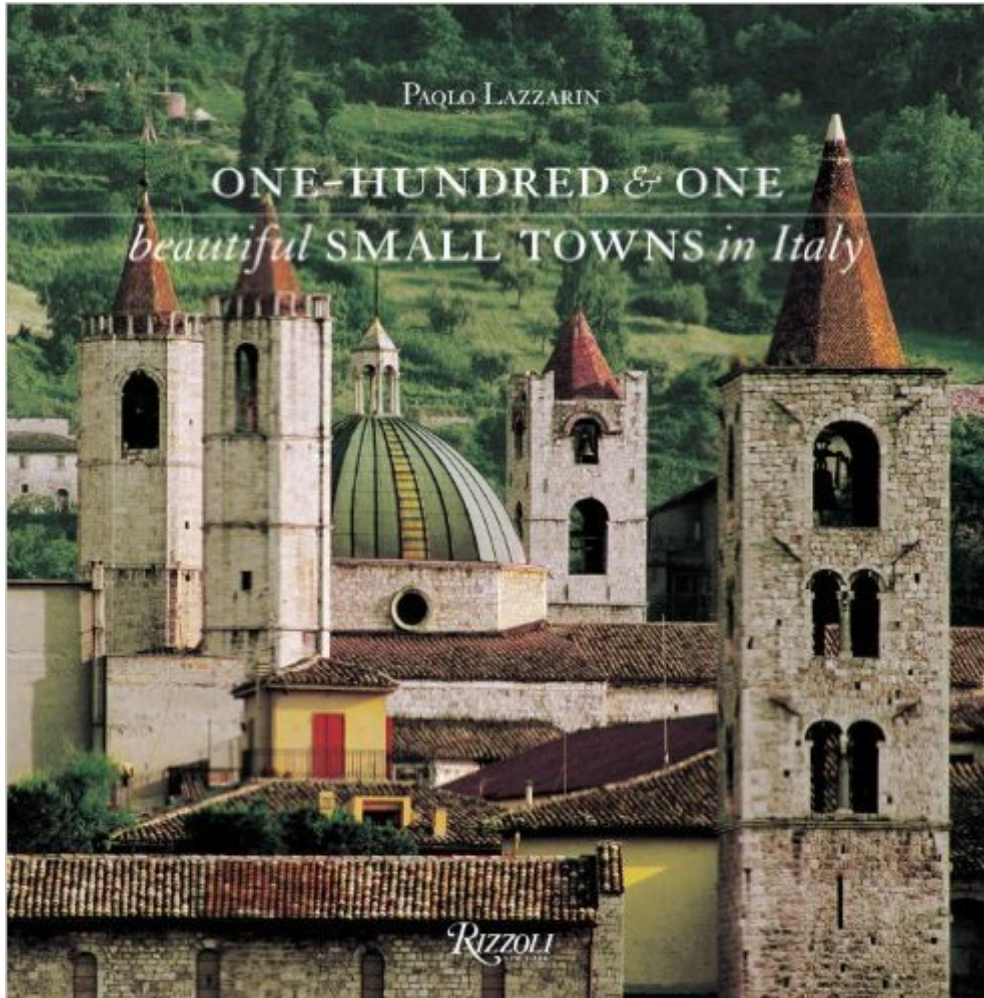


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One Hundred & One Beautiful Small Towns In Italy (Rizzoli Classics)



Synopsis

The perfect guide for those who can't resist succumbing to Italy's charms again and again, now in a popular pocket-sized format. Who hasn't dreamt of being whisked away to a sweet little Italian town buried deep in the countryside? The small towns sprinkled throughout this expansive book are not only rich with beauty but also saturated with as much historical and cultural importance as their sister cities. The fact that they are "off the beaten path"-though sometimes extraordinarily famous for their art, food, and wine, or simply their setting-makes them rare gems even more desirable to see. The 101 towns featured represent the twenty diverse regions of Italy and their varied landscapes, architecture, and local specialties. Practical sidebars introduce the reader to traditional artisans as well as to the best place to buy Parmigiano Reggiano or the greatest terrace to take in a Tuscan sunset. Art and architecture are also amply covered, from the history of L'Aquila's ninety-nine fountains to the most elaborate of baroque churches. You will be amazed to see how much Italy has to offer beyond the well-trod paths of Venice, Florence, and Rome: from Asolo to Vicenza, flea markets to fish markets, horse races to open-air concerts, this book promises 101 great reasons to go back to Italy over and over.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

ONE HUNDRED AND ONE BEAUTIFUL SMALL TOWNS OF ITALY is a lavishly illustrated insider's look at the Italy as known to Italians. Writer Paolo Lazzarin took on this project of focusing on the secret treasures within Italy and wrote it for Italians. Now Rizzoli has released it internationally and

all of us who love this most romantic of countries are the richer for this guidebook. Lazzarin has divided his book into the multiple regions of Italy from the north to the south and shows us all the hidden small towns that are in the regions of the famous cities such as Venice, Milan, Florence, Siena, and Rome. He is careful to acknowledge the influence of these cities we all know, but at the same time he graces each of the 101 towns with descriptions of the land the architecture, the artisans, the foods, and the special places that provide a strong magnet to the reader. Many of the towns names are familiar, but only because the names appear on cheeses, wines, olive oil, and trinkets! Yet in this book the towns of Spoleto, San Gimignano, Arezzo, Gallipoli, Portofino, Gubbio, Ischia, Modena, Aosta and all the others come to life in warm prose and breathtaking photography. This special book is illuminating as a resource guide for the next voyage to Italia; it also is one of the more beautiful gift books for treasured friends and loved ones on the market today! Grady Harp, November 2004.

