

Rome airport: a city that uses two names for one airport.

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By stefano sandano

Leonardo da Vinci and Fiumicino: two names for one airport.

In Europe, the hub-and-spoke mode of operation has an even longer history than in the US, having grown out of the past regulatory framework and of the prevailing geographic and political conditions, rather than as an autonomous market process. Each nation has had its own flag carrier, with a privileged position in and around its domestic market and frequently a large government ownership share. More often than not, flag carriers have been benefiting from considerable amounts of subsidies or direct financial support from the state.

The airport of Rome capacity constraints and the slot allocation regimes with the practices currently in effect in Europe, constitute major barriers to entry and hence to competition and economic efficiency.

However, the Eternal City in 1961 decided to add to the name Fiumicino (that means "small river channel – because the airport is located at the end of the Tiber River) the name of Leonardo da Vinci, in memory of the most brilliant genius mind that Italy ever had.

At Leonardo da Vinci, the airport operator, Aeroporti di Roma, is spending a lot of money in expanding and upgrading terminal facilities to meet the needs of growing traffic numbers and shaking off the airport's rather modest reputation.

There are now three terminals one of which, Terminal C, is linked to a satellite. The handsome new Terminal A is for domestic flights and replaces spartan facilities. Terminal B, a light and airy place, has a dual role handling international and a number of domestic services. Terminal C is located near the major international flights and is connected to satellite C, a mini-terminal in its own right with a full range of shopping, catering and other services.

International passengers will find the satellite a big improvement on the old days when the only way to reach the aircraft steps on many flights meant a bus ride. Despite all the money spent on the satellite, however, the risk has not entirely been removed. Three of the 14 gates are still the prelude to a bus journey to a parked aircraft. How did that happen?

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The satellite is connected to Terminal C by the "Skybridge" automated rail shuttle, the first of its kind in Italy, and there are plans to extend the service to the rest of the airport. That will be welcome news for those who have tramped the endless walkways – the moving walkways are only a partial help – which link the terminals.

New shopping and catering areas have been introduced in Terminal B as the plans to sharpen up the image and quality of Rome's major airport gathers pace.

Stefano Sandano is an archaeologist of Rome and the owner of the website

<http://www.rome-airport.org>

, where you can find more informations about the airports of Rome.

Rome airport: getting out from Rome airports.

By stefano sandano

Getting to and from the main airport, Leonardo da Vinci, commonly known as Fiumicino, about 30 miles southwest of the city center is quite easy. But getting to and from Ciampino airport, 20 miles southeast of the city center of Rome is not that easy, is time consuming and uncomfortable by public transport and buses run infrequently, finish early and do not connect well with the metro trains.

Many of Italy's major cities have international airports, but the Leonardo da Vinci of Rome is the country's busiest and is a hub for flights linking Europe to the Middle East and Africa.

Soon after the big Fiumicino Airport opened in 1960, a new comfortable motor road was built to link it with the centre of Rome across the Magliana section. Various big hotels for business travelers and conventioners grew up nearby. Negotiating Roman traffic by car is difficult enough, but you may be taking your life in your hands if you ride a motorcycle or moped in the city. The rule in Rome is to look straight ahead to watch the vehicles in front and hope that the vehicles behind are watching you.

Most of the historic centre of Rome is closed to normal traffic. Police controls some entrances to the centre, while other entrances have electronic gates. You are not allowed to drive to the centre of Rome from 6.30 am to 6.00 pm Monday to Friday and 2 pm to 6 pm Saturday, unless you are a resident or have special permissions. All 27 streets accessing the so called " Limited Traffic Zone " have been equipped with electronic access detection devices. To avoid a fine, customers wishing to drive to hotels in these areas, should first contact the hotel management who will fax authorities with your number plate. Although Rome's traffic is nowhere near as chaotic as that of Naples, some drivers, particularly motorcyclists, do not stop at the red lights. And do not expect them to stop at pedestrian crossing either.

Stefano Sandano is native of Rome, is a copyrighter for the main attractions of the Eternal City. To be updated with the Rome airport news you can visit

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