



Through My Eyes! Italy

Jerry Grasso

Welcome to my ***Through My Eyes!*** coverage of some amazing locations my wife Jayne and I have visited around the world. Some are iconic while the majority of the images presented here require a more intimate exploration of the location. This particular ebook is devoted to Italy.

What is not to like about Italy: great food, wine, and historic locations. What a combination! The photos within were taken during three visits made by my wife Jayne and I in 2011, 2016, and 2017. These cover north-central Italy and Tuscany, as well as points of interest in the South, or the boot-area of the country. The final trip was South Tyrol, Northern Italy. The attraction there was the Italian Alps called the [Dolomites, a UNESCO World Heritage Site](#).

My goal is not to present a definitive study of these locations, but rather to provide hopefully a tantalizing glimpse to peak your interest! You will find that these images are not just your typical iconic scenes, but also contain some rather different ones as well.

I chose many of these as abstract, intimate versions of elements within some local scene. My attempt here is not to portray a travelogue. Rather, these are quiet images that you may not have noticed as you hike, walk, or travel throughout the country. It is all too easy to stick a cameraphone out the window of a car to record a more grander scene. But I challenge you to still your soul, and immerse yourself within a location, and try to find the at times startling patterns, shapes, forms, and textures that nature provides to our un-seeing eyes. Take the time to reflect upon her marvels and you may be rewarded with a small gift far more valuable: a moment of peace in an otherwise chaotic, stressful, life!

For an interactive map of the island with the visited sites referenced within this ebook, please click [here](#). Feel free to do your own exploring!

Any image found within this book or on my website is available as a print purchase. Just email me at jerrygrasso96@yahoo.com, or visit my website at jerrygrasso.com.

Enjoy life!



[Civita di Bagnoregio](#) is a town in the Province of [Viterbo](#) in central Italy, famously known as 'the dying city'. It was founded by [Etruscans](#) more than 2,500 years ago.









[Siena](#) is a city in Tuscany. The historic center of Siena has been declared by UNESCO a [World Heritage Site](#).



The [Siena Cathedral](#) (Duomo), begun in the 12th century, is a masterpiece of Italian [Romanesque–Gothic architecture](#). Its main façade was completed in 1380.





The [Torre del Mangia](#) is a tower built in 1338-1348, it is located in the [Piazza del Campo](#), Siena's premier square.









[Villa Lante](#) was built in the mid-sixteenth century, at the behest of [Cardinal Francesco de Gambara](#), that the fountains, waterfalls, hedges, water games, niches and labyrinths were built by [Jacopo Barozzi da Vignola](#). The Park's most salient feature is the water that flows from many fountains, embellished with some very fine sculptural groups positioned along five levels of overlapping terraces. At the center of the square in front of the buildings, the large fountain composed of a triple circle of pools immediately grasps the attention of tourists: it is the so-called Fontana del Quadrato – Fountain of the Square, surmounted by a group of sculptures attributed to Taddeo Landini, depicting Four Moors. And again, the terraced gardens, the Fountain of the Lumini, formed by 70 jets of water that emerge from small cups, and everywhere shrubs and tall trees, holm oaks, plane trees and oaks. On the third terrace is the Mensa del Cardinale (or Fontana della Tavola), a huge stone table with a central cavity in which water flows: here Cardinal Gambara, who commissioned the Park, loved to hold his summer banquets.







The [Fountain of the Dolphin](#) is surrounded by box hedges, the [Fountain of the Giants](#), adorned by two colossal statues of rivers, and the Fountain of the Flood, with water that flows from a cave.



Another highlight of Villa Lante is the garden's elaborate labyrinths, carefully carved out of hedgerows in ornate patterns.





[Assisi](#) is a town in the Province of Perugia in the Umbria region. It is the birthplace of [St. Francis](#), who founded the Franciscan religious order in the town in 1208.



The [Basilica of Saint Francis](#) of Assisi which was begun in 1228.







The [Rocca Maggiore](#) is a castle which dominated, for more than eight hundred years, the citadel of Assisi and the valley of Tescio, constituting the most viable fortification for their defense. The fortress stands on a hill that overlooks Assisi: above its walls stands out the 'Maschio' tower, from where you can enjoy a magnificent panorama of the city and of the Umbrian Valley, from Perugia to Spoleto.



Fence covered with old chewing gum.



[Florence](#) was a center of medieval European trade and finance and one of the wealthiest cities of that era. It is considered to have been the birthplace of the Renaissance. UNESCO declared the [Historic Center of Florence a World Heritage Site](#) in 1982.



