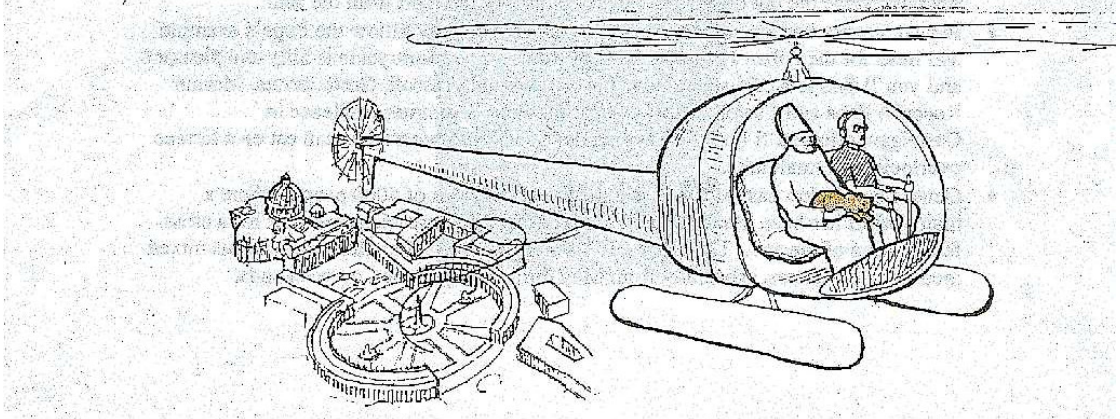


EXCURSIONS OUTSIDE ROME



As in every big city, much of the population of Rome leaves the city on weekends, and there is no shortage of places to go. Turn this to your advantage and do the reverse.. See Rome on the weekend and go outside during the workweek. For sightseeing, we suggest the following:

- Tivoli- no doubt the most popular out-of-town spot for visitors to Rome. Tours go there every day, stopping at the ruins of the Emperor Hadrian's villa and then going on to the spectacular gardens and fountains of the Villa d'Este. If you have time and enjoy walking (hiking), go also to the Villa Gregoriana, a little further east of town. It's a gorge in the midst of the town with several waterfalls, which can be seen from both top and bottom. Unlike other places, it's generally uncrowded, although it's been renovated and publicized recently, so we can't guarantee the solitude. After that, walk two blocks into town and have an ice cream cone at Pinocchio, where they make the best ice cream we've had in the Rome area.(or anywhere else for that matter)
- Ostia Antica- You don't have to go all the way to Pompeii or Herculaneum (Ercolano) to see Roman ruins. Ostia Antica, near the airport, down by the beach, has extensive archeological finds.
- Tarquinia and Cerveteri, up the coast on the via Aurelia (there's also an Autostrada) are the two major sites of Etruscan ruins. Most of the artifacts have been taken to the Villa Giulia in Rome, but the tombs themselves are worth a visit. The Etruscans had a highly developed culture long before the Romans, although it tends to be overlooked because we know less of their history and language.
- Viterbo and environs- Viterbo itself is an attractive medieval city but nearby there are several smaller places nearby worth seeing.
- Bagnaia is a town about 5 km east of Viterbo where you'll find the Villa Lante, started in 1564 as a summer residence for the Bishop of Viterbo by Vignola. Although not terribly large, the gardens, with their great variety of fountains, are regarded as one of the masterpieces of Italian Renaissance landscape design.
- Bomarzo a few km further east, near the Attigliano exit from the Autostrada del Sole, is the site of the Villa Orsini, better known as the park of the monsters. Natural rock outcroppings were sculpted into monsters and fantastic animals in the late 16th century, anticipating surrealism by more than three and a half centuries.
- Caprarola, 15 km south of Viterbo and just east of Lago di Vico, is where Vignola built the Villa Farnese, starting in 1547. It's the largest and most famous of the numerous villas designed by Vignola and his students in the area.
- Lago di Vico is one of the area's most attractive lakes. There's a very dense forest sloping down to the west bank of the lake. Driving or walking through it is dramatic since the tall dense trees nearly block out the light from the sun.
- Papal country- For a pleasant day in the country you may follow the Pope's example and head for the Alban Hills southeast of Rome. The countryside is hilly and pleasant and you'll find lots of restaurants in the area around Frascati, Grottaferrata, Marino Rocca di Papa and Castelgandolfo. Near the Pope's summer residence in Castelgandolfo you'll find the Taverna dei Cacciatori where you can eat on a terrace overlooking a small lake.
- Genazzano, 50 km east of Rome is a medieval hill town of 5000 people where a major effort has been made to bring artists, actors and musicians together for a cross fertilization of the arts. The town's 15th century castle is the setting for various mixed media performances, especially from May through September, on weekends.
- Skiing- Rome's two main skiing centers are Terminillo, an hour and a half NE of Rome beyond Rieti, and Campo Felice, just off the autostrada to L'Aquila, less than two hours east of Rome. Terminillo is a little ski village with surrounding mountains

reaching an altitude of 7260 feet and is full of hotels and restaurants. Campo Felice has less facilities for eating and sleeping, but has large open ski slopes similar in size and height to Squaw Valley in California.

- Beaches- If you're in Rome without a car, you can easily get to Ostia by train, but why bother? Take a train down the coast and go to San Felice Circeo or Sperlonga. The latter is a delightful whitewashed village on a high rock outcropping right at the edge of the sea. At the far end of the curving beach below is the Grotto of Tiberio, where the Emperor had his seaside revels. Fire and brimstone spoiled the fun at Pompeii, but here after two thousand years, nothing's changed. Lust, gluttony and narcissism are still the order of the day. Fregene is another beach town, north of Ostia, with attractive pine groves, accessible by car. We've mentioned Positano, south of Naples, in another section. To the northwest, in Tuscany, the Monte Argentario, a not quite detached island is home to beautiful and rather exclusive resorts such as Porto Santo Stefano and Porto Ercole.
