

SOPHFRONIA SCOTT'S WRITERS' RETREAT

located in the inspirational Veneto region, Italy

'THE WRITE OF YOUR LIFE'

20th - 26th September 2020, Italy



GRANDTOURIST



THE WRITE OF YOUR LIFE

We'd like to invite you to join acclaimed author Sophronia Scott in the idyllic countryside of Italy for 'The Write of Your Life'

- Workshops
- Seminars
- Conversation
- Inspirational Tours

"It was the best money I've spent on myself and my creativity, ever"

Rachel Fox (2019, Alumna)

Here are the writers from our inaugural trip in September, 2019. We had a wonderful time.

GRANDTOURIST



YOUR HOSTS

Meet Sophronia a successful writer, poet and essayist. Sophronia was educated at Harvard where she studied English Literature.

After a successful career in New York as a magazine journalist, she became a full-time writer and teacher. In 2017 her second novel 'Unforgivable Love' was published by William Morrow, an imprint of Harper Collins. It has received excellent reviews. In the last year Sophronia's essay collection 'Love's Long Line' has been published by The Ohio State University Press.

She has also co-authored a book about faith with her son Tain. Sophronia is a kind, considered and charismatic teacher.

Sophronia

Sophronia Scott
Photo: Rob Berkley



Janet is an Oxford educated Geographer, with a Master's in the History of Art. Whilst Sophronia is the writer, teacher and wordsmith, Janet is the tour guide, itinerary writer and travel planner. She has spent her career creating unique travel experiences for an international client list. She also blogs about travel, life, the universe and everything!

Her enthusiasm and knowledge of Italy is both extensive and contagious. She speaks French and Italian and is consequently very useful to have around.

Janet Simmonds

Janet Simmonds
Photo: Pete Corcoran



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TOGETHER we'd like to introduce you to the very best of Italy: the perfect place to seek inspiration; a haven to enrich your writing skills and expand your horizons; a place to grow creatively in an atmosphere of support, guidance and camaraderie. We'd like you to join us for 'The Write of Your Life'.

OUR HOME IN ITALY

VILLA MARGHERITA, COUNTRY HOUSE HOTEL.

Located on the River Brenta, just 20 minutes from Venice and yet in the peace and tranquility of the Veneto countryside.

Experience the verdant, green countryside and cobalt blue skies of Italy’s Veneto region. A region that inspired Lord Byron, Browning, Hemingway, Thomas Mann and Daphne du Maurier.



A landscape of green fields, manicured gardens and indulgent al fresco breakfasts.

Brilliantly located on the edge of the River Brenta, just 20 minutes from Venice.



THE WRITE OF YOUR LIFE

20-26 September, 2020, Italy

DAY ONE 20th Sept (Sunday)

ARRIVAL

Arrive at Venice's Marco Polo Airport, your driver and vehicle will be waiting to drive you the short distance to your hotel. You are staying at a comfortable, first class hotel, surrounded by peaceful gardens. Check in and relax. Each bedroom has a desk and chair to facilitate your writing.

EVENING

This evening there will be a 'Welcome Party' in the hotel. Meet your fellow writers and say hello to Sophronia and Janet. A light dinner will be served. The writing programme for the week will be discussed.

MEALS INCLUDED TODAY:

Dinner

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The fairy tale Doge's Palace, Palazzo Ducale was the centre of government for the Republic of Venice for almost 1000 years.

DAY TWO 21st Sept (Monday)

MORNING

The first workshop will take place. 'What do you believe? A study in voice and authenticity'.

AFTERNOON

We'll take the boat across the lagoon into Venice. First we'll have lunch at a typical trattoria on Zattere, where the views are spectacular. Then we'll walk to Punta Dogana, Accademia and St Mark's Square. We are reliving history as we walk on the polished Istrian stones that Casanova, Lord Byron, John Ruskin, Ernest Hemingway and Robert Browning walked on before us. Next there's a boat trip to San Giorgio Maggiore to go up the bell tower and absorb the most stunning view of Venice and the lagoon.

EVENING

Seminar - What do you need as a writer and how do you get it?

MEALS INCLUDED TODAY:

Breakfast, Lunch

DAY THREE 22nd Sept (Tuesday)

MORNING

Workshop Two -
What is Love, Anger, Hope, Despair?
Making the abstract tangible.

