

2024 - Around the 'Boot'

Ipsach – Adriatic Coast – Puglia – Calabria - Napoli - Pisa -
Ipsach

3rd April to 27th April 2024

5323 km – by our Caddy Hotel
26 days, 200km/day
(no motorways, except in CH 2x300km)



1. Background

Peggy and I have visited Italy many times before... why do I write a Report for this one more trip to this very familiar Italy?

I had taken my first glimpses of Italy in my tender childhood in 1951-54, when I spent some time in Ticino staying with my beloved Mammi. The first real trip to Italy then happened in 1963, when I was 18 and my old friend Hausi Gantenbein took me in his Citroën Ami6 for a 2 weeks tour to Lake Garda, Venezia, Trieste, and back home through the Dolomites. Since then I have visited Italy dozens on times, at first with my old friend Max and later with Peggy and also with our kids.

Peggy and I have roamed through Italy again and again, the biggest trip was in 1979 by car with Ella, Padi (3y) and Evi (1y) when we went as far as Sicily, camping at Florence, Sorrento, Giarre near Aetna, Palermo and Rome, which took us 3 weeks.....

.... but we had never visited the Adriatic Coast between Venice, Appulia and the Ionic Sea and we realised that it was time to do it now or it may soon be too late....

..... and NOW WE JUST DID IT and I think this is reason enough to conclude this life chapter of ours with a final report!

2. Plans and Strategy

The first part of the plan was quite easy: as straight as possible to the Po-Delta and then along the coast to the 'Boot's Heel'. Studying some Guidebooks (thank you Evelyne), I just made a list of places and sites we might want to see (smaller detours permitted) but without any time schedule as our travelling mode with the Caddy gives us utmost flexibility.

Since I had no idea how fast we would progress and how well I would still be after the first part, I did not feel like doing any planning for the return journey we would then just follow the nose as we would feel like at the time... this is possible with our Caddy flexibility.

Note: We try to **avoid motorways** when abroad, in order to enjoy things to see and keep flexibility to stop, to turn off or even turn back any time at will. With our Caddy we are not forced to reach a specific target at a specific time!

3. Results

We managed to make our tour around the 'Boot' as we had intended and we enjoyed every day and now feel satisfied in every respect.

I have to admit however, that the everyday challenges like driving, navigating, where to go, to park, to eat completely absorbed my brain's capacities, such that I could not muster additional energy to think/decide about alternative modes like looking for hotels, spend some time in camping sites etc.

The trip would not have been possible without Peggy doing the all the practicalities and coaching me sometimes when I could not make up my mind about decisions.

4. Various

- **Mishaps** (see details in the diary 22. and 25. April)

In fact all went well but I will mention 2 events which may have had a bit of impact on our moral.....and may have shortened the end of the journey by a couple of days.

- the road accident I provoked near Sorrento, caused by a short absence of concentration. Some will say: 'it could happen to anybody'..... in this case I have to admit that I was overly tired after a long and mostly strenuous drive this day (Agropoli to Sorrento)

- the second mishap, without serious consequences fortunately, was, that I had moved the car out of my parking lot while sleeping, barely scratching the bumper of another car but causing a big stink with people calling the police at 11pm.

- Difficulties

My problems with navigation due to my fading short-term memory have often caused me to be very frustrated. Not only is my memory deteriorating over time but this handicap becomes a real problem in regions with a dense road network and sometimes sloppy sign-posting. I often missed the way and sometimes I had even difficulties to get back on track. Unfortunately I have never bothered to have a proper on-board GPS installed! So I still try using Google Maps on my small tab which I cannot view of course while driving.

- Weather, Season

While April in general is warmer than in Middle Europe, mornings and evenings still tend to be cool, especially when some winds are blowing, which was often the case. At the same time, most camping sites and B&B's were still closed, so that it was not straight forward to look for this alternative just at the point we would have felt to look for it. So we just kept to 'our Caddy mode' which was easy just because off-season it is much easier to find a quiet place to stop and be undisturbed or even spend a idyllic time.

5. Epilog

After getting home and trying to get back into daily routine I realised to what extent my emotional batteries had been empty. I noticed this especially when I tried to avoid all activities representing any kind of challenges, risks, decision making and even during the 6 weeks I often liked to direct my attention to work on the report also to avoid other activities which might stress me.....

..... well, well!?

Was this our last big Caddy-Trip? Que serà serà

Diary

I have tried to reconstitute the story mostly from my poor memory, based on sparse notes, our pictures and using info from the Internet.

Remark: the clock of my Sony Camera was still set to last year's Hongkong Time (+6)!

Wed 3.4.	dep 13.00 / Ipsach (Home)	via: Lucerne, Gotthard	arr: 16.30 / Coldrerio (A2 Rest Area)	km: 299
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Smooth drive without Stau through the **Gotthard Tunnel** to the A2 Rest-Area near Coldrerio, where we had already spent the 1st night twice before. Also this time we had our carpark just facing the lorry perking just beside the pedestrian exit to the small road to Coldrerio.
This time we walked across the bridge over the motorway to make a little turn in the village before having our picnic.

Thu 4.4.	dep 08.10/Coldrerio / 5° brrh	via: Como, Brescia	arr: 17.30 / Lido di Volano (22°/8pm)	km: 356 (655)
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The cold night was just about bearable. Getting up early to have hot coffee and breakfast to get started. Usual drive via Chiasso, Como and by-passing Bergamo and Brescia. Between Brescia and Verona we stopped for a Pranzo Lavoro.... later we realised that we had had lunch here already in 2022 on the way to the Balcans.
I had intended to visit Ferrara but missed the right turn and as time started to run out continued to the coast near Pompona. We stopped for the night on a large quiet beach parking at Lido di Volano and had our picnic also enjoying the stroll to the beach.



Plenty of Space beside ...



