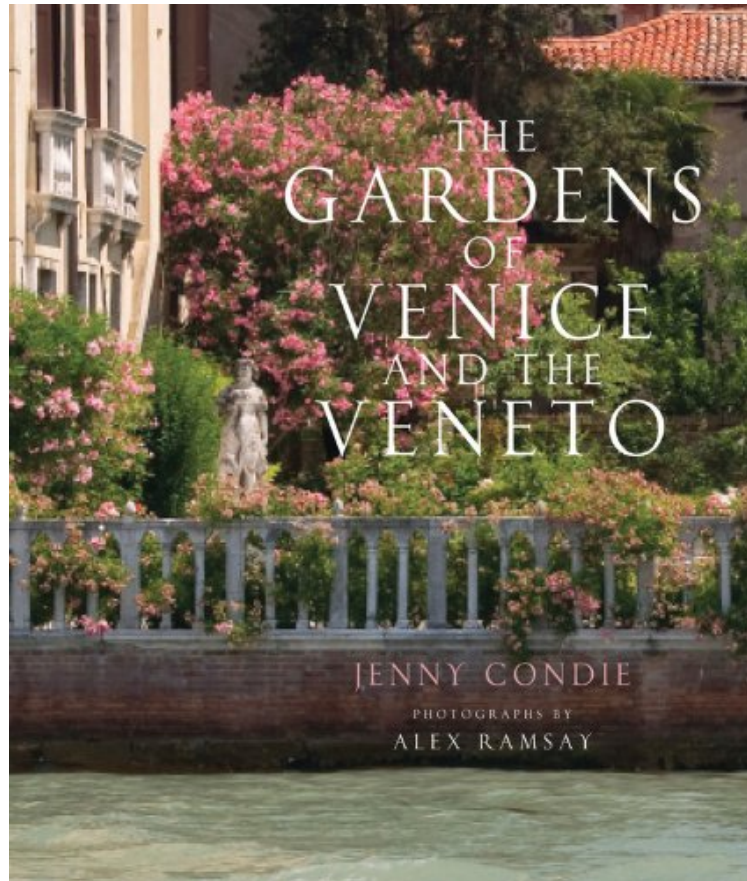


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The Gardens of Venice and the Veneto

Jenny Condie

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Jenny Condie : The Gardens of Venice and the Veneto before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Gardens of Venice and the Veneto:

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Why Is Venice So Beautiful? By The Garden Interior Well yes, there is the obvious: the unique architecture, the strategic location at the top of the Adriatic at the first interface between Europe and the Near East and Far East. The wealth, the power and the history. But where did all that wealth and power and history come from? It came from commerce and a new kind of commerce, which was built up from scratch in an era when almost all wealth was agricultural and feudal, and was represented by a sack of turnips or a new-born calf in the barn. The source of the wealth of Venice was business it was fundamentally commercial and entrepreneurial. When the origins of modern commerce exploded out of the souk, the trading post and the village market in the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance, it had only a few really important DNA strands: the small but dynamic banks of Flanders and Florence, the seafaring capitals of northern Europe, the coffee houses of Amsterdam and England. And of course Venice, perhaps for centuries the very focal point of it all. The reason this city exercises such a hold on the mind of Europe and the world is the encrustation of beauty, the accretion of beautiful things, that went on there so robustly, so brilliantly and for so long. And one of the most lovely expressions of these centuries of

wealth and beauty has been the gardens of Venice and the Veneto. Now comes this ravishing new book that begins with this seemingly casual observation in the introduction: Gardens may be said to be the expression of mans striving to reconcile his spiritual and physical needs in the corner of the world in which he finds himself. And so we are put sharply on notice to pay attention, there is going to be some serious thought passed along here; and we are not disappointed. Plants and seeds from all over the world passed through Venice and some of Europes most interesting and diverse gardens were created here. This book explores 21 of them four in Venice proper and the rest on the mainland of the Veneto. The gardens in Venice itself are charming and gorgeous, but not until we move inland to the Veneto do we find the space for garden design to really expand and flourish. A word about Jenny Condie's writing style: it is always erudite but still light and informative and not overly didactic. It is always interesting without being self-conscious. It may sound easy to strike this balance in a serious work for the broader public, but it is not, and Condie carries it off with an admirable and consistent ease. This book does not showcase flowers and plantsmanship. Rather, it focuses on the garden structure as a horticultural extension and complement of the architectural scheme of the properties it explores. This is what you might expect, given Condie's training as an art historian with a specialty in architecture. So it has a different point of view from a lot of garden books, but one that is fascinatingly set out and may be considered required reading for an understanding of how the garden relates to the house. And Alex Ramsay's photographs, well, they are just superb, intoxicating. Take this amazing book in small doses; too much and you are likely to be overwhelmed. My favorite garden profile was the Giardino Giusti near Verona; you may choose your own from this stunning collection. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Gorgeous city, gorgeous book By Michelle Fabio, Bleeding Espresso As with most coffee table-type books, *The Gardens of Venice and the Veneto* is full of large, gorgeous photographs of the book's subject. But this book offers so much more within its 200+ pages. Inside you will find the history, culture, architecture, horticulture, and atmosphere of La Serenissima; Jenny Condie and Alex Ramsay's love for the city shines through on each and every page. Condie's writing style is smart and clean; Ramsay's eye is superb. The gardens themselves? Amazing. Old, new, large, small, public, private, well-known, hidden . . . so, so much to enjoy. I can't recommend this highly enough for anyone who loves Italy, Venice, gardens, or photography.

The Gardens of Venice and the Veneto draws together an amazing variety of spellbinding garden retreats, from monastery gardens quietly cultivated in the islands of the lagoon to magnificent villas on the Brenta Canal, and baroque masterpieces in the hills beyond. Highlights include an eerie Masonic garden complete with gothic chapel and cavernous grottoes, a pleasure garden made for his workers by a benevolent nineteenth-century industrialist, and a flower-filled delight by the banks of the Grand Canal. This is a book of ravishing images and intriguing stories. The garden behind Henry James's *Aspern Papers* is here, along with the garden which so beguiled Margaret Symonds, the young English author of *Days Spent on a Doge's Farm*. With an emphasis on gardens that can be visited, longtime resident Jenny Condie elucidates the dynastic triumphs, the reversals of fortune, and the shifts in taste and influence which have shaped these extraordinary places.

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