



SUMMER NEWSLETTER

2012



Paderno del Grappa
Veneto, Italy

CIMBA2012

Summer Semester



Italian Journeys: What's Inside

By Emily Allen, Purdue University

This summer, 185 students from 21 different universities studied in Paderno del Grappa on the CIMBA program. They ranged in age from 19 to 23, included 105 women and 80 men, and took 6 credits each in courses that enrolled on average 24 students.

But statistics can't tell you the real story of what happened here. The transformative magic of Italy cannot be quantified—it's possible that the spell Italy casts cannot even be described, but the pieces in this newsletter attempt just that.

Eleven students came together for a course called "Italian Journeys: Travel Writing, Tourism, and the Construction of Place." Those students—my

students—embarked on a collective journey of exploration and discovery.

We studied the history of travel to Italy, theories about why people travel, and novels and memoirs in which the rapturous journey to Italy is transcribed.

But, most importantly, we traveled ourselves—and we wrote about it. In weekly 3-hour workshops we shared with each other essays about our summer journeys and our reasons for undertaking them. We tried to capture the experience of travel and the ineffable process of self-discovery and transformation.

You will read on the following pages the narratives of our

voyage. I find these essays—like the students who wrote them—to be brave and generous. They reflect the joys and difficulties of travel, the humbling experience of trying out a new language, and the thrill of learning that you can rely on yourself.

Many of the students in "Italian Journeys" had never before written creative non-fiction; only a few of them had previously traveled in Europe. All of them are now experts in both. I am proud to introduce them to you, as I am ever so proud and happy to have worked with them.

These are our Italian journeys. Come with us.

Italia, Ti Amo

By Sophie Amado, University of Iowa

I walk but I don't go anywhere. Every alley looks the same, every turn a maze. I'm in Venice searching for a *pasticceria* where they don't make me pay to sit, where there's a functional restroom, and where I can try an authentic cannoli.

But is this the one moment I've been looking for during my stay in Italy?

A quest is defined as an arduous search for something. But a search for what? Or whom? Now that I'm entering the final week of my study abroad program in Paderno del Grappa, Italy, I reflect back upon why exactly I have come here in the first place. Obviously, the opportunity to accrue six credit hours in four weeks was certainly appealing to me when researching study abroad programs. But why had Paderno del Grappa become a getaway from my home university placed in a state known for its corn production? I wanted change, I suppose, but there must have been something else luring me to the northern Veneto region.

Maybe I was looking for the time I was in Siena, staying in a countryside pastel yellow villa with acres of luscious greens spreading out along the rolling hills of Tuscany. I tried my first glass of *prosecco*. Staring out the white window on the third level of the bed and breakfast, I looked up at the stars, taking slow sips of my sparkling sharp beverage. It made my throat hot, but the flavor was sweet.

Maybe I was looking for the next day when my friend Claire and I took a €60 tour through local

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medieval towns and vineyards. An eight-person van pulled up to our villa—a villa we'd started claiming as our own. That's when a sun-kissed Italian man dressed in tight, faded jeans, a plaid shirt, and what looked like a refined knock-off pair of Dolce and Gabbana sunglasses came out of the vehicle and approached me.

"Ciao, io sono qui per portarvi a Montalcino."

Having no idea what he said, distracted by his "Italian" good looks, I paused momentarily before I spoke my go-to line: *"Mi scusi, non parlo italiano. Parla inglese?"*

"Sì, io parlo inglese," he chuckled, making me yet more disconcerted by the language barrier. "My name is Francesco, I'm here to take you to Montalcino. Your Italian is very good." *You're kidding me,* I thought. *His name is Francesco and he just said I spoke Italian well.* Standing in front of Francesco was like I'd opened up a cheap, dollar-store romance novel and pulled out its protagonist. I spent time that afternoon walking under Tuscany's blue blue sky

Siena, Italy

(Left) Sophie smells roses on a 100-year old plant climbing up the side of a 14th-century building that has been turned into a bed and breakfast, the Fattoria di Cavaglioni (Right).



Italia, Ti Amo

(continued from page 3)

and potent sun, visiting two towns developed around ancient fortresses and two Tuscan vineyards. Claire and I sampled the flavors of the Chianti region: pre-digestion wine, red wine to go with pizza, red wine to go with steak, olive oil freshly pressed one time and one time only, cheeses aged amongst tomato patches, bread with audible flavor when broken from its loaf.

Had my quest been the pitiable time I'd gotten lost in the unfamiliar train stations of Italy and found my way back on my own? I had left my group of friends on a Sunday morning after an exhausting return to Venice. Nine hours had been spent confined in a six-seated train car from Austria. The ride had been hot and cramped, and I was only able to sleep by contorting my legs in several positions throughout the night, fitting like a puzzle piece amongst my friends.

There was no way I was going to spend a day sight seeing in Venice after that, so I decided to return to the Paderno del Grappa's campus on my own. Disoriented and sleepy, I approached the ticket machine and realized that I only had three minutes left to board the next train. I ran to my platform, barely making the ride. Only after the train started moving did I realize I'd forgotten to validate my ticket. I tried to remain calm. Later that morning, I would confront an Italian conductor with no English in his repertoire, struggle to comprehend the blurred accent of the blonde New Zealander sitting in front of me—whose companion luckily spoke fluent Italian—and run off the train in a foreign town and station in order to take several transfers four hours out of my way before reaching, finally, my snug and sagging dorm mattress.

Perhaps I'd been searching for my Saturday afternoon in Vienna. That morning, we saw monumental structures such as the Hofburg Palace, despised by its empress for its restraining royal lifestyle. We saw the large State Opera House in the middle of the Ring and the



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Sophie Amado

immense Stephansdom Cathedral with its glowing pinks, shining blues, and crisp, red stained glass windows. Exhausted from the morning activities, we decided to break apart and explore for a half an hour on our own. Happenstance led me to a rally against China's occupation in Tibet where the Dalai Lama walked onto a concert-like platform to promote peace to a Viennese audience.

Maybe I'd been looking for the first time I bit down into a crunchy, delectable, Italian *panini* filled with tomatoes, mozzarella cheese, and basil. Maybe I'd been searching for the time I went to The Alpina—the local coffee shop near campus—and sat sipping down a *cappuccino*, frothy and fresh, when a bright orange tabby cat scurried along the front porch. Maybe I'd been yearning for the moment I stepped down the stairs of Venice's Santa Lucia train station onto the Grand Canal and fell in love with a city like none other. Or the time I took a nature walk up the majestic Mt. Grappa.

The answer is yes. Or maybe no. I had been looking for all of these things and none of these things. Before my flight to Paderno del Grappa, I had no idea what I would be doing during my study abroad experience. The only thing I did know and always had was that I was

going to return to the United States a different person.

