

SOPHFRONIA SCOTT'S WRITER'S RETREAT

'THE WRITE OF YOUR LIFE'

Located in the inspirational Veneto region, Italy



GRANDTOURIST



THE WRITE OF YOUR LIFE

We are delighted to invite you to join acclaimed author Sophronia Scott in the idyllic Italian countryside near Venice for 'The Write of Your Life'

- Workshops
- Writing exercises
- Conversations about writing
- Inspirational visits to Venice, Padova and Asolo

"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.

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YOUR HOSTS

Sophronia is a successful writer, poet, and essayist. She 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 and is now director of Alma College's Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Creative Writing, a low-residency graduate programme based in Alma, Michigan.

Sophronia is the author of non-fiction books including *The Seeker* and *the Monk: Everyday Conversations* with Thomas Merton, and three novels including, *Wild, Beautiful, and Free*. She is the recipient of an Artist Fellowship Grant from the Connecticut Office of the Arts. She is a kind and charismatic teacher.

Sophronia

Sophronia Scott
Photo: Rob Berkley



Janet is an Oxford educated tour guide with Master's degrees in Geography and History of Art.

She is an expert on Italy and will introduce you to the history, art, culture and modern life of the Italian peninsula especially Venice and the Veneto region. Janet is the itinerary creator and local history expert. She has created unique and interesting journeys for an international clientele including the Alumni of Oxford University, 92Y Cultural Center in New York and various London Guilds. She speaks Italian and French, so she is useful to have around.

When she's not travelling she writes about journeys, art and life on her blog, the appropriately named: *Educated Traveller*.

Janet Simmonds

Janet Simmonds
Photo: Pete Corcoran



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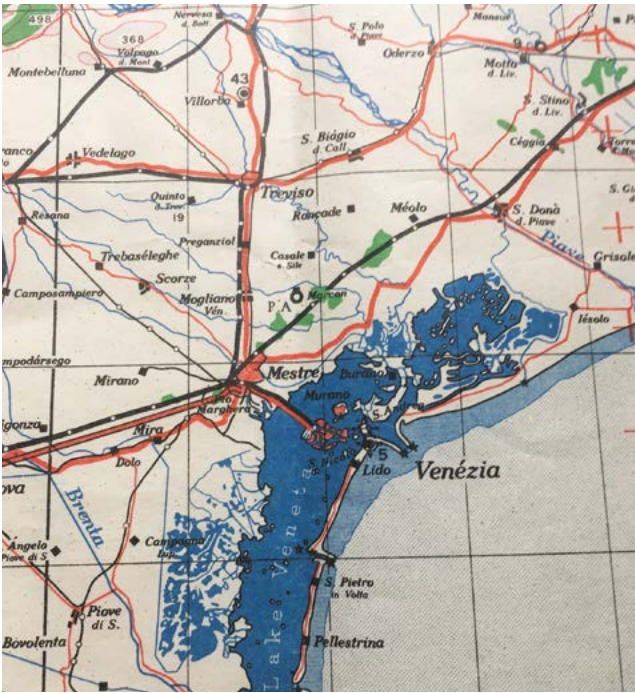
TOGETHER we are excited to introduce you to the very best of Italy: the perfect place to seek inspiration; a haven to enrich your writing skills and expand your horizons; a place to grow creatively in an atmosphere of support, guidance and camaraderie. We'd like you to join us for 'The Write of Your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

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

Italy

DAY ONE

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. Comfortable sofas and chairs await you in the sitting room and conservatory.

EVENING

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

MEALS INCLUDED TODAY:

Dinner

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DAY TWO

MORNING

The first workshop will take place. Workshops typically start after breakfast and run until about midday.

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. To learn more [Click Here](#)

EVENING

The first of our 'Conversations about Writing' in an informal sitting room setting.

MEALS INCLUDED TODAY:

Breakfast , Lunch

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

DAY THREE

MORNING

The second workshop will take place finishing just before noon.

LATE LUNCH

Then we head up to the foothills of the Alps for lunch in the stunning little town of Asolo. Here in this exquisite Italian town where the plains of Veneto meet the mountains, poets and writers like Robert Browning and Freya Stark found inspiration.To learn more [Click Here](#)

AFTERNOON

Next stop is the Villa Barbaro at Maser, a magnificent country villa built in the 1560s for a wealthy Venetian family. Designed by architect Andrea Palladio and decorated by artist Veronese, the house is a jewel of style and design.The frescoes inside tell allegorical stories filled with imagination and humour. Perfect for a writer's creativity.

EVENING

Second 'Conversation about Writing' in an informal setting.

MEALS INCLUDED TODAY:

Breakfast, Lunch

The Basilica of Santa Maria Assunta, Torcello, Venetian Lagoon.



DAY FOUR

MORNING

Workshop Three takes place this morning. Around noon we'll head to the edge of the Venetian Lagoon for our private boat tour out to the islands.

