

MAY 2012
THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO GO®

Rome

where®

wheretraveler.com

ANNO 18 - N5 MENSILE POSTE ITALIANE SPA SPEDIZIONE IN A. P. 70% ROMA

plus

- 3 DAYS OF CONTEMPORARY ART
- FUN FOR KIDS
- CONCERT CALENDAR

SECRET ROME

Discover the city's
hidden treasures

where Rome now

by Solveig Steinhardt and Tiffany Parks

The month's top entertainment, art and attractions

7 SECRETS OF ROME

1 The Vatican spills its secrets

Of all the secrets this ancient city holds, those kept under lock and key in the vaults of the Vatican Secret Archives are perhaps the most fascinating, and the most impenetrable. Until now. For the first time in history, 100 priceless documents have been removed from the archives and put on display in an exhibit at the Capitoline Museums. The documents span nearly 12 centuries and are often as visually stunning as they are historically interesting, written in elaborate calligraphy and accompanied by intricate wax or gold seals. Ogle things that precious few eyes have seen, such as letters from Michelangelo, Gianlorenzo Bernini and Marie Antoinette, the court proceedings of Galileo Galilei's trial for heresy, King Henry VIII's request for an annulment, the papal bill excommunicating Martin Luther, and the 60-meter scroll containing the depositions of 231 French Templar Knights (pictured). *Lux in Arcana: the Vatican Secret Archives revealed*. Piazza del Campidoglio, 1. Open Tues-Sun, 9am-8pm. €12 (€10 reduced).

2 Caravaggio on the ceiling

It's well known that Rome's museums and churches are chalk full of paintings by the great Caravaggio, but almost no one knows about his only mural, Jupiter, Neptune and Pluto. This ceiling mural (not a fresco) decorates the villa of the Ludovisi family, which also contains works by Guercino, Domenichino, Pomarancio, Bril and many more. Casino di Villa Boncompagni Ludovisi. Via Lombardia, 46. Open Fri and Sat mornings, minimum 15 people. For appt, write to ttl@glgnet.it. Tel 06483942. €20

3 Borromini's unknown masterpiece

One of Rome's artistic superstars, Borromini was arguably the greatest baroque architect and his churches represent some of the finest architecture in the city. Strangely enough, one of his churches is all but unknown. This tiny gem, Santa Maria dei Sette Dolori, is tucked away in a courtyard in Trastevere. Its precious polychrome marble floors and gilded statues combined with Borromini's unmistakable undulating style make it a sight not to be missed. Via Garibaldi, 27. Open daily, 7am-noon. Free.

4 The cold beauty of the 1920s

There's something about Fascist architecture that places our beings in a metaphysical limbo, removed from space and time. Commissioned by Mussolini for his Sports Academy, this 1932 race track exemplifies the austere beauty of Fascist art. The track is surrounded by 64 statues, each offered by a different province of Italy and representing 64 different sports. Go there for a different view of Rome, or for an out-of-the-ordinary photoshoot of the stunning contrast between the red track, the white statues and the blue sky. Stadio dei Marmi – Lungotevere Maresciallo Diaz in the Flaminio district.

5 A mountain of amphorae

Many people don't know that the heart of Rome's nightlife, the Monte Testaccio, is nothing but an ancient and highly organized dump for broken ceramics. The innumerable layers of neatly stacked pieces of broken pieces of oil amphorae came from the nearby river port and provide a vivid indication of the colossal amount of food that was required to sustain imperial Rome, at the time the world's largest city with a population of at least one million people. You can have a close look at the shards from inside the Ketumbar restaurant on Via Galvani.

6 Poetry in the woods

In the 1700s, a group of poets from Queen Christina of Sweden's circle of friends founded the Arcadia Academy with the aim of restoring the sober beauty of Italian poetry, as opposed to what they considered the bad taste of the Baroque literary style. One of the Academy's most important members was Metastasio, whose writings were set to music by virtually every composer of the time, including Pergolesi, Marcello and Mozart. The new genre was inspired by the pastoral and bucolic values of ancient Greece, and a small wood on the Janiculum hill was chosen as the Academy's ideal meeting place. Designed by Antonio Canevari, the newly founded Bosco Parrasio was decorated with an imposing gate, symmetrical staircases, fountains, an amphitheatre and numerous Egyptian and Greek elements both in the garden and in the enclosed villa. The Bosco can be visited by appointment only, more info on www.villediroma.com

7 Preserved perfection

When the tomb of St. Cecilia was opened during a church restoration in 1599, her body was found miraculously uncorrupted. Sculptor Stefano Maderno was commissioned to recreate her form in marble and the delicate and naturalistic work is leaps ahead of its time. Santa Cecilia in Trastevere.

Open daily, 9:30am-12:30pm
and 4-6:30pm. Free.