AFTERNOON

A drive through the countryside of the Veneto.
First stop the spectacular Villa Barbaro at Maser.
Built in 1560 for the wealthy Barbaro brothers.
The frescoes inside the villa are allegorical,
depicting family members and bucolic scenes,
a rich source for the imagination. The paintings
are magnificent, bright and full of humour.

LATE LUNCH

Next door to Villa Maser is the vineyard,
here we will enjoy a family-style late lunch
with locally produced meats, cheeses, salads,
chutneys and top quality local wines.

EVENING

Seminar - Worrying about what others will
think? Does a writer have to wait until certain
people are dead before they can write
about them?

MEALS INCLUDED TODAY:

Breakfast, Lunch



DAY FOUR 23rd Sept (Wednesday)

MORNING

Workshop Three -
When did that happen? Playing with time.

AFTERNOON

This afternoon is at leisure to focus on your
writing. You can write in your room, in the
gardens of the Villa Margherita or in our
workshop room.

LATE AFTERNOON

We'll head back into Venice this afternoon and
cruise the waters of the lagoon in our own
private boat. We'll see the palaces that line the
Grand Canal and admire Venice from the water.
A fascinating visit today will be the remote
island of Torcello, one of the earliest settlement
points in the lagoon, dating back to pre-Roman
times. The mosaics in the church here are truly
exceptional.

[Click Here](#) to learn more about the legends
of Torcello

EVENING

Dinner this evening will be at a typical fish
restaurant in Venice.

MEALS INCLUDED TODAY:

Breakfast, Dinner



DAY FIVE 24th Sept (Thursday)

MORNING

Workshop Four - They did what? Writing difficult characters.

AFTERNOON

This afternoon is at leisure to focus on your writing.

LATE AFTERNOON

Today there will be a late afternoon excursion to Padova – the university city. We will visit the spectacular Giotto frescoes in the Scrovegni Chapel, built in the 13th century by Enrico Scrovegni, a notorious money lender. As Scrovegni's life was coming to a close he became concerned with the afterlife, particularly given his choice of profession. He commissioned a magnificent chapel and had it decorated with frescoes of the life of Christ. Giotto the finest fresco painter of the day was summoned from Tuscany to work on the interior paintings. As we all know it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

[Click Here](#) to discover more about Enrico Scrovegni

EVENING

Dinner will be at a small, trattoria on the shores of the Brenta Canal.

MEALS INCLUDED TODAY:

Breakfast, Dinner

DAY SIX 25th Sept (Friday)

MORNING

A visit to Villa Foscari at Fusina. Our final workshop will take place here entitled 'Writing Difficult Characters'. The villa was designed by architect Andrea Palladio. The villa was intended as a country house for the Foscari family. Unfortunately the young wife of Mr Foscari had scandalised polite society by having an affair. So the house was used as her 'gilded cage', she was exiled to Villa Foscari which became known as La Malcontenta. Legend has it that she would sit at the window, desperate to escape her miserable and isolated exile.

AFTERNOON

SEMINAR - Going Home - How do you take the 'Write of Your Life' with you and implement what you've learned in your regular writing practice at home?

EVENING

This evening there is a Farewell Dinner hosted by Alessandro dal Corso and the dal Corso Family. There will be great food, sparkling conversation and a small awards ceremony.

MEALS INCLUDED TODAY:

Breakfast, Dinner



DAY SEVEN 26th Sept (Saturday)

MORNING

This morning is our departure day.

Vehicles will be available to transport you to Marco Polo Airport for departure flights.

Sadly 'The Write of Your Life' journey has come to an end, it's time to head home and put new techniques and skills into practice. Happy Writing!

MEALS INCLUDED TODAY:

Breakfast



IF YOU'D
LIKE TO
EXTEND
YOUR STAY:

BEFORE

'The Write of Your Life' there will be a 3-night tour entitled 'The Foundations of Venice' Including historical walking tour of Venice, and visits to Roman cities and sites that existed before Venice developed. The cost will be **US \$ 1200 PER PERSON**

AFTER

'The Write of Your Life' there will be a 3-night tour entitled 'Verona, Lake Garda and Palladian Villas of the Veneto' including tour of private vineyard, boat trip on Lake Garda, visit to Verona. The home of Shakespeare's Romeo & Juliet. The cost will be **US \$ 1500 PER PERSON**



THE WRITE OF YOUR LIFE

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WHAT'S INCLUDED:

