

WEEKLY NEWS

Craig | Joanne | Peanut



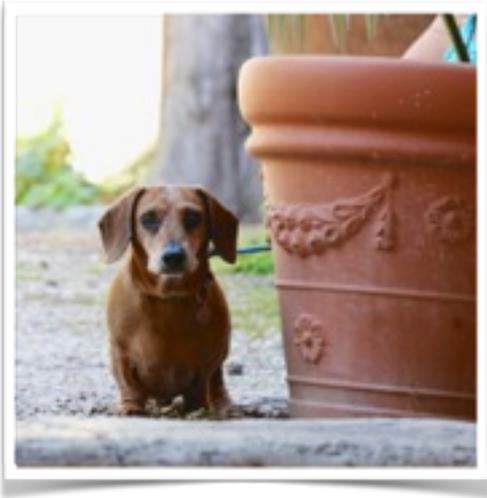
Monday: Castiglione Della Pescaia

It was still raining and looked like it was in for the day and normally we'd be off driving to the next destination but for some strange reason we stayed put. As I mentioned this place is a bit like a run down Butlins holiday camp but when you drive off the main street its not too bad.

We've found a spot just in the forest (with plenty spiders) and it has free water and service facilities, which is a rare find. For some reason they had two taps, a red one and a black one. Maybe one is drinking water, yippee? I walked over to a nearby motorhome and knocked on the door.

"Scoozee seenyora, akwa potabeelay, rose or neroa". "Si, Si akwa potabeelay". she proceeded to have a full





blown conversation with me in Italian. Maybe my accent is improving but then again I had just spent 5 minutes talking to myself in an Italian accent, to get in to the swing of it. Then the husband came to the door and joined in. How could I stop them? I just smiled like an idiot and nodded every so often. I didn't know the words for "shut up, I am English and they don't teach you any languages at school" After about 20 minutes they both stopped in sync, looked at me and smiled. I still didn't know which tap was drinking water, so "rose or neroa?" Then off they went again. This time they had an Italian discussion, which means waving hands and raising

your voice higher and higher until you are shouting at each other. Then they both looked at me, shook their shoulders and said Si rose e Si neroa. Half an hour later I returned to Homer and said to Craig "either will do". We took advantage of the services and topped up the water, washed Homer, did a bit of washing etc.

Despite the rain we still had our flip flop feet. You know what I mean...when your feet suntan but leave a distinct white mark with pattern of your flip flops. Mine are a nice V shape and quite clean cut but Craig's are more like two big lines with fading towards his ugly man toes. Why do men have ugly feet?

We were all set to prepare our hot evening meal when all of a sudden the rain stopped and the sun popped out. In typical British style we whipped on the shorts and t-shirts and lifted out the deck chairs. Our Italian camper neighbours were fascinated with us. Grandma sat in the window watching our every move whilst her son and great granddaughter slopped off to the back of the van (in thick overcoats) and sat on a tree stump. The Italians will stare at you all day and think nothing of it.

Craig's hair was getting a little long, so time for his first mobile mop cut. He plugged in the wahl, grabbed the little mirror and proceeded to trim...outside. At least we don't have to worry about cleaning up his bog brush hairs and anyway good nesting material for the spring birds. He did a good job for once!



Casserole on hold, we fired up the BBQ. T-Bone steak, chicken, sausage, salad and a few potato wedges. Swilled down with a nice glass of red wine. It smelt fab and tasted wonderful. Our new neighbours couldn't take their eyes off us and

so we exaggerated everything we did to make our show more exciting for them. We entrained them and they entertained us with their expressions. At one point, I remember sitting down, putting my feet up and then shouting and clicking my fingers at Craig, demanding a top up. Craig hurried to fill my glass, well you've never heard anything like it. The Italian mother was not impressed and she started bellowing at her husband. Clearly telling him that he was a lazy, bone idol husband and she'd had enough. It was funny.

It was about 9 pm, we were sat in the 'lounge' just starting to doze. Even Peanut was on his back snoring his head off. Then all of a sudden there was one almighty bang and we all jumped out of our skin. Jesus Christ, what the hell was that? Then a big bolt on lightening. It thundered like never before and sounded 10 times worse in a tin box. After about 5 minutes the heavens opened and hale pelted Homer. I could feel his little headlights flicker with every pellet of pain. Good job we are parked under the trees for a little shelter. Wait a minute, trees, lightening, tin box, not a good place. Just to be safe we turned out off the electricity and sat in the dark watching the storm. It lasted for several hours and eventually we dozed off to sleep.

Tuesday: Castiglione Della Pescaia to Rome



Woke all excited as we're off to Rome today. I've always wanted to visit Rome from being a little girl. I guess it is something to do with my catholic upbringing although not something I now practice. Craig's always wanted to see Rome for historical reasons, so our combination of interests so mean we get to see the best of Rome.

