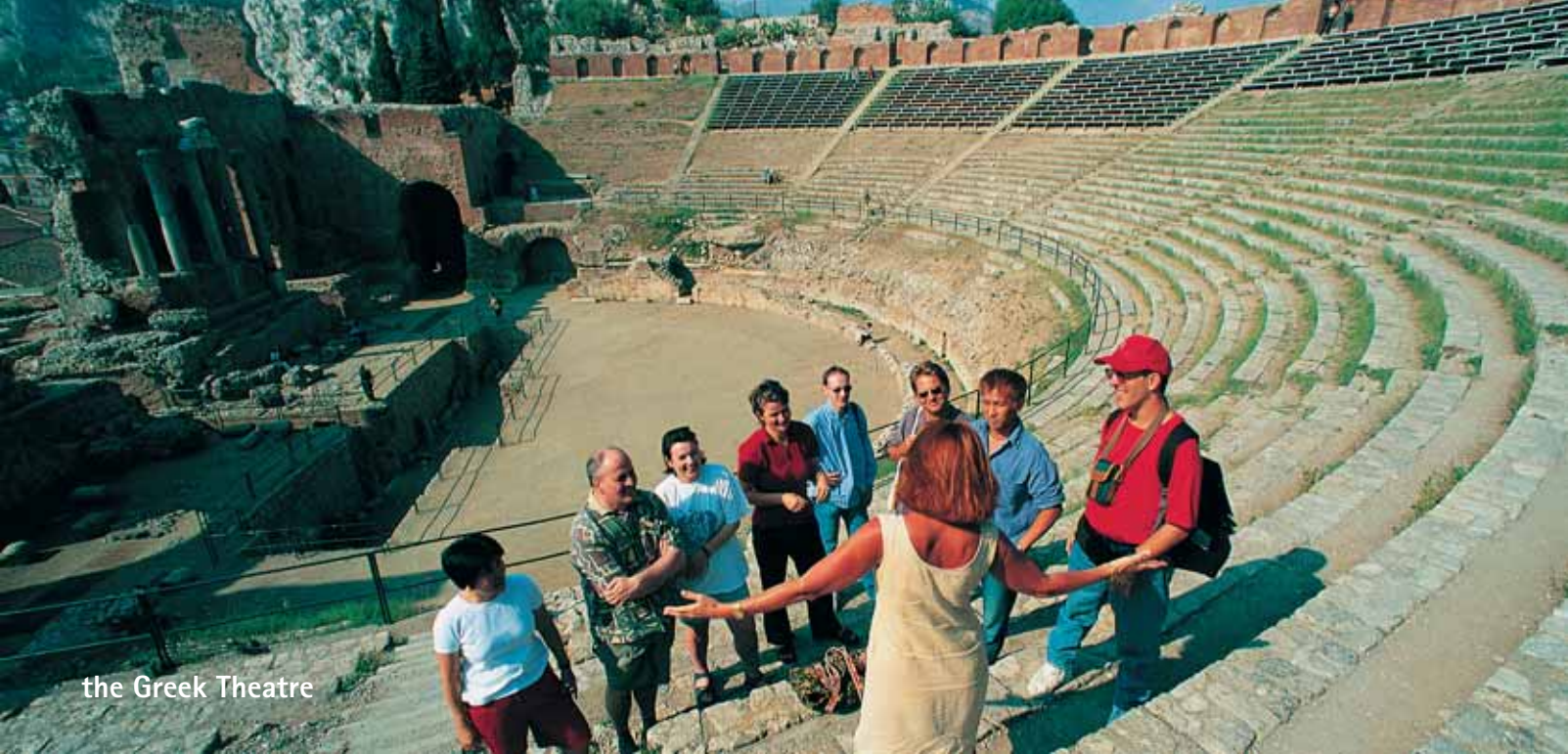
view of Taormina, the Bay of Naxos and Mount Volcano Etna from the Greek Theatre

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO COMBINE:

- a high quality school
- nationally and internationally accredited
- a family atmosphere
- a relaxing place for your holiday
- a beautiful location by the sea
- a breathtaking and dramatic landscape
- a region full of history, culture and traditions
- delicious food and excellent wine

yes? **ma dove?!**



the Greek Theatre

IN TAORMINA, SICILY !

