

10/14/08

**“Bella Roma”
by
Tom Holbrook**

Just a few more days before Judy and I, together with six friends, Dick, Sue, Dave, Bonnie, Sally and John, make a jaunt across the big pond and take in sunny Italy. Although they who are putting this together say, for this time of year, we'll have moderately cool to warm weather. But we will be wearing sunny smiles, especially when I chomp down on some of the 'honest to goodness, real and authentic, Italian food.' All who read this column regularly know food is my weakness and my passion so you can understand my excitement to be going to the very origin of Pasta.

Now I know some Greek and Etruscan enthusiasts out there will claim their ancestors were the first to discover/invent pasta but my normal un-impeachable sources insist the Italians of Rome were the upstarts who first kneaded the flour made from durum wheat with their feet and produced a broad piece of pasta that was roasted on a hot stone or in an oven which made it more like a flat-bread pizza than spaghetti. It is highly believed the first written account of pasta that was cooked by boiling was recorded in the Jewish Talmud, in Aramaic, in the 5th Century AD.

Another food staple which we modern dudes and dudettes assume has always accompanied spaghetti and other pasta dishes... the grand old tomato... actually didn't come into the mix of recipes until the Spaniards brought it home from the New World in the 12th century. It's name, pomo d'oro (golden apple,) indicates that it was probably a strain of the yellow tomatoes enjoyed by many today.

Our group had a pre-trip meeting last night to discuss all the necessary and pertinent things, i.e., what to pack; what to wear on plane; how many pairs of shoes (realizing the number will differ drastically between men and women (one or a maximum of two for men, and a minimum of 7 for ladies); short sleeves or long; sweater vests or cardigans; electrical adapters and what kind; hair dryers or not (Dick and I said it wouldn't affect us); regular or breathing underwear; natural or micro fiber, non-wrinkle clothing; cell-phones or not; money belts or not; cameras and batteries; do we purchase pre-trip Euros and if so, how much; what type of hats and/or jackets; what side trips/excursions do we want to take; who drives to the airport, or do we take advantage of The Villages' new reduced rates for the shuttle; and many, many important decisions to make. The most difficult conundrum facing us all was how do we put all that we want to take into two suitcases weighing no more than 30 pounds each? (Just kidding... we're actually allowed up to 50 pounds per bag and one carry-on bag per person.) Such a deal.

Anyway... soon we'll be off and, of course, you fine folks out there will be blessed with blow by blow details on every step we take... post-trip naturally. I know you will be waiting with bated breath but hang in there.

Allow me to close with a try at some humor, contributed by my daughter-in-law Katy in Virginia. With the huge financial crisis going on we are hearing of some very unique mergers between some old line companies.

- 1. Hale Business Systems, Mary Kay Cosmetics, Fuller Brush and W.R. Grace Co. will merge and become Hale-Mary-Fuller-Grace.**
- 2. Polygram records, Warner Bros. and Zesta Crackers join forces to become Poly-Warner-Cracker.**
- 3. Zippo Manufacturing, Audi Motors, Dofasco, and Dakota Mining will become ZipAudiDoDa.**
- 4. FedEx will join with its competitor, UPS, and become FedUP.**
- 5. Grey Poupon and Docker Pants will become Poupon Pants.**
- 6. Knotts Berry Farm and the National Organization of Women will become Knott NOW!**
- 7. 3M will merge with Good Year and become MMMGood**

And certainly not least but appropriately last we see

- 8. Fairchild Electronics and Honeywell Computers will become... are you ready.... Fairwell Honeychild.**

Have a great week.

#