

Client: Romeo Hotel
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NAPLES NOT ROME



To those who know Naples, the lack of visitors is both a mystery and a joy. In Rome, there are always moments when sightseeing begins to feel like a rugby scrum. Yet only an hour away by train, in a city with the most ravishing location in Italy, you could be alone with Caravaggio.

Naples has never learnt restraint. It plays shamelessly to every Italian stereotype. The voices are loud, the greetings theatrical; the food is divine, the driving fatalistic; the architecture is glorious and the policemen are more elaborately turned out than a Gilbert and Sullivan rear admiral. Oh, and the phalluses from Pompeii, preserved in the Naples National Archaeological



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Museum, have cupid wings and bells. Naples is chaotic, splendid, dilapidated, maddening, impossible and completely adorable.

There may be more masterpieces per square mile in Rome, but how many masterpieces can you cope with in a long weekend? The fabulous staterooms of the Capodimonte Museum, a Bourbon palace where you can rattle around as if you own

SCRUFFY CHIC Authentic Naples

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the place, have a couple of hundred to keep you busy, from Titians to Caravaggios. Down in the *centro storico*, the marble figure of the Veiled Christ, a masterpiece of Neapolitan virtuosity in the Cappella Sansevero museum, draws admirers from around the world.

If it's the ancient world you're after, Naples is a show stopper. Gloomy staircases will take you underground 30ft and 2,000 years to the lanes of Roman Neapolis, eerily preserved beneath the modern streets. Or take the shuttle train to Pompeii and Herculaneum, the greatest excavations of the ancient Roman world, where you'll see the homes, taverns and brothels of ordinary citizens preserved by Vesuvius's ash.

Then there's the unforgettable Bay of Naples — from the great hulk of Vesuvius, past the silhouette of the Sorrentine peninsula to the outline of Capri, it is dazzlingly beautiful.

Stanley Stewart

BA and easyJet fly to Naples. Hotel Romeo, overlooking the bay, has doubles from £205 (romeohotel.it)