

Ambassador



National Italian American Foundation

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Reviving Piemonte's Abandoned Vineyards
The Real La Cucina Povera
Restoring Florence's Masterpieces
Ciao Italia Goes Piemontese!
Anniversary Gala Preview
Grappa's Bitter End?



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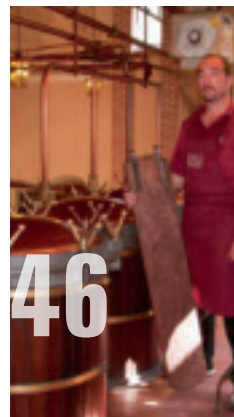
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Piemonte is known for some of Italy's finest and most elegant wines. Yet, vast acreage of once proud and productive vineyards in its Alpine foothills remains abandoned and overgrown since World War II. One visionary winemaker, Christoph Künzli, is resurrecting those vineyards.*

*Cover photograph by
Don Oldenburg.*



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From The NIAF Chairman

Just when you thought Summer was heating up too much, Fall sneaks up and everything cools off. That's sort of an analogy of NIAF's Gala season, which has all of us at the Foundation going full throttle on right now. But once the Gala Weekend arrives.... well, it doesn't get any better than that!

This year is the Foundation's 41st Anniversary. Following last year's remarkable milestone celebration of 40 years of fulfilling our mission to preserve the Italian American heritage and culture, and promote and inspire a positive image and legacy of Italian Americans, this anniversary may seem to some like an afterthought. But, believe me, it's not.

Instead, this year's Gala is the beginning of NIAF's fifth decade! And it promises to be another uplifting celebration for each of us there, and for the Italian American community as a whole. Like last year, attending this Gala will boost your pride in your Italian heritage beyond all expectations, strengthen your commitment to your family and ancestral values, and bring new and lasting friendships into your life.

The Gala takes place October 14-15 at the Washington Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, in downtown Washington, D.C. There are too many highlights and exciting events during the Gala Weekend to detail here, but please take a look at the Special Gala Preview in this issue starting on page 66. You'll also find information there and on our website at www.niaf.org on how you can participate in the Gala, and even become a sponsor.

Meanwhile, as I urge you to join us at NIAF's 41st Anniversary Gala for many reasons, I have one personal reason. This will be my final Gala as NIAF's chairman. My four-year term in which I have had the

honor to lead NIAF's distinguished Board of Directors and serve this exceptional Foundation whose work goes to the very heart of each of us and our vibrant community, comes to an end next March.

So, I'd like to thank every one of you, personally, if you are at the Gala, for your support of NIAF's mission and for your own role in helping to keep our magnificent legacy alive.

One more important thing: As you all know, on August 24th, a devastating earthquake struck central Italy claiming hundreds of lives and destroying entire towns. Our hearts and prayers go out to the earthquake victims and their families, and to the rescue workers whose relentless efforts following the earthquake saved many lives.

Within five days after the tragedy, the Italian American Relief Fund had received more than \$250,000 in donations to assist in helping victims and rebuilding towns. The Italian American Relief Fund is a unified effort within the Italian American community dedicated to providing relief at times like these, when Italy desperately needs our help. Please lend a hand and make a donation today at www.italianamericanrelief.org.

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The NIAF-IALC Leadership Forum – Washington



IALC members are invited to join NIAF's Board of Directors and participants from various Italian American organizations for the NIAF-IALC Leadership Forum during the NIAF 41st Anniversary Gala Weekend, on Saturday, October 15, from 3 - 4 p.m., at the Washington Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, in Washington, D.C.

The summit will explore the problems and benefits surrounding dual citizenship and the Italian American vote, with representatives from the U.S.-based company Your Italian Passport. IALC members will also have the opportunity to put their leadership commitment into action, discussing other important issues pertaining to the Foundation, the Italian American community, and relations between the United States and Italy. To join the IALC or to reserve your place at the NIAF-IALC Leadership Forum, please contact Alex Benedetto at 202-939-3117 or abenedetto@niaf.org.



