

Vacation in Italy 1998

October 13, 1998, left at 5 a.m. in the morning for the airport. Took the 7 a.m. flight to Newark, New Jersey. Took the 5 o'clock flight that evening to Rome, Italy. Arriving at 9 a.m. in the morning on the 14th. We were met by our tour director Salvatore Barberi. After a meeting to be brief on the rest of our trip, we had three hours to rest. We met Salvatore in the lobby of the hotel at 5 p.m. and went sightseeing and to dinner.

Note for the 14th, Roma is very much like Boston, with narrow streets and lots of hills and cars. Very fast drivers. They drive very small cars and pay \$6.00 for a gallon of gas. It seemed to me that they drove crazy and stopped and parked when and where they wanted too. Roma is going through lots of repairs and cleaning, getting ready for the big event with the Pope in the year 2000. We were told that one of the sealed doors at St. Peter's Basilica will be open on the first of January, 2000. They are expecting not less than 26 million people to come to Roma in 2000. Salvatore told us that 57 million people live in Roma.

We stayed at San Giorgio Hotel in room 414, downtown Rome. We were in Roma for two days.

October 15th, Thursday, Today is my mother birthday, she is 80 years old. We went to St. Peter's Basilica, Sistina Chapel, and St. Peter's Square in Vatican City. We saw were the Pope greets the people. Our guide for the day was Carlo, he told us a lot about Roma, the Pope, and other history facts. After lunch, we went to St. Sebastian Catacombes, and the Roma Coliseum. While at the Coliseum, we were talking to a guy dress as a Roman Soldier, he told us that he once lived in Greeley, Colorado. Tom and I couldn't believe we went all the way to Italy, to meet someone from Colorado.

For dinner, we went to a nice restaurant with extremely good food, lots of fun music and singing. We even had a birthday cake for mom. After dinner we went to see the Spanish Steps and the Trive Fountain, where we all made our wish by tossing a coin in the fountain. What a wonderful evening.

October 16th, Friday, We left Roma for Pompei and Sorrento. Our guide was Mary Lou, she took us through the hidden city that was buried from an eruption of Mt. Vesuvius 2000 years ago. Pompei has very good farmland due to the remains of the eruption of the volcano. During the time of the explosion there were 20 thousand people, that died from the gas's from the volcano. This two hours tour of Pompei was very hard to walk for a healthy person, it was twice as hard for anyone with a walking disability. Mom was glad to have her cane with her. These Pompei people were very smart, they had running water, a drainage system, drinking fountain in the center of the square, and even street lights, using marble rocks that would give off light, by the light of the moon.

I can see, where so many of today's ways had been past down to present date.

We had lunch on the outside of the hidden city. Then we went onto Sorrento which means the land of the Mermaids. It was the home of many privates at one time.

In Sorrento, we stayed at the Hotel Cesare Augusto in room 424. Salvatore "Our Papa" took us to the famous wood furniture factory to see the beautiful wood items. Tom brought me a beautiful music box with the song "Return to Sorrento". Mom brought two art items. One of St. Peter's Basilica in wood, which she gave to me, and the other a 3D painting for Johnnie. While talking with the man at the shop, he knew our name Dezzutti. Only in Italy it is spelled De zutto or de Zutto. He said, this was a very common name in Italy. After dinner, Tom and I took a walk, before going in for the night.

October 17th, Saturday, we went on a tour of the Isle of Capri the large island, with our guide Patrica. She also told us about the other side of Capri, which is called Annacapri which means small island. Capri was first used as a port to receive items from all parts of the world. Greeks were the first to live there. They showed the Italian many of today cultures. The island is protected by St. Michael the archangel. We took a ferry ride to reach the isle on the other side where we had lunch. We had our dinner at our hotel.

October 18th, Sunday, we left Sorrento and stopped at Foligno for lunch that afternoon. Then onto were they made Cameo's from sea shells. They were lovely and very expensive. Since, it was Sunday, the workers weren't there. Then we went onto Assisi. We arrived in the late afternoon at our hotel Abergo Giotto, room 34. Salvatore took us to meet our guide Guiseppe. He told us all about Assisi, St. Francis and St. Clara. We were only able to see the lower smaller church. The upper and larger church was being cleaned for the Pope's visit. After dinner Tom and I visited some of the shops and walked up to the main square. Assisi is not a large place, but we weren't able to see all of it, because we were there only for a brief time. Mom was walking with some of the ladies in our group, and they got themselves lost going back to the hotel. Tom had to save them.

October 19th, Monday, after breakfast, we left for Venice. We had lunch in Ravenna, and we saw one of the oldest churches St. Apollinare Basilica. It rained most of the day. When we arrived at the Ramada Hotel in Venezia room 406, it was still raining, and Salvatore had to cancelled our plans for the evening.

October 20th, Tuesday, we took a ferry over to Venezia. We seen St. Mark's Basilica and St. Mark's Square where all the pigeons go. It was really neat. The pigeons would come right up to you and land on your arms or head. You could buy birdseeds to feed them. For lunch, we took a boat over to another island about 20 minutes away, a fishing village called Burano. We ate at a really nice restaurant with good food. We visited the many shops, and seen the village of many bright colored house's. In this village they had a lace factory and all the lace was made by hand. Beautiful work! We also saw the Venetian glass blowers. They were very fast and good at their work.

As we were getting ready to return to Veniza, mom stayed to get on the wrong boat and Tom had to save her again. Later that afternoon, we went for a gondola ride and was serenaded along the way.

It's hard to believe that this is the way people really got around years ago. Very narrow paths. From the gondolas, we saw many houses, hotels and shops that you could only get to by gondola. It was very interesting, and a pretty place.

One of the ladies in our group Julia got lost, while we were on the gondolas. We had to leave without her, and the Veniza police returned her to the hotel later that night.

We had all our dinners 7:30 p.m. or later. "When in Rome do as the Romans do."

October 21st, Wednesday, leaving Venezia, we stopped at Milano and had lunch. In the early afternoon, we arrived in Varese. There we saw the Aera where the famous gladiators once did battle. Then we went to see the house where Juliette lived. We were able to go into the famous courtyard, where Juliette balcony and Romeo stood in history. We walked around Signoria Square and Park. These were all in the town of Varese. We arrived late in the day at the Grand Palace Hotel in Varese. As we drove up to the hotel we could see that there were many trucks and equipment outside the hotel. On the equipment it said "movie people". Was that what it sound like? Yes, it was. There was a movie being filmed there by Mel Brooks. After we saw our room 505, which was on the top floor. Tom and I went walking around the hotel, and we seen Mel Brooks. Mr. Brooks was also staying at our hotel.

For dinner tonight, Salvatore, took us to Impolnia, up a very winding road, not much wider than one car to fit on it. It was a very tight squeeze, but two cars could pass each other. There were moments of wondering, if we were really going to arrive in one piece. Our driver Angelo was wonderful. He could move that bus in ways that were unbelievable. We arrived at the top of the mountain at the restaurant LaVallombrosina a nice place with good food. Returning back to the hotel, Angelo drove another route. The winding road was to add a little excitement to the evening. And It Worked!

October 22nd, Thursday, Lake Como is our destiny for today. It was the most beautiful place we seen so far. I really liked it there. Lake Como is shaped like the letter Y, and in the center of the Y is a town called Bellagio. We had lunch there after visiting an old time wine cellar. Later that day, we crossed the boarder into Luno, Switzerland. We stayed a couple of hours, before returning to our hotel in Varese. Our hotel was once a Palace dating back to the 14th century and made into a hotel. We had dinner at the hotel, which was very nice.

October 23rd, Friday, on our way to Florence, we stopped to see the Tower of Pisa. It was breath taking. You have to see the tower to truly enjoy it. We had lunch in the square, before returning to the bus. As we arrived in Pisa, and was over taken by the sight of the tower, two gypsy girls attack one of the men in our group and stole his wallet. It happen so fast, they were finished within 7 to 10 seconds. Poor Pete, didn't have any idea what happen to him. The two women were long gone. We continued on to Florence, to our hotel the Grand Hotel Mediterraneo in Firenze room 120.

October 24th, Saturday, the next morning we went on a two hours tour with our guide Patricia. She told us about the many Basilica, arts and marble statues of Florence. We saw the famous statue of Michaelangelo's "David", among others. The two Basilicas were St. Mary of the flower and Holy Cross. The Holy Cross Basilica was done in three shades of marble, white, light green and light rose. The same colors of the Italy flag. What a beautiful church.

It was a misty raining morning. After the tour, we had lunch in the main square and did a little shopping. We returned to the hotel for a short nap. Tom and I walked to the down town area, and through the small park across the street from our hotel.

Before going to dinner, we went to see the Fountain of David at a park, that over looked the city. For dinner tonight, we went to Palazzo Borghese. This was a restaurant done in the Reassance theme. It was great fun and the costumes were beautiful. Tom was chosen to take part in the fun. It was a most enjoyable evening. We have some great pictures of Tom dancing.

October 25th, Sunday, we are on our way to Siena were St. Catrina and St. Domenico had lived. We saw both of their Basilicas. Siena wasn't much larger than Assisi. We then drove to Tevere on our way to Roma, and stopped for lunch. In the late afternoon, we arrived at the Sheraton Golf Hotel room 557, in Roma. Resting for a while, then onto our last supper, and night in Italy. We were taken to a truly fine restaurant with opera singers and lots of music and singing. The three singers were a lot of fun. We all had a great time.

It's hard of think of going home tomorrow, and that our vacation has come to an end.

Our tour director Salvatore was great to all of us, and our driver Angelo was perfect.

October 26th, Monday, leaving Roma at 8o'clock for New Jersey USA, and arrived about 9 hours later. We then had a 5 hours lay over for the flight to Denver. By the time we arrived, picked up our car, and drove home it was close to midnight.

Home Sweet Home! What a wonderful trip!

P.S. We have two photo albums of wonderful pictures, and some very nice souvenirs.

THE END