In the final scene of the movie *Paris, Je T'aime*, a film filled with five-minute vignettes of various love stories set in Paris, France, we view a middle-aged, American woman, clearly a tourist, sitting on a bench. The audience then listens to her inner monologue:

“Sitting there in a foreign country, far from my job and all the people I knew, a feeling came over me. As if I recalled something, something that I had never known and for which I had been waiting. But I didn't know what it was. Maybe it was something I had forgotten. Or something I had missed my whole life. I can only tell you that at the same time I felt joy and sadness. But not a great sadness. Because I felt alive. Yes. Alive.”

I am in Italy to do the same. To feel alive, foreign, different. To bring my present self to a place of the past.

Just to be.

Night Train

By Michael Swank, University of Iowa

I notice other travelers lying down in the aisle. I do the same. I close my eyes, my body shifting with every turn the train makes. The floor of the train is hard. The carpet smells old, musty, and dirty. I think about all the feet that have walked on this carpet. I imagine the different nationalities and ages of the people. I prop myself up and look at the other passengers. Really look at them.

Michael Swank

I'm holding my head in my hands. My 20-year old, lanky, oversized body frame is stuck in a chair that has just enough room for my left butt cheek. This should be a moment of joy. But the fact we just hopped a five-hour train ride from Verona to Munich with seconds to spare has been lost on me.

"We should be walking into a beer garden right now," I said, "This sucks."

The train creaks along the railway. I feel confined. This hallway is my prison, yet I don't even have a cell. I am the train car nomad. Every time a train worker comes around, I try to look inconspicuous. I don't have an assigned seat. My two travel mates have snagged the car with the most open seats. We all sit together, peering anxiously out the window, looking for the predators to our current home. As expected, people find their seats in our car and my travel partners and I are forced to shuffle around the seats. I pull the short straw as a kind faced Nigerian minister comes up to me.

"I believe you are in my spot friend," he says in perfect English.

Upset and embarrassed, I move without saying a word. Of course no one comes for the spots my friends occupy. I am all alone. Sitting in this fold out chair, I am in limbo. My body is heavy, my eyes not quite registering what they're seeing. My brain produces nonsense thoughts. I get up to stick my head out of the open window, hoping to center myself. The cool, rushing air rips through my hair. The train tears along the railway. The air soothes me. I smell the familiar damp smell of late spring. My mind, calm now, runs through childhood memories.

I'm in elementary school. I'm sitting outside late at night with my parents. I'm wearing a chilled damp swimsuit, fresh out of our backyard pool. Our small bonfire is crackling away. The array of red and orange tongues of fire dance in the darkness as I sit watching, entranced. Now I'm 14 years old.

Running with my friends through my neighborhood. It's a Friday night, way past our usual bedtime, and we've never felt so free. The memory fades, and now I'm 18 years old. It's my senior year of high school, only a few weeks left of class. I'm with my friends at our party spot, in the country outside of Lawrence. We're all trying to slow down time, freeze these last few moments.

I try to place what this spring smell means to me now. I worry that I'll never feel that same joy. I feel tainted by maturity, jaded. As I'm deep in thought, my head and arms relaxed, hanging out the window, a train comes rushing from the opposite direction. The screaming of the train startles me. I head back to sit in my lonely chair.

This time I notice other travelers lying down in the aisle. I do the same. I close my eyes, my body shifting with every turn the train makes. The floor of the train is hard. The carpet smells old, musty, and dirty. I think about all the feet that have walked on this carpet. I imagine the different nationalities and ages of the people. I prop myself up and look at the other passengers. Really look at them. There are young parents in the process of passing their morals onto their children. There are the children attempting to figure out how the world works. There are old couples attempting to hold onto the last bit of life remaining, perhaps to see the part of the world that has evaded them, or to see their children and grandchildren for what might be the last time. I see poor lost souls hoping that this train will take them to a place with all the answers.

I come back to myself, feeling these hopes inside of me.

It's 9:00 o'clock the following evening. My friends and I triumphantly walk into the beer garden. There's a buzz that engulfs the entire park. Conversations fill every table. We sit down and say our cheers to finding our way into Munich. That same damp, late spring smell finds me again. The true meaning of young joy comes to me at once. All of those memories where moments of pure happiness and freedom, surrounded by people who cared for me. I remember thinking how I could never find that joy again. I was wrong. This moment. These friends. Elation.



Terminus

The author, having finally arrived in Munich via the long, nocturnal route.

Back to Sorrento

By **Muyun Zhu, University of South Carolina**

“Look at the sea, how beautiful it is, it inspires so many emotions, like you do with the people you have at heart. You make them dream while they are still awake. Look at this garden and the scent of these oranges, such a fine perfume; it goes straight into your heart...” I wore my earphones and listened to the song, “Come back to Sorrento.” My body was shaking as the train jolted along. I stared at the views outside of the window. My mind already to Sorrento, the place I have dreamed for ages.

The train stopped when the song ended. I walked out of the station and saw the true face of Sorrento. My first day in the city was wonderful. The sky was bright, and I was excited. I lived in a family-run hotel surrounded by lemon trees and decorated by roses. At night, sitting in the lemon garden, I drank my before-bed cup of Cappuccino and sensed the faint scent of these plants around me. The moon was big and bright; with the hazy moonlight, this lemon garden seemed attired in a large soft veil. Within such an atmosphere, I wished to stay in this moment forever.

They say, “A good start does not always lead to a happy ending.” My second day in Sorrento was almost a catastrophe. I took a walk to Piazza Tasso, the center of Sorrento. The streets were full of cars, motorcycles, and millions of tourists carrying large pieces of luggage. There was such a major traffic jam on Corso Italia, the main street of Sorrento, that at least four policemen came to evacuate the traffic. The smell of vehicle exhaust and the noise of starting engines were everywhere.

“Mamma mia!” I said to myself.

I thought everything would get better in Piazza Tasso. It didn't. The whole center of town consists of hotels, restaurants, and souvenir shops, which destroyed my imagination. I sank into an anti-tourist predicament, such as James Buzard mentions in *The Beaten Track*. I knew that what I saw is the real Sorrento; but I could not resist thinking that if there is no other tourists, if every resident lived in a very traditional way instead of soliciting business in front of their stores, if the hotels all disappeared, how authentic Sorrento will be.

With my grave and disappointed mood, I left the café. I decided to throw away the map and follow my heart, wandering in this little town without a destination. I wandered to the coast. It was close to afternoon tea time. The harbor was not as crowded as it was in the morning. I thought: I shall enjoy this rare, silent, and isolated moment. About 100 meters in front of me, there was an old Italian boat captain trying hard to canvas customers. When I tried to walk around him, he suddenly grabbed my arm and said, “€50 for 2 hours.” I did not really want to boat, but when I looked at the entrance of the harbor, where a new tour group was gathering, I sighed and told to myself, “at least, I can have a peaceful moment in the boat.”

“Do you accept credit cards?” I asked.