Reader Feedback

Righting A Wrong

Your article “Fighting to Right a Wrong” (Spring 2016) was done perfectly. I will always be indebted to NIAF for your interest, involvement and help. I know that when bills H.R. 4146 and H.R. 4147 are passed by Congress and become law (and I am positive they will), NIAF and its members will have had a lot to do with this great and wonderful happening. You are like a Godsend from heaven.

— Chet Campanella
San Jose, Calif.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Read the story of Chet Campanella's campaign calling on the U.S. government to acknowledge injustices against Italian Americans during World War II in the Pensieri column, Spring 2016 issue.



Taking Your Kids To Italy

Through her reporting and the captivating cover photo of her father and children in the Spring 2016 issue, Guiomar Barbi Ochoa succeeded in drawing the attention of many parents who have yearned to take their children to Italy — but hesitated.

After reading her article, it is clear she understands traveling with *i bambini* over the big pond is not only demanding on parents but on fellow passengers. But she has provided a tutorial on what to offer children in the air, where to take them on the ground, and how to find the best places for the food they love.

Thanks to Guiomar's article, once I decide to travel to Italy with my five active grandsons, I will know where to find puppetry in parks, an Italian-speaking Ciccobello doll, and a same-day drycleaner. Italians embrace the presence, excitement and energy of every child.

— Eve Grimaldi
Dean of Students
Georgetown Visitation
Preparatory School
Washington, D.C.

My husband and I are planning a trip to Italy with our three young sons. Thanks to your article (“Italia With Bambini,” Spring 2016), I know not only how to ease our time in the air but also where to go and what to see when we arrive.

— Felicia Emry
Lutherville, MD.



Lauren C. Cater

Reading the article “Italia with Bambini” is the motivation I need. I have two precious Godsons who turn 10 this year. I want to travel with them to where their great grandfather was born. With two eager boys wanting to know about Italy, it will be much more exciting. Guiomar's lovely experience shows this can be done.

— Roy Sambuchino
Erie, Pa.

Better Photos In Italy

Frank Van Riper's story “Taking Better Photos in Italy” (Spring 2016) makes photography a snap — in Italy and anywhere. Grazie!

— J. Conte
New York, N.Y.



© Goodman/Van Riper Photography

We Want to Know What You're Thinking!

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Past Issues are available to NIAF members online at NIAF's website: www.niaf.org.

*On Wednesday,
August 24,
a large part of
central Italy
was struck by
a devastating
earthquake.*

Help Italy's Earthquake Victims Today

*This tragic disaster
has claimed more
than 300 lives,
left thousands
homeless,
shattered the
local economies,
and wiped entire
historic towns
off the map.*



Massimo Percossi/ANSA via Associated Press

And while other stories have begun to creep back into our lives, this crisis is far from over. The town of Amatrice is in danger of being isolated as roads and bridges are destroyed by aftershocks. These ancient towns, and the countless lives they are at the center of, are forever changed by that horrible day.

As the impact of the earthquake fades from the headlines, we in the Italian American community need to support the people and communities suffering through this horrendous tragedy.

In 2012, the National Italian American Foundation brought together many organizations throughout the Italian American Community to create the Italian American Relief Fund (www.ItalianAmericanRelief.org) to provide a simple and unified platform to rally to a single cause. We sought to work with as many groups as possible so that we might put the needs of those in duress and the philanthropic spirit of the entire Italian American community before the issues and interests of individual groups.

In the weeks since this catastrophe, thousands of individuals, dozens of Italian American organizations, and many corporate partners around the nation have come together through the Italian American Relief Fund to

raise more than \$250,000, a number that continues to rise every day!

We are working with representatives from the State Department, the Italian Embassy, and the affected areas, to identify projects where we can send the funds raised. Our goal is to be able to send direct aid for projects both in the near and long-term future!

