

So Now You Want To Stay

This happens a lot. You come for what you think will be three months and then you don't want to leave. Not many people want to leave when they should, and a few (like Alan, Dom, and I) even stay. Because of the current retrograde government, it's becoming much more difficult if you're not from the European Union (if you are, skip this section). I highly recommend the excellent book by Travis Neighbor, *Living, Working, and Studying in Italy*. You can also look at the site www.stranieriitalia.com which has some good information. The Region of Umbria has also "helped" us with the printing of this book in return for giving some information on employment; note this is valid only for EU citizens. Basically your choices are work under the table, or study.

Work – I'm often asked about getting a job. The first step is to leave Italy... No, seriously, the Bossi-Fini law (put together by a xenophobe and a quasi-fascist who happen to be, respectively, the Minister for Reform and the Foreign Minister) makes it virtually impossible for you to get a job legally, so forget about it. But you can find a job *al nero* (under the table). Like anything, experience and luck help. Your best bet (if you speak some Italian and good English) is to get a pub job. Do like I did and go to pubs when they first open (and their owners aren't busy) and ask for a job, making sure to emphasize your previous waitering or bartending experience (even if you have to make it up). If you've never bartended before, you won't be able to start now, because the waiters working now are the bartenders of tomorrow. Organizing parties (i.e. inventing a theme party, making and distributing flyers, and generally getting lots of people to come) for various pubs is the best way to get quick cash. Call Pisco at 335.790.8037 if you're interested. Saying you will be around in Perugia for a while also helps.

The best time to get these jobs is the summer, and September if you want to work the whole winter. If you play guitar you can probably get some gigs, but even if you're as good as Dominik, Mike Fromm or Måns, you won't be able to pay the rent. Another idea is trying to teach English. Unless you have experience or a certificate you probably won't get hired formally but there is some demand for private lessons from native speakers. Put a notice up around town or drop a free ad in the Cerco e Trovo newspaper. You could try the *vendemmia* (harvesting grapes - September) or the *raccolto di olive* (olive harvest - November) – go to InformaGiovani (in Via Idalia, a little sidestreet between Via Pinturicchio 44 and 46) and ask for a list of people who are hiring. Each one is only about two weeks but you can make decent money.

Studying – To get a study visa you need to be enrolled at an accredited institution. The University for Foreigners is not the only option. ABC Lingua, another language school (albeit smaller) can be your ticket to the study visa, or you can enrol at the Università degli Studi di Perugia, the University of Perugia. This will be a long, frazzling bureaucratic process, slightly easier if you are a citizen of the European Union. Essentially, you must have a series of documents (secondary school diploma, birth certificate) authenticated, which means your government must give these documents the Apostille of the Treaty of The Hague (1961), a sort of official stamp of authenticity. These documents must then all be translated and given to the Italian consulate (along with your approved application to the University) and authenticated by them. They will then give you your visa and you can head for Perugia. The person to talk to about this is Signora Fabiola at the Segreteria degli studenti, conveniently located Nowhere Near You (Via Tuderte, where it intersects with Via S. Constanzo and Via Pallotta, below San Pietro). Go in the *piano terra* and bear off to the left (look for Ufficio Stranieri). You can also check www.miur.it under "Study In Italy;" this is the government's site, which is occasionally helpful. This is the one-paragraph description. If you're lucky, you'll be able to do all these steps in five months, so start early. The test for foreigners is usually in the beginning of September.

Volunteering - My best recommendation for staying in Italy without lots of bucks in your bank is WWOOF, Willing Workers On Organic Farms. This is a worldwide network of small organic farms who give you a great experience in return for your work on their farm. You get room and board (a bed and food), sometimes even some money, though it depends on the farm. Look at their website, www.woof.it. It's a neat experience.