



Fiera!

Today was an exceptionally fun day for me because it was the day that the big open air fiera (fair) came to Rapallo.

Rick Gush

Friday, January 29, 2010

Photo by Rick Gush Today was an exceptionally fun day for me because it was the day that the big open air fiera (fair) came to Rapallo.

The fiera, which includes almost 500 merchant booths, is strung out all along the waterfront, and several of the streets closest to the shoreline are closed to traffic and filled with booths. Along the river there are about fifty agricultural booths selling grapevines, fruit trees and an assortment of different nursery merchandise.

I was at the fiera by 8 a.m. and by 8:30 a.m., I had already purchased a new kumquat and two cherry trees and carted them home on my scooter. By 9:30 a.m., I was back at the fiera taking a walk around with my wife. At 11 a.m., I walked around a bit with Richard, my friend who has a small farm up on the hill, and then as usual I enjoyed a hot sausage and pepper sandwich at one of the booths that features enormous whole roast pigs.

Photo by Rick Gush The joke among the locals is often about how the fiera is a good place to get new underwear. There are in fact an amazing amount of underwear booths selling everything from styles from the nineteenth century to considerably more frisky wear.

The fiera is pretty crowded, and the swarms of wandering people clog the aisles make it difficult to walk around. There are a lot of people talking loudly, kids shrieking, dogs barking and dozens of the booths are occupied by salesmen equipped with microphones who are enthusiastically and loudly demonstrating the latest food slicers, cooking pans, window cleaners, and even fancy pruning shears.

It can be either exciting or exasperating, and the scene is generally one of an orgy of consumerism. I did my part and found a couple of swell knapsacks for only five euros each, but I did not find the big booth selling work gloves.

Unfortunately, my wife and I also learned that the Tuscan factory that makes the old-fashioned rustic pottery that we use in our home has shut down, so we were unable to replace our broken dishes from this year. I suppose we'll have to start looking around in some of the interior valleys to locate some stores that still have stocks of these charming dishes.

My wife and I ate lunch at 3 p.m., and I received the news that my mother-in-law had expressed a desire for a potted kumquat for her own terrace garden. That's great news for me, because I usually have trouble thinking of appropriate gifts for her. So, I hopped on my scooter again and made yet another trip down to the fiera and brought home another tree. What a fun day!

<<More La Dolce Vita>>