

Created by: Debra C. Argen

Rome, Italy



Rome, Italy, called the “Eternal City”, is truly a city that eternally enchants and delights.

There is almost a magical quality to the city, and I continually marvel at its beauty as I discover more of its secrets.

Edward F. Nesta and I traveled to Rome in October 2004, from Firenze, Italy via train, (Read our article on **Firenze and Tuscany** in **Destinations**), using tickets that we obtained through **Rail Europe**, www.raileurope.com, in the United States prior to leaving for our trip. Rail Europe makes traveling from city to city, or country to country in Europe very easy, since with tickets in hand there was no waiting in long lines to purchase tickets. Passengers should arrive at the station at least 20 minutes before the train is scheduled to depart. The train was clean, comfortable and attendants came by with snacks and beverages, which were included in the price of our first class tickets. We arrived in Rome, and went directly to our beautiful hotel, the **Hotel Eden**, www.hoteleden.com. (Read our article on the **Hotel Eden** in **Hotels & Resorts**.)



Art abounds in Rome, from the architecture and ruins, to the museums, and street artists, and we explored them all. Our first museum stop was to our old favorite, the **Galleria Borghese**, www.galleriaborghese.it, to reserve tickets for a 5:00 pm entrance. With tickets secured, we explored their “Secret Gardens”, as well as their English boxwood labyrinths surrounded by sculptures and a reflecting pool. We walked through the park, past the **Zoo** and decided to visit the **Galleria Nazionale d’Arte Moderna**, www.gnam.arte.beniculturali.it, for the first time. The building is a monumental structure and houses an impressive collection of art by Jackson Pollock, sculptures by Alberto Giacometti and Alberto Viani, bronzes by Rodin, Alexander Calder mobiles, and many other important artists.

On the last Saturday of each month, the city of **Rome Tourism Office** www.comune.roma.it offers free city tours, and since they were exploring the **Monserato** area, which we had not previously visited, we decided to go along. We met the Guide at the **Piazza Ricci** for a very informative tour of where some of the most important families began to build their homes. We began at the end of the street where there was a home from the Medieval Ages, which dated back to 1470. From there we passed the 16th century **Palazzo Incornati**, and had a view into their courtyard. The Palazzo has frescoes on the outside painted by students of the artist, Raphael. This winding street is very charming with palazzos and churches, and street corner shrines that make it worthwhile exploring.

We returned at 5:00 pm to the Galleria Borghese, the former palazzo of the Borghese family which houses a truly remarkable collection of art, from Bernini sculptures to paintings by Caravaggio and Canaletto, among many others. This is one of our favorite museums in Rome, and we always try to make time in our schedule for a visit. The palazzo is astonishing with in-laid marble floors, frescoed walls, and bas-reliefs and then there is the art collection, which is opulence at its best. Probably our favorite sculpture at the museum is Bernini’s Apollo and Daphne created between 1622-1625, and is a tribute to his genius in capturing life in marble. You can see the anguish in Daphne’s face, and you expect Apollo to reach out and touch her, so realistically captured by the artist. Make sure you stop in Room number 3 to see this exquisite

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sculpture. The museum is closed on Mondays, so plan your schedule accordingly.

In the evening, we went to the bar at the **Hotel Eden**, which was named Best Bar in 2004, to enjoy aperitifs with Achille Di Carlo, Executive Assistant Manager of the hotel. We sat at an outside table listening to live piano music, with panoramic views of the city, and under a full-moon sky, watched a magnificent fireworks display, which of course, Achille told us that he had arranged especially for us! Since we were in Rome during the historical E.U. signing, the fireworks were surely in celebration of that, but at the Hotel Eden, anything is possible. General Manager, Marcel Levy, always looking to keep the hotel fresh, is adding Le Caveau to the Terrace, which will be a wine tasting, and private dining room with 1,000 bottles of the best of Italian wines, as well as a humidor, which gives us something to look forward to on our next trip to Rome.

Whenever possible, we try to stay at a few of our favorite hotels in a city or explore some new ones as well, to provide different hotel views for our readers. After a wonderful stay at the Hotel Eden, we went to stay at another of our favorite hotels in Rome, the **Hotel Majestic Roma**, www.hotelmajestic.com. (Read our article on the **Hotel Majestic Roma** in **Hotels & Resorts**.)

Another day we went to the **Museo di Roma** – **Palazzo Braschi** www.museodiroma/comune.roma.it, an imposing 18th century palazzo worth the visit for its stunning architecture as well as extraordinary collection of paintings,



costumes, and sculptures. Interesting history notes on the collection is available in English as well as in Italian. Located in the Piazza Navona, we chanced upon this museum just as it was beginning to rain, and since we did not have umbrellas with us, we went in to get out of the rain, which proved to be a serendipitous find.

We also had the good fortune of being in the right place at the right time, and were in Rome for the **Degas Exhibit** at the **Complesso del Vittoriano**, museovittoriano@tiscali.it (October 1, 2004 until February 1, 2005). The exhibition included important pieces of his photographs from the late 1800's, sketches, bronzes and paintings. We also climbed the steps of the **Vittoriano**, which the Italians call the "typewriter". This grand-scale white marble monument is the home of the tomb of the unknown soldier, and has massive columns, sculptures, and frescoed walls. The ceilings have bas-reliefs called the New Sciences, which were completed in 1911.



The floors are inlaid with various marbles to create intricate patterns. From that high vantage point we were rewarded with views of the city as well as the **Foro Romano e Palatino** (Roman Forum and Palatino Hill), providing ample photo opportunities. If you are in Rome for the first time, walking around the Roman Forum is de rigueur, as well as the **Colosseo** (Coliseum), which history buffs as well as gladiator film fans will certainly appreciate. The ruins are amazing, and every time we visit, our imaginations run wild imagining what life must have been like during that time.

While at the **Complesso del Vittoriano**, we visited **Il Museo Centrale del Risorgimento** (The Central Museum of Italian Risorgimento), www.risorgimento.it, a free museum with interesting historical artifacts

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of the history of Rome, and World War I memorabilia.



We stopped at the **Basilica di Santa Maria ad Martires Pantheon** (Pantheon), an architectural marvel of 142 feet wide by 142 feet high and with a 27-foot opening at the top. When you stop to realize that this was started in 27 B.C. and then rebuilt in 123-136 A.D., it is even more impressive. The artist, Raphael, (1520), is interred here. It should be noted that if you plan on visiting any churches in Italy, visitors in shorts are not allowed to enter and women are required to have their arms covered.



We continued playing tourists and tossed a coin over our shoulder into the **Fontana di Trevi**. Film fans will remember this fountain from the film, "Three Coins in the Fountain", where people continue to throw a coin from their right hand over their shoulder so that they will have luck and return to Rome. Each time we come to Rome we always throw our coins in the fountain, and we keep returning, so who knows, maybe it works!

Of course, we made time in our visit to Rome to visit many excellent restaurants, and to sample as many of the gelato flavors as we could, with some of our favorites being hazelnut, tiramisu, mango, and pineapple!

Read our articles on some of our new favorite Roman restaurants including **La Veranda**, **La Ninfa** and **Margutta**, in **Restaurants**, as well as our other articles on **Rome in Hotels & Resorts**, **Chefs' Recipes** and **Music Scene**.

Next stop, Paris, France!

Read our articles on **Paris** in **Destinations**, **Hotels & Resorts**, and **Restaurants**.

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