On top of the façade is a series of niches with the twelve Apostles with, in the middle, the Madonna with Child. Between the rose window and the tympanum, there is a gallery with busts of great Florentine artists.





Florence Cathedral, formally the "[Cathedral of Saint Mary of the Flower](#)", is the cathedral of Florence. It was begun in 1296 in the Gothic style and was structurally completed by 1436. The dome was the largest in the world, and it remains the largest brick dome ever constructed.





The [Ponte Vecchio](#) "Old Bridge", is a medieval stone closed-spandrel segmental arch bridge over the Arno River. It is noted for the shops built along it.







[Orvieto](#) is a small city perched on a rock cliff in Umbria, Italy. [Duomo di Orvieto](#), dating from 1290. the Duomo is an amazing masterpiece of Gothic and Romanesque architecture. A symbol of the city itself, The Duomo was commissioned by Pope Urban IV. Construction began in 1290, but took several hundred years to fully complete.







Adjacent to the tower, [Torre del Moro](#), is also the beautiful Palazzo dei Sette, named in medieval times because it housed the seven judges who represented the major corporations and trades of Orvieto.













The Sacro Bosco ("Sacred Grove"), is colloquially called [Park of the Monsters located in Bomarzo](#). The park's name stems from the many larger-than-life sculptures. It was commissioned by Pier Francesco Orsini, a patron of the arts, greatly devoted to his wife Giulia Farnese. When Orsini's wife died, he created the gardens to cope with his grief. The design is attributed to Pirro Ligorio, and the sculptures to Simone Moschino.





The [Orsini Castle](#), built by Orso Orsini in the 13th century. It was the summer residence of Pope Nicholas III, uncle of Orso.







The church of the [Santissima Trinità dei Monti](#), often called merely the Trinità dei Monti is a Roman Catholic late Renaissance church in Rome. The present Italian Renaissance church was eventually built in its place and finally consecrated in 1585 by the great urbanizer Pope Sixtus V.

In front of the church stands the [Obelisco Sallustiano](#), one of the many obelisks in Rome, moved here in 1789. It is a Roman obelisk in imitation of Egyptian ones, originally constructed in the early years of the Roman Empire for the Gardens of Sallust near the Porta Salaria. The hieroglyphic inscription was copied from that on the obelisk in the Piazza del Popolo known as Flaminio Obelisk.



The [Trevi Fountain](#) is a fountain in Rome designed by Italian architect Nicola Salvi and completed by Giuseppe Pannini and several others. It celebrates the ever-mutating and incredible power of water like Rome. The central feature of the monument is a chariot in the shape of a shell, drawn by seahorses with Triton as their guide. Before the enormous central niche stands Oceanus. To the side are the statues of Abundance and Salubrity. All around, natural and artificial forms merge together in a representation of rocks and petrified vegetation that run along the foundation of the palace and around the borders of the pool, which represents the sea.

The Trevi Fountain was finished in 1762 by Pannini.







This procession with [Pope Benedict](#) occurred during the celebration of the Roman Catholic feast of the Immaculate Conception traditionally celebrated on December 8. These scenes were captured at the bottom of the Spanish Steps.

The Spanish Steps are a set of steps in Rome climbing a steep slope between the Piazza di Spagna at the base and Piazza Trinità dei Monti, dominated by the Trinità dei Monti church at the top.



