

Maureen Fant's Quick List of Roman Restaurants

Feel free to copy and circulate this list, but please always include the source:

Maureen B. Fant at www.maureenbfant.com or www.elifanttours.com.

This list is a work in progress. Every so often I add, remove, revise, and generally think about the Rome restaurant situation. This isn't everything, but it's plenty, and if you keep checking back, there will be more. Send me an [email](mailto:info@maureenbfant.com) with Restaurant List as the subject, and I'll shoot you future revisions as soon as they're ready.

I realize that at this length, I shouldn't be calling it a quick list any more. Let's say it's a quick list in the sense that I write only what I have time or inclination for and am not committing to fancy layouts and proper reviews with amenities like listings of nearby tourist attractions—at least until somebody wants to talk about an app or a book.

When you're not going out to eat in Roman restaurants, visit www.maureenbfant.com for links to radio interviews with me, recipes online, and my books, including the award-winning *Sauces & Shapes: Pasta the Italian Way*.

Send me an [email](mailto:info@maureenbfant.com) if you'd like to eat like the Romans or cook like the Romans with me on your next trip to Rome.

If you use the list, you can say thank you by [buying](http://www.maureenbfant.com) *Sauces & Shapes*. And give another copy to a friend.

I try to limit the giving of free advice to this list and my posts on [Chowhound](http://www.chowhound.com) and [egullet](http://www.egullet.com). To cook with me at home in Rome or to hire me to make a dining plan for your trip to Rome or even just a reservation or two, drop me a line at info@maureenbfant.com. Or just write to say hello or tell me how your dinner was. For free information, post a query on the Italy board of www.chowhound.com or www.egullet.com. For occasional news and views, visit www.maureenbfant.com or www.elifanttours.com and follow @mbfant and @elifanttours on Twitter.

Visit [Elifant Archaeo-Culinary Tours](http://www.elifanttours.com) for week-long small-group tours with Elizabeth Bartman, archaeologist (past president of the Archaeological Institute of America, no less), and *moi*. Better yet, put yourself on our [mailing list](http://www.elifanttours.com) and tell some friends. The number of people who have returned for second, third, and even fourth Elifant tours speaks well for our formula of stimulating archaeological visits and fascinating food experiences. Since major advertising to fill just a handful of places doesn't make sense, we rely on word of mouth. Please do us a favor and use that mouth of yours to direct a friend or three to [our site](http://www.elifanttours.com).

We take so few people at a time (usually 8 or fewer) that it's more like traveling with friends than with an organized group (but we are very organized). Liz and I are not your average tour leaders, and we are with each tour all the time, imparting our expertise and good cheer.

Our trip to western Sicily last spring was lots of fun. Next we return to Bella Napoli with [Paestum to Pozzuoli: the Bay of Naples and Beyond](http://www.elifanttours.com), October 9–16. If you love wonderful restaurants, beautiful scenery, and archaeological sites you aren't going to see with anybody else, this is the trip for you.

In April, we have [Basilicata and Puglia: the Heel and the Hinterland](http://www.elifanttours.com). A little bird told me you've been waiting years to taste genuine burrata.

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Names highlighted in **yellow** are not necessarily my favorites, but they are **open on Sunday evening**, the most difficult meal slot of the week.

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Introduction

Who am I to be doing this?

I have been writing about the restaurants of Rome since about 1990, first in the *New York Times* travel section. I self-published *Eat like the Romans: the Visitor's Food Guide* in 1992, years before there were apps or blogs and before some of today's bloggers were even born. In 2001, Harper-Collins/Ecco Press published my *Trattorias of Rome, Florence, and Venice*. I wrote the Rome volume of the Williams-Sonoma Foods of the World series in 2005. I've lived in Rome nonstop since 1979, and since 1984 my constant dining companion has been a discriminating Roman, my husband, Franco. I am also a pretty good Roman home cook, so when we go out, it's for pleasure, not fuel. In 2013, W.W. Norton published my *Sauces & Shapes: Pasta the Italian Way*, coauthored with Oretta Zanini De Vita; it won an IACP award and was nominated for a James Beard.

Usually I approach restaurants with happy anticipation and without a "gotcha" agenda, wherein the critic is just waiting for the joint to slip up. Usually. In this list, I don't trash restaurants I don't recommend; I simply omit them. That doesn't mean I won't say something snarky, of course, but in general, anybody who goes into the restaurant business has all my respect and thanks.

Obsession

Not mine. Yours. Leave it home. The blogosphere and, especially, its followers often become fixated on certain places that may be perfectly good but are undeserving of the cult status that follows viral recommendations. Wanting to keep up with the cool kids, I sometimes drag Franco to one of these, but we are rarely impressed. This is partly because the Roman trattoria, ideally an extension of one's home, needs cultivation. You need to go often and become known. You need to learn what your favorite dishes are, and as you do so, the owner will remember them too, as well as your likes and dislikes.

When you have a relationship with a trattoria, you are likely to eat better than someone who has just parachuted in for a single meal. This is the secret to why critics may find a restaurant perfectly awful while locals think it's just fine, and vice versa. In fact, "ask the locals" is not really the best advice. Better advice might be: "Get a local to take you along when he goes to dinner at his favorite trattoria and present you to the owner; then let him order for you." And the next time you go, you will have been properly introduced. The owner or waiter will soon learn your favorites too.

Then there is the whole idea that there are certain places in Rome one simply *must* visit. You *must* visit the Pantheon, but there is no need to visit any one particular restaurant or trattoria. You will do better cultivating a place near where you're staying than hopping around trying to catch all the Internet "musts."

There are no "musts" in Rome. There are numerous good places to eat in every category. They are not exactly interchangeable, but if you miss one, another will be just as satisfying. You'll have to strike your own balance between love of variety and developing a relationship with a trattoria. And don't forget the popularity paradox: the more tourists who read about a place on the Internet (or even in a book) and descend on it, the less desirable the place becomes. So don't all go to the same restaurants as everybody else.

I haven't been to some of these listings in quite a while, but they're probably still worth a look. I don't divide by type because more and more eateries are becoming multifunction

and offering various options. Just read the descriptions; they're not that long. The order is alphabetical, sorted by the computer—sorry!

How far in advance can/should you reserve?

Although many tourists plan every bite months in advance, the Roman way is to see how you feel at the last minute. Except for Valentine's Day (when grown-ups stay home) and weekends in general, a few days, hours, or even minutes is usually enough. Exceptions are La Pergola, which usually needs at least a month, and a few of the Internet favorites. However, you might as well reserve as soon as you know when you want to go. Some places may be amused or dismayed at how far in advance you're calling, but they'll either manage or tell you when to call back. But really I'd encourage everybody to respect the local equilibrium and not ruin things for the locals, who go to these places not for tourism but as part of their normal lives.

Strange but true: **Roman restaurant websites** often do not have the latest information, but it's worth a try. They are also, inexplicably, unlikely to say what day of the week the restaurant is closed, but almost all are closed at least one day a week plus vacations. Please pardon my inability to resist snide comments about the English on some restaurants' websites. To me the really disastrous ones bespeak an arrogance, presumptuousness, ineptitude, or inattention to detail that I hope doesn't carry over to the kitchen. To tell the truth, it usually doesn't, but I'll keep hammering. A girl's entitled to her *bête noire*, n'est-ce pas?

You can often make a reservation through a website, but unless you get a personal reply, do not take for granted that the request has been recorded or even received. (Conversely, if you follow up an unanswered e-mail with a phone call, you may wind up with two reservations, but it won't be your fault.) The best way to make reservations remains the telephone; someone will speak English. The use of email is improving, but don't panic if you don't get an immediate reply; do phone if you don't get a reply within a couple of days. Many restaurants have a cellular number (+39 3xx ... as opposed to +39 0xx ...), which you can use to send a text message (Skype is good for this).

Do check opening hours and days (there have been many changes lately), and do confirm your reservations by phone shortly before the date. In fact, every time I don't follow my own advice, I get into trouble. I reserved a restaurant for a Sunday evening in June ten days or so ahead, but when we, and four friends, arrived, we found they'd begun closing Sundays in summer.