.... Beach and Jetty

Fri 5.4.	dep 08.00 / Lido di Volano /13°	via: Comaccio, P. Corsini	arr: 17.45 / Lido Dante (18°/8pm)	km: 109 (765)
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Peggy got up before sunrise and went for her daily Tai Chi at the jetty. It was a romantic beach morning with view to the Po Delta and dozens of fishing boats adding to the atmosphere.
After breakfast we continued on the coast road to **Porto Garibaldi** where beside the canal we found a range of stalls offering this morning's catch! Peggy could no resist to buy 500g of ecrevisses (crayfish). Then we continued along the canal to visit picturesque **Comacchio**, offering a very nice stroll along and over the canals.



Fish Market Porto Garibaldi



Picturesque Comacchio

25km later we stopped at **Porto Corsini** where Peggy cooked the ecrevisses for lunch... miam! Then we could not resist to walk to the end of the jetty (2*3 km / 14.35 to 15.47). Soon later we reached **Lido Dante** and decided to take it easy and settled on one of the beach parkings. Picnic, then nice walk on the Beach.



Cooking Ecrevisses



... eating them



The endless Jetty with Trabucco



and its end after 2km



Lido Dante Parking



...and Beach

Sat 6.4.	dep 09.00 / Lido Dante / 13°	via: Ravenna	arr: 14.00 (17.00) / Cesenatico	km: 52 (817)
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Standard daily morning routine (Tai Chi & breakfast) then went to visit **Ravenna**, known to be the last station of Dante Alighieri. Attractive sight-seeing turn for 2.5h passing several churches, towers and also Dante's tomb.
Starting with Porta Nuova and along Via di Roma passing the Parocchia Santa Maria in Porto, Palazzo di Teodorico and the Basilica Sant'Apollinare Nuovo. Then Piazza del Popolo, Torre Civica, Basilica de San Vitale, Tomba di Dante, Basilica di San Francesco, then for desert Battistero Neoniano & Cattedrale della Resurrezione de Nostro Signore Gesù Cristo (I think after all that Peggy was a bit saturated for a while with churches etc;-).



Santa Maria in Porto



S. Apollinare



Torre Civica



Basilica di San Francesco



Piazza di San Francesco



C. della Res. de Nostro Signore

Then we continued to **Cesenatico** and stopped at **Porto Canale** at 2pm. It was now high time for lunch and passing the Ristorante Gambero Rosso at the end of the canal at nearly 3pm we could not resist to stop for a Caraffe (1l) of Pinetta Frizante à la Spina and yammy Fritto Misto. Got back to the parking at 17.00 and then reparked for the night and visited the other side for the canal with several trabucchi (land-based 'fishing boat' alternatives). Beautiful shore-evening in setting sun.



Porto Canale....

...enjoying Frito Misto

....and Pinetta Frizante

..one more evening walk....

... passing Trabucchi

Sun 7.4. dep 09.00 / Cesenatico / 13° via: Rimini, San Marino, Pescara arr: 15.30 / Fano km: 150 (967)

Drive along the coast to **Rimini** centre (no visiting) then turned towards **San Marino**.

Easy drive to **San Marino** and enjoyed the 45' walk (parking 30') around this old fortified city/state, perched on top of a rocky peak (1 more country for us to add to our records;-).



San Marino Forts



One of many Fortifications



Historical Center



View over the Plain to the Sea

Then continuing first to **Cattolica** and trying for a beach to rest .. no way but then attractive drive over hilly coast road with a short stop-over at Fiorenzuola di Focara, a small town high above the sea (thus missed out Gradara and Orbino). After **Pescara** we finally ended up at Lido di Fano and found a good place to stay, about 100m off the beach and a bit hidden, for Peggy to cook the hamburger steaks she had bought yesterday. But first we had Apéro then walked along the beach to Fano. Back before 7pm, time for dinner.



Fiorenzuola..

...di Focara with nice View

Lido di Fano

Fano Center

'Privacy' Parking

PS: Big subject: my continuing hardship with Google navigation on small roads and in towns. I tend to swear every few minutes at Google or about the Italian signalisation and also all one-way roads are united against me! and now I also could not find my night cap anywhere I had mislaid itin my door pocket!

Mo 8.4. dep 09.10 / Fano / 13° via: Ancona, Numana arr: 17.00 / Lido di Fermo km: 143 (1110)

After morning routine at sunrise, we visited **Ancona** for 1.30h, e.g. Loggia Mercantile, Porta Pia Roma (I took it for the Arco de Trajano, located at the harbour and missed it out - pic G-Earth) Piazza del Plebiscito with statue of Pope Clemente XII & Torre Civica and then up the hill to the Cattedrale di San Ciriaco.



Peggy Tai Chi at Fano



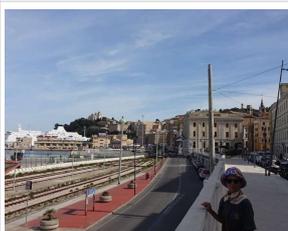
Loggia dei Mercanti



Porta Pia Roma



Arco Trajano



Along the Harbour



Pope Clemente XII



Piazza del Plebiscito



Harbour View



Cattedrale San Giraico

Then did the coast drive passing Numana, and reaching **Fermo** at 15.00. After a short visit of the small town, we continued to Lido die Fermo and found a reasonable place to stay at a beach parking. We would probably not find it reasonable in high season!
Had picnic followed by a walk till 20.00



Fermo, Piazza del Popolo...



.... Museo di Fermo



Lido di Fermo

Tue 9.4. dep 09.00/ Lido di Fermo/16° via: Ascoli, Teramo, Pescara arr: 17.30/Francavilla al Mare km: 186 (1296)

After breakfast it was difficult to find a WC, then passing by a big centro commerciali at Porto d'Ascoli we found the necessary facilities at Ipercoop before turning inland to visit Ascoli at 30km
As expected, **Ascoli** is an attractive medieval city and we made a turn for about 2h, first crossing a bridge with view to the old Ponte Cecco of Forte Malatesta, then visiting Cattedrale San Emidio and passing over Piazza Arringo and on to Piazza del Popolo with the Palazzo dei Capitani del Popolo and the Chiesa de San Francesco.
On the way back to the car we had Kebap Meat, Lasagne and salad at a small self-service bar, just before it closed



Ponte di Cecco



Cattedrale



... San Emidio...



