



2009 Spring – Bettoja Newsletter

Rome on the fast track.

When the sleek red and cream “Freccia Rossa” streaked out of the **Stazione Termini** In December , it put Rome on the fast track to Milan, cutting the trip to about three and a half hours, compared to well over four . Now it is possible to make a comfortable day trip to Milan from Rome for business, shopping or sightseeing. It departs 2 times a day between Rome and Milan has a dedicated info desk at the departure platform where you can amend your reservation at the last minute if you need to board a different train from the one you have a reservation for. On board in the first class carriages stewardesses offer newspapers (Italian), beverages and a light breakfast or snack. Fares are aprox. \$140 first class and \$100 second class each way. There is a restaurant carriage offering a variety of meals: starting from a salad to a full 3 course meal for aprox \$40. Alternatively you can have a sandwich and a coffee at the bar... Rail time Rome-Florence is 1 hour 40 minutes, Florence Bologna 1 hour, Bologna Milano 1 hour. If your train is a non stop Rome-Milano you will make it in 3 ½ hours, if it stops in Florence and Bologna it will take 4 hours. It’s definitely the way to get from the airport to Rome Maria Lisella writes in *Jax Fax (Jan '09)* “ The Stazione Termini is where the 30-minute train ride from Fiumicino airport leaves travelersthe Airport Train costs 11 euros or about \$13 one-way and leaves every 30 minutes; it is the most painless ride into Rome ,and it is always on time.” And,the station is a block from the four Bettoja Hotels: Mediteraneo, Massimo d’Azeglio, Atlantico and Nord. You can arrange for a porter to pick up your luggage and walk to your hotel.. Nice!

The evolution of the Stazione Termini

The original Statzione , designed by Salvatore Bianchi rose in the fields and vineyards of the Esquiline hill in 1867,now the Piazza dei Cinquento,. It was thought to be too large at the time. But fifteen years later it was already inadequate. In 1911 a temporary a new ticket office was added as well as new set of track for passenger trains. In 1925 Angelo Mazzoni was asked to study a project for the enlargement of the original structure including an underground station and two terminus stations . Between delays in approval of plans, Mazzoni’s departure for South America and the 2nd World War, the new termini was not completely opened until December 1950! Again, it has been rebuilt – it is now totally 21st century, except for *Agger Servianus*, a ramification wall built in 378 BC fenced in beside the entrance to the station.The station was dedicated to Pope John 11 December 2006. Two floors are filled with art galleries, chic stores and boutiques where you can buy everything from the best *cappuccino*, lingerie at **Intimissimi**, a bag at **Bottega Verde**, even a **Ferrari!**. It has a large and well stocked bookstore. ... A wonderful place for last minute shopping or to kill time waiting for a train.

In Rome, art, music, theatre flourishes in the Spring

There’s an amusing version of Tosca going on at Teatro Flaiano, via S Stefano del Cacco 15. The **Piccolo Lirico** edition of Tosca is performed in a small theatre, with the main roles portrayed by emerging artists. The orchestra is diminutive, the set is designed to take the viewer beyond the literal and into the symbolic. Until May 30....It’s Darwin’s 200th birthday this year. A spectacular exhibit **Darwin 1809-2009** is in the Palazzo delle Esposizioni until May before it moves to Milan. Soon the opera will move outdoors in the baths of Caracalla: Midsummer Night’s Dream, Tosca and Carmen are scheduled. For more , click www.romaturismo.com... The website is new and full of info.

An interesting neighborhood

Through the years the neighborhood has had its ups and downs. But now, where there were uncared for buildings there are important museums, apartments, restaurants, shops, and the Stazione. One of the Rome's most important museum, The National Museum of Rome, located in four sites around town, has its headquarters in the **Baths of Diocletian**, a few blocks from the Mediterraneo. The **Palazzo Massimo alle Terme Museum** near the stazione, is celebrating its tenth anniversary of its restoration. The second floor has frescoes, some dating back to the first century, from the villa of Livia, wife of Augustus. In an article, *NYT*, January 25, '09 [New Light on Ancient Art](#) Elisabetta Povoledo writes "For the anniversary show, the

museum tinkered with several showcase exhibits.....to place them in a better light. In the case of the frescoes, a new lighting system was installed that recreates the sun's dawn-to dusk nuances. "It's rather nifty to watch" said Carlo Celia, an architect on the project. The other National Roman Museums are **Palazzo Altemps** and **Cripta, Balbi**..... Entrance fees to museums can add up so it might be wise to investigate **Roma Pass**. It costs 23 Euros and entitles you to free admission to the first two museums and /or archaeological sites visited, full access to the public transports system, and other reduced tickets and discounts. Good for three days. Click www.romapass.it for details.

Georgia's tips

Angelo and Jo Bettoja's daughter, Georgia, and her family live a few blocks from the Mediterraneo. They dine out frequently in the neighborhood. Here are three restaurants within walking distance of the hotel and Georgia's comments..... **Agata e Romeo**, Via Carlo Alberto 45 (06 44 66 115) www.agataeromeo.it/ One of the top five restaurants in Italy, family run. The menu is traditional Roman cuisine with innovative touches. Small and cozy, seats 30, so you need to book well in advance. Expensive, about 100 euros per person. Open for lunch or dinner. Closed weekends. Smart, casual dress. A five minute walk from the Mediterraneo.....**Ristorante Valentino**, via del Boschetto 37 (06 488 0643). This little classic restaurant is an old fashioned "osteria" (wine and a little bit of food) that serves a few very good dishes like *scamorza* (hot melted Italian cheese), steaks and vegetables, lovely salads, lot of wine and beer. Seats about 55. Prices are very reasonable, indeed: 20-25 euros per person, depending on what and how much you drink. Casual dress. Ten minutes walking distance from the hotel: Go down via Nazionale and turn left into via del Boschetto.....**Antica Trattoria La Matriciana** via del Viminale 44 (06-488 1775) www.Lamatriciana.it. Traditional restaurant offering good Roman cuisine. It is like stepping back in the '50s, nothing has changed, but it's very clean and orderly. Popular with tourists, seats about 80. Closed Saturdays. About 45-50 Euros per person. A five minute walk from the hotel: go down via Cavour, turn right on via Torino at first traffic light, then left on the big square- It's right in front of the Opera. More of Georgia's tips in the next newsletter!

Springtime in Florence

It's the International Year of Astronomy .2009 is exactly **400** years since Galileo made his first revolutionary observations by telescope. Celebrations are global, but the biggest show is a multimedia event at the *Palazzo Strozzi* in Florence, Galileo's birthplace, March 13 through August Florence's *Maggio Musicale* also takes place May and June - It's the 70th anniversary. The concluding concert on June 30th will be conducted by Zubin Mehta. The Tuscan countryside is bursting with blooms in Springtime and so are the gardens at Bettoja's Relais Certosa Hotel - fifteen minutes from the Ponte Vecchio, by mini bus. Situated in the Tuscan Hills in the shadow of a 14th century monastery, this charming 69 room hotel is a wonderfully relaxing place, especially in warmer weather when you can enjoy the large swimming pool, and a set or two of tennis. Good food, too.

Check www.Bettojahotels.it for rates and special offers.

Ciao