Phone code for Italy is +39. All landlines begin with 0, which you always dial, even with country code; all cell numbers begin with 3.

Ratings

Three asterisks (***) means I'd go to a place for a major birthday or anniversary. Two asterisks (**) will do for a lesser celebration. One asterisk (*) means worth a detour for a normal lunch or dinner out. No asterisk means it's fine if you're already in the neighborhood. There are many reasons why a place may not be listed—I don't like it; I haven't tried it yet; I don't think it's particularly interesting or convenient for visitors; I just haven't got around to writing it up yet. You can always write me an email to ask.

Dress codes (ha ha)

People are always asking about dress codes or forgoing nice restaurants because they don't want to pack a jacket. Here is my last word on the subject. As long as you don't look like an unmade bed or off-duty surfer, you are unlikely to be too casually dressed for a Roman restaurant, even an upscale one. Only a very few tend to be dressier (like La Pergola). You can, of course, get as spiffed up as you like, and, since evenings are generally much cooler than days, what is so bad about a jacket? Short-shorts, tank tops (for men), and anything torn and/or dirty (unless, of course, designer) are probably the only items to avoid. And if you "don't want to look like a tourist," lose the gym shoes (unless they're by Prada). If the restaurant cares what you wear, it will probably say so on its website.

Children

As for **children**, another topic people ask about, you know your own young better than anyone else does. Italians are very tolerant of children, and Italian bambini get taken all sorts of places at all hours and behave acceptably even when they'd clearly rather be asleep. So if yours can sit reasonably still and eat relatively normally, take them anywhere you like. Children are pretty much worshipped in Italy, so feel free to discuss with the waiter what the little prince or princess might like to eat. You can always ask for pasta with butter and parmigiano for the picky.

Mealtimes

Eating at off-hours is becoming easier. This is partly due to foreign influences and partly because most people who work in the center of Rome don't live there and can't pop home for spaghetti and a nap, which used to be normal. Restaurants and trattorias serving proper meals at (early) American hours are usually catering to tourists (even though some, especially pizzerias, may be perfectly fine). On the other hand, the whole approach to meals and mealtimes is in flux, and many restaurants and bars are experimenting with adjacent bistros, light meals at off-hours, happy hours with appetizer buffets, and the like. It's hard to keep up with, but in general it's a welcome development, modern life being what it is. Normal (traditional) Roman meals begin at 1.00 or 1.30 and 8.00 or 8.30.

Be sure to check websites or phone the restaurants (or both) to verify all information.

*

(Agata e Romeo)

I am very sorry to report that this wonderful restaurant has closed. There is now a Chinese restaurant on the premises. We have not tried it (and don't remember its name), but friends have reported it as "very Chinese" (and they would know). They were the first Italian clients since the place opened, four or five months before.

Achilli Enoteca al Parlamento

via dei Prefetti, 15 (near Parliament)

Tel. +39-066873446

www.enotecaalparlamento.it

Lunch, dinner, wine bar Tuesday through Saturday (Monday through Friday in summer). Light lunches available 12.30–2.00. Wines by the glass and canapés at the counter

There have been changes since our last (none too recent) visit to this upscale restaurant behind a venerable wine shop. We don't like what we've heard, and the website menu is none too encouraging. But I'm not giving up on the bar and *tartines* (canapés), and the new bistro may be all right too. Stand by. Meanwhile, have a look at the English version of the website and try to guess how much it would have cost them to call somebody who actually speaks English (much less a professional translator) or even use a spelling checker. What is it with these people?

Acquolina***

via Antonio Serra, 60 (Collina Fleming)

Tel. +39-063337192

www.acquolinahostaria.it

Evenings only, closed Sunday.

A lovely fish restaurant with various configurations of tasting menus. We still haven't been back since Giulio Terrinoni, departed to start his own place, Per Me (*q.v.*), but note with pleasure that the *gran fritto* with sweet-pepper gelato is still on the otherwise very fancy menu. The à la carte section offers each dish in two sizes, with two prices, so that, if you wish, you can create your own tasting menu of smaller portions. The location is not quite as far off the map as you will think at first glance, but you will want to take a taxi. Of course, if it were more central, we'd probably have been back already.

Al Ceppo**

Via Panama 2, Parioli

Tel. +39-068419696

www.ristorantealceppo.it

Lunch every day except Monday; dinner 7 evenings a week.

Upscale restaurant with roots in the Marche just gets better and better. Ask for the fried meat-stuffed olives (*olive all'ascolana*) and fried custard (*cremini*) as an antipasto or pre-antipasto. Meats are grilled in huge fireplace. But the more labor-intensive dishes are delish too, also fish. Friends have recently reported an excellent pork-three-ways but an awful veal chop.

Al Moro, Antica Trattoria dal 1929

Vicolo delle Bollette, 13 (Trevi Fountain)

Tel. +39-066783495, +39-0669940736

www.ristorantealmoro.com

Open for lunch and dinner. Closed Sunday and August.

You love it or you hate it. It's a very good classic upscale, rather expensive trattoria. It really, really helps to be beautiful or famous or a member of Parliament or at least wearing a

necktie. But if you pass muster, you can eat very well. We would generally rather go to Nerone, where we're loved.

All'Oro*** NEW ADDRESS

Via Giuseppe Pisanelli, 23/25

Tel. +39-0697996907

www.ristorantealloro.it

Dinner daily 7–11 p.m. Lunch Saturday and Sunday, 1–2.45 p.m.

This interesting, creative restaurant has moved twice since its origins in small but stylish quarters in the affluent (but out of the way and boring) Parioli quarter. It's now in a hotel with the same ownership in the Flaminio quarter, a few blocks north of Piazza del Popolo. We haven't been to the new place and hadn't been to the old for a long time, but the menu is still characterized by playful takes on Roman classics, such as the (delicious) "Rocher" (because it looks like the Ferrero candy) of *coda alla vaccinara*.

Antica Pizzeria Fratelli Ricci (Est! Est!! Est!!!)

Via Genova, 32 (off Via Nazionale)

Tel. +39-064884107

www.anticapizzeriaricciroma.com

Closed Monday.

Founded in 1900, it has more atmosphere per square inch than any other pizzeria in Rome. The pizza is idiosyncratic, not traditional thin-crust or yeasty thick, but softer and doughier. Last time I went, I wondered what I had ever seen in it, but my tablemates thought it was great, so I don't want to influence you. Given the central location (near the Opera and St. Paul's Episcopal church), it is certainly a place to keep on your list. Reserve or expect to wait. Or both. Although Ricci is its real name, it's widely known as Est! Est!! Est!!!, a white wine from near Lake Bolsena in northern Lazio whose sign features prominently out front.

Antico Arco**

Piazzale Aurelio 7/Porta San Pancrazio

Tel. +39-065815374

www.anticoarco.it

Open daily, including just for drinks.

Stylish surroundings and good service with yummy food (tendentally creative but highly satisfying) and interesting wines, including a good choice from Lazio. So you don't have to make a big mess sharing your pastas, they bring little tastes of everybody's *primi*. You can't not love a restaurant that does that. I can't resist the *risotto al Castelmagno* (a Piedmontese grainy bluish cheese) with nebbiolo wine sauce (in cold weather). Nevertheless, be warned, some people just hate it, possibly because they were expecting something more traditional. We happen to like it a lot, but not everything on the menu. You can also go early for *aperitivi* and snacks, which is unusual for a restaurant, and they are open daily, which deserves a medal.

Antonello Colonna***

scalinata di via Milano 9/a

Tel. +39-0647822641

www.antonellocolonna.it/open/en/restaurant-rome/

Dinner only (see below for the buffet lunch). Closed Sunday and Monday.

One of the best, definitely a special occasion. You may see exotic spices and fancy names on the menu sometimes, but the roots are in Antonello's home town, Labico, east of Rome. The space, built on the old terrace of the Palazzo delle Esposizioni, is fantastic. If you're one of those carbonara geeks who has to try every version in town, and even (or especially) if you're not, don't miss the "carbonara inside out." There's also an *amatriciana* inside-out, which is wonderful, but the carbonara is even better. Dessertaholics will not want to miss the *diplomatico*.