Out on the water, I faced the sky and asked the Captain, “Do you think Sorrento is not Sorrento anymore? I mean, it has become a commercial product. I mean, Sorrento has changed.” The Captain watched me. He fetched out a basket with a lemon, an orange, and *limoncello*, pointing to the coast, the sea, the sun, the basket, and finally his heart, saying, “These do not change.”

At this moment, I understood. Sorrento never changed; he developed. The Mediterranean Sea and sunshine are his appearance; lemon and orange form his skeleton; his people's love for their home is his soul. Those hotels and stores are only his clothes changing in order to adapt to the era. Hundreds of years ago, people may also have been attracted by his beauty while complaining about the crowded Piazza Tasso.

In the mild sea, the Captain and I sat face to face. He started to sing. Oh, it is “Come back to Sorrento”! I listened to the melody of sea waves. I raised a glass and said, “to the Captain, to the Mediterranean, and to Sorrento.”

“He fetched out a basket with a lemon, an orange, and *limoncello*, pointing to the coast, the sea, the sun, the basket, and finally his heart, saying, ‘These do not change.’”

Muyun Zhu



Bella Notte

By Lauren Moeller, University of Kansas

A simple “bye” at the airport would not do. If you come from the family that I come from, going to Italy for a month is celebrated like a national holiday. This was the last seven days of the American Lauren.

Good luck cards from my grandparents began appearing in the mail with a little extra surprise folded inside the envelope, and “sister only” trips to shopping malls happened as time ticked closer and closer to my departure. Everything built up to the family dinner only hours before I needed to be at my gate. The last supper.

I knew I would eventually have to board the plane. I just needed to remind myself that I wanted to do it. Pictures of my friends in exotic European locations had already persuaded me. My uncle, who taught with CIMBA in previous summers, had persuaded me. Everyone had persuaded me, but I hadn’t persuaded myself. As I made my way through security, something hit me. I was going to Italy. But why?

My knowledge of Italy was limited. Italy for me was the most delicious pastas and pizzas, and that one *Lady and the Tramp* song playing in the background. It was watery streets with slowly gliding gondolas. I didn’t really know what to expect; all I could do now was board the plane.

“Something to drink?” asked the accented blond flight attendant.

“Yes, please.” I said. We were somewhere over the Atlantic. My journey had officially started.

On arriving in Paderno del Grappa, I decided my quest on the trip was to figure out my own motivation for coming. If I hadn’t wanted to be here, I wouldn’t be.

In my last week in Italy, I have only now begun to construct an answer for myself. I realize that I have been looking in all the wrong places for one specific answer. I did not come to Europe simply to see the magnificent Duomo in



“As the weeks have passed, my wall has come down. I have experienced Italy, and Italy has experienced me.”

Lauren Moeller

The author on the bridge in Bassano del Grappa (left).

Florence, or the breathtaking Sagrada Familia in Barcelona, or even to swim in the turquoise waves of the Mediterranean off of Cagliari. No. The feeling of traveling, experiencing new places with new friends, and facing hilariously impossible situations created by the unfamiliar is what coming to Europe is all about.

It’s learning that there is a whole new world to see and experience. It’s not relying on maps or guidebooks, but being lead by fellow students’ laughter. It’s trusting that the way you are walking is the right way back to your Florentine hostel, even though it isn’t.

It’s experiencing Barcelona nightlife, and walking home when the sun is coming up over the big and bright city.

It’s the feeling of booking yet another Ryan Air ticket, and then the relief after making the earliest flight on a Sunday morning with seconds to spare.

It’s finding out the pizzeria in Paderno del Grappa is always a good life decision, and that when CIMBA professors say they will come to find you if you are not in class, the small campus and close-knit relationships will enable them to do so.

The rush and thrill that being abroad brings to me is indescribable. It

frustrates me that I cannot put it into words. All I can do is try and convince people, just as my friends and family did, to encounter the same feeling of living that I have had in the last couple of weeks.

*This is the night,
The most wonderful night,
And they call it bella notte.*

My Italy now represents much more than a Disney-based stereotype. My Italy is the feelings and memories I have made here. I tried to be conservative in my travel experiences, but as the weeks have passed, my wall has come down. I have experienced Italy, and Italy has experienced me.

As my friends back in Kansas are getting ready to go off to med school or law school—or whatever type of graduate school guarantees them another couple of years of college life—they remind me that this summer is, in fact, my last real summer. This is my last “hurrah,” and it has been a good one.

Why have I come to Italy? Well, why *not*? After everything it has offered me, Italy is more than a simple “hurrah.” It is *bravissima*. The only question that remains is, “when will I come back?”

Veni, Vidi, Vici!

By Lauren Obrien, University of Kansas

As I come around the corner, I am immediately thankful that, on this overcast day, it is still bright enough for me to be wearing my sunglasses. Tears of awe, excitement, and shock glaze my eyes. I let out a nervous giggle, of which the other American students I am with take no notice, and I brace myself. I am standing within a few hundred meters of the Amphitheatrum Flavium, better known as the ancient Roman Colosseum.

I am immediately taken back to The University of Kansas, sitting before my favorite professor, Professor Corbeill, learning about ancient Rome and all of its glory.

I have been dreaming of coming to this town, this structure, since sitting in class freshman year. It was an honors class I had frantically signed up for and almost dropped because I was the only freshman and non-classics major enrolled.

It was that class that made me fall in love with all things relating to ancient Rome. It was that class that spurred my decision to study Latin, a dead language, and participate in an intensive summer study abroad program in Italy.

I take a deep breath to keep the tears from spilling down my cheeks.

The structure, from the outside alone, is everything I had hoped for. So big and prominent, yet perfectly decayed to a state of ancient beauty. This amphitheatre, dating back almost two



When I think of Rome, I think of Romulus and Remus. I think of Caesar, the republic, the invention of aqueducts, and the myth of Nero singing while Rome was burning to the ground in 64 AD.

Lauren Obrien

thousand years, stands in contrast to all that is new around it. Tiers of perfect arches dominate its structure, and it stands in all of its grandeur next to modern buildings as if mocking them. I find it to be more beautiful and magnificent than any building I've ever seen.

It is as if the missing pieces were never to have been there, the stone always to have covered the walls instead of marble. I am unable to imagine it in all of its ancient glory, because it is perfect as it is.

As I near the structure, the smell of rain fills my nose. I become transfixed on this structure, imagining gladiatorial games and ancient naval battle reenactments.

At this moment, I realize that I hold Rome as entirely separate from Italy. When I think of Italy, I think of the sun, colorful houses, vineyards, coasts, the smell of warm pizza, and the view of the mountains.

When I think of Rome, however, I think of Romulus and Remus. I think of Caesar, the republic, the invention of aqueducts, and the myth of Nero singing while Rome was burning to the ground in 64 AD.

Standing before this magnificent structure makes me want to shout, "*Et tu Brute!*"—not only because I feel entitled

to do so because I can read Latin, but also because I am here. I am in one of the founding cities of the world; I am in Rome. Never have the Ides of March felt so real.