the Sicilian countryside

SICILY

Most people do not seem to realize how much Sicily has to offer. With its sun, its beige pebble and sandy beaches, its warm aqua blue water, its snow-topped volcano, Mount Etna, its forests and rolling golden hills. Sicily has always been at the centre of the Mediterranean Sea, and therefore, it has always been at the centre of Mediterranean **history**. Every major European royal dynasty that wanted to have power in Europe had to "own" Sicily, every major Mediterranean power has left its mark on Sicily! Important artistic, architectural and cultural remains are visible at virtually every corner in every town on this island in the heart of the Mediterranean Sea.

J.W. Goethe wrote about Sicily in his book "Italienische Reise" (Italian Journey) back in 1786: "Without Sicily, Italy cannot be fully understood. It is here one finds the key to all things". Syracuse ruled over the Mediterranean Sea and over Italy up to Tuscany, influencing first the Etruscans and then the Roman culture. It was so powerful in the Mediterranean Sea that Athens was obliged to defend its supremacy in the Greek world in different wars. Many of the **legends,** described in Homer's Odyssey take place in Sicily, between the Aeolian Islands and the Volcano, Mount Etna. Agrigento, with its magnificent temple, was described by Pyndar as "the most beautiful town for mortals". Catania, among many, gave birth to Caronda, the first man in the world who understood the importance of having law in a written form to guarantee democracy. Palermo, where the Arabs left beautiful traces of their vast knowledge in science and architecture and where the Arab culture mixed with the German culture of the court of Frederick II by leaving beautiful palaces, churches and chapels with breathtaking mosaics and columns.

In Fine Arts the contribution of Sicily has been enormous. Since the Middle Ages, when the language and the **poetry** of the court of Federico II was about to become the national language, before Dante and his magnificent Comedy put an end to the controversy. Sicily has contributed with 2 Nobel prizes in literature: Quasimodo and Pirandello. Most of the school of literary realism was Sicilian: Verga, Capuana, Rosso di San Secondo. And still in the contemporary scenario Sciascia, Bufalino, Consolo, and Camilleri are best sellers. Don't be misled with the question of dialect. Every region in Italy, from North to South, has its own "incomprehensible" dialect. In fact, in Italy we can say that we all live in a sort of bilingualism: our National language, spoken all over the country, and our local dialects, spoken locally in every region from the Alps to Sicily. Sicily has also contributed greatly in music, from the old cantastorie travelling around the island singing the stories of the paladins of France to Vincenzo Bellini delighting XIX century European royal courts with his Norma. As well as in pop music nowadays with Franco Battiato and Carmen Consoli, Mario Venuti and Denovo. In painting and sculpture, from Antonello da Messina to Renato Guttuso. In fashion, from Marella Ferrera to Dolce & Gabbana. And in **cooking** & **wine**: from pasta alle sarde to caponatina, from cannoli to pasta reale, from Marsala to Malvasia.

more information on www.sicilia.it

the Bay of Naxos

TAORMINA

Taormina is full of **history** and **culture**. It is famous because of its beauty, its incredible history and architecture, and its reputation for welcoming travellers. Taormina is perfectly situated to offer students easy access to the beautiful and historically important treasures of Sicily: the right place for combining study and holiday.

The town of Taormina is an important archaeological and historical location. The Greeks, fathers of Italian and European culture, established the first colony in Italy here in the Bay of Naxos. The town is like a treasure chest of history: walking along its main street, Corso Umberto, a maze of narrow staircased streets and small beautiful squares, you find Theatre and Gymnasium of the **Greek** Age, Odeon and Baths of the **Roman** Age, traces of the **Byzantine** domination and beautiful buildings in which the **Arab** and **Norman** cultures melt together in a memorable **sense of beauty**, and amazing villas belonged to the European aristocracy in the XVIII and XIX century, all in the context of a small town on top of Monte Tauro hill, overlooking the coastline of the Ionian Sea. The village of Taormina is perched on a cliff overlooking the Ionian sea. Besides the ancient Greek theatre, it has many old churches, historical buildings, lively bars, fine restaurants, and antique shops.