Antonello Colonna Resort & Spa [OUT OF TOWN]

Via di Valle Fredda, 52, Labico RM

Tel. +39-06 9510032

www.antonellocolonna.it/resort-spa/en/restaurant/

Open for lunch and dinner. Closed Sunday evenings and Mondays.

With 12 rooms, a spa, an art gallery, a working farm, and more, as well as a Michelin-starred restaurant, Antonello Colonna's newest enterprise reflects both his love of the territory and his talent (penchant?) for keeping many balls in the air at one time. Maybe it's the fresh air, but the food is fantastic, less *recherché* than in his Rome restaurant, a little more countrified, with more grills and roasts, but wait till you taste them.

L'Arcangelo

Via Giuseppe Gioacchino Belli, 59 (Prati, near Piazza Cavour)

Tel. +39-063210 992

www.larcangelo.com

Lunch and dinner; closed Saturday lunch and Sunday.

Intimate upscale trattoria offering modern (lighter) versions of traditional dishes. The Internet is gaga over the gnocchi (on Thursday), but I haven't had them. Don't expect to understand anything on the singularly unappetizing online English menu.

Armando al Pantheon

Salita de' Crescenzi 31 (Piazza della Rotonda, Pantheon)

Tel. +39-0668803034

www.armandoalpantheon.it

Lunch 12.30–3.00, dinner 7.00–11.00. Closed Saturday evening and all day Sunday.

It's one of the hottest tables in town, which tells you (a) Romans really like their own food, and (b) the Pantheon neighborhood has a serious problem if the only place anybody wants to go to is this one tiny trattoria. I used to like it when I needed to meet someone for lunch in the center and wanted options to suit different appetites plus peaceful surroundings for conversation, but I have not been inspired to go there for quite some time, largely because of its off-putting Internet cult status, which has made reservations a must (and brought many, many tourists). Although some friends are unimpressed, the favorable reports outweigh them.

Ba' Ghetto

Via del Portico d'Ottavia 57 (Ghetto)

Tel. +39-0668892868

www.baghetto.com

Closed Friday dinner and Saturday lunch.

Spiffy kosher meat place in the Ghetto with Roman and Middle Eastern food. It's handy to keep in mind for lunches when you're not sure what you want, or if you feel like sitting at a table but not eating a whole restaurant meal or when you just want something different. I tend to go there (not often) for girlfriend lunches. They have a branch near Piazza Bologna and a dairy place, called Milky (seriously?), diagonally across the street on Via del Portico.

Babette

via Margutta 1D/3

Tel. +39-063211559

www.babetteistorante.it

Closed Monday lunch.

Charming place, with even more charming garden, near Piazza del Popolo. They do breakfast, lunch, and dinner. The famous buffet lunch is no longer offered except on weekends.

Beppe e i suoi formaggi

Via di Santa Maria del Pianto, 9A/11 (Ghetto)

Tel. +39-0668192210.

www.beppeesuoiformaggi.it

Closed Sunday.

The back room of this excellent cheese shop (formerly Bleve's Vecchia Bottega) is attractively set up for wine by the glass and delicious plates of *salumi*, cheeses, and other delicacies. It's possible to have a glass of wine and a tasting plate of cheese before going off to dinner elsewhere.

Bir & Fud 2.0

via Benedetta, 23 (Trastevere, near Ponte Sisto)

Tel. +39-065894016

www.birandfud.it

Open daily noon to 1 a.m. No e-mail reservations, but you can make them online.

Haven't been to this pioneering new-generation pizzeria since the major renovation and change of management.

Caffè Propaganda

via Claudia 15 (Colosseum)

Tel. +39-0694534255

www.caffepropaganda.it

Open daily 12.30 p.m. to 2 a.m. Kitchen closes at midnight.

They have reopened after the "restyling"; the place is certainly stylish but not radically different. The service seemed somewhat worse at a recent lunch soon after the reopening, the food about the same, with some misfires, some things quite good, and daily specials on

a blackboard. However, there is a new chef and some artistic innovations on the dinner menu, which looks very promising (and which I have not yet tried). Yes, there are a lunch menu and a dinner menu and even a menu for the cocktail bar, which occupies the front room. (Cocktail bars are now a thing in Rome.) It's better, and certainly more interesting, than anything else in the neighborhood and thus fills a need. The website is incomprehensible (though attractive, which just goes to show) and not because it's only in Italian. The establishment seems to love making things complicated. We'll just have to see if that carries over to the food.

Casa Bleve*

via del Teatro Valle 49

Tel. +39-066865970

www.casableve.it

Lunch and dinner Monday through Saturday. Closed Sunday.

Important wine bar and shop in beautiful setting. Like all wine bars, it's heavily into cheese and *salumi*, but hot dishes are available as well as the legendary salad things and delicate *involtini* (rolls) of this and that, such as smoked swordfish filled with persimmon pieces.

Smoked salmon filled with crabmeat was always my favorite, but Signora Bleve says she can't get the good crabmeat any more. I live in hope.

Checchino dal 1887**

via di Monte Testaccio 30

Tel. +39-065743816

www.checcchino-dal-1887.com

Closed Sunday evening and Monday. Lunch and dinner Tuesday through Saturday, plus Sunday lunch, but check their interesting website for holiday openings—sometimes they stay open.

Also wine bar.

To taste the traditional Roman food of yesteryear, you need a reliable upscale restaurant—especially if you're planning to eat intestines. But don't be put off because this restaurant is famous for offal, which is very easy to avoid. Have the baby lamb chops (*abbacchio scottadito*) or the *saltimbocca alla romana*. The vegetables are delicious too, and cheese gets much attention. No fish except *baccalà* (a recent addition to the venerable menu).

Great wines too—and the cellar has been there so long that there are many interesting old bottles. This is the place to try the Roman Gang of Four pastas (*gricia, amatriciana, carbonara, cacio e pepe*), but also *tonnarelli sugo di coda*, fresh pasta with the tomato sauce in which the *coda alla vaccinara* was stewed for about six hours. Franco always orders the *pasta e ceci* (chickpeas). Newer places in Testaccio are getting more attention, but we love the tranquil ambience, civilized service, and homemade apple cake. The same family has been there for six generations—the fifth and sixth were present at the celebration of their 130th birthday in February 2017. But even though you think the menu has probably not changed much in 130 years (a good thing), the Mariani family upholds tradition without being mired in it. Vegetarians and celiacs are welcomed and fed. There's a delightful private dining room upstairs, which, in a major innovation, is now a wine bar when not being used for events. If you order the *bue garofolato* (a delicious beef pot roast in tomato sauce flavored with cloves), you get a *Piatto del Buon Ricordo* (souvenir plate).

Checco er Carettiere

Via Benedetta 10 (Trastevere, Ponte Sisto)

Tel. +39-065817018

www.checcoercarettiere.it

Open daily, lunch and dinner.

I haven't been in a few years, but the last time we went, we had visiting Turkish friends and it was August (many places closed) and we wanted to take them someplace traditional. It was perfect. The time before that, I went with a bunch of food writer pals and it was pig heaven. And a recent report from discriminating friends was enthusiastic. The bloggers think it's awful. So sue me. Under the right circumstances (e.g., you haven't eaten in a week, other places closed, need a place in that neighborhood, need unreconstructed Roman trattoria fare), what's not to like? There is also a bar-pasticceria and an osteria and I don't know what-all else, but I'm talking about the original restaurant.

Circus

Via Petroselli 47 (in Fortyseven Hotel)

Tel. +39-066787816

www.fortysevenhotel.com

Open daily for lunch, drinks, and dinner.

Finally, a roof terrace in the middle of town with good food. A short walk from the Circus Maximus, Tiber Island, Ghetto, Piazza Venezia, and more, the view from the terrace is among the best in town. The varied and interesting menu (including some Roman classics, for those who missed them elsewhere) contains some truly excellent ingredients. Reserve. Sometimes they are closed for private events.