.. and me



Piazza Arringo...



..... with Aqua potabile



Piazza del Popolo



Kebap, Lasagne

Now made a small detour via **Teramo** (26°) over mountainous roads with view to snow-covered peaks (Gran Sasso d'Italia, 2912m) to reach the coast again near Giulianova, then followed the coast passing Pescara (no stop) to Francavilla al Mare. Found a new car park still on building beside the sea and had picnic, then went for a walk along the beaches till 20.30.



Gran Sasso near Teramo



Francavilla al Mare

Wed 10.4. dep 07.50 / Francavilla al Mare /15° via: Ortona, Lago Lesina, Termoli arr: 19.00 /Vieste km: 233 (1529)

After usual morning program, we left early and visited **Ortona** with the impressive Castello Aragonese. Of course we also 'had to' walk to the end of the long jetty!
Next stop at the small medieval fortified town of **Termoli** with the Castello Svevo.
After crossing into Puglia we then reached Lesina at Lago di Lesina and looked for the **Lesina** Lake Café with a sandwich bar Evi had discovered 2 years ago and recommended. As it had not yet opened for the season we had lunch just beside at the Bodeguita del Lago and enjoyed the pulpo and eal with salicornia etc on the lake terrace!



Ortona, Castello Aragonese



Termoli, Castello Svevo



Termoli, fortified Town



Torretta Belvedere

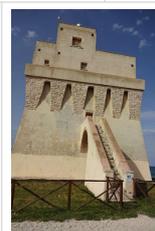


Lesina, Lunch at Lake



Eal, Pulpo and Salicornia

Nice drive along the lakes beside the Gargano (passing the Torre Miletto) and through **Peschici** (it was time to stop but saw no suitable place to stay for the night) and so continued to **Vieste**. Et voilà, just at the first beach we saw the brand-new *Grande Parcheggio Lungomare Europa Peschici-Vieste*, 750 slots and still free of charge..... There was just us and 2 camping cars at some distance.... enough space! It was high time to stop!



Torre Miletto



Vieste, brand new Parking



Parking Google Earth

Thu 11.4. dep 08.15 / Vieste 17° via: Manfredonia, Trani arr: 17.30 / Bisceglie km: 183 (1712)

After our morning routine we walked along the promenade to the picturesque old town of **Vieste** on a peninsula. It seems that we missed out to walk to the end of the peninsula and to the cathedral.... but we saw the spectacular cliffs with the Monolite Pizzomunno at the little bay after the peninsula. About 3km later we had a look at a camping-site which was open and we considered for a moment if we should stay and make a day's rest.



Vieste, old Town on Peninsula



Vieste, Monolite Pizzomunno

We were both not in the mood to just hang around and it was quite windy ... so we continued.... and enjoyed the drive along the wild coast with numerous coves and caves and a beautiful sea

We took it easy and stopped here and there e.g. at Baia Matinella. Then we reached **Manfredonia** with the huge Castello Aragonese, built by the Stauffer-Kaiser Friedrich II's son, Manfred, in the 13th century. While taking photos I got a parking ticket false alarm, it was just a warning!



Baia Matinella



Manfredonia, Castello Aragonese



Statue of Manfred

Somewhere I missed a turn again and it took me a long time to notice and get back to the right way.... but then we passed beside a Lidl and then had late lunch at 14.30 along the beaches at Barletta and also visited the Castello di Barletta.

Then continued to **Trani** and admired the very old Basilica Cattedrale Beata Maria Vergine Assunta 11/12th cty and the Castello Svevo.

We then found a reasonable spot to stay at the shore, at about 1 km from the boats harbour and center of Bisceglie.

Had picnic in the car and then walked to the cosy harbour at the town center.



Castello di Barletta.



Cattedrale Beata Maria



...Verg. Assunta



Castello Svevo di Trani



Waiting for Picnic



Bisceglie Port & Town Center



Graffiti

Fri 12.4. dep 06.20 / Bisceglie / 16° via: Bari, Molfetta arr: 14.30 / Torre Quetta Beach km: 48 (1760)

Morning routine, then continued driving and after 10km made a short visit to **Molfetta** with its old Duomo di San Corrado (12th cty), nice views over the harbour-side and a sculpture of Giuseppe Mazzini.

Soon we reached and crossed **Bari** and found a good parking only at 3km from the center! No problem! It was a nice walk back to the center along the Lungomare di Bari.



Molfetta, Duomo S Corrado



G. Mazzini



Bari, Walk 3km to Center

We started the sight-seeing round at the Teatro Margherita at 11.45 and got back to the teatro at 13.45. There was very much to see within the 2h criss-cross around the historical center, starting with the Basilica Cattedrale Metropolitana Primaziale San Sabino.



Teatro Margherita



Cattedrale San Sabino



San Sabino

Next, Basilica San Nicola and then harbour view from city wall. Next we saw the ruins of an old church Santa Maria de Buon Consiglio with pillars looking very Roman and finished the turn with the Castello Svevo.
On the way out we had a portion of take away 'pizza- alike'. Pleasant walk along the Lungomare back to the car.



Basilica San Nicola



B. San Nicola



S. Nicola



S. Nicola



Bari City Wall



Ruins of S.M.Consiglio

A few km later we stopped at a parking, Torre Quetta Beach, an opportunity for a cleaning session, as we were told that there are showers! The **cold** shower was a torture for me **never again!** After Peggy's cleaning of the car, we were just hanging around beside the sea. Peggy cooked minced meat steaks... Quite cool breeze in the evening when walking along the shore with a few terrace restaurants just open for the weekend!



Torre Quetta Beach

Sat 13.4 dep 6.45/Torre Quetta Beach via Monopoli, Trulli, Brindisi arr: 17.00 / Casa l'Albate km: 203 (1963)

Peggy had the fixed idea to leave before 5am to avoid paying another day-fee. So we left early and after 1km we found a good lonely spot beside a stone beach ... the sun rose beautifully out of the sea at 6.15 while we watched it over our breakfast!