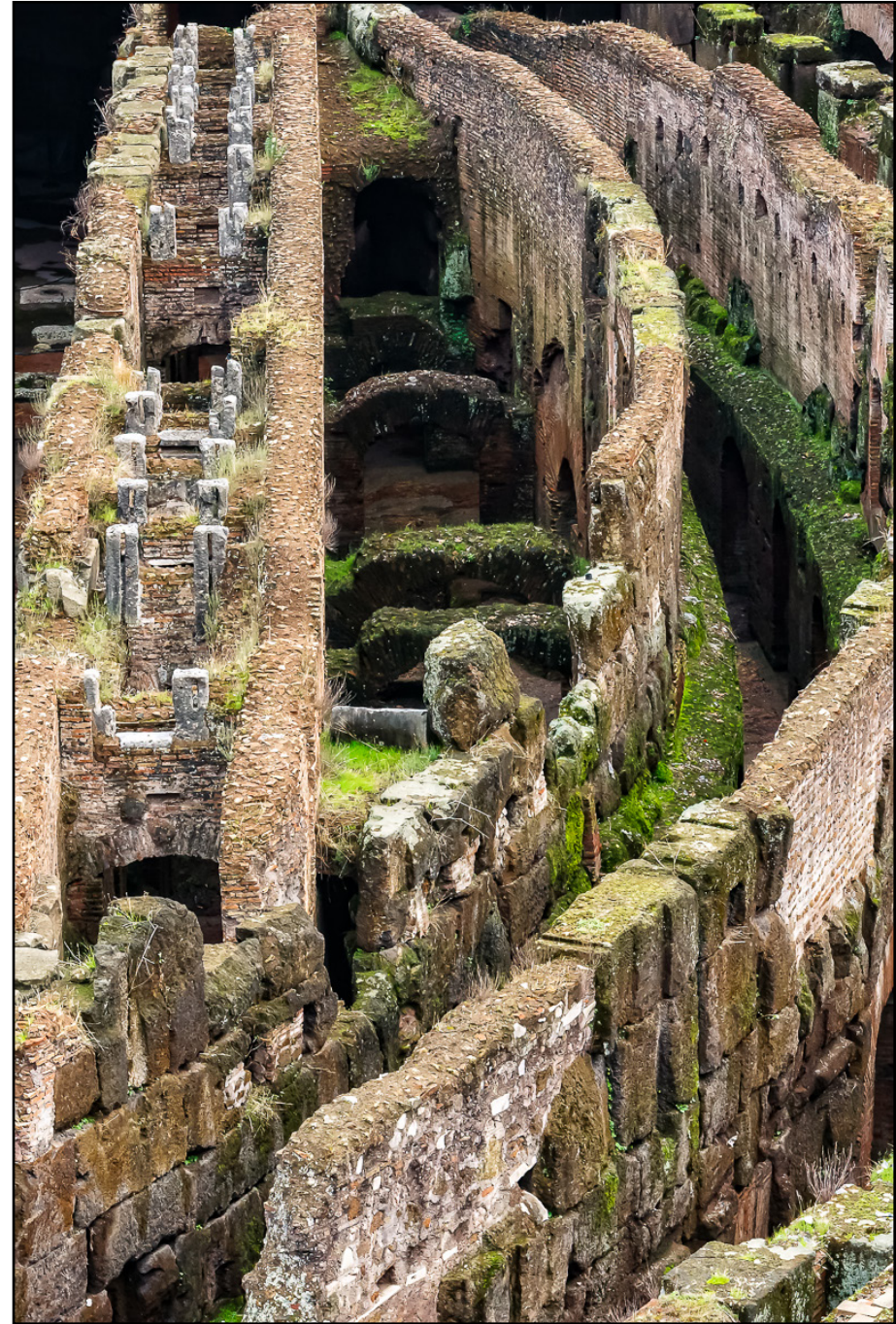
The [Arch of Constantine](#) is a triumphal arch in Rome dedicated to the emperor Constantine the Great. The arch was commissioned by the Roman Senate to commemorate Constantine's victory over Maxentius at the Battle of Milvian Bridge in AD 312. Situated between the Colosseum and the Palatine Hill, the arch spans the Via triumphalis, the route taken by victorious military leaders when they entered the city in a triumphal procession.







The massive stone amphitheater known as the [Colosseum](#) was commissioned around A.D. 70-72 by Emperor Vespasian of the Flavian dynasty as a gift to the Roman people. In A.D. 80, Vespasian's son Titus opened the Colosseum—officially known as the Flavian Amphitheater—with 100 days of games, including gladiatorial combats and wild animal fights. To make caged creatures and prize fighters emerge from underground as if by magic, the Romans devised a labyrinth of secret tunnels beneath the arena's wooden, sand-covered floor.