Suddenly I am awakened from my own mind by a dark-skinned Arabic man who awkwardly sticks an umbrella in my face

"Boom shaka laka?" he asks.

"No, *grazie*," I reply, and after he walks away I ask my friends, "What in the world does boom shaka laka even mean?"

Nobody knows.

As I disappear into my own mind again, the world around me evaporates. Part of me wants to forgo entering the Colosseum, to keep this perfect image seared into my mind forever. But I have been dreaming of this moment for far too long to pass up such an opportunity. I came to Rome, I am seeing the Colosseum, and now it is time for me to enter, to conquer one of my biggest dreams.

"*Veni Vidi Vici!*" I proclaim—using the Latin pronunciation, of course—and I hop in line.



Roman Holiday

The author throwing coins in the Trevi fountain (above) and in front of the Amphitheatrum Flavium—better known as the Roman Colosseum (above right).

Porta all'Italia

By Erica Sturwold, University of Iowa

A door. A mini door. A mini door, mini-er than me. That's when I knew I was somewhere else, somewhere abroad. Never at home would a door be too small for me, and hardly ever do I crouch or contort myself in order to get where I am going. Getting to where I am going now has a new meaning.

This same door, at home, would have been made proportionate to fit all the many people who could ever possibly want to fit through; because, naturally, the more people in the store, the more potential business.

No, this door, this Italian door, made of wood and painted in a pale pastel, is not meant to fit everyone, not meant to change its shape and appearance, not meant to change the way it so simply embraces so many critical elements of the deep-rooted Italian culture. It was this nature of inconvenience and awkwardness that drew me in, made me aware, made me feel that maybe I really do not need things to be so fast and easy.

How many times do I stop to notice doors in the U.S.? Not often. Probably just as often as I stop to realize I have to get through a particular passageway to get to my next destination; almost always the importance of the destination, and the activities taking place there, override my journey and the obstacles I face along the way.

A small door, too small to comfortably fit a girl who is 5'9,"and made from materials not fit to

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withstand so much as a hard hail storm, is one that seems impractical in many ways. But in so many more ways it is a testament to the Italian heritage; it is an artifact that attempts to preserve a traditional desire to stay unmanufactured and untainted by demands of younger, faster generations and societies.

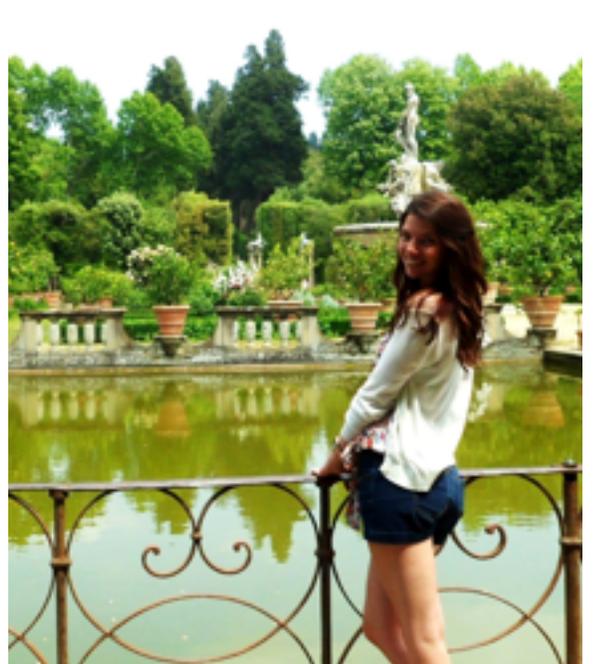
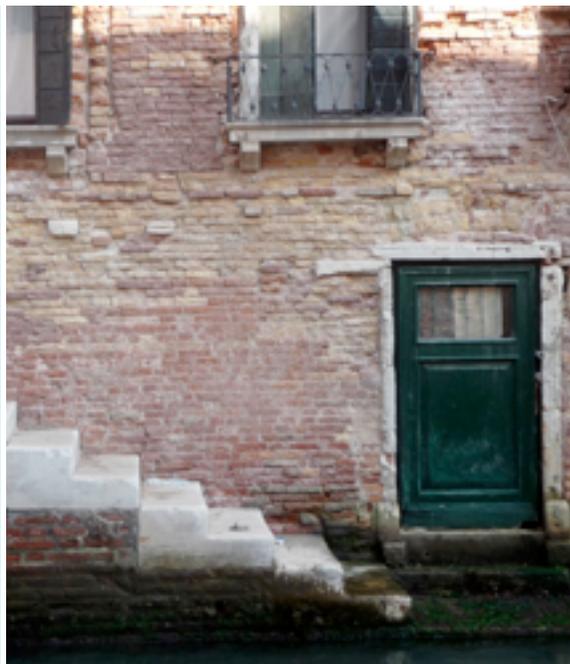
My door, tucked in a cobblestone corner of a Bassano del Grappa street, leads to a very modest family-owned shop. My friends and I walk in to find the owner; a small, dark-skinned, rolley polley-shaped man, face caked with pride and hands callused and worn, welcoming us in. He points out a shelf of his best wines and presents to us glass figurines handmade by his wife—his *moglie*. I think to myself, “I love this little shop. I love its little owner. I love its little door.”

Looking around the shop's nooks I take time to appreciate the delicate trinkets the owner is so proud of. I find myself thinking of the people who receive the trinkets as gifts. I can't help but to feel sorry for

Room with a view

Another tiny Italian door (at left)—this one a water door in Venice, Italy. At right: the author enjoys a wider angle on the beauties of Italy.

Following page: Erica dips a toe into the river that runs through Bassano (left); the famous bridge in Bassano del Grappa (right).





Found at a small, family-owned shop in Bassano del Grappa, Italy, is a door that is small enough to be seen as an obstacle, or deterrent. Why do I take pleasure in something that stands as a deterrent? Because the act of being deterred was what I had unknowingly been searching for upon making my way abroad.

Erica Sturwold



Porta all'Italia *(continued)*

them; they have not, and most likely will not, see the shop their gifts came from. They will never know the figurines were crafted by the proud rolley polley man's wife, and, never understand the allure of the modest mini door.

On the way out I purchase a glass wine stopper from the owner and take a moment to realize how well he speaks English; he is able to carry a conversation better than most locals I have spoken to. He asks, "Would you like wine with your wine stop?" and, "What else will you be doing in Bassano?" I realize he has dealt with us, us American tourists, many times before. He caters to our kind, therefore he knows the expectations, and yet, he does not change his traditional ways. He does not change his door. He does not set out to make each of its wood panels even; will not enforce or insulate the door with stronger materials; and, most certainly, is not going to change the size of its frame to fit all possible people.

