

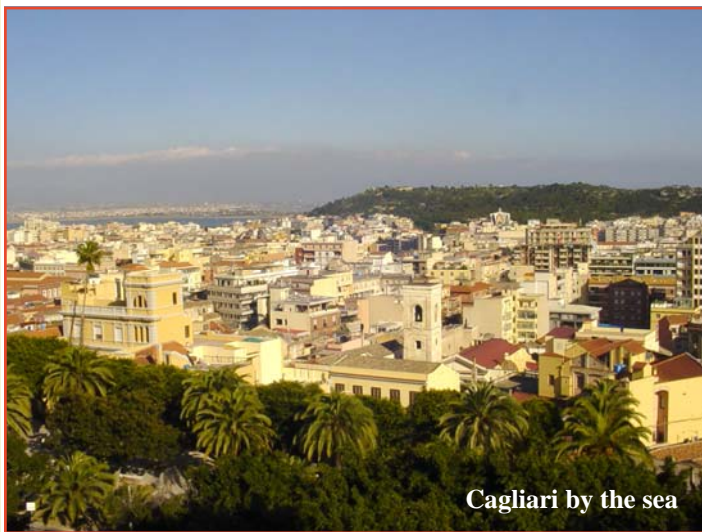


# Travails, Trips and Travels

By Don Eliseo Lucero Prisno III

## Seaside City of Cagliari in the Mediterranean

**I**t has always been my dream to visit the Italian island of Sardinia. This is the second largest island in the Mediterranean Sea. Sardinia may not be as popular as other Italian destinations thus less frequented by tourists. Yet, I have this desire to visit ‘less travelled’ places and make my trips more adventurous. The fact that Sardinia is an island makes it a bit special for me since I have always been living in the bigger interconnected part of Europe. Living in an archipelago for a big part of my life provides me a different outlook towards island life.



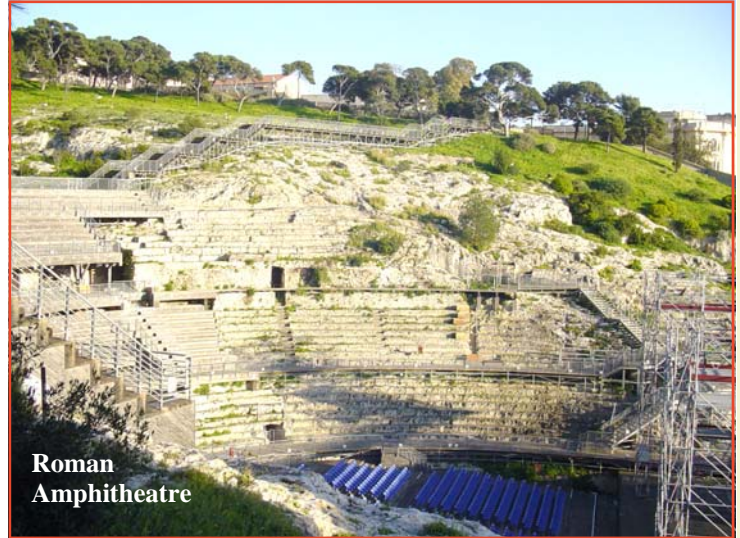
Cagliari by the sea



Hilly city

The rocky island, which is considered an autonomous region of Italy and which can create its own laws, has a number of towns and cities to explore in all its corners. I ventured into Cagliari, Alghero, Oristano, Iglesias, Olbia and Sassari, thus covering most parts of the island. I spent most of my time in the capital of Cagliari—the experience which I am going to share in this column.

Cagliari provides a different glimpse of European life being sur-



Roman Amphitheatre



Typical Italian buildings



Residential apartments

rounded by waters facing different cultures. History of the city shows us how these different cultures transformed the city into what it is right now as influenced by the Roman, Byzantine, Spanish and Piedmontese peoples. Having been inhabited since the ancient times, way of life has become an amalgamation of these cultures as shown by the architecture, archaeological sites, monuments and cultural practices. Many of these structures re-

(Continued on page 27)

(Travails.... from page 26)

main intact to showcase to the world the changing persona of the city.

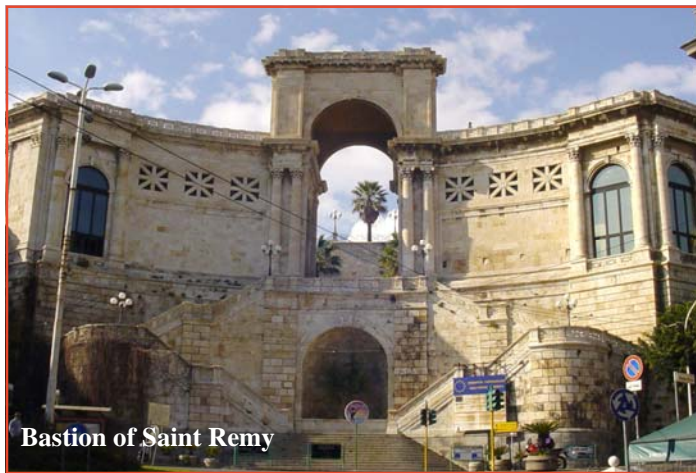
Walking around Cagliari is a good way to discover the city. A good pair of shoes, comfortable wear and water would be handy specially during summer since one has to navigate many hilly parts of the city. Cagliari has different districts which have many historical showcases. These districts namely, Villanova, Stampace, Marina and Castello present how the city evolved. These districts which are retained from the olden days still have their original appeal and remain to function as distinct villages.

The Castello quarter is the old part of the city which dominates the higher part of Cagliari. It shows many surviving walls, very old streets, and important buildings constructed on top of the hill. This is where one can see the stunning sights of Cagliari from the top including the view towards the sea. There are many shops here selling various crafts. A number of churches including the Cagliari Cathedral, towers, a castle stand on these hills making it a beautiful yet robust sight to see.



**Cagliari Cathedral**

I was impressed with Saint Remy Bastion which was built in the early 20th century to connect the higher part of Cagliari with the lower districts (Villanova and Marina). There is a beautiful terrace which used to be a favourite promenade of the locals.



**Bastion of Saint Remy**

Another site I found interesting is the Roman Amphitheatre which dates back to the 2nd century AD. It uses the natural slope of the hill for the seat arrangement. This excavation provides an important glimpse of how they entertain themselves during those days including gladiators who fought to death and criminals who were publicly executed. At present they use it as an open theatre.

For somebody interested in maritime issues, I had to visit the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Bonaria, the patron saint of sailors. This was built by the Aragonese in 1324-1329. It has a Gothic portal in the façade. The wooden statue of the Madonna inside the church was thrown off by a Spanish ship and landed at the



**City streets**

feet of the Bonaria hill. The Mariner Museum is in the cloister of the convent.

I am always a big fan of living by the water and the sun. Thus it was not surprising that I would enjoy Cagliari. It is an affordable place and can still be considered relatively cheaper. Accommodations are not expensive and one can enjoy truly Sardinian hospitality. Aside from enjoying the city, I am also able to hop to other places of Sardinia because of the conven-



**Bonaria**



**Historic district**

ience of the train services. Hiking anywhere in the island or near the city would also be another exciting activity. There are also many beaches to enjoy. In fact the island has beaches famed for being the playground of the rich and famous.

As summer gets nearer Europeans would start scrambling for places to visit. Why don't you try Cagliari this time?