

A VISIT TO THE ROMAN CITY OF RIMINI

There is only one, 5-star hotel in Rimini: The Grand Hotel.

It was constructed in 1908 and makes the claim of being, at one time, the favourite haunt of the late Italian film director Federico Fellini.

The hotel boasts of having 168 rooms – all with air-conditioning – and all being very large, relatively speaking.

The junior suite measures about 600 square feet while the smallest, single room measures about 220 square feet.

The hotel overlooks the Adriatic Sea and Federico Fellini Park.

To state that it is a strikingly imposing structure for a hotel would be to state the obvious.

But one cannot always tell the flavour of a sausage by the look of its skin.

On the day that **TARGET** (泰達財經) arrived at The Grand Hotel, without an advanced booking, the Resident Manager (assumed) explained that the hotel could accommodate this medium's requirements for 4 nights, but that for one night, it would be required that there be a stay at The Milton Hotel, a 4-star establishment, managed by Best Western, located just across the street.

The Milton Hotel is one hotel to be avoided: One star – from 5 stars to 4 stars – makes a huge difference in this part of the world, as **TARGET** came to learn.

The single bedroom at this hotel is too small to swing a little kitten.

The bathroom is so tiny that, in the shower, there is insufficient room for a very skinny person even to pick up a piece of soap that had fallen from one's hand.

Also, there is no ventilation fan in the bathroom so that, after a warm shower, the room resembles a sauna and one almost needs to find one's way out by memory rather than sight because of the denseness of the water vapour.

There is one television set in the small bedroom, but the reception is very poor.

The minibar was broken at Room 310 on Tuesday, September 9, 2008, and the chocolate in this minibar must have melted by the looks of things.

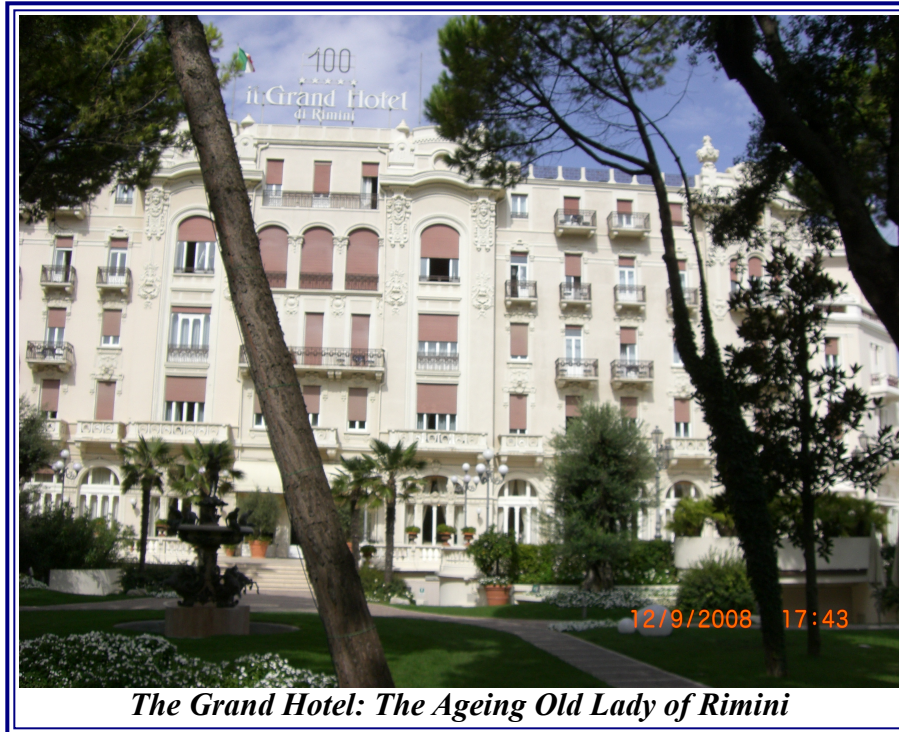
There is no housekeeping service, at all, other than in the early morning, and, if one needs a towel, there is trouble in obtaining such an item in a region of the world where the midday temperature in early September rises to more than 34 degrees, Celsius.

