

ITALY

WHERE?

Every summer, the 75-year old travels to the tiny island of Alicudi, the most remote of the Aeolian Islands off the coast of Sicily. With a population of 120, this is island living at its most basic. The fact that most of the island is dominated by the extinct cone-shaped volcano makes this the perfect place to escape the modern world.

The climate here can be pretty harsh. In summer, the heat is brutal and in winter, it is often impossible to get here by ferry from Sicily because of the stormy seas. But Alicudi has also largely managed to retain its charm because of its isolated location. Although tourists have found their way here over the years, the primitive nature of the island's utilities attracts a different kind of traveller, a more adventurous spirit.

The western slopes of the mountain are uninhabitable and seem to be permanently cast in shadow. The village, which clings to the eastern slopes of the mountain, has rough-hewn stepped paths that wind their way up to the various dwellings and can be quite testing for your feet.



WHO?

The Italian painter Marco Tagliaro was born in Venice but lives and works in Treviso for the most part. His realist paintings of flowers and cityscapes have been exhibited in several countries. Marco's painting technique is similar to glazing. He adds layer upon layer of colour, to create an extremely tactile effect. His technique requires a great deal of patience and incredible attention to detail. Some of his works take years to complete.







The island has no real beaches. Going for a swim requires a long climb over a stretch of stones. But when you finally make it into the water, the experience is everything you could have hoped for and more.

Marco bought a house here about thirty years ago. It is a typical island dwelling, a tiny rectangular building with thick walls and a flat roof. It has two rooms with small windows and doors that open out onto a wide terrace. The sweeping view is simply breath-taking. You can spot the six other Aeolian islands and Sicily in the distance.

The house is one of the highest on the island. If Marco needs something from the village, he has to walk down (and up) 500 steps. Although the elderly painter is still quite energetic for his age, he does his best to plan his purchases in order not to have to walk down every day.





The house's walls are like his paintings, covered in multiple layers of pink. They reveal an entire history, bleached by the elements and time. Marco chose the house because it is a quiet place to withdraw and dedicate himself to his work. Even the village cat knows that his house is a haven of tranquillity. It is very basic, without electricity or running water. Instead he has a well with very cold, refreshing water. He uses the tiny, cool cave under his house as a natural fridge to store his food.

Marco spends most of his day working. He likes to paint and draw and still believes in writing letters. He enjoys the company of people, has spent a lot of his life travelling and has a great circle of friends who live around the world. They regularly receive a letter or a postcard from their friend from his rocky outpost in the Mediterranean.