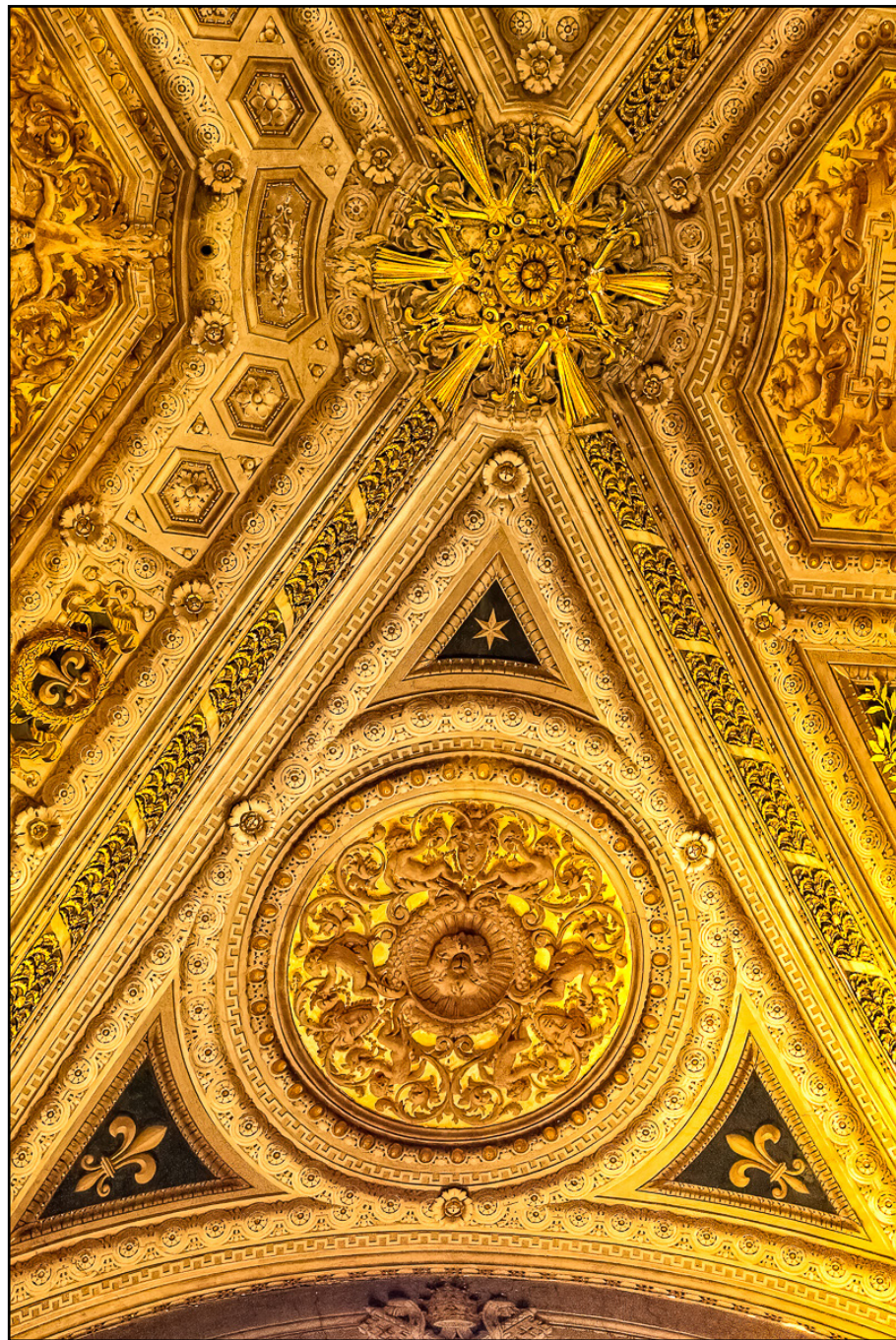






The [Gallery of Maps](#) is a gallery located on the west side of the Belvedere Courtyard in the Vatican containing a series of painted topographical maps of Italy based on drawings by friar and geographer Ignazio Danti.

The gallery was commissioned in 1580 by Pope Gregory XIII as part of other artistic works commissioned by the Pope to decorate the Vatican. It took Danti three years (1580–1583) to complete the 40 panels of the 120 m long gallery. The panels map the entirety of the Italian peninsula in large-scale frescoes, each depicting a region as well as a perspective view of its most prominent city.





The [Papal Basilica of Saint Peter](#) in the Vatican, or simply Saint Peter's Basilica, is a church built in the Renaissance style located in Vatican City, the papal enclave that is within the city of Rome.

St. Peter's is a church built in the Renaissance style located in the Vatican City west of the River Tiber. Its central dome dominates the skyline of Rome. The basilica is approached via St. Peter's Square, a forecourt in two sections, both surrounded by tall colonnades. At the center of the square is an ancient Egyptian obelisk, erected at the current site in 1586. The open space which lies before the basilica was redesigned by Gian Lorenzo Bernini from 1656 to 1667, under the direction of Pope Alexander VII, as an appropriate forecourt, designed "so that the greatest number of people could see the Pope give his blessing, either from the middle of the façade of the church or from a window in the Vatican Palace".