Colline Emiliane

via degli Avignonesi 22 (near Piazza Barberini)

Tel. +39-064817538

www.collineemiliane.com

Closed Sunday evening and Monday.

Genuine Bolognese cooking year after year, in simple, rather cramped, surroundings. Not a must on your trip to Rome, but sometimes it's *just* what you want, and dinner becomes a love fest of *tagliatelle* with *ragù* (i.e., genuine *bolognese* sauce), *lasagne verdi*, and *tortelli di zucca* (two kinds, with *amaretti* and without). Many tourists think it's a major Rome destination (go figure), which has had negative effects on the restaurant's demographics, feel, and possibly service.

Cul de Sac (wine bar)

P.zza Pasquino 73 (near Piazza Navona)

Tel. +39-0668801094

<http://web.tiscali.it/culdesac>

Open daily noon to midnight.

One of the original Roman wine bars. The food is good, the seats uncomfortable. I never go there because it always seems so crowded, but those who love it are devoted. A savvy pal and Cul de Sac devotee recommends sitting outside in the late afternoon to avoid the crowds.

Da Cesare (near Vatican)

via Crescenzo 13

Tel. +39-066861227

www.ristorantecesare.com

Open daily for lunch and dinner.

There are two places called Da Cesare, and this is the one the bloggers ignore. But even though it's not an in-crowd fave, it's large, reliable, and walking distance from the Vatican. And good, offering a varied menu of meat and fish, with occasional touches of Tuscany (*ribollita* on Tuesdays), in attractive, classic-style surroundings.

Da Cesare al Casaletto*

Via del Casaletto, 45 (Monteverde nuovo)

Tel. +39-06536015

www.trattoriadacesare.it

Lunch and dinner. Closed Wednesday.

This is the one that's the in-crowd mecca. For a few years now it has been the darling of the blogosphere to the extent that web surfers consider it a major destination. It's a trattoria with a large menu that exploits Roman tradition without veering very far from it. It's somewhat above average in quality, somewhat below in price, attractive but uncomfortable (though outdoors in summer should be nice). The *fritti* are noteworthy, but if you're not into that, you might not agree with all the raves. The *spaghetti alle vongole* we tried were totally lacking in garlic—a statement or an oversight?—but were otherwise very good. Wines are very good. The usual question—whether it's worth the long schlep to a neighborhood where there is surely nothing else you want to see—is a non-issue. Take the number 8 tram; it's a straight shot from Piazza Venezia, Via Arenula, or Viale Trastevere, about 20–25 easy minutes. The restaurant is spitting distance from the last stop. I have to say the place is growing on me. At my last meal there, with the girlfriends, we all had really wonderful *amatriciana* followed by eggplant croquettes and *polpette di lesso* (traditional but very trendy meatballs of boiled beef) from the antipasto menu and superb. We skipped the *fritti* and dessert.

Emma*

via Monte della Farina 28/29 (Largo Argentina)

Tel. +39-0664760475

www.emmapizzeria.com.

Open daily for lunch and dinner.

Rome's designer pizzas are mostly far from the center, so you have to add the schlep factor, and then there's the whole annoying reinventing the wheel (what the Italians call discovering hot water), like nobody ever made a decent pizza before. And I always wondered if the bloggers and I were eating the same pizza in that I just didn't see why it was harder to get a table at these places than at the best restaurants in town. All of which is to say that I dragged the whole family to Emma on a Sunday evening after a museum visit more as an exercise in keeping up with the cool kids than in expectation of anything I was actually going to like—only we all thought it was just great. And its location, striking distance from Largo Argentina, means you can go there after sightseeing or shopping or whatever you do in the center of Rome. Never underestimate the power of great ingredients. The pizza is thin-crust Roman style, only better. The *suppli* are voluptuous. The fried zucchini flowers and

other *fritti* are excellent—with none of those “how old was that oil?” doubts you often get at your neighborhood joint. The tagline is *pizzeria con cucina*, meaning they also make pasta and other non-pizza food. We have had excellent meatballs and excellent salads.

Enoteca Cavour 313

via Cavour 313

Tel. +39-066785496

www.cavour313.it

Open daily 12.30–2.45 and 6 p.m. to 11 or 12. Closed Sunday in summer.

One of the original Roman wine bars, it has a sort of old counterculture feel, but still meets a need. Not to be ignored at lunch, since you can get a decent light meal in a neighborhood full of tourist joints. In addition to lunch and dinner, you can buy bottles or drink wine by the glass from 10 a.m.

Er Buchetto

via del Viminale 2 F

Tel. +39.3299652175

www.erbuchetto.altervista.org

Open Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., Saturday 9–12.30, closed Sunday.

Quintessential hole in the wall but hardly a secret. You can have anything you like as long as it's *porchetta*. Eat it on the premises (if you can snare one of the three tables), either in a sandwich or on a piece of paper with a fork, or take out.

Felice*

Via Mastro Giorgio 29

Tel. +39-065746800

www.feliceatestaccio.com

Lunch and dinner seven days a week.

This spiffed up former hole-in-the-wall represents the new gentrified Testaccio, but the food is traditional and full of flavor and when you leave you think you won't eat again for a week. They do two sittings at lunch and dinner, so it's not the place to plan to linger in the usual Italian style, but that's an advantage if you have something else on the agenda after your meal. Still, it's an obnoxious practice largely unknown in Italy. Reports are consistently inconsistent. Some people hate it. We've always done pretty well, but don't expect to be coddled.

Fortunato al Pantheon

Via del Pantheon, 55

Tel. +39-06 679 2788

www.ristorantefortunato.it

Open daily for lunch and dinner. but they seem to close on Sunday evening in summer.

Large, ultra-traditional, ultra-civilized classic restaurant. One tends to forget about it since it's just always *there*, but sometimes it's exactly what you need. Although it attracts better-heeled tourists, given the location a stone's throw from the Pantheon, it's also a favorite of Italian politicians (throw the stone the other direction and you'll hit the parliament, though I am not suggesting that).

Giolitti

Via Uffici del Vicario, 40

Tel. +39-066991243

www.giolitti.it

Open every day 7 a.m. to 2 a.m.

The most famous and historic of Rome's great *gelaterie*, it's a beautiful bar-pasticceria with large room in which to sit and eat a *coppa di gelato*, but most people queue for cones. The Champagne sorbet and *gelato di riso* are hard-to-make house specialties. Local pundits are favoring the newer places, but if you've never been here, don't listen to them.

Gran Caffè la Caffetteria

Piazza di Pietra, 65

Tel. +39-066798147

www.grancaffelacaffettiera.com

Open daily, 9 a.m. to about 10 p.m.

Superb coffee, pastries, and light meals a step from the temple of Hadrian. The establishment has strong Neapolitan ties, a near-guarantee of great coffee and sweets, but look also for the *sartù di riso*, individual savory rice molds, typical of Naples and hard to find in Rome. There are outdoor tables and plenty of room in the elegant interior. I finally had tea there (there is a long menu of teas and tea-like infusions) and was pleasantly astonished to receive a (very) small pot with actual leaves in an infusion basket. (The tea strainer provided was thus superfluous, but I appreciated the gesture.) The usual way "tea" is "served" in Italy is as a cup or pot of hot water that probably never actually boiled with a bag on the side, so a place where you can have real tea is a major big deal.

Grano*

Piazza Rondanini 53 (near Pantheon)

Tel. +39-066819 2096

www.ristorantegrano.it

Lunch and dinner every day. Outdoor tables (even in winter).

Excellent casual, attractive restaurant near the Pantheon. Love the setting and the food. Meatball heaven—the ones made of cheek meat are an antipasto served with a zucchini sauce; the ones in tomato sauce are a *secondo*, both divine. "Hamburger" of *coda alla vaccinara* is a neat hockey puck of boneless meat taken from the stewed oxtail, delicious and perfect, especially if you don't like wrestling vertebrae. The antipasto *melanzane alla parmigiana* (eggplant) is superlative and enough to share or order as your *secondo*.

Hostaria da Nerone*

via delle Terme di Tito 96 (Colle Oppio)

Tel. +39-064817952

Closed Sundays. Outdoor tables.