Advancement is seen as such a positive thing in many aspects of the American lifestyle. It is important to get ahead

while you can, and improve on whatever you are able. This, to some, may be simply seen as greed, but I like to think of it as just not knowing any other way. We know only to move forward, never to halt, bend, crouch, or reverse. We have not been taught to appreciate the things we must come across, at one point or another, that inconvenience us.

Something similar to this door back home may have certainly annoyed me in some small way; but here, I fell in love with the miniature door for allowing me to enter into such a traditional form of this culture. Walking through it made me feel, though only for a moment, Italian.

Found at a small, family-owned shop in Bassano del Grappa, Italy, is a door that is small enough to be seen as an obstacle, or deterrent. Why do I take pleasure in something that stands as a deterrent? Because the act of being deterred was what I had unknowingly been searching for upon making my way abroad. The door that stood so imperfectly, with its minute size and uneven panels, truly was, in so many ways, perfect.

Inferno

By Jack Wellner, University of Kansas

I awake with a startle, and Shannon is not happy.

“I *specifically* told everyone not to leave,” I hear our guide say in a voice heavily laden with annoyance. As my senses return to me in an overwhelming rush, I clumsily rise to my feet and shoot my hand in the air, exclaiming in my most shameful tone, “I’m over here!”

As if the look she gives me isn’t bad enough, my CIMBA traveling companions—Jack, Josh, Brice, Brian, Stephen, Shannah, Lauren, Tim and Ed—all do the same, each and every face screaming, “What an idiot!” The heat creeps up my neck and into my face, the feeling all too reminiscent of the “naked at school dream.”

Did I really just doze off in the Sistine Chapel?! Although the answer is yes, I immediately see accusing faces turn into laughs and smiles. Even Shannon smiles. The tour resumes.

As our guide begins to explain the history of the different parts of the chapel and the artist that created them, I realize how idiotic I must have seemed. Michelangelo’s spirit is almost tangible. I cannot believe I am in Rome, gazing up at the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Am I still dreaming?

Our attention is first turned to the creation of Adam, where God’s hand is outstretched, giving the spark of life to Adam through the connection of their fingers. Although this symbol of touch is the most recognizable of the famous work, I connect with the image of the vessel in which God and his angels reside. The resemblance to the human brain

is uncanny. Everything from the brain stem to the macaroni-esque folds, called *sulci*, is present. My mind instantly shoots to a study I learned about in my anatomy class last semester at the University of Kansas. There is a fold in the middle of the brain that is believed to be connected to the separation of perception of reality and imagination. My jaw drops as my eyes connect with what I perceive to be this fold. It’s as if it was the artist’s intention to display that not only is God giving Adam the ability to sense reality—sight, smell, taste, feel, and hearing—but also the main thing that separates us from the rest of the animal Kingdom: thought.

Right next to the creation of Adam is the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. Michelangelo has a bit of a different take on this familiar story. Normally, Eve takes the forbidden fruit from the tree, but here it is Adam who plucks it. And the evil serpent, too, is changed: instead of being pure snake, the serpent is here half woman, as if to say it was a vile *temptress* attempting to provoke original sin. It seems as though Michelangelo wanted to show Adam tempted not only with the fruit, but also with the female body. Adam takes the fruit out of lust. I can taste the sin.

As we make our way back to the front of the chapel, my gaze fixes on the depiction of the “Final Judgment,” in which Jesus decides who is admitted into Paradise, and who is damned to Hell for all eternity. The top of the painting is pristine: there are angels playing, different saints and prophets listening to the music of a harp, and what can only be called pure joy.

But my focus is drawn to the inferno lying at the bottom of the work. The temptation to look is overwhelming. I think I can actually hear the cries of men beseeching pity from the Almighty, only to be dragged into the fiery pits, never to escape. I am in a trance. The room smells of roasted flesh. I am gripped with fear.

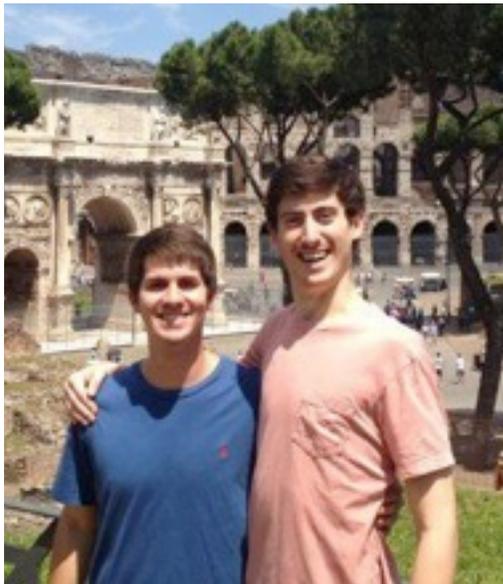
The voice of reason releases me from my nightmare.

“Alright everyone, if you wouldn’t mind following me out the doors, we will make our way to the basilica.”

Thank you, Shannon.

Roman Travelers

The author (right), wide awake in Rome in front of the Colosseum with one of his CIMBA traveling buddies.



Always a Mountaineer

By Unaiza Riaz, West Virginia University

The way a particular moment can crash on you is so beautiful. Sometimes it's even better to describe it to a stranger, that particular moment when you find an answer you didn't know you were looking for.

Standing in a bar in Florence, I look up at the wall and see different college T-shirts from the U.S. covering the interior. My friends are in the other room, my favorite song is playing. Strangely, the multi-colored wall above my head looks familiar. A blazingly gold T-shirt is hung up, bearing the motto of my school and the scribbled names of some of my close friends. The shirt says "West Virginia University, Always a Mountaineer" on the front. I am in a bar in Florence, Italy and I want to cry with happiness.

For me now, home is comfort. I traveled a lot when I was younger, but as I've gotten older, I've become more and more attached to life at home. It felt like another person signed me up to move to Italy and to attend CIMBA. I don't know a word of Italian. I am not a business major. I don't know a single other person going. The simplicity of this daring decision doesn't hit me until I see the gold T-shirt that brings me back home, reminding me how much I've learned about myself while being here.

I think back to school this past spring semester. I ran for student government simply to see if I could do it. At WVU,



"Coming here in itself was a risk I didn't think I was strong enough to take. But I am."

Unaiza Riaz

student government is probably a bigger deal than basketball. The horrifying concept of standing mic in hand, long stage looming in front of me with 400 or 500 eyes staring up at me was never something I saw in my future when I first came to college. I still am not sure how words turned into sentences and each step led to another in that moment. "My name is Unaiza Riaz and I am a proud member of the Golden Ticket," I had said as I finished my questions, finally smiling and focusing on all the familiar faces in the audience. Stepping off that debate stage was so surreal; I thought for sure I had said the wrong ticket name. Or even said someone else's name. I decided to go to Italy the day after.

I know now I did come here looking for something. I think I even dared myself to come here. I wanted to see if I could do it. For some people, traveling is sightseeing, shopping, and exposure to a new culture. I enjoyed all of that, but I also got so much more out of the experience.