The [Capitoline Wolf](#) is a bronze sculpture depicting a scene from the legend of the founding of Rome. The sculpture shows a she-wolf suckling the mythical twin founders of Rome, [Romulus and Remus](#). According to the legend, when King Numitor, grandfather of the twins, was overthrown by his brother Amulius in Alba Longa, the usurper ordered them to be cast into the Tiber River. They were rescued by a she-wolf that cared for them until a herdsman, Faustulus, found and raised them. The image of the she-wolf suckling Romulus and Remus is a symbol of Rome since ancient times, and one of the most recognizable icons of ancient mythology.





The Roman Forum, also known by its Latin name [Forum Romanum](#), is a rectangular plaza surrounded by the ruins of several important ancient government buildings at the center of the city of Rome. For centuries the Forum was the center of day-to-day life in Rome: the site of triumphal processions and elections; the venue for public speeches, criminal trials, and gladiatorial matches; and the nucleus of commercial affairs.



The cliffs of [Torre Sant'Andrea di Missipezza](#) in Roca Vecchia.



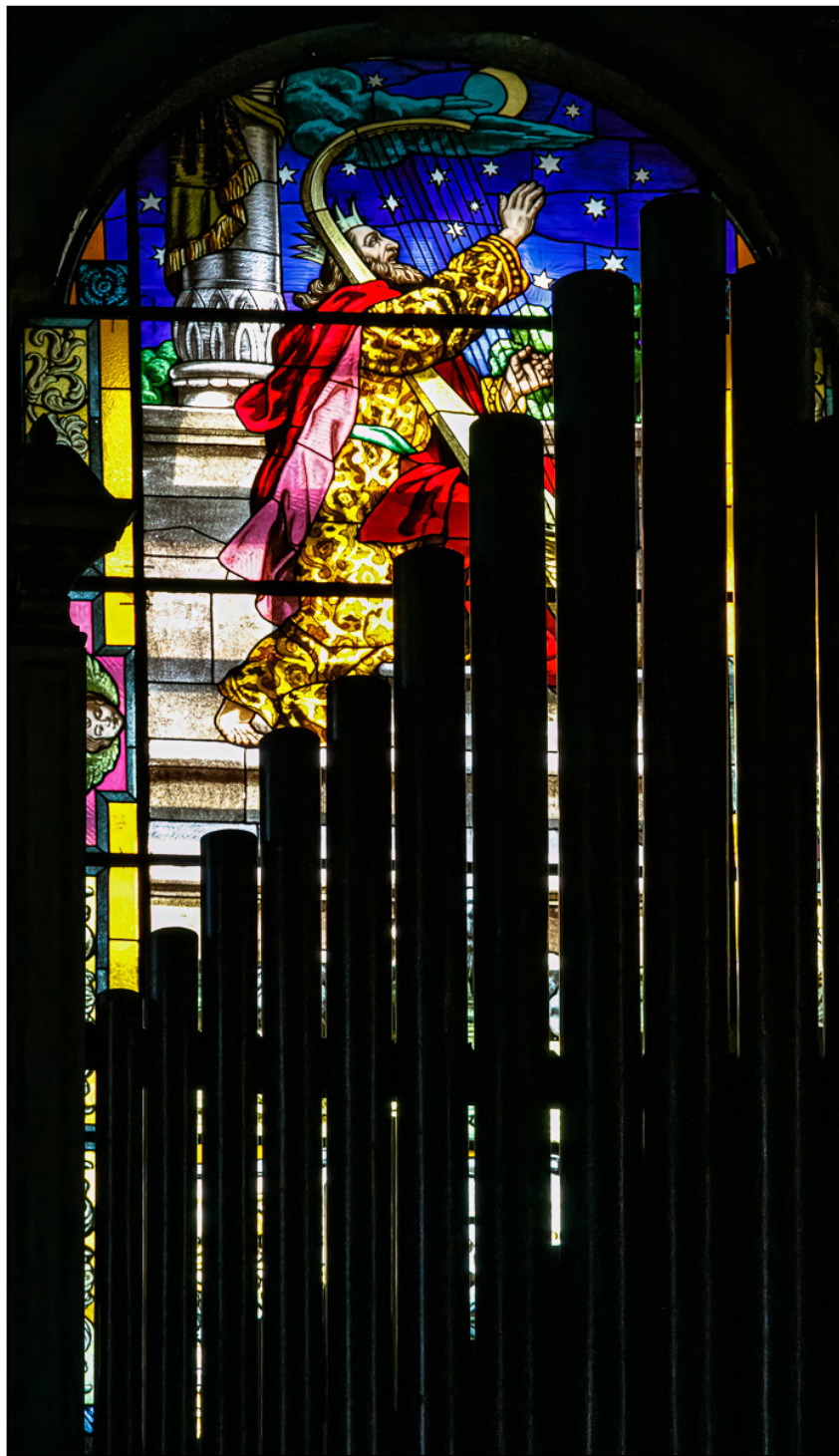




Prodotti Casarecci



Because of the rich Baroque architectural monuments found in the city, [Lecce](#) is commonly nicknamed "The Florence of the South". The city also has a long traditional affinity with Greek culture going back to its foundation; the Messapians who founded the city are said to have been Cretans in Greek records.









[Gallipoli](#) is located by the Ionian Sea, on the west coast of the Salento Peninsula. In the south-west corner of Puglia lies the old island town of Gallipoli. Accessible only via sea or a 16th century bridge, it was once a strategic center of influence for the maritime trade.











The city of [Santa Maria di Leuca](#) was founded in the early 1st century by some monks. It is the southeastern extremity of Italy — traditionally considered the lowest point of the geographical “heel” of Italian peninsula, as well as the meeting point of the waters from the Adriatic Sea and the Ionian Sea.







