

# Untold Italy Episode 92 - Wine Windows of Florence

This is the Untold Italy Travel podcast, and you're listening to episode number 92.

Ciao a tutti and Benvenuti to Untold Italy, the travel podcast, where you go to the towns and villages, mountains and lakes, hills and coastlines of Bella Italia. Each week your host Katy Clarke takes you on a journey in search of magical landscapes of history, culture, wine, gelato, and, of course, a whole lot of pasta. If you're dreaming of Italy and planning future adventures there, you've come to the right place.

**Katy**

Buon giorno! Ciao! Hi everyone,

Hope you've been having a great week so far. Today I'm excited to be sharing something that speaks to 2 of my passions - history and wine. I'm taking you back to Florence and introducing you to something you may not notice when you first visit the Renaissance city, or even on your second or third trip. But once you know about them, you'll be on the lookout on each and every street. And they are wine windows or doors where historically Florentines filled their bottles with local wine from the country estates of noble families and went on their merry way, having paid what they owed through the window, without direct contact with the seller.

As a wine and history lover, when I found out about these little wonders I was shocked. Wait, what? How have I not known about these before now and, how can I get one for myself!

Our guest today is Robbin Gheesling, an American sommelier and photographer who chanced upon this uniquely Florentine curiosity several years ago and has since made it her passion. Robbin works with the Bucchette del Vino association in Florence and their historians to help uncover the history of the windows. She has recently produced a beautiful photographic book documenting the wine windows and runs tours to help you discover them for yourself. So I'm absolutely thrilled to have her join us on the show today.

**Katy**

Benvenuta Robbin, welcome to the Untold Italy Podcast.

**Robbin**

Good morning, Katy. Thanks for having me.

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**Katy**

Oh, thank you for joining us from beautiful Florence today. How is it there at the moment?

**Robbin**

The clouds have broken - it was nothing but rain yesterday. So it's a beautiful day.

**Katy**

Oh, fantastic.

**Katy**

Robbin, I gave, I guess, a quick introduction to you and your work. But let's hear from you about what took you to Florence and how you started photographing wine windows.

**Robbin**

Well, after quite a bit of time in the music industry, actually in New York, I got really interested in Italian food and wine and started coming back and forth to Italy then. And I got my level three WSET in wine. But then got really interested in Italy specifically and I started following other Italian structures of wine. And then I'd always been a photographer, so as soon as I found the wine doors and realized that there was no photography of them and no real history of them, I'd found one very slim 20 year old book at the public library here and took the list in the back and started photographing and it's snowballed from there.

**Katy**

And have you spent a lot of time in Italy. Has it grown over time, or is it something just keep darting back and forth.

**Robbin**

It goes in stretches - especially with visas and all that. I think I started my first long stint was three months in Sienna, then I did three months working for Slow Food in Piedmont. Then I did - I just fell in love with Naples just the sea and the crazy. I mean if you're a New Yorker, you can put up with Naples quite easily, spent about two years in Naples and then came to Florence for my master's degree in Italian studies and have been coming here. So that was about 18 months and then have been coming back for the wine doors research for the last five years.

**Katy**

Wow. You're fully immersed in everything Italian. I love it. That's so fascinating. So how did you first find out about the wine windows and what really made you interested to explore

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them further? You mentioned that it was this one little book, but something must have piqued your interest. And what made you take it that next step?

### **Robbin**

Well, the most famous one on via delle Belle Donne actually still has the hours of operation in marble right above it. And so it's kind of a pretty popular stop for tour guides even a long time ago because it wasn't like an in depth wine doors tour, so they would just point out - hey, everybody could tell what it was because of the sign and they would point this one out. And so I was just on a walking tour with the University. And being a sommelier - I was like wine? wine door? - what is this? What is this history? What is this? Having my fascination with Italian food and wine, it was just like it made me want to go further. And God bless librarians. I just had smart enough to ask it. I went to the Oblate Library with an amazing aperitivo spot in the library. And have you heard of these? And he's like, yes, there's one book. And so it was just one stop on a walking tour, to a librarian, to all of this.

