



WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT *UP AT THE VILLA*

“I was hooked at the first few lines of the prologue in Linda Dini Jenkins’ *Up at the Villa: Travels with my Husband*. Recounting a wildly romantic tale of a young, ’60s-era Southern California man and woman who meet by happenstance at lunchtime one day and set off on an extravagant life of love and travel, the book’s introduction is enchanting. Being a sucker for a great love story, I was eager to see where this travel book was going to take me.

But a reader would be mistaken to think this is just a travel book. In fact, it is part travelogue, part memoir, part recipe book, part poetry tome and part advice column. And it is, in part, a personal love story, as Jenkins is clearly compatibly connected to her travel cohort, husband Tim, who sounds like exactly the type of person everyone should travel with — adventurous, fun, impulsive, intrepid and unflappable (except when pressed to speak French, as the chapter titled *Lost in Lille* attests). . . .“

— Karen Eakins, *Home and Away* magazine

“*Up At The Villa: Travels With My Husband* is a humorous travelogue with poetry and recipes sprinkled throughout. Linda Jenkins writes about her travels with her husband, not only to Italy but to other regions also. She writes in a style that makes reading the book easy and fun. After reading this book, it made me want to go out and travel more with my wife!”

— Dan’s Journal, <http://grumpydan.blogspot.com/2009/04/up-at-villa-travels-with-my-husband-by.html>

“*Up at the Villa* is part travel journal, part cookbook (yes, there are recipes!) and part poetry book. There are even a few travel tips and language guides. It is just the kind of book I love because you never get bored reading it. Linda Dini Jenkins has done a superb job of capturing the joy of traveling whether it is a day trip or a two-week adventure in Italy.

“Jenkins is a storyteller and a poet which is an interesting combination in an author. Some of her stories read as poems and some of her poems tell a story. Ms Jenkins tells stories of traveling in groups or with her husband Tim both of which bring their own challenges and joys.

Anyone who has traveled will relate to the stories in *Up at the Villa*. I laughed out loud when she told the tale of arriving in Italy at the rental car agency only to find that instead of the smaller car her group had requested they were given a SUV – one that would be difficult, if not impossible to navigate in the narrow streets of the small towns in Italy. Having had a similar experience I found myself remembering and laughing at my own trip. Maybe that is what makes *Up at the Villa* so much fun is that the stories are so different and varied and common that everyone can relate to at least one of them whether they are experienced world travelers or never venture further than an overnight trip a few hours from home.

“Travels in Italy are the primary theme of *Up at the Villa*, but there are also stories of trips to Paris, Brussels, Vermont and even South Orange, New Jersey (which happens to be where I was born). If I had to pick one theme in this collection of travel memories it is that you have to enjoy whatever experiences come your way when you travel. As much as you may plan, things never go exactly as you think they will when you travel, but often the best experiences are the ones you did not plan.”

— Jackie Willey, www.amoretravelguides.com

“Anyone dreaming about renting a villa in Italy must read this book. The important discoveries are not about the villas or their locations, but about the kind of people and attitudes required to successfully enjoy them. Linda conveys valuable travel insights with passion, warmth and humor. Her excellent style draws you in as part of the family and at the very least, after reading this book, you may consider kidnapping her husband Tim as your permanent chef and navigator. After renting villas in Italy to thousands of travelers a year, I finally figured out why people love the concept so much.”

— Mario Scalzi, President & Founder, The Parker Company, www.parkervillas.com

“Midlothian author Linda Dini Jenkins’ new book is part scrapbook, part travel guide and part memoir told in short, chunky essays, poems and vignettes. With tasty tidbits such as how to cook exotic snail, handy French phrases such as, “I am going to kill my husband” (*Je vais tuer mon mari*) and the history of the all-American hamburger, Jenkins takes you with her and her adventurous husband on their gigantic leap across the pond. Ranging from poignant to silly to helpful, *Up at the Villa* provides a good model for documenting your own life’s journey — no matter the other passengers or how bumpy the road.”

— Valley Haggard, Book Editor for *Style Weekly* and *Belle*

“*Up at the Villa* is more than a travel memoir - it is a book about exploration and education. In a unique way, Dini Jenkins illustrates her journeys through multiple locations and with various genres. From poetry and narrative, to learning guides and directions, the author paints pictures with words, inviting the reader to learn with her as well as about her. Most important, the book invites the reader to relate, which she does successfully with each chapter.

“Dini Jenkins sets the book's ultimate thread as her relationship with her husband. However, it does not reveal every detail of their relationship in a linear way. With each location they visit

or revisit, she describes their interpersonal interactions, sometimes with judgment and other times using simple observation. She ultimately describes the progress they make in their relationship as a journey of learning about each other, whether by enjoying a sunset in Italy or revisiting his hometown in South Orange, New Jersey.

“Dini Jenkins' style is detailed, regardless of the particular genre in which she writes a chapter. Yet, she avoids often trite travel memoir styles by providing personal context about the unique history of a location, landmarks, menus, or traveling in groups. Similarly the landmarks, menus, or traveling in groups. Similarly the accompanying photographs display unique angles to a location, such as two Vermont cows with the caption ‘Ben and Jerry's.’ Once again, the reader relates. At the close of the book, she shares ‘how to’ or ‘why go’ guides about each location. The details surpass any traditional travel guide; they simply pull out a single theme, from a unique Tuscan recipe or antique art that can't be missed.

