

In chapter 1 we left off having just returned from Italy when I ended up storing my Rosetta Stone program for Italian on a shelf in my office. That was in 2005. Now let's fast forward to February, 2008. It was a typical work day for me in my office. For some reason that I still haven't figured out, I happened to glance at the shelf where the Rosetta Stone for Italian program had been sitting since August of 2005 and decided I was going to re-install the program and learn Italian. I thought that if I did not do so, I would be wasting all the money that I paid for the program.

I started studying Italian every day and while I was learning a few words and phrases I was frustrated as there seemed to be a lot that I did not understand. I decided to further enhance my study of Italian by purchasing an Audio program designed to teach Italian. It did help me broaden my vocabulary but it still didn't teach me any grammatical rules such as conjugating verbs or how to use prepositions. To be honest, I didn't even know that I needed to learn such rules. One thing that I did however realize after 2 months of study was that I had great difficulty understanding the Italian that was spoken on the Audio program and if I was to continue studying Italian I needed to find somewhere in which I could practice speaking and listening to somebody else speaking Italian.

In April of 2008 I decided to go online and search the internet for somewhere in the Charleston, South Carolina area where I could speak Italian with somebody. It was at this time that I discovered a website called Meetup. This is a website designed to be used by special interest groups. There were groups for people that had dogs, people that loved going to restaurants; there was even a group for people who wanted to learn German but no groups for people wanting to learn Italian. What I did find was a list of individuals who wanted to see various groups started that weren't in existence yet. In that list was a posting by a man by the name of Vince that asked if anybody wanted to start an Italian Language Group with him. In the posting he managed to put his email address which you were not technically supposed to do. I responded to his posting telling him I would love to start such a group with him.

After corresponding a few times back and forth with Vince we decided to start meeting once a week at a restaurant in Charleston called Bocci's in order to be able to speak Italian with one another. We hoped that as time passed, other people would join us as well. So, it was a Thursday evening sometime mid to late April 2008 when I drove 35 minutes to Charleston to meet my new friend and Italian speaking partner. I will never forget waiting outside of the restaurant when I saw a young man approach me who said "Chuck?" I responded "Si, Vince?". We then exchanged the traditional "Come stai, bene" etc. He then began to talk about something in Italian of which I understood almost nothing. I used most of what I knew in the introductions. Naturally, he was (or at least I think he was) a little disappointed with his new friend.

Doesn't sound like an ideal start to an Italian language group? Was this really the start of Il Tavolo Italiano? Stay tuned for the next video and find out!