In the immediate aftermath of the quake, we partnered with the Harvard Program in Refugee Trauma to send American trauma specialists to Italy to provide mental health training for Italian healthcare practitioners in the affected areas. As the days turn into weeks, we continue to identify long-term relief efforts that might otherwise be lost in the rush of new news and waning attention spans.

We will continue to update the website to provide more about the specific projects we will support, but for the sake of our friends in Italy we must continue to generate the same kind of engaging support that we have seen over these first few heart-breaking weeks. United as one, we Italian American can do a great deal of good in the coming weeks and months. We hope that you will be a part of this effort with us.

— John M. Viola
NIAF President and COO



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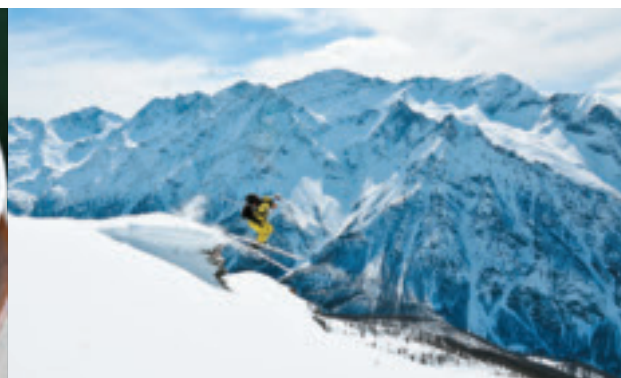
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The Voyage of Discovery students at the “Mamma Margherita Occhiena” memorial at the Oratory of Don Bosco in Torino.

All photos by Gabriella Mileti

Students Connecting to Italy

A Voyage to Discover Piemonte's Past, Present and Future

By Gabriella Mileti

NIAF Director of Programs

As I sit at my desk on a hot, late summer day in Washington, D.C., it's hard to imagine that yet another Voyage of Discovery is in the books. Now in its 17th year, the Ambassador Peter F. Secchia Voyage of Discovery is responsible for bringing 20 lucky Italian American students to Italy for the first time in their lives every year, and I am so fortunate that I have led the last three years of students to our ancestral land.

At a first glance, the Voyage of Discovery, or “VOD” as we refer to it, may seem like an all-expenses paid vacation to Italy for two weeks. But speak with any of the students who have been chosen for the trip and you immediately realize that the word “vacation” doesn't even cross their minds. It's not the 6 a.m. wake up calls or bus rides that make this trip anything but a vacation, but the life-changing experience of traveling to the land where their families came from. It is, indeed, a voyage of discovery — to discover their cultural past, present and future. And, in doing that, they discover aspects of their culture that they didn't even know existed, especially understanding Italy's current contribution to the United States and the world.

For the 2016 edition, we set out for the northeastern Italian region of Piemonte, NIAF's 2016 Region of Honor. Our base city was the regional capital, Torino — a city

that played an important role in history as the first capital of unified Italy. Actually, if we want to get technical, Torino was the second capital after the unification: Giuseppe Garibaldi declared Salemi, Sicily, in the province of Trapani, as the first capital of unified Italy on May 14, 1860, by placing the tricolor flag on top of the cylindrical tower of the Norman-Swabian castle there. However, that title only lasted one day, which brings us back to Piemonte.

Home to not only Torino, Piemonte offers a plethora of diverse cultural sites and activities. We spent the first two days exploring Torino and its deep history to put in context the rest of our trip. Walking the cobblestone streets and arcaded sidewalks, we learned about the Savoia, the royal family that reigned over all of Italy after 1861 and called Torino home.

Torino is actually not like any other Italian city. Thanks to the Savoia, the city resembles Paris. But, aside from Savoia history, which we really never could escape on this trip, Torino is home to the National Museum of Cinema that not only recounts the story of cinema but also houses original props from movies such as “Star Wars” and “Alien,” Federico Fellini's famous black hat and red scarf, the original screenplay of the “Godfather,” and the shark used in “Jaws,” among many other things. ➤



Gabriella Mileti with the Voyage of Discovery students on a movie set at the National Cinema Museum.

