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Attached is my site visit report that includes helpful information for USMS members that will be attending the FINA Masters World Championship in Riccione (pronounced Ree-chee-own-ay). FINA has a Championship website at <http://www.finamasters2012.org/> and the intent of this report is to provide useful travel information those attending may want to consider. USMS members needing more information regarding travel, may e-mail me at kgary150@me.com

**Overview:**

Riccione is a seaside town located in north eastern Italy. It is easily reachable by train, car, and plane. International flights arrive at either Malpensa, Milan, Fiumicino, Rome or Marco Polo, Venice. Rail links are available from all airports and each is about a 2 hour drive or 3 hour train ride. You can also fly into Rimini (the next town over from Riccione), however, you must connect through a European hub such as London.

**Helpful Websites:**

Malpensa Airport:

<http://www.airportmalpensa.com/>

Venice Airport:

<http://www.veniceairport.it/core/index.jsp;jsessionid=FDUHRANM1WS05QFIAIBCFFA?requestid=688726&language=en>

RyanAir – for flights from Stanstead (very far from London center) to Rimini. This is a NO frills airline, but's it's cheap.

<http://www.ryanair.com/en>

Trains: [http://www.fsitaliane.it/homepage\\_en.html](http://www.fsitaliane.it/homepage_en.html)

If you arrive at the train station and need a taxi – if they are none waiting, you can call

Taxi: Radiotaxi Riccione - +39-0541-600553

Telephone hint: In Italy, use the 0 in front of the city code (like above). Do not use a 0 if it precedes a three digit number like 328 etc – this is not a city code but a cell phone.

**Vibe:**

Riccione is a popular and affordable vacation destination for Italians. There is foreign tourism (in the past it was a popular spot for Germans and northern Europeans) but it is principally Italian families. In the US, I would equate it to a

version of Myrtle Beach. Not too fancy, lots of infrastructure for crowds and plenty of places to stay, eat and drink. I participated in Worlds 2004, and in the past 8 years, I found the town to be as I remember. The main drag, Viale Dante, is full of restaurants and shops which stay open for the “passeggiata” (the after dinner walk that all Italians do to check out the scene, window shop and eat gelato). Riccione is a good host location because there is a wide selection of lodging opportunities at all levels. This is NOT a fancy Italian beach side town. If it were, it would cost 3 times the prices that I found.

**Layout:**

The aquatic center is located about a mile from the beach (technically West, as the beach runs North/South. Riccione’s terrain is flat so therefore it’s very easy to walk or ride a bike to the pool. All of the hotels I visited provided bikes, free of charge, to their guests. From the central part of town, it’s about 10-15 minute easy ride to the pool. Most of the hotels and restaurants are either located in between the beach and the railroad tracks. The Viale Dante is the main pedestrian artery. There will also be shuttles, run by the meet organizers, which will pick up swimmers at designated spots.

**Aquatic Center:**

At the moment, they have a 50 m indoor and a 50 m outdoor pool. I was told that they are constructing another 50m outdoor pool so that, as opposed to 2004, all events will be held at the aquatic center in Riccione. I believe they will be using both the indoor and outdoor pools for racing. They will not send Water Polo to San Marino, as they did in 2004. There is a full diving tower and another indoor 25 m warm up pool. They will construct seating around the main outdoor pool and will provide shade as well. The indoor 50m pool also has a small warmup pool.

Aquatic Center Info: <http://www.polcomriccione.com/index.php?idinfo=5>

**Lodging:**

I reviewed approximately 30 different hotels. In general – all of them offered the following:

Different choices of meal plans or no meal plan at all.

Free Bikes

Free Wifi

Air conditioning

Parking

Sky TV

3 Stars and up all had spas

Beach access with a Beach Establishment

NB – Italian beaches are different than US beaches. There is only a very small beach which you can plunk down on a towel. Honestly, it’s not the best as they are not cleaned as often and tend to be full of cigarette butts.

There are individual bathing “establishments” where you rent an umbrella, lounge and have access to a bar and bathrooms. The average cost per day per chair 10E.

