

TURNED ON IN TURIN

The new Milan at half the price! Like Caine in his mini, Adrian Gillan chases Italian lads around the streets of Turin - before the Winter Olympics put the city on the map and change her forever.



FORGET Milan – except for a daytrip perhaps! Spawned by Romans, engorged by Savoys: Turin is grander by far than its better-known fashion-house neighbour. This once capital of a newly united Italy and home to a now-waning Fiat is soon to host the Winter Olympics. Cometh the hour! Cumeth the men! Whatever you do, hit town before said Winter Olympics (10th – 26th February 2006), during which you'll find not a bed to lay your head; and after which, Turin will be rightfully and truly on the tourist map - with prices to match. But if you have to visit after said Winter Olympics, try April when the city hosts the **Turin Gay and Lesbian Film Festival** (www.tglff.com).

First off, buy yourself a **Turin Card** (www.turismotorino.org). Amazing value (15 euro for 48 hours; 17 euro for 72 hours), this little beauty gives you access to almost everything: museums, public transport, even boat trips on the Po. One of its many freebies is the wonderful **TurismoBus** which provides an hour's round-trip (with live English commentary), taking in most of the main sights - albeit just their exteriors unless you hop off to look inside) - not least popping you over the Po up onto the hilly Collina district for great views back across town. Dismount the bus for closer inspections. Behind the main square with its **Palazzo Reale**, the holy **Duomo's** rather plain and a bit of a let-down; and its dubious **Shroud** (or "Holy Sheeeeeeet" as locals affectionately dub it) is a mere copy, although still strangely haunting – the orig-



inal's only exposed to eyes and air once every 25 years now. Just north of the Duomo you can still see ruins of a gate and a once-mighty amphitheatre on the **Porta Palatina**, the city's old Roman heart. The **Muzeo Egizio** showcases the largest collection of Ancient Egyptian artefacts outside Cairo – even bigger than our home-grown cultural pilage, the British Museum. Stroll down the colonnaded **Via Roma**, which stretches north-south between the main square and the main south-central railway terminal, lined with boutiques and cafes. Italy's tallest brick building and allegedly the world's highest museum, there are four good reasons to visit the **Mole Antonelliana**: the building itself which is awesome, both inside and out; the central 'free floating' elevator, like something out of Wonka; the views from the top across town and the entire Po basin; and the mamma-fucker amazing National Museum of Cinema housed inside! This museum – like this city – will exceed all expectations! Feeling thirsty? **Caffe Leri** (Corso Vittorio Emanuele II, 64; Tel: +39 (0)11 54 30 75) is the gay heart of Turin; and one of the world's most ambient bars! Sprawling out into an exquisite, crumbling Baroque colonnade, charming waiters flit from table to table, as do horny local punters, on one of the most sociable scenes you'll ever get immersed in. Food 'til late, beneath sparkling chandeliers, surrounded by candles. Just north of the centre, **Il Male** (Via Lombardore, 10; Tel: +39 (0)11 28 46 17) is a pub-style bar which also serves food and is famed for its singles nights and cruisy after-hours 'parties'. When those toes start a-tapping, head straight for **Centralino** (Via delle Rosine 16/a; Tel: +39 (0)11 81 74 821), Turin's central, fail-safe, stalwart gay disco-for-the-young every Friday – mainly pop and retro, in rooms strung out along a long basement space. **Bananamia** (Murazzi, the short clubbing stretch down by the Po) is gay-dominated on Fridays and at weekends generally and makes a joyous alternative to Centralino – especially in summer when this under-the-arches space spills out onto the very banks of the Po! Or **Metropolis** (Via Principessa Clotilde, 82; Tel: +39 (0)11 48 41 16) on Saturdays, just north of centre, attracts gay boys and girls of all ages. Also affectionately known – though somewhat cruelly to be fair - as "Necropolis": City of the Dead! Hot steam action can be found just north of centre at **011** (Via Messina, 5; Tel: +39 (0)11 28 42 63) - especially during the 'Naked Party' from 10pm on Saturdays. Towels not an option! The more central **San Martino** (Corso S. Martino, 8; Tel: +39 (0)11 53 37 94) sauna pulls in a slightly older crowd. For indoor sex, without the steam, try the three floors of cabins and glory holes that is **Castro** (Corso Vittorio Emanuele, 65) – bang opposite Caffe Leri. To take airs, head for **Parco del Valentino**, avoiding the main part of the park where the Botanical Gardens and fake Medieval castle are; sampling instead the narrow stretch by the Corso Galileo Galilei – boys both in bushes and in passing cars that pull-in-to-pull. **Hotel Napoleon** (Via XX Settembre, 5; Tel: +39 (0)11 5613223; www.hotel-napoleon torino.it) is a perfectly positioned, moderately-priced and overtly gay-friendly 3-star hotel with colourful owner, film posters caking the walls and a fab breakfast terrace from which to gaze. Near all sites and hot queer action.





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