Sunrise near Torre Quetta



View back to Bari

Then we continued to **Monopoli** and enjoyed the magnificent Cattedrale Maria Santissima della Madia, Chiesa San Francesco d'Assisi, Chiesa di San Domenico and Castello Carlo V.



Monopoli, Ch...



...S.Francesco



Cattedrale..



...Maria...



...Santissima..



...della Madia



Castello Carlo V

The main highlight today was still to come: **Trulli-Land** at and around Alberobello which was a bit very fairy-tale for my taste. We then continued through nice Trulli countryside to Locorotondo where we turned back to the coast and had our picnic at a beach near Savelletri. 1h later, at 15.00 we stopped at **Brindisi** and made a short turn and had a look at the 2 Roman Columns and the Cattedrale San Giovanni Battista.

Later we had some difficulty to find a good spot for the night but with a bit of imagination we settled at **Casa l'Abate** on small parking beside the Torre Casa Te L'Abate, in front of a Caffeteria.....Picnic, then concluded the day with a nice late evening beach walk to Torre Specchiolla.



Alberobello, Trulli...



.... 'Trully City'



Brindisi, Catt. S. G. Bat.



Rom. Column



Casa l'Abate ... Dinner

Sun 14.4. dep 7.30/Casa l'Albate / 14.5° via: Lecce, San Foca arr: 16.00 / Torro dell'Orso km: 71 (2034)

The night was a bit tormented by a group of about 8 people, who after leaving the bar at 1am, where loudly discussing and even shouting at each other on the street with no end..... they probably did not notice that we were sleeping there.... Otherwise the place had been very good to stay the night also with morning routine with idyllic sunrise!

We left at 7.30 and via San Cataldo arrived at **Lecce**, parking at 8.30 not far from Castello Carlo V where we started our 3h sightseeing tour at 9.00.



Casa l'Abate



.....with small port.



Lecce, Castello Carlo V



Fontana Armonia

So much to see from the Anfiteatro with the Colonna di Sant'Oronzo via the Chiesa de Santa Irene, Cattedrale Maria Santissima Assunta e S.Oronzo and more to the Porta Rudiae. Then continuing and on the way admiring a balcony carried by animal sculptures to the Porta Napoli with the Obelisco di Terra d'Otranto. Still several churches to go, finishing with the Basilica Santa Croce and the Chiesa di San Matteo....and for desert, just beside our parked car, the spectacular Chiesa Sant'Antonio a Fulgenzio (Sunday service) Lecce is sure worth a visit!



Anfiteatro, Col. S. Oronzo



Ch. Sta. Irene



Ch. S. Irene



Cat. Maria Santissima Assunta



Camp. Duomo



Porta Rudiae



Balcony



Porta Napoli



Obelisco



Bas. S. Croche



Chiesa S. M.



Chiesa San Matteo



Ch.S.Antoni..



.. a Fulgenzio

Then joined back the coast at San Cataldo (made no stop - too many people on Sunday) then followed the coast towards San Foca. On the way we enjoyed walking and stumbling for a while on the rough ground of the sinuous waterline!

13.00, at San Foca, we stopped at the promenade beside the little boat harbour and got ourselves a little take away lunch to eat while enjoying sea view - Fritto Misto and Seafood Lasagna.... quite yammy. We then kept stopping to admire all sorts of cliff formations (e.g. le Grotte della Poesia near Roca) until we reached Torre del Orso, settling there at 18.00 and after picnic spent a beautiful evening also walking along the sea on the high cliffs.



San Foca, take-away Picnic



Cliffs near San Foca



Grotte della Poesia, near Roca



Torre del Orso



Torre del Orso Parking



Torre del Orso

Mo 15.4. dep 07.30/ Torre dell'Orso/16° Otranto, P.Ristola, Gallipoli arr: 17.15 / Conchiglie Lido km:152 (2186)

Morning Routine with beautiful sunrise scenery. We left early and reached **Otranto** at 8.30 already. Otranto also offers great sightseeing for our 2h visiting with 2 main highlights within a beautiful setting overlooking the harbour:

- The Castello Aragonese offering dramatic views to its 3 cylindric towers and massive walls and the Monument of the 700 Heroes & Martyrs executed by the Turcs in 1480.



Torre del Orso



Otranto, Castello Aragonese



Eroi & Martiri

- The Cattedrale di Santa Maria Annunziata (11th cty), also famous for its splendid floor mosaics and the Chapel of the Martyrs with exposed skulls.



Cattedrale di ...



.....Santa Maria Annunziata...



.....



.....



.....



... capella martiri

Then nice drive along the rocky coast passing Santa Cesarea Terme, Grotta Zinzulusa, Grotta Verde and several Torre until we reached Punta Ristola (2115km from home) at Sta Maria di Leuca, the very end of the 'Boot's Heel'! At **Punta Ristola** I felt having accomplished my mission to drive to and visit **Puglia** and Peggy was indeed very excited to explore every rock and cave at this exposed view-point for over 1h including a bite and a beer.



Afterwards there were some more cliffs and caves until we reached Gallipoli at 4pm which was too late for a proper visit. So we just drove to the historical centre, a fortified town on a small Island and drove around it (1.5km), stopping briefly here and there for a picture. On the way out after the bridge we stopped at the beautiful Fontana Greca where we also had a nice view to the fort protecting the island.

Then we just continued along the shore to Lido di Conchiglie where we found a good spot to settle and from where we had a nice view over the bay to Gallipoli at 7km distance. Peggy cooked dinner tonight!



Note: At the Heel! Start of the Way Home!

Strange! I had imagined the trip only in the outbound direction to the 'boot's heel', without giving any thoughts to the onward and home journey! Very unusual for me. Perhaps a sign of age and emotional exhaustion.....and incidentally Evelyne's Puglia Guide ended here too, as we now left Puglia.... Even if we felt now that we had started to head for home, we still decided to proceed to the toe of the boot but first making the detour via Matera.....before proceeding to Calabria.