At home, I'm shy, not a risk taker, and I am terrible at new things. I get lost driving around the town I've lived in for thirteen years. I had to go to the hospital two times in the same day this past spring semester, and I gave myself three out of four nasty scars on my hand in a span of a week.

But being here in Paderno del Grappa, I am not these things. I am capable and brave. Coming here in itself was a risk I didn't think I was strong enough to take. But I am. I've made friendships that will last a lifetime, and this entire experience has given me a new outlook on how to approach what's next in life.

Looking around me at the colorful sky of the bar adorned with so many different colleges, I wonder what each shirt's story is. I'm still sitting on the barstool, a new song comes on. I'm still smiling. "My friends from home left that shirt here," I proudly tell someone next to me. He runs to look around to find his school's T-shirt.

I have had an incredible month here. I am going home with a completely new outlook on taking risks, traveling, and knowing myself. I take a picture of the gold T-shirt, shout a couple of "WVU I love you" chants with my new friends, and head out.



WVU—Florence Campus

The golden colors of the WVU Mountaineers brighten a corner of Florence (above); the author high above the city, as a Mountaineer should be.

Breathless

By Ellie Thalls, Purdue University

Walking up to the colossal structure takes my breath away. As I hurriedly dig into my overstuffed purse to find my camera, I look around myself. Hundreds of people are swarming the streets, talking on phones and going about their normal business. Is no one else affected by this place?

The Roman Colosseum captures my heart when I walk out of the metro station and into the busy city center. I feel like time is frozen as I gaze up at the magnificent ruin. Yet everyone else seems to be moving in fast forward. The Colosseum isn't a place that was on my things-to-see-before-I-die list or even one of the things I am looking forward to most on my Italian trip, yet here I am, in absolute awe.

I climb up the stairs to the first level, my heart pounding in anticipation. I walk out to the first overlook and gasp. I rotate slowly in a circle, taking in the sights of the crumbling walls and the sheer magnitude of the place. I take a hundred pictures of the same view, positive that I must have missed something in the one before, not wanting to lose a single moment in time. I walk slowly around the arena, and I just keep thinking, "Gladiators fought here. Their blood has been soaked into the ground I am walking on."

I look to my left, and another tourist seems to be having the same moment. Our eyes meet, and a moment of



Putting the Awe Back in "Awesome"

The author in front of one of the world's most magnificent structures: the Roman Colosseum (also at right).

understanding passes between us. Although the Colosseum isn't a religious structure, there is an aura of reverence that envelopes it.

I walk now to the lower level, and again am taken aback by the size of this magnificent arena. Standing in the bottom and looking towards the skies, I can hear the crowds cheering and the loud cries of defeat as another gladiator is taken down. The Roman Colosseum was built in 70 A.D. and was mainly used for fighting, whether man to man or man to animal. I am no history buff, but I cannot help but be overwhelmed by the weight of the history of this place.

I continue my walk with the past, and, two hours later, walk out feeling much more reverent. I go on to see many more sights; the Pantheon, the Forum, the Vatican, the Sistine Chapel and Saint Peter's Basilica. While the Sistine Chapel is far more beautiful, something about the Colosseum has me enraptured.

Being a traveler at heart, I will tuck away the memories of the Colosseum forever. But I will keep going. I have been to some incredible places—the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, Notre Dame, St. Petersburg, Copenhagen, Brazil and London. I will keep all these memories, yet I am unsatisfied.

I yearn to be constantly in motion, experiencing new places and making a new path for my future. Choosing one place to call "my place" seems absurd to me. To me, place is an abstract thing. It is ever-changing, fluid, and it adapts to who we are and what we need in a particular moment.

This is how I know I am a traveler at heart: I cannot be satisfied. Looking up to see the Colosseum satisfied me for a day and will remain with me after I leave Italy and return home, but I am ready now to experience my next place.

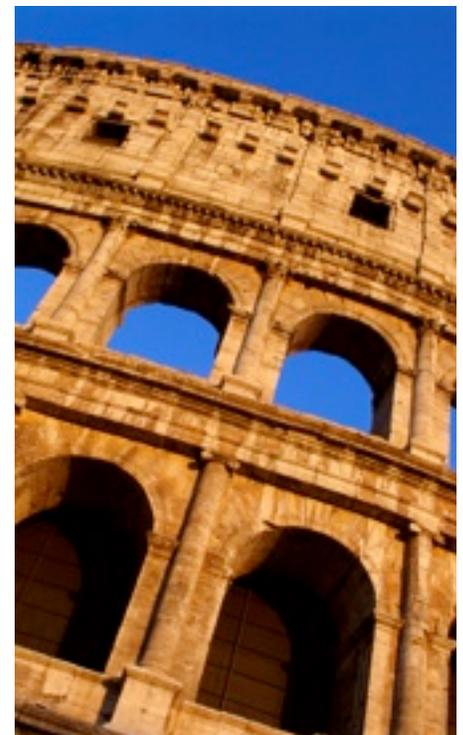
What could be better than having a moment like I did at the Colosseum a hundred more times? I am ready to live and breathe and experience the place I don't yet know I want. The anticipation of future travel leaves me breathless and sends my mind spinning.

When my insomnia is in full bloom, I lay awake in bed, listening to the fan and

"I am ready to live and breathe and experience the place I don't yet know I want. The anticipation of future travel leaves me breathless and sends my mind spinning."

Ellie Thalls

making a list of where I want to go next. To me, the place itself isn't what gives me satisfaction. Knowing that I am going to experience many more places is what does.



Austr(al)ians

By Nicole Iaquinto, University of South Carolina

If it wasn't for the Australians we would have been lost. It must be fate that we met them in our little hostel, a few meters over the bridge in Innsbruck, Austria.

My CIMBA traveling companion, Emily, and I arrived at Hostel Pension Glockenhaus around 21:30, a little later than originally expected, and were greeted warmly by our neighbor across the hall.

"Are you girls staying in that sleepout?" He points across the hallway. Huh? The language is familiar but the accent is foreign—and the vocabulary. Sleepout? I guess he means bedroom.

"Yes I think so" I reply uneasily.

This is his second night at Pension Glockenhaus in a run down room with four bunk beds and a shower barely tall enough for a child. His name is Nathan. He is traveling with a group of other Australians who become our Austrian tour guides for the night. We stroll through Old Town Innsbruck passing café's, restaurants, and shops until we finally arrive at a stone archway, six feet tall with a small painted black sign: "Limerick Bill's Irish Pub."

The archway leads us back through a hallway of twists and turns until we finally reach a hearty wooden door with iron castings. We would never have found this on our own. I pull the door forward and step inside as a wall of cigarette smoke and German hits me. Inside, tables of Austrians sing, talk loudly, and argue even more loudly. American rock-n-roll tunes blare from the speakers. The all-Austrian crowd sings along in broken English.

