



Creative Seeing in Umbria

Country

Italy

Region

Umbria

Instructor

Jonathan Maher

Dates

15 May > 21 May 08

Price

£1280.00

Overview

Sitting right next door to Tuscany, Umbria is a region of stunning beauty, idillic medieval towns perched upon bushy hills alive with traditions and customs dating back to the middle ages. This workshop will show you the very best of Umbria, visiting the region's most interesting and photogenic towns, events and landscapes. Your home will be the beautiful country 'agriturismo' from where you will be looked after by the generous hospitality of Valeria and Alessio. Each day you will sample the regions most delicious dishes and wines, whilst exploring magnificent towns such as Assisi, Orvieto, Castelluccio di Norcia and the stunning landscape around the Piano Grande. Amongst the many highlights of this enchanting journey is a visit to the town of Gubbio to witness the "Corsa dei Ceri" a impassioned reenactment of a colourful and highly energetic medieval game - a truly incredible sight that has to be seen to be believed.

Itinerary

What is Included

- Five full days tuition
- Six nights of accommodation (own room with en suite)
- Breakfast is included on all mornings whilst in your country hotel
- All dinners included during workshop
- Transport around Umbria during the workshop
- Transfer to and from Perugia San Egidio airport to the country hotel at specified time
- Entrance to any exhibits or monuments on the workshop itinerary

What is Not Included

- Air travel to workshop location
- Film & other photographic materials such as memory cards film or processing
- Lunch & dinner unless specified otherwise

Calendar



Thursday 15 May 2008 - ARRIVAL DAY

There will be one pick up scheduled for this day. After meeting your VSP contact at Perugia's airport, you will be driven to your country hotel and home for the next days.

You will have time to settle in, relax and get to know your fellow participants. In the evening there will be an introductory talk from your instructor Jonathan, introducing the workshop and the days to come, followed by drinks, then dinner together at the country hotel.

Friday 16 May 2008 - WORKSHOP DAY 1

After breakfast we will start the day with talk and demonstration about some fundamental photographic concepts. This morning's aim is to ensure you are all comfortable with your equipment, and to teach you some really useful tips for getting the most out of your camera. We'll do everything we can to make sure that when you arrive at your first shoot location, you are ready to produce great images.

We'll head out to the stunningly beautiful town of Assisi, arguably one of Italy's most beautiful places. Our goal this morning is to both savour the surroundings of the place, and also to give you a technique for 'seeing photographs'. We'll move from scene to scene, stopping to analyze what we see before us. We'll do some fun exercises to help you start to see the potential in front of you, and you'll also have the time to go off on your own to put this into practice.

At lunch time in Assisi, we'll sit down in one of the many wonderful traditional restaurants to sample the best of Umbrian cuisine. We like to call this a 'business lunch' when we all have the opportunity to discuss our work, the challenges, and perhaps one particular element of photography.

After lunch we return back to our country home to conduct our first image review session. The reviews are perhaps the most important part of the learning process. We'll give you time to download your images, make a selection, before sitting down together to view the images on a digital projector.

In the afternoon we shall head out to a nearby location to do some landscape photography, using this as an opportunity to think about the different ways we can interpret a landscape. We'll bring along a picnic with us, so that you can enjoy some local wines and cheese whilst we watch the sun going down over the Trasimeno Lake.

The evening will be spent back at the hotel where we'll have dinner, drinks, and chat about the day's events and photography

Saturday 17 May 2008 - WORKSHOP DAY 2

Today we'll be making a trip to visit the enchanting town of Orvieto. We'll be building upon what we learnt the previous day, developing our vision for photographing towns and people. Today you'll each have an assignment, based upon the concepts you've examined the previous day. The assignment can often be a great way to help you focus your creative eye and mind and ensure that you build upon important skills. We will stay in Orvieto for lunch, enjoying another famous 'business lunch', after which we'll return back to the hotel in the afternoon

Back at the hotel in the afternoon, we will conduct another image review session, after which there will be a talk on 'seeing creatively at night'. We're going to show you how to 'paint with light' - and if you've never tried it before - we promise you'll be hooked once you give it a try!

Dinner and drinks will be taken at our hotel, after which we'll conduct your first ever 'painting with light' project!