Tue 16.4. dep 09.30 / Conchiglie Lido / 19° via: Taranto, Matera arr: 17.45 / Marina di Pisticci km: 285 (2471)

Got up at 6.30, then had breakfast before walking and crawling to and around the cliffs nearby, offering a last great view over the Bay. Then followed the coast to Taranto via Santa Maria del Bagno (Torre del Fiume o 4 Colonne). In Taranto we just stopped for a few pictures, then headed for Matera losing the way near Masafra.



Having lost 1h we finally reached Matera at 2pm. We started the turn with the Castello Tramontano and then making a loop to the center also visiting the Chiesa di San Francesco d'Assisi before we walked down to and around the famous spectacular Sassi, when light rain started which made us head back to the car passing-by the Cattedrale di Maria Santissima della Bruna e Sant'Eustachio.



We left Matera at 4pm and reached the coast at Lido Metaponto at around 5pm, time to settle but we did not find a reasonable spot here. So we drove back to the E90 express road and left at the next exit to the Lido di Pesticci.
 Bingo! The perfect place on an empty parking at a lonely beach...still raining a few drops here and there but it was already 6pm anyway.
 PS Since I had no guide for this area we missed out a few ancient Roman sites at Metaponto....e.g. the Tempio di Hera (with a lonely car park;-). Never mind...



Marina di Pisticci

Wed 17.4. dep 07.45/ Marina di Pisticci 17° via: Rotondella, Graco arr: 16.45 / San Giacomo km: 235 (2706)

After nice morning routine with Peggy's Tai Chi on the beach, we joined the E90 again to follow the coast....when after a short while we saw a town spread over a hill-top like a Kippa. Why not? Off the express-way and driving inland to **Rotondella**. Nice quiet town with a terrace offering an phenomenal view as far as Matera at over 50km. We also saw **Graco** in the distance (and a picture on the view panel) and decided to go for it.



Morning Routine



Rotondella



View from Rotondella



View to Graco



Graco



Pasta and Fritto Misto

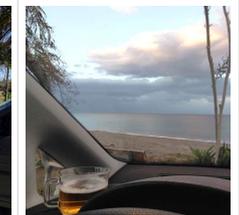
We drove through interesting hilly countryside to Graco, a spectacular ruined city but then found out that visits into the ruins are only allowed with guides. Was impressive to see this scenery anyway.

Back to the coast we had nice lunch (pasta and fritto misto with rosato) in a restaurant at **Marina Roseto**.

After a long coast drive we arrived at San Giacomo and found a perfect parking for the night, 10m from the sea with evening sun. As usually we made a little walk before and after picnic.



San Giacomo....



...gently drifting ...

Thu 18.4. dep 08.00 / San Giacomo 12° via Crotone, C.Colonna arr:17.00 / Rochella Ionica km: 256 (2962)

Usual morning routine (Tai Chi & Bf) then stopping to visit Punta Alice. Flop! There was not more to see than a ordinary light tower, a bit of beach and a huge compound of a horrible, decaying chemical plant.

Around 11am we made a brief visit to the little port of **Crotone** and of course over the jetty with great views over to town and the coast line which we followed to visit **Capo Colonna** with a big compound of Greek/Roman ruins between the light tower and Torre di Capo Nao and a lovely chapel.

Wikipedia: *The peninsula was the site of a great sanctuary of Hera from the 7th c. BC, the most famous in Magna Graecia. Later the Romans built the fortified town of Lacinium over the area.*



Tai Chi



Clearing B&B



Crotone Port



Capo Colonna (Hera)



Capo Colonna



Torre de Cappo Nao

At Capo di Rizzuto we stopped for a bite and did some climbing over rocks and peeping into caves in spite of a stormy wind.

After 3 more hours driving for 250km along the coast we arrived at Rochella Ionica at 17.00 and found a good spot to settle in a harbour parking with view to the boats sections. Peggy had bought some mixed seafood this morning at a Ipercoop (Crotone) so we had a yammy dinner and then went for our digestive walk over the jetty with view to the 2 forts towering on rocks above Rochella.



Capo

..... Rizzuto

Rochella Ionica

Vegies waiting for....

.... mixed Seafood

Evening Walk on Jetty

Fri 19.4. dep 08.30 / Rochella Ionica / 12° via: Reggio di Calabria arr: 18.00 / Tropea km: 242 (3204)

Normal morning routine, then continued along the coast when 90km later, at Melito di Porto Salvo, right at the front end of the boat a big concrete bridge was barred. Never mind, soon later we started to see the coast of **Sicily**, also the **Aetna** which was covered by clouds. Half hour later we reached **Reggio de Calabria** with all one-way streets refusing to take me where I wanted to park. En passant while erring around we managed to take a quick picture of the Cattedrale di Maria Santissima Assunta in Cielo, before we found at last a short-time car park at the end of the Lungomare Falcomatà. We walked 1km each way also passing 2 big modern sculptures in front of the Villa Genoese Zerbi. At the big WW-II memorial we turned back and as parking time was over we left without visiting the centre.



Castello Rochella

Sicily, Aetna cov'd

Reggio, Cat. Maria S. Assunta

Villa Genoese Zerbi

Monumento Vittoria

WW-II Memorial

At Canitello we stopped briefly to look over to the **Eastern Tip of Sicily** at 3km distance to Torre Faro and then also appeared the **Stromboli Volcano Island** which the kept us company for a long while....
 Soon we reached the **Castello Rufo di Scilla** which we visited (no fee for the elderly) mainly for the very nice view.
 After a lot of ups and downs and looking around in vain for a place to settle we finally reached Tropea and found a tiptop place at a small beach parking (Lido del Nonno) beside the small port. Strong wind but beautiful sun setting scenery!



Tip of Sicily

Stromboli Island



Scilla

Castello Ruffo de Scilla....

.....

View to Stromboli

Tropea, Lido del Nonno

.....

