

Write a Bestseller Retreat Italy April 23-28, 2016

Led and hosted by Jacq Burns with Espressino travel



Retreat Programme:

DAY 1: Saturday

12 Arrival at the villa

12.30-2.30pm Settle in. Over a leisurely lunch we will introduce ourselves and our books. We will discuss the programme, and what we most want to achieve on the retreat.

3.30-5.30pm Workshop – What are agents and publishers looking for? We look at the big picture stuff that actually gets you published and cover the essentials that go into making a great book. We also discuss the rules of fiction and non-fiction writing and when it is okay to break them.

6pm - 10pm Our first evening of the retreat starts with a guided tour of Castello Monaci and winery, wine tasting, a fireside aperitivo with snacks followed by a private multi-course dinner in the castle.

DAY 2: Sunday

7.30am Optional gentle activation and meditation session or sleep in.

8.30-9.30am Breakfast

9.30am-12.30 Free Writing Time - You'll be clear about your focus from the previous day and you know your targets, now is the time to implement them.

Jacq will make a time to see each writer individually to refine your writing and apply the learning from yesterday's workshop.

1pm -2.30 Lunch

Theme: Books we love and why we love them. The inside line on how these books become so successful.

2.30-4.30pm Workshop: looking at structure, story, voice, theme and concept and title. We will look at practical examples of how to make your words work harder and how to edit and polish your work and make it more readable.

5pm- Spend the evening in the incredible city of Lecce, the 'Florence of the South,' where we will join the locals in the region's liveliest passeggiata with a guided tour of the city, and a taste of the best of local products, street food and drinks. As the sky darkens we will begin our 'Lecce by Night' tour, stopping for the best coffee in town before exploring the secret corners of the city only locals know about. Our tour concludes with gelato at the town's best artisanal gelateria.

DAY 3: Monday

8am -10am Breakfast

10-12 Free writing time.

12 - 1pm Writers' surgery, to discuss the morning's writing and progress and to making any realignments and solve any challenges.

1-2:30pm Lunch – open discussion

2:30–4.30pm

Workshop: Discoverability is key since the decline in the number of books sold in bookshops and the meteoric rise of Amazon. It is crucial to help readers to find your book and once found, get them to tell others about it. Discover how to embed these things in your book even in the early stages of your writing and crucially before you pitch to agents. You'll find out how to make your writing more lovable and worthy of word of mouth – a key ingredient of any bestseller.

5pm - 10pm

Democracy rules tonight. Mindful of the need to achieve our desired writing output and manage our energy levels, we will vote to choose between two options - dining at the beautiful seaside town of Otranto or at the villa.



Our Retreat Workshop Space

DAY 4 : Tuesday

8-10.30am Free writing and breakfast

10.30–12.30 Workshop - Let's get down to thinking about pitching your idea to agents. We will road-test your concept and practice synopsis and query letter writing and cover how to approach agents. It is also time to apply the editors checklist test, the 'test' that the big 4 publishers apply when considering books to publish.

1pm - 2:30pm Lunch

2:30-5pm Free writing time

Optional open writers' surgery from 2.30-3.30pm

5pm -This evening we drive the White City, Ostuni, an atmospheric hill town in the Valle d'Itria region. We'll enjoy gelato at our favourite gelateria in Puglia, and a walk through the winding streets. After the

Tour's completion (roughly one hour) guests have the option of either exploring the city's shops and backstreets on their own or try an aperitivo at one of the town's fabulous bars. After drinks we will walk to dinner to feast on traditional dishes.

DAY 5: Wednesday

8am Breakfast

9.30am-11.00 Workshop: The publishing industry – a detailed look at how books are sold and marketed, how important concept is, and what that teaches us about what we need to include in our writing if we want a successful book on our hands.

11-1pm Free writing time

1-2.30pm Lunch

2.30-6.30: Free writing time during which Jacq will arrange to see each writer one-to-one to give you a clear next-steps plan to take away.

We'll stay at the residence this evening, eating and drinking together at a celebratory dinner to mark the end of the week's writing - the perfect opportunity to reflect on your achievements.

We will also enjoy some live Pizzica music and dancing from the area.

DAY 6 – Thursday April 28

Breakfast and arrivederci.

Transfers to Brindisi airport.



Informal discussion and relaxation area

Our Retreat venue and Accommodation:

As the name suggests, Castello Monaci is a castle and an excellent winery, 30 minutes west of Lecce. It's breathtakingly stunning. We stay at Casina Metrano, located in part of the beautiful Castello Monaci estate removed from the hustle and bustle of the castle although we have access to it whenever we need to.

Casina Metrano has a pool, communal roof terrace, covered outdoor seating areas, kitchen and lounge, all of which make it perfect for our retreat where peace and quiet is vital.

And when we are not writing, we will be in comfort, all rooms have wi-fi connection, flat screen TV, minibar and private bathrooms.

<http://www.castellomonaci.com/en/accomodation-apulia/beb-salento-casina-metrano/>

What is included:

The retreat cost is all inclusive (the only exclusion is travel to Italy*) and specifically includes:

- Advance reading by Jacq, all tuition, one-to-one time and workshops.
- All breakfasts, lunches and dinner both in the villa and in other venues.

These range from the ultra fancy welcome dinner with wine tasting, tour, fireside aperitivo and multi-course meal in the castle to more rustic experiences like our fun and interactive street food tasting tour in Lecce.

- Transportation to and from the airport and all excursions and guided tours. (Pick up will be from at Brindisi airport if coming by air or Lecce train station if already in Italy.)
- Drinks on town excursions and drinks at the venue
- Gelato stops on each excursion
- Bikes for the duration of the retreat
- Espressinotravel.com services as organizers, guides, translators, cultural interpreters, local experts and trouble-shooters.

Exclusions:

Guests will book and pay for their own air travel to Italy. Ryanair fly inexpensively to Brindisi.

(It is possible to collect from Bari airport however this will incur additional costs.)

Personal expenses and shopping on town excursions.

We finish the retreat on a Thursday so there is a perfect opportunity to add on a long weekend and have partner or family join you in Puglia. Trains are inexpensive and good so do consider extending your stay and visiting more of Puglia or other parts of Italy if you have the time.

Contact us by March 10 for the early bird price - £1775

Full price – £1975