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Behind The Wheel - Italian 2



Synopsis

Mangiamo! (Let's eat!) In Italy it's all about the food. Well, there's also shopping, (facciamo la spesa!), traveling (viaggiamo!), and of course, l'amore. Behind the Wheel Italian Level 2 lets you practice your foundational Italian with lessons and stories based around various scenarios, including eating out, shopping, and getting around town. This course first reviews basic concepts from Italian Level 1, then expands on these areas, focusing on medium-length sentence combinations, versatile vocabulary, and extensive sentence building instruction to improve conversational skill and listening comprehension. Italian Level 2 features both English and native Italian speaking instructors. This program includes a companion book and audio transcript to enhance the learning experience.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“The audio-only lessons build upon one another, using a native speaker to help you learn useful words and actually construct sentences from the get-go.”
— Minneapolis Star-Tribune
“Unlike other audio language programs, this series encourages students to create their own sentences, making it more fun and conversational than other more expensive programs.”
— The Cleveland Plain Dealer
“Focuses on real-world conversation...Great value.”
— Men's Health magazine

MARK FROBOSE is the founder of the Behind the Wheel series. A foreign language instructor for

more than thirty years, he has built a career on "taking the foreign out of language." He is a nationally recognized foreign language speaker, teacher, and author.

I started with Level 2 because I once lived in Italy and spoke reasonable Italian, but hadn't used it for years. I had a lot of fun trying to get the answer to 'How do you say in Italian?' in before it was given - and the fact that 9 times out of 10 I was right did a lot to boost my confidence. Meanwhile, I was listening to and speaking Italian. It was really only with disc 6 that I started to learn new expressions, but that was fine as I needed reminding, and by then I felt confident enough to acquire new vocabulary and tenses. I must admit that the sheer amount of repetition did start to drive me mad, but I suppose it's part of the technique - practise till you're so familiar that you're actually bored! I would stop the disc after about the 3rd round of repetition and go on to the next one, and then go back through the discs in sequence to make sure I really was word-perfect. I loved this method of language-learning - available when you want it, using dead time driving to work, no obligation to set aside an evening, etc - and plan to improve my other half-remembered languages by the same means. The only drawback is not being able to ask questions, but you can always find a native speaker for that.

I've been dabbling in Italian for years, following a brief introductory course at a community center and listening to various level 1 CDs to prepare for several Italian vacations. So I was stuck in a rut, with some familiarity with basic phrases and vocabulary that I kept reviewing to refresh my memory. In preparing for my next trip to Italy, I finally took the plunge and tried this level 2 CD package. I have been very pleasantly surprised. First, I know a lot more than I thought I did. And second, instead of relying on repetition of conversations between imaginary characters who are trying to order food, make plans, or take a train, this CD just bounces all over the map -- a quick review of vocabulary here, a summary of queries (where? how? what?) there. So for me, it jogs my memory, randomly introduces new verbs and phrases, and never gets dull. Even when the constructions are way beyond my ability (do I really need to know how to say "I was going to go to the store?") I still pick up useful words (such as the word for "store"). I would recommend this course for people who are tired of memorizing numbers and months of the year and want the challenge of trying more wide-ranging vocabulary and phrases -- in a not necessarily systematic way.

I finished "Behind the Wheel - Italian 1" and went directly to "BTW - Italian 2". I'm impressed with the series and highly recommend it. I was thinking of taking Italian through my local community college

and bought the textbook they are using for the introductory course. Ugh, it reminded me of why I never did well in language classes in high school and college. Those courses put primary focus on learning grammar, whereas "BTW - Italian" starts with the most commonly encountered words and verb conjugations and builds from there. In other words, it lets me focus on what I need for a conversation between me and another person rather than load me down with first, second, and third person singular and plural conjugations of the verb under study. It appeals to my self-interest in why I want to learn Italian (which isn't grammar drills) and it drills me in learning vocabulary and building sentences while I drive to and from work. That formerly "wasted" driving time has become quite productive. I am really quite thrilled with the progress I've made using this method compared to the many attempts I made at language courses in college.

So I ordered both level 1 and 2. It takes some time to get through level 1. I get to level 2 and find that what was labelled as disc 3 was instead a repeat of disc 6 from level 1. The book for level 2 showed an entirely different dialog so it was plainly a mistake in labeling. I go to return to and the website tells me I am too late. This is the trouble with not using brick-n-mortar merchant. sells me this defective crap and refuses to make it right.

I am very much enjoying listening to this tape while driving to and from work and errands every day. I think it is well set up and Italian 2 is perfect for someone with rudimentary Italian already. There is often reviews of basic Italian as well. I love how the words are applied in sentences and there is plenty of time to repeat outloud. I also love that there are several reviews within each tape to constantly reinforce what has just been taught. Highly Recommended! I can't wait for my trip to Italy to use what I am learning.

This series works for me. I like the method of learning by audio. When I listen without reading the text, I concentrate on the sounds. Then when I am not "behind the wheel," I read the book and listen to the audio. This reinforces what I have heard. Unfortunately, one of the CDs in this set is the wrong CD. It is labeled correctly as Disc 3, Level 2, but the material on the CD is from Level 1 and does not correspond to the printed text in the book. I emailed Mark Frobose and had no reply. I emailed MacMillan and was told to call customer service. When I called customer service, they said that I would have to return the item to and order another set. They did not seem to understand or care that they have a quality-control problem. So I ordered a second set, and surprise!, it has the identical problem. Now I have to return two defective sets of a product that I liked. If that particular

CD had not been a crucial bridge between review and new material, I might have let this problem slide. I like the set, but I won't try again.

Great way to continue learning Italian. My husband has a long commute to work and enjoys listening to it on the way to work. He raves about how well the company bridges Behind the Wheel-Italian 1 to Behind the Wheel-Italian 2. I would recommend it to anyone trying to learn another language.

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