The olive growing area of [Terra d'Otranto](#) used to comprise the land extending from The Murge plateau to the southernmost point of the Salento peninsula, popularly known as the heel of the Italian boot. Thanks to the Basilian monks, the trading of olive oil in this part of the Apulia region began during the Middle Ages, and during the Renaissance, Terra d'Otranto olive oil was even exported to the Ottoman Empire.





[Polignano a Mare](#) is a town on Italy's southern Adriatic coast, perched atop a 20 metre-high limestone cliff above the crystal clear waters of the Adriatic. The origins of this enchanting place date back to the 4th century BC when Greek settlers founded the city of Neapolis. It flourished under the Romans and was important enough for Emperor Trajan to direct his Via Traiana, built between 108-110 AD, through the town.



Have a dining experience you won't forget at [Ristorante Grotta Palazzese](#). Hidden within an ancient cave, this restaurant with spectacular terrace overlooking the Adriatic Sea has been used for banquets and parties since the 1700s.









The town of [Alberobello](#) . It is known for its “trulli ” buildings with cone shaped roofs. It is also a [UNESCO World Heritage site](#). The history of the trulli is linked to the Prammatica De Baronibus, an edict of the 15th-century Kingdom of Naples that subjected every new settlement to a tribute. In 1481 the Counts of Conversano D'Acquaviva D'Aragona from 1481, owners of the territory of Alberobello, then imposed on the residents that they built their dwellings dry, without using mortars, so that they could be configured as precarious buildings and easily demolished.

Having to use only stones, the peasants found in the round form with self-supporting domed roof the simplest configuration.









This is the ancient cave city of [Matera](#). This world heritage, [UNESCO-listed](#) site is a gorge filled with ancient cave dwellings known as Sassi. The Sassi are a series of grottoes carved out of limestone, houses dug into the rock itself. The ancient town grew up teetering on the edge of a ravine created by a river that is now a small stream. The ravine is known locally as “la Gravina”.





For eight centuries, the [Cathedral of Santa Maria della Bruna](#) has stood against Matera's famous Sassi. Rising majestically over Matera's highest point, the Civita hill, it was built between 1230 and 1270, commissioned by Andrea, bishop of Acerenza, and by the local noble families.



The magnificent gilded ceiling.





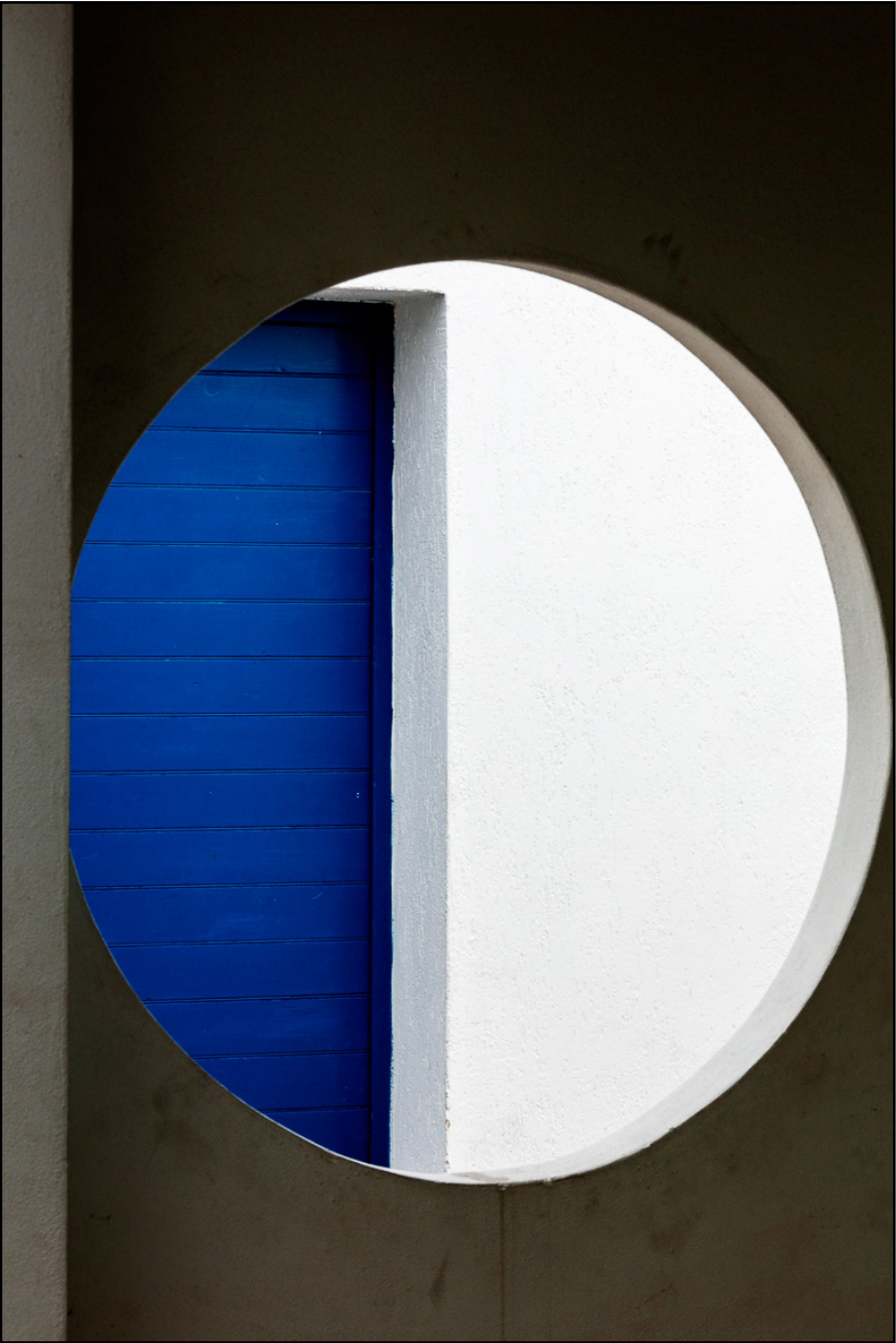


The [Palazzo del Sedile](#).













One stop we made was the botanical gardens located on the grounds of [Trauttmansdorff Castle](#). Colorful plants from all around the world thrive and bloom in Trauttmansdorff's more than eighty terraced garden landscapes.



This is the [Chiesa di San Giacomo](#), Ortisei that was started in 1470.



Lago di Braies





Cadini di Misurina





The [Tre Cime di Lavaredo](#) is Italian for "Three Peaks of Lavaredo". These are three distinctive battlement-like peaks, in the Sexten Dolomites of northeastern Italy. They are probably one of the best-known mountain groups in the Alps.

My Artistic Mission

Child-like wonder and inquisitiveness

are qualities frequently put aside once we become adults. We tend to slowly become sterilized by our right-or-wrong kind of world which too often has too little time to explore the what-if's and the what-could-be's. I believe we all need to re-connect with these qualities to re-enrich our lives. A first glance at a photograph of an onion often reveals the fact that, indeed, it is an onion. But what also lies beneath its surface? We won't know until we peel back its layers.

Animation innovator, Walt Disney, recognized this and tried to bring back the power and importance of imagination. Inspired by his spirit, my mission therefore is to encourage the use of viewer imagination. My work attempts to explore and suggest what often lies hidden within the personalities and mysteries present in the world that was, and the world that is around us.

