

Into Italy

Photographer's Notes About the Pictures

Mopeds, Rome 1993:

When traffic lights turn green, it often sounds and looks like the start of a race. At a traffic signal, it's a custom for the mopeds to weave between lanes of stopped traffic and to wait ahead of automobiles. To someone from abroad, it seems very chaotic.

Leica CL, 40mm Summicron, Tri-X film

Man in Thought, Florence 1991:

I never discovered who this person was, but he appears to be deep in thought, and even a little tired. It's as though he were spiritually among the Renaissance designers of the city behind him.

Olympus XA 35mm, Kodak Tri-X film

Trimmed Trees, Fiesole 1991:

Italians love design. This extends to gardens and even to the trees that line an overlook.

Olympus XA 35mm, Kodak Tri-X film

Couple, Assisi 2001:

In a quiet moment in a usually busy area adjacent the Basilica of St. Francis, this couple shares a close friendship.

Leica M6, 50mm Summicron, Kodak Tri-X film

Borgo Pio, Rome 2001:

From long ago I remember evenings like this when neighbors got together to share stories and cement friendships. It is still part of the Italian culture as seen in this picture made just a few blocks from St.

Peter's and the Vatican.

Leica M6, 35mm Summicron, Kodak Tri-X film

Roman Street, Rome 1993:

The play of evening light is obviously the subject of this photograph, but the Italian architecture also lends a sense of place to it. Because it is unpeopled, it assumes a spirit of its own.

Leica CL, 40mm Summicron, Kodak Tri-X film

Restaurant, Todi 1997:

This scene is one that demanded to be photographed because it is so unusual. While outdoor dining in Italy is common, walking through a restaurant to find an outdoor dining area perched atop a steep hill was breathtaking. The canopy of foliage added to the effect.

Leica M6, 35mm Summicron, Kodak Tri-X film

Hadrian's Villa, 1993:

A small utility truck is parked to be unobtrusive near the ruins of Hadrian's Villa outside Rome. That calls attention to it even more and the slender cypress trees seem to be co-conspirators.

Leica CL, 40mm Summicron, Kodak Tri-X film

Two Men Outside the Pantheon, Rome 1993:

Just outside the entrance to the Pantheon two men meet. I waited until no others were visible in the frame, and caught the two men face-to-face. The darkness of their clothing, their anonymous appearance, and the massive, dark doors of the Pantheon lend a brooding air about what is transpiring. It is a picture about power in Italy.

Leica CL, 40mm Summicron, Kodak Tri-X film

Tuscany Near Monte Oliveto 2001:

The Tuscan hills near the abbey at Monte Oliveto Maggiore have been pictured in frescos and paintings. This was an especially crisp day and the stop for the photograph was therapeutic. Accompanied by two understanding friends, I enjoyed being among the trees.

Leica M6, 35mm Summicron with a yellow filter, Kodak Tri-X film

Priest at St. Peter's 1997:

I had just photographed inside St Peter's cathedral when I went outside and saw this priest walking along the railing. With the shutter speed still set at a slow 1/30th and no time to change it, I cranked the aperture all the way to f/16 to make this picture. Because the priest moved slowly, the slow shutter speed didn't affect sharpness. This picture was a gift to me from above.

Leica M6, 35mm Summicron, Kodak Tri-X film

Pizzeria, Perugia 2001:

While dark and foreboding on the outside, the restaurant was bristling with customers and mirth on the inside. In Italy, uncommonly good places are often found in out-of-the-way locations.

Leica M6, 35mm Summicron, Kodak Tri-X film

Davanzati, Florence 1991:

A house for a noble family from the 14th century looks like something from a Harry Potter movie, or like a painting from MC Escher. The stairs wrap around the periphery of a large open area in the center of the tower-like structure. Climbing the stairs can produce vertigo.

Nikon F3, 24mm Nikkor, Kodak Tri-X film

Maritime Theater, Hadrian's Villa 1993:

Done in classical architecture and originally decorated in marine friezes, the Maritime Theater is a circular pond with a man-made island. Hadrian may have gone there to escape from the pressures of running an empire. Today a visitor can imagine that mythological beasts like Centaurs once drank from the water.

