

Inferno? More like InferYES! A Serious Review.

Hello, faithful readers, and welcome back to the blog that says more about you for reading it than it does me for writing it. As always, I am your trusty guide to all things life, both current and after, Dante Alighieri. I'm a pretty good poet, too. What's that, you want me to show you? (See, that rhymed. Poetry skills = unparalleled. Except by Virgil. Love me some Virgil.)

I know many of you have been wondering why I haven't been posting much as of late. Well, let's just say the straightforward pathway had been lost. I found myself in a dark area, lots of trees and undergrowth, can't quite think of the name of that type of place right now. What I mean to say is, I was at something of a crossroads, and if there's one thing they say about travel blogging, it's "don't use it as a crutch to handle emotional baggage." Shocking how often they say that. Anyways, I decided to take a trip without staring at every landmark I came across through the filter of my camera, or having to jot down what I was enjoying without getting the chance to truly enjoy it. I return to this blog with a clear mind to tell you about the first, and what I'd guess will end up being by far the most famous, third of my trip.

Folks, there's no other way to put this: I went to Hell (or "the Inferno," as it will henceforth be called). To some of you who are more "rest and relaxation" travelers, that may sound, for lack of a better term, hellish. But for those of you who, like me, prefer intrepid adventure to resorts and Rosé, this was a dream trip. It was literally one-in-a-million -- it was clear from the get go that they were not used to seeing fully

alive folks such as myself in hell. Going from being around living people to being around long-dead people and non-corporeal souls was certainly a culture shock, but after I became comfortable with the fact that dead people are just like me, only their life on earth has already come to a close, I began to settle in.

One thing about the Inferno that factored heavily into my enjoyment of the trip was my wonderful tour guide, the poet Virgil. Having Virgil as my tour guide was the equivalent of being a lifelong Bulls fan and having Michael Jordan take you to your first ever in-stadium game. The man has a beautiful way with words, not just in his poetry, but also in his informative “guided circle walks.” I wanted to bring back a few copies of the Inferno audio tour Virgil hands out to guests who he is too busy to take around himself, but unfortunately CDs are not made to withstand realm transfers. Doesn't that make you long for the days of cassette tapes?

My stay in the Inferno was marked largely by the day trips Virgil and I took together. Every day, we would go visit a different circle of the Inferno and see a different group of suffering souls. Met some great people in hell, actually -- there were even a few that I'd love to stay in touch with, should I somehow get tricked into committing a sin and end up in the Inferno. In each circle my new best friend Virgil and I visited, we saw souls being punished for their earthly sins. The first few circles were definitely on the lighter side, featuring souls suffering for sins like gluttony and lust. I met a lovely yet lustful young couple of souls in the 2nd circle who told me their story, and I was deeply moved. Unfortunately, so were they, but not emotionally -- they were literally moved by the eternal storm that was their punishment. Still though, great people.

While the people I met were a highlight, the accommodations were a lowlight. In fact, as far as I can recall, I didn't get so much as a wink of sleep the whole time I was there. That was partially because of my fear that falling asleep in the afterlife would count as dying, and partially because there was so much to see. We witnessed some grueling punishments as we ventured deeper into the Inferno, and we also met a few important historical figures. As you all know, I always do a "Worst Person I Met" section of my trip reviews, and this one is no different.

Worst Person I Met in the Inferno: Ulysses. Ulysses is a Greek fellow who calls himself a "hero". I don't see it that way. He and I are actually alike in one way: we both decided to make traveling our thing. I did it by having a fun blog, and he did it by abandoning his family like a chump and staying out on his adventure. Ulysses' story, at least the way I remember it, was not as heroic as his legend might imply. Supposedly Homer's poem about him is a must-read, but I have not been able to get my hands on it, and to be frank, now I'm not sure I want to. What a low-character individual.

While Ulysses may have been the worst person I met, I ran into a worse person who was not eligible for the award, as he was a man I already knew. Vanni Fucci, one of the lowest-rate Italians you'll ever meet, was in the Inferno being punished for robbing a sacristy. I wish I could say I was surprised by his severe lack of moral fibre, but would we expect anything else from a member of the Black Guelphs, one of the top two or three worst political parties of all time? (If you'd like to read more about the Black Guelphs and why they suck, please read my opinion piece "An Objective Look at the Black

Guelphs and Why They Suck,” published in *White Guelphs Weekly*.) My encounter with Vanni Fucci, and my subsequent enjoyment at seeing him be punished, reminded me that everyone can have sinful thoughts -- I watched gleefully as he was enveloped by serpents, and I'm not proud of thought -- but only the most detestable people rob sacristies. I'm not perfect, and I'll readily admit that, but Vanni Fucci may as well be an antonym for perfection.

Most of all, I will remember my trip to the Inferno for what I learned. Seeing others suffer for sins would cause a pang of self reflection in even the most emotionally unavailable of people, and for me, that reflection helped me find my path again. The other two thirds of my journey were both decidedly less dreary, but I feel that for you all, the reader, the Inferno will be the most impactful of the three. There's something about humans that compels us to do better when we learn of the consequences than when we learn of the rewards. I wonder why that is. Dante Alighieri, signing off.

My trip to the Inferno: **4.5/5**