

team of three shooters are also regularly assigned to snap people and events at the hospital for in-house newsletters, external promotional and advertising posters, as well as providing cover graphics for patient information pamphlets on numerous disease states.

“Years ago, proficiency in the photographic process was the cornerstone qualification for medical photography and the market for our expertise was growing,” Meats recalls. It’s far different nowadays; jobs are scarce, and photographers must be multi-skilled, not only in their ability to communicate with doctors and other scientists at a professional level, but also in the exacting field of photomicrography, medical imaging, surgical filmmaking, Flash presentation, graphic design, and digital video editing.

To stay ahead of his profession’s learning curve, Meats recently earned his Registered Biological Photographer Program (RBP) certification, under-

going rigorous training consisting of a written, a practical, and an oral exam. Provided by Yale University’s BioCommunications Association, Inc. (www.bca.org)—an international association of photographers, designers, illustrators, and videographers involved in visual communications for the life sciences—program participants must build an extensive portfolio (submitted to a committee of the Board for grading) consisting of 30 assignments ranging from photomicrography to photography in the operating room, medical portraiture, and image editing.

“Growing up in London, Ont., I’ve always had an interest in medicine and my earliest ambition was to set up a medical practice in the city,” says Meats, smiling at the memory. But on receiving his first camera at nine years old, an Ilford 126 model, he admits to being forever smitten. “From then on, my path was set on a career combining the art of photography and the science of medicine. I’m lucky. I’ve found that perfect blend.” ■

BIO: In an era when 35 mm ruled, Jack Kohane began a 15-year career as a photojournalist chasing fire engines and police cars for many weeklies in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Though pixels now dominate most patter among photographers, he admits to remaining stuck on silver technology for the depth and texture of visual expression it allows him. Today, Jack focuses more on pens than his lens, contributing as a freelance journalist to the *National Post*, the *Toronto Sun*, *Spa Life*, *Fodor’s* travel guides, and of course, *Photo Life*. You can reach Jack at jackkohane@rogers.com.

Portable. Even more affordable. And absolutely D-Lite-ful.

They’re easy to carry and now even easier to afford. Elinchrom’s D-Lite 4 To Go Set is now on sale for only \$1299 (reg. \$1599), while the D-Lite 2 To Go Set is yours for just \$999 (reg. \$1249). That’s tremendous value, especially since both offer remarkable lighting control. Modeling lights ensure what you see is what you get. Digital power can be adjusted in 1/10ths of an f-stop. And a short flash duration freezes motion. Powerful, precise and now more affordable than ever. What’s more D-Lite-ful than that?



Kit includes two 200 or 400 Ws heads, two softboxes, two stands, two carrying cases & a free Beginner’s Guide to Flash Lighting DVD.



BUY D-LITE KITS AT THESE DEALER LOCATIONS:

Vistek Toronto
496 Queen St. East
(416) 365-1777 or
1-888-365-1777
sales@vistek.ca

Vistek Calgary
1231 10th Ave. SW
(403) 244-0333 or
1-800-561-0333
calgarysales@vistek.ca

Or ask your local
photo dealer
For more of the D-Lite
story or dealer inquiries,
visit gnigami.ca

Gnigami

A Distribution Company

ni-ga'mi (ni-gah-mee) ©Gnigami Ltd. 2007



DESTINATIONS


SICILY

LAND OF NO ONE

PHOTOS BY RICHARD MARTIN, TEXT BY ELISA PALOSCHI

**“ITALY WITHOUT SICILY DOESN’T MAKE A PICTURE IN THE SOUL:
IT’S THE KEY TO EVERYTHING.”**

—J.W. GOETHE



AT THE HEART OF THE MEDITERRANEAN, BUT ON THE OUTER EDGE OF EUROPE, LAYS THE ISLAND OF SICILY. LIKE A MOSAIC OF ANCIENT CULTURES AND PEOPLES, ITS EXOTIC APPEAL SETS IT APART FROM THE ITALIAN PENINSULA. NUMEROUS FOREIGN DOMINATIONS HAVE CARESSSED, STAINED, AND ALTERED THE SICILIAN LAND AND SOUL. FIRST THE GREEKS AND THE ROMANS, THEN THE ARABS AND NORMANS, AND FINALLY, THE FRENCH, SPANISH, AND ITALIANS, ALL OF THEM CONTRIBUTING TO A UNIQUE HISTORICAL INHERITANCE. THE CONQUERORS HAVE LEFT AN ABUNDANCE OF ART, ARCHITECTURE, AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS, AND HAVE TRANSFORMED THE LANDSCAPE, SCULPTED THE CULTURAL ECCENTRICITIES, INFLUENCED THE PHYSICAL PASTICCIO OF THE INHABITANTS, AS WELL AS FASHIONED THE SOCIAL ATTITUDES, UNIQUE TO SICILY AND THE SICILIANS.

