



INSIDE

FAMILY TRAVEL FIVE: Cruising with a crowd **2K**
BEST FARES: Kids flying alone **2K**
TEXAS: Head to the bat cave **3K**
COLORADO: Hooked on Telluride **6K**

ITALY

Rome without the crowds



Rome's earliest churches had plain exteriors but spectacular mosaics inside, such as this one at Santa Prassede, which was built in the fifth century.

Venture beyond the Vatican to see the church masterpieces other visitors may miss

Story and Photos by **SUZANNE MORPHET**
 Special Contributor

ROME — Like millions of people around the world, I was captivated by the televised inauguration of a new pope this spring. I'm not Catholic, but the pageantry, the perfect symmetry of St. Peter's Square and all that marble created an irresistible urge to go to Rome to see what the Eternal City has to offer anyone interested in the faith that fed the Renaissance.

In the 14th century, after the popes returned to Rome from a self-imposed 70-year exile in Avignon, they used art and architecture to re-establish their sovereignty over the city. They were so successful that the problem for today's tourist is how to fit it all in.

The obvious place to begin is the Vatican, but I soon discov-

ered that the pope's Rome extends far beyond Vatican walls. According to one source, Rome has more than 900 churches, many with beautiful paintings and sculptures by renowned artists of their day, yet most visitors walk right past them without a second glance.

See **SEE ROME** Page 4K

CRUISES

Alaska alternatives

Port towns offer activities similar to cruise excursions for less

JUNEAU, Alaska — It's cruise season in Alaska, with more than 1 million cruise passengers expected between April and September in port towns from Ketchikan to Seward.

Cruise passengers who sign

up for shore excursions can spend hundreds of dollars, if not more in the case of families, in each port they visit. Taking a helicopter to see Juneau-area ice fields can easily run \$1,000 for a family of four for a one-hour trip. A nature tour near the tiny town of Ketchikan can run \$89 for adults and \$50 for kids.

Alaska port towns have many low-cost and even free things to do, from hiking to exploring glaciers to learning

about Alaska and native culture. Here are some ideas from some of Alaska's most-visited ports.

Just remember: Your ship won't wait for you if you run late from an outing you've organized on your own, so allow plenty of time to get back to port for your ship departure.

Becky Bohrer and Mark Thiessen, The Associated Press

See **SEEING** Page 5K



Mark Thiessen/The Associated Press

Most cruise ship passengers leave for Anchorage once their ships dock in Whittier (above), but those who stay can kayak, hike trails or visit shops, cafes and restaurants.

GUARANTEED \$4,000,000 POKER SERIES

HOW'S YOUR POKER FACE?

JUNE 14-SEPTEMBER 2

BUY INTO A SATELLITE TODAY & TAKE ON THE PROS TOMORROW TO SHARE IN \$4,000,000.

SEE PLAYERS CLUB FOR DETAILS | WINSTARWORLDCASINO.COM
 EXIT 1 • I-35 AT THE RED RIVER • THACKERVILLE, OK
 GAMBLE RESPONSIBLY • 1-800-522-6700

A CHICKASAW COUNTRY DESTINATION