

There's a new reason for Scots to visit Naples ...

McTominay is everywhere in the city now

BY REBECCA ANN HUGHES

IT'S the morning after the Naples Italian Serie A football league title win. Light blue and white bunting flutters along the streets and banners emblazoned with the team's donkey mascot are draped over balconies.

The face of Diego Maradona, who secured two other historic championship wins with Napoli, gazes down from murals and giant flags strung over the shaded alleys. But there's another face and name around the city, too.

Scotland's Scott McTominay, who joined Napoli last summer, has already become an icon for Neapolitans. His goal that helped the team to its fourth championship has raised him to the saint-like status Maradona enjoys.

McTominay is everywhere in the city now – memorialised in murals, celebrated on T-shirts and modelled into the famous figurines of its Christmas nativity scenes.

If you're a fan of the footballer, there's no better place to honour him than in Naples this summer.

Sitting at the packed plastic outdoor tables of a trattoria in Naples's historic Quartieri Spagnoli, scooters roaring past beside me, I can see a freshly spray-painted effigy of a noble-looking McTominay on the opposite wall, a seductive Sophia Loren beside him.

The grid-plan alleys of the neighbourhood are an open-air gallery of murals, mainly featuring Maradona. Wander the shaded passages and you'll see him in various guises – Christ-like with a crown of thorns, graced with the wings of an angel, and sanctified with a halo.

Similar tributes are now being paid to McTominay. Already, a black and white icon of the Scot's face has been inserted in the niche of a deconsecrated votive shrine along Via San Nicola a Nilo.

And in an even more blatant statement, a mural on a wall near the San Pietro a Majella music conservatory shows the footballer leaping backwards to kick the ball, substituting the figure of God in the famous Michelangelo painting the Creation of Adam.

On the walls of the decadent, crumbling palazzos that line the centro storico neighbourhood



you'll see the graffitied phrase "McFratm" – McTominay's dialectal nickname that roughly translates as "McBro".

Souvenir stalls also sell flags and scarves with his name, but the most characteristic Neapolitan ode to the player is found on Via San Gregorio Armeno.

THIS narrow alley in the heart of the historic centre is renowned for its workshops producing figurines traditionally used in presepi, or nativity scenes.

The quirk here, though, is that Neapolitan nativity scenes are not just populated by Mary, Joseph and other biblical figures. Celebrities, politicians, popes and royalty have long been witnesses to Jesus's birth in Naples.

New famous people who are modelled into figurines each year represent a line-up of those the world's been talking about most.

Naturally, McTominay has now joined the ranks. Miniature



Diego Maradona still dominates Naples's historic Quartieri Spagnoli but you'll now see Scott McTominay there too

sculptures of him, with combed blond hair and a football in his hand, make for the perfect football fan souvenir.

If you are visiting Naples, when it comes to accommodation, you stay in style like McTominay and his family do at the five-star Romeo Hotel Napoli. Housed inside a Kenzo Tange-designed glass and steel building, the hotel is all sleek ebony panelling, volcanic stone

from Mount Vesuvius and textured glass.

Despite opening nearly 15 years ago, it still feels very on trend. It is packed with owner and Neapolitan businessman Alfredo Romeo's artworks – from an Andy Warhol of the nearby volcano to Mark Kostabi paintings and Zaha Hadid fireplaces and an eclectic chair collection.

The Krug Champagne-branded roof terrace with an infinity pool overlooks the sweeping bay with shadowy Mount Vesuvius behind.

Some rooms have panoramic harbour and volcano views, while wellness rooms are fitted with saunas, Turkish baths and Jacuzzis. Suites feature opulent marble fireplaces and the Zen Garden suite has a Japanese-inspired outdoor area with an open-air Jacuzzi.

In the basement, there is a vast, futuristic spa where McTominay might have recovered from his game in the Himalayan salt-walled sauna or beneath the snow cascade in the frigidarium.