The mountains surrounding the city of Palermo provide a magnificent context to this fascinating city. From my hotel rooftop, I was struck by the visual relationship between the shapes of the city skyline and the contour of the mountains in the background.

When I fly into Palermo, it's with a mixed sense of excitement and fear, and always a window seat. I lived there for four years and I return often. With each visit, the anticipation of connecting with old friends and favourite haunts is as thrilling as the huge limestone precipice, precariously close to the runway, and as the foreboding sea, within hands reach of my window.

This visit is different, and I sense this as I drive towards Palermo, past the fishing villages, Sverracavallo and Mondello, and past Monte Gallo and Monte Pelligrino, whose imposing cliff faces, like canvas, change colour and texture with the sun. I am about to meet Richard Martin and our group of photographers and I know that as I share my Sicily with these strangers, I will never again see my beloved land in the same way.

Sicily is like home and I have a deep understanding of the Sicilian customs, the nuances of the southern culture, and most importantly, I know when yes means no and that a green light does

not always give you right of way. This is why Richard has asked me to co-lead his tour and is also the reason why I am excited to meet this group of people who will allow me to view this island through their eyes with a new sense of wonder and adventure.

Palermo was settled by the Phoenicians in the 8th century BC. Today, it is a city where the contrasts are more extreme, the passions more alive, the beauty more ferocious, and the landscape more astonishing than in any other city in Italy. I escort the group into the Arab district, La Kalsa, with its winding cobbled streets that lead into a world of disparity, where children run amongst World War II ruins and palaces of Palermo's nobles line the grand Piazza Marina. Richard will love this secret and hidden side of Palermo, and is quickly drawn to its poetic decay. We find ourselves invited into a building site—an old aristocratic palace, long destroyed, first from World War II bombing and then into further decay from an earthquake. As we explore the bowels of this destruction, the

When travelling to new surroundings, it is important to be conscious of the negative aspects of 'over stimulation'. There is a natural tendency to be less observant in general, while engaged in exciting new situations. Ultimately, the challenge is to consciously observe beyond the surface of one's own 'selective reality'.



© RICHARD MARTIN

carpenters continue to work around us, ignoring our tripods and our enthusiasm for peeling paint and cracked plaster.

We close our tripods and meander into the ancient Vuceria market, where farmers and townsfolk mingle to the sounds of the vendors selling everything from sandwiches of spleen and chickpea fritters to slabs of swordfish carved from the massive sword-adorned fish. It's as if we are actors within a play, as the hawkers call us onto their stage. They are welcoming, and accommodate our curious cameras.

From Palermo, we traverse the island through the spectacular countryside that was shaped by the Romans who cut down large parts of the forest to cultivate wheat to feed the rest of the Roman Empire. We drive past villages that time seems to have forgotten, heading to our small farmhouse at the base of Mount Etna. Legend has it that Etna was the home of Homer's Polyphenus, and at 3330 m, Etna certainly dominates the landscape.