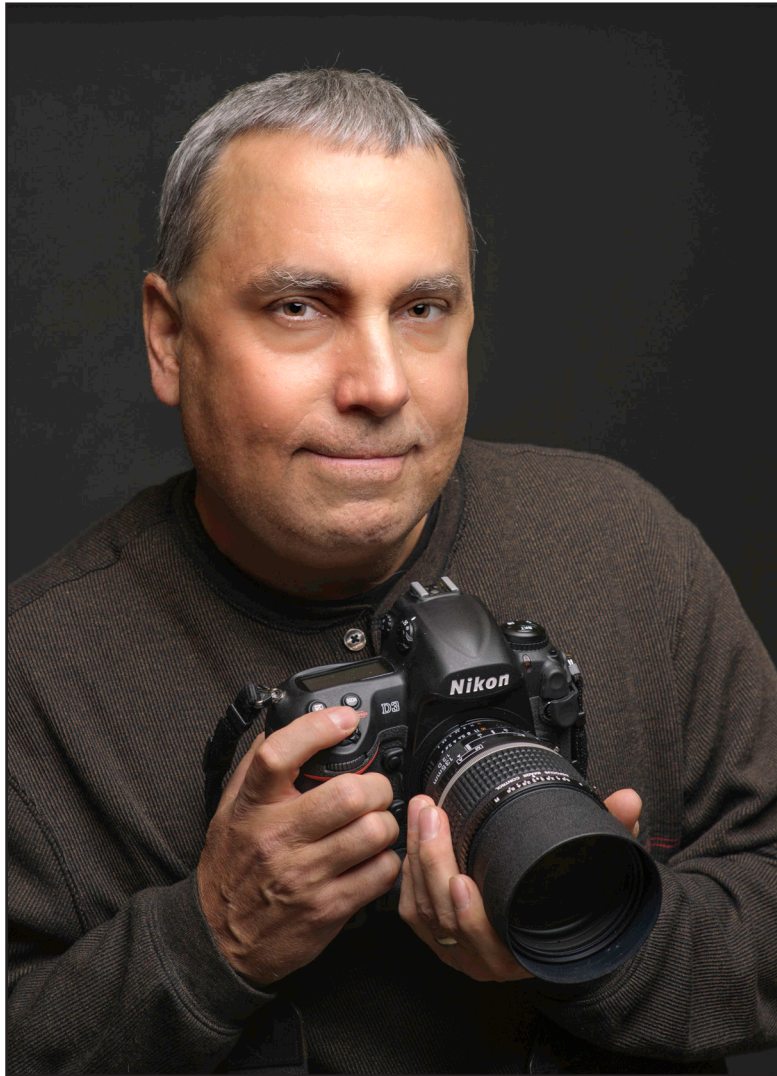
For me, my photography often is not so much about the decisive moment. Rather, it is about creating an awareness of place and a sense of history, with an aura of mystery. It is the starting point for my artistic journey, not the destination. I try to use what I produce

as personal metaphors for my reactions to what I saw and felt. My favorite motivational quote is that "Life begins at the edge of your comfort zone." My works attempt to reflect this as I probe the emotional, mind's eye after-image that was captured by both the eye and the heart, and which often defies logical explanation by the mind.

My goal is that my projects will serve as a springboard into inventiveness and exploration with the hopes of awakening my viewer's inner child. I try hard to show the connections and implications of things that others may not readily see. My hope is that my work may also help viewers discover the beginnings of their attempt to understand and perhaps even learn to tolerate and sympathize with the human condition and the world in which we live. I will try to do whatever I can to make viewers linger longer in front of my works so as to ignite their imaginative response through discovery and inquisitiveness.

Any image found within this book or on my website is available as a print purchase. Just email me at jerrygrasso96@yahoo.com, or visit my website at jerrygrasso.com.

Enjoy life!



JERRY GRASSO has been an award-winning, international fine art photographer and visual artist since 2002. He has mentored locally with photographer, [Mallorie Ostrowitz](#), and then with internationally-renowned visual artist, [John Paul Caponigro](#). Photography is only the starting point for many of his projects. His favorite motivational quote is that “Life begins at the edge of your comfort zone.”

In addition to his travel photography, Jerry specializes in the intimately abstracted architectural photography, the photo essay, and the photo composite series.

Jerry’s mission is to awaken his viewer’s inquisitive inner child by creating an awareness of place and a sense of history, with an aura of mystery.



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Jerry Grasso Visual Arts
148 Old Turnpike Road
Bristol, CT 06010 U.S.A.

Contact me at:

jerrygrasso96@yahoo.com

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jerrygrasso.com