The Grand Hotel, on the other hand, makes the claim of being a 5-star, classic hotel, something out of a movie set, complete with a round couch in the foyer.

The ceilings are extremely high by any standard, but one must remember that this is, still, Italy, and service in Italy does not match the standard of service of Germany or Asia.

But the hotel is badly in need of repair.

It reminded **TARGET** of an ageing beauty who, still, refuses to admit that she is no longer the youth of yesteryear, her face, wrinkled, her hair, grey, her legs, showing the marks of varicose veins, her breasts, sagging, down to her waist, and all of the makeup on her cheeks, no longer able to hide the ravishes of time.



On the first afternoon of **TARGET**'s arrival, at about 3 p.m. on Monday, September 8, 2008, since the restaurants at The Grand Hotel were closed, arrangements were made to eat at a local restaurant, named Ristorante Novecento.

The food at this restaurant was excellent and comprised:

Appetiser

Mussels and Clams (stewed in white wine, garlic and fresh herbs)
€7.00

Mixed Salad
€4.00

First Main Courses

Gnocchi with Gorgonzola Cheese
€8.00

Tagliatelle with Meat Sauce
€7.50

Second Main Course

Sea Bass, baked in Sea Salt
€18.00

Mixed Sea Food Soup (actually, it was stew)
€18.00

Dessert

Tipsy Cake (sponge cake, soaked in liquor, with layers of custard)
€4.00

Grandmother's Cake
€4.00

With the above, **TARGET** drank half a litre of Sangiovese wine at €4.00, a glass of vinsanto (a desert wine) at €3.00, and 2, one-litre bottles of water at €2.50 per bottle.

Two cups of cappuccino at €2.00 per cup finished off this 2-hour memorable afternoon meal.

It appeared that **TARGET** had returned to some semblance of civilisation after the horrors of Bagno di Romagna (Please see [TARGET Intelligence Report, Volume X, Number 228, dated December 3, 2008](#)), but it was a semblance, only.

On return to The Grand Hotel at about 7 p.m., following a walk on the beautiful beaches of Rimini, it was discovered that the suite, assigned to this medium, had not been prepared: There were no clean towels in the room; the room had not been made up; and, when this matter was reported to the front desk, it took the best part of one hour to obtain housekeeping service.

The air-conditioning system had not been turned on or, alternatively, it was not adequate to cope with the heat of the day.

On inspection of the room and the hotel, in general, it was discovered that this tired old beauty was very badly run down.

The food in the hotel is not a patch on the cuisine of free-standing restaurants of the city and the service staff appears to have a problem in smiling.

Rimini was founded in 268 B.C. when the Roman Senate sent a colony of 6,000 people to the area in order to establish the township of Ariminus.

The name was changed to Rimini, but the population did not increase very much in 2,276 years.

There are about 1,100 hotels in the city of Rimini, but nearly all are low-class establishments, which cater for budget tourists.

There are about 800 restaurants, trattorias and bars in Rimini, but one should not expect to receive first-class service in any of them.

Having said that, the mediocrity of the service is offset by the expertise of the many chefs who churn out the hundreds of pasta dishes, daily, their preparations of the succulent fresh fish and lobster courses are second to none.

The seafood is as good as it gets, anywhere in the world.

However, aside for the generally poor quality of guest accommodation, the city is striking with its plethora of Roman arches, its grand piazzas, its historic churches, and little parks, which are constantly in use by elderly people, smoking and chatting about the events of the day ... and of their neighbours.

Shopping in Rimini is non-starter and, no doubt, husbands and boyfriends will want to take their wives/lovers to this part of the world – in order to save money.

At the same time, Rimini is famous for Sangiovese wine – which is, absolutely, superb.

Drinking this wonderful wine is addictive, however, and it goes down one's gullet, much too smoothly.

Rimini is a wonderful place in order to free oneself from civilisation and recuperate from the capricious life of Hongkong.

For the adventurous traveller, hiring a motor car for the day is well worthwhile since San Marino is about 30 minutes away and, in The Republica di San Marino, one may visit the historic buildings and castles or browse in the museums in the mountains of The Republica.

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