Hotel accommodation, Writers Workshops, Seminars & Meals:

- 6 night stay on the Brenta Canal, Veneto, Northern Italy.
- Accommodation in a very comfortable, four star country house hotel.
- Choice of room types and single or shared rooms available.
- Delicious buffet breakfast daily.
- Arrival and departure transfers from Venice Airport to the hotel.
- A professional series of Writers Workshops led by Sophronia (Total 5 workshops)
- Three seminars where ideas and writing skills are discussed (Total 3 seminars)
- Fascinating and inspirational local sight-seeing programme curated and designed by Janet Simmonds. All tours are planned to enrich and inspire your writing experience.
- Welcome Cocktail Party on arrival day included.
- Meals included during the trip: 6 x breakfasts / 2 x lunches / 4 x dinners.
- Note - there are further details of the seminars and workshops at the end of this document.

Exceptional and unique sight-seeing visits as follows:

- Afternoon excursion along the Brenta Canal to see the 'Old Mill' at Dolo, a point of inspiration for the painter Canaletto.
- Visit the UNESCO World Heritage Villa Barbaro at Maser.
- Private Boat on the Lagoon - An opportunity to see Venice from the water. In the footsteps of Hemingway, Ruskin and Thomas Mann. Amazing perspectives.
- Afternoon trip to Padova – the university city. See the Giotto frescoes in the Scrovegni Chapel, built in the 13th century by an infamous money lender.
- Visit to Villa Foscari known as the Villa Malcontenta, a superb Palladian villa that was the gilded cage of a lonely and disgraced aristocratic woman.
- All transportation for services listed - comfortable minivans with air conditioning.
- Professional and courteous drivers.
- Two visits into Venice to discover this inspirational, historic city and the magical waters of the lagoon.

THE PROGRAMME COST IS AS FOLLOWS - PRICES ARE PER PERSON:

- **US \$ 3500 / GBP £ 2750 / EUROS € 3100 PP** / based on a shared twin room.
- **US \$ 3900 / GBP £ 2950 / EUROS € 3300 PP** / double for single occupancy.
- **US \$ 4200 / GBP £ 3250 / EUROS € 3600 PP** / based on shared Junior Suite.

All enquiries to: janet@grand-tourist.com

BOOKING AND MAKING PAYMENTS:

- A deposit of **US \$ 1250** is required to book and confirm your place on the trip.
- A second deposit of **US \$ 1250** is due on 01 April, 2020.
- The balance payment is due no later than 01 July, 2020.
- There will be a maximum number of 20 participants in the group.
- Please note that deposits are not refundable.
- It is essential that you take out travel insurance (medical & cancellation).
- You can make payments by Pay Pal or Bank Transfer.
- If you have a Pay Pal account you can send the deposit to: janet@grand-tourist.com

Grand Tourist Bank Details – for international bank transfers:

BANK - Nat West Bank, 33 Eastgate St, Chester CH1 1LG, UK

ACCOUNT: Grand Tourist Limited

IBAN - GB 57 NWBK6040 0839 1357 48

SWIFT - NWBKGB2L

Notes:

- Flights are not included and must be booked by each individual participant.
- All services are subject to confirmation at time of booking.
- Grand Tourist Ltd is registered in England. Co. registration: 5455911.
- This is a unique and exclusive tour run by Janet Simmonds and Sophronia Scott.
- All technical details handled by Grand Tourist Ltd www.grand-tourist.com



FROM THE DESK OF SOPHFRONIA SCOTT

Here's what Sophfronia has to say about writing and what the programme includes:

'An unforgettable journey that will, for new writers, jumpstart your writing practice or, for experienced writers, re-energize your current one'.

I believe we all have a reservoir of creativity within us. It is filled with the inspiration we take in during the course of our lives, everything from a beautiful painting in a museum to a beloved song on the radio to the fascinating sight of a hummingbird feeding on flowers. For writers, this reservoir fuels our work and encourages us to soar on the page.

However these days the whole "butt in the chair" mentality is stressed to the point where writers spend much of their time alone in a room mining for words. On one level that's great—it's how our work gets done! Although on another level it drains our resources. Eventually the reservoir runs dry and all manner of difficulties ensue, including the dreaded writers' block.



WHAT'S THE REMEDY?

