TRANSCRIPT

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EPISODE NAME: Former ATF Producer Lyn Jarvis and WCAX-TV Weathercaster Sharon Meyer Visit Rome and the Isle of Capri, Italy

((p-Italy #2 Rome and Isle of Capri)

Lyn Jarvis / Across the Fence: Hello, I'm Lyn Jarvis contributing editor, joined by WCAX-TVs Sharon Meyer, and our Italian adventure continues here on Across the Fence. Along with great food and hospitality, there is so much history and fine art in Italy. What's ahead for us today?

Sharon Meyer / WCAX-TV: If things go as planned, while we are in Rome, we'll try to visit the Vatican and then head over to the Isle of Capri...places on our must see list, but first why don't we find a street café to enjoy some Italian wine. Did you know Italians lead the world in wine consumption?

Lyn: No, but everyone seems very happy over here.

Music

Sharon: Rome is the capital of Italy and the countries most populated city with 2.7 million people. It's the most popular tourist attraction in Italy and the 11th most visited city in the world, and tucked in the middle of all this is Vatican City, the smallest country in the world. Dominating Rome since its beginnings, in 753 B.C., is the Tiber River. 350 miles long, it was and still is critically important to Roman trade and commerce.

From St. Angelo's bridge, we got a look at the Vatican's St. Paul's Cathedral, not that far away. Closer though, is the Coliseum and my husband Rene, and our video editor, Marco Ayala, joined the long line for a tour. In our world of sky scrapers and stadiums the Coliseum, from 80 A.D. that held 50,000 spectators, is still very impressive.
One can just imagine how stunning it would have looked decorated with glistening shields and its arches filled with statues of emperors and gods. Antiquities are still being found and are being stored in the Coliseum's outer halls and chambers. Guarding these treasures is this spunky black cat who knows the hiding place of every Coliseum mouse. Two grand entrances, one at each end of the structure, were used by the aristocracy and their guests. The Emperor, though, had a private entrance, which went below ground, and emerged in the royal box. The most popular event was the duel of the gladiators who arrived in chariots and gathered before him with shouts of "Hail Emperor...men soon to die salute thee." Many less violent kinds of entertainment, however, such as chariot racing, circus acts, and drama are all a part of its history. Many of Rome's historic treasures lie within eye sight of the Coliseum, like Circus Maximus. It covers a small valley and was, and still is, Rome's largest venue for public games, concerts, and meetings. And the nearby Forum, is a huge complex of ruins once the legal, social, and business center of ancient Rome.

All those who visit Rome come to Trevi Fountain. It stands 85 feet high and 65 feet across and on a warm summer day, it's the place to be. It was built in the 15th century to mark the end of the Aqua Virgo, a manmade channel that brought fresh water to Roman bath houses. Tossing a coin into the Fountain, according to legend, will guarantee a return trip to Rome. The fountain is swept every morning and the money is donated to Caritas, an Italian charity...well over $4000 dollars a day.

Built more than 1800 years ago, the Pantheon still stands as a reminder of the enduring Roman Empire. Near the entrance is a marble statue of young Julius Cesar, perhaps the greatest emperor of them all. The Pantheon is still used as a church for masses and ceremonies such as weddings and baptisms. Above the alter is the famous dome, with its large opening that allows worshipers to look towards heaven...and is the Pantheon's only light source during daylight hours. At the foot of the Spanish Steps we found the Barcaccia Fountain, claiming the best water in Northern Italy.

Nearly everyone, young and old, stopped to fill their water bottles ... or, just splash some of that cool water on hot and sweaty brows. Completed in 1725, the stairway with 138 steps, connects the fountain to Trinita dei Monti, a church consecrated by Pope Sixtus, in 1585. And we did climb every step and from the top, is a nice view of the Spanish Square and Condotti Street stretching into the distance. We turned a corner...stepped into another country and there it was...St. Peter's Basilica, the jewel of Vatican City and the largest church in the world. It is the namesake of St. Peter, one of the 12 apostles who is buried
here. After the crucifixion, he took leadership among the followers of Jesus and played a significant role in the founding of the Christian religion. Vatican City is the seat of the Roman Catholic Church and the residence of the Pope since 1377.

Since that time, there have been 265 popes in uninterrupted succession...a most impressive statistic, considering the turbulence of the times. The nave in St. Peters is more than 715 feet in length with its dome some 450 feet across; standing in the immense basilica is a humbling experience. There are some 45 alters here, each decorated by famous artists such as Christofari, Bernini, and Michaelangelo. Vatican City is the largest museum in the world and we were told, if one minute were taken to look at every object, it would take 10 years. That, of course, is impossible, but the one thing that every visitor looks for is the "Pieta." Many, of every religion, are brought to tears when they see Michelangelo's masterpiece of the grieving Mary holding her dead son after the crucifixion.

Music

Lyn: At Rome we boarded a high speed train for the two hour ride to Naples ...where we climbed aboard a hydrofoil to cross a part of the Mediterranean Sea. Three hours later we've arrived at the Isle of Capri. I have always wanted to visit the Isle of Capri, an island in the Tyrrhenian Sea in the Campania region of Southern Italy. Back in 1934 the song, Isle of Capri was recorded and it became a huge world-wide hit, sung in countless arrangements and translations. It was one of my mother's favorite songs. She never got to visit here, so this is for you Mom.

Bing Crosby sings "Isle of Capri"

You can see why people have been coming for centuries to this tiny island, just 4 miles long and 2 miles wide. Known for its dazzling beauty writers, artists, and musicians have long been drawn to its shores. The islands first tourists were the Romans, and even emperor Augustus himself, as early as 29 B.C. would summer here. Today the island is more popular than ever with some 2 million annual visitors.

Most tourists cluster around the marinas and luxury hotels leaving much of the islands west end virtually empty. And that's why we chose to stay in Anacapri... meaning Upper Capri... at a small hotel where, every night, we got this glorious sunset view over the Tyrrhenian Sea. Within walking distance of
our hotel was Aumm Aumm, famous for 3 minute pizzas made in a wood fired oven...and really good. Please join us for pizza prepared by Chef Humberto.

Music

We decided we should sail around Capri and went to the marina to find a captain and we needed someone who spoke English. We were directed to Costanzo Sorrentino, and being a windy day, we asked him what to expect.

Capt. Costanzo Sorrentino : “With the wind, it is a west wind, and that’s most important because west side is open and we find big waves. East and northeast are not much. Just west. The west wind is the most strong.”

With that somewhat ominous prediction, we climbed aboard the small boat for our 3 hour cruise. We were a little apprehensive, as the wind was quite strong even in the sheltered harbor.

When we reached open sea, we knew that we were in for a rough ride, but Costanzo assured us that we would be fine and to enjoy the ride. Being that rough, we could not enter the famous Blue Grotto, so opted for the White Grotto, in a cave on land. After climbing the well-worn steps, we made our way into the chamber filled with limestone stalactites and stalagmites glowing in the filtered sun. From a natural opening at one end of the cave that provided a spectacular view of the Bay of Naples.

Music

And from water level, here’s a unique view of Capri's famous sea stacks...Stella on the left attached to Mezzo, and Scopolo to the right.

Costanzo offered the invitation to swim through the Green Grotto. Only our brave video editor, Marco accepted. We waited, anxiously, as the sea pounded the Grotto... minutes passed and finally he appeared in the aqua water.

"What's it like Marco? It was great. Very rough and water is very salty. Were you afraid? A little!"

Our small boat rocked and rolled and by this time our stomachs were feeling a little queasy and we were glad to see calmer waters ahead.

What an adventure with memories for a lifetime and a big thanks to our captain and guide, Costanzo, for getting us back safe and sound.
Lyn: As with all good things, our Italian adventure has come to an end. What an exciting place to explore with all the history, art, and Italian culture. I would like to come back again, wouldn't you Sharon?

Sharon: Absolutely, and along with the things that you mentioned, the people are wonderful. They sure know how to cook and I think we've all gained a few pounds over the last couple of weeks...and the scenery...especially in the Isle of Capri is gorgeous!

Lyn: I couldn't agree more. I'm Lyn Jarvis with Across the Fence, and for both of us here on the Isle of Capri, thank you for watching.