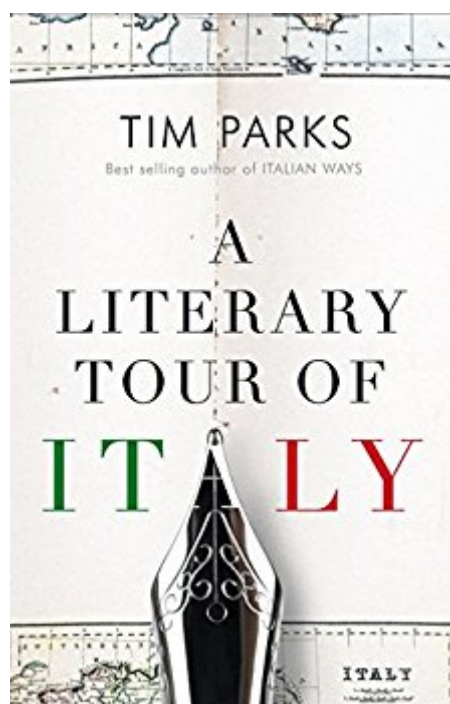


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A Literary Tour Of Italy



Synopsis

An acclaimed author of novels and short stories, Tim Parks “ who was described in a recent review as “one of the best living writers of English” has delighted audiences around the world with his finely observed writings on all aspects of Italian life and customs. This volume contains a selection of his best essays on the literature of his adopted country. From Boccaccio and Machiavelli through to Moravia and Tabucchi, from the Stil Novo to Divisionism, across centuries of history and intellectual movements, these essays will give English readers, and lovers of the Bel Paese and its culture, the lay of the literary land of Italy.

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Customer Reviews

Best known for his accounts as an English ex-pat in Italy, and as a prolific novelist, Tim Parks also contributes lengthy essays, introductions to translations, and book reviews, most often to the New York Review of Books. Twenty-three entries comprise this new anthology. The contents reflect Parks' incisive mind and his broad range of literary and cultural contexts which enrich his steady eye and his accessible, if learned, prose style. He strives to remain clear while expanding learned commentary and sharpening criticism. He blends lucidity with erudition, elegance with

©lan. Starting off with Robert and Jean Hollander's 2000 translation of Dante's Inferno, Parks

remarks: "If twenty-first century man went to Heaven he would soon be demonstrating to have Hell abolished." Why it must exist for Dante forces this critic to pause and examine the poem aesthetically. Parks finds the "anesthetic" quality of the infernal realms a necessary ingredient, to distance us from the stench and sight of so many torments. Similarly, Parks argues for terza rima as a structural corrective to keep we readers, the poet-pilgrim, and his guide all advancing in step, past disquieting scenes which linger with all three of us as we advance. Disturbing vignettes appear as Parks examines those who succeeded Dante. Italian literature, like much of its politics and some of its best art and film, favors betrayal, deceit, revenge, and violence. Parks takes us chronologically forward, past Boccaccio and Machiavelli, to explore writers from the past two centuries who deal with loss and selfishness, isolation and pleasure. "His mother rejoiced when her children died in infancy" is quite an attention-getting opening to his study of a new biography of Giacomo Leopardi.

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