

The Leonardo Express

Federico Fabretti

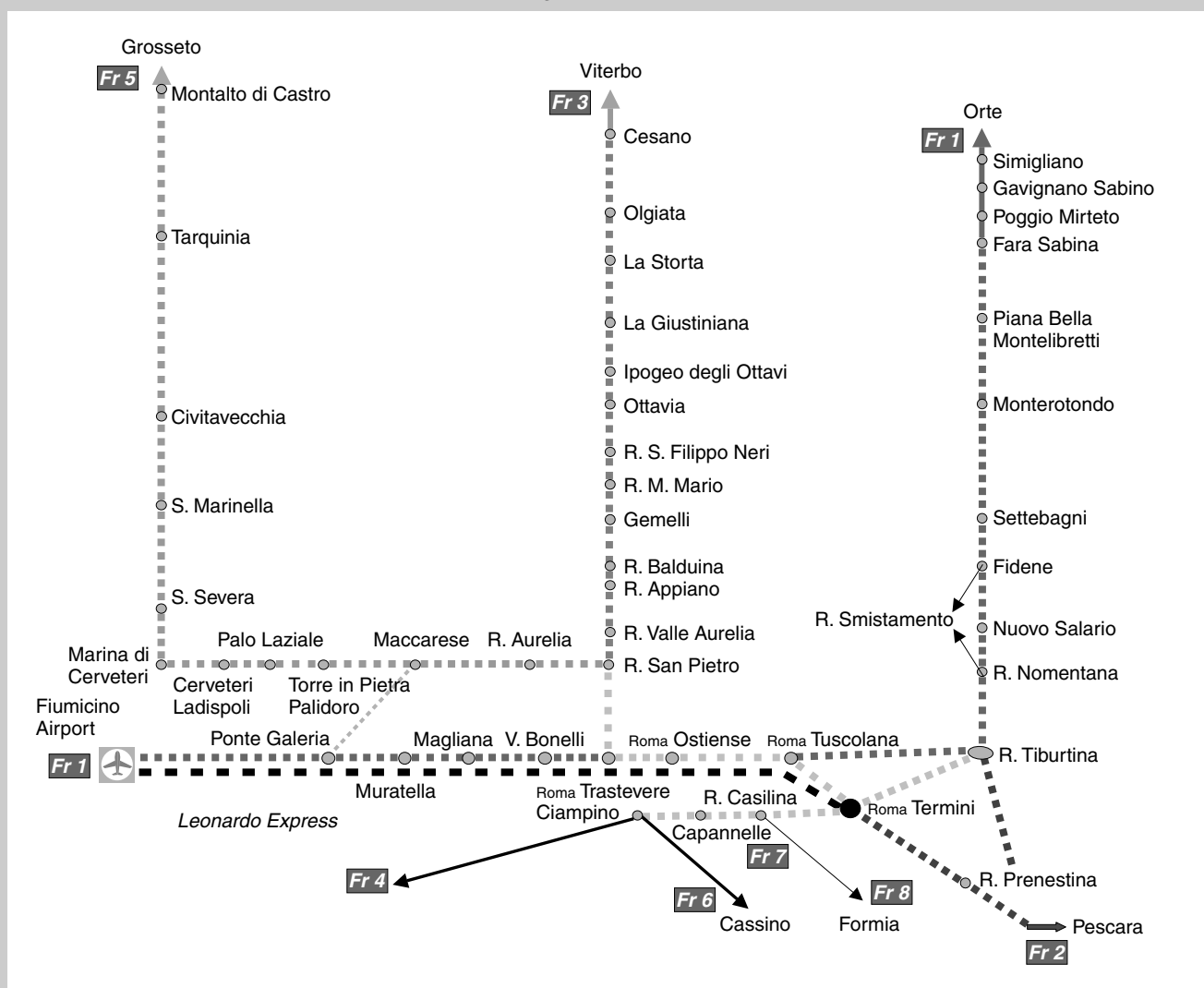
After your flight lands at Leonardo da Vinci Airport, Rome's main airport in Fiumicino, it is just a short train trip into the city. All it takes is the time to claim your luggage and then the *Leonardo Express* whisks you off to Rome's Termini Station in only 31 minutes. Suddenly, you are right in the heart of the Eternal City's archaeological and artistic splendours and a stone's throw from the Baths of Diocletian from which the station takes its name.

All told, the train is by far the fastest (not to mention the cheapest and most comfortable) way of travelling between Rome and the airport. By car, coach or taxi, the journey can take an average of between 60 and 90 minutes, depending on the time of day and traffic congestion you encounter. The cost by private car depends on the engine capacity and the time that you leave the vehicle in the car park, but a recent

survey found it comes out at between €12 and €22 (€1 = US\$1.28). If this seems expensive, a taxi costs even more with some people paying over €40. On the other hand, a ticket on the *Leonardo Express* costs just €9.50.

