

***IL FERRAGOSTO***  
***(The Feast of the Assumption of Mary)***  
***15 agosto 2011***



*The beginning of the end. That is what this famous Italian holiday really celebrates! Il Ferragosto marks the point in Lucca where the focus of life and the weather begin to turn from summer to fall at this northern latitude. Most everything is closed today in celebration of these halcyon days of summer. Any self-respecting Lucchese is certainly either traveling or at the beach during this momentous weekend. No such luck for us this year ~ sadly, our time at Casa dei Colombi within the walls of Lucca and all Mediterranean adventures this year are coming to an end. We arrive back to the States by the end of this week for an upcoming show in Minneapolis and new portrait sittings.*

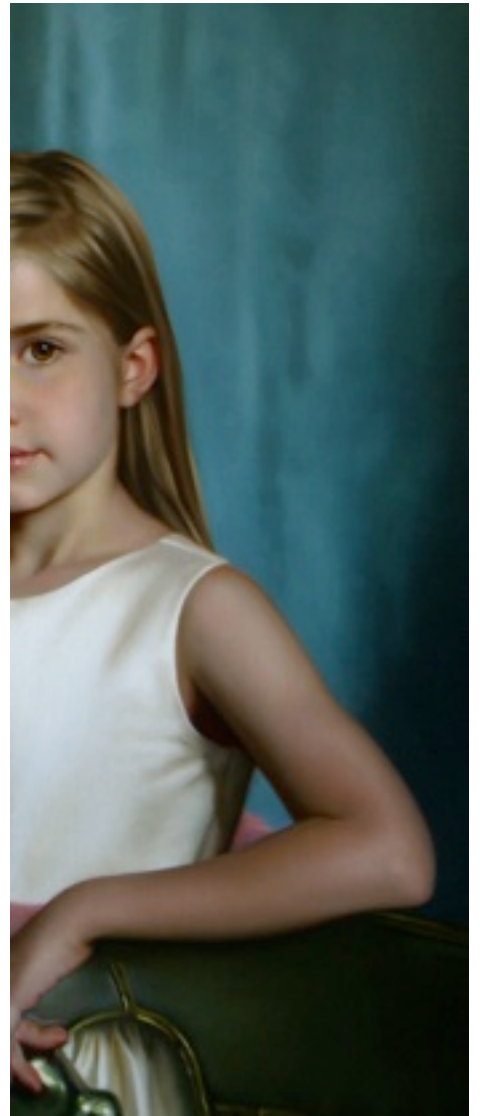
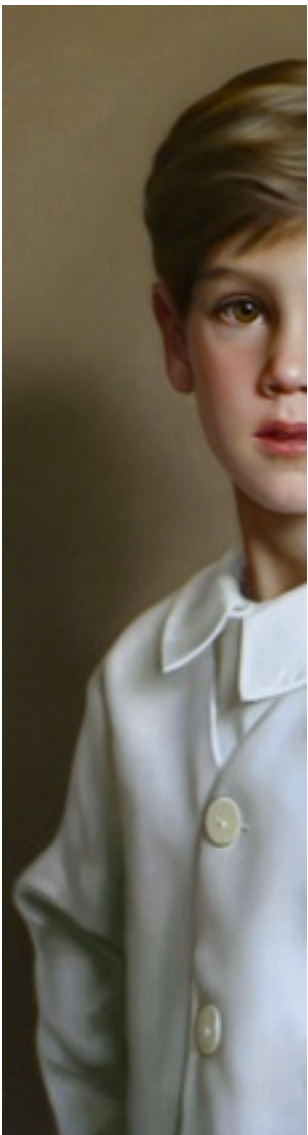
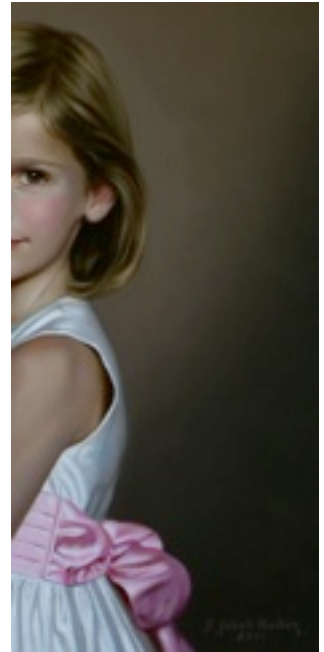
*Thus begins our 2011/2012  
fall/winter U.S. season.*