Before considering hotels and prices, be advised that most hotels in Riccione come with full pension (3 meals a day are included in the price), ½ pension (2 meals a day are included) and B and B (only breakfast is included). By taking the full or ½ pension option, the cost of the room is only slightly higher. For people on a budget, they will save handily by taking the full pension option and eating at the hotel. At a 2 star hotel the difference between 1 vs. 3 meals is 12.5 E. This will save a LOT of money. And you can always invite people over to your hotel to eat – they will pay a la carte. All recommended hotels have good food – a must in Italy and offer good quality for what you pay....in other words....a big bang for the buck (or euro). All price quotes are per person, not per room and the Dollar is 1.30 to the Euro (as of January 2012)

**We are recommending that, if possible, USA Swimmers stay in the hotels below. This will be helpful to the coaches who will want to help you, for disseminating information and various other reasons. We are not insisting – just suggesting.**

#### **Recommendations for Team USA:**

##### **2 Star Hotels**

The 2 star hotels are generally located in the same area, slightly north of the Viale Dante and slightly removed from the fray. Rates range from 35 – 40 E a night.

##### **The Quisisana**

Via Foscolo, 28 tel: 39-0541-646-470 [info@quisisanahotel.com](mailto:info@quisisanahotel.com)  
<http://www.quisisanahotel.com>

This hotel is clean, well located, very basic and had a lovely owner. They had wifi on the ground level, provided full pension if desired and seemed very willing to take care of special meal requests for athletes. As the owner said, “Just let us know”. In addition – all rooms come with air conditioning.

##### **Hotel Nancy**

Viale Boito, 12

39-0541-648262, [info@hotelnancy.net](mailto:info@hotelnancy.net), <http://www.hotelnancy.net>

It's a bit off the beaten track and is therefore quiet. It's cheap and cheerful and the rooms are clean and basic. It has all of the amenities listed above.

##### **Hotel Taormina**

Viale Boito, 31

39-0541-646-484, <http://www.hoteltaormina.com>, [info@hoteltaormina.com](mailto:info@hoteltaormina.com)

Run by the same people as the Hotel Nancy – also a small, simple hotel with good food. Basically the same as above.

#### Hotel Paris

Viale Boito, 20, tel: 39-0541-648012, <http://www.parishotelriccione.it>,  
[info@parishotelriccione.it](mailto:info@parishotelriccione.it)

It is listed as a 3 star but it should be in the 2 star category. Same as the above, clean, simple and about 2 blocks closer to the beach with a larger dining room. Do not take the rooms on the top floor. The ceilings are very low and the rooms are very sad.

### 3 Star Hotels

The next step up is a 3 star and Superior 3 star hotel. These hotels are better located, have more amenities (usually spas) and are generally more tastefully appointed. Rates run from 65 – 95E a night

#### Hotel Cavallino Bianco

I love this place. The people are lovely, it's right in the heart of Riccione, the food is good and I like the décor. It has been recently renovated and the rooms are airy, white washed and have good bathrooms. It's in a turn of the century building on the heart of the Viale Dante. In my opinion, it's not 4 stars because it does not have the on site spa, fancier dining rooms and larger spaces. It's more of a boutique B and B.

Viale Dante, 105  
+39-0541-600216, [info@hotelcavallinobianco.com](mailto:info@hotelcavallinobianco.com),  
<http://www.hotelcavallinobianco.com>

#### Hotel Select

This hotel seems like a 4 star but it's a "Superior" 3. It's a lovely place, right on the beach about a ½ mile down the beach from the main drag. Many of the nicer hotels are in this area as it is a bit quieter and removed from the hub bub. The hotel has 2 different décor solutions. There is a more traditional décor – carpeted floors, yellow damask-y bed covering/drapes and there is the modern version – wooden floors, modern fixtures. I personally prefer the modern version as it seems cleaner and better suited for the beach. They have a small but well done spa and a full package of amenities.

