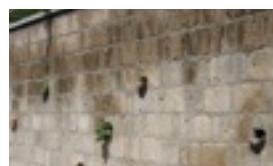


Rome to Pompeii

**STOP START A BIT
LIKE THE WEATHER**



**WASHING DIRTY
LAUNDRY
IN PUBLIC**



**DRAIN PIPE
BUILT IN TO SIDE OF
WALL**



**BREAD
HOW TO MAKE BREAD
IN THE SUN**

UPDATE



Friday: Rome to Baia

Up bright and early, so we gave Homer a bit of a clean and filled him up with fresh water. We settled the bill including €1 city tax, per person per day. Nice little earner for the city.

We headed back towards the coast to see what else the region of Lazio had to offer. First pit stop, Ostia Antica the port of ancient Rome with lots and lots of ruins. Oh nearly forgot, Craig did a full English for breakfast and it tasted so good. Then we headed



**Homer's canopy
wasn't folding
away correctly, so
Craig got out his
little tool bag and
fixed it. That's this
week's odd job
done.**

south and it felt very different from what we'd see so far. The fact it started to rain didn't help but the towns and villages all looked rather desperate and very run down. Almost like concrete blocks from the communist days. In some places, you wondered if anyone still lived there and as we got further south we passed more and more ghost towns. If in places you

did see people they looked well dodgy, so needless to say we kept going. I am guessing the recent recession has hit south Lazio harder than most and by the looks of it, it will take a lot for it to recover.



At Mondragone, we looked for a place to stay but every turning had a locked gate. A bit like they've started to do in and around Leigh to reduce crime rate. We eventually found one lane with access and what a bad decision. It was full of pot holes and very narrow. Poor Homer ended up doing a 30 minute aerobic session, which didn't impress Peanut one bit.

Cumae seemed quite a nice fishing town with plenty of space to park but the parking times didn't make sense. We drove around and everywhere was the same - no parking between 3am and 8am? We scratched our heads and decided it wasn't worth chancing. Later that day we discovered that in summer the nightclubs come out of the town and head to the Lido or beach hence the restriction on parking.

Winding our way up Torregaveta and we spotted a decent sized car park. Unfortunately we only stayed half an hour as the scruffy, wondering locals made us feel uneasy. Eventually we found a good spot just outside Baia - I wonder what this place looks like..guess we'll need to wait til morning, night night xxx

Saturday: Baia to Bacoli

Decent nights sleep considered we're on a public car park and next to the train tracks. Craig fired the kettle up and we sat and watched the world go by as we slurped our cuppa's. The local road sweep was busy picking up litter, bagging and placing in a specific spot for the bin men to collect. In about half an hour he'd filled half a dozen bin bags. The local police pulled up on the street adjacent. They stood there for ages looking up at a building.

Street Scenes



Young girl washing car screen.

Italian Cyclist

Mobile florist

They kept point and then waving their hands. Several people walked by and had a bit of a



chat with the police, shaking their heads before they proceeded with their journey. Could this be our 1st International crime? How exciting! Eventually the road sweep chap went over with his brush. He climbed on a step, raised his brush and knocked off a broken piece of marble window frame. The police were worried it might fall on a passer by. No CSI skills today.

We headed back to Bacoli and in to the phleorean fields. The fields are built on the volcano of Solfatara and it constantly gives off sulphurous gases and scalding vapours through cracks in the rocks. We were looking for a local aire but the streets are that narrow we turned in to someone's back yard. We turned around and then noticed a woman chasing after us. I wound down the window and she asked if we wanted to park the motorhome (in Italian). We accepted, turned

around and parked next to their old bedford motorhome....could this be a girlfriend for Homer? Her husband came out and showed Craig the water and a place to empty the toilet. What a cracking spot. Right in the middle of the phleorean fields and next to a animal sanctuary and park.

It was still raining and hadn't stopped for two days, so the ground was pretty saturated. Flip flops are lethal in rain and you might as well wear banana skins. Maybe we should have packed our wellies after all.

