



ITALY 2022



Last Leg

This morning we left our little rural abode at Massa Martana. I personally, will be glad not to be sleeping on the floor — it was so hot in the bedroom for me that the last seven nights have seen me sleeping on a makeshift mattress under the fan in the living area - just to keep cool. Sig was fine - he did not mind the sweltering overnight heat as much. This place would have been a fabulous winter bolt hole. A lovely open fire, views of what would probably be snow covered mountains and numerous heaters throughout the house. But with the incessant and oppressive heat, day and night, not so, at least this time around.

Before WWII the Umbria region was regarded as Italy's centre of industrial development. The ravages of the war quickly changed that.

The next short leg of our journey takes us to yet another mountain stronghold village — Spoleto. We have two nights here. It is north-east of Massa Martana, so we obviously headed south-west! This was to give us a nice wide circuit enabling us to see more of what this region has to offer.

Over yet another mountain ridge we came upon more open country — no intense cultivation of vines and olives. Lovely quiet scenery of mountains and farms. After wriggling around the map for quite a number of kilometres we arrived at Narni. Like Amelia yesterday, Narni was lively and impressed with its maze of buildings. We did not venture far into the town as our time was limited but we did get as far as the main square with its usual duomo and formal buildings. We ventured inside a couple to catch a glimpse of the usual ornate interiors but decided not to walk to the end of town.

However, given it being midday, we did decide to try for a lovely pasta meal. We found a fabulous spot, down a shady side alley that looked promising. We were ushered in and sat in the cool shade of a courtyard. You could hear the cook in the kitchen next door cooking up a storm. Unfortunately the dishes we were served were not at all promising. Of the meals we have had in Italy over the years, not many have been to my liking. I am wondering whether our version of pasta and spaghetti dishes in Australia seem to be much richer in their sauces than what we have been served over here in “carbohydrate land”. When I cook a pasta meal, it has as much meat or sauce as the pasta itself. Not so here. And the pasta or spaghetti here always seems to be “molto al dente” which is something Sig likes, but not me. Pasta and spaghetti needs to be cooked so that it is soft and creamy - not hard and chewy. We even swapped dishes to see if the other one was any better. Na. Very disappointing! The search for a good Italian pasta/spaghetti meal continues.

After this Sig turned the car north towards Spoleto, via an upland area of vertical cliffs with a raging river running through it. We spied numerous rafting enterprises along the way and one very impressive waterfall - 165m tall (the highest man made waterfall in the world). It seems that the Romans were here centuries ago - baths and stone buildings everywhere. But we decided not to stop.

Our abode, the Hotel San Luca, is, by far, the classiest place we have stayed on this trip. However they still do not have tea making facilities! Bugger. At least we have aircon, a nice large bed, a TV that works (that Sig may be able to watch the Euro Women’s Final tomorrow night) and even a small balcony. Now for a good night’s sleep and then a walk up to Spoleto old town tomorrow. Apparently the breakfast here is something to look forward to — no hard boiled eggs for me! Hopefully there is at least English Breakfast tea - with lots of milk!!

It becomes very obvious when Italian’s talk that the Italian alphabet contains only 21 letters!!



Spoleto was founded by the Romans in 241BC. The town’s main claim to fame is its Piccolo Spoleto Festival, run annually, presenting a varied program that includes visual arts exhibitions, performances of classical music, jazz, dance, theatre, and choral music, cultural events and community celebrations, poetry readings, children’s activities, craft shows, and film screenings. If you are not into art then Spoleto is simply another Umbrian hilltop town, of which there are hundreds - all with church spires pointing the way to heaven.



Original stone bridge still standing - amazing!



Courtyard of our hotel