*Summer view from our bedroom over the Walls of Lucca*



*Early summer mornings  
at the beaches in Tuscany*

*A Sneek Peek at the Summer Oil Portraits of 2011*  
*John Seibels Walker*  
*Portraiture in the Grand Manner*



*We have enjoyed our usual wonderful summer season here filled with art, travel, friends and creativity. Leaving this foodie paradise is especially difficult for me. There is a beautifully written article in yesterday's New York Times entitled, "I Won't Have the Stomach for This" ~ go to their website and read it if you love food and you have a moment. When John and I are about to leave Italy each year, I almost feel like I will be losing my stomach ~ there is that special urgency to make the most of every beautiful "ingrediente artigianale" and every special moment here!*

*As travel firsts this summer, we finally:*

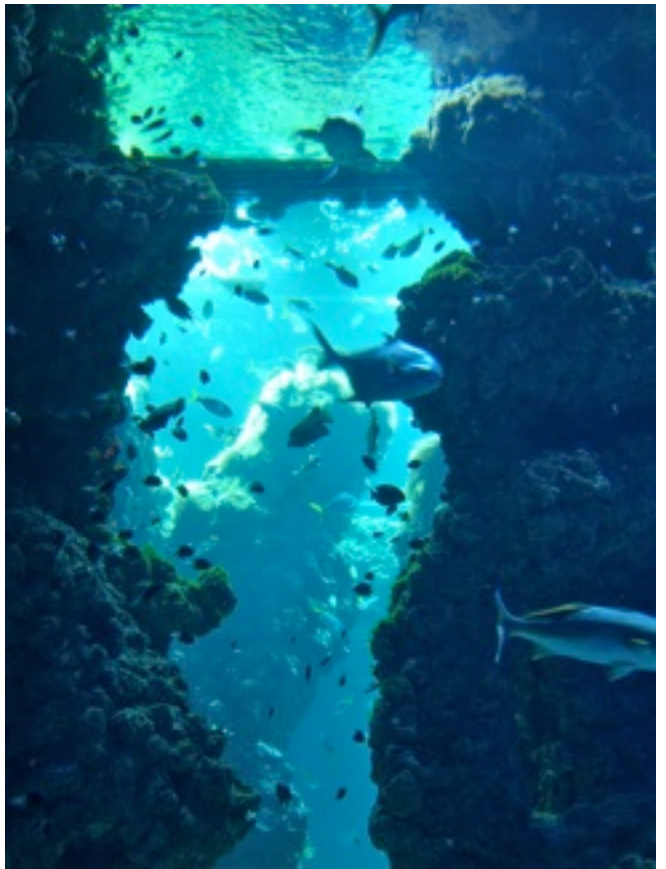
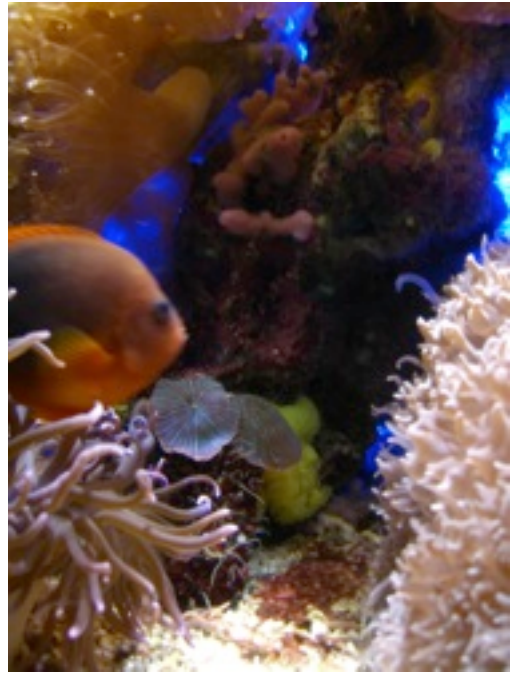


- 1. Went inside and enjoyed a full day at the magical Musee de l'Océanographie while in Monaco. What a treat ~ more a work of art than any aquarium we have ever been to. I went crazy with my photography! Can highly recommend this very historic spot for oceanography.*









