

# [PDF] Italian Ways: On And Off The Rails From Milan To Palermo

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## Books Details:

Title: Italian Ways: On and Off the

Author:

Released: 2013-06-06

Language:

Pages: 282

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## Description:

**From** Parks' talents for observation don't coalesce into a comprehensive project. Modernity, Italy's relation to Europe, immigration, public-private corruption, byzantine pricing and routing, and resisting change are too many complex concepts to analyze from cramped compartments. Riding in trains hearing regional accents results in "slow unification of the language." Perhaps, but then we jump off to another topic. Unlike homogeneous Italy, U.S. cities have lost "cohesion and identity"; this better describes the book. Parks believes that Italy "is a nation at ease with the distance between ideal and real. They are beyond what we call hypocrisy. Quite simply they do not register the contradiction between rhetoric and behavior. It's an enviable mind-set." Parks, "not native not stranger," writes of commuting between major cities, southern Italy's routes, station histories,

buying tickets, encounters onboard. He treats this material with his tremendous novelist's power but not curating or culling it thematically. Parks is too much of a character in this nonfiction exploration of whether Italy is a modern nation; watching sweating illegal-immigrant trinket sellers, he deems them "happy with their lot" since they are chatting. His inner monologues distract, undermining ethos from his larger vision. --Cynthia-Marie OBrien

**Review** "This mix of piercing social observation and undying affection for Italy is classic Parks."  
**(Rachel Donadio - New York Times)**

"[A] treat equivalent to a ride on the Orient Express... Italian Ways is no Ferrari on rails but instead something much better: a slow train so thoughtfully appointed that one never thinks to look out the window or care about the destination." **(Ben Downing - Wall Street Journal)**

"Fascinating [and] droll.... Parks [is] perhaps the most faithful foreign inamorato Italy has ever had."  
**(Andrea Lee - newyorker.com)**

"Parks really shines. He gives us a country that is as frustrating as it is endlessly fascinating."  
**(Marjorie Kehe - Christian Science Monitor)**

"[Parks is] a perfect guide—an outsider, but one with a deep familiarity and respect (plus a dash of exasperated skepticism)—to the country's celebrated eccentricities. Parks has a charming voice and a novelist's eye." **(Chloë Schama - Smithsonian)**

"This is not a "railway book" in any conventional sense. It is sharp-eyed and sharp-tongued about the absurdities of 'Italian ways.'" **(John Lloyd - Financial Times)**

"Incisive [and] hilarious." **(Alexander Aciman - The Daily Beast)**

"Relaxed, humorous, meandering [and] charming." **(Brigitte Frase - Minneapolis Star Tribune)**

"A movable feast to say the least." **(Richard Eder - Boston Globe)**

"Presents a picture of Italy you won't get from any tourist board... sympathetic and lively." **(Micahel Upchurch - Seattle Times)**

"Tim Parks has reinvented the narrative of the train journey with an epic voyage into the essence of Italy itself. With a novelist's keen eye he mines absurdity and deep meaning from small, overlooked moments and gestures." **(Tom Vanderbilt, author of Traffic)**

"This is the best book I've ever read about Italy. Never have I encountered a more insightful and hilarious insider/outsider portrait of the country at the center of Western civilization. Tim Parks should be given a villa in Rome and the title of English ambassador." **(Sean Wilsey, author of Oh the Glory of It All)**

"Engrossing, entertaining, and wonderfully revealing about the country and its people. It makes perfect armchair travelling - a delight from beginning to end." **(David Lodge, author of Changing Places)**

"Starred review. Delightful [and] hilarious.... Combining wonderfully evocative prose with a wry analysis, Parks provides local color while continually seeking hidden social meaning.... The result is a fascinating portrait of a society that seems rooted in place no matter how fast it goes."

**(Publishers Weekly)**

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