Sunday 18 May 2008 - WORKSHOP DAY 3

Today we will be visiting the town of Gubbio to witness one of the most spectacular medieval traditions, still practised in Italy. Every year, contestants race from the main square, up the hills behind the town as far as the Church perched on a hill. The event happens twice a year and we will be there to witness the under 25's race. Prior to arriving in Gubbio you will be briefed on the day's events and we'll prepare you for some of the exciting challenges of photographing an event. We'll eat lunch in Gubbio and return back to our hotel in the afternoon.

There will be an image review session in the hotel later in the afternoon where you'll have both the opportunity to review your images from the day at Gubbio, and also your previous evening's 'painting with light' experiments.

After dinner for the extremely dedicated photographers in the group, Jonathan will take you out for a second session of painting with light, building on what you've learnt from your first experiments.

Monday 19 May 2008 - WORKSHOP DAY 4

We'll be out in the great outdoors today - exploring the stunning scenery of the Piano Grande, a vast plane that was once a lake, situated amongst the beautiful Sibillini Mountains. The Piano Grande is now a vast expanse of grassland, populated by horses, with the charismatic hamlet of Castelluccio di Norcia that sits upon the surrounding hills, presiding over the great plain. It will be a chance to take some great landscape shots, to witness some of Italy's most imposing scenery, and we'll crown the event with a delicious picnic lunch.



In the late afternoon we shall return back to our hotel and sat with a glass of red wine we'll discuss some of the important concepts this workshop deals with.

Dinner will be back at the hotel

Tuesday 20 May 2008 - WORKSHOP DAY 5

For the final day of the workshop we'll be making an excursion across the Umbrian border, to the picturesque medieval town of Cortona. Whilst not being part of Umbria, Cortona is close by to your hotel, and a town definitely worth visiting. Today we'll be helping you bring together all of the new skills you've been learning and making sure that your workshop ends with a wonderful and memorable finale.

Wednesday 21 May 2008 - DEPARTURE DAY

Today is the day for checking-out of your hotel and we will be making one drop-off to Perugia airport, departing at 9:30am.

Accommodation

Monestevole is an ancient hamlet, built originally in the late 1300s. Entirely restored with care by the owners, it is a place full of energy where every angle brings beauty and inspiration. Situated on 30 hectares of land, including olive groves, forrests, organic gardens and common areas (such as the swimming pool and outdoor wood-burning pizza oven), Monestevole is a paradise in the hidden hills of Italy where the nights are lit up only by the stars.

Agriturismo Monestevole (<http://www.monestevole.com>)

Travel

For this workshop you will be collected and returned from Italy's Perugia San Egidio International Airport. Pickup from Perugia airport is at 4pm on Thursday 15 May 2008. You will be returned to Perugia airport by 10 -10:30am on Wednesday 21 May.

Companions

Photography is a passion that touches millions of people, but that doesn't always mean that it is shared throughout your family! A great many of our participants choose to travel with their husbands, wives or partners, and we make every effort to make them just as welcome as everybody else. Should you wish to attend with your partner we would welcome them to come along. Please note that non-participating partners would need to have their own transportation as space in our minibus is limited. For help in finding things to do in the area, the staff at the Villa will be more than happy to assist with this when you arrive.

The Photography

Photography

Ask any accomplished professional and they will tell you that eventually, once you figure out how to operate your camera, which is very quickly, your single concern and worry becomes the quality of your ideas and creativity. Anybody can read a camera manual and become an expert on their camera's functions - you could even read the manual whilst on the train to work - but this won't make you a better photographer. The critical areas one must work upon are the quality of and generation of ideas.

This workshop is all about developing your creative mind so that your ideas become more varied, more original and far more interesting. What do we mean by 'creative seeing'? We mean the ability to look at a scene, and realise that if the scene itself is not particularly interesting and the light is unflattering, you are able to choose elements of what is



before you - and show them in an interesting and original way. We are talking about the ability to not be put-off by a high-contrast, brightly lit scene, but instead to realise that each condition presents unique creative opportunities. Photography is very often about what you don't show rather than what you do show. We need to be selective and extremely fussy about what we let into our viewfinders.

This workshop is not specifically a landscape workshop, but rather a journey through a region whilst learning to see photographic opportunities, and most importantly, understand why you see them. The photography will be a combination of medieval picturesque towns, events, some landscapes, all done within the context of helping you understand - why do some images work, and others not?