“Finally, Dini Jenkins invites the readers to finish their stories by providing space at the back of the book for the reader to share their own thoughts and learnings about personal travel or to paste ticket stubs from choice locations. While she calls her writings ‘subjective,’ this simple portion of the book reminds readers that all of us share individual truths about our environment and how it's shaped us. She leaves no stone unturned in this honest, educational and inspirational piece.”

— Laura Cococcia, www.armchairinterviews.com

“Jenkins revels in the sweet life enjoyed by Americans renting Tuscan villas. She and her husband have traveled throughout Italy, and she has recorded some of their typical travel experiences in towns such as Verona and Naples. Time spent in French cities including Paris and Lille add a complementary note. But not all her encounters have been wholly positive: her dread of scorpions was put to the test in a converted mountainside Tuscan mill. American drivers spoiled by automatic transmissions will find Jenkins a kindred spirit who is both overwhelmed by manic Italians barreling down expressways and incapable of navigating uphill intersections with a stick shift. Lest she be accused turning a critical eye only on European venues, Jenkins includes chapters on her Vermont home and on South Orange, New Jersey. To enliven the prose, photographs and drawings of all sorts illuminate just about every page of text.”

— Mark Knoblauch, Booklistonline.com

"With the beauty of her prose and poetry, Jenkins provides a window on all of those small things that make Italy so alluring. At the same time she artfully captures the nuances of relationships and what makes them tick. A lovely book.”

— Kathy McCabe, Editor and Publisher,
Dream of Italy Travel Newsletter, www.dreamofitaly.com

“Linda Jenkins has written a new kind of book: it's a love story, a picaresque adventure, a treasury of impressions, a candid memoir, and a testimonial to the way places can preserve,

imagine, and beget the human story. Her lucid, lyric style guides us through an inner and outer landscape of shimmering variety, capturing moments of poignancy, surprise, peril, frustration, delight, mystery, and joy, with enchanting verse-preludes opening each section to mark and illuminate our way. If you have yet to plan your trip for the year, pick up *Up at the Villa* and go where you haven't been before."

— David J. Impastato, filmmaker, co-founder of Poetry Retreats and editor, *Upholding Mystery: An Anthology of Contemporary Christian Poetry*

"*Up at the Villa: Travels with my Husband* by Linda Dini Jenkins is a great collection of stories from Linda Jenkins, who recounts her trip to Italy (and surrounding areas). It is not only a travel log that describes the beautiful Italian countryside and culture, but her relationship with her husband, Tim. Their very different personalities lead to unexpected adventures. It's 192 pages and is a great read. I highly recommend it if you are planning to travel, or wish to travel vicariously through Linda's eyes. Oh yeah. It also comes with delicious recipes and must-have tips for travelers."

— Margaret Oleska, publisher of www.localtalentbooksmusic.com writing on www.divinecaroline.com

"First, let me say that I love the cover. It is simple and free and depicts perfectly the life of the author. She is a free spirit. She has traveled the world, and I would now title her as a professional traveler. She put together stories, lessons, tips, poetry, and suggestions for this breezy book. Not many of us can live the carefree lifestyle she has. Most Americans cannot even afford a short day trip! Live vicariously through Jenkins. Who likes airports, anyway?"

—Debra Gaynor, www.ReviewYourBook.com

AmoreTraveGuides - Italy Feature 3/2/09

<http://www.amoretravelguides.com/italy-feature>

Up at the Villa is a wonderful example of what a travel journal can be. Author Linda Dini Jenkins includes a few pages at the back of the book for readers to start their own travel journal and offers the following tips:

1. Capture the things you see on your travels and the things you don't want to forget
2. Include restaurants, hotels, historical sites and natural phenomena
3. Record the names of people you travel with and the people you meet along the way
4. Include dates, phone numbers and websites where possible
5. Keep your ticket stubs, museum passes, restaurant cards and receipts
6. Keep maps, tour itineraries, and brochures, you can cut out pictures from the brochure or sections of the map for your journal
7. Train and bus tickets will remind you of where and when you traveled so keep them with your journal
8. Pick up small things that you can bring home. They may not fit in a journal but pick up shells at the beach, pretty rocks from hikes, etc. to take with you; they make wonderful keepsakes from trips

9. Keep notes on the sights, sounds and smells of a place you visit. Write about what you experience and not just what you see and where you went

Up at the Villa Travels With My Husband...

Explore Tuscany, Lombardy, Naples, the Amalfi Coast, Brugge, Paris and more -- and take a journey into relationships and the true places of the heart. This beautifully illustrated collection of personal essays, stories and poetry recounts the ups and downs and adventures of travel, and tells the story of surviving a marriage and keeping friendships strong, even when the circumstances aren't always ideal. Linger over the photos, savor the recipes, make good use of the tips for travelers and enjoy these charming tales from the road.

Juicy Tip From Book: The Moulin Rouge, or Red Windmill, is a cabaret built in 1889 in Paris's Pigalle (red light) district near Montmartre. Josephine Baker performed here, as did Edith Piaf and Frank Sinatra. And Toulouse-Lautrec is famous for painting the nightlife inside.

— *Journeywoman*, www.journeywoman.com, “*Ten Travel Books I’d Give My Girlfriends*”