



# The Secrets of Italy: People, Places, and Hidden Histories

*Corrado Augias*

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## **The Secrets of Italy: People, Places, and Hidden Histories** Corrado Augias

One of Italy's best-known writers takes a Grand Tour through her cities, history, and literature in search of the true character of this contradictory nation. There is Michelangelo, but also the mafia. Pavarotti, but also Berlusconi. The debonair Milanese, but also the infamous captain of the Costa Concordia cruise ship. This is Italy, admired and reviled, a country that has guarded her secrets and confounded outsiders. Now, when this "Italian paradox" is more evident than ever, cultural authority Corrado Augias poses the puzzling questions: how did it get this way? How can this peninsula be simultaneously the home of geniuses and criminals, the cradle of beauty and the butt of jokes?

An instant #1 bestseller in Italy, Augias's latest sets out to rediscover the story-different from the history-of this country. Beginning with how Italy is seen from the outside and from the inside, he weaves a geo-historical narrative, passing through principal cities and rereading the classics and the biographies of the people that have, for better or worse, made Italians who they are. From the gloomy atmosphere of Cagliostro's Palermo to the elegant court of Maria Luigia in Parma, from the ghetto of Venice to the heroic Neapolitan uprising against the Nazis, Augias sheds light on the Italian character, explaining it to outsiders and to Italians themselves. The result is a "novel of a nation," whose protagonists are both the figures we know from history and literature and characters long hidden between the cracks of historical narrative and memory.

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