We look around, confused. Should we be in a place like this? It is obviously not a tourist attraction. It is not "Austrian." But it is filled with Austrians. The signs behind the bar cater to the Austrian crowd. The sign reads: Die heutige Wahl: Gösser 3 €. Tonight's special. We sit down at an empty table.

Even the non-smoking section of the place reeks of tobacco. Seven of us sit at



Right now, I think I know what it must be like to be an Austrian. Soon we are talking and singing along with the Austrian crowd. We sit with them at their tables and in their mismatched chairs. At this moment, I know we could not have found a better place.

Nicole Iaquinto

The author high above Innsbruck, looking across the Alps (left) and enjoying the company of a friendly local—a mountain sheep (below).

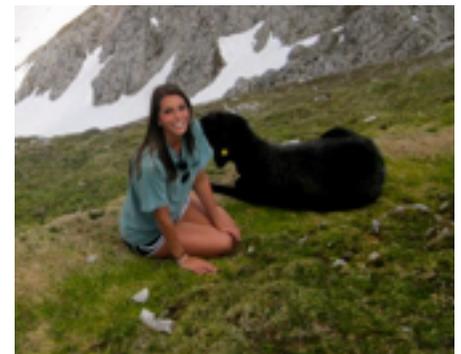
a large round table in the back, surrounded by tables filled with other 20-somethings, all speaking German. The Australians tell us about their adventures in Innsbruck thus far and how they stumbled upon this place last night after meeting some locals. I am enchanted by their accents.

I look around at the thick wooden beams that line the walls and ceiling. Tables of every shape and size are planted around the dark, smoky room. The chairs are all mix and match. Some have deep velvet cushions, and some have rickety wooden poles and straw seat covers. Others have sturdy arm rests and sunken pillows for seats. Although this place is not uniform or posh, its atmosphere gives it a sense of meaning and character. Its hodgepodge of tables and chairs probably seat the same group of people week after week: friends meeting to talk after work; classmates letting loose after a tough week in school; locals making their nightly appearance.

Right now, I think I know what it must be like to be an Austrian. Soon we are talking and singing along with the Austrian crowd. We sit with them at their tables and in their mismatched chairs. At this moment, I know we could not have found a better place.

Here, we are not surrounded by the usual group of tourists, snapping pictures at everything new and different that we would see at places designed to be "authentic Innsbruck bars." Here, at Limerick Bill's, we blend in with the crowd, enjoying our night just like everyone around us—all the *other* Austrians.

We head back to Limerick Bill's the next night, this time more aware, more prepared. We walk purposefully down the long corridor to the sturdy door, this time not taken aback by the cloud of smoke or the thunderous German. We head to our favorite table in the back, almost as if we were regulars.





“When I was seven, I came to a small town in Umbria called Spello with my dad, grandfather, and Grammy. I remember almost nothing about the trip. The things I do remember seem insignificant. Going to get gelato with my grandfather, ordering four scoops of ice cream, and then keeping it a secret from my dad. Taking my first sip of red wine. Sticking my head under the Italian water fountains and getting completely soaked while my dad laughed.”

Emily Fradley



Olive

By Emily Fradley, University of South Carolina

Where did I get my skin? I stay darker than most year round. When I lay in the sun, I turn a yellow tan. My mom calls it “olive.” This “olive” reference reminds me of green olives, the kinds with pits. I don’t want to look like a green olive. I want a warm, reddish tan. But instead, the only part of my skin that turns red is when the sun scorches that delicate part of your cheek just below your eyes, and the color is gone the next morning when you wake up—mine turning back to “olive.”

My parents are both quite pale. My extended family is almost entirely Scottish. No one from Scotland is tan. When I picture someone from Scotland, I think of a fair-skinned person, with blue eyes, and light hair. My parents fit into this schema, as do my cousins, aunts, and uncles. I, however, have

“olive” skin, green or blue eyes depending on the weather, and brown hair with a reddish tint that I have intentionally changed to blonde. Am I adopted?

My family and I have pondered my characteristics from time to time and have yet to figure out where they come from. I was not always like this. I was born with white blonde hair, blue eyes, and fair skin, and somehow have morphed into this alien in my family. My mom and I try to figure this mystery out, and the only piece we have solved is my skin. I got my “olive” skin from my grandmother. Grammy, I called her, who loved to travel, especially to Italy.

When I was seven, I came to a small town in Umbria called Spello with my dad, grandfather, and Grammy. We would be gone for two weeks, and while we did so much during our stay in Italy, I remember almost nothing about the trip.

Olive (continued)

The things I remember seem so insignificant. Going to get gelato with my grandfather, ordering four scoops of ice cream, and then keeping it a secret from my dad. Taking my first sip of red wine. Sticking my head under the Italian water fountains and getting completely soaked while my dad laughed. Sleeping in a bunk bed in our apartment—a fort of my own in a building that resembled a castle. Grammy trying to buy matches to light her cigarettes.

My dad is in the front seat alongside my grandfather in our tiny rental car. Grammy and I sit beside each other in the backseat. She is trying to teach me Italian. We are driving to a nearby town through what seemed like huge mountains to a seven year old. Looking back they were probably small hills. She starts to teach me numbers. Then she starts to teach me to do my times tables in Italian. I am seven. I do not even know what time tables are in English. She still persists, and I want to impress her, so I try my best. Then all of the sudden, Grammy becomes violently sick.

No one knows what to do. We are now pulled over on the side of the road. My dad jumps out of the car, sees I am a little shaken and says to me, “Are you okay buckwheat?” Was she sick from these hilly roads? Or possibly something bad at lunch? No, ten days later she is even worse. We are back in the states. It is cancer.

My Grammy passes away three years later. I am in Scotland with my mom; we can’t find a flight to make it back for her funeral. I am only ten at this point and still don’t really understand why or how this is happening. I did not even know that she had cancer; my parents had kept this detail from me. And now, my mom crying, trying to explain these things to me, tells me cancer comes from the cigarettes. I wish Grammy hadn’t known the Italian word for matches.

When I went to Italy with Grammy, it was my first trip to the little town of Spello. It was her eighteenth. The statement “Grammy loved Italy,” which is so often said around our family gatherings, does not do justice to how she felt about this special place. I am told by my dad that when she described her month-long, sometimes year-long trips here, her eyes would light up in a special way, and even she herself could hardly find words to describe how she felt about this extraordinary place.

It seemed like her whole life was centered on Italy. She was a very smart woman—one of the few females to graduate from Brown in the 1940s with an English degree. She spent hours studying the Italian language in preparation for her journeys, and

“I think about olive oil. Italian olive oil and its golden color. In some strange, divine way, all of these things are connected, and I have no doubt that I didn’t just choose to come to Italy.”

Emily Fradley

by the time she died she was perfectly fluent. She planned as many trips as she could to go to Italy, with friends, her husband, and more than often by herself. It’s hard for me to imagine someone having enough courage to come over here completely alone for months at a time knowing absolutely no one.