LUNCH today is at the fabulous Da Romano Trattoria on the fishermen's island of Burano. This traditional restaurant has been run by the same family for four generations.They recently celebrated a century in business.The walls of the dining room are lined by paintings, cartoons and illustrated menus donated by visitors and diners alike. Lunch here is a feast for all the senses.To learn more [Click Here](#)

AFTERNOON

Later we will visit the island of Torcello, a mysterious and magical place, once a thriving metropolis and now home to just a few dozen inhabitants.Absorb the atmosphere and isolation of this remote timeless environment. Ernest Hemingway wrote his best-selling novel 'Across the River and into the Trees' whilst staying on Torcello, in the winter of 1949.

LATE AFTERNOON

We'll head back into Venice in the late afternoon.There will be free time to explore, imagine and meander.As night falls we will make our way back to our hotel.

EVENING

This evening is free for writing, thinking or simply meandering.

MEALS INCLUDED TODAY:

Breakfast, Lunch



DAY FIVE

MORNING

The fourth workshop will take place in the conservatory.

AFTERNOON

This afternoon is at leisure to focus on your writing.

LATE AFTERNOON

Around 4 pm 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. To learn more [Click Here](#)

EVENING

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

MEALS INCLUDED TODAY:

Breakfast, Dinner

DAY SIX

MORNING

A visit to Villa Pisani at Stra is included this morning. A place of contemplation and endless imaginative possibilities.

Our final workshop will take place here at this vast, historic palace, built in the late 18th century by the Pisani family in an attempt to rival Versailles. When Napoleon marched into Venice in 1797 he was so impressed with Villa Pisani that he purchased it immediately for his nephew. The walls of the palace are awash with stories and legends. Hitler and Mussolini met here in the 1930s. There's an impossibly difficult labyrinth (maze) in the gardens and a reflecting pool in the garden that mirrors the palace and stables in its waters. This is a place of contemplation.

AFTERNOON

A final conversation about writing will reflect on our week of creativity and how we can apply what we've learned when we return 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

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 writing 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.

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.

CHECK WITH JANET FOR DETAILS AND PRICES.



THE WRITE OF YOUR LIFE

Italy

WHAT'S INCLUDED:

Hotel accommodation, Writers Workshops, Conversations about Writing & 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 Informal Conversations about Writing
- 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 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 magical village of Asolo and the UNESCO World Heritage site of 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 Pisani, a superb Palladian style villa that was the symbol of Venetian wealth and decadence at a time when the Venetian Republic had already faded.
- 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.



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! But 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 conversations 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, subjects may include:

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.

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT WRITING 60-90 minutes duration:

Conversation One:

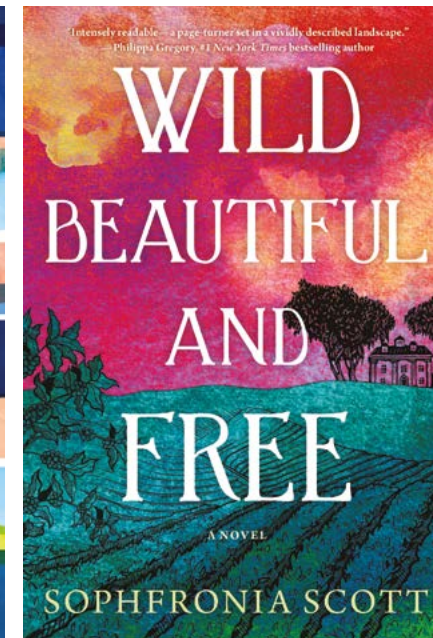
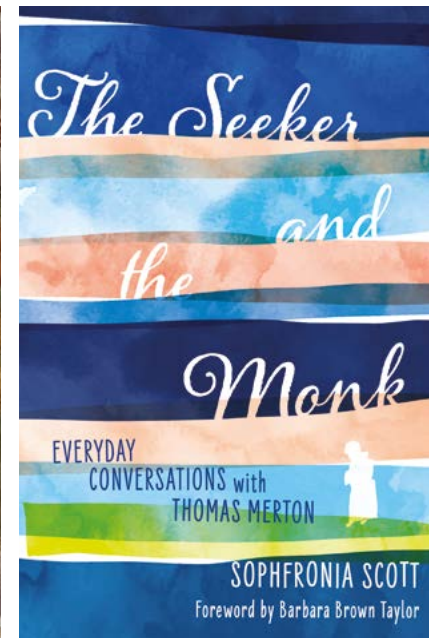
What do you need as a writer and how do you get it?

Conversation Two:

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?

Conversation Three:

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

THE WRITE OF YOUR LIFE

Italy

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 for the 'Write of
Your Life',

We are really excited to introduce you to the
very best of Italy. It's the perfect place to seek
inspiration; a haven to enrich your writing skills,
expand your horizons and grow creatively.
All this in an atmosphere of support, guidance
and camaraderie.

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'

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