

Jake's Adventures



Part Three: Perhaps it was the memory of being surrounded by voracious tropical fish in a Hawaiian pea soup that turned Patti's heart against an island vacation. Whatever it was, if she's determined to go to Italy, Jake had better start learning the language.

Aloha Venezia! Where are my Peas?

By Jake Satin-Jacobs

"Let's go to Hawaii." I said.

"No," Patti replied. It was that simple. "Hawaii is too expensive in the winter. Italy is cheap."

"Why do you think it's so expensive in the winter," I asked.

"Everyone wants to go then."

"Why does everyone want to go there in the winter?"

"Because it's warm and beautiful."

I followed with, "And why is Italy so cheap?" And her response was, "Because no one wants to go there in the winter."

I decided to forego the next logical step and cut to the chase. "And no one wants to go there because it is not beautiful and warm." She nodded.

"So, let's go to Italy in the summer."

"It's too expensive."

"Hawaii in the summer?"

"Too hot. We're going to Venice in November."

"Where are my peas?" "I thought, remembering the reef fish.

Quando l'ultimo bus ritorna dalla spiaggia?

When we begin planning a vacation, we have a very precise division of labor. I do not plan. Patti makes all the reservations, spends hours on-line, chatting over the minutia of the trip with fellow travel freaks, buying paper underwear from an on-line travel store and compiling lists of cheap places to eat wherever we go.

My single task during the preparation phase is to learn the language of the country we are going to visit. I don't learn the whole language, of course. There is no subtle discussion, but I prepare for basic communication.

I learn present tense, directions, "How much? Too much." "I'd like the same thing – only cheaper," numbers and – just in case – "What time does the last bus return from the beach?" I was disappointed to find that saying the word "Ciao," did not bring me the same sense of inner

peace as "Aloha."

Well, Patti planned her plan and I learned to "parlare Italiano" like an illiterate, simple-minded native and, in early November, we boarded a plane for Venice.

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