

Settimo Cielo Writing Retreat – Spring 2015

www.settimocieloretreat.com

“It more than met my expectations. It has set me off writing. I am now a writer. Thank you.”

Welcome

Welcome to Settimo Cielo Writing Retreat. Here we offer the peace, stimulation and beauty needed to write, with a touch of luxury. This is a chance for writers of any genre and at any level of experience to take the time and space for thinking, meditative enquiry, sharing and learning together in gorgeous surroundings.

We will be offering the opportunity to work together in a small group and one-to-one with experienced writers, sharing writing exercises or reading our work out loud, experimenting and taking risks. But nothing will be compulsory and you will have the chance to influence how the retreat unfolds.

The setting is simply stunning at deluxe Settimo Cielo retreat, in the beautiful Lunigiana area of Northern Tuscany in Italy. Settimo Cielo is perched above the lovely medieval town of Licciana Nardi, in its own grounds, with spectacular views. The atmosphere at Settimo Cielo is relaxed and open: it feels like a big creative, generous family. All your food will be cooked freshly for you, eaten around the table in the big kitchen or outside on one of the terraces overlooking the valley. You will experience real Italian-style hospitality, nature at its best, the wonderful food of the region, and an included visit to the nearby UNESCO heritage site of the Cinque Terre.

Hosts

Your hosts are:

Karen Hargadon-Feeney, owner of Settimo Cielo, photographer and creative artist.

Edana Minghella, facilitator & writer – Edana is a writer of short stories, stage & screen. Her writing includes Doc Martin TV Series 2 with her brother Dominic Minghella. She is also a trained teacher of adults & experienced facilitator, as well as a jazz singer!

www.edanaminghellajazz.com

Vincent O’Connell, screenwriter & director - Vincent is a Bafta- and Television Society-award winning writer and director. He has written prolifically for TV, film and stage and is a passionate teacher of film making and creative writing. His directing work includes the short film Skin (written by Sarah Kane) which was shortlisted for a Golden Bear.

www.vincentoconnell.co.uk

Places are very limited, with a maximum of 8 participants. We want a small group so writers can really feel looked after and get all the attention (or space!) they need.

Location

Licciana Nardi, in the Lunigiana, Northern Tuscany

Dates

Saturday 25th April (arrival) – Saturday 2nd May (departure) – 7 nights

Prices

Tower Room or Garden Room (rooms in Settimo Cielo) - double rooms with ensuite facilities £1250.00 per person (single occupancy)

Torre (separate house adjacent to Settimo Cielo with two bedrooms, living space, kitchen, bathroom and separate loo) – double rooms £1250.00 per person (single occupancy)

Studio Apartment (self-contained apartment in Settimo Cielo with two beds, bathroom, open plan living/kitchenette & private patio) – sharing £1075 per person

Prices are inclusive of

- all writing support in groups and 1-2-1,
- three meals a day including wine at dinner
- aperitivi each evening,
- unlimited soft drinks & fruit throughout the day
- an escorted day trip to the Cinque Terre
- Special dinner at fabulous local pizzeria
- Transfers from Aulla Lunigiana train station to Settimo Cielo

Not included

- Flights (or other transport) to Pisa
- Train to Aulla Lunigiana (around 15-20 euros return)
- Train tickets for Cinque Terre day trip (around 8 euros return)
- Lunch at Cinque Terre

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is the retreat for?

The retreat is for writers of any genre and experience. The aim is to offer a safe, inspirational, relaxed and beautiful space to help writers kick-start their writing projects, or reignite a piece of work that just needs that little extra push to get it going. We expect most people will come with fiction (a novel or short stories) or scripts (theatre/film/radio) but don't be put off if your genre is poetry or non-fiction, for example.

All writers are welcome - from absolute beginners to professionals seeking space and light.

Will we all be working on a joint piece of writing or on our own work?

The aim is for writers to work on their own projects.

Will there be a structure to the retreat?

We will offer a loose structure which writers may choose to participate in or not. The structure is flexible and will be tailored to the needs and wishes of the group. The structure will look something like this:

- Daily mindful meditations (possibly including walking meditations) most mornings to focus on the present & to stimulate our five senses, led by Edana
- Group writing exercises and discussion most mornings
- Reading and sharing our own work in group most late afternoons
- Screenwriting masterclass with Vincent
- One-to-one support with Edana and Vincent

Is the screenwriting masterclass just for people who want to write for the screen?