The rain backed off for 10 minutes, so we had little walk around our new patch. It was bazaar but I loved it. Imagine a valley will very steep slopes and the slopes are made up of rows and rows of terraces all growing lots of different crops. We are at the bottom of the valley and its just lush vegetation all around. It reminds me of the paddy field in Bali. We walked in to the field at the side and there were horses, donkey's, goats, rabbits and doves. All roaming freely. Not long and we were joined by the owners dog. Friendly mutt of the heinz 57 breed who we later named Vincenzo.

Late afternoon the rain stopped, so we took a walk in to town. Just as we were leaving



Homer, Vincenzo (the dog) came bouncing over all excited. We patted him on the head and he decided to join us for a walk. Vincenzo was a 'guide dog' in every sense of the word and he guided us all the way to the town. He never bothered us and stayed

about 10 / 20 feet in front. Every so often he



would glance back and make sure we were still following him. What a lovely dog.

We climbed up and up to the top of Barcoli castle and then down in to the town of Garibaldi. We looked for the biscuits but couldn't find them! As we wound down we passed loads of lemon and apricot trees. Jesus they have big, bobbly lemons here. This area is well known for its Limoncello - pure alcohol & lemon zest. Worth a try on a nice sunny day.

Eventually we reached the little port were we looked out to the bay with Vesuvius to the left and Ischia Island to the right. Even on a gloomy day like today, it looked beautiful.

Back at Homer and first things first... smackaroo dog chew for Vincenzo. The least we could do for the best tour to date.

Sunday: Bacoli day 2

Hurray the sun has his hat on. Quick breakfast and off out on the bikes. Peanut was all excited and sneezed with excitement. We cycled out of town towards Baia and there on the side of the road was an ancient amphitheatre. This area is covered in ruins and they've not even started to excavate or research. We cycled around the lago d'averno, an extinct volcanic crater. The locals call the lake Gateway to Hades because the vapours are meant to cause illness and death. After the lake we headed

up towards the top of the phelegrean field entrance. There smell of sulphur was pretty strong today and as we climbed higher and higher, it got quite strong. About half way up and I had to push the bike, it was too steep. By the time I got to the top I was wet through. My skin was like Sellotape, so tacky all my clothes were stuck to me. I couldn't wait to head back down and feel the cool breeze as I free wheeled all the way to the bottom.

Back in town and the church bells were ringing. The locals were pouring out of the church on to the street.



All dressed in their sunday best and having a good chin wag with their friends and family. As we cycled around you could see the families heading towards the port cafes for lunch. Hearing the

church bells and seeing all the people reminded me of when I was little. The church on the opposite corner to the Concert (knocked down years ago) used to ring its bells with pride. I loved to watch the bells from my bedroom window wishing I could go to a that church rather than St Richards (just cause it had bells).

In the afternoon we did a spot of washing mainly bedding and towels. We have two mobile washing machines - one for on the move and one for when we're static. I'll tell you about our mobile one another day but our static washing machine is quite good, Craig's the drum and I am the cycle and it all centres around a big plastic tub. After finding freezing water we put in a little Fairy and the clothes. Craig then jumps around in bare foot and stomps on the clothes. For a top wash I just put on some fast music and Craig dances faster. Its ace.

Back in Homer just chilling when all of a sudden we heard the sound of a plodding diesel. By now we know that means another motorhome. Up we popped and said hello to our new neighbours all the way from Geordie Land. Val & Dave now lived in Spain but originally from Newcastle. They were on holiday for 6 weeks or so and heading to Sicily, so no doubt we'll bump in to them at several points along the way.

Monday: Bacoli to Pompeii

We planned on getting up early but this place is so quiet we slept all the way through til 7am. Clearly we'd missed the opportunity to drive through Naples! As we looked out of the window to check the weather we had two donkeys walking passed. Then about 5 minutes later a brown horse and white goat. Felt weird especially when the horse decided to poop right at the side of Homer.



Craig has a chin wag with Dave and we ended up with a GPS for free site half way up



Vesuvius. We said goodbye to our hosts and see you later to Val & Dave.

