

ROME

ENCOUNTER

CRISTIAN BONETTO

Rome Encounter

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Colour-Coding & Maps

Colour-coding is used for symbols on maps and in the text that they relate to (eg all eating venues on the maps and in the text are given a green knife and fork symbol). Each neighbourhood also gets its own colour, and this is used down the edge of the page and throughout that neighbourhood section.

Shaded yellow areas on the maps denote 'areas of interest' – for their historical significance, their attractive architecture or their great bars and restaurants. We encourage you to head to these areas and just start exploring!

Prices

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CRISTIAN BONETTO

A self-confessed romantic with a weakness for devious driving and smooth-talking, irresponsibly tanned hedonists, it's not surprising Cristian is a shameless Rome junkie. Since first hitting the city with his rucksack in 1997, the Italo-Australian journalist and playwright has tread both its well-worn and lesser-known streets enough times to know how to charm his way out of parking fines, find the perfect slab of ricotta and spend an afternoon body painting to Roman rap in a suburban piazza. Cristian's musings on Rome and Italy have featured in magazines worldwide, and his play *Il Cortile* was performed in Rome in 2003. He spends much of his life travelling between Italy, Scandinavia, New York and his home town of Melbourne, where you'll find him hunting down decent zabaglione gelato. Cristian's other Lonely Planet titles include *Naples & the Amalfi Coast*, *Sweden* and *Copenhagen Encounter*.



CRISTIAN'S THANKS

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THE PHOTOGRAPHER

Will Salter produces award-winning images of travel, sport and portraits. He sees photography as a privilege, a rare opportunity to become intimately involved in people's lives. See more at www.willsalter.com.

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Cover photograph Spiral staircase, inside Vatican Museums, Kelly Han/Photolibary. **Internal photographs** p80, p100, p114, p127, p147, p166 by Cristian Bonetto; p14 Look Die Bildagentur der Fotografen GmbH/Alamy; p15 Ettore Ferrari/EPA/Corbis; p21 Alinari Archives/Corbis; p22 Giovanni Simeone/SIME-4Corners; p24 Franco Origia/Getty Images; p27 Marco Longari/AFP/Getty Images; p28 Vincenzo Pinto/AFP/Getty Images; p111 Cubolimages srl/Alamy; p136 Gautier Stephane/sagaphoto.com/Alamy; p178 Alessandro Di Meo/epa/Corbis; p190 Allegra Pazienti/freniefrazioni.com; p198 Andrea Matone/Alamy; p199 Gough Guides/Alamy. All other photographs by Lonely Planet Images and by Will Salter except p4 Glenn Beanland; p6 Krzysztof Dydyński; p11 Russell Mountford; p20, p55, p147, p200, Martin Moos; p32 Hanan Isachar; p45 Jon Davison; p56 Philip & Karen Smith; p59, p60, p74, p121, p163, p170 Paolo Cordelli; p88 Oliver Cirendini; p184, p201 Greg Elms.

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Jump on board and explore the cobble laneways of Trastevere (p146), one of Rome's most atmospheric neighbourhoods

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Our authors are independent, dedicated travellers. They don't research using just the internet or phone, and they don't take freebies, so you can rely on their advice being well researched and impartial. They travel widely, visiting thousands of places, taking great pride in getting all the details right and telling it how it is.



THIS IS ROME

It starts off as a casual fling – a date with the Sistine Chapel, a flirt with the Spanish Steps, and (if you're lucky) a steamy session with a creamy carbonara.

Suddenly you can't stop thinking about that electrifying fresco, the sea of spires and domes below a hilltop terrace, and those languid nights of perfect Campari sodas on an intimate, rust-hued piazza. You're intrigued by the contradictions: sophisticated yet provincial, gregarious but downright rude.

Few cities get under the skin like Rome. One-time *caput mundi* (capital of the world), it was here that Brutus betrayed Julius Caesar, that Christ appeared to St Peter, and that Gregory Peck tricked Audrey Hepburn at the Bocca della Verità. It's like a travertine Filofax of Western cultural anecdotes, from chapel-painting Renaissance men to ill-fated Grand Tour romantics.

Yet Rome is far from a static relic. Here, past and present fuse with intoxicating effect – temple pillars soar beside tram stops; clubbers bump and grind in 14th-century chapels; and chariot racetracks double as rock-concert arenas. Amid the jumble of imperial ruins, baroque fountains and retro espresso bars exists a kicking 21st-century cocktail of gritty street art, multiethnic neighbourhoods and Italo-fusion flavours. One minute you're walking in the footsteps of the Caesars and the next you're rocking to local indie bands in a graffiti-pimped bar. It mightn't have Berlin's daring or London's edge but new millennium Rome is set on catching up to its 'with it' northern rivals. Recent years have seen the launch of two bold new contemporary art museums, a cutting-edge performing arts centre and a spate of fresh, dynamic festivals.

Of course, it's not always *perfetto* (perfect) – true love never is. Anarchic traffic, pollution and persistent beggars can give the Eternal City a whole new meaning. With an 'it's over' ready on your tongue, suddenly you stumble across a secret courtyard, a perfect zabaglione gelato or a hidden Caravaggio... and fall head over heels again.

Top Bask beneath the baroque ceiling of Chiesa del Gesù (p51) in the *centro storico* (historic city centre) **Bottom** Spend an afternoon alfresco on Vicolo del Cinque, Trastevere (p146)