Filling the reservoir at regular intervals, in ways large and small. You may already do this little by little (reading, talking walks, seeing a good movie). But I'm suggesting you go big! Recall how so many of the great writers traveled, seeking adventure, new views and most of all, inspiration. What would happen if you did the same? If you walked the paths explored by the likes of Ernest Hemingway, Peggy Guggenheim, Henry James, Robert Browning, or Lord Byron, what would your pilgrim soul find?

Janet Simmonds and I invite you to join us for just such a journey designed to fill your reservoir and open a new, perhaps even the best, chapter of your writing life. The Write of Your Life Writers Retreat features five workshops and three discussion-style seminars that will delve into the mysterious intangibles mastered by the best writers that delineate the good from the great. We'll work with not only what's on the page, but also the ultimate source material - what's inside of you.

You'll come away with:

- Increased confidence in your own voice and authenticity.
- Motivation to create writing that represents a deeper expression of one's self.
- New work generated in our workshops and inspired by our travels.
- A greater awareness of your reservoir of creativity and how you'll continue to fill it once you return home.



THE WORKSHOPS

Each workshop will be 2 ½ hours in length, the following subjects will be covered:

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE? A STUDY IN VOICE AND AUTHENTICITY

A reader may come to you for a great story, poem, or experience, but they stay because they connect to what you have to offer as a distinct writer and individual. Understanding how your thoughts and beliefs shape your writing and make you unique is essential. We'll discuss belief systems, review samples that demonstrate author personality, and draft from exercises to explore how we "show up" on the page. This is all about authenticity.

WHAT IS LOVE/ANGER/HOPE/DESPAIR? MAKING THE ABSTRACT TANGIBLE

You know what it means when you say you love, hate, wish, or hurt. But how can the reader understand the depth of such feelings? We'll explore best practices for communicating emotion, experience, and visuals in your writing.

WHEN DID THAT HAPPEN? PLAYING WITH TIME

We speak so much about not having enough time we forget that when we're writing about time, it's as flexible as a rubber band. Whole books have been written about a day, stories written about an hour. We'll discuss bringing an awareness of time to our work and how to use it as a tool to create narrative tension as well as structure.

WHAT DID YOU NOTICE? A LIVE EXERCISE IN MINDFULNESS

This workshop will take place on a boat floating down the Grand Canal in Venice. We'll work with seeing the world as a writer, consuming it with all five of our senses, and bringing the world we've experienced to the page.

THEY DID WHAT? WRITING DIFFICULT CHARACTERS

All of our writing features characters. In fiction we make them up. In nonfiction they are real people, including ourselves. Our poetry can include both. At this point in our trip we will have heard about several interesting historical figures and you may feel inspired to write about them or create characters with similar issues. But how do we write about difficult/sad/mean/unlikeable or otherwise tricky personalities without making them into cardboard figures of melodrama? We'll explore this and also share some of the writing we've generated during the journey.

THE SEMINARS Seminars will be 60-90 minutes duration:

Seminar Discussion 1:

What do you need as a writer and how do you get it? Exploring Annie Dillard's quote, "How we spend our days is how we spend our lives."

Seminar Discussion 2:

Worrying about what others will think. Does a writer have to wait until certain parties are dead before they can write? Is it better in some instances to write anonymously? What is our reward as writers if we don't write with our names?

Seminar Discussion 3:

Going home—How do you take the Write of Your Life with you and implement what you've learned in your regular writing practice?



Sophronia Scott's publications

MORE ABOUT SOPHFRONIA

www.sophfronia.com
Facebook - Sophfronia Scott, Author
Twitter - @Sophfronia
Instagram - @sophfronia.scott



MORE ABOUT JANET

www.educated-traveller.com
www.grand-tourist.com
Facebook - Janet Simmonds
Twitter - @GrandTouristUK
Instagram - @educatedtraveller.com



Travel photos by Janet Simmonds &
Our friend & photographer Nicole Friedler
at www.nicolefriedler.com

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Don't hesitate to contact Janet Simmonds
janet@grand-tourist.com with any questions
that you may have.

In the meantime Sophronia and I look forward
to welcoming you to Venice in September, 2020
for the 'Write of Your Life',

To find out more and to book your place
contact Janet now: janet@grand-tourist.com
We'll schedule a chat with you and explain
more about this amazing trip.

Happy Writing!

'Go on treat yourself, invest in your writing
dream in 2020!'

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