Taormina is about 45 minute drive away from Europe's largest active volcano, **Mount Etna**.

Just south of Taormina is the nature reserve of **Isola Bella;** and further south, situated beside a bay, is the popular seaside resort of **Giardini Naxos**. Isola Bella, the Bay of Mazzarrò, the Bay of Giardini Naxos, the Beach of Spisone, Capo Sant' Andrea grottos those are **among the most famous beaches in Italy,** very few minutes away from the Taormina city center by cable car.

Taormina's first important tourist was **Johann Wolfgang Goethe** who dedicated exalting pages to the city in his book entitled Italian Journey, but perhaps it was the German **Otto Geleng**'s painting of the views fromTaormina that made its beauty talked about throughout Europe and turned the site into a famous tourist center. When his paintings were later exhibited in Berlin and Paris, many critics accused Geleng of having an 'unbridled imagination'. At that, Geleng challenged them all to go to Taormina with him, promising that he would pay everyone's expenses if he were not telling the truth. During the early 20th century the town became a colony of expatriate artists, writers, and intellectuals. **D. H. Lawrence**, **Truman Capote**, **Charles Webster Leadbeater**, **Jiddu Krishnamurti**, **Halldór Laxness**, **Daphne Phelps**, **Robert Hawthorn Kitson** , **Bertrand Russell**, **Roald Dahl**, and **Tennessee Williams**.

The exceptional stage at the Greek Theatre hosts the cultural events realized during the **Taormina Arte International Festival**: pop and classical concerts, opera and ballets as well as the **Taormina Film Fest**, the well-known cinema festival, dating from 1960.

our school garden

A SCHOOL WITH A NEW CONCEPT

Our courses and programs are held at "**Casa Silva**" **an historic villa, just 200 metres from the Greek Theatre** : an architectural, natural treasure that Taormina has miraculously managed to conserve.. Built in the early 19th century, in the park that at the time included the current public gardens, the property was owned by Professor Salvatore Cacciola, mayor of Taormina for many years during the 19th century and husband to Lady Florence Trevelyan, a niece of the cousin of Queen Victoria. The villa still today boasts a **luxurious botanical garden** filled with **citrus trees**, **Mediterranean plants**, **centuries-old palms**, **monkey puzzle trees**, as well as many other exotic trees and plants.

Both impressive and elegant at the same time, "Casa Silva" reflects - in its architectural style and use of varied materials - the eclectic taste of Professor Cacciola and Lady Trevelyan. He was a cosmopolitan traveller and an expert in the field of medicine, and together with his wife Lady Trevelyan created the villa as a stone representation of his cultural interests, a harmonic mix of classic culture, Sicilian tradition, exotic travels, hints of the Orient fused together in a sophisticated and intriguing combination, showing a Sicily of a time gone by. "Casa Silva" is protected by the Sovrintendenza alle Belle Arti.

While maintaining our high calibre of academic teaching qualities, **BABILONIA is not just a language school, but truly a Cultural Centre**, open both to the local community and to our international students who will gain a wider cultural experience and the chance to easily interact and integrate with the local community. **This is our new concept: students immersed not only in the language but also in the culture WITH the local community!**

BABILONIA hosts **book presentations** by authors, a **cine-forum** , **art exhibitions** (painting, photographs, sculpture) in its 1,000 square metres of botanical garden. Additionally, **live theatre performances** and **live concerts** (jazz and classical music) are offered. In the **net-c@fé** located in the **WI-FI garden**, students can enjoy their leisure time under the lush green trees to study, relax and meet their classmates.

Students can buy coffees, cappuccinoes, fruit salads, croissants, cakes and typical Sicilian dishes at lunch in our **cafeteria**.

our classes

METHOD

The BABILONIA program has been developed from a communicative based approach and focuses on the four language abilities: **listening**, **speaking**, **reading**, **writing**.

