

We had a good welfare and recreation officer on the Uss Vreeland. I exhausted Naples of about all of it's sightseeing and none of it's sin, but was saved from boredom. I signed form and got an over night pass for Rome on a two day tour. So, towards the end of our week-and-a-half I boarded a tour bus to Rome one morning. After the claustrophobic insanity of Naples is was great to get out of town down the highway, even if it was after a midwatch. I dozed some and curled up in the padded seat and watched Apennines foothills roll by. I got out at a rest stop and found cola Charms, those old hard candies. It was nice to find something that unusual and good after eating in Naples. I didn't believe Italians had such thin spaghetti sauce and tough little portions of Veal Parmigean. Somebody claims it was the neighbors dog, but the taste wasn't bad. Cola Charms in Italy include a fizzy center and perfect cola taste, that nothing has or even imitates. I was going into a migraine state after having not slept the night or day before, but these little lpieces of candy gave me an inordinate amount of pleasure, considering. The country pleased me as we continued. Instead of guard rails the Italians plant stout flowering bushes in the highway medians. A bus could roll over them, but one of those little Fiats never. The bushes even look better than the little posts and corrugated sheet metal.

We didn't see a heck of a lot the first day. It is a few hours between the two towns. On the outskirts of Rome you see an ancient viaduct that supplied water to the town. Our driver had to make it all the way across town to our hotel through more of that murderous traffic. In the time we were there we saw at least a half dozen accidents. While we were in town it became a matter of fact thing to hear 'ther's another one' and see a car up on a curb into a pole or a vehicle or two piled together. Tony the guide settled us in and got as a spaghetti meal at the hotel. More thin sauced spaghetti, no meat balls, a buck extra for a quart of wine. That repeated each mealtime. The hotel dining room was nice enough, and they gave you linen napkins. A glass of water, a chunk of bread, and spaghetti with watery sauce. I wandered around a little bit and crashed with my head still splitting. We had six to a room and no air conditioning. It was a good thing I hadn't slept in going on two days.

St. Peter's - St. Paul's - Pantheon - Catacombs (nextday Hillsetc.)
 LUTHER'S Steps - Downlow Opalium
 TRU: Fountain

I imagine the Vatican fortress is the most memerable part of the Rome tour. In sheer size and richness it surpasses all the rest of the places to visit. It requires no sort of imagination compared with the ruins around town, and although it does not have the visual scope of the Colesseum or the Forum it houses a dizzying display of art the magnitude of which I have never seen. The most memorabile sensation for me possibly was the corridor from the museum to the shrine area inside the Basilica itself. It seemed I walked for miles with art all about me. The walls were covered in visionary oil paintings or statuary and the ceiling was covered in gold framed oil paintings as well. It was an incomparable sensation to walk that passageway for minute after minute and feel covered or surrounded in art, to feel it basically pass around you as you moved. One could be locked in study there for