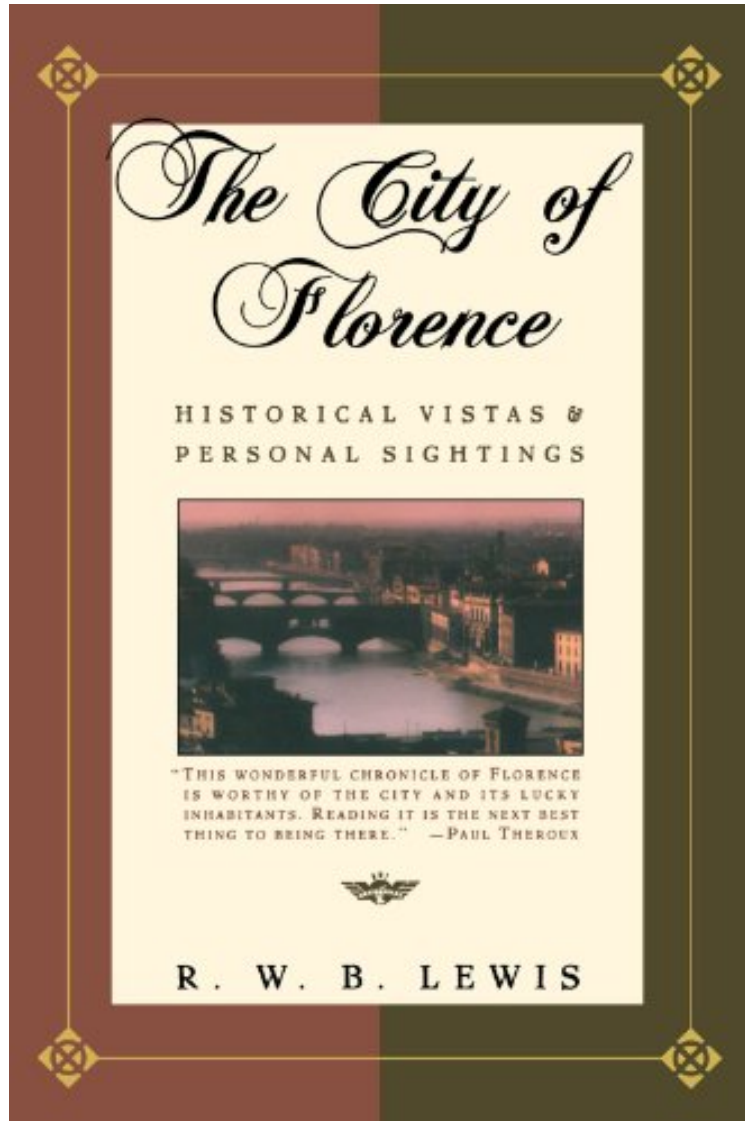


(Pdf free) The City of Florence: Historical Vistas and Personal Sightings

The City of Florence: Historical Vistas and Personal Sightings

R.W.B. Lewis

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R.W.B. Lewis : The City of Florence: Historical Vistas and Personal Sightings before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The City of Florence: Historical Vistas and Personal Sightings:

69 of 69 people found the following review helpful. A wonderful guide for the visitor or dreamer. By A Customer The City of Florence is a wonderful introduction to the riches of this fascinating city. Lewis tells the story of the development of Florence from its earliest days to the present, complete with engaging anecdotes that bring history to

