

A Week in Italy

By Diana Ardjmand '17



Last June, 13 other students and I woke up bright and early at 4 a.m. to set off on our way to Rome. Though our many flights lasted over 15 hours and consisted of little sleep for most of us (which concerned Ms. Wepstic and Mr. Gerke greatly), we arrived to meet our enthusiastic guides, Yves and Monica, who led us straight into our (hot) days of sightseeing, art, architecture and food.

We spent the first three days of our trip in Rome. There, we were able to admire the amazing architecture of the Colosseum and the Imperial Forum (also known as the "Birthday Cake"), sculptures and mosaics of the Castro Pretorio, and the iconic paintings of the Vatican. We even experienced Italy's love for the Pope firsthand when we visited the Roman Catacombs gift-shop which had pope-everything, Pope calendars, magnets, postcards, necklaces - you name it! Then, we hopped on a train to Florence. We went to the Uffizi, Basilica of Saint Mary of the Flower and the Duomo, and saw Michelangelo's David and admired the view from Ponte Vecchio.

Up close, we were able to see the ubiquitous masterpieces that were always showing up in our textbooks, like the Birth of Venus. During our time in Florence, we went to Venice for a day trip, rode gondolas through the canals, and visited Venetian glass shops.

Obviously, our time in Italy was filled with museums, buildings, history, and amazing food. More importantly, however, was the time we all got to sit down on some crumbling stone steps or at a table in a cafe to just capture the surrounding city and people. Not only were we able to see all the art we had learned about in our Drawing and Painting and AP Euro classes up close, but we also got to experience the live art of the city; from the graffiti in the subways to the paintings being sold by street artists. As a group, we enriched our ex-

isting knowledge of famous Renaissance art and experienced both the art of the country as well as the art of our own drawn observations. With our small watercolor travel kits, we were able to draw and paint what we saw, from the green and blue at the Boboli Gardens to the smallest cracks on the columns of ancient structures. In moments like these, I would forget for a little while that we were all actually in Italy—that far away place known for its people with powerful accents, restaurants with delicious pizza, and vibrant history. I was just lost in my own consumption and creation of art, and I'm so grateful that I had a whole week to do so with such an amazingly talented group.