

Una storia d'amore!

Terence Wallis

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Italy has been called a dream that keeps returning; Wallis's photographs make you never want to wake.

In his photo travel book, *Una storia d'amore*, author and photographer Terence Wallis captures the aesthetically stunning road less traveled through modern Italy.

After the illness and death of his father, Wallis left his corporate job and formed his own company where he could pursue his love of photography. The result of that venture is this travelogue through twenty Italian regions.

Una storia d'amore is well organized. Each chapter covers a specific region and shows a map with that region colored in. Short descriptions come for each photographic subject. An abundance of white space punctuates the color and beauty of the pictures.

Wallis has a wonderful eye for composition, especially when it comes to villages and their points of interest. A crowded harbor at Portofino is shown with hundreds of white boats on a dazzling sapphire sea. Long shadows cast by the morning light at the Piazza Foro Traiano symbolize how ancient Rome still influences the modern world. Shots of churches, like the Chiesa del Gesù and the Basilica di San Francesco d'Assisi, are so breathtaking that they jump from the page.

Beyond famous sites are photographs of sights off the beaten path. Venice is captured via snaps of the Grand Canal and gondolas, but most of the photographs from that city focus on solitary back alleys, quiet neighborhoods overlooking canals, the sunny reflection of water on a bridge, and other points of contemplation.

Photographs also capture the details of Italian living, with close shots of carved water fountains, ornate house numbers, colorful café signs, and decorative marble embellishments. Captions are similarly detailed—as with one of lush palm trees on the shores of Lake Como that marvels that palm trees can be found at the foot of the Alps.

At times, the level of detail is uneven. Some pictures don't show enough, as with a closeup of a gelato truck that takes no account of the surrounding square. A faraway picture of Villa Melai teases about its renowned botanical gardens, but there is no follow-up with pictures from that garden. Other pictures, such as worn school chairs with peeling paint, are aesthetically engaging but could be from anywhere in the world.

Una storia d'amore is a beautiful travel book, a love letter to Italy that digs beneath tourists' tracks to highlight Italy's rich culture and vibrant beauty. Italy has been called a dream that keeps returning; Wallis's photographs make you never want to wake.

KATERIE PRIOR (February 22, 2018)

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