Unreconstructed Roman fare, great *carbonara*, *spaghetti alle vongole*, *polpette* (meatballs), *carciofi* (artichokes) *alla romana*, and other local classics, with a large antipasto buffet. It's our local and we love it. Great view of the Colosseum from some of the outdoor tables.

Il Convivio Troiani***

vicolo dei Soldati, 31 (between Piazza Navona and the Tiber)

Tel. +39-066869432

www.ilconviviotroiani.com

Dinner only. Closed Sunday.

The Troiani brothers run a great and beautiful upscale restaurant, where creativity and territory meet. We went there recently and had the no-holds-barred tasting menu with previously unknown (to us) Latian wines suggested by Massimo Troiani. The six-course menu took about three hours (including what seemed like 45 minutes for choosing the wines), but every bite was worth it (loved the grilled eel!). The faint-hearted can have four courses instead of six.

Il Cortile

Via Alberto Mario 26 (Monteverde Vecchio)

Tel. +39- 06 5803433

www.ristoranteilcortile.it

Lunch and dinner daily except Monday.

The only reason I never listed this one before is that I forgot. Sorry! It's about a hundred years old, and I've been going there (once in a while) for a good forty of them. If there have been any changes in that time, I haven't noticed them. It's a neighborhood restaurant, a lovely old place a cut above the usual trattoria, with a wonderful antipasto buffet.

Il Falchetto

Via di Montecatini 12 (off via del Corso)

Tel. +39-066791160

www.ristoranteilfalchetto.it

Lunch and dinner daily.

It's been there since 1916 and if you've ever noticed it, you probably thought it was a tourist trap. It certainly has a lot of tourists, but it is a nice place with very good food and service and is absolutely not to be dismissed. It has good fish as well as traditional Roman dishes. I hadn't been here for about 35 years, since which time it has been renovated, but a friend and I went for dinner recently and were happy.

Il Focolare

Via G. Rossetti, 40 (Monteverde Vecchio)

Tel. +39 06 5818395

www.ristoranteilfocolare.it

Open daily for lunch and dinner.

This is another one I've been forgetting, but I've been going there occasionally for longer than I want to say. I remember when it was also a pizzeria and had the most uncomfortable chairs anywhere, ever. There's been quite an evolution since then. It's a good, bustling neighborhood restaurant with courteous service and a large choice of good and varied food, with a lot of fish.

Il Forno di Campo de' Fiori

Piazza Campo de' Fiori, 22

www.fornocampdefiori.com

Closed Sunday. Also closed Saturday afternoon in July and August.

The bakery has a sandwich place just across the little street to the left as you face the main establishment. There you can get pre-made sandwiches on super *pizza bianca*, including, in season (early and late summer), prosciutto and fresh figs. Don't neglect the apple cake in the main bakery.

Il Gelato di San Crispino

Via della Panetteria, 42 (Trevi Fountain)

Tel. +39-066793924

Piazza della Maddalena, 3A (Pantheon)

Tel. +39-0697601190

Both shops open noon to after midnight; closed Tuesday in fall and winter

Romans love to argue about where to find the best gelato, and this is one name that always comes up. There are newer *gelaterie* more favored by the blogosphere, but I'd rather spend the calories on pasta and wine, so, sorry, I'm not up to date.

Il Pagiaccio***

via dei Banchi Vecchi, 129a

Tel. +39-0668809595

www.ristoranteilpagiaccio.it

Lunch Wednesday through Saturday, 12.30 to 2 p.m. Dinner Monday through Saturday, 7.30 to 10.30 p.m.

With two Michelin stars, it's the runner-up to La Pergola and possibly the most adventurous of the top group—so much so that I wouldn't put it high on the list for newcomers to Rome. Our first several dinners there were amazing, with surprising but subtle tastes, but our most recent (not very recent, however), our anniversary yet, was a real disappointment (except the amuse bouche and petits fours), with combinations that didn't combine and an agonizingly slow pace. We recently tasted some tidbits made by the chef, Anthony Genovese, at a food event and decided we had to give the place another chance (someday; it's *very expensive*). What we tasted was ravioli with barbecued pork—delicate pasta, flavorful meat with surprising flavors. It was like Italian dim sum. Need I say more? My bestowal of three stars comes with reservations, but this is certainly a major player and a lovely place. Come to think of it, another thing that annoys me: like many places, they have a hair trigger with the English. If they overhear a single word of English, they're off. Many places do this; it's creepy. No shorts or T-shirts, they say, but if you have to be told that (sez me), you shouldn't be eating there anyway.

Il Sanlorenzo*

Via dei Chiavari 4/5

Tel. +39-066865097

www.ilsanlorenzo.it.

Open for lunch Tuesday through Friday, and dinner Monday through Saturday.

Elegant fish restaurant near via dei Giubbonari (Campo de' Fiori). If you like raw fish, this is your place. And if you don't, it's still great. Gourmet (but not tartered up) *spaghetti alle vongole* is fabulous when they have it (I think not often). As upscale fish joints go, it gives better value than more famous competitors, but it is definitely pricey and no longer the bargain it once was. It used to be open on Sunday but is no longer. Phooey.

L'Angolo d'Abruzzo [OUT OF TOWN]**

Piazza Aldo Moro 8, Carsoli AQ

Tel. +39-0863-997429

www.langolodiabruzzo.it

Closed Monday evening

Spitting distance from the train station in Carsoli, less than two hours from Rome, this lovely, haut-rustic restaurant offers the hearty cuisine and best wines of inland Abruzzo.

L'Archeologia

Via Appia Antica, 139

Tel. +39-067880494

www.larcheologia.it

Open daily, lunch and dinner.

Not a tourist trap (despite being something of a tourist magnet, but not only). It's a beautiful and very good restaurant in an old staging post a short walk from the Circus of Maxentius (definitely worth a visit). The menu has something for everybody, including meat and fish and homemade flour-and-water pastas. The biscotti are delish.

L'Asino d'Oro

via del Boschetto 73

Tel. +39-0664491305

Closed Sunday evening and Monday.

Creative Umbrian in the neo-chic Monti quarter. Bargain lunch menu with no choice. Reserve yesterday. Everything about this restaurant annoys me, but I am a minority, and the food is generally pretty good. At our last à la carte meal (dinner; lunch offers only the fixed menu), we found the antipasti tasteless, but everything else was fine, and it makes a change from the usual Roman fare—lots of flavorful sauces, for example, which is probably why foreigners like it so much. Our most recent lunch was tasty but insufficient and we wound up ordering another whole meal for the table. I do love the name, which means The Golden Ass, and the owner-chef's name is Lucio (Apuleius' protagonist was named Lucius). The paper placemats and cool lighting are part of a general effort to look hip and youthful, but I prefer to feel warm and fuzzy when I eat an Umbrian stew of wild boar.

L'Oste della Bon'Ora [OUT OF TOWN]

Via Vittorio Veneto 133, Grottaferrata

Tel. +39- 06.9413778

www.lostedellabonora.com

Open daily for lunch and dinner.

Oste means host, as in landlord, publican, proprietor of an *osteria*. Massimo Pulicati, backed up by his wife and sons, is the host of this very good place in the Castelli Romani, whose cuisine is rather more refined and researched than Massimo's extroverted, *romanesco* hosting style and clear love of the local gastronomic vernacular would suggest. If there's anything on the menu with *misticanza*, the wild greens of the *campagna romana*, don't miss it.

La Briciola di Adriana** [OUT OF TOWN]

Via Gabriele D'Annunzio, 12, 00046 Grottaferrata

Tel. +39-0694593368

Closed Sunday evening and Monday.

The homey, unprepossessing ambience tries to say "trattoria," but the food is anything but standard local fare. Adriana Montellanico makes the best *vignarola* (favas, peas, and artichokes happily together in springtime). Her legume and chestnuts soups are sublime. Her zucchini antipasto is the stuff of legend. She understands food, wine, and her territory like few others.

La Campana

vicolo della Campana, 18 (via della Scrofa)

Tel. +39-066875273. ristorantelacampana.com

Open for lunch and dinner. Closed Monday.