### **Katy**

Wow. And so maybe let's take a step back, so some of our listeners may not know what a wine door or wine window is. So maybe you can tell us a little bit about what they actually are.

### **Robbin**

Sure. So when the guilds were ending, the guilds were kind of like the middle men of all of the trades, kind of like a modern day union, to some extent, like if you were silk or wool or wine or even a hotelier (albergatore), they all had their own guild or union type things. So when the noble families with all the money, when the Medici return to power, we're like, hey, we don't want to give these guys this cut anymore. We want our money to stay with us. Why can we not sell directly? And so the documentation that we can find so far gave them permission to sell directly from their own houses. And then the thing, what we're really trying to find still is we know when the decree came that you could sell from your house, but we still don't know who actually cut the first wine door. And about how long they were in operation till actually be 1920, right until before World War One. And then that's kind of everything shut down and people just started sealing them up. But they were just tiny little portals that were the size of the Chianti Fiasco, the bottle with the straw on the bottom, from the Seventies marketing and all of that, they're kind of cheesy to us now. But if you look at the Carro Matto, the big wagon with all of the bottles in it, that's in the Antenori Courtyard. The straw and the shape are of the bottle is actually to carry mass quantities of wine in from the countryside. And the straw actually acted as bubble wrap. So if you like, stack four Chianti Fiasci together the way the neck is, you can put another one. So they all fit like a puzzle. And so all the little doors were the size of the Fiasco. So it was just this little thing that you literally just come and knock on the little door. And some of them, very few, but some still have the original iron knockers. Most of them have been vandalized. The ones that I found. The knockers have been outside the city. Knock on the door. You would either bring an empty Fiasco. You know recycling, let's do it. Or you could just go ahead and buy one

of theirs that they had there in the seller and just exchange the money and the wine. And they were always at a certain level, you wouldn't necessarily have to see the person you wouldn't know who's buying. Some of them are so low to the ground just from the way the modern street has come up. But some of them were just literally the seller. And you'd kind of bent down and knock and they would hand one up and there you go.

**Katy**

Right. So how you're describing it is, I come along, I need some wine. I come along to one of these windows and I'll just go, bop - you knock on the door with your little iron knocker and then someone pours the wine in and then probably collect your money there at the same time as well. Is that right?

**Robbin**

Yes. So that way the noble families didn't have to sell their bulk wine to the guild or Enoteca - they could just sell it right there and have all the profit.

**Katy**

Right now. I'm thinking here - how many wine windows are there?.

**Robbin**

I believe the Association has the list up to 180 in the historical center.

**Katy**

Right, so there's a 180 windows. How do we know which one is good - back in the day?

**Robbin**

Well, actually, this is also before the codification of Chianti Classico, if you will. So when the Bettino Ricasoli kind of made the Chianti recipes - so 'good' wasn't necessarily a thing. There was no law. It was just probably got down to who you preferred or who is cheapest, because it was all, you know, low alcohol and probably sweet. Maybe this person had white wine and this person had red wine, so you had to go to two different places. There was no, like, DOCG level Chiantis coming out of these doors. It was pretty farmer quality.

**Katy**

Pretty basic. Yeah, I still love it. Just need to go out to do my wine shopping - here I go, take my little bottles and off I go. It's amazing. Just like this in terms of height, I'm in centimeters is it about 30 cm - about that?

## **Robbin**

So if you just think of the Chianti bottle that that's commercially available today has been kind of the regulation size. So whatever that is in centimeters is about right. Because I even took one, because now they make a touristy sizes and half a bottle and a big bottle. For the photography, I couldn't find an old one for some reason. I could find them in the antique shops in America, all over the place, but I come here and I was like, I need to find an old one for my photography. I can't find one. So I go to the supermarket and buy a modern one and I go to one of the doors and it didn't fit. So I'm thinking either the bottle has changed, but also just the way the walls and architecture has been redone, that I'm thinking that maybe it has gotten, like, built up and couldn't fit the bottle. But, yeah, all different.

