



Urbino: The Story of a Renaissance City

June Osborne

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During the Renaissance, the Italian city of Urbino rivaled Florence and Siena as a center of art, culture, and commerce. Chances are you've never heard of it--but you should have. Raphael was born there. Piero della Francesca painted his famous *The Flagellation* there. And the city's exquisite Ducal Palace, its twin towers piercing the sky, remains a striking monument to grace and power. Yet despite all its past glory and present charm, Urbino is practically unknown to tourists today.

With *Urbino: The Story of a Renaissance City*, art historian June Osborne brings to life not only the great city and its art but also its turbulent history and the intrigue surrounding its ruling family. First settled by the ancient Umbrians, Urbino reached its zenith during the fifteenth century under the rule of Duke Federico da Montefeltro and his son Guidobaldo. Federico may have been a usurper and a fierce, opportunistic warlord, but his lust for power was more than matched by his passion for great art. Indeed it was under his direct guidance that the magnificent Ducal Palace was built--its perfectly proportioned courtyard a wonder of early Renaissance architecture.

Today the Ducal Palace hosts the National Gallery of the Marches, one of the most important art galleries in Italy, featuring works by no lesser lights than Raphael, Uccello, Piero della Francesca, and Titian. Exploring such sites as the fourteenth-century Oratorio di San Giovanni Battista and the Gothic Church of San Domenico, Osborne captures not only the startling beauty of Urbino and the Apennine foothills but also the tumultuous legacy of Federico and his son (and their many wives and courtiers).

With over a hundred lavish color photographs, many by renowned landscape photographer Joe Cornish, *Urbino* is the best--and the only--guide to this gem of the Italian Marches.

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