Viale Gramisci, 89  
+39-0541-600613, [info@hotelselectriccione.com](mailto:info@hotelselectriccione.com),  
<http://www.hotelselectriccione.com>

#### Hotel Dory

Closer to the pool, about 2 blocks from the beach is the Hotel Dory. It is newly renovated and they are accustomed to hosting master athletes as they are a "Bike Hotel" – a hotel that caters to cyclists. The newly renovated rooms are nice – I

would avoid the non-renovated rooms....quite tired. However, the lobby is great, the restaurant was delicious (homemade pasta) and they also have a building behind them that is for apartment rental. Groups of friends who need a bit more space would be well served in this type of accommodation. They offer all of the Viale Giacomo Puccini, 4

+39-0541 642 896, <http://www.hoteldory.it>, [info@hoteldory.it](mailto:info@hoteldory.it)

We have negotiated 2 packages for you – for the explanation, please contact the hotel and let them know that you are with USMS. The package names (given by the hotel) are Style at 669E and Magic at 556E. They have great amenities.

**THE SPECIAL RATE WILL BE HELD UNTIL THE END OF FEBRUARY. USE “USMS” AS A REFERENCE.**

Hotel Kursaal

If you want to be on the beach, in a well-appointed hotel, Kursaal is a good choice. Request the newly renovated rooms – they are done in dark hard woods and in either a red or blue color scheme. The rooms were clean and it is a straight shot up from the hotel to the pool.

Viale G. D’Annunzio, 32

+39-0541-644100, [info@hotelkursaal.it](mailto:info@hotelkursaal.it), <http://www.hotelkursaal.it>

#### **4 Star Hotels**

A step up from 3 stars, you will have concierge service, larger rooms and a slightly more luxe service. Rates range from 90 – 140E a night

Lunariccione

The Lunariccione is tucked away, off the beaten track in the heart of the “action”. Because of its position, it is easy to get around but away from the busy beach, street scene. The palazzo has been recently renovated and is decorated in soft tones and warm Italian stones. It’s a bit like a subdued version of a Miami hotel. They have a beautiful spa area, both inside and out, with a huge hydro massage pool. It’s very relaxed and the concierge at the front desk could not have been nicer. The only low point is the bathroom which could have been more carefully conceived.

Viale Ariosto, 5

Tel +39-0541-692150, [info@lunariccione.it](mailto:info@lunariccione.it), <http://www.lunariccione.it>

**WE HAVE A BLOCK OF ROOMS AT A SPECIAL PRICE WHICH WILL BE HELD UNTIL THE END OF FEBRUARY. USE “USMS” AS A REFERENCE**

**Minimum stay is 4 nights**

Double

**Bed and Breakfast:** Euro 172,00 a day

**1/2 Pension (with breakfast and lunch):** Euro 217,55 a day

**Full Pension (all meals):** Euro 259,35 a day

### Double Used as Single

**Bed and Breakfast:** Euro 129,00 a day

**1/2 Pension (with breakfast and lunch):** Euro 151,76 a day

**Full Pension (all meals):** Euro 172,66 a day.

### Leardini Group

Both the Lungomare Hotel and the Hotel Maestrale belong to this group of hotels. They all have excellent service and are full 4 star establishments.

### The Lungomare

This hotel is right on the beach and has great views of the Adriatic. The rooms have been renovated to a "Nautical" theme and have teak closets, blue striped drapes and are very tastefully done. The hotel is near the port and main shopping street. The top floor dining room has a spectacular view of the ocean. This hotel as well, has 2 different "styles" to choose from within the hotel – basically the difference is whether or not you want a wooden floor or carpet. I would take the wood.

Lungomare della Libertà, 7

tel. +39 0541.602224 - [info@lungomare.com](mailto:info@lungomare.com), <http://www.lungomare.com>

### The Maestrale

Is smaller and about 1 block off of the beach. It has the feeling of a luxurious B and B or villa and is a more intimate experience. Surrounded by trees, you feel out of the fray. They also have apartments to rent which sleep 4 people and have maid service every day. This might be a solution for either families or a small group travelling together.

Via Carducci, 2

tel. +39 0541.602224 - [info@hotelmaestrale.com](mailto:info@hotelmaestrale.com), <http://www.hotelmaestrale.com>

### Hotel Sarti

Well located, well appointed and recently renovated, the Sarti is a good solid choice for a 4 star hotel. They too cater to groups of adult athletes. The communal spaces were lovely – a pool in a garden space, the beach across the street and a light filled dining room overlooking the sea. The pasta is "fatta in casa" (made in house) and they take great attention to detail. Facilities for kids, spa, etc. This hotel is about 1/2 mile south of the center where most of the other 4 Star properties are located.