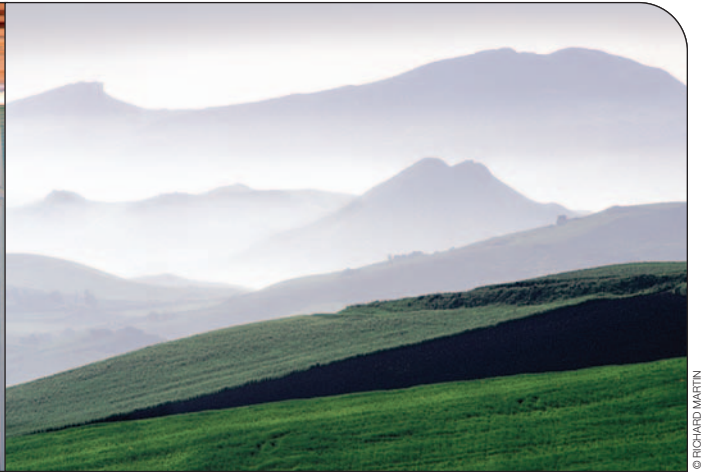
We ascend Mount Etna before sunrise, the landscape is spectacular and surreal as the early morning light reflects off the reds, browns, and blacks of the rock. As we pass houses, buried in the lava flow of 2002, from the backseat, someone questions why families would live here when there is such a threat from the magma. But, as we turn a bend in the road, we see an orchard of blossoming fruit trees in a field of blue flowers, and understand why the people do not leave this fertile land. While we set up our tripods, a serendipitous fog rolls in for an unexpected photographic opportunity, which remains the highlight of the trip for many.

From our base, we explored Taormina, Catania, the Iblea mountain range, and the photographer's favourite, the southeastern Sicilian Baroque region. The Spaniards' sense of grandeur and visual extravagance, their love for splendour and elegance, is best exemplified in the city of Noto. We chose to visit on a Sunday in order to watch the townsfolk parade up and down the main

It is particularly important to allow for a flexible itinerary in your travel plans to accommodate the unexpected opportunities and the serendipitous twists that often transpire. Some of my best experiences and favourite images have occurred between selected points of interest.



© RICHARD MARTIN



Make an effort to relate the photos that you make with your own experience and impressions instead of merely repeating what you see on postcards and travel brochures.

Like visual journals, all fine photographs are self-portraits, graphic interpretations of where the mind has been—mapping our travels in pictures.

Corso in their Sunday best and to photograph the intricate Baroque architectural features such as the menacing gargoyles that adorn the buildings.

Like Ulysses, we begin again our journey and head towards the northwestern coast of Sicily to explore the medieval town of Erice, Trapani and Scopello. In the fishing village, Castellammare Del Golfo, our hotel overlooks the small harbour and we are woken by the cries of gulls as the fishermen return to port. The small fishing port, just steps from the hotel, quickly becomes our favourite hang out and we return each day to observe the slow movement of the men and their colourful boats going about their ways.

I can't leave Sicily without visiting the Belice Valley with its green and gold-chequered rolling hills, home to abandoned towns and farms, devastated by an earthquake in 1968. One ghost town in particular, The Earthquake Town, as we nickname it, seems intact from a distance, but as we drive down towards the main street, the devastation becomes alarming. The houses and squares



are overgrown with wildflowers, weeds, and fig trees, not a voice can be heard and the church bell tower waves precariously in the wind. I have always loved this town and feel such a sense of nostalgia while walking the quiet streets. Although there is a total sense of loss and sadness, I am excited to share this special place with the others; we become voyeurs into lives long past.

Our tour comes full circle in Palermo; we are exhausted, exhilarated, enriched, and loaded with thousands of images. The participants chose to travel with Richard because he consistently makes simple and stirring images out of ordinary scenes and objects and for his willingness to share his passion, enthusiasm, and talent for making photographs. What they didn't expect was to find that the Sicilian landscape would speak powerfully about the civilizations that have coloured the island's rich history.

Nor did they know that a strong sense of camaraderie would grow over a shared meal. And, certainly, no one would have expected those friendships to continue long after our adventure ended. ■

BIOS: A long-time contributor to *Photo Life*, Richard Martin pursues photography as a medium of visual expression. Well-known for sharing his enthusiasm, creative vision, and passion for the medium, Richard has been leading annual photography and visual design workshops in his native Kingston, Ont., for 15 years. He also conducts workshops, tours, and seminars around the world, including in Cuba, Sicily, Venice, Tuscany, Provence, Seattle, San Francisco, Vancouver, and Montreal. For up-to-date information about Richard's workshops and schedule, subscribe on-line to receive his newsletter at www.richardmartinphoto.com. You can also contact Richard at info@richardmartinphoto.com

Elisa Paloschi is a filmmaker, photographer, and persistent traveller. She is currently completing a documentary about sex trade trafficking and setting up a program in India, which will provide the experience of art to empower marginalized children (www.artforempowerment.org). Her photography can be seen at www.eyesfull.com.