By Bill Marsano. An old Italian pastime is the compiling of lists of the 'cento citta'--the hundred most appealing Italian cities and towns. Candidates should be small enough for intimacy but big enough to afford urban pleasures. They needn't be sunk in wilderness but countryside should certainly be at hand. Agreeable climate? Another plus. The lists are always highly personal and endlessly debatable, and here's Paolo Lazzarin, journalist and photographer, with his own nominations. He outdoes tradition by selecting 101 towns, all, per the subtitle, beautiful and small. And all in all, he does a pretty good job; certainly this book will help the Italy-lorn struggle through a long winter of discontent with being too far from the Blessed Peninsula. And, as Jane Austen wrote, or should have, "It is a truth universally acknowledged that staring at pictures of Italy never did a body any harm." The photos are the principal part and appeal of the book; this is not a survey course ("Italy: From the Etruscans to Berlusconi"). There is an abundance of them but I could wish more were better and/or better chosen. Some do not illustrate, others do not evoke, and still others are well-worn tourist-office images. For example, here you'll get no hint of what Riva del Garda actually looks like, and still less of Faenza, which is represented only by its famous ceramics. In San Remo, must we see the casino--again? The entry for Valenza has an extended caption about a nature reserve sitting beside a large and ordinary shot of a palazzo's interior staircase. As for the writing, the best I can say is that it avoids the customary excesses; Italians are too often overwhelmed by patrimony and resort to cheerleading in prose form. On the other hand, Lazzarin is mechanical, uninspired. It's hard to believe that he's really at one with all these places, even, occasionally, that he has the facts. Shall Trento really be called a hamlet? Is Triora really "perched above the sea"? (I

distinctly recall its being a 10-mile drive inland.) Shouldn't Lazzarin admit that the Cinque Terre's hill paths are terminally overrun by vapid Rick Steves tourists? And there's an overall lack of sophistication: Siena's Piazza del Campo, Lazzarin confides, "was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1995." Believe me, gentle reader, the designation is irrelevant to Siena, that living masterpiece. Its sole value is to validate the pack of overpaid, underworked artsy UN bureaucrats who awarded it. (And still one wonders: 1995? What on earth took them so long?) Still, still--you could do worse. Lazzarin has found his way to plenty of places most Americans have never heard of or have merely passed by: Triora, Ortona (no T, no C; just plain Ortona), Cividale, Sondrio, Anagni and others, and with this book in your lap and some wine at hand, you'll have a good enough time visiting them, and perhaps be inspired to check ticket prices online. If that should happen, then your next step is to get some of the Cadogan Guides to Italy and to Italian regions; they are written by Dana Facaros and Michael Pauls, and they are much the best I've run into. Lucky you: They're all available fromn , too.--Bill Marsano is a professional writer and editor who has won several awards for his articles. He visits Italy several times a year.

Note this detail in the publisher's description: "now in a popular pocket-size format." Its trim size is just 8.25"-by-8.25", a perfect square. (Small, though hardly pocket-size.) If you plan to tuck the book in your suitcase, this is the version to buy. But if you'd prefer a taller, more sumptuous version, ideal for your coffee table, with the same photos 25% larger, you might prefer the second-listed version, published in 2004, with a trim size of 10.25"-by-12.5". This heftier version resembles two other big coffee-table picture books on Italy that are even more mouth-watering: "The Most Beautiful Villages of Tuscany" by Bentley & Palmer, and "The Most Beautiful Country Towns of Italy" by Bentley and Ramsay. Because Milan journalist/photographer Paolo Lazzarin covers so many towns here, his treatment of them is necessarily brief. Typically, for each one he offers a page of text and, opposite, a handsome photograph of one of the town's highlights. Some towns, like Siena, enjoy two additional pages of photos. The book is probably most useful to readers planning a first or second trip to Italy. It serves up a scattering of charming towns that are extra-extra-special for one reason or another (not just for their beauty). Some of them, like the magical hill town San Gimignano, might later prove a highlight of one's entire trip, ranking right up there with Florence or Venice. At the front of the book is a map showing the 20 regions of Italy, making it easier to visualize a proposed itinerary, and at the back, an appendix lists, by region, lots of useful addresses & phone numbers--of recommended hotels, restaurants, tourist information offices, and shops. As with other Rizzoli publications, the photographs, on glossy paper stock, are crystal clear, nicely varied, and

often magnificent. The book is worth buying for the photos alone, but the commentaries are unfailingly interesting, too. A truly lovely volume, highly recommended.

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