

Rome is the infernal city as Cerberus raises hell

Residents are advised to stay in their homes as heatwave bites, writes **Tom Kington**



This week the cool, gushing water of the Trevi Fountain seemed like a desert oasis to the hordes of tourists staggering out of Rome's narrow, blisteringly hot streets.

This has made life harder for the police officers stationed at the fountain to stop visitors throwing themselves in.

"We tolerate people dipping a hand in to wet their brow, otherwise we would have to shut the place down," one officer said. "But we draw the line at feet — there are rules."

Eyeing the 18th-century fountain, Dan Tuttle, 32, a British tourist, said he was sorely tempted to follow the example of the Swedish actress Anita Ekberg, who waded through the water in the 1960 film *La Dolce Vita*.

"I know I can't, but I would love to



Romans are trying to keep cool in weather they would normally escape

dive in," Tuttle said. With temperatures above 35C thanks to the anticyclone from Africa dubbed Cerberus, Rome was sweating through the kind of heat normally seen in August, when the city shuts down and locals flee to the beach, leaving it to hapless tourists.

The problem is that this is July and Romans are still at work, forced to share the hell with foreigners. Which is why the air-conditioned shopping malls on the edge of town are full of locals walking their dogs, business at hospital emergency departments is up 15 per cent as people keel over in the heat and supermarkets are selling out of watermelon.

The town hall has weighed in on shopping lists, warning Romans not to drink alcohol, fizzy drinks or coffee, because they just make you feel worse, while advising people to dress in linen and stay indoors between 10am and 6pm.

At home, I have been rising at 6am

and flinging open the windows to draw in any cool air before shutting them by 8am to keep out the rising heat, as well as closing the external shutters Roman houses have to stop the sun scalding the panes.

Arriving at work, I am careful to park my moped on cobbles rather than on asphalt that may melt during the day, causing it to sink into the black goo and topple over. Taking refuge at my desk, I write about how temperatures in Sicily and Sardinia are forecast to rise again next week as high as 47C, close to the 48.8C (119.8F) record European temperature set in Sicily two years ago.

The soaring temperatures will be due as Cerberus — named after the three-headed dog that guards the underworld in Greek mythology — gives way to the more ferocious Charon, named after the boatman ferrying the dead across the Styx.

This raises the question, who has been making up these names so keenly adopted by newspapers? Because they make great headlines and give journalists a chance to show off their knowledge of the classics.

Whoever it is, the result is that Italy's heatwaves sound a lot more sophisticated than hurricanes in the US, which were given the supremely dull names Martin, Owen and Walter last year by the World Meteorological Organisation and the American National Hurricane Center.

I rang Italy's meteorological and climatology agency but Carlo Cacciamani, the director, said the names had nothing to do with them and he did not really approve. "Cyclones get names because they have lifespans but this heat is caused by the African anticyclone, which is always there, even if it moves," he said.

Inquiries in meteorological circles led me to Antonio Sanò, the wily head of a private weather forecasting site. "It's me," he confessed, explaining how he had been inspired by Dante Alighieri's 14th-century epic *The Divine Comedy*, in which the author meets Cerberus and Charon during his descent to hell. "I had a great Dante teacher at school and I knew we needed something hellish to describe this heat," he said.

Sanò realised the instant appeal of his names when he first used Cerberus on his site to describe a heatwave in 2012 — and the Italian news agency Ansa immediately adopted it. The media has been lapping it up ever since.

This summer, after Charon, Sanò said he would dub the next heatwave Minos, the king of Crete who became a judge in the underworld after his death and used his tail to indicate the circle of hell to which a soul was consigned. "After that, the furthest we go is Lucifer, but we are keeping that for the end of the summer," Sanò said.

Headline writers have been warned.



Golden Goose's celebrity fans include Selena Gomez and Taylor Swift. It is basing shoemakers in its stores in cities such as Milan, top

the pieces you want to keep with you for ever, lengthening their life-cycle and reducing the environmental impact."

Trainer-makers have long profited from convincing customers to ditch last year's shoes for the latest model. Silvio Campara, 39, the chief executive, said Golden Goose was treading a different path.

"We want to show the value of repairing old shoes instead of throwing them away," he told Bloomberg.

The company, whose sales rose 30 per cent to about €500 million last year, aims to have about 70 cobblers working in ten stores and at its repair hub near Venice.

Campara has set up a "Gen Z board" to learn what young customers want. He says more than 80 per cent of his clients are young people who do not want to fill tips with their old shoes.

Marco Zanin, 36, one of the company's cobblers, said: "The kids who come in are curious. They want to know everything about the shoes and how to master working on them."

Italy retains a tradition of artisanal shoemaking, meaning the cost of its high-quality footwear is far cheaper than in the UK. Campara said, however, that the fashion world was suffering from a "lack of artisan manpower" — a dearth he and his team of cobblers hope to put right.

How to woo Gen Z fashionistas? With a load of cobblers

The Italian trainer-maker adored by celebrities is bringing back cobblers to woo hip young consumers who despise modern throwaway culture (Tom Kington writes).

Golden Goose, based in Venice, will send shoe repairers to its stores in Milan, New York and

Dubai to prove it is dedicated to recycling.

The company, whose customers include the singers Taylor Swift and Selena Gomez, told clients: "You have the chance to fix, replace and refurbish



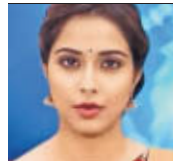
AI news presenter makes headlines

India
Amrit Dhillon Delhi

After the opening credits the presenter appeared on screen dressed in a maroon and gold sari, telling viewers that she represented a "historic moment" for journalism.

Unveiled this week by Odisha TV, a news channel in the east of India, Lisa is an AI news anchor. Jagi Mangat Panda, managing director of the channel, hailed her arrival: "She is going to do the repetitive jobs so that the news people can focus on creative work."

Industry supporters say that using AI



Lisa, a digital anchor, said she represented a historic moment for journalism

allows channels to deliver the news in many of India's local languages. They can also process vast amounts of data, such as live election results, at speed.

Lisa is not India's first AI news presenter. In April the Delhi-based India Today Group launched Sana on its Hindi news channel, Aaj Tak. "The

newsroom has accepted her and the public has reacted positively. We have not cut any jobs because of her," Vibhor Gandotra, head of special projects at India Today, said.

Concerns have been raised over job losses and shortcomings in using AI presenters in conducting debates. "Live reporting and investigative journalism are probably safe, as AI bots can't replicate human observation," Shailaja Bajpai, a media expert, said.

But many Indians, like Ashok Mehta, a Delhi Uber driver, are more wary: "How can I trust a machine that could be programmed to fool me?" he said.