We decided to avoid the toll road and take the alternative route. Good idea from a scenic point of view but bad idea for Homer. He rattled and rolled and we felt every pot hole. The road was so bad, I am sure they'd laid this by just stomping their feet. The narrow, windy road was in need of repair and every squeak reappeared. By the time we reach Rome, Craig's looked like he was about to explode. He'd spent months sorting out every little squeak and in one small journey they'd all returned. It was like an orchestra of squeaks, playing in harmony with the pot hole drums and tambourine pan lids. With Craig ready to have a breakdown we headed in to Rome in the middle of rush hour, so now we had the honking Italian horns joining in. If there was anytime for praying, it was now. I didn't know whether to laugh or cry, so I kept stum with my eyes firmly fixed on the road ahead. Craig's posture said it all, slumped forward on the steering wheel, head in hands.

We arrived at Area Di Sosta LGP Roma, our chosen camping spot for Rome. Rome is known for theft just like any major city, so it was important to find a good campsite with lock up facilities and good security. For €15 a night this place had everything we are looking for and only 6km from the centre. Unfortunately they were full but they had a few spot on the grassed area. Personally, I prefer grass to stone, so everyone sorted.

We punched all the key points of interest in to the GPS and set off on our bikes. I won't go in to all the history and background of the sights but we managed to visit

San Giovanni in Laterano





Colosseum



Arch of Constantine



Roman Forum



Capitoline Hill



Plaza Venezia



Palatine Hill

Campidoglio Plaza



National museum



Santa Maria Maggoire



Rome was everything I expected and more. Everywhere we looked we could see something, it was like being a child in a toffee shop. The Giovanni Cathedral was the 1st place we stopped and outside it looked grand in size but that's about it. But OMG once inside it was

brehtaking. It was the most beautiful and elaborate church I had ever seen. I walked around in a daze.

Venezia square was interesting. It's more of a place where all the roads meet up, so lots of traffic coppers (one for you Clive!) trying to direct 10 lanes of traffic in to 5 lanes with a roundabout thrown in for fun. And I thought the new roundabout on the Leigh by-pass was bad! We slowly and cautiously cycled our way through until we came to a dead stop. Two coaches were having a nudging competition to see who could get down the street first. After 20 minutes of italian testosterone the traffic cop stepped in. By this time half of Rome were stacked up behind the coaches and the scooter boys were like little wound up toys. They were revving their 50cc engines and honking their horns like mad and with every minute the coil spring got tighter and tension increased. Then all of a sudden a gap appeared and Craig was off. Jammy bugger seized the opportunity and got out the chaos leaving poor me in the middle on a bloody push bike. As the gap widened I had no alternative to to pedal like billy oh because all the little wind up scooters were off! It was like donkey derby. I have no idea what gear I was in or where I was going but I just peddled like mad and made a bee line for Craig. When I got there I gave him one big cheesy grin, I beat them.

Inside Santa Maria Maggiore Church we folded up our Brompton bikes and sat down next to a pillar. We then took it in turns to walk around, so we didn't have to drag the bikes stopping looking at the guard came over and



After cycling 20km I was sooner finished by dinner

turns to walk around, so we didn't around. We got more people bikes than ever. Even the church asked for a bike demo.

well and truly knackered. No and I was in bobo land.

Wednesday: Rome part deux

As you can imagine I woke with a sore bum. John Wayne was nothing on my stance. 20km might have improved my fitness but it certainly did nothing for my walk, I could hardly move. We had so much to see and today we had to ride even further.

After about 20 minutes cycling my bum became numb, so I didn't feel the pain anymore.

Trevi Fountain



Spanish Steps



Ara Pacis



Michael Angelo Museum



St Peters





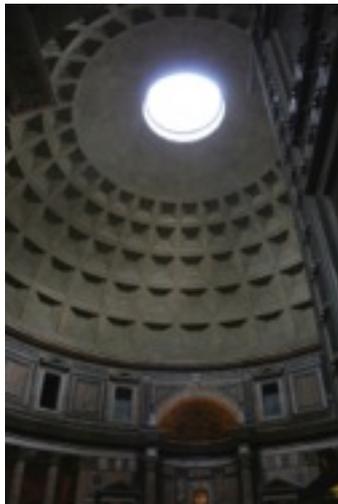
Vatican



Trastevere



Pantheon



The Ghetto



Pasquino Square



Navona Square



For lunch we had Pizza in a little cafe just at the side of Trevi fountain. Craig had meat and pepper and I had cheese and rocket. Have to say it was very nice but the pricing seemed weird...you paid by the kilo.



In total we cycled about 30km and when we got home I didn't feel too bad but needless to say, we didn't need any rocking.

Thursday: Rome part 3

You'll like this...the campsite has some pet budgies located right next to the gas fill up point. Was this done on purpose or just no thought at all?

Today is the rock concert, so we only set off at lunchtime. We did a tour of some of our favourite sites plus a few new ones for good measure and then we headed back to Giovanni square for the concert.

- San Giovanni in Laterano
- Colosseum
- Roman Forum
- San Clemente
- Villa Celimontana
- Santa Maria in Dominica
- San Gregorio Magno



The concert started at 3pm and it was buzzing. I wouldn't have a clue who the groups were but they sounded OK. I hummed along to quite a few because they were English songs just sang in Italian. We didn't stay too late, a little unfair on Peanut plus the fact we had to cycle 6km back home





The best shop in Rome...wish you were here Freya & Ruby xxx