## **Katy**

Because when I saw them, I was having my mind that it was a glass and you'd just be going around drinking a glass of wine as you walked around drinking it. That's how I pictured it, which is probably the Australian coming out of me, but it's very uncouth isn't it?

## **Robbin**

Unfortunately, not a bar crawl. That's what we're doing today. But then it was literally just the wine you were taking home now.

## **Katy**

Interesting. Do we have any idea of how much it would cost for something like that, or is that sort of still part of the investigations that are ongoing?

## **Robbin**

I have not found any documentation yet that talks about pricing. I think that's one of the things that we are working with - when I'm working with the Association on some of this research is getting into the family archives of the families that are still around now. Also, some of the families that aren't technically around anymore. I believe all of their family documentation is in the archivo del estado - the state archives, so I might have to go in there. But if I could find ledgers of their agricultural documentation, I might be able to find out about the cost.

## **Katy**

Did they go into the kitchen area, or where did they come out inside of the house?

## **Robbin**

Most of them either were in a side room, but most of them are actually a literal cellar. That's where they kept - no refrigeration, so that's where they kept any produce, because it was also more than wine. If they also had some other kind of crop, they could sell through the door as

well. But it would go down to literally the cellar. If you imagine some of these palazzi, for those who haven't been inside, sometimes you look at these windows and you're like, Why are they so high up? Well, but there's literally like two or three little steps up to the window from the inside so they can see out. But then they can be seen in. So the cellars were actually quite deep, and sometimes the ones I've seen from the inside, the door is actually quite high, so they would have to fill from the big cask and then come up a step or two and hand it up. So it was literally a cellar. .

**Katy**

Right, and then who would be the wine filler? Who would be the person dispensing the wine then, do we know that?

**Robbin**

Service. Could have been the kitchen person tending to the produce in the cellar or no nobility, I think, was dirtying their hands with the public.

**Katy**

I think if you're going to be a peasant, that sounds like a pretty good job - dispensing wine. I could live with that. These people are celebrated these days, aren't they? Let's face it. Oh, my goodness. So today - so there was 180 in the centro storico at the peak, maybe of these - how many are in operation today is like working wine windows.

**Robbin**

Amusingly. Vivoli - theirs has always been open. So when I started doing my first investigation before the Association came together, and I was doing that first round of photography out of the book. I asked the gentle woman at the cash register - nice elderly lady, I don't know how long she's worked at Vivoli, but maybe she owns it. I was like, obviously, you know what this is. And she's like, oh, yeah, a wine door. And so they just had a light and a plant in it. They hadn't been serving out of it. They hadn't thought of it that way because, you know, Vivoli it's on the well beaten path, and there's always just a queue inside - why, why bother? But she was telling me, just talking about the number of them. She's like, we didn't know it was there until the flood of '66. It had been walled over, and I Vivoli's pretty close to the river. So she's like, when the water destroyed our walls and we had to redo the exterior, we found it and we dug it out and restored it.

**Katy**

Right.

## **Robbin**

So they didn't even know they had one. So we actually don't even know how many were lost over time because they've only become protected recently. And I'm trying to see if I can get UNESCO to actually - cause the whole of the centro storico is a UNESCO thing, so I don't know if we can get specifically the wine doors protected because there was one - as my photography shows, there's so many different ways they've been reused. Like, it was the best place to put your door buzzers for the whole building, because there's a hole already here - we'll just make the buzzers. And I think that was actually quite an innovative way to use them. So we don't know how many got walled over. We don't know. There was one that got completely destroyed by an air conditioning duct just a couple of years ago, and people went cuckoo because there was photographs of this all of a sudden there's this duct, and they made them go fix it. The city made them go fix it. So they are protected now. So people have their dug out, and they only started re-using them in the pandemic. So the few that are open on both sides, because even though you might be able to see them from the exterior, they're walled in on the interior - that they were the first to actually serve out of it, because when they were doing the restaurant, when I started the photography, it had been empty for years. They put in this restaurant and they decided, we know what this is. This is open. The door had always been completely unlatched, like, I could open it, stuck my camera inside and took a picture of nothing.

