

FLORENCE
GROUP TOUR OF THE
MAJOR SIGHTS



TRAIN SPOTTERS
LIVING LIKE A
LOCAL?



ITALY 2022



A Reconnaissance Mission

All eleven of us currently at the hotel decided to head into Florence today. Luckily for us Roger speaks passable Italian. We walked to the nearby train station and Roger sorted out all the tickets for us. He then proceeded to be our tour guide — minus the whistle and long pole with Australian flag on top! We amiably strolled along stopping as any person wanted to access a shop or display. We personally, were not in a hurry to see everything because we have a flat in the heart of Florence (for a week) after the end of the competition. Iliana made it her mission to help Jason buy some handbags for his wife and daughter. Handbags acquired we

Players and partners jetting in from different corners of the globe at different times all sharing their tales - hilarious and heart warming at the same time.

wandered on to the local market where we decided to split up for an hour. The market was a mass of stalls selling leather products. This did not interest us much but we found the local version of Victoria Market and spent an interesting hour looking at the amazing display of fresh and dried food products. The array of pasta was of course startling. The mushroom and cheese stands were monumental in their array. Jars and bottles of tomato products galore.

It was extremely hot and stuffy outside, so when we met up with the group again, we suggested to go back to the food hall for lunch. It was packed but we all managed to find some food to our liking. We particularly enjoyed the ice creams that refreshed us greatly. After lunch some people wanted to see the huge cathedral nearby. We just observed its magnificence from the outside and stood in the shade with the poor exhausted horses. One looked near to collapse! The line of tourists wanting to enter to look inside went on for more than two blocks. We will explore this place much more next week.

After money changing and some ticket alterations for some group members, we made the train back to our hotel. By the time we arrived, I at least, was very glad to get inside (even to our “Very Best Exotic Marigold Hotel” look-alike).

Friendships

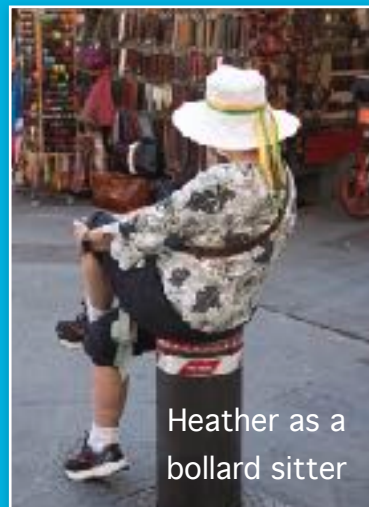
The value of this trip was, once again, the camaraderie engendered in the group. Football brings us together - memories and new friends combine. Lots of laughs and concern shown for others. Group events are not normally our thing, as we like to be free to do what we want. However this was a good day.

The day ended with a late training run organised for the relative “cool” of the evening. Sig, and most of the others appeared to be quite exhausted at the end of an hour. It does not bode well to be acting like a tourist and trying to play football on the same day. Hopefully the planned tours on the game days will not be attended by many of the players. Maybe the local Italian team used all this as a ploy to get an advantage over us (joke intended)!

Siggy and Jimmy proudly posted for Jen and myself as we photographed our men in their Aussie gear.

As a side note, I just went to the bathroom to discover that we no longer have water in the taps. This joins the fridge with no shelves or freezer compartment and the tele that does not work. That aside, we continued to laugh today. It’s a trip that we will remember for a long time for all the right/wrong reasons.

Hot, sweaty, tourist-filled Florence



Heather as a bollard sitter



Incredible array of pasta

Sitting at our local station, not knowing which platform the train was arriving on when the announcer tells us what we “need” to know in Italian. We all suddenly become interpreters. “Did anyone get that?” No one is any the wiser. Fingers pointing in all different directions. Interesting to see all the differing interpretations at work!!



Team meeting