Our 1st stopping point was the town of Pozzuoli right on the headland before of the bay of Naples. Sophia Loren was born here. The town itself didn't offer much other than great views out to Island of Ischia. We then continued to the next headland and stopped at a place with great views over the bay of Naples with Vesuvius at one side and Island of Capri on the other. Pretty impressive and worth having a bit of breakfast to admire the view.



Next we planned on heading around the City of Naples, as driving through is NOT recommended. Your motorhome will either be damaged or stolen. But like most men, you tell them something can't be done and they go out their way to prove it wrong. Craig went straight for the centre, my butt cheeks went in



to auto pilot, clenching tighter and tighter as more and more cars, lorries and scooters surrounded us. If that wasn't enough the road

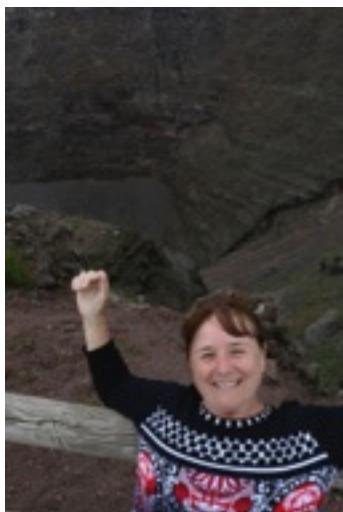
was a nightmare. It didn't have pot holes, it had craters and not because of damage but because they'd pinched all the cobbles. Well someone must have a nice cobbled back yard. After lots of bleep words we finally got through - unharmed! We did wonder about taking a walk around but not for all the tea in china would we leave Homer here. Maybe we'll take the train in...one day.



Once out of Naples we entered in the GPS position from Val and Dave. Marg (our GPS) wasn't too keen on the numbers and adamant we should head for the middle of the ocean. So change of plan, head up Vesuvius and see what's there. And we did. The views going up were just fab and the Bay of Naples just got prettier by the minute. Once at the top we parked Homer in the shade, put on our flip flops and walked up to the crater. It was quite a hike especially in flip flops but worth it once up there. The volcano was smoking in

several places and at times you could even hear it rumble. The rumble made me nervous, so after a walk around the rim we headed back to Homer.

By the time we got back our feet were dirty with black volcanic ash. Think they'll



need a wash before we get in to clean white bed sheets.

As we slowly wound our way down we decided to head for Pompeii, staying at Spartacus campsite for €16 per night. Its a good central site for seeing Pompeii and Herculaneum.

As soon as we shuffled Homer in to place we got out the chairs and enjoyed a glass of red as we watched the sun go down over Vesuvius. Craig then did a cracking tea with black pudding and pepper sauce.

Bellies full and eyes tired we sat down for 5 minutes before heading to bed. Every two minutes headlights kept shining in to Homer, what was going on. Cars kept pulling in to the site and then disappearing. Where were they going? We then saw the little bungalows which clearly are rented out by the hour. Tonights entertainment sorted - I found it fascinating just watching how many men went in and out. The busy one's even changed their sheets every hour - bagged it up and handed to the cleaner! Wonder if she's do my washing?

Tuesday: Pompeii

Hey we have internet access another rare find in Italy. Updates later.

We decided to take a look around Pompeii today (not ruins) and see the cathedral etc. Craig punched the key points in to Marg and off we set. As usual Peanut got lots of finger points as we cycled by. One old chap on a





bike gave us a big smile and wave and then fell off. I felt really bad especially given the effort he'd made as most italians don't smile.

We wandered around all the streets trying to find the sites but Marg wasn't feeling too well



and clearly led us up the wrong garden path. We switched her off and just did our own thing. It was nice to just cycle and see Italian life. Then after a spot of lunch we went to the Cathedral and Pompeii square.

Back at Homer and you won't believe it. There is an English couple pulled up in a caravan and they have put up a little picket fence for their dogs. They have fly screen at the door,



the chap has Jesus sandals, wears long trousers and no top. Not quite the site I had in mind for our BBQ evening.

Tomorrow we plan to visit the ruins followed by an afternoon of chilling,

Miss you all, so please keep in touch xxx