

# NORTH WEST CUP IN CALVISANO, BRESCIA ITALY



## Touring Italy and shooting IDPA combine for a “Trip of a life time”

**WORDS** MIKE CRITSER **PHOTOS** KITTY RICHARDS

**At the Smith & Wesson BUG Nationals, Federico Iannelli (POC for Italy) asked me to be the Match Director for the Northwest Cup in Italy and to bring several of the top IDPA shooters along to do a clinic. Little did I know that this simple question would lead to the trip of a lifetime.**

I have been very lucky to have been able to travel internationally the majority of my career, but this was the first time with a firearm. It's not easy! It required two trips to the Italian Consulate in New York to get the permit, which consists of proof that you

own the firearm, your carry permit, travel itinerary, passport etc. Then there is the law in Italy of no “war” rounds. That meant my 9mm parabellum (9x19) was out. However, after a bit of research, I find out the 9x21 is legal there. The bullet in a 9x21 is actually seated deeper in the longer case resulting in both the 9x19 and 9x21 being almost the same overall length. I thought our guns laws made no sense! So a replacement barrel in my M&P 9 Pro and I am good to go. Arrange to get ammo locally and I am all set. Although I find out the hard way that

it's shooting about 4” low. First stage was standards with 6 head shots. Six nice shots in the neck, down 30. Ouch!

Firearms have to travel separately from your luggage (with a separate \$100 charge). I had decided to fly to Rome and spend a couple of days with Federico before we drive to Milan for the match. Upon landing in Rome, I find that it is VERY good to have a well-connected friend when I am outside of customs and my gun is inside. Federico and his Police Chief friend sort that out and we are good to go.





Immediately upon arrival, competitors from all over the world were made to feel welcome.



No one likes to paste but even less so in the rain



Seeing the sites in Rome (Colosseum, St Peters) was absolutely unbelievable. THE FOOD!!! Really good and a lot of it. I don't think I have ever been to a restaurant where I prayed for the food to stop, but then I have never been to Rome before. We went to a restaurant that was owned by a friend of Federico's, no menu. The food just kept coming and coming and coming. Each time the waitress would put a plate in front of me, I would comment "not another course???" Then it was off to Milan with stops in Anzio for the US Cemetery and

Museum. Again unbelievable.

The match was truly an International event with 22 International shooters from the USA, Romania, Finland, Israel, Austria, Germany Slovenia, Serbia, Hungary and France. 247 shooters overall.

IDPA USA was well represented by Robert Ray, Kitty Richards, Tom Yost, Randi Rogers, Gordon Carrell, Denice Hamm and myself.

The stages were a pretty straight forward sanctioned match. They looked relatively simple until you stepped up to the

shooting position. Then you realized that there were some very tight shots and a lot of movers that would draw you into one static target too far. The match consisted of ten stages that varied from Taking out the Trash, on a scaffold painting, making pasta, at home in bed etc. Very challenging, but nothing completely out of the ordinary. In fact, other than the language, you would swear that you were at any sanctioned match in the states.

The IDPA Family Effect was in full force. Flavio Zanni (the real Match Director)



## MATCH REVIEW



The rain dampened the targets but not our spirits!



Great dinners and great stages made for a fantastic match



welcomed me like a long lost brother. He speaks very little English and I speak no Italian, but thankfully there is Google Translate. It's almost comical talking into a single cell phone back and forth, but it works. The laughing, joking and teasing were also in full force. One of the Stats guys is in my class and division. We were on opposite ends of the scoresheet. He was #1 and I was doing my best to stay off the bottom (I did). I kept trying to convince him that since my score was higher than his, I was winning. He didn't buy it, but hey, it

was worth a try.

Lunches during setup were a group affair at a local restaurant. Italian meals consist of a first plate (pasta) and a second plate (main course, usually meat or fish) and lots of it. All freshly made and delicious. And then there is the vino! Why Italians are all skinny is beyond my understanding. Match lunches were the standard Italian fare of prosciutto, capicola and bread. A bit different, but very nice change from burgers and hot dogs. I now know why all the pictures I see on Facebook of the Italian matches are

of the group in a restaurant and very little of the match. Eating is a priority and I am glad to say that I am a Master in that division. Did mention the FOOD!!

We made another side trip to Verona with Manuel Di Paola, one of the CSO's and an E9 in the Italian Army. Seeing the balcony where Romeo and Juliet were, Manuel taking us to the "best gelato shop in Italy" (it was) and sipping drinks at a café on the town square was an amazing experience and typical of Italian hospitality.

As much as things were different,



they were the same. Spending time with Federico, Flavio and crew impressed me with their professionalism and dedication to our sport. I was aware of some rules related issues at past matches. After working with them it was hard to imagine them intentionally violating any rules. It dawned on me that it is difficult for us to understand or find all the rules. Imagine not being able to even read the rule book. It is written in English, a

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language that most do not speak, yet they do an outstanding job of interpreting them. I was impressed with the professionalism of the entire crew. Although it is a bit weird hearing the range commands in heavily accented English.

I met new friends from several countries. The thing that impressed me most, is that IDPA people are the same everywhere. I felt very much at home with family. The banter over lunch was the usual stories and teasing (Ask Tom Yost about ordering a Cappuccino at lunch. Apparently it's only for breakfast). This was truly the trip of a lifetime with old friends and meeting new friends.

Bottom line. This was a fantastic match and Italian hospitality is beyond imagination. If you get an opportunity to attend a match, RUN, don't walk to your nearest travel agent. **TJ**

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

##### Mike Critser, A20835

Mike Critser is an Air Force Viet Nam Veteran and a former Chicago Suburb Police Officer. He is retired from a Multi-National Trade Show Producer (SHOT Show). He joined IDPA in 2004 and quickly got involved in scoring and organizing local, regional, national and international matches. He lives in Trumbull, CT.



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