Our Standard group course is divided into two parts: **language analisys** session followed by **communicative activities** session. The language analisys session includes reading and listening language analisys and controlled oral and written activities, while the communicative activities session involves listening and reading comprehension and free oral and written activities. The instructors rotate weekly to add variety and interest to the group dynamic. Grammatical **structures** are presented in order of frequency and relative complexity. The material is always introduced in some form of **authentic text** (newspaper or magazine article, taped dialogue, video-taped situation, letter, short story, etc.).

Our first goal is **communication**, both oral and written.

Progress is monitored and all teachers meet weekly to facilitate organization and ensure proper student placement.

There is a maximum number of **10 students per class**, though depending on season, our average class size is generally between 5 and 8 people. This limit ensures a small group environment conducive to communication and offers each student the opportunity to participate as much as possible. Ranging from Absolute Beginner to Advanced, our program is divided into **seven different levels** of ability, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. All students are placed in a level based on their **entrance exam** (written and oral).

the school building and the school garden

ACCREDITATIONS

- the Italian Ministry of Education
- A.S.I.L.S. - Association of Schools of Italian as Second Language
- the University for Foreigners of Perugia as Authorised Exam Centre
- the University "Ca' Foscari" of Venice as Teacher Training Centre for graduating teachers of Italian as Foreign Language Master ITALS
- Agency for Higher Education for C.S.N., for loans and grants to students in Sweden
- Frei and Hansestadt of Hamburg for Bildungsurlaub in Germany
- U.S. College & University for course Credits

TEACHERS

All teachers at BABILONIA are **university graduates** and many speak at least one or two other foreign languages. Most have studied foreign languages at university and abroad and all have been **trained to teach Italian as a foreign language**. We organize our own ongoing in-house teacher training program and teachers participate regularly in scheduled teacher training seminars and workshops, as well as by other professional national and international organizations.

TIME TABLE

08:30 – 09:25	One-to-one or Two-to-one lessons
09:30 – 11:00	Semi-standard or Standard Group courses: language analysis
11:00 – 11:30	Coffee break
11:30 – 13:00	Semi-standard or Standard Group courses: communicative tasks

13:00 – 14:00	Lunch break
14:00 – 14:55	One-to-one and Intensive and Culture courses
15:00 – 15:55	One-to-one and Intensive and Culture courses
16: 00 – 16:55	One-to-one and Intensive and Culture courses

This time-table may change according to school needs. On rare occasions (e.g. extraordinary high season) Group classes may also be scheduled in the afternoon.

COURSE PRICES INCLUDE

- free internet and WI-FI access
- student insurance
- free extra curricular activities program
- educational material
- student card for discounts
- oral and written entrance test
- final certificate of attendance
- free guided tour in Taormina

a lesson in the school garden

AT A GLANCE

number of levels	seven	entrance test	compulsory on the first day
maximum class size	ten students	final exam	on request
absolute beginners accepted	yes, according to our course schedule	teaching material	yes, free
average student age	from 17 to 75	internet for students	yes, free
junior programs offered	on request	caffetterie and school restaurant	yes
average size of school low season	12 - 20 students	library for students	yes
average size of school high season	50 - 65 students	tv, stereo, videotapes, music tapes, cd roms	yes
minimum course length	one week	student lounge	yes
maximum course length	as long as you wish	air-conditioning in classrooms	yes
lesson hour	45 minutes	student card for discounts	yes
classes take place	Monday to Friday	school garden	yes
each of the 6 levels lasts	four weeks	WI-FI	yes

leisure time in the school garden

GROUP COURSES	**SEMI-STANDARD COURSE** 2 lessons per day: language analysis or communicative activities	designed for those who want to study only for a limited time each day, focusing on language analysis activities or communicative tasks
	STANDARD COURSE 4 lessons per day: language analysis & communicative activities	designed for those who want a complete language experience, focusing on language analysis activities and communicative tasks
	STANDARD PLUS COURSE 4 lessons per day: language analysis & communicative activities PLUS 1 hour individual lesson per day	designed for those who, beyond the advantages of the Standard group course, want to have an extra individual hour (one-to-one) especially devoted to their individual language needs
	INTENSIVE COURSE 6 lessons per day: language analysis & communicative activities	designed for those who want to have a more intensive group course to strengthen their abilities in a shorter time

More information on the preparation courses & dates for CELI Exam of the University for Foreigners of Perugia is in the Price List attached

INDIVIDUAL PROGRAMS	**INDIVIDUAL COURSE** (one-to-one) as many hours as per your request	designed and arranged on an individual basis to meet your needs,
	DUETTO COURSE (two-to-one) as many hours as per your request	designed for two people who want to share a language course with no one else

CULTURE COURSES	**THE SICILIAN WRITERS IN THE ITALIAN LITERATURE** Italian literature from its origin to the present day	20 hours in 2 weeks
	HISTORY OF SICILY from the Etruscans, Greeks and Romans to the present	20 hours in 2 weeks
	ART HISTORY IN SICILY sculpture, painting and architecture in Italy	20 hours in 2 weeks

our school garden

ITALIAN PLUS ...

A language is not just a set of grammar rules but the result of a culture and of life-style.
These programs give the opportunity to broaden your experience of Italian culture. Programs are taught in Italian.

"CASALINGA" COOKING CLASS This course is meant for learning the true "casalinga" (home made) cooking (first and second course, side dish and once a week sweet or cake) according to the typical regional recipes	**"PADI" INTERNATIONAL DIVING LICENSE COURSE** This course is designed for those who want to get the PADI International Diving Licence. The course includes theory lessons and practice in diving. Equipment included. From May to October.
SICILIAN FOOD & WINES Sicily produces an extraordinary range of excellent wine, oil and cheese. Learn more about them with a personal experience. The course includes tasting and explanation about origin, production, recipes.	**HIKING, TREKKING & ECO TOURING** This package includes hiking different trails in various National Parks of Sicily guided by professional eco-tour guides. Transportation costs included.
WINE FOR BEGINNERS This wine tasting course is meant for people who like wine and want to learn how to recognize quality, age, characteristics, and want to be able to analyse wine: an introduction to become a sommelier in the future!	**GOLF FOR BEGINNERS!** Learn how to play golf in an enchanting golf club with an incredible position on the slopes of Mount Etna, about 40 minutes drive from Taormina. The package includes lessons with Head Professional Golf teacher and car rental.
THE SICILIAN CERAMIC DECORATION & OTHER ART TECHNIQUES Learn how to make Sicilian ceramics or wood and furniture restoration, or other forms of art crafts on request. You will be tutored by professional craftsmen at the atelier	**PLAYING GOLF** Play 18 holes in an enchanting golf club with an incredible position on the slopes of Mount Etna, about 40 minutes drive from Taormina. The package includes car rental for you to drive to the golf club, golf car, equipment and trolley.
SCUBA-DIVING For divers who already have their licence and want to enjoy diving with the instructors of the PADI Diving Center. Equipment included. From May to October.	**COURSES FOR BUSINESS & EXECUTIVE PURPOSES** Tailored private tuition in business, finance, law, medicine and architecture, with an Italian colleague in your field
DIVING FOR BEGINNERS This course is designed for those who have never dived before and want to experience the beauty of diving. The course includes theory lessons and practice in diving. Equipment included. From May to October.	**COMMERCIAL CORRESPONDENCE** This course is for learning how to write, compose or reply to commercial letters in Italian. Useful for those who have tourist, commercial or business relations with Italian customers or suppliers.

a dinner with students at our school

SOCIAL & CULTURE PROGRAM

Our school offers a scheduled program of free extra-curricular activities which are included in the price of the course, allowing you to have a richer experience with the language and the culture. These activities include **films**, **games**, **lectures**, **social events**, **walks** and **guided tours**. Our weekly seminars cover a variety of subjects from Italian literature and poetry on specific subjects including history, politics, social life, cuisine, etc. In our program, we also offer social activities such as **dinners**, **parties** and **sport activities** organized by the school.

In addition to our complimentary social & culture program, BABILONIA also offers paid guided **excusions**, usually every weekend and occasionally in the afternoon. We try to take students to the truly special places off the beaten track, the places known more by "locals" than by tour buses and travel agencies..