Sat 20.4. dep 08.00 / Tropea / 12° via: Amantea, S.Lucido arr: 17.30 / Sapri km: 268 (3472)

After morning routine we made a turn up and through Tropea perched on high cliffs also offering nice views e.g. the Chiesa de Santa Maria dell'Isola and the faint shape of Stromboli at 60km distance!
 Then continued passing **Amantea**, San Lucido with a statue of Cilla (old legend) and on to Marina de Santa Maria del Cedro where we stopped at a restaurant and had Risotto ai Frutti di Mare and Pork Chops.



Tropea historical Center

.... Chiesa S. Maria

... View Point

S. Lucido, Statua di Cilla

Marina S..M del Cedro

As it was raining once in a while, we just continued along the main road SS18 passing **Praia a Mare** (Torre Fiuzi and Isola di Dino) when suddenly this only road along the coast was blocked and no deviation info! No choice but drive inland and then over a pass to get back back to the coast at Maratea 1h later. Then the road continued high above the cliffs and joined the sea level only at **Sapri** where 1km before town turned down to the little port with a good spot to settle! We had a look around the port and there was also a footpath with historical background called Donkey Trail. We also met Mario who in season takes tourists on tours on his solar-power-driven boat! He also showed us the mineral water source just behind the parking. We really spent a nice evening until dark at 8.30pm.



Praia a Mare, Torre Fiuzi & Isola Dino



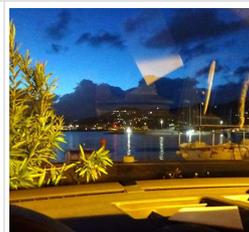
Sapri, Parking...



... at the Port (in front of Caddy)



...historical Donkey Walk



... sleep well....

Sun 21.4. dep 08.00/Sapri/12° via: Lenticosa, P. Licosa arr: 16.30 / Agropoli (near Paestum) km: 140 (3612)

Morning Routine with nice view in sunrise lighting! Peggy then went to the source, Mario had shown us, to fill a few bottles with the 'mineral water'. It turned out to be too salty for coffee and also for quenching thirst! Then drove past Sapri to Scario, after which started a winding road up to San Giovanni a Piro, then over the mountains to **Lenticosa**, a hanging small town with an old church to which we paid a short visit.



Sapri, good Morning Feeling



Holi Cave beside...



healthy Source



San Giovanni a Piro



Lenticosa

Then descending to **Marina de Camerota** followed by exciting coast drive in nice weather, passing Pisciotta with short stops here and there to **Porto di Acciaroli**, where we had a quick bite after a walk on the amazing jetty with a Madonna Statue. 17° in hot sun/cold wind. After Ogliastro the road to Punta Licosa was barred. So we had to return and try inland and from San Marco over a pass to join the coast again. Later we made a short visit to Punta Licosa with view to the Amalfi Coast at some distance.



Marina de Camerota



Pisciota



Porto di Acciaroli over Jetty...



... to Madonna



Punta Licosa, view to Amalfi-



Coast

Nice drive again along the ongoing coast to **Agropoli**. I had planned to stop for the night at Agropoli to visit Paestum the next day at the start of the Golfo di Salerno!

We crossed Agropoli and found a good place to settle at the end of Lido Aurora. After apero we made a nice walk before picnic with lentil salad etc with a beautiful sunset over distant **Capri**!



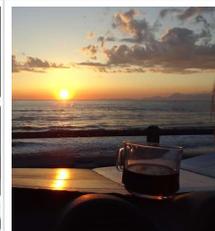
Agropoli, end Lungomare



Agropoli, Lungomare



I love lentil salad



Enjoying sunset...



... over Capri

Mo 22.4. dep 08.30 / Agropoli / 11° via Paestum/Amalfi/Sorrento arr: 18.20 / Vico Equense km:173 (3785)

Usual morning routine.

Then 10 minutes drive to the **Paestum Archeological Site** of the Greek ancient city Poseidonia, founded in the 6th century B.C. The well maintained ruins amongst which 3 impressive temples, the Hera-, Neptune- and Athena-Temples and an Amphitheatre are really fascinating.



Hera and Neptune Temples



Amphitheater



Athena Temple

Pleasant drive of 40km along the Gulf of Salerno followed by a nerve wrecking drive, first through **Salerno** and an even more nerve wrecking but very exciting drive of 50km along the **Amalfi Coast**. We had been in Amalfi twice before, in 1979 by car and 2015 a return trip by public bus. As it was difficult to park in Amalfi, we just made a short pic-stop.



Gulf of Salerno



Amalfi



near Amalfi

I found the drive nerve-wrecking because of heavy bothway traffic, narrow roads with cars parked wild anywhere at random and hardly any places to stop the car to take pictures....but I still did....hmm. But of course I enjoyed the drive while Peggy closed the eyes every few seconds when I had to cross with only a couple of cm spare.

After **Positano** we continued to the end of the Penisula via **Sant'Agatha sul Due Golfi** with the idea to peep over to Capri Island. I wanted to drive to Termini but somewhere took a wrong turn and after long winding roads with nice view we ended down below **Nerano** at **Marina del Cantone**, a dead end! So had to drive back to the top of the ridge and then took the correct turn to Termini and on a small road to the top of a ridge to see over to Capri. Then we continued still along the winding coast roads to **Sorrento** and on to **Meta** just to remember the time we were here on our last trip by bus with Castel-Reisen in Autumn 2015.



Positano, cars parked at random!



San Agatha



Marina del Cantone



View to Capri



Meta (visited 2015)

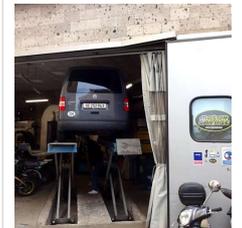
All along I had wished to settle today on a spot facing Vesuvio and just after **Vico Equense** at Lido Bikini, BINGO, we saw a small view-spot parking which exactly corresponded to my wish. It was nearly 17.00 and I was tired but Peggy feared that it was on private ground as there was a closed gate giving access to a beach leisure center (Bikini Beach) and so she wanted to move on to try a bit further before deciding.