I wish I could say that I personally remember all these things about my own grandmother, but most of them are told to me. Being the youngest grandchild, I shared the least amount of time with her. Yet, I still seem to have a strong connection with her. People in my family tell me how eerily we resemble each other as I grow older, and I can’t help but notice that I have the same curiosities. When my family shares stories about her, or reminisces on what she is like, I feel such a strong admiration for her, but at the same time, a bond of equality, like I am her, just in a different time.

Our trip together to Italy was her last. I want to continue her quest. I want to travel throughout Italy, pick up where she left off, because if she were still with us on this earth, I am certain I would be spending my long weekends in Italy going to Spello and visiting her in the little apartment my grandfather bought her for her fiftieth birthday. Part of me feels as though she is inside me when I’m here, helping me to notice the beauty around me, popping an Italian phrase into my head when I need it the most, and giving me the drive to embrace the beauty of Italian culture.

Our “olive” skin. Grammy and I—the only two in our family who have it. And we both love Italy. And Italy is known for olives. And now, I don’t think of the strange green olives I associated with this phrase in the past. I think about olive oil. Italian olive oil and its golden color. In some strange, divine way, all of these things are connected, and I have no doubt that I didn’t just choose to come to Italy. The urge to come to Italy was inside me, just as it was for Grammy. And I know that, just like Grammy, this will not be my last trip to this enchanting place. Coming here as an adult has given me that special courage she possessed, the courage I found unthinkable, to continue her journey and begin to make it my own.

Foreign Exchange

By Emily Allen, Purdue University

As an English professor from Purdue University teaching at the Consortium Institute for Management and Business Analysis (CIMBA) in Paderno del Grappa, Italy, I struggle to use the words of my new language: not *grazie* (thank you), *prego* (you're welcome), or *spaghetti* (spaghetti), but *equity*, *auditing*, and *market value*. My colleagues and new friends here are faculty from business schools (*b-schools*) and economics departments, and they draw from a different lexicon than the one we use in liberal arts.

I revel in the new phrases and concepts—*maximizing utility*, *splitting two for one*, *fungible*—and let the novel textures roll around my mouth and off my tongue. Italian is said to be a musical language, but my ear is tuned to the strange and wonderful sounds of English spoken with a business accent.

My colleagues are extraordinarily welcoming. They offer me new words and patiently explain the ones I don't understand: "What is, *future value*?" "How do I say, *macroenvironmental*?" I know from learning Italian that learning a new language means diving into a new culture, but I welcome the plunge. Soon I have total immersion.

When numbers are involved, my CIMBA friends speak very loudly and slowly to me ("*This—is—twenty—Euros*"), but mostly they treat me like one of the family. I feel successful, elated. I am learning to "b."



"As we fan out across Italy on the weekends, looking for signs of difference, of 'authentic' Italian culture, we do so in the company of new friends who share a love of this ancient and marvelous country, a country that fills both our senses and our dreams.

Emily Allen

If travel is the search for difference, then we must embrace it everywhere we find it. The majority of us at CIMBA are Americans—and all of us have some tie to an American university—but none of us are the same. I am struck, as I often am, by the richness and diversity of "a" national culture. My students from Kansas, Indiana, Iowa, and South Carolina are almost as different from each other as they are from the Italian students who share our beautiful campus. Yes, we all speak English, but we cannot be said to share a single, homogenous culture.

As we fan out across Italy on the weekends, looking for signs of difference, of "authentic" Italian culture, we do so in the company of new friends who share a

love of this ancient and marvelous country, a country that fills both our senses and our dreams. That love binds us, perhaps more strongly than the chords of language or nationality, which, after all, are made up of many, uneven strands.

I did not come to Italy to learn a new academic language. I did not come here to learn about Kansas, or Utah, or Arkansas, or South Carolina, or to fall in love with a super bunch of university professors, their children, and a wonderful, diverse lot of students. But that is exactly what happened.

I came here to experience difference, to open myself to a foreign language and a foreign culture. And I did.

CIMBA Summer 2012 Faculty

Emily Allen, Purdue University
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 Joan Gabel, University of Missouri
 Mikhail Grachev, University of Iowa
 Cliff Hawley, West Virginia University
 Jim Heintz, Kansas University
 Todd Houge, University of Iowa
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Jamie Jorgensen, University of Iowa
 Molly Rapert, University of Arkansas
 Matthew Shaftel, Florida State University
 Tim Shaftel, Kansas University
 Dominic Standish, CIMBA
 Bob Underwood, Furman University
 Brent Wilson, Brigham Young University

CIMBA Summer 2012

By Heather Schnacke, CIMBA Undergraduate Campus Life Coordinator

What is it that makes CIMBA so special? What makes it so unique in comparison to other programs or places in Italy for that matter? Just imagine a town with one stop light, two stop signs, one café, one restaurant, one bank, one hotel, and two schools — all run by local Italians.

Surrounded by mountains and connected to many other small villages, tiny Paderno del Grappa can only be described as having an atmosphere of pure beauty and Italian authenticity.

The students who came to Paderno this summer embarked on an incredible four week journey. This journey of discovery and transformation consisted not only of classes, but also of weekend travels to Venice, Rome, Florence, Paris, Cinque Terre, Barcelona, and many other fabulous destinations. CIMBA students also engaged in activities that connected them to the local area: hiking the famous Mount Grappa, taking survival Italian classes, visiting local villages such as Bassano and Possagno, taking in the elegance of the striking hill town of Asolo, and learning Italian etiquette, which we put into practice at an authentic Italian gourmet dinner in Castelfranco Veneto (see photo, back cover).

The four weeks went by so fast—too fast. But it is inevitable that CIMBA students will go back home

"Italy," writes Anna Akhmatova, "is a dream that keeps returning for the rest of your life." I think anyone who has experienced true Italy would agree.

Heather Schnacke

and miss doing things the Italian way: cappuccinos at the bar in the early morning, gelato in the afternoons, walks down the street to the pizzeria or the haircut place, pasta for every meal—okay, maybe not *this* one—and that special community of people that shared a moment in time in Italy together.

To this year's CIMBA students, I say "*Grazie e arriverderci!*" To prospective students, I say this: if this type of experience appeals to you, then CIMBA is the place for you.

I leave you with this to entice you to take the CIMBA journey or to help you to recall what that journey meant to you—this year or in years past. "Italy," writes Anna Akhmatova, "is a dream that keeps returning for the rest of your life." I think anyone who has experienced true Italy would agree.

CIMBA—Behind the Scenes

The CIMBA staff makes it all happen: at left, Heather Schnacke, Campus Life Coordinator Adam Luck, and Campus Coordinator Silvia Ziliotto, along with CIMBA Executive Director Al Ringleb and Associate Director Cristina Turchet

Right: Adam, Silvia, Heather, Campus Life Coordinator Dan Davis and Campus Life Coordinator Ilya Gokhman.





CIMBA

Summer 2012

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