But, apart from Torino, the region of Piemonte has a lot to offer on its own. We set out to Alba to visit the Ferrero factory where the students got a firsthand look at some of Italy's current contributions to the world. The Ferrero factory is much like Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory, meaning it's completely off limits to visitors — pictures and videos are prohibited and the Nutella recipe is a secret. But thanks to NIAF, we got the golden ticket. And, unlike Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory, we were able to taste all of it. As the chocolate was being made, we were given samples right off the conveyor belt. Every chocolate

lovers dream! What was most impressive is the fact that even after 70 years, Ferrero is still family-owned and family-operated, and it showed from every employee we came in contact with. We truly felt like we were in a family's home, not the factory of multi-billion dollar company.

The students left that day not only with a bag full of Ferrero goodies and smiles on their faces, but a behind-the-scenes experience at the third-largest chocolate producer and confectionery company in the world.

Continuing through Piemonte, with "Made in Italy" on our minds, we set out for Alessandria to visit the Borsa-



Dominic Muccio taking a selfie with a new friend

Left: Marisa Formica and Emanuela Randino with children from the Oratory of Don Bosco.

We walked up 131 steps to reach the Cupola of the Basilica of Superga and it was worth it to say the least!



lino hat factory. Dating back to 1857, the factory was completely different from Ferrero, but we still got the sense of what Italian artisanship really means. At Borsalino, most of the work is done by hand, however, some steps, like processing the wool, are done by machines that are over 100 years old. We witnessed the making of a fedora from start to finish and left in awe, to say the least. And, some of us left with some pricey souvenirs, too!

Last stop on our factory tour, we headed to Asti for the iconic, Italian brand Martini, formally known as Martini & Rossi. Though we didn't get to see the distillery in action, the Martini premises is home to one of largest wine museums in the world. The museum houses not only some of the

first wine amphorae dating to the Egyptians and Romans, but also tells the story of the origins of the Martini brand, which dates to 1863 and, today, is the world's fourth most powerful spirit brand. Once again, the students were able to bear witness Italy's modern contribution to the world.

Along with the company visits, we dug deep into the local culture. While in the famous "Langhe" area, wine country at its finest, a student used the Italian he learned from his 101 Italian class at college to learn some wine-making tips with a seventh-generation wine maker in the small town of Neive, in the province of Alba.

The most mindful day of our trip was by far our service day spent with the children of the Oratory of Don Bosco in Torino. There, each student came in contact with local children, teaching them American games and English words, but also learning from them. At the end of the day, the Italian children had to be pulled away from the VOD students. Some even went home in tears.

What's left from the trip are not only pictures and memories, but friendships that will hopefully last a lifetime. It's now up to the members of the "VOD 2016" class to continue their voyage of discovery and pass the torch onto the next generation as I anxiously wait to see what is in store for the 2017 class. ▲

Interested in applying for the 2017 Voyage of Discovery program? Look for announcements starting this November.

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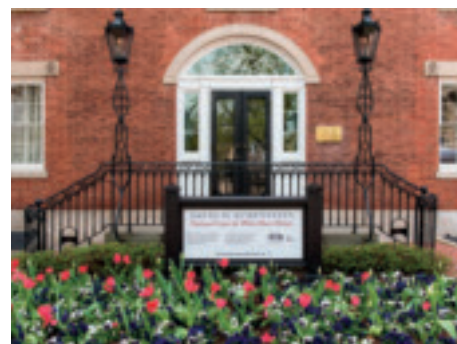
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Historic Ties Binding Italy and the United States

White House Historical Association Symposium at Decatur House

By Elissa Ruffino



Decatur House

Located across Pennsylvania Avenue from the White House, on the northwest side of Lafayette Square, is one of the oldest surviving homes in Washington, D.C., Decatur House. It is named for its first owner, Commodore Stephen Decatur Jr., hero of the Barbary Wars and the War of 1812, who built the historic house in 1818.