Leica CL, 40mm Summicron, Kodak Tri-X film

Olive Trees, Hadrian's Villa 1993:

Like brave people with scars that reveal hardships overcome, these ancient olive trees prove their determination to survive.

Leica CL, 40mm Summicron, Kodak Tri-X film

Pines of the Villa Borghese, 2001:

In 1924 Ottorino Respighi composed The Pines of Rome, and specifically included the pines of the Villa Borghese in his collection of symphonic poems. They are majestic trees, and the foliage happily absorbs the noise of everyday life.

Leica M6, 35mm Summicron, Kodak Tri-X film

Assisi 2001:

Italians value the past. The preservation of monuments and old city centers provides a great draw for visitors from countries like ours. I find it refreshing that things are repaired, not torn down. These scenes are found everywhere.

Leica M6, 35mm Summicron, Kodak Tri-X film

Nuns, Orvieto 1997:

In the middle of the day when the light is ordinary, finding so many nuns in white walking from the cathedral was a gift. It seems so quintessentially Italian.

Leica M6, 35mm Summicron, Kodak Tri-X film

Vatican Museum, Rome 1993:

Sweetly odd and surreal, a torso and basin are frozen in time within the Vatican Museums. They are reminders of a glorious past.

Leica CL, 40mm Summicron, Kodak Tri-X film

Maritime Theater and Reflections, 1993:

When photographed in 1993, the public still had complete access to the ruin. Now viewers are restricted to an observation area to reduce wear on the monument. That's unfortunate because peering into the deep green waters invites speculation as to what creatures still live beneath.

Leica CL, 40mm Summicron, Kodak Tri-X film

Via Giorgio la Pira, Florence 1993:

On a quiet street away from tourist areas, long-time residents carry on with daily life. The late afternoon light adds depth to this picture.

Leica CL, 40mm Summicron, Kodak Tri-X film

Cloister, Ferrara 2001:

Ordinary mid-afternoon light is transformed by the deep recesses in quiet places like these. Visited in person, they invite contemplation.

Leica M6, 35mm Summicron, Kodak Tri-X film

Chigi Chapel Rotunda, S. M. Del Popolo, Rome 2001:

For me, this picture has some of the feel of the 1977 movie "Close Encounters of the Third Kind." It appears both alien and futuristic, which perhaps served to awe the people who worshiped here.

Leica M6, 21mm Elmarit ASPH, Kodak Tri-X film

Man on moped, Monte Falco 1997:

Olive orchards and vineyards lie outside the fortified walls of this small town. Shade trees are often planted near roads to keep travelers cool. Here a man leaves town on a Vespa - a small motorcycle found everywhere in Italy.

Leica M6, 50mm Summicron, Kodak Tri-X film

Ominous Painted Figure, Venice 1989:

Seeing splashed paint that resembled a sinister figure sparked the idea for this narrative photograph. By itself, the painted form would not have been enough, so I waited for someone to walk into the scene. It is like a single frame from a movie thriller.

Olympus XA 35mm, Ilford HP5 film

Rainstorm, Florence 1989:

Photographing in the rain is both exhilarating and frustrating. One must be mindful of the equipment and be adept at juggling camera and umbrella. In this picture, the foreground umbrellas frame the wet scene beyond and serve to explain the actions of the hurried pedestrian.

Olympus XA 35mm, Kodak Tri-X film

Via de Cerratani, Florence 1993:

Whether tourist or Italian, the woman pictured has been obviously influenced by pervasive Italian fashion. Her friend has not.

Leica CL, 40mm Summicron, Kodak Tri-X film

Seafood Display, Rome 1993:

Fine food is a pleasure found across all Italy, and food suppliers take their role as seriously as those who prepare it to perfection.

Leica CL, 40mm Summicron, Kodak Tri-X film

If you wish to purchase any prints in this show, please see the Print Purchase sheet for details, or contact the photographer at william.schneider@ohio.edu