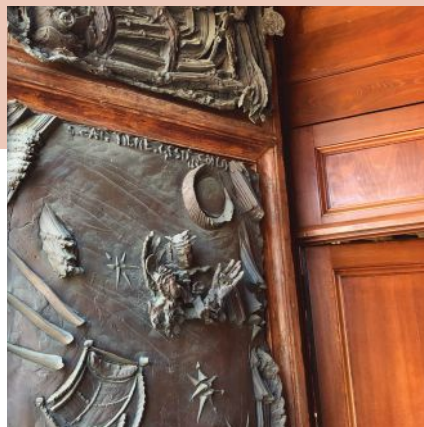






# Custom Doors of Italy

*A vacation adventure in Italy revealed a treasure trove of ornate, historic, and unusual doors.*



BY LORI GREENE, DAHC/CDC, FDAI, CCPR

In years past, I have often combined family vacations with photo safaris — always on the hunt for beautiful and interesting doors. This year I spent two weeks touring Italy — Milan, Lake Como, Verona, Venice, Siena, Florence, Naples, Capri, Rome, the Vatican (which is not actually part of Italy), and other stops in between. It was a fabulous trip with so much to see and experience.

I don't know if it's coincidental that I am drawn to international destinations with amazing doors, but this trip was no exception. From the grandest cathedrals to the least-traveled alleyways, there were beautiful doors everywhere — not to mention the art, architecture, history, and food. I could fill this entire issue of the magazine with the hundreds

of photos that I took; it was incredibly difficult to choose which photos to share.

I highly recommend Italy as a vacation destination — it's a beautiful country with a rich history and a variety of landscapes and cultures. The people are friendly, the food is delicious, and there are so many more doors to see!

This article includes a small sample of the doors of Italy.

## Cathedral Doors

When searching for the most beautiful doors of Italy, the cathedrals, basilicas, and churches are obvious places to start. There are tens of thousands of churches in Italy, and many contain artwork that rivals any museum. Often the doors are works of art as well, and the architecture is unlike anything I have seen outside of Europe. I visited at least 20 churches in Italy with varying levels of grandeur; these entrance doors are from Milan, Florence, Siena, and the Vatican.

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Opposite page: The Vatican. Above: Florence, Siena, and Milan.

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## Wheel-Chasers

Some doorways and portals in Italy still have “wheel-chasers” or “guardstones,” which range in design from utilitarian to extremely ornate. Typically made of cast iron or stone, they were originally used to protect door openings from the wheels of carriages and carts.







### Pairs and Wicket Doors

Many homes and businesses have pairs of doors — whether the door opening is narrow or wide. For the larger openings, wicket doors are common. Wicket doors are typically smaller doors within the larger door opening, which allow one person to pass through without having to open the doors fully. The smaller doors are not only easier to operate — they are less likely to be a security risk.





## Knobs and Knockers

Ornate door knockers are extremely common, as are stationary knobs or other decorative ornaments installed on the outside face of the door. These are typically made of cast brass, bronze, iron, or other metal, but sometimes include a carved wood base. On pairs of doors, it's easy to see the worn finish on the most frequently used door leaf.



## Doors of Venice

Many of the doors in Venice show signs of water damage and are often retrofitted with plates of stainless steel or other material which are intended to reduce the amount of water intrusion. I spotted the blue door, shown on the opposite page, at the end of a long alley and had to get a closer look.





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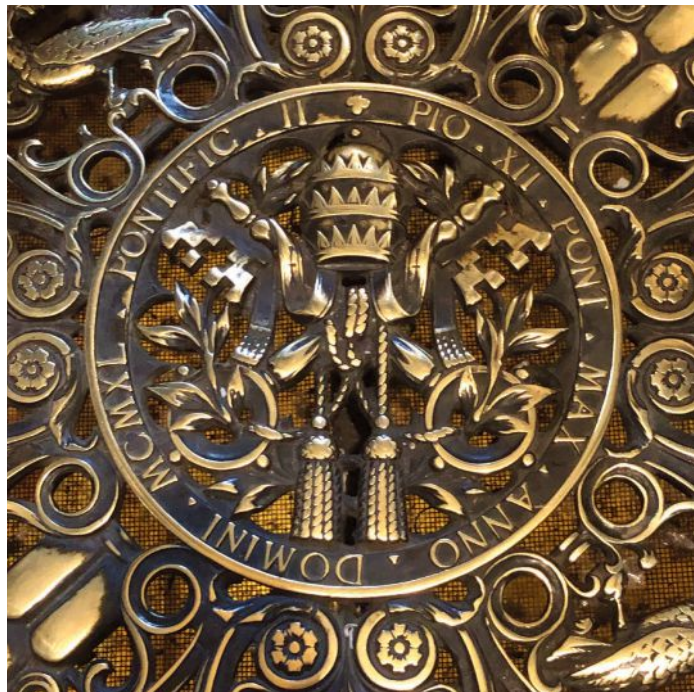
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## Crossed Keys

When visiting Vatican City, and particularly St. Peter's Basilica, I was intrigued by the symbol of two crossed keys representing the keys of heaven. The layout of the basilica is said to be vaguely key-shaped (or the shape of a keyhole, depending on who you ask), and there are dozens of keys depicted in paintings, sculptures, mosaics, floor patterns, marble wall panels, and other architectural elements. +



**LORI GREENE, DAHC/CDC, FDAI, CCPR**, is the manager of codes and resources for Allegion. Email: [lori.greene@allegion.com](mailto:lori.greene@allegion.com). She is shown here at the Milan Duomo, the cathedral church of Milan, Lombardy, Italy. The cathedral took nearly six centuries to complete.