



Italy

Part 1

Venice to Murano

June 10 - 11, 2015

Atlanta Airport - June 9, 2015

Our bags packed and our Euros in our wallets ready to spend...Anna flew from Phoenix, and I flew from Las Vegas where we met at the airport in Venezia (Venice). I had a slight delay during my change of planes at the Atlanta airport due to thunderstorms, but I still arrived in Venice on the morning of June 10th within 30 minutes or so of Anna's



Venice, Italy - June 10, 2015

Our driver met us in a van and drove us a short distance to a pier to get on the water taxi. We sped along in the water taxi to the Hotel Antiche Figure, with the wind blowing through our hair and blissful smiles on our faces. Venice was love at first sight for me!





Anna, pinch me.
Are we really
here?



We sure are,
girl!!





Anna...after we
checked into the
Antiche Figure Hotel
right on the Grand
Canal.





Our room and bath at the
Antiche Figure Hotel.



We took our first walk along the canals and over bridges. What I didn't know before I got there was that there are over 400 foot bridges with steps of varying heights.



Anna had her first Gelato....it's everywhere!





Very old buildings, but also the stucco and paint doesn't last due to all the moisture from the canals.







We stopped for
our first slice of
pizza and it was
pretty good.

The week we arrived Venice
was having some sort of focus
on art, so there were art
exhibits everywhere. This was
a sculpture in a courtyard of
one of the exhibits.







Above - This is the famous Rialto bridge in Venice. It was under repairs.





In Italy they don't use a lot of clothes dryers and still hang their laundry out the old fashioned way.

It was very difficult to follow the street map the hotel gave us, if you would call these alleyways and cobblestone paths streets. Despite all the crowds of tourists, I think one of the things I loved about Venice is that there are absolutely no cars. You either walk or go by boat. We walked in circles and circles, but finally we saw our first glimpse of San Marco (St. Mark's) piazza at the end of this alley on the right.





St. Mark's Piazza





St. Mark's Piazza





Old churches are everywhere in Europe. This one was right by where we decided to take our gondola ride.

"Hey lady! You want to ride now?" the gondoliers call out in their thick Italian accents. Anna asks, "Do you sing?" The reply was always, "No, no, I don't sing."



Always the fashionista, I made sure to wear my stripe shirt to match the striped barber type poles and the gondolier shirts! But I did a bad photoshop job on the hat.





I didn't care if they sang. I just wanted to get off my aching and tired feet from all the walking over bridges. Besides who needs a singing gondolier? Anna and I sang!!



I took this really bad selfie photo. I was trying to get the gondolier in the picture but cut his head off.



Anna took better selfie pics
and got the gondolier
wearing his straw hat
before he took it off!

"Oh, solo mio...."





Oh, rest for our aching feet!!
The side canals are very
serene and quiet except for
other passing boats.





Then out into the
Grand Canal the
busy waterway of
Venice.