## **Katy**

Did you do it? Did you see camera inside?

## **Robbin**

Oh, yeah, of course. Oh, yeah. It was literally just a big empty space that was completely raw floor and everything. I was like, oh, you know, it's a shame that this is open and people have been throwing their trash in there. I'm like, but they were the first to actually it's like, okay, we're a restaurant now. This is open. We're on the Santo Spirito, which is quite a well walked path - so they just hung a little sign and started serving wine out of it by the glass.

## **Robbin**

So when the pandemic hit and the full lockdown started happening, well, the people that had restaurants with open on both sides started serving out of them. So I would say maybe there's five. Only.

## **Katy**

Okay, that's exciting. At least there's five. And this sort of like an urban myth started evolving around the plague and the use of the wine windows didn't it? Do you want to tell that story?

## Robbin

Well, there was one article that came out that mentioned the source that they had found, the Association found that how they had been used during the plague of the 1600s, not the 1300s, not Boccaccio era, we're talking fairly recent in terms of Italian history, fairly recently that they were talking about how these portals were used, and they would use the scoop to get the money so they wouldn't have to touch it. And then they would rinse it with the vinegar. And it kind of propagated that they were created for this plague, but that's not true. It was really created to save this money. But that's kind of how it mushroomed - it was just perfect timing on our plague versus their plague. And now they're being reused. And so when it's like an Orange zone, when you couldn't stay in anywhere, they were the ones that were in operation were getting their 'to go' orders through a wine door.

## Katy

I love it. I love it. Everyone loves a good story, but I think it does dove-tail in very nicely, and everyone needs a bit of a pick me up at these times. And so if someone's going to have a wine window or a wine door and be serving it out there, it's all fine by me. I like a bit of embellishment of the story. It's good. So when you look at them, some of them have a specific kind of design, don't they? And they sometimes seem to match the doors that they're next door to and it's really lovely actually.

## Robbin

Yeah, that was always a choice of the architect. I would say for the most part, the shape does match the main entrance, if you will. So like, we've got our little baby door and we've got our papa door. So we'll just make them match completely. Some of them are literally they were just, like, filled in, like, all you can see is left as an outline of them, which makes no sense. So there wasn't any real regulation into their looks. But most of them, especially a good noble family, made their architecture nice and so were like we're going to make this match and have it all that way, but no real consistency.

## Katy

I love a bit of matchy-matchy myself. It does look really nice. And I think, you know, I think to Robbin before, is that when you know about these wine doors and once you know about them and you see them everywhere, you can't stop seeing them for some reason. And if it gets quite exciting, when you're in Florence, you go on a little hunt for them. Did you find that, Robbin?

## Robbin

I did, especially when I first started shooting. I was asking Italians about them and there's like, no, it's just where you put a little Madonna or a candle or something. It has the same shape, but no, that's not what it was. So it has also created a little confusion as people see a niche for Madonna, and they think it's a wine door. So it's kind of having to know what's

around there's one that looks like a wine door, it's right on the side of a Church. But that's where you would put your donation. I kind of have a sixth sense about them now, where I'll be in a neighborhood and be like, yep one over there and turn the corner to the other is there. There's plenty of places where they've been hidden in the past that they're now recognized.

**Katy**

I think it's really interesting that the flood sort of expose some more and nature gives and it takes away. And I guess in this time it kind of gives and it's really fascinating stories - I can imagine. Someone needs to write a book about this.

**Robbin**

Funny, you should say.

**Katy**

Oh, sorry, Robbin. Spoiler alert!

**Robbin**

My book that I'm working on now is why I've come back. So I've had the photography book, but I was realizing - because also having been a sommelier and having done food and wine tours in the past - was like, this is like the perfect itinerary to do them by neighborhood and still find the nice little wine bars along the way. Even like the ones that aren't serving like, say, you know, one of my favorite places live Le Volpi e l'Uva. Like, if you did like the route I have in mind, you stop here and up here and up here and then end with the tasting with Ciro and the gang at Volpi e l'Uva. No one's written this down. So it's like in a Lonely Planet style, I intend to do as much as I can do in nine months is at least 150 to 200 words on every single one I can find about (at least) the family, what they were growing. If I can find out if they were growing Sangiovese or Bonaccho, whatever they were doing out there. If I can get that just like, so you can stop - here it is here's just the brief bits and then next door, go have a glass yourself. So I'm hoping to have all of these little routes done in a book by next summer.

**Katy**

Well, that sounds absolutely fabulous. I'll be signing up for that. And do you have a particular favorite? One of these doors yourself? What's your favorite one?

**Robbin**

Well, it's a different perspective when you're a photographer, because as I learned in a critique, is like, your image may not be good, but your story behind the door is why you like it. But fortunately, one of my favorite images is the one with street artist Blub. He does all of these famous paintings as scuba divers. He's pretty well known for putting them inside the wine doors, like, he plans to paint them big enough to put in a wine door. So I'm on my route

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doing my shoot, and someone very graciously left me some litter, and the wine bottle in the niche was there. I didn't put it there. That was not set up. So I was just like, thank you.

**Katy**

Happy accident.

**Robbin**

I might have turned the label a little bit just to see what it was. So that one for me is always a favorite. But now it's two years on and people ripped the art out, and it's kind of, oh, I don't say mediocre, but it's not as interesting as it is for me, but in terms of just its own shape. There's one at the Santa Spirito that matches the big door and I'm always it's like, fascinating that they thought of that they're like, we're not just going to cut a hole - we're going to make this match.

**Katy**

Yeah. I think there must be so many amazing stories behind each of these wine doors. I mean, the merchants of Florence had - they were just so fascinating in themselves so, so you can imagine, you could just build a whole series of novellas, I'm thinking - around the stories of the wine window. It just really sparks my imagination and that's why when I saw your work, I was really inspired to reach out to you because I really wanted to find out more about them and what I wanted to know. So you mentioned that there's mainly house wine that they were dispensing, but like you said, there's there's different types of wine coming from different regions. So do you have a suspicion about what types of wine, apart from the traditional Chianti Classico that was served, that was coming from the doors?

**Robbin**

Or just what I know of Chianti history and Chianti being in the province of Florence, that I assume it's mostly Sangiovese. I mean, I don't know if they were doing Canaiolo 100% then that kind of thing. But it could also just be again, being the agriculture of the day, it could have just been the way cross colonization happens is like the way the biotype evolves. The biotypes just you may not necessarily know what was in the field. It could have been what we would even call a modern field blend. You're just like, there's some grapes I'm just going to pick up. But I assume it was Sangiovese, for the most part. But you're talking about calling ones the fascinating part for me is that three families that still produce wine have wine doors. So that's if I can get into their archives is going to be fascinating. So that's the Ricasoli, the Antinori and the Frescobaldi. They are big Chianti producers now, so to be able to follow their history back through their door and also the Guicciardini Strozzi label - Guicciardini has a door. I think the marriage between the Strozzi and the Guicciardini happened, again in Italian recent times, like late 18 hundreds. But to know what they were producing them would be quite fascinating.

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## **Katy**

Unbelievable. So these families would have had very large palazzi in the center of Florence. And so those wine doors are still there today. And are they open or are they blocked off?

## **Robbin**

They're blocked off? Well, the one on the side of Antinori is now technically a restaurant. So Buca Lapi, which is like on the side of the Antinori Palace. I guess technically the wine door isn't theirs anymore because it's part of the restaurant. And I don't know if the restaurant has any intention of reopening it.

## **Katy**

I think you need to get some bravado and just got knocking on these doors. "I need to come into your palazzi. Palazzo. To see your wine door, please. What's behind the door? I need to see it immediately!" I'll be up for that. I can join you.

## **Robbin**

Well, you're got to have a drink first. Some liquid courage.

## **Katy**

So I think it's fascinating that you just found this curiosity and you've just gone with Robbin. It's just amazing. And obviously I don't want this is a terrible pun, but this has obviously opened up a few doors for you. Sorry. But is there any other thing like that that you can see capturing your imagination as quite as much as this has.

## **Robbin**

It's actually kind of a worry because, like, I know I've been doing this for so long now that it's kind of like this guide book that I'm here writing is the pinnacle. And to some extent, the end. Every now and then, I'm like, what am I doing next? I haven't gotten that far yet. Which is kind of good because it'll keep me from being distracted from this project. But I haven't quite thought about what's next.

## **Katy**

Yeah., but, I mean, I'm sure it will pop up as you go on your little journeys around Florence, it sounds like a terrible job to be doing. Oh, I just need to document this walking route, so I discover the way and then discover the winery/the bars next doo. That sounds like my kind of job actually. Sounds fabulous.

## **Robbin**

It's like, yeah, it's gonna be rough. It's gonna be terrible.

## Katy

It's gonna be terrible. So as we are a travel podcast - if people are coming to Florence, how can they sort of engage with the stories? Apart from - the last time I was at me and my friend were walking around and were just like, oh, my gosh, this is exciting, and we were probably, as you say, looking at some walls, which we didn't know. We just assume we're like quick there's a wine window! But I'm sure there's a way to take a more structured approach until your book's out, obviously.

## Robbin

Well, the photography book that's currently available, which was - the whole origination was to document and then do street photography of them. So I've been kind of calling the currently available book my exhibition portfolio. I have done that in a paperback form that's got the address of each one underneath. So if there's a specific one that you like, the image of, you can easily just look it up on your Google maps and you can go find it. In terms of structure, I've got a sit down tasting right now. I don't have a walking tour available per se, with me, but I have a sit down tasting with you, and I can talk about the history of them more specifically. Like, if there's a particular neighborhood you want to know more about, I sit down with you at a wine bar and I show you my images and show you the maps and I'm also designing just a map right now that I can hand out.

## Katy

Wine tasting in Florence with a professional sommelier, who knows about wine windows. This sounds like an experience that would be definitely worth doing. And I will be definitely joining Robbin when I make it back to Florence. But I'm wondering, Robbin, you've been all over Italy. You've lived in many, many different places. Is there any other places that maybe hold a special place in your heart that you love to go and explore?

## Robbin

People asking me, my favorite place in Italy, I've discovered, is like, "who's your favorite child?" Because everything is so different. You know, I love Naples even though it's crazy and where my phone was snatched right out of my hand, but still just - the sea and the people and I love Naples. But then I love Friuli and Trieste and the Carso region for their wines. And there's too many places in Italy to really pin it down.

## Katy

I know it's very hard. I feel the same way, although I'm very partial to Venice as well. I thought I was going to love Florence more, and I do. And in fact, what I found with Florence was, you need to spend a lot more time there to really dig into the history and just these little nooks and crannies and really tease them out because I'd gone there the first time when

I was in my 20s on a very world wind trip, and I didn't have the most exciting experience at that time. And there were many reasons for that. But luckily, I was able to go back several times more recently, and I just really started pulling on my heart strings. That's part of what Florence does to you, I think.

### **Robbin**

Similarly, I was here for the master's degree, and honestly, when I won the Premier for the master's degree, which was for business operators who needed to improve their Italian, there was this tenure that I won. And I was like "could it be someplace else than Florence?" But this again, kind of like with the individual images I was able to finally see Florence differently. So I wasn't having to cut through the Piazza del Duomo to get to class with thousands of tourists. I was able to stand on a corner, see this wine door. And the other thing that one must do when you find a wine door is actually try to look above the portone, to see if there's a family crest. To see which family is there, because some of these families don't exist anymore, but their crests are still there. So I was able to literally look up and over the mass tourism and find this thing that helped me love Florence.

### **Katy**

Yeah, I love that. Well, when I studied Renaissance history at school, I had an amazing teacher that some of our listeners may have heard me carry on about this before, but she was really brought the history to life. We're about as far away from Italy as we could be in the south of Australia, but she really taught us about the merchants and their history and how important they were to the rise of Florence. And so I can see how that does draw you back into what the city was all of that and how it came to prominence. And that wealth that they built and their traditions and their culture that still resonates today, even though so many centuries have passed. It's so beautiful. So, Robbin, we all want to know how we can look at these photos of the wine windows or the wine doors. Are you calling them wine windows or doors?

