



## **Italy: An Open Air Museum**

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Imagine if you could see the River Styx, bathe in the Fountain of Youth, collect water which enhances fertility, wear a gem that heals bodily ailments, understand how our health is affected by geomagnetic fields, venture close to the flames of Hell on Earth and much, much, more. Know something? These things exist—on Earth—today—in Italy and you can visit them because Italy is an open air museum.

Ann C. Pizzorusso, in her recent book, reveals how Italy's geology has affected its art, literature, architecture, religion, medicine and just about everything else. She explores the geologic birth of the land, describing the formation of the Alps and Apennines, romantic bays of Tuscany and Lazio, volcanoes of the south and Caribbean-like beaches of Puglia. But that's not all, from the first pages of this visually stunning book, the reader has the impression of being in an art museum, where one can wander from page to page to satisfy one's curiosity—guided from time to time by the Etruscan priests, Virgil, Dante, Goethe or Leonardo da Vinci himself.

Pizzorusso stitches together widely diverse topics—such as gemology, folk remedies, grottoes, painting, literature, physics and religion—using geology as a thread. Quoting everyone from Pliny the Elder to NASA physicist Friedemann Freund, the work is solidly backed scholarship that reads as easily as a summer novel.

Wonderfully illustrated with many photos licensed from Italian museums, HRH Elizabeth II and the Ministero Beni Culturali the book highlights the best works in Italian museums and those outside in the “open air museums.” This approach can be used in any other country in the world and can be used for cultural tourism (a tour following the book has been organized for cultural and university groups), an ideal way of linking museums to the surrounding landscape.