

MAKING SENSE OF YOUR LIFE

LGBTQ Memoir Writing Workshop

Puglia, Italy, August 24-31, 2019

We all have incredible lives. As LGBTQ people, many of us have walked roads less traveled and seen things outside of the mainstream. Like most, we strive to find meaning in our lives. Learning how to effectively put our experiences into words is a craft that is inspiring, cathartic and does, in fact, help us finding meaning.



Nearby town of Polignano a Mare

The goal of our workshop is to enable you to cast light onto your own memories and hone your ability to put your experiences into words. This is not about daily journaling. This is not about writing the next great bestseller or even sharing your stories with others. This is about remembering and articulating those experiences that helped define who you are today, and, in the process, bringing a greater sense of meaning and purpose to your own life.



Villa Cappelli

Do you need to already be a writer to participate?

Writing about your own life is a journey, not a destination. Our goal is to teach you the exercises and process for putting your own experiences into words. We do not expect anyone to walk away with a finished manuscript. What we do expect is that participants will explore and hone their skills of memory recollection and experience articulation; will be inspired by others sharing their own experiences, and will be energized by informal discussions among participants. For the novice, as well as the professional writer you will find great value in this unique workshop.

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For more information about the workshop, write to tom@bammer.co

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What to expect

Arrive Saturday afternoon and relax around the pool. On the first night, we will host an informal dinner for our group at Villa Cappelli.

Beginning on Sunday morning, the daily routine will start with a light continental breakfast, followed by the first workshop session of the day, kicked off by a brief discussion of our goals and process. We will then have a short guided meditation to focus participants' minds, followed by an hour-long writing session. After that, each person will read his/her writing exercise aloud to the group. Tom and Mike will offer writing tips and suggestions at the end of each participant's reading. The session will usually last about two and-a-half hours.

Afterward, we will break for a big lunch and a couple of hours for some relaxation, perhaps, a nap, a walk, or time by the villa's pool. Then, in late afternoon, a second writing session will

take place. In the evenings, people will be free to join the group for dinners in nearby towns or head there on their own. From charming seaside destinations to nearby small villages, you'll get a real sense of authentic Italian culture and enjoy delicious local specialties.



Pool at Villa Cappelli



Courtyard of Villa Cappelli

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Nearby town in Otranto

On Wednesday, we will take a break from writing, shepherding the group on an organized excursion in the surrounding area, including a big meal out on the town hosted by Tom and Mike. On the last night of the workshop, Paul and Steven, owners of the villa, will host a gala dinner there for our group.

How to write

The goal of the week is not to produce a novel, but to exercise your writing skills, be inspired, pick up a few useful tips, and meet and bond with some amazing people. Some of you may worry that your writing isn't up to snuff to participate in such a group. Don't be concerned—the goal is to focus on your own memories and to discover your own stories about your past. Stay focused on your journey rather than compare yourself to others.

What to write about

This is a memoir workshop. Our aim is to uncover past memories and translate them into words. Not everything you write will need to be an “LGBTQ memory.” Simply write about your life and what made you who you are today. Share experiences from growing up, coming out, your re-



Matera, the European Union Culture Capital for 2019

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relationships with others, and any special moments of note. Just let your mind go and explore! Sometimes, during a session, you may finish with only a few lines; at other times, a longer passage will emerge. It is all good!



Fresh Fig Tart from the kitchen of Villa Cappelli

Down-time

We both have much experience in publishing and in social media. For those who wish to join the discussion, we will be moderating several informal talks over wine, coffee and the pool about publishing and using social media to share your stories.

In addition, there is much to explore around Puglia. You will not be required to attend every session, but we encourage you to participate in as many as possible. As mentioned, we will take one full day off to explore the surrounding area and there will be four free evenings when you can pop



Lunchtime at Villa Cappelli.

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into town on your own. There will also be bikes available for use, if you would like to take a break and explore the surrounding area.

Location

Paul Cappelli and Steven Crutchfield are old friends and ex-New Yorkers who moved to Puglia a decade ago and renovated an ancient villa along the Appian Way into a boutique hotel, and started a highly successful olive oil business.

Both are from the advertising world and are very creative. We hope they will be able to participate in the writing workshops. [Click here](#) for more information and photos of Villa Cappelli.

Villa Cappelli is located near the town of Terlizzi about 15 miles north of Bari in Puglia province, 250 miles southeast of Rome and 150 miles from Naples. We can arrange to pick you up at the airport in Bari or at nearby train stations.

Accommodations

Villa Cappelli contains seven bedrooms with queen-sized beds (six with private bathroom, one with shared bathroom), and two bedrooms with two twin beds (one with private bathroom, one with shared bathroom).



One of the bedrooms at Villa Capelli



Our hosts at Villa Cappelli, Steven and Paul at their recent wedding

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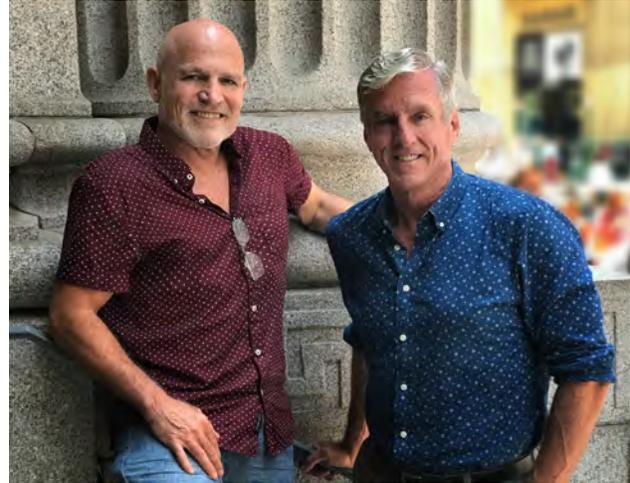
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About Mike and Tom

Mike Balaban Co-founder of Bammer.co, Mike has been documenting the gay community via photographs his entire life. Three years ago he launched his Instagram account, @Bammer47 which now has over 11,000 followers drawn to his vintage photos, as well as his recollections and commentary on gay life over the last four decades. In addition, Mike



Mike and Tom

has been a non-profit board leader and LGBTQ activist since 1996. Some of the organizations he has served include: GLSEN (founding board member), Echoing Green, Athlete Ally (founding board chair, 2012-2018), NewFest, Stonewall National Museum & Archives, and the Democratic National Committee's LGBT Leadership Council.

Tom Walker Co-founder of Bammer.co, Tom has worked in the publishing industry for almost 35 years. Working alongside many well-known writers, photographers and celebrities. He has been involved as producer, designer and co-author of a variety of books, including the bestselling *Day in the Life* photobook series; the Who's *Tommy the Musical*; three presidential inaugural books; National Geographic photographer Paul Chesley's photomemoir, *Paul Chesley: A Photographic Journey*, which won the 2016 Photobook of the Year from Independent Book Publishers Association; and, most recently, he co-authored the memoirs of paralympic sportstar, Tatyana McFadden. In parallel, he has worked in the digital advertising industry and social media since 1995.

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Cost: The cost for the week includes seven nights lodging, all continental breakfasts, lunches and dinners (excluding four dinners out on the town); transportation to and from local train stations and airport, and, of course, the instruction and guidance of our moderators.

\$2500 per person: Private room, queen-size bed (six with private bath, one with shared bath). If you wish to come with a partner or friend and share the bed, the cost will be \$2100 per person.

\$2000 per person: Shared room with two twin beds, (one with private bath, one with shared bath)

Room selection will be made on a first come, first choice basis.

Non-refundable deposit of \$1000 per person due by May 30. Final payment due June 30.

Cost does not include air fare.