Over nearly two centuries, Decatur House has been home to many famous residents and has served as an entertainment and cultural address in the nation's capital. Since 2010, it has housed the David M. Rubenstein National Center for White House

History — the institute for White House research and education for the White House Historical Association (WHHA).

On March 2, the WHHA held an educational symposium at Decatur House, sponsored by and organized with the Embassy of Italy, the National Italian American Foundation (NIAF) and the Italian Cultural Institute. Titled “Italy in the White House: A Conversation on Historical Perspectives,” it was the first of a three-year series exploring historic international influence in the White House and in the lives of U.S. presidents. The day-long event showcased and celebrated Italy’s and the

United States’ cultural, political, philosophical, culinary and architectural connections, as well as the longstanding friendship between the two countries dating to the beginnings of this nation.

Among the symposium’s guests and participants were diplomats, academic experts, community leaders and students who gathered for lectures on topics ranging from Cicero’s ideal of the gentleman politician to Filippo Mazzei’s concept of equality that influenced Thomas Jefferson in establishing our nation’s founding principles.

“We are thrilled and honored that Italy was the first country featured at

All photos by The White House Historical Association

Above: Stewart D. McLaurin, Lloyd N. Hand, Ambassador Armando Varricchio, NIAF Board Member Anita Bevacqua McBride; NIAF President John M. Viola, and Catherine S. Fenton.



Armando Varricchio, Italy's ambassador to the United States; NIAF and WHHA Board Member Anita Bevacqua McBride, and NIAF President John M. Viola



NIAF IALC Member Anthony Tamburri with another guest



Anita Bevacqua McBride addresses the symposium

the prestigious series of international symposia created by the White House Historical Association,” said Anita Bevacqua McBride, a member of both the NIAF and the WHHA board of directors.

“We all know the impact Italy has had on American culture and many other sectors of our society.... Today, this symposium is teaching us so much more about the historical influence Italy has had on the White House and its occupants since our founding that has impacted us all. Italians and Italian Americans are justifiably proud of these contributions.”

As the symposium got underway, newly-appointed Italian Ambassador H. E. Armando Varricchio was just steps away at the White House presenting his credentials to President Barack Obama. The ambassador then quickly traveled across Lafayette Square to make his first public U.S. appearance at the symposium.

“I wish to sincerely thank the White House Historical Association, NIAF, all the scholars who are contributing to today’s event for transforming what was already a special day — the very day when I officially start my mission as Ambassador of Italy to the United States — into a truly unforgettable day,” he said. “The relationships between Italy and the United States are built on solid rock, as we share the same values and the same goal to

make the world a better place.”

Leading the morning session, keynote speaker Campbell Grey, associate professor of Classical Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, examined the long correspondence in the late 1700s between Benjamin Franklin and Italian philosopher and jurist Gaetano Filangieri. He chronicled the array of Italian items in the White House, including the Carrara-marble fireplace, the mantle in the Red Room, and paintings by Constantino Brumidi in the Palm Room.

And, in referring to that wonderful friendship between Jefferson and Mazzei, Grey spoke of how the Italian physician and champion of liberty helped Virginia acquire weapons during the American Revolution, inspire the maxim “all men are created equal” in the Declaration of Independence, and teach Jefferson about winemaking at Monticello. An afternoon panel of leading scholars continued the discussions.

As the sun shone brightly through the clear-roofed tent in Decatur House’s historic courtyard, WHHA President Stewart D. McLaurin welcomed everyone to the luncheon. He toasted the new Italian Ambassador before guests enjoyed lunch courses modeled after dishes served at historic state diners for visiting Italian dignitaries, including White House state dinners in 1964

for President Antonio Segni, in 1968 for Prime Minister Francesco Cossiga, and in 1976 for Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti.

Following the luncheon, McