



let the story begin...

The Hidden Writer Workshop Retreat

13 - 15 August 2021

Sherri McIver and Ingrid Gaiotto welcome you to this fully accommodated workshop retreat. Explore your hidden writer in a convivial atmosphere, delight in delicious local food and wine and enjoy an introduction to historic, artistic Castlemaine. Local residents are encouraged to participate.

'Writing is the axe that breaks the frozen sea within.' Franz Kafka

This workshop retreat is ideal for those who want to write but somehow can't get around to it. It's also for anyone well into their first work but wondering where to take it.

We'll explore how to keep going once you start. It's not as easy as it sounds. We'll push the limits we place on ourselves. Let's plan to define the character of your characters, become more present in your observation, express the connection of landscape to your themes, write dialogue that jumps off the page and enjoy the poetry in everything.

Alchemy turns base metal into gold. The first step of alchemy is called *nigredo* (darkening). It is the burning away of what is not essential. This is the way we work with our imaginations. We let the image reveal its meaning. The second step is the whitening. *Albedo*. Where did the image take you? What did it reveal? Quite possibly, the beginning of a story.

Sherri McIver shares writing advice and sources of inspiration gathered over a lifetime. You'll engage in writing exercises created to build confidence and proficiency and be given the creative tools to continue your writing journey. This is a writing workshop unlike any other. The group is deliberately kept small so everyone benefits from individual mentoring. The beautiful and comfortable workshop space allows plenty of room for your imagination to roam and there are added outdoor experiences to aid with inspiration.

Ingrid Gaiotto has a passion for hospitality inspired by her Italian heritage. During the workshop retreat Ingrid will provide the food and drink for your enjoyment on the select days and evenings meals are provided. An experienced tour operator, Ingrid will also lead you on an immersive encounter with Castlemaine, guaranteed to stimulate ideas for your writing and a deeper experience of this historic town.

The Workshop Facilitator



Hidden writer

Sherri McIver A writer nearly all her working life, Sherri began her career as a journalist before spending many years as an advertising copywriter. She's written scripts for TV as well as poetry and song lyrics and is currently ghost writing and editing several memoirs. Sherri has held many successful creative workshops in Central Victoria, Northern Queensland, Western Australia and Melbourne. Everyone who attends her workshops experiences the realisation that they are an extraordinary individual with a unique, creative voice.

"Sherri's workshops provide a safe, nurturing environment to kickstart a creative discovery or recovery. Her feedback is practical, technical and specific but she also somehow encourages students to open their minds to the wider possibilities of their own imaginations. Since participating in her workshop I've set achievable writing goals, developed a sustainable daily practice and one of my short stories was recently longlisted for the Sidney Hammond Memorial Prize and published in Hawkeye Publishing's annual anthology. Thanks Sherri, for your encouragement and generosity."

Dawn Edmonds - McKinnon, Victoria

"To write is a basic desire which requires much more than a basic talent. Attending The Hidden Writers workshop helped me understand how I could take my fledgling ideas and shape them into something worth sharing with others. Sherri McIver has a keen understanding of the written word and in these wonderfully safe and engaging workshops Sherri helped me find my 'hidden writer'."

Sue Foley - Bentley, Victoria

Your Host



In giro

Ingrid Gaiotto is a hospitality & tourism entrepreneur, interior designer and educator, known for taking unforgettable tours to her home country, Italy. Her warmth, humour and intimate knowledge of the Goldfields introduces a new perspective to the region. As host and guide, Ingrid is enthusiastically welcoming and gracious.

"Ingrid, we had a wonderful trip with you and can't thank you enough for the care and attention that you gave us all. Definitely the best organised trip that we have been on ... A truly memorable experience."

Chris Spriggs - Brisbane, Queensland

Your Accommodation



The **NOTHERN** Arts HOTEL

The Northern Arts Hotel is the latest Castlemaine venture for Maggie Fooke, former owner of the Brooklyn Arts Hotel in Fitzroy and she brings her unique flair to this place of warmth and welcome. One of the hotel's great advantages is the presence of the renowned Johnny Baker's French patisserie right next door and any free time can be taken up with an easy stroll to the beautiful Castlemaine Botanic Gardens or The Mill, the town's newest artisan precinct.

Experience Historic Castlemaine



Castlemaine is blessed with historic architecture, a stunning natural landscape, beautiful gardens, great restaurants and a thriving cultural scene, making it one of the most exciting destinations in Australia.

The region has hung onto its gold rush charms, while welcoming a whole new generation of residents and visitors who have added fresh life to an area already redolent with natural beauty and history.

Castlemaine prides itself on its creative population of writers, musicians, artists, poets and many bookstores.

The Program

Friday 13 August, 5pm start

After arrival and settling into your room, you are greeted with a traditional Italian *aperitivo*, followed by a fully catered dinner featuring local food and wine.

Saturday 14 August

The Hidden Writer workshop commences at 10.00am and finishes at 5.15pm, with a break for morning tea and lunch. Weather permitting, Ingrid will guide you on a short afternoon tour of a favourite Castlemaine location, where we'll engage in an outdoor writing exercise. Dinner is at your discretion, offering you a chance to explore some of the fabulous local restaurants.

Sunday 15 August, 5:30pm finish

The Hidden Writer workshop commences at 10.00am and finishes at 5.15pm, with a break for morning tea and lunch.

Meals

We kick off the retreat with an indulgent Italian *aperitivo* and opening night dinner. Other meals include a light breakfast with delicious French pastries from Johnny Baker's, morning tea and a catered lunch (served at 1pm) on Saturday and Sunday. Saturday night dinner will be at your discretion and will offer you the chance to explore the area.

Accommodation

Every room is large and comfortable, however, only five rooms have en suite bathrooms (and incur a small supplement). There are also two twin rooms available. Please book early if you'd like to secure one of these. Also note that the boutique accommodation is in a historic building and rooms are accessed via stairs, with no lift available.

Cost

Double en suite (single use) – \$1,250pp

Double bedroom (single use with nearby private bathroom) – \$1,190pp

If you prefer to share a room with a friend, the cost is reduced to \$1,090pp

Non-residential – \$790pp (excludes accommodation/breakfast)

The price includes an opening night aperitif, dinner and wine; all breakfasts, morning teas and lunches; accommodation; and writing-related activities and handbooks.

How to Book

The Hidden Writer Workshop Retreat is strictly limited to 10 people. To book your place, please contact Ingrid Gaiotto on 0418 418 288 or email ingrid.gaiotto@bigpond.com

We will email you a confirmation, a Booking Form and an invoice requesting payment in full (please refer to our Terms and Conditions below).

Terms & Conditions

If you make a booking to attend The Hidden Writer Workshop Retreat, you are agreeing to the following terms and conditions:

Payment

All bookings must be accompanied by a signed Booking Form and payment in full.

Cancellation

In the event of a cancellation made by us, due to COVID-19 imposed restrictions; not reaching minimum numbers; or other reason, your payment will be refunded in full. However, we are not responsible for any other costs incurred by you as a result of the cancellation (for example, your travel or other accommodation costs).

If you have to cancel for medical reasons, you will be required to present a medical certificate and your payment will be refunded in full. Otherwise, if the cancellation is made up to 14 days before the workshop, we will refund your payment minus an administration fee of \$250, which may be transferable to a future The Hidden Writer Workshop Retreat, at our discretion. If you cancel less than 14 days before the retreat, the total payment made by you is non-refundable.

If minimum numbers for the retreat are not reached, the retreat will be cancelled and your payment refunded in full.

General Conditions

Please note that all participants on The Hidden Writer Workshop Retreat 13-15 August 2021 must be aged 18 years and over.

We reserve the right to ask any participant to leave the retreat if we consider their behaviour to be unacceptable or detrimental to the health or wellbeing of others on the retreat. In this circumstance, you will not be entitled to a refund.

The Hidden Writer Workshop Retreat reserves the right to make changes to the program.

“There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you.” Maya Angelou