The first air-rail link was opened on the 27 May 1990, following the completion of a new branch of the line from Rome to the station serving the small town of Fiumicino. This involved building a

Stations on Fr 1 with Connections to Other Ferrovia Regionale



Source: Ferrovie dello Stato (FS)
 Note: Each dash (■) indicates about 1 minute of travel time.



Leonardo Express at Fiumicino Airport Station

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Leonardo Express passengers at Fiumicino Airport Station

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2.2-km viaduct taking the line right into the airport complex and terminating at a three-platform station close to the international air terminal, but still is convenient for domestic flights thanks to a network of overhead and moving walkways.

The first airport line terminated in Rome's Ostiense Station where a large air terminal was also built, providing passengers with a range of services, including escalators and an overhead moving walkway that

passed over all the tracks, linking it to the historic station building on the other side. However, in September 1993, the terminus was moved to the more central Rome Tiburtina Station. Subsequently, it was decided to run the trains further on to the Latium towns of Fara Sabina and Orte, creating a sort of overground underground that continues to benefit commuters living in the area and was originally called the Fm 1 (Ferrovia metropolitana or Metropolitan Railway 1)

but is now known as the Fr 1 (Ferrovia regionale or Regional Railway 1). In addition to these trains, 27 September 1993 saw the start of the first non-stop direct connection between Termini Station and the airport, which came to be known as the *Leonardo Express* in 2000. After leaving Rome's Termini Station, the route parallels Fr 1 from Rome's Tuscolana Station to Ostiense and then joins Fr 1 at Ostiense to run on the same tracks to the airport. When the first non-stop services were launched, there were 38 trains per day, rising to 62 *Leonardo Express* services in 2000, and 70 today with departures every 30 minutes.

Travellers have a choice of two alternatives—the fast *Leonardo Express* or the Fr 1 services, which now boast modern double-decker carriages known as TAFs (or *Treni ad Alta Frequenzazione*, meaning high-traffic trains). These trains do not start from Termini Station, but do stop at six stations in the city (Nuovo Salaria, Nomentana, Tiburtina, Tuscolana, Ostiense, and Trastevere) as well as a further four intermediate stops before reaching the airport. The journey to the airport from Tiburtina Station (where high-speed trains on the Naples–Rome–Milan line will be stopping in the near future) takes 45 minutes compared to 23 minutes from Trastevere Station. On weekdays, a train leaves each station in both directions every 15 minutes.

But back to the *Leonardo Express*; the soundproof carriages have climate control and a sound system that will soon be providing passengers with real-time information on the train's cruising conditions. Each train set consists of an E464 electric locomotive, three UC-X IR passenger carriages and a driver's carriage from which the locomotive is controlled. The seating capacity for 300 also offers spaces with anchors for passengers using wheelchairs as well as toilets for disabled and extensive luggage space. Both the Rome Termini

and the Fiumicino Airport Termini have services for accompanying passengers with disabilities to their trains and to the station exits. The first *Leonardo Express* departs from platform 26 in Rome Termini at 05:52 and the last departure is at 22:52. The platform is about 200 m from the ticket office, but moving walkways help speed passengers as far as platform 24 and make it easier for them to transfer luggage. The first departure from the airport is at 06:37 with the last service at 23:37.

Current statistics show that some 9000 passengers are using the *Leonardo Express* each day and the figure is rising steadily. Customer satisfaction surveys indicate the service is appreciated over taxi or private car due to its low cost, comfort, speed and safety.

Tickets can be bought at a wide variety of outlets, including all Trenitalia's ticket offices, as well as at authorized regional sales points in bars, newsagent's kiosks and tobacconists, approved travel agents and self-service ticket machines in stations and of all Italy's major airports.

A few months ago, Trenitalia concluded an agreement with a supervised indoor car park in Via Giolitti (Rome), close to the departure platform. Now, anyone wanting to access the station by car can park in convenience and safety for just €5 per day (less than half the normal charge) and buy their *Leonardo Express* ticket directly in the car park.

The success of the service speaks for itself. To celebrate the landmark of reaching *Leonardo Express* customer 6 million last June, Trenitalia awarded a slew of prizes to a surprised Italian-Venezuelan engineer and a Russian tourist who purchased ticket numbers 6,000,000 and 6,000,001.

The prize winners—who found unexpected (albeit fleeting) celebrity status on local TV and in Rome's major newspapers—both received a bronze locomotive plate from a historic electric



Presentation of prizes to customer 6,000,001

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Customer 6,000,000 with railway staff at Fiumicino Airport Terminal

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locomotive built in the last century, a silver reproduction of a *Leonardo Express* ticket, and a book of complimentary tickets.

The prizes were presented by the Latium Regional Councillor for Transport and Public Works, underlining the respect that the *Leonardo Express* service has earned

in the eyes of local government and due in no small part to its beneficial effects on tourism, the economy and the environment. ■

Federico Fabretti

Dr Fabretti is Head of Media Relations at FS. After obtaining a degree in politics, he joined IRI as press officer, subsequently moving to work in media relations for the Italian government, Daimler Chrysler Italia, and Telecom Italia Mobile.