life. My favorite is an excerpt from the meeting of the committee charged with deciding where to place the statue of David. Woven into this is Lewis' own story of living off and on in Florence for the last 50 years: the neighborhoods, the business owners, the museums and the Vespa drivers. The traveler will find information on the best restaurants and cafes, the most interesting shops and the best ice cream. The literary traveler will find anecdotes about writers who have lived in or near Florence. A useful, delightfully presented wealth of information and entertainment; a must read if you're planning a trip to Florence. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Lewis had a more than fifty year love affair with Florence. By Alan L. Chase I have only visited Florence one time, but that was enough to ensure a special permanent place in my heart for this magnificent Tuscan city. Author R.W.B. Lewis had a more than fifty year love affair with Florence, and in his "The City of Florence - Historical Vistas Personal Sightings" he eloquently makes a case for why this was his favorite place to live outside of the U.S. Professor Lewis won the Pulitzer Prize for his biography "Edith Wharton," which was penned during one of his many long sojourns in Tuscany. His writing is exemplary - lyrical and precise. The book is a wonderful weaving together of historical insights into the political, artistic, architectural and intellectual history of the city with very personal reflections on what life in the modern city has been for Lewis and his family. He first encountered the City of Florence during WWII when his U.S. Army unit entered the city shortly after the Germans had bombed many of the historic bridges. After the war, he joined the faculty of Yale University and lived in the wooded hills of Bethany, Connecticut - when he was not residing in Florence. Numerous academic assignments and sabbaticals gave him ample opportunities to return to Tuscany. The author's vibrant and poetic style of writing helped to raise to the surface my own vivid memories of sites in and around Florence. The book also took me down streets and into neighborhoods I had not had the chance to explore in my brief encounter with the city. Because Lewis and his family always lived in a different neighborhood each time they returned to Florence, he was able to share intimate details of life in the city from several different geographical and experiential perspectives. His stories of those who had lived in the city before him made each spot, each church, each bridge, each piazza, each trattoria take on almost a human personality. This is a book that will be appreciated by anyone whose life has been touched by the *insieme* of Florence, or who dreams about visiting there some day. 19 of 19 people found the following review helpful. A book on Florence by someone who loved the city. By Ian K.R.W.B. Lewis was a professor of American Literature at Yale. He died at the age of 84, in 2002. Although Lewis lived in the United States, Florence was a city that he and his family visited for much of his life. Lewis spent some time in Italy growing up. During World War II he was in Italy with the OSS (the forerunner to the CIA). Lewis was on a boat which was sunk by the Germans and he managed to swim to land and evade capture until he reached the allied lines. Lewis was in Florence again after it was captured by the Allies. He returned over the years with his family. Lewis' *The City of Florence* is both a biography of Lewis' experience in Florence and the history of the city. Lewis' historical sketches cover the city from medieval times to modern times (Lewis describes one of the modern floods of the Arno, the river that runs through Florence). *The City of Florence* is not a travel guide. Lewis explored Florence in a random fashion, as anyone does when they live in a place. He discusses some of his favorite museums and places to walk, but it would be difficult to plan a trip based on this book. Instead what you get is some of Lewis' feeling for the Florence he loves. Lewis never does write about exactly why he loves the city. Perhaps he considers it obvious. For example, why Florence and not Siena. Lewis even likes Florence in August, when most Florentine residents flee the city if they can. He does not comment on Florence's notorious traffic and he comments only a little on the struggle to preserve Florence in the face of modern development. If you are planning on visiting Florence, *The City of Florence* is probably worth reading to get a feel for the city. Lewis' historical sketches of Florence are engaging and would also be a good preparation for a visit.

A New York Times Notable Book In this deeply personal and learned labor of love, R.W.B. Lewis provides a new look at the glories of Florence, the smallish Tuscan city which has been a prime source for modern Western culture and which has also been his second home for fifty years. With a scholar's eye and a lover's passion, he invites us to share his vision of a city and the way of life it has engendered and inspired.

From Publishers Weekly With the same grace and scholarship that marked his recent Pulitzer Prize-winning biography of Edith Wharton, Lewis takes us into the heart of the city where he and his wife have lived off and on for 50 years. Their experiences in Florence come alive in his descriptions of the places they have rented, their friends, their explorations and their reflections. The author also shows off the city with quotes from Henry James, T.S. Eliot, the Brownings, Boccaccio, Dante and other writers and artists who have been similarly touched by its ambience. While he was working on the book, Lewis informs us, "even a simple bus ride into the center carries me past strong historical and personal associations... [that] we know we have seen before... [yet] we look at as though for the first time." His fresh view of the city on the Arno makes this a treasurable guide. Illustrations not seen by PW.-- we know we have seen before... [yet] we look at as though for the first time." His fresh view of the city on the Arno makes this a treasurable guide. Illustrations not seen by PW. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Forget April in Paris, autumn in New York, and even Disney theme parks; the world's most magical place is

Florence. Rare is the poet or novelist who comes away from that Italian city uninspired (even those who may not have enjoyed a room with a view during their visit). Accurately described as a "deeply personal and learned labor of love," this volume is literary historian Lewis's erudite paean to Florentine charms. Lewis, most noted for his highly regarded biography of Edith Wharton (1975), skillfully interweaves his personal associations with the city, which began during military service in World War II, with those of more celebrated visitors over the centuries. A generous portion of history is added. Lewis has a vast store of knowledge about many subjects but never sounds pedantic; he assumes that his readers are also knowledgeable. For those who aren't, or who have never been to Florence, his book may demand too much concentration and commitment. Public and academic libraries with earlier, similar works on the city (e.g., Mary McCarthy's *The Stones of Florence*, 1959, and, more recently, Christopher Hibbert's *Florence: The Biography of a City*, Norton, 1993) may consider Lewis's an optional purchase. (Illustrations not seen...-?Mary C. Kalfatovic, Telesec Lib. Svcs., Washington, D.C. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist) Like all great cities of the world, Florence is a sensual and intellectual experience, and the exact nature of the Florentine experience is spelled out in loving detail by the biographer of Edith Wharton and Henry James. Offering readers the proverbial room with a view, Lewis visits various stages and junctures in Florence's distinguished history, illuminating the ingredients that have gone into the making of Florence's incomparability. His book is an ode to Florence's psyche and physical form; it is travel writing at its best. Factual and personal, backwards-glancing as well as geared to the present, it is a well-written, compelling work. Fulfilling Lewis' intention, we come away with a keen sense of the entire pageant of Florence's civic and cultural life. Brad Hooper