

Len's 42nd letter from the Via

Date:19/08/17

Location

Florence

KM's to
Rome

537

Steps Today

Arrived in Florence by train where it is said you can buy and sell anything. Staying in a nice hotel a little away from the hustle and bustle of the Duomo and the shopping crowds. Took the opportunity to have a sleep in knowing that what walking I did was going to be purely at my discretion as to time and distance.

After a leisurely breakfast caught the train to Pisa to meet Carol who was flying in today. Pisa was populated with beggars on the street not beggars of love but beggars of money, and very aggressive in their requests. They all had their own spots on the promenade to the tower which is obviously their working distance from each other. Reminded me of the Eagles in the outback who nest about twenty kilometres apart to ensure that each pair have sufficient hunting territory. I have no solution to this problem but it detracts from the cultural and social environment of these old cities and the beggars deserve a solution.

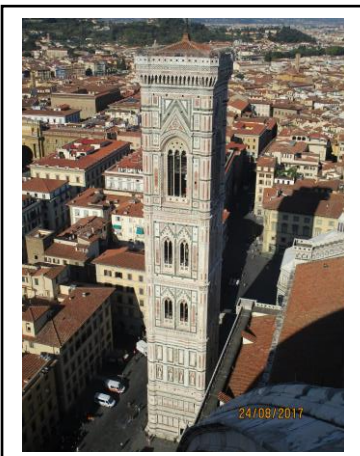
I had to get to the airport from the centre and boarded the Pisamover, a driverless transport system which quickly moved people to and from the airport without going onto roads. What a novel idea, a train connection to a major airport which took people to and from a railway station hub that brought them from or distributed them to all parts of the country. The trip on the people mover was very smooth and quick and I reached the airport well ahead of Carol's arrival without any concerns about traffic road blocks. Come on Mr Andrews why can't we have a Metro underground link to Tullamarine, Melbourne has a lot more people using its airports than Pisa.

I won't let the negativity of how to efficiently get to the airport spoil my delight in having my walking partner back with me to do the last 537 kms. to Rome (weather permitting).

Back in Florence we went for a stroll around the old city and came across this shop, it specialises in selling authentic Ferrari memorabilia. I have a young friend called Alexander who would love to spend a couple of hours in this shop with a no limit credit card.



Florence does have some beautiful buildings and artwork. Over the time there we managed to visit the David statue (a mandatory visit whenever Carol visits Florence I think to give me some aspirational guidance), the Duomo, the Boboli



Gardens; and to get us ready for the walk we climbed the Cupola of the Duomo. This is a photo taken from the very top of the dome. We also made the trek up to the top of the Boboli gardens to take in the views beyond Florence, which this little fella can enjoy every day of the year. We also visited Fiesole; always worth the short bus trip, especially for the views back to Florence.

Tomorrow it is back to Lucca to pick up the Via Francigena again, to put our walking shoes back on and walk downhill (largely) to Rome. I am surprised at how much I want to get back on the trail.

