

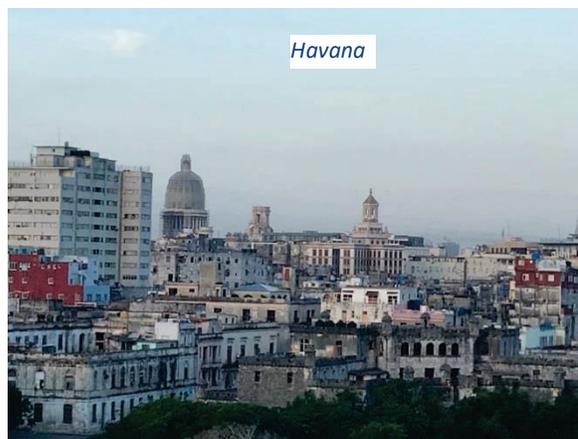
## Adriatic Coast and Italy Travel Journal – Volume 1

Thursday, July 26 to Friday, July 27, 2018 - Flights to Dubrovnik, Croatia

For those of you following our summer travels, you last heard from us towards the end of our trip to China a few weeks ago. We finished up in Shanghai, China and returned home on July 9. We then took a 5-night cruise with



our friends  
Melanie  
and Alan  
Cordova  
to Key  
West and  
Cuba from  
July 16-21.  
We  
celebrated  
Lori's



birthday in Cuba with some new friends and had an overall great time. Cubans are the nicest poor people you'll ever meet. Hopefully one day they can rid themselves of their oppressive government.

Traveling this trip again with Debi and Andy Weisman, our flight to Dubrovnik was a complete shitshow. Dealing with cancelled and changed flights and a last-minute race from the Fort Lauderdale airport to the West Palm



Beach airport, we eventually made it to Dubrovnik via Atlanta and Rome. We spent the next three days in Dubrovnik, an important Mediterranean Sea power from the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards, including picnicking on top of the old St. John's Fortress watching the total lunar eclipse on our first night there.

Sunday, July 29 through Saturday, August 4 – Adriatic Cruise

We spent the next seven days on the Crystal Esprit Yacht Expedition Cruise, exploring the crystalline waters,

dramatic coastlines and cultured shores of the Adriatic (that's right from the Crystal website). The cruise was outstanding. With only 62 passengers onboard, we made many new friends, several of whom we figured out we already had connections to through mutual friends. In Dubrovnik we hiked up a mountain, rode buggies around the top and took a cable car down to the bottom. Whoever organized that excursion obviously never hike up that trail in the middle of the day, or he would have had us take the cable car up and hike down. It was two miles of steep and rocky terrain



in sunny 95 degree heat. We thought an older couple that was with us would need to be airlifted to a hospital somewhere along the way, but they miraculously made it to the top a couple hours after us. In Kotor, Montenegro we visited an olive grove to learn about olive oil production, then explored the Old Town. After docking in Split, Croatia we visited the old towns of Trogir and Split, then attended a string quartet concert at the Museum of Split put on exclusively for passengers of our ship. In Zadar, Croatia we had a walking tour of Zadar and had a tasting of their locally produced liqueur, Maraschino. From the port of Opatija, Croatia we drove two hours to visit the capital of Croatia, Zagreb, for the day. In Piran, Slovenia we took a bike tour around the area, visiting the area where they've produced salt for hundreds of years. Back on the ship that afternoon, we went jet skiing in the bay, careful to stay in the permitted Slovenian section and not on the Croatian side where we weren't permitted. The cruise ended in Venice, where we learned to row gondolas with the Venetian Rowing Club.

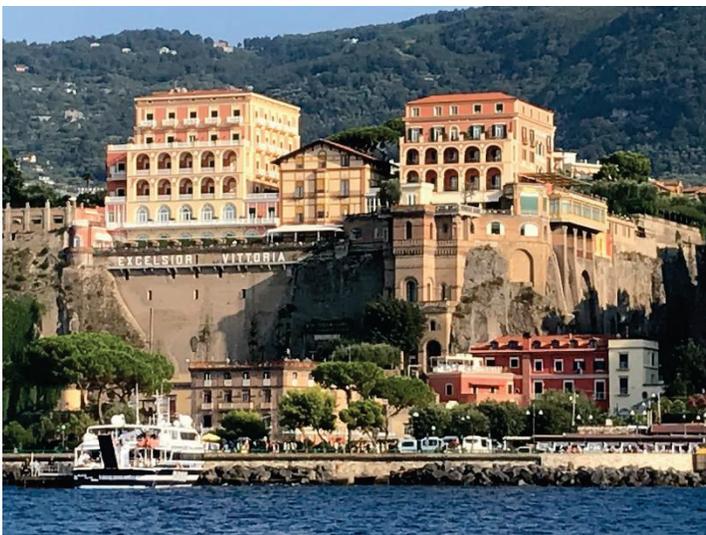


Monday, August 5 – Venice to Sorrento, Italy

After a food and wine tour of Venice during the day, we flew from Venice to Naples, then transferred by car to Sorrento, Italy. After numerous flight delays, we finally made it to our hotel around 10pm, had dinner and went to bed.

Tuesday, August 6 – Sorrento and Amalfi Coast

Not happy with our hotel in Sorrento, we had our private driver take us to various hotels in the area looking for



vacancies. We ended up at the Grand Hotel Excelsior Vittoria, where the gods were looking out for us. We checked into unbelievable rooms overlooking the Bay of Naples. That's our hotel in the photo, on the top of the gorge. After transferring our luggage, our driver Frank drove us around the Amalfi Coast, stopping to eat in and explore Positano, Amalfi and Ravello along the way.

Wednesday, August 7 – Capri

Today we spent all day on a boat cruising along the Sorrento Coast and then to Capri Island, stopping to swim and visit the White, Green and Blue Grottos, take the cable car to the top of the mountain from

Anacapri, and wander around Capri. We then had a quite memorable dinner at Ristorante Donna Sofia, a restaurant tribute to Sophia Loren. After being picked up by the restaurant porter at our hotel, we were driven down roads barely wide enough for a donkey cart, which they were originally designed for, to the restaurant. The service was so bad that by 11:00pm we were ready to walk out, like others in the restaurant were doing. Just

then our entrees showed up with lots of apologies about the kitchen being short-staffed. Nevertheless, the food was delicious. We asked for the check figuring that would take a while; then the fun began. To make up for the slow service caused by two cooks not showing up for work, a free bottle of wine appeared on our table, then desserts and more bottles of locally-made Limoncello and Pistachio liqueurs. Then the owner-chef appeared in the dining room with a giant pan of pasta, which he started distributing to everyone there. It ended up being a fun night, ending in photos with the owner and his wife



and a positive review on TripAdvisor. The next couple days are unplanned other than a food tour in Sorrento, so we'll relax a bit before visiting Pompeii on our way to Rome on Friday, from where we depart for home on Saturday.