..... I gave in and as I tried to move out of the parking to turn left to continue, I overlooked a small motorbike which crashed with full speed into our car. Nobody was hurt but both vehicles damaged. First we had to remove our vehicles from the road. Whereas the Caddy still seemed to work the bike was not. The biker only spoke Italiano and me hardly. But we managed to agree not to call the police! 'Thank you Mario!' (Esposito). As we did not manage to fill my accident declaration form (German version), Mario called his insurance agent in Vico Equense, who was still in the office and suggested that we should drive there taking Mario along.....all seemed fine but soon I noticed a strong pull to the left on the steering wheel but we still managed the 2 km with squeaking tires though.



Bike & Caddy with damaged side

We managed to clear the insurance issues but what now? What about fixing the directions of the Caddy and where do we sleep? Mario guided us to his motorbike shop where they also do car repairs and thanks to Mario, the Caddy was immediately put on the repair platform. Bad news: The steering bar of the left wheel was badly bent; Good news: we should take the car to repair at 9am and there was no objection to drive 2km back to the Bikini Parking to sleep and then, the next morning, back again to the garage! The body work (Kotflügel) was very dented but repair could wait until home, since I could still open my door just enough to squeeze in and out!



Caddy on the Lift

So we drove back the 2km to Bikini Beach. It was 18.15 and so, with a bit of delay, we still managed to enjoy a good evening and a night facing Vesuvio at 25km across the Bay, just as I had wished! Bonus: Sunset over Ischia!

UNBELIEVABLE: Accident at 16.40 / Insurance & Garage / Back to Bikini Parking at 18.20 **Delay: 1h 40'**



Back to Bikini Parking

View to Vesuvio ...

.... and Sorrento

... Picnic

Sunset over Ischia

Sleep well!

Tue 23.4. dep 08.30 / Vico Equense /12° via: Vesuvio, Napoli, Pozzuoli arr: 19.00 / near Bacoli km: 112 (3897)

When I woke up at 6.30 and peeped through the window I saw a police car beside us (ohoh!?) and 2 policemen who fished for speed offencers they caught a few but did not take notice of us!
By 7am they left and we had our normal breakfast and then delivered the car at 9am at the garage.

We were told to collect it at 11 or perhaps 11.30. 2h time to walk down to the Marina di Vico and up to the Chiesa della Santissima Annunziata perched on a high cliff. After a little unexciting turn in town we found a small snack bakery and had a mini pizza and a lovely feuilleté, before collecting the car which was ready for a test run.



Bikini Beach



Marina die Vico



Scoglio Margherita



Ch. della Santissima

Now we had a **big surprise!** The repair of the steering cost only **80 Euro!** hmm!?! The new bar and the work!
NOTE: Everybody from Mario to the agent and his wife and the garage staff have been very nice and helpful to us!
We have been very, very lucky!

Next target was to drive up to the Vesuvio, although the top was covered in clouds. And off we went, until, on the A145 at Castellamare, I missed the exit before the tunnel, after which I had lost the orientation and took the wrong hill for the Vesuvio, and I headed in a totally wrong direction (probably Gragnano). I took me one hour until I got back on track in Castellamare di Stabia and soon stopped at a Lidl for Peggy to shop and me to recover my nerves. Then drove to Torre Greco and got there at 2.30pm. The clouds had gone and so we drove up to the Vesuvio's highest parking.... because of the time lost earlier, it was now past 3pm and too late to leave the car behind to walk up to and around the volcano crater as we had planned to stop tonight after Napoli. So I just took a few pictures. We then returned slowly to Torre Greco stopping here and there to enjoy the view over the Gulf and the City, e.g. from 'Terrazza Due Golfi' at 15.15.

Then drove back down to Torre Greco and then to and through Napoli (e.g. passing Castel Nuovo and through the Vittorio Tunnel) in busy hour and reached the other end at 5pm



Drive to Vesuvio...



Vesuvio Crater



View over the Bay of Napoli



Driving to Napoli



Napoli, Castello Nuovo

.... with a short stop at Posilipo with a beautiful view to Vesuvio over the Gulf of Napoli. Ouff again after an hour of very strenuous traffic! At Pozzuoli we then passed beside the Phlegraean Fields (volcanic threat to Napoli Region) without realising it and then a huge Roman Anfiteatro (just got a glimpse), as I was totally concentrating to leave Napoli behind to find a spot to settle as time was up.



Posilipo, view to Vesuvio



Posilipo



Capo Posilipo



Pozzuoli, Anfiteatro



Lido Via Miliscola, Bacoli

It was nearly 7pm when we decided to park beside Via Lido Miliscola, between the beach and Lago di Miseno near Bacoli (40.7888671, 14.0710033), about 20km from Napoli). Usual picnic and a walk along the beach with frontal view to closeby Procida and the Ischia Islands behind and with side-view still to Capri in the distance.

Wed 24.4. dep 08.00 / near Bacoli /11° via: Gaeta, Ostia (near Rome) arr: 18.30 / Ladispoli km: 306 (4203)

Morning Routine. Then drove up to Monte Procida with great views over Bacoli and the bay of Napoli to Vesuvio and Capri and over to Ischia! Next short stop at the Roman site Linternum (a big column) beside Lago Patria. Of course we made a turn to the old town of Gaeta on a peninsula which we had already seen from far while driving along the bay. After taking pictures of Fortresses, Churches and also a big warship, police expected us to move away again.



View to Capo Miseno & Vesuvio



View to Procida & Ischia Is.



Roman Linternum



Gaeta



Gaeta



Gaeta



Gaeta Warship

It was now time for lunch and we stopped 10' later and had pasta, lovely beef ragout and nice artichauds with lovely white!

About 120km to Ostia on the coast beside Rome. Just kept driving hoping/expecting to find a good place worthwhile to stay for the rest of the day. No way - to posh! So we continued concentrating on by-passing Rome and the Fiumicino Airport!



