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Beppe Severgnini

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Beppe Severgnini : Ciao, America!: An Italian Discovers the U.S. before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Ciao, America!: An Italian Discovers the U.S.:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Two StarsBy nutznboltzafter the first few chapters his story becomes boring1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Very interesting and funny. As a half Spanish-half Italian person I have ...By Mercedes OntoriaThe thoughts of the author about the United States can be very useful for foreign people as well as for United States citizens who want to take a look to their own culture from another point of view. It

is an interesting and funny way to approach to the United States culture, language and costumes, specially if you are planning to live in this country. It was useful for me and I enjoyed it a lot. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very funny for Americans who can laugh at themselves. By J. Brandemuehl I thoroughly enjoyed this book. It's filled with funny anecdotes about daily life in urban America and it's interesting to hear it from an Italian perspective. It's best appreciated by Americans who've traveled internationally and can appreciate the nuances of culture. You also miss a bit if you haven't experienced life in Italy. Having been to Italy several times over the years, I could appreciate the Italian awe of how much more efficient American bureaucracy and buying phone services can be. I was on the floor over his description of feeling like a "matador faced with a milk cow"! For Americans in Italy, it's the opposite experience of course - complete naivete at first about how "the system" works in Italy which one quickly realizes is simply that the "system" doesn't work at all and that it's assumed you will find blatant ways to work around the system to get what you need. Unfortunately since his book was written, Americans are not nearly as polite as they used to be, everyone's in a rush, we've lost patience with our airlines, our government and so on. And sadly, in the 15 years since his book was written, 35% of Americans are now overweight or obese. He should come back and write a short sequel. A good light-hearted read and highly recommended.

In the wry but affectionate tradition of Bill Bryson, *Ciao, America!* is a delightful look at America through the eyes of a fiercely funny guest one of Italy's favorite authors who spent a year in Washington, D.C. When Beppe Severgnini and his wife rented a creaky house in Georgetown they were determined to see if they could adapt to a full four seasons in a country obsessed with ice cubes, air-conditioning, recliner chairs, and, of all things, after-dinner cappuccinos. From their first encounters with cryptic rental listings to their back-to-Europe yard sale twelve months later, Beppe explores this foreign land with the self-described patience of a mildly inappropriate beachcomber, holding up a mirror to America's signature manners and mores. Succumbing to his surroundings day by day, he and his wife find themselves developing a taste for Klondike bars and Samuel Adams beer, and even that most peculiar of American institutions -- the pancake house. The realtor who waves a perfect bye-bye, the overzealous mattress salesman who bounces from bed to bed, and the plumber named Marx who deals in illegally powerful showerheads are just a few of the better-than-fiction characters the Severgninis encounter while foraging for clues to the real America. A trip to the computer store proves just as revealing as D.C.'s Fourth of July celebration, as do boisterous waiters angling for tips and no-parking signs crammed with a dozen lines of fine print. By the end of his visit, Severgnini has come to grips with life in these United States -- and written a charming, laugh-out-loud tribute. From the Hardcover edition.

From Publishers Weekly From his temporary home in the leafy suburbs of Georgetown, Washington, D.C., Italian newspaper columnist Severgnini turns a curious eye toward Americans, their bureaucracy and labor-saving gadgets. With the same critical lens through which he viewed England (in *Inglese*, which was a bestseller in the U.K.), the reporter sees through all America's gimmicks the fat-free, guilt-free, buy-now, pay-later mechanics of advanced capitalism but he is not adverse to her charms. Both repelled and attracted by the wonders of convenience living, he finds a joyous horror in channel-hopping, mall shopping and the pursuit of comfort, in our abuse of English ("La-Z-Boy is a veiled invitation to commit a cardinal sin") and our blatant lack of sartorial know-how ("The President of the United States jogs through the city in shorts that display his milk-white thighs"). In other hands, such a memoir could have been a jingoistic cliché-fest. Severgnini, though, is a master in the vein of Bill Bryson, and his every criticism is matched with admiration. Nor does he spare his own people from his caustic wit in fact, visiting Italians often come off as badly, if not worse, than his American subjects. The result is a sardonic tale of cultural bewilderment, an incisive peek into the mundane obsessions of our American existence that makes the commonplace be it a fixation with weather statistics or an air-conditioning complex seem not only insane but extremely funny. From Library Journal It would be difficult not to like this delightful book. Best-selling Italian author Severgnini, who is also a correspondent for the *Economist* and a columnist for the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera*, here documents one year in America. The book is actually an English version of *Un italiano in America* now with a postscript five years later. Severgnini's encounter with America begins in April 1994 when he and his family arrive in Washington, DC, and settle in Georgetown, a neighborhood where he meets both college students and politicians. In a light yet poignant writing style, he chronicles renting and furnishing his new home and approaches routine tasks that Americans take for granted obtaining parking permits, choosing cable and long distance services with wonder and humor. He also tackles American customs and habits: Why are Americans obsessed with air-conditioning and ice? Why do they like their coffee scalding? Americans, he observes, are individualistic, and yet they also come together for a nationwide picnic on the Fourth of July. While the key strength of the book is the author's fresh perspective, the weakness is its focus on Washington, DC, and many consider America to start actually beyond the capital Beltway. Still, a good purchase for most public libraries. Lee Arnold, Historical Soc. of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Severgnini shares his insights and experiences in this charming, quirky memoir of an Italian's year in the U.S. He lived in a suburb of Washington, took up residence in a creaky home, and immersed himself in American life. He tried (and failed) to get a credit card. He bought groceries in bulk, suffered through

unbearably cold air-conditioned movie theaters, and even purchased a highly illegal showerhead, which flouted water conservation laws with its outrageous water pressure. As a result of these experiences, Severgnini made broad conclusions about the American mindset. Some of Severgnini's conclusions about Americans seem unfair. Sure, we are ravaged by fevers of consumerism and nostalgia, but is neon lighting really the only American art? What about jazz? Despite this tendency to exaggerate the American character, Severgnini's observations about America usually ring true. It's not easy to walk the thin line between Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* and Dave Barry's *Only Travel Guide You'll Ever Need*, but this memoir manages to do so admirably. John Green Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved