



**WF WORLD CUP  
COMPLETED WITHOUT  
ANY INJURIES**



**FLORENCE  
CITY OF CATHEDRALS  
AND SEARING HEAT**



**GET ON YOUR BIKE**

# ITALY 2022



## Uffizi Gallery

I visited the world renowned repository of art in 1983. I only had two hours at that time to rush around and admire what was on show. This time around Heather and I booked tickets for the late afternoon. All those classic photos you see in art books are actually here in the flesh in the Uffizi!! Thousands of renaissance paintings and sculptures. Rows and rows of them for people to gaze at longingly from all different angles. If you like this sort of art then you will be in your element. I did art in my senior year so it was particularly poignant. All the classic artists were on show. Lots of stylised poses both on canvas and lovingly carved out of marble. Every painting, every carving, every exhibit had its own unique story to tell. The crush of people was everywhere. The most well known paintings and sculptures were mobbed by the crowds. Nudes were

**“Hai voluto la  
bicicletta? E  
adesso pedala.”**

**Take a forced  
holiday in Italy?  
Now live with the  
heat!!**

everywhere. Nymphs and angels, Jesus and Mary, Zeus, famous people (mostly wealthy) - beauty and muscle in all its glory. The most strenuous part of the Uffizi is climbing up the stairs in the heat. All in all, the two hours we gave ourselves were more than enough for us. Enjoyable, yes, quality, yes, but such an overabundance in one place and much of it was the same. Artists trying to outdo each other. Opulence, wealth, lavishness, magnificence. Art. Uffizi - box ticked. Next!

## The Three Tenors

Heather has always yearned to attend a concert at the source of the music. She got her chance to be in the front row to listen to three tenors sing a repertoire of well known songs - not the world famous tenors but pretty good we thought. We arrived late due to a ticket mixup but the show, held in the old opera theatre, lived up to its hype. Sitting in front of us were Wayne and Shirley. All the songs were familiar tunes you hear in operatic performances were sung. The accompanying lady piano player was exceptional and at one point a couple of ballet dancers joined the singers and finally to top it all off, a highly skilled balalaika player chimed in. We loved the show. On the walk home, to end a memorable evening, we sat on the waist high parapet, high above the Arno, and were entertained by a busking flutist. The lights glistened on the water providing a magical atmosphere. A moment in time to savour - a time to breathe in this thronging city.

## A taste of Tuscan country

After a casual morning lie-in we walked a block to pick up our hire car. It was a short wait before we were off through the one way narrow city streets, over the Arno River, out to the countryside through the Chianti wine region towards Siena. We deliberately chose secondary roads. Being quite mountainous (ironically there were many ice warning road signs) we saw glimpses of valleys and vineyards as well as a few traditional villages. Lunch was enjoyed via a roadside cafe serving traditional Tuscan beef rolls with a backdrop of glorious scenery - green rolling hills, rows of grape vines, iconic pencil pines and lots of terra cotta topped stone houses. But the heat was oppressive even up here. Eventually we arrived on the outskirts of Siena and drove around to find car parking so we could walk into and enjoy the old town. We stopped to get our bearings and opened a window to sample the air. The blast furnace hit us and we quickly shut the window, turned the car around and headed back to the hills. Yea naaa!! Imagine walking around in that heat. Not likely! Growing old has one advantage - you get to know your limitations!! We ambled slowly back enjoying the view and after negotiating a number of closed streets and our GPS helping us through a maze of one way inner city lanes we arrived back at our apartment, a little stressed, but satisfied.

*Busy manic  
Florence - quiet,  
slow-paced rural  
Tuscan country.*



Pinocchio was born in Tuscany as was Leonardo Da Vinci and Michelangelo, Giotto, Petrarca, Galileo, Machiavelli, Donatello, Puccini, Brunelleschi, Botticelli, Amerigo, Galilei, Vespucci, and Carducci.

Tuscany is famous for its wine (Chianti) and its "no salt" 'pane sciocco' bread.

Tuscany also has the highest number of football teams in Europe.