### **Robbin**

I call them doors. I'm discovering an academic difference between myself and the Association is we had a big long chat - over wine -they were saying, we're calling them wine windows in English, and you should call them wine windows. And I was like, that doesn't make sense to me in English, you don't knock on a window. They were wood doors that you had a knocker and like the portone itself. So to me, they're doors. They will always be doors. But I think that's also a literal translation of romantic Italian, because in Italian they can be called finestrini. And I'm not even really sure why they were called finestrini, so they ran with that. The Association did. So that's what kind of sticking in the parlance. But for me it's always doors.

## **Katy**

But I think as well from a window because those doors are missing. Maybe that's where it comes from because I didn't realize they had the doors on the front.

## **Robbin**

Yeah. I mean, I don't know, there's a few of them that have plexi glass on them now, but then they were actual doors. Little doorways.

## **Katy**

Oh Robbin, the wine windows certainly captured my imagination as a wine and history lover, and I know listeners will want to follow along in your journey as you write the book. And obviously, they may want to purchase your beautiful book of photography. How can they do that?

## **Robbin**

So it's my nice, complicated name - [robbingheesling.com](http://robbingheesling.com). Have a look at your notes there for the podcast. You can see how to spell that. And I'm sure it'll be on your episode guide somewhere. But [robbingheesling.com](http://robbingheesling.com) is kind of like my gallery and my shop for prints and the books and the handmade book, unfortunately, I don't have the facility to do while I'm in Florence. Amusingly enough with all of the handmade book shops that are around here. I don't have access to them to continue to do my handmade addition. Maybe want to get back to the States. I can do those again if someone's interested.

## **Katy**

Ah beautiful. Now definitely follow Robbin. She's also on Instagram, aren't you Robin? And I'll put all of these contact details onto our website. But if you love looking at photos of Florence and you're interested in the wine doors, yeah, it's a beautiful Instagram to follow. And if you're looking for a gift for Christmas, I'm not joking. You need to go check out her web shop because she's got some beautiful prints up there and I've already got one of them on my list for Santa. Grazie Mille Robbin, thank you for joining us on Untold Italy today.

## **Robbin**

Thanks for having me, Katy. I hope to see you soon here in Florence.

## **Katy**

How many stories must these wine doors or windows hold? I feel like they are not just openings to access wine but the window into another world and another time. I can't wait to get back to Florence and discover more of them for myself. And have a drink on that terrace at the Oblate library. Magnifico!

Robbin's story is another great example of how combining your travels to Italy with your passions connects you to the country in inextricable and mysterious ways. Of course the highlights are popular for a reason but if you can find a way to connect them to the things you truly love, whether that be exploring the outdoors, learning about wine, interior design, fast cars or cooking new dishes, you'll make sure your trip is all the more memorable and special.

Robbin's gorgeous book of photography featuring over 100 wine doors in their natural Florentine habitat would make an incredible gift. They are not just pictures of the windows but show how they've been adopted into the life of modern Florence complete with local protagonists, the Florentine people.

I bought one for myself and have put one of the prints on my Christmas list. I actually really want a wine window of my very own. We are hopefully building next year so you never know! Robbin's books and prints are available on her website <https://www.robbingheesling.com/> where you can also book a tour with her in Florence. While you're waiting for your trip you can follow her adventures on Instagram @winedoorsflorence Of course we've put it on our website with all the show notes and places mentioned in the today's episode at [untolditaly.com/92](https://untolditaly.com/92) for episode 92.

Did you enjoy today's show? If so, it would be amazing if you could give us a rating or review either on your favorite podcast app or on our Facebook page @untolditalytravel That helps the people of the internet know our podcast is great to listen to and the algorithm gods at Apple and Spotify push us up the charts.

Grazie! Thanks for listening as always! That's all for this week, let me know if you spot any wine windows or doors in your neighborhood! We'll be back next week with another fun episode of Untold Italy but until then it's "ciao for now"