

When in Rome...

If you believe in the wisdom of "When in Rome do as the Romans do", you won't get an argument from Roberto Alvarez. He says, "If you stop for a moment and think about the frustration of the inability to communicate when visiting a foreign country absolutely, take some language skills with you". Alvarez teaches conversational Italian classes in locations throughout the Tampa Bay area, depending on the amount of time you have to listen to the "Professore" he has plenty of success stories. "The friendships, the good times, the discovery of those out-of-the-way places, it's all a product of your ability to communicate with the locals". Alvarez stresses that a more enjoyable vacation doesn't mean fluency instead, "what you will learn in my classes will more than prepare you and put you in a comfort level that will lead to a memorable vacation".

Alvarez is the son of a Spanish father and an Italian mother who came to the United States after World War II. Following twenty years in the world of television sports broadcasting, locally with UPN 44 and Sunshine Network, he says "I'm doing something where I can honestly say I am helping people". Since January Roberto has had nearly two hundred people attend his classes, "when the learning experience is fun the result is people enjoying

themselves while they learn". Most of his students or "amici" (friends) as he refers to them, are interested in not only learning to speak but also learning about the culture of Italy because they are either going to Italy or they are interested in reconnecting with their Italian heritage. "The reward is receiving a postcard from a former student who says she is now communicating much better with her Italian grandmother in New York. Then last week another pair of former students, attorneys Colleen and Frank Russo, emailed me while in Italy to say that they were having the time of their lives because they were successfully conversing with the Italians in Bologna. That's why I love sharing my knowledge and experience".

In January, Alvarez will be offering his Beginners Conversational Italian Class at Castellano & Pizzo Italian Deli in Tampa. Every class will include a dinner prepared by the deli's chefs. This class will meet from 6-7pm on Tuesdays from January 13th through February 10th. Classes that begin in January will also be held in Feather Sound, Largo, St. Petersburg, and Palm Harbor. Class sizes are limited and pre-registration is required. Enroll by contacting Roberto at 727.492.6653 and www.learnitalian.us.