Artichauds, Beef Ragout

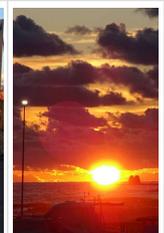
It was after 6pm, when we reached Ladispoli and the prospects to find a good place to stop looked very bleak, when suddenly, we saw a range of a few parked cars beside a small river passing under a footbridge at the end of the Lungomare. It was in town and just in front of a snack bar but then also just beside the sea. We spent a nice evening with beautiful view of sunset from the footbridge!



Ladispoli, Parking in Town....



... beside the Bridge



... good night!

Today, as for the last few days, we had short patches of rain but only when no problem and sun when needed!

Thu 25.4. dep 08.00 / Ladispoli /9° via: Civitavecchia, Castiglione arr: 15.00 / Piombino km: 252 (4455)

Morning Routine. Driving to Civitavecchia, with a short stopover to view the impressive Fortezza Michelangelo and one of the XXL-Cruisers moored in the harbour. Following the coast for 200km via Castiglione della Pescaia and Punta Ala (flop) and passing non-stop through dead Follonica...(we had skipped Grosseto)



Civitavecchia, Fort ...



... Harbour



... bye or hi?



Castiglione d. Pescaia

Finally we reached Piombino on a peninsula facing Elba. It was only 3pm but a nice place and after a first strolling to the Faro della Rocchetta with a great view to Elba and even to Corsica and a turn in town we decided to stay and also found a marvellous terrace parking with view to the Islands while we had our grilled chicken and some wine of course (perhaps I had a bit too much). Then made a walk again to the Faro and enjoyed our last spectacular sunset over Isola Capraia. Very happy, we returned to the car after 8.pm and as usually, Peggy went to bed at around 9pm, whereas I stayed on my seat to listen to music (usually classic from radio) until feeling sleepy... . sometimes I then fall asleep behind the steering wheel until Peggy calls me and so happened again tonight, but before Peggy called.....



Piombino: Faro d.Roccheta



Map



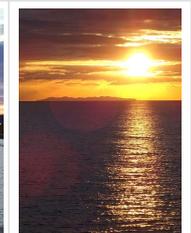
Piombino....



... parked for the night



Another stroll in sunset



... over I. Capraia

.....I heard some banging and shouting and like in a dream, seeing a nightly unknown scenery and I was scared and so pressed the gas pedal as my engine was on. Before the car moved the crazy woman immediately opened my door, leaned over me and in 2 seconds she withdrew the car-key and wowed it like a trophy over her head and shouted: *'You are drunk and 2 times you tried to escape!'* In the meantime I woke up completely but could not figure out what was happening when the women and 2 others kept repeating that they had called the police and they would not return my key before the police arrived. Peggy also appeared and at least managed to calm them down a bit and get them off my back! About 20' later (22.30) 2 policemen arrived and the woman and her companions were all over them one of the policemen tried to talk to me but mutual understanding was not possible under the circumstances. Peggy also brought my clothes, as I was shivery in my 'pajama'.

Now at last I realized that **I had been driving out of my parking lot while sleeping (sleep driving)** and had (lightly) touched the bumper of the woman's old-timer VW-Bus, leaving a little spot while our caddy had a slightly dented streak over my right back-door! Now the policemen filled-out the accident form, returned a copy to me, asked me for my mobile nr. and then gave me the sign to park again (which I did backwards perfectly) then we shook hands and they left. No mention of an alcohol test which the mob had requested. Of course we then drove to the other end of the carpark to sleep and still managed to have a reasonable sleep!



Little scratch - big Story

Fri 26.4. dep 07.30 / Piombino / 10° via Pisa, Lucca, Albetone Pass arr: 18.00 / Riva (near Po) km: 335(4808)

Just having quick breakfast and then left early. After last night's nightmare we were not keen to discuss possible itinerary alternatives for getting home and so we took the more or less straight way towards home, leaving the coast at Livorno for a short visit to **Pisa** where I wanted to see the Piazza del Duomo with the Torre di Pisa one more time in my life.....



Pisa, walking....



... and enjoying...



... once....



...more!

Then continued and passed Lucca to continue through a long wild valley, stopping at the Ponte del Diavolo, then over the **Albetone Pass**, a skiing resort, still snow covered and with skilifts in operation! Nice drive through nice country-side down towards Modena and bi-passing Reggio.



Ponte del Diavolo



Passo del Albetone, 1388m...



... Skiing Resort



Ponte Calatrava

After the crossing of the E35 Motorway over the elegant Calatrava Bridges towards Mantova it was past 5pm already and so we tried to find a place for the night before Montova and almost getting concerned, we found, by pure coincidence, this parking of a local sports ground at the small off-the-main-road village Riva (20km before Mantova). We enjoyed a relaxed picnic in spite of rain and then at 9pm Peggy went to bed and I listened to classical music waiting for Mr. Sandman.....to send me to bed too.....



Lonely parking for last night!

Ohoh! 22.15 same as in Piombino I started the engine, and fortunately this time I did not manage to untie the handbrake, before Peggy, in alarm, woke me up! Good that we were completely alone.....;-)

Sat 27.4. dep 8.00 / Riva /11° via: Montova, Brescia, Bergamo, Como arr: 17.00 / Ipsach - Home km: 515 (5323)

Long routine drive home, first on main roads via Mantova, Brescia, Como, Chiasso, then A2 Motorway via Gotthard Tunnel to Ipsach! 10 hours on the way (1h shopping near Mantova, 30' sandwich-stop on the A2-rest area near Chiasso). Weather was gray with max 12° with patches of rain until Gotthard, then sunny and up to 21°. Arrived at Home at 17.00

Just moved up the shopping and the minimum of other items and then took it as easy as possible. My batteries were empty and Peggy was certainly tired too!

We had done 5323 km (600km motorway only in CH), 26 days, 200km/day

Epilogue

Over the next few days the car was fixed and we got back to normal life! So it seemed. But in hindsight I discovered that I have again lowered my capacity to face challenges and my motivation to new undertakings.....

Que Serà Serà!