

speaking of Italy



*A Personal Journal
by Steven Tambone*

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A STREET CORNER IN ROME

When I think about cities in Italy, the first place that usually comes to mind is Rome. If you're traveling to the country for the first time, consider making it your first stop because it provides a great indoctrination to the history, art and culture. Landmark treasures such as the Vatican Museum, Saint Peter's Basilica, the Pantheon, Trevi Fountain and Coliseum should not be missed. At the same time, avoid running from place-to-place trying to squeeze in too much during your stay - take some time to slow down and just enjoy the city! Go for a leisurely walk and wander about, sit for a couple of hours at an outdoor café, or take a morning stroll through a Roman market. Really "experience" Rome and observe it - you may find something else to love!

It was my wife Marion's first trip to Italy, and by chance, I found a room in a small boutique hotel centrally located to all the great attractions - there was so much I wanted her to see! As we pulled-up to this charming tiny piazza that first morning, I was thinking how the Eternal City has this aura, a mystique that truly makes it special - it just never seems to disappoint! Our driver grabbed our luggage from the trunk and bid us farewell - "Arrivederci!" The entrance to the hotel was on the second floor of a quaint-looking building situated right at the corner. Eager to start the day, we checked-in, stored our belongings and off we went!

After a busy day of sightseeing (and fighting the crowds), our room back at the hotel provided a much needed respite - it was elegant (yet simple), very well-kept and spotlessly clean. It had two glass doors that opened to a beautiful window overlooking the piazza below - it was literally right at the corner! I called over to my wife - "Mar, come here - you have to see this!" In front of us were four confluent stone streets surrounded by ancient buildings with flower-boxed, shuttered windows and beautiful flowing green vines - just

down the block we could see a peaceful courtyard in front of a small church. The area around the piazza was a restricted traffic zone - so there weren't any cars! At one corner, there was a small restaurant lined with white cloth tables and umbrellas - a host was greeting passersby with a polite "Buon giorno." Just across the street was a small food market, and through the door we could see a case filled with a variety of cheeses and Italian meats! I pulled over a few chairs and a small table and said - "be right back." I ran across the street to the market returning with some parmesan reggiano cheese, prosciutto and a bottle of red wine - and there we sat. At dusk, candlelit tables along the stone streets created a wonderful sense of intimacy as couples, families and friends began the evening passeggiata (stroll). Occasionally someone would look-up and wave - we'd hold up our glasses, nod and wave back - I can't remember a more memorable evening in Rome!



After three wonderful days, it was time to move-on to our next destination - our taxi had arrived and was waiting downstairs. As I helped Marion into the back seat that morning, I turned and looked-up at the window of our room one last time. I'd made a wonderful discovery - I found a place where my wife and I could just sit back and "take in" our extraordinary surroundings while talking about all the good things in our lives. It was a place where we felt like a part of the city, not just like visitors - and it was down a quiet side street away from all the hustle and bustle. It was a window that overlooked a small piazza right at a street corner - a street corner in Rome.

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WHY I SPEAK OF ITALY...

My greatest love is, and will always be my wonderful wife Marion – until my last breath. But a little over 25 years ago I began another great love affair - with a country across the Atlantic – Italy.

It's a place where the senses truly come alive – a place where life seems to slow down just enough so that you really feel like you're living! With each visit I have found something new to love, something new to learn – and I've always left, with a reminder that it's some of the simple things in life that really make it worth living.

As family and friends have come to learn, I'm always willing and eager to assist with travel suggestions. I also take great pleasure in sharing some of my wonderful experiences – some of the things I've learned. So although my blog – “Let's Make Sense” is all about personal finance and investing, I hope you don't mind, if every once in a while I digress by – *Speaking of Italy*.

Sincerely,

Steven Tambone