Teaching

We will develop your ideas and the way you observe scenes so that new creative avenues unfold before you. It is terribly important to ensure we feed your mind with new ways of looking at the ordinary. We want you to be able to see an ordinary scene, and pick-out the interesting ways of showing it, or more importantly for you to make an interpretation to make it interesting - whether it be the light reflecting off water, blurred movement of a crowd, the worn texture of the walls, the steam rising from a coffee on a cold morning, the rainbow of colour from umbrellas - these are your impressions - your interpretations of a scene - your ideas must be clear before you can know what to compose on, what to selectively focus, how to expose - it all starts with your ideas.

By opening your eyes to new opportunities - by getting you to see the world through a creative eye - as a photographer - you will be able to make the ordinary, interesting. We want you to be able to take images that nobody else can say - 'hey, I saw that too' - even if they were stood next to you. Your images need to be showing something unusual - a different angle - a unique perspective - your interpretation. This is what will capture the interest of those looking at your images.

Is this for me?

Our Creative Seeing & Visualisation offering is what we call a 'Workshop'. This means that it is open to all skill levels. Our Workshops involve critique sessions on most days, and our emphasis is on the photography first and foremost. We try to strike a balance between showing our participants important places and landmarks, whilst avoiding going down the route of a 'tour' company. Travel is very often an integral part of workshops, and when we design our itineraries, we keep this in mind. We design our days to be full so that for those with the energy - they will never be bored - and those who wish to adopt a slower pace - they can do so by opting out of certain activities.

Our passion is photography, and we welcome all of you that share this love. One of the great benefits of learning in a group, is the knowledge you also gain from those around you. New ideas, shared critiques and a good sense of camaraderie are ingredients we actively try to encourage in all of our trips.

Inspiration

Introduction

Below you will find a collection of photographers, writers and films chosen to awaken your senses. They may inspire you about the location or they may just intrigue you. Either way please use this as an insight into the experiences and impressions of others. International travel is so easy these days. The pace at which one travels and 'sees' the world gets faster and faster. If you feel like it, take a moment to slow the process down. Some of the films are fun and light-hearted - others a little more serious.

Photographers



To follow

Books

To follow

Movies

To follow

Forums

We have our own online forum that over the years has proven to be a very popular and useful way of not just keeping in touch after a workshop, but also before. It can be a fascinating source of information for those considering their first workshop with VSP. You will need to register to join the forum, and we recommend the following two sections

Ask a past VSP Workshops participant (<http://www.vspworkshops.com/cgi-bin/yabb2/YaBB.pl?board=feedback/>)

Discussion board for all participants booked on The Creative Seeing & Visualisation Workshop in Umbria (<http://www.vspworkshops.com/cgi-bin/yabb2/YaBB.pl?num=1195048631/0#0>)

Testimonials

"What a great week. I have learnt so much about my camera, my photos, my eyes. Thank you for your energy, enthusiasm, careful planning and sense of humour"

Kirsten, USA, 2006

"I have attended Workshops with Maine, Santa Fe and TPW and founded the organisation by VSP to be the best"

David, UK, 2007

"I'm a better photographer and I feel I have more courage and greater awareness and sensitivity to what makes a successful photograph. The course has given me even more enthusiasm for photography"

Ross, USA, 2005

"Very busy schedule, which I enjoyed. VSP take photo critiques very seriously and helps people of all levels and skills. Overall very much enjoyed the Workshop - best so far!"

Frank, Netherlands, 2007

"If you like to travel and you have the passion for photography, this is the best combination to make your trip a perfect trip! Travel, shoot and enjoy the moment!"

Beatrice, Italy, 2007

"VSP always exceeds my expectations. As a new photographer VSP encourages, challenges and inspires me to take



VSPWorkshops

my images to the next level"
Rachel, USA, 2007

"You won't find a more friendly and delightful photo experience on the planet"
Steve, USA, 2007

'Thank you very much for another fantastic workshop. It is so good to be able to spend time thinking about what I love - photography and not having to worry about anything else because you have thought of everything before. I learned a lot, I had a rest, I had a fantastic time with very nice people, I laughed a lot and wasn't thinking about my work - this is priceless! I will check on your web on a regular basis as always and we will definitely meet again - Grazie"
Bob, USA, 2006