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The Back Door To Italy To good to be true?

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When Jack Cronin told me that he had found a travel destination gem, he was understating the truth. Traveling in Europe as an American is a well-stratified disaster that involves endless episodes of juggling luggage and language, and waiting on warm buses for glimpses at tourist-stained attractions. Ten days later you arrive home, \$10,000 poorer and never happier to be back in the good ole US of A!

But this was different! My partner Jack had happened upon a real treasure. An enterprising young Italian, the son of a hotel owner on the tiny volcanic island of Ischia off the coast of Naples, Italy, had noticed that no Americans ever visited his hotel. He also noted that no Americans ever visited the island...and for that matter, most of beautiful Southern Italy, with its rich history and romantic charm...was largely ignored by American tourists.

Armed with the blessings of the thriving family business, Luca Orofino set out for America with a plan to change all that!

Jack and I have been interested in travel all of our careers. We got in touch with Luca via FAX and convinced him to stop in Indianapolis on his visit to the U.S. We later met with him and his brother Giorgio at a restaurant by the airport. They were armed with brochures and contracts and determined to make friends with someone who could directly help them connect with American tourists who wanted to visit Italy the right way...two week on a beautiful island with the opportunity to travel by hydrofoil to a splendid variety of some of the greatest, and oldest, tourist sites in the world. Pompeii, buried by the ashes of Mt. Vesuvius in Roman times, now the most important excavation site on earth, is only forty minutes from the hotel. Amalfi and Ravello, the legendary mountain coast villages loved by Jackie Kennedy and Greta Garbo, are only an hour away, Capri and its blue grotto, the exclusive gem of the Mediterranean renowned in song and movies, is just a pleasant on hour cruise away.

This was Luca's fourth trip to the USA. The first three visits were to fine-tune his plans for a two-week dream destination vacation aimed at American seniors. "This is a wonderful vacation," says Luca, "we will share the love of our people and our love of life with the Americans. We have many wonderful dishes and many local costumes that Americans know nothing about!"

Luca convinced me to come to Italy to test his vacation destination product first hand. I did just that a few weeks ago. And he was right! It is wonderful! Luca and his family have really done their homework. They offer a maximum experience of culture, history, relaxation and convenience while you enjoy an all-inclusive opportunity to

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minimize your expenses, confusion and inconvenience. The Stay and Visit® program that Luca has created offers a truly satisfying mix of all of these objectives.

The same volcanic activity that buried Pompeii in 79 AD, gives the island of Ischia the natural blessing of giant thermal parks where over 3,000,000 European seniors flock each year to bask in the soothing and healing waters. I could have spent my whole vacation in the innovative pools and spas on Ischia.

Each day, you can choose to stay on Ischia or visit the cultural and historic vistas of Sorrento, Psestum, Napoli, etc, with a professional guide and your small group leader. The program takes you far off the beaten path to places of local flair and international beauty. We visited gorgeous vistas with spectacular panoramas and perfectly preserved ancient ruins. We dined at the finest local restaurants and sampled a slice of life in Italy, that until now, few Americans had been invited to partake.

I returned to Indianapolis determined to help Luca attain his goal of serving Americans directly, with no middle-man mark-up. This was y tenth trip our to the US, and by far and away, the most delightful experience I have ever had!

Yes, Jack had understated the truth -- "This is a chance to go in the back door of Italy, and it is all true!"

Joel Erwin, 1995



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