



My Venice and Other Essays

By Donna Leon

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Donna Leon has won a huge number of passionate fans and a tremendous amount of critical acclaim for her international bestselling mystery series featuring Venetian Commissario Guido Brunetti. These accolades have built up not just for her intricate plots and gripping narratives, but for her insight into the culture, politics, family-life, and history of Venice, one of the world's most-treasured cities, and Leon's home for over thirty years. Readers love how Leon opens the doors to a private Venice, beyond the reach of the millions of international tourists who delight in the city's canals, food, and art every year.

My Venice and Other Essays will be a treat for Leon's many fans, as well as for lovers of Italy and La Serenissima. For many years, Leon, who is a perennial #1 bestseller in Germany, has written essays for European publications. Collected here are the best of these: over fifty funny, charming, passionate, and insightful essays that range from battles over garbage in the canals to the troubles with rehabbing Venetian real estate. She shares episodes from her life in Venice, explores her love of opera, and recounts tales from in and around her country house in the mountains. With pointed observations and humor, she also explores her family history and former life in New Jersey, and the idea of the Italian man.

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Editorial Review

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The many thousands of readers who love Donna Leon's Guido Brunetti mysteries love them for multiple reasons, the least of which is probably their plots. Not that there is anything wrong with those plots, but it is the side dishes surrounding the plots that entrance us, especially the character of the cynical yet sensitive Brunetti and the way he interacts with his family. So it is with the essays in this collection of Leon's brief nonfiction writings. Whether she is musing about Venice, expressing not only an appealing crankiness about garbage or Bermuda shorts-wearing tourists but also an unassailable love of the human interaction that the city's car-free status makes possible; or about her love for classical music; or her mixed reactions to America; or her thoughts on men, she never fails to explore the periphery of her topic, deepening her theme and giving it context and nuance. A favorite? How about "With Barbara Vine," in which two celebrated mystery writers chat about their favorite ways of doing somebody in ("Oh, I love a good push down the step")? --Bill Ott

Review

"Leon . . . takes both loving and jaundiced looks at Italy and the United States, music, men and many other subjects in *My Venice*."—*New York Times Book Review*

"Entertaining [and] unapologetically opinionated."—*New York Times*

"Cheerfully opinionated. . . . An intriguing glimpse at the strong views of an exceptionally interesting and entertaining novelist."—*Seattle Times*

"So keenly observed that they almost make me homesick for a city I've only visited . . . [Leon's essays] have the kind of friendly intimacy of a letter from a friend far away"—*Boston Globe*

"Donna Leon is . . . a practiced writer of sharply observed commentary. . . . Leon clearly loves her adopted city, but she is not so pie-eyed as to overlook—and report to often hilarious effect—its idiosyncratic imperfections. . . . Savoring these short and engaging pieces is akin to sharing a latte at a Venetian café with an entertaining, opinionated, intelligent friend."—*BookPage*

"Well known as the author of the Commissario Guido Brunetti mystery novels, American Donna Leon has lived in Venice for 30 years and knows its vagaries and delights in and out. The essays in *My Venice* are filled with her pointed observations, humor and insight. . . . Leon's great intelligence and wit come through in every one. . . . A lively collection."—*Shelf Awareness*

"Leon . . . is literate, witty and contentious, with a ready sense of humor and an eye for the absurd. I'd love to have a cappuccino with her."—Kathy Weissman, *Bookreporter.com*

"Engaging. . . . Leon muses, reminisces, and often complains about her Italian home of more than 30 years. . . . But in the titular essay, it's clear also that she loves the community feel and unforced camaraderie of her neighborhood."—*Publishers Weekly*

"[Leon] never fails to explore the periphery of her topic, deepening her theme and giving it context and nuance."—*Booklist*

“Absorbing. . . . *My Venice and Other Essays* . . . provide[s] morsels of wit and sharp observations.”—*New York Journal of Books*

About the Author

Donna Leon is the author of the international best-selling Commissario Guido Brunetti series. The winner of the CWA Macallan Silver Dagger for Fiction, among other awards, Leon was born in New Jersey and has lived in Venice for thirty years.

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