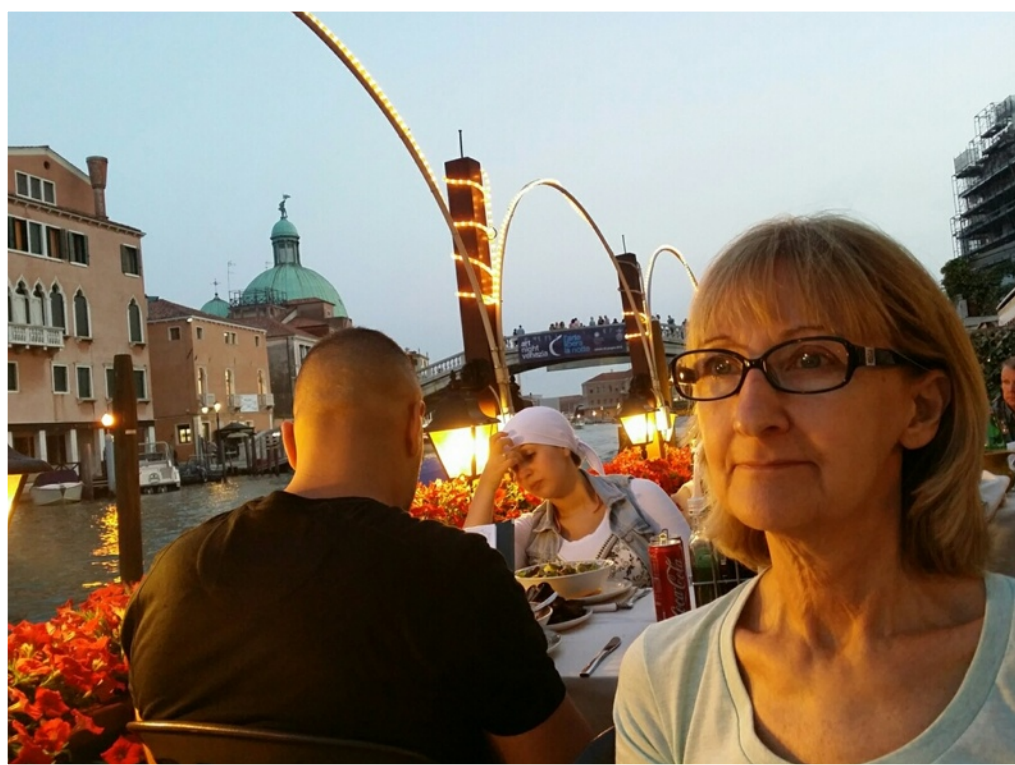




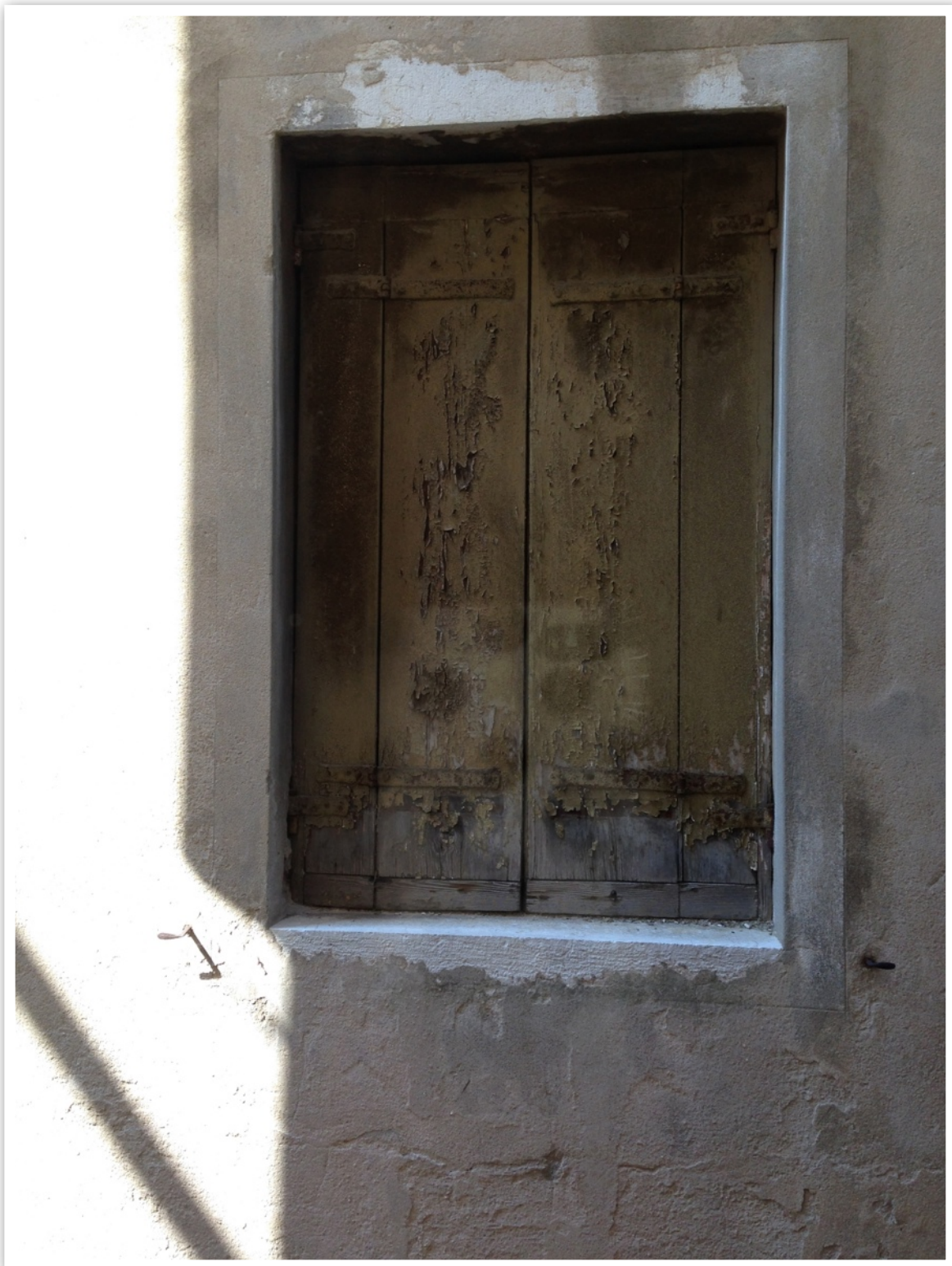
A leaning tower, but not the one in Pisa. The ground is soft in Venice.

Just across the Grand Canal from our hotel we ate at this restaurant suggested by one of the hotel staff. It was good!!





The first morning waking up in our hotel, I took this photo out the window of the building next door.





Every hotel has an all you can eat buffet breakfast. This is only one of the tables filled with food. There was coffee, tea, juices, eggs, meats, cheeses....and so on.



June 11, 2015 - We had a private water taxi take us from the hotel to an island called Murano. It's known for its family owned glass blowing factories and has some of the most famous glass in the world. It's very expensive!! The citizens of Venice were smart and made it mandatory to have all the glass blowing factories on the island because of fire. They didn't want to burn down the entirety of Venice.



It's easy getting spoiled by luxury. Water taxis are more expensive than taking the public water buses called "vaporettos", which we did take one night. The vaporettos are jammed packed crowded with standing room only in the hot summer and stop like a local bus at every dock. Water taxis speed when out in the open waters.









The water taxi docked at Murano, and anywhere in Venice there's always a young Italian gentleman there to help you out of the boats, as well as the water taxi driver.





All of the glass blowing factories are family owned for many years, and the one we visited was the B.F. Signoretti family.

A beautiful mosaic.





Our guide, Roberto Romano...yes that was his real name...told us all about how the glass is blown. This part of the tour wasn't very long...they explained because it's very hot in there...but they really want to rush you up to the showroom and try to sell you some very beautiful but extremely expensive glass products.





They rushed us out and around to the beginning of the huge showroom. No photos allowed, so I will just explain that they served us drinks and catered to us. Celebrities are known to buy a lot of stuff from the island of Murano, so they are used to catering to you, if they think you will spend money. Anna was interested in buying something to display up on the top ledge opening between her living room and kitchen. She found the perfect item and began her bargaining while sipping more prosecco...a type of Italian champagne. Happy with her new item to be insured and shipped to her house, we were offered another private water taxi to another island called Burano with some other people from Texas who also spent a lot of money there. If Anna didn't buy anything, we'd be on our own to catch the cheaper public vaporetto to the other islands! The more you spend, the more perks you get.

