



Happy Holidays!

Lucca News 2014

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*John and Karen Walker  
Portraiture in the Grand Manner*



*Monday, 8 December 2014*

*Tanti Auguri a tutti!*

*Today has been a national public holiday here in Italy*

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*L'Immacolata Concezione  
(The Feast of the Immaculate Conception)*

*Miracles DO happen and I am finally finishing an  
email newsletter this Lucca season!*

*It has been a beautiful winter holiday weekend here  
with the full moon only adding to all of the special  
Christmas street lighting and window decorations.  
Today was the final day of Il Desco (Lucca's local  
food and wine expo and market during the holiday  
season). Our streets have been filled with people  
holiday shopping and strolling. The weather has  
finally turned nippy and our annual ice skating rink  
is being set up in Piazza Grande, as is the holiday  
market next to it.*

*All is calm, all is bright!*

*Below is a link to a little slideshow of our early  
evening stroll through Lucca Centro this past Friday:*

*[https://www.icloud.com/photostream/  
#A2J0DiRHGcRS7x](https://www.icloud.com/photostream/#A2J0DiRHGcRS7x)*

*We are soon to leave this magical part of the world ~  
we return back to the States on December 17th and  
will be back in the Charlotte SouthEnd studio  
by the first of the year!*







*Immediately upon our arrival we have enjoyed all of the usual cycling in this area of Tuscany, both up into the mountains and out to the sea ~ including stops at many of our favorite restaurants for some of the beautiful al fresco dining in the countryside that we truly savor over here.*

*We have been here this year for the entire vendemmia (wine harvest) on into the olive harvest and pressing of the new oil. The gorgeous Italian cachi (persimmons), chestnuts and mushrooms have filled the markets this fall into winter ~ and my kitchen as well!*

*Attached to this same email you will find a pdf of one of our favorite recipes that we make during the fall/winter Lucca season: creamy polenta with mushrooms.*





*In early October we traveled to Ferrara, Padua and Ravenna ~ all in an area of Italy just south of Venice which we had traveled through many times, but had never really focused on. A fantastic show covering Belle Epoque painter, Vittorio Corcos, had just opened at Palazzo Zabarella in Padua and we were determined to go! Since Ferrara and that area is also famous for its cycling, we brought our bikes along on the trip and we were able to enjoy all three cities and countryside by bike, with our final day spent in Ravenna near the Adriatic taking in all of the remarkable early Christian tesserae (mosaic tiles) there and in nearby Classe.*

*Ferrara and Padua are beautiful cities, but Ravenna is truly a little jewel of a place that is rapidly growing in its popularity with tourists ~ so our recommendation would be to go SOON and experience there the amazingly well preserved Byzantine Christian world of the 5th and 6th Century ~ right before the final days of ancient Western Civilization.*









*October was also the month for Lucca Comics and Games .*

*There really are no words to describe this extravaganza where our whole historical center is pretty much taken over as a live improvisational piece of performance art for 4 days and nights around Halloween each year celebrating all things fantasy in film, t.v., games, books and comics. This event in tiny Lucca has grown to be the 2nd or 3rd largest of its type in the world ~ many times larger than Comic-Con in San Diego.  
It is amazing!*

*Below is a link to a video shot from over Lucca covering the month's worth of set up and tents for this same event last year:*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_Ocpaj4\\_v0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Ocpaj4_v0)

*And.... a picture is worth a thousand words ~ so below is a link to a slideshow to bring you along with us as we took a walk each day and evening of the event. This is absolutely a dream event for any photographer!*

<https://www.icloud.com/photostream/#A25yeZFhSve8D>





*All things art:*

*It has been a busy season painting here for John, as always. Several portrait unveilings are scheduled now for the weeks and months ahead and a very special JSW portrait was recently unveiled in North Carolina last month.*

*Below is a link covering the official unveiling of John's portrait of former NC Supreme Court Chief Justice Henry E. Frye to hang at UNC School of Law*

<http://www.law.unc.edu/news/story.aspx?cid=989>

*We will also have numerous new paintings hanging on the walls at the Charlotte studio, including many beautifully framed plein air landscapes from Italy this fall season as well as John's summer studio still life series capturing the luminous beauty of Carolina magnolias painted from life ~*

*Cin cin !*

*k & j*

*Portraiture in the Grand Manner*

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