Piazzale San Martino, 4

+39-0541-600-978 <http://www.hotelsarti.com> [info@hotelsarti.com](mailto:info@hotelsarti.com)

## Dining

I didn't have too much time in the restaurants, but I did find a couple of good places. Food in general is not too expensive in Italy and is of generally excellent

quality. My dinners ran from 17 – 25 Euro at restaurants. You can find cheaper solutions by eating in pizzerias or more casual places.

Kalamaro

Viale Parini,1 +39-0541-690-562

DELICIOUS Italian seafood. I could eat there every day.

Panna e Cioccolato

Via Lungorio1 +39-0541-694606

Home made gelato.....irresistible. Think fig and ricotta or zabaglione or cioccolato fondente....need I say more?

Brasserie

Via Ippolito Nievo, 14 +39-0541-693197

On the main shopping, see-and-be-seen drag, yet has good, solid Italian fare.

Hops

Via Parini, 3 +39-0541 607920

Brewery, steakhouse and pizza in the center of town. Usually on tap – 4 different beers – as for the eats – good basic fare – pizza, steaks...they even serve hamburgers if you really need one.

Piadina – La Piadina di Pio

Via Dante, north of the port.

Eating a piadina is a MUST in Riccione. The region is famous for it and is their version of the panino. Do not miss it with stracchino (a super delish soft cheese), prosciutto and rucola.

Pizzeria Diana

Viale Ceccarini, 90 +39-0541-692418 [www.dianariccione.it](http://www.dianariccione.it)

Good basic pizzeria.

Il Vicolo di Bacco

Viale Ceccarini, 73 +39-0541-601082

A cool little wine bar in an alley of one of the main shopping streets. Wine bar....need we say more?

## LIFE OUTSIDE RICCIONE

Riccione is in the Emilia Romagna, one of the richest regions of Italy. There are endless and easy side trips that one can make either on a day off, or for an extended period of time after the meet has finished. Day trips can include...

**Ravenna** – full of byzantine mosaics – a wonder of byzantine Italy and a much overlooked treasure.

**Bologna** – the heart of 17<sup>th</sup> century Northern Italian painting and now the heart of Italian cuisine. The tortellino, gnocco, piadina and spaghetti Bolognese all hail from this one delicious city.

**Parma** - A lovely and enchanting city – home of the famous painter Parmagianino and prosciutto di Parma....delectable

The options are endless – you simply need to decide if you want astounding art, mouth-watering food or both!

**Verona** - a roman amphitheater sits in its heart where they have opera all summer long. Home of Romeo and Juliet – it is truly an enchanting town.

**Urbino** – The family seat of the Duke of Montefeltro, this hilltop town in the Marche was one of the centers of learning and culture in Renaissance Italy. Castles, beautiful art, breathtaking views.

### **Further Afield**

Rome, Florence, Venice are the major sites to see on an Italian Grand Tour. However, I recommend the smaller towns as they will be less touristy. One of the best things you can do in Italy is to rent a car, get off the highway and get lost driving from one hilltop town to the next. You never know what you will discover!

### **Other fun things of import.....Team USA Dinner**

We would like to organize a Team USA dinner, potentially on Wednesday, June 13<sup>th</sup> – the evening before Relay Day. The plans are TBD but we're hoping to either have a dinner with regional specialties and wines either on the beach or at a nearby villa. In order to be in on the fun, you'll have to let us know if you'll be participating in the meet and if you're interested in the dinner....

Questions concerning coaching and swimming – contact USA Head Coach, Frank Marchinkowski at [f.marcinkowski@cubu-masters.org](mailto:f.marcinkowski@cubu-masters.org)

Questions concerning planning, travel etc – contact USA World's Liaison, Kristin Gary at [kgary150@me.com](mailto:kgary150@me.com)

Go Team USA and We'll see you in Italy!