



Gondola

Donna Leon

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Of all the trademarks of Venice, none is more ubiquitous than the gondola. In this beautifully illustrated collection, internationally bestselling author Donna Leon tells fascinating stories about this famous boat.

First used in medieval Venice as an easily maneuverable getaway boat, the gondola evolved over the centuries into a floating pleasure palace that facilitated the romantic escapades of the Venetian elite. Now a tourist favorite, the gondola has never ceased to be a part of authentic Venice. Each boat's 280 pieces are carefully fashioned in a *maestro*'s workshop—though Leon also recounts a tale of an American friend who decided to make a gondola all on his own, a feat that took five years to complete. But the gondola is a work of art well worth the labor—and the *barcarole* sung from its prow are no less masterful. The best of these popular songs sung by the *gondolieri* are included on an accompanying CD, including an exclusive track from Cecilia Bartoli.

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