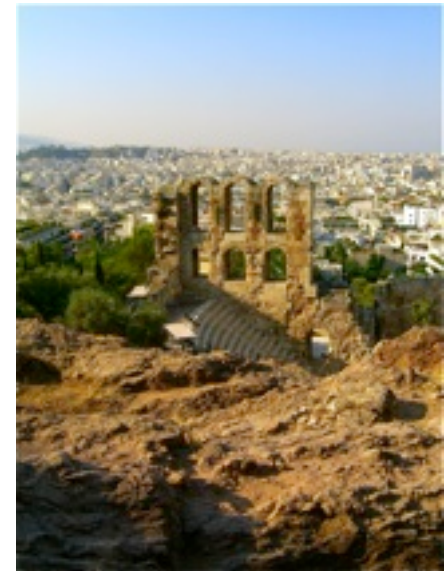
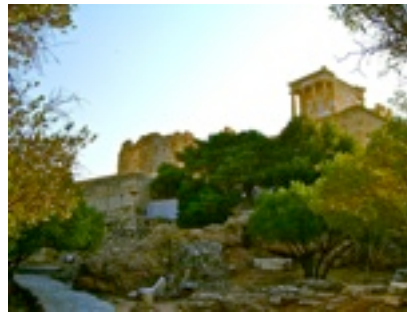
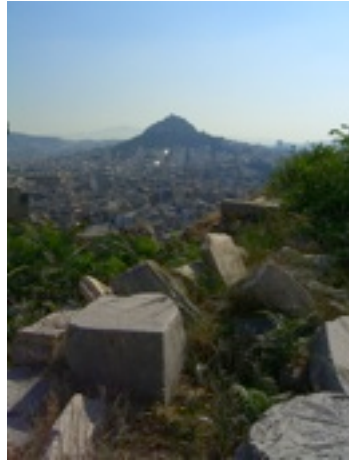


*2. Wound our way up to the Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte overlooking Naples to enjoy its extensive collection of baroque paintings and art ~ along with stunning views over the bay of Naples to Capri straight ahead, Vesuvius to the left, and Castel St. Elmo topping the pretty hillside neighborhood of the Vomero to the right.*



***3. Made the climb up to the Acropolis and the Parthenon in Athens.***

***We were extremely lucky with our timing in Athens ~ as we enjoyed cool weather, gorgeous dining and a very tranquil day everywhere we went. Just the day before our visit, there had been a huge protest demonstration ~ one of several that occurred there earlier this summer.***



4. *Spent a day on the lush, fertile and very historic Greek island of Corfu discovering 19th C painting sites, climbing to the top of old seaside fortresses, and seeing in person the famous Archaic Gorgon (Medusa) pediment from 590 BC. Corfu is home to this most ancient surviving pediment in Greece.*

*A fascinating and most civilized spot ~ will think of spending a week on Corfu in the future, as several boats a day head over there from our Italian shoreline*





**5. Explored Diocletians Palace (300 A.D.), which comprises the old city of Split ~ along with driving and sailing along the beautiful Dalmatian coastline of Croatia. Our search for a great bottle of local red wine during our 5 days in Greece and on the Greek Isles finally ended in.... well, Croatia! Once again, the excellent red wines of Croatia did not disappoint. The Plavac of Croatia is closely related to the Croatian mother vine for all of southern Italy's Primitivo and America's Zinfandel.**



*So that ends what has been another memorable summer season for us here. For more (and much higher resolution images) on all of our travels this summer, you can always go to [www.gallery.me.com/kikiphotos](http://www.gallery.me.com/kikiphotos) where you will find albums on Monaco through Venice, including our time on Santorini and Mykonos and in Katakolon (Olympia) once again this summer. As always, a large selection of John's work can always be viewed at [www.johnseibelswalker.com](http://www.johnseibelswalker.com)*

*And, just for fun, below are this summer's top three winners in our "best graffiti" art contest! It is only appropriate that we sited two of our top three favorites while in Naples and Santorini, as graffiti originated in ancient Greece and was then widely used later as a form of public communication and expression during the Roman Empire. Hence the name "graffiti" being from the Italian verb, "graffiare" or "to scratch". It can really still be quite the art form here and is also often very clever.*

*Cheers everyone, k & j*



*As sited along the streets of old Naples, this took our top prize for artistry. Quite a stunning display, even though we never found out what it all meant!*

*As sited along a narrow alleyway frequently used by tourists on the highly touristic Greek Isle of Santorini. Pretty much says it all about what was going on in Greece with their economy this summer!*



*And last, but not least, the new international sign (ha ha) for “please do not pee here, guys” as seen in Split. Loved this ~ if you have ever explored through the narrow streets and park corners of many a European city (especially in the old days), you then know that this is actually a very pertinent sign!*