

Farewell to Dolce Vita?

New York Times (1923-Current file); Jul 12, 1974; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times
pg. 34

economic to environmental, are deeply rooted in the country's politics, sociology and financial structure. Austerity measures will only scratch the surface. There is a long, hard pull ahead. Meanwhile, some of the most glaring symptoms—as reported the other day—will be a proliferation of “chiuso” signs closing the museums that are synonymous with Western culture and beauty, as funds decrease for the already pitifully inadequate curatorial staffs. It would solve no basic problems, but perhaps personnel could be augmented by Italy's international art students, who could at least keep the doors open while writing their doctoral dissertations; repair and maintenance work might be carried out by international professional volunteers. It is a disaster situation when the Brera, for example, must close its doors.

“Italia chiusa”—a closed-down Italy—is not a prospect one likes to think about; but the Italians themselves would probably be the first to point out that, after all, Rome survived.

Farewell to Dolce Vita?

There will not be much dolce vita for anyone in Italy this year, with the new austerity measures brought on by the current fiscal crisis—although it is the Fiat rather than the Ferrari set that usually is hit hardest in such matters. In our proper puritanical hearts, we Americans have long found both dolce vita and dolce far niente suspect, even as we enjoyed them with strong feelings of guilt and with the inner conviction that this was the real reason why Venice was sinking and the coastal pines were dying. Italy has a long hedonistic tradition that goes back to Nero's musical divertissement.

The real reasons for Italy's serious troubles, from