

Trip Report

Rome, Tuscany & the Italian Alps

When you travel all the way to Italy for a ski trip, you not only want great skiing, you want the ambiance of a charming alpine village and you want the best that Italy has to offer: delicious Northern Italian cuisine, tasty wines and the opportunity to enjoy the great sights of Italy. Well, this year's European Vacation had it all...

Our time in the Alps was wonderful, with excellent weather, terrific skiing, no injuries, and we even elected a new Pope. The Hotel Alpina was perfect, with a quaint Alpine charm, exceptional service and delicious breakfast and dinners every day. Check out the website : www.alpinahotel.it/en/ Our picture is on the slide show on the home page of the website.

While in the Alps, the entire group took the famous "Bernina Express" one of the world's most scenic train rides from Italy to St. Moritz in Switzerland. It was spectacular and what fun with a lively group singing and drinking good Italian wine.

After the Alps we spent four nights in a four star hotel in Florence where we enjoyed a tour of the city, a delicious Florentine Steak dinner, and guided side trips throughout Tuscany. We visited Bologna; Siena, home of the famous Palio Horse Race; and San Gimignano, a beautiful medieval hilltop city in Tuscany.

Then it was on to Rome, where we had city tours and visited all of the major monuments of Rome. Taking advantage of the crisp, clear weather, four of us rented a "bicycle built for four" and cycled through the beautiful Villa Borghese. We had wonderful dinners in Rome including a delicious dinner for the whole group, set up by the three Domingue sisters, at the Trevi Fountain.

All the fun and interesting experiences we had were made even better by the wonderful group of people we traveled with. This was the first time the Jacksonville Ski Club has ever partnered with another ski club, and it worked out great. It saved us a lot of money and we all made lots of new friends. The Pensacola group was led by my buddy, the infamous "Doc Holliday."

Now, just thinking of all the interesting cities, wonderful sights, delicious cuisine and raucous fun we had is kind of mind boggling. As you can imagine, there was an extreme amount of coordination required in the arrangements for a trip this complex, but in the end it was worth all the effort. Now it's time to start thinking about next year... We already have a Florida Ski Council Trip to Bavaria planned for March 7th 2014. We'll spend six nights in the beautiful Alpine town of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, skiing the Zugspitze and touring the castles, villages and natural wonders of the region. Then we'll spend several days in Munich, one of the most interesting and fun cities in all of Europe. Please drop us a line if you are interested in joining us.

Here's to happy skiing and traveling adventures; hope to see you all soon.

Ciao for now,