“I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano!”

— William Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice

Join Rick Dildine, Paul Edmonson of The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, and other special guests on an invitation-only private journey to explore Shakespeare’s Italy.
From the lovelorn streets of Romeo and Juliet’s Verona and Julius Caesar’s murderous machinations in Rome, to the frothy mix of sex, money and intrigue in Othello’s Venice, Shakespeare’s fascination with Italy is a constant undercurrent of his work. His Italian settings are so crucial to his plots that they have become characters in their own right, and his influence can be felt in Italy today.

**Trip Highlights**

Enjoy a full-day tour of Vicenza, the hometown of Renaissance architect Andrea Palladio (a contemporary of Shakespeare) including the Teatro Olimpico, Europe’s oldest surviving indoor theater

Join with Dr. Paul Edmonson and Rick Dildine for evening conversations including “Was Shakespeare a Tourist in Italy?”

Explore Padua, the setting for Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew*

Visit the Scrovegni Chapel to see Giotto’s fresco cycle and Padua’s historic center

Tour the little village of Abano Terme to a private palazzo with a museum that is devoted to masks of the Italian Commedia dell’Arte

Visit Verona, the backdrop for *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*

Explore the 12th-century Basilica of San Zeno, with a sparkling altarpiece by Jacopo Bellini, and its crypt, where the marriage of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* took place

Tour enchanting Mantua, which boasts a rich trove of artistic and architectural gems. Mantua and its forest are settings specified by Shakespeare in *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*

Take an in-depth tour of the Palazzo Ducale, the 500-room palace that dominates Mantua’s skyline

Visit Antonio Bibbiena’s “Teatro Scientifico” and imagine one of Shakespeare’s plays being performed in this captivating setting

Enjoy a private visit to Andrea Palladio’s most iconic villa, La Rotonda, normally closed to the public

Follow our Venetian guide on a walking tour through the Jewish Ghetto, with special visit to its important synagogues, which reveal Shakespeare’s inspiration for *The Merchant of Venice*

Take private water taxis down Venice’s Grand Canal, arriving at the Rialto Bridge, an important Shakespearean landmark

Visit the monumental Arsenale, which once served as the shipyards for the Venetian Republic; Shakespeare lovers will recall that in *The Merchant of Venice*, Antonio’s money was invested in ships, and in *Othello*, the fleet commander would have set sail from this impressive dockyard

Enjoy a free day in Venice to wander, dream or shop.

Welcome & Farewell dinners at off-the-beaten-path restaurants

*But soft, what light through yonder window breaks? It is the east and Juliet is the sun!*  
*Romeo and Juliet, Act 2, Scene 2*
An invitation-only private journey for Shakespeare Festival St. Louis patrons & supporters.

Join us on this exclusive, private trip and discover Italy through the Bard’s eyes. The trip focuses on the sites as found in the Italian Plays as well as exploring the masterpieces of Shakespeare’s contemporaries, including Andrea Palladio, whose neoclassical and harmonious designs were based on mathematics.

We’ve planned an adventure a day—this is not a trip to miss. Send an email or call if you are interested; we’ll put you on the “I’m Interested” list and send you the full itinerary and pricing right away.

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