Absolutely not. Focusing down on story, action and character, the screenwriting masterclass is a treat for all writers. You will, however, be equipped with all the tools you need to embark on screenwriting projects if this appeals to you.

How many people will be on the retreat?

Places are limited so we can give writers the attention (or space!) they need. There will be no more than 8 participants on this retreat.

Can I bring a non-writing partner/friend?

Yes. A limited number of places are available for non-writing partners/friends sharing your room with you, at a reduced rate. Please contact us for details.

How do we get to Settimo Cielo?

The best thing is to fly into Pisa, then get the train from the airport to Aulla Lunigiana, where we will pick you up. Easyjet, Ryanair and British Airways fly into Pisa.

The train is easy, fast and cheap and you can buy tickets at the airport or online. Use the Trenitalia website. It's in Italian but this link should take you to the English translated version. www.trenitalia.com

Please note that at the time of writing Pisa Airport train station is being renovated so you need to take the free bus (or taxi, about 10euros) to Pisa Centrale station. The journey time

between Pisa & Aulla varies depending on the train route so look for the quicker, direct trains that take around an hour or so.

Alternatively you may want to hire a car from Pisa in which case, let us know so we can send you driving directions.

What flight arrival times should we aim for?

It's probably best to try and aim for flights arriving into Pisa by around lunchtime. There will be a welcome drink/aperitivo around 6pm on the first night, before a delicious dinner cooked for you by Karen!

Can we extend our stay?

Yes of course. Please let us know and Karen can quote you for extra nights. The Lunigiana is a beautiful, undiscovered area of Tuscany with loads to do and see in the mountains, by the sea and within the wonderful towns and cities.

Is absolutely all our food included in the cost?

There will be three wonderful home-cooked meals a day based on the fabulous local produce, aperitivi and a glass of wine with dinner. There will also be plenty of soft drinks and bowls of fruit scattered around so you can have something when you feel like it. We will also be having a meal out at the fabulous local pizzeria – people come from miles around to visit it! No extra cost to you as the set menu there will be included in the price.

The only meal not included in the price is when we go to the Cinque Terre for the day. There you can choose where you want to eat your lunch and you will need to buy it yourself.

****Please let us know about any special dietary requirements in advance*.***

Tell me more about the accommodation

The accommodation is in two adjacent buildings -- Karen's house and the Torre. You can see pictures on the Settimo Cielo website. The setting is stunning and the accommodation luxurious. You won't want to leave. The website is <http://www.settimocieloretreat.com/> In Karen's house, all rooms are ensuite. The Torre is a charming independent house with two bedrooms, a living space & kitchen, and a separate bathroom plus a second loo both shared between the two bedrooms.

Please also be aware that this is a countryside setting and there are animals around, including very friendly small dogs, cats, and chickens! You will also very likely hear owls 😊

****Please let us know if you have any access concerns as there are steps to some of the rooms and bathrooms. Please also let us know of any allergies that may affect your stay.****

Will I be asked to help out with household chores?

No. On many creative retreats, there is an expectation to help with cooking and other household chores. Not here. Everything will be done for you. We want you to be able to concentrate on your writing.

What will the weather be like?

Where possible we will hold our sessions outdoors. April and May are lovely months in Tuscany. Many warm sunny days but not too hot. However, in the mountains we do get variable weather and there may well be rain at times. So, bring sunscreen and sunglasses and a rainproof jacket, and a fleece in case the evenings are chilly. You may also want to bring insect deterrent.

If you're a walker, bring some walking shoes/boots as we are in prime walking country.

Is there wifi?

Yes there is wifi at Settimo Cielo.

Do I need to send a deposit?

Yes, you will need to make a deposit to reserve your place and there will be a date by which the full amount must be paid. Karen, who runs Settimo Cielo, is designing a special booking form for our retreat and will send this through soon. It will have instructions about how/when/how much to pay.

I love the sound of this. Where do I sign?

To book, or if you have any more questions, please contact Karen on vita.uk@btinternet.com