

In Sardinia: An Unexpected Journey in Italy

Jeff Biggers

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Jeff Biggers's *In Sardinia* is a story about becoming enchanted by an Italian island—its history, customs, literature, art, ancient archaeological sites, and heroes and legends too.

Biggers regards Sardinia as one of Italy's most complex and beguiling regions. Years after his first visit, it continues to hold him. But on his first introduction to the island, he and his family were greeted by a furious mistral; their boat landed on its rocky coast, where the boulders appeared to be sculpted by the gale-force winds.

Curious and willing to be surprised, Biggers (a journalist, historian, and travel writer) ventured along Sardinia's back roads, encountering places that tourists never see. On one such excursion, the grandson of one of the island's poet laureates was so eager to show Biggers where Antioco Casula had lived that he abandoned his lunch. The book is alive with such encounters, covering the island's artists, poets, writers, artisans, shepherds, and innkeepers and the stories they told.

Capturing Sardinia as a rugged, demanding land of astounding natural beauty, Biggers notes that its history is one of family loyalty, secrets, passion, and vengeance. Bronze Age Sardinia was a vital trade partner that possessed rich resources—its silver mines even supplied King Solomon's legendary city. Biggers traces the island's strong, vibrant culture (older than the ancient civilizations of Rome, Greece, and Etruria) to show how it withstood all attempts to eradicate it. Today, the whole land is called an "open museum," with thousands of Neolithic and Bronze Age monuments, Stonehenge-evocative dolmens, burial tombs, and towers dotting the landscape.

In Sardinia is an delightful travelogue that unearths magical stories from beneath island stones.

KRISTINE MORRIS (May / June 2023)

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