At "Casa Silva", BABILONIA also hosts **book presentations** by authors, a **cine-forum** and, in summertime, **art exhibitions** (painting, photo and sculpture) in its 1,000 square metres of beautiful botanical garden. Additionally, **live theatre performances** and **live concerts** (jazz and classical music) are offered.

Many manifestations and events are organized during the summer in Taormina. The exceptional stage for **pop** and **classical concerts**, **opera** often recorded by television is the **ancient Greek Theatre**. The most important performances are realized by **Taormina Arte**, the cultural institution which organizes one of the most famous music, theatre and dance festivals. Within the program of Taormina Arte there is the **Taormina Film Fest**, the well-known cinema festival, dating from 1960.

The school office can also facilitate in finding information for various excursions, agencies, appointments, and activities as desired.

palazzo Duchi di Santo Stefano in Taormina
(Arab-Norman typical architecture) and Mount Volcano Etna

ACCOMODATION

We believe that quality accommodation can be just as important as a well planned curriculum. It is a service that we offer exclusively to our students because we believe that it is an essential part of an enjoyable and productive stay. All of the accommodation available through the school has been selected for cleanliness, comfort, and location. Most accommodation is **within 15 minutes walking distance** from the school. **Our Apartment Manager inspects monthly all accommodation offered**. through the school Special prices have been negotiated for our students that are generally below the standard rate available to tourists.

Since all accommodation is privately owned and operated, there are minor differences in amenities, but all meet a standard level of quality and convenience and are checked monthly by our school. In matching housing needs with what is available, everyone must keep in mind the cyclical and limited nature of housing resources in Taormina. The sooner you communicate housing needs, firm registration and deposit, the better we can respond. All housing is on a **first reserved first served basis**, so we highly recommend making your reservation well in advance to secure optimal results. Types of accommodation offered through the school are:

- **SHARED STUDENT APARTMENTS** Available with single or double rooms, we offer apartments to be shared by our students in town. Shared apartments have a common kitchen and frequently share bathroom(s). We recommend shared apartments as a great way of facilitating social and personal interactions with fellow students.
- **INDEPENDENT APARTMENTS** We also have a number of independent apartments available for those who prefer private accommodation. Frequently, we have single students or couples who prefer the privacy of their own apartment
- **HOME-STAYS** Available with single or double rooms. We have a certain number of families, couples and single adults, who make available rooms in their residence. Many are available with boarding options (meals), which include breakfast only, half-board (breakfast & lunch or dinner). Obviously this accommodation option requires a greater commitment not only on the part of the property owner, but also on the part the student. It is well suited to those who desire a more immersive learning experience and additional daily practice speaking Italian.
- **HOTELS & PENSIONE** Taormina offers an abundance of accommodation at all price levels. The school has negotiated special rates with a few 2 and 3-star hotels and can provide information on hotels at all levels as well as boarding houses.

relaxing time on the beach

HOW TO GET TO TAORMINA

How far is Taormina from:			
	by plane*	by train	by car
Roma	1h.	10 h.	8 h.
Milan	1 h. 45 '	16 h.	15 h.
Florence	1 h. 20 '	12 h.	10 h.

* to Catania Airport

from the airport

- **by bus:**
  there is a bus service from the Catania airport to Taormina that takes approximately 75 minutes. Tickets may be purchased at the airport or at the bus station and buses leave nearly every hour during high season and obviously less during low season. Taormina bus station is a 5 minute walk from the centre of town;
- **by taxi:**
  we offer an airport pick-up service from Catania Airport to Taormina. This service must be reserved at least one week in advance of arrival. All flight changes or delayed flights must be communicated immediately and directly to the service. Direct telephone number information will be provided by the school after booking. This service is not cancellable within 48 hours of your arrival.

from the railway station

There are many direct trains leaving for Sicily from all the main towns in Italy. The station for Taormina is "Taormina-Giardini", along the coast. The city centre of Taormina is a 10-minute drive from the station and you can take a local bus or taxi.

Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione
presa dall'atto prot. 15746

Association of Schools of Italian
as Second Language

Freie und Hansestadt Hamburg
BILDUNGSURLAUB

csn
HÖGSKOLEVERKET
Swedish National Agency for Higher Education

University for
foreigners of Perugia