Founded in 1518, it is generally accepted to be the oldest restaurant in Rome, though any time you see a simple name that is a tangible thing (*campana* means bell) preceded by a definite article, you might suspect that the place originated as a tavern for weary pilgrims, who could tell their friends to meet them at The Bell, whether or not they were able to read the sign. (Not far from La Campana is Hostaria dell'Orso, The Bear—same idea, similar age.) It's a good old place that hasn't changed since I first went there in 1968. There's an antipasto buffet, patient service, and plenty of well-made old favorites. But I have to say, it's not a place I go out of my way for.

La Gensola

Piazza della Gensola, 15 (Trastevere near the Tiber Island)

Tel. 065816312

www.osterialagensola.it

Open daily till May, then closed Sundays.

A historic *osteria*, famous for being the setting of at least one painting of the Danish sculptor Thorvaldsen drinking there with his pals. I used to go there a lot in the last century, when it was a Sicilian restaurant with a wonderful pasta with eggplant and great caponata and Sicilian pastries. At some point it morphed into a primarily seafood restaurant with only a couple of Sicilian items. It carved out a niche as *the* moderately priced place for fish in central Rome. And at some point I stopped loving it. There are a few more Sicilian items on

the menu nowadays. The cooking is uneven. If you go there a lot and know what your favorite thing is (trattoria survival rules), you'll probably always do fine, but I'm still smarting from the way overcooked John Dory fillets at our last meal, and that wasn't all that was wrong.

La Pergola***

Hotel Rome Cavalieri, via Cadlolo 101

Tel. +39-0635092152

www.romecavalieri.it.

Dinner Tuesday through Saturday.

The only Michelin three-star for miles. Is it worth it? Yes, if you can afford it. If you can't, don't give it a thought. Never mind yesterday, book last month. And wear a jacket.

La Regola*

Piazza San Paolo alla Regola 40

Tel. +39-066893099

www.allaregola.it

Tuesday through Sunday noon to 3 p.m. and 7 to 11 p.m. Closed Monday

Genovese cuisine, including seriously genuine pesto, at a tranquil little place on a sheltered piazza near Ponte Garibaldi. Lovely outdoor seating when weather permits.

La Rosetta

Via della Rosetta, 8 (near Pantheon)

Tel. +39-066861002

www.larosetta.com

Open daily, continuously 12 noon to 11 p.m.

I have never been enamored of this restaurant, where I have always found the excellent seafood outweighed by unpleasant service, close tables, and wild prices. However, I have recently been hearing better reports, and there was never any doubt about the quality. They're one of the few proper restaurants open seven days a week, all day long. There's an oyster bar from noon to 7 p.m. The English side of the website definitely needs work—unless the "launch" menu really does refer to christening a yacht.

La Sagrestia

Via del Seminario, 89 (near Pantheon)

Tel. +39-066797581

www.lasagrestia@yahoo.it

Open for lunch (noon to 3 pm) and dinner (7–11.30 pm) daily except Wednesday

An unpretentious little classic in a neighborhood full of tourist traps, this is an address worth knowing. It's a completely authentic, old-style, economical Roman trattoria-pizzeria with wood-burning oven.

La Terrazza dell'Eden (Hotel Eden)

Via Ludovisi 49 (Via Veneto)

Tel. +39-0647812752

Breakfast, lunch, and dinner daily.

There are plenty of places with great food in Rome, but not that many where it's served in an atmosphere that really announces special occasion with a view in a central location. We hadn't been here in decades, but recently we were invited to choose a place for dinner with those features. The tasting menu was a combination of the precious (foie gras) and the designer-traditional (*cacio e pepe*). Superb service with perfect English and a Michelin star. There's an adjacent large bar, with live music.

Lumie di Sicilia*

Via Fratelli Bonnet 41 (Gianicolo)

Tel. +39-06 5813287

Closed Monday

When you can't face another plate of *carbonara* or oxtail, head for the exciting flavors of Sicily. There are not many places in Rome where you can find *caponata* or *sarde a beccafico*. It's friendly and good, not too plain, not too fancy, and walking distance from the American institutions of the Janiculum.

Marzapane

Via Velletri, 39 (Piazza Fiume)

Tel. +39-06 6478 1692

www.marzapaneroma.com

Lunch and dinner daily except Wednesday

We and our exigent gourmet friends were very excited to try this new(ish) place with the female Spanish chef, being talked about for a Michelin star. Well, it's not getting it from us. Except for the risotto with butter and Cantabrian anchovies, which you would have to be seriously impaired not to make delicious, the creative food was mostly fussy, trying to be ingenious, sometimes good but not always successful or even very flavorful. Overall, however, the food was not the real problem (though I suggest not having the *baccalà* with a sort of powdered chorizo). The place looks nice, with warm lighting and clean lines, but the tables had no cloths or even placemats, just knife rests, and bare tables make me think of all the cooties walking around on them. The surface of the table was sort of tacky to the touch, which was really unpleasant—though it might have its uses aboard ship in rough seas. The service, which included forgetting one antipasto (waiter blamed the kitchen) and twice pouring only a drop of wine for one of our group, while everyone else got a full measure. Positive note: except for a couple of somber-looking young couples who were probably foreign, the restaurant was populated with lively tables of Italians. So, bottom line, not a total loss if you need something interesting, spiffy, and new, upmarket but not fancy, especially on a Sunday evening (but book ahead, and the website requires a credit card to book, unusual in Rome), it's worth a try. It's also open on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. It may eventually mature and deserve a star. Finally, if you want a laugh, look at the English on its website. And not just the English. "*Amouse bouche*" made me think of *Rosemary's Baby* (anybody need that explained?).

Metamorfosi**

Via Giovanni Antonelli, 30/32 (Parioli)

Tel. +39-068076839

www.metamorfosiroma.it

Closed Saturday lunch and all day Sunday.

Roy Caceres, gifted Colombian chef who used to be at Piperò's old place (outside Rome), does very good creative cooking in elegant sleek surroundings in darkest Parioli. I personally have no patience with the current trend toward raw meat and seafood, and I must say that cuts out at least half the menu and most of the antipasti.

Mordi e Vai ... Gastronomia romanesca

Via Alessandro Volta, Box 15 (a stand inside the new Testaccio market)

Tel. +39-339-1343344

www.mordievai.it

Lunch and snacks Monday through Saturday 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The name means bite and go, as in eat and run. Not a restaurant but a stand-up joint with takeout inside the New Testaccio Market. This is real unreconstructed Roman food, with all the things you can do with leftover boiled beef stuffed into a *panino*. There were about two weeks, when it had just opened, when one could stand in solitude, salivate, and try to decide whether to have a neat and fingerable *polpetta di lessò*, a patty made of boiled beef (yum), or go for the drippy *panino* with *straccetti* (beef "rags") with artichokes. Now it's on the food-tour circuit and pretty much off mine. The other day I stood and watched aghast as a tourist, occasionally aided by an Italian guide, ordered s-o s-l-o-w-l-y, a number of different *panini*, which the owner made (this is the aghast part) scooping up the ingredients with his gloved hands, ignoring the handy spoons and ladles, wiping occasionally on the same kitchen towel, handling money, and then returning to the food. Same gloves. Yuck.

Mordi e Vai 2.0

Via Appia Nuova 221 (Metro A Ponte Lungo)

Tel. +39 06 94 41 46 75

www.mordievai.it

Monday through Saturday 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.; closed Sunday

New branch of Mordi e Vai (above), with longer hours and home delivery.

Open Colonna*

scalinata di via Milano 9/a

Tel. +39-0647822641

www.antonellocolonna.it/open/en/city-lunch-rome/

Lunch buffet Monday through Friday; brunch Saturday and Sunday; both 12:30 to 3:30

If Colonna's wonderful restaurant (see above) is an evening treat for the elite, he's definitely a man of the people during the day. All-you-can eat (€16 during the week, €30 for the weekend brunch) of Colonna quality (and style) in a truly amazing space, and I do mean space.

Osteria Laltro Ballerino NEW LISTING

Largo Appio Claudio 346 (Metro A, Giulio Agricola)

Tel. +39-0671584807

www.laltroballerino.com

Lunch and dinner daily except Wednesday. Cocktail bar Thursday to Tuesday, 5 p.m. to 1 a.m.

Once upon a time, in the early 1990s, there was a very good, very imaginative restaurant with gourmet food in an attractive, casual setting at non-gourmet prices. The décor was all about comics; even the name, Giuda Ballerino!, was an exclamation favored by an Italian comic-strip character. The location, in an area near the Via Appia Nuova, was guaranteed to frighten tourists away despite easy accessibility on Metro A. The restaurant was a success and began to spawn (catering, maybe a wine bar—I don't remember). It moved to new quarters nearby and then it moved again—same neighborhood—and split into a more upscale restaurant and a casual osteria. In the most recent mitosis, the restaurant, still called Giulio Ballerino!, moved to posh new quarters in the Bernini Bristol Hotel, on centrally located Piazza Barberini, and the osteria stayed put, adding cocktails with hors d'oeuvres for part of the week. Its name, despite the lack of an apostrophe, reflects its origins as an offshoot. Its menu, with the kind of unconventional pairings of ingredients that put Giuda B. on the map in the first place (e.g., skewers of shrimp wrapped in phyllo pastry with mortadella foam) is very interesting and good, and the prices remain a bargain. I haven't been to the Barberini Bristol location yet, except for a multi-chef event, but it was promising, and I'll get there eventually.

Palatium Enoteca Regionale

Via Frattina, 94 (Piazza di Spagna)

www.vytaenotecalazio.it

What's in a name? We'll find out soon. This place has been boarded up with no sign of life (or sign of explanation) for months. The website says that Vyta Enoteca Regionale del Lazio will open September 18. Palatium was very witty. Who knows what Vyta means? Or what they're going to do there. Stand by.

Paris*

Piazza San Calisto 7a (Trastevere)

Tel. +39-065815378

www.ristoranteparis.it

Closed Sunday evening and Monday.

Both Roman Jewish (*carciofi alla giudia*, *fiori di zucca*) and Quinto Quarto (offal) specialties plus excellent fish. The house-made bresaola is very good. Another good antipasto is the boiled skate (*arzilla*), a byproduct of making the very traditional *brodo di arzilla*, a spicy, tomatoey fish broth with broken spaghetti and, on request in season (winter), *broccolo romanesco*. The *pasta e ceci* is exceptional (the recipe in my Williams-Sonoma book is based on it), and the *tagliolini* with zucchini flowers and scampi are too.

Pascucci al Porticciolo* [OUT OF TOWN]**

Viale Traiano, 85, Fiumicino RM

Tel. +39-0665029204

www.pascuccialporticciolo.com.

Closed Sunday evening and all day Monday.

Fiumicino is not just an airport. It's a town at the mouth of the Tiber, and this is the best of its many seafood restaurants, with light but filling ingeniously creative use of the best raw materials (with the emphasis increasingly on raw) in a cheerful setting with uncommonly cordial service. There is also a small hotel—something to keep in mind when you have an early-morning flight.

Pecorino*

Via Galvani 64 (Testaccio)

Tel. +39-0657250539

www.ristorantepecorino.it.

Closed Monday.

Good classic Roman fare in cozy, attractive, old Testaccio surroundings dug into the pottery mountain, right across from the new market.

Per Me di Giulio Terrinoni***

Vicolo del Malpasso 9 (Via Giulia)

Tel. +39-06 6877365

www.giulioterrinoni.it

Open daily for lunch and dinner. Lunch menu available Monday through Saturday.

Beautiful new(ish) place in the premises of dear departed Il Drappo, but a world away décor-wise. Terrinoni used to be at Acquilina, and the emphasis is still on fancy fish, a lot of it raw. There are various tasting menu options. Just let the server explain everything. It's all delish, including the lighter-than-air tempura-style *fritto*. Sorry to sound like a broken record, but everything is so perfect, why couldn't they have hired a translator for the website?

Perilli

Via Marmorata 39

Tel. +39-065755100

www.trattoria-romana.it/da/perilli/

Open for lunch and dinner. Closed Wednesday

Decades ago I used to regard a meal at this Testaccio classic as a major treat, with its old-fashioned gruff-but-competent service, big bowls for pasta, and all the Roman favorites you could ever want. But it was always a bit more expensive than basic trattoria level, and we gradually became disenchanted with the price-quality ratio and quality in general. A few years ago, spurred by relentless Internet postings, we tried it again and were just as underwhelmed as we'd been fifteen or twenty years before. Make no mistake, it's not half bad, and the *carbonara* is very good, and it has the sort of old-Rome atmosphere that is becoming ever more rare. If I lived nearer (as I used to), I would go there more, develop a relationship, and surely like it more. That is the nature of Roman trattorias. I just don't subscribe to the gushing and would rather go to Checchino. But Perilli is open on Sunday and Monday for both lunch and dinner, and that is not to be sneezed at.

Piatto Romano

Via G. B. Bodoni 62

Tel. +39-0664014447

www.piatto romano.com

Closed Wednesday.

The name says it all. It's a no-frills real Testaccio trattoria with excellent, genuine Roman cooking and good pizza too. Oretta particularly likes the fettuccine with chicken giblets.

Pierino [OUT OF TOWN]**

Piazza C. Battisti 5, Anzio RM

Tel. +39-06 9845683

Closed Monday. Lunch and dinner in winter. Dinner only in summer except Saturday and Sunday.

When we crave a serious, classic fish restaurant—no sushi, no strange ingredients—with absolutely wonderful seafood pastas (e.g., shrimp and artichokes over *tagliolini*), we get on a train and go to Anzio, the main Tyrrhenian fishing port supplying Rome. The trip is a bit over an hour and you can walk to the restaurant from the station (follow all the pedestrians down the hill). If you allow an hour before lunch, you can see the lovely archaeological-cum-World War II museum. A walk around the port and/or on the beach is nice too, even in winter.

Piperno**

Via Monte de' Cenci (Ghetto), 9

Tel. +39-0668806629

www.ristorantepiperno.com.

Closed Sunday evening and all day Monday.

The best place for the Roman Jewish classics, but not only. The fish is also excellent. Service is old-style and dignified, atmosphere upper bourgeois. It's like time travel. I love it. The English on their web site is singularly awful, which is saying a lot. Except for the presence on the menu of such Roman Ghetto warhorses as fried zucchini flowers and *carciofi alla giudia* (fried whole artichokes), the restaurant considers itself a traditional Roman restaurant, not a specifically Jewish one.

Pipero* NEW ADDRESS**

Corso Vittorio Emanuele II, 250 (Chiesa Nuova)

www.piperoroma.it

Tel. +39-06-68139022.

Closed Sunday.

Creative cuisine in stunning, minimalist surroundings, every detail taken care of. We went to try it out recently and really loved everything, from the Champagne offered at the start to the mackerel with eggless wasabi (but not hot) mayonnaise to the classic carbonara and four other courses in the tasting menu. (N.b., while Piperno has the accent on the second syllable, Pipero is a dactyl.)

Pizzarium

via della Meloria 43 (sort of near the Vatican. Exit the Metro A Cipro stop and turn left.)

Tel. +39-06 39745416

www.bonci.it/portfolio/pizzarium

Open daily, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.

I was worried about what Internet cult status had done to it when I went a couple of times recently after a long hiatus. It was still *pizza al taglio* to the umpteenth power, but there was more English being spoken than Italian. Nevertheless, the place upholds the great Italian tradition of never volunteering information. Thus you have to ask one by one what is on this pizza or that pizza, while the crowd behind you waits (anybody remember the stateroom scene in *Night at the Opera*?), unable to hear the explanation, so it will need to be repeated ad infinitum. What is wrong with putting little labels on the pizzas, you ask. Beats me. But the pizza is good. If you've never tasted *pizza e patate*, trust me. Don't miss it. The *suppli*, which come in different flavors (start with classic), are oversized and delish. Note that *pizza al taglio* implies that you grab your slice and clear out, but they will put your pizza on little boards so you can taste as many kinds as you can handle. There are some benches outside, but don't expect comfort or even tables. Be a sport and don't linger. Craft beer is available. I found the mineral water is in an unmarked fridge near the door on the right but had to ask for it.

Riso

Via Marmorata 113 (Testaccio)

Tel. +39-065750708

www.ristoranterisoroma.it

Open daily for lunch and dinner.

Very spacious and attractive new above-average (for Rome) Chinese-cum-sushi in the cavernous space once occupied by a store that sold boating equipment.

Roma Sparita

Piazza Santa Cecilia (Trastevere)

Tel. +39-065800757

www.romasparita.com.

Closed Sunday evening and Monday.

After being inundated by friends and Internet posts (all foreign, not Italian), we finally tried it. If you're in the neighborhood, it could well be your go-to trattoria, and the outdoor tables in summer in the beautiful piazza must be enchanting, but we're unlikely ever to plan an evening there. It just goes on the list of decent traditional Roman places of which the one you go to most is the one nearest where you live and eventually becomes the one you like best because you always order your favorite food. Anthony Bourdain's visit has pretty much faded from Internet memory, and citations have calmed down, with some negative comments replacing all the gushing.

Romeo NEW ADDRESS

Piazza dell'Emporio, 28 (Testaccio), Tel. +39-0632110120, +39-0645229090

www.romeo.roma.it

Open all day, every day 9 a.m. to midnight

It's big, has retail activity at the front, and could probably be anywhere in the world except that it is an enormous space dug underneath the Aventine Hill, the southernmost of the canonical seven. It used to be a car dealership; I don't know what it was before that. I have only been there for an event, but was impressed by everything—food, service, use of the beautiful, enormous space (everything except the website's English, that is). These big multifunction places disorient me, but until I go back and really see how I like it, I'm at least glad to know there is a place that offers absolutely everything with long hours near public transport. There's a related pizzeria next door called *Giulietta* (Juliet; cute).

Stazione di Posta

Largo Dino Frisullo (Testaccio)

Tel. +39-065743548, www.stazionediosta.eu

Closed Monday and Wednesday lunch and all day Tuesday.

It took us a long time to get there largely because we kept forgetting it even existed. An upscale creative restaurant is just not on our Testaccio radar. Evidently we waited too long since the chef that earned the place its Michelin star had already left for *The Corner* (q.v.). The food is quite avant-garde, at least for Rome, not to say affected, with touches of Japanese this and that and a propensity for the raw. The pricing is annoying. There is a menu price for your choice of two, four, or eight courses, so if you want three (antipasto, primo, secondo, for example), you have to order the third à la carte or take the four-course. At our Saturday lunch, two courses were offered for €25, which would have been a bargain, but in order to have three, we accepted the four, and the desserts were totally not worth either the money or the calories. The rest of the food, and service, was uneven. The building, a station within the ex-slaughterhouse (*mattatoio*) complex (way down at the far end), is beautifully renovated, and the place would be great for events. It also has a cocktail bar.

Taverna Volpetti (formerly Volpetti Più)

Via Alessandro Volta 8-10 (Testaccio)

Tel. +39-065744306

www.volpetti.com/taverna

11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday; 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Sunday and Monday

The Volpetti shop has been sold; it looks the same, but Emilio, Claudio, and Alessandro Volpetti have left. The familiar staff are still doing their thing, but there is an air of rudderlessness. Meanwhile, around the corner, what used to be a glorified *tavola calda* has been seriously spiffed up, with a new name, and is very nice. There's a self-service buffet, or you can order from a small menu. Pizza is served in the evening.

The Corner

Viale Aventino 121

Tel. +39-0645597370

www.thecornerrome.com

Open evenings only, seven days a week, plus Sunday lunch.

It was a sad day in gourmet Rome when L'Altro Mastai closed about five years ago, so the great news of late summer 2014 was that the chef, Fabio Baldassarre, had returned with a gorgeous new restaurant and lower prices in a brand new boutique hotel on Viale Aventino, about halfway between the Pyramid of Cestius and the UN Food & Agriculture Organization, just below the church of San Saba. However, he is no longer there, and we have not yet had a dinner under the new regime, that of Marco Martini, who earned a Michelin star for Stazione di Posta (q.v.), which we did try, but after he left. But I have had lunch there (reasonably priced by number of courses—€10 for one, €18 for two, €25 for three).

"Pretentious" is not a word I use lightly for restaurants that make an effort to do things nicely, but I am keeping it handy because this may be the one. But, moving along, my lunch companion was another American woman who speaks Italian. We were overheard speaking English to each other (of course) and so were given English menus. Grrrrr. Anybody know what "spicy cockerel" means? When we got our Italian menus, we learned it was "galletto alla diavola." That was pretty good—my friend had it—not a whole *galletto* (something like a Cornish game hen) but a little piece of one glazed with something that smelled very good, which drove me crazy because my "*spaghetto ajo e ojo di mare*" (don't even ask) was overcooked and tasteless. An antipasto of "*baccala [sic] alla romana*" [sic] was actually an artistically presented *brandade* with some decorative tomato thingies. Insofar as *brandade* can be considered good on a planet where you could have *baccalà mantecato* instead, I suppose it was good, but *baccalà alla romana* it was not. [Rant on capricious use of specific terminology to mean whatever you want instead of what other people will understand.] Will I ever go for dinner? Probably not.

By the way, the Bistreet bistro has gone, replaced by Brazilian sushi, which doesn't seem to belong to The Corner (as Bistreet did). For news and reviews, do not watch this space.

Tram tram

Via dei Reti, 44-46 (San Lorenzo)

Tel. +39-06 490416

www.tramtram.it

Closed Monday. In summer it may be closed Sunday instead of Monday.

Great value, good food, and good wines in a friendly, sort-of-countercultural trattoria with a transport theme (e.g., seats in the front room from an old tram) and a no-frills bohemian charm. When we first went there some years ago there was quite a lot of Puglia on the menu, but on our last visit it was much more Roman, though touches remain (the fava purée with chicory is excellent). The fried fresh anchovies and the meatballs in tomato sauce are outstanding. The tables are small (but decently spaced), the comfort level not high. I love it.

Trattoria del Pesce

Via Folco Portinari, 27 (Monteverde Nuovo)

Tel. +39-349-3352560

www.trattoriadelpesce.it

Closed Monday lunch, otherwise open daily for lunch and dinner.

Airy, casual, and attractive, it's a very nice fish restaurant for the rest of us, with very fresh local fish and some interesting preparations (I really liked the *panzanella di mare*). To get there, take the 8 tram (same as for Cesare).

Trattoria Monti

via San Vito 13 (near S. Maria Maggiore)

Tel. +39-064466573

Closed Sunday evening and Monday.

The friendly owners are from the Marche (house wine is Verdicchio), so it's not your typical Roman trat. It's a very nice family-run restaurant, almost always too crowded, but not the major destination the Internet boards would have you think. Reserve. On Sundays you can have the rich, meaty, and creamy Marche lasagne known as *vincisgrassi*. The portion is small enough so that you can contemplate another course.

Trimani il Wine Bar

via Cernaia 37b

Tel. +39-064469630

www.trimani.com.

Open Monday to Saturday 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. to midnight

Large and attractive, associated with the important wine shop next door at Via Goito 20.

Vino e Camino

Piazza dell'Oro 6 (Tiber end of Via Giulia and Corso Vittorio)

Tel. +39-0668301332

www.vinoecamino.it

Closed Sunday.

With its varied menu, attractive rustic-chic look, and attention to wine, this is not the standard Roman trat. The mothership was in Bracciano (now closed), where it was noticed some years ago by the Slow Food Guide and there by us. Makes a nice change without leaving the middle ground. It's a good choice when you don't know what your tablemates are going to want to eat. Our most recent meal was a bit of a bust, however—dryish swordfish, supersalty fried *filetti di baccalà*—but I'm not ready to cross it off the list. The pizza-like *pane carasau* is quite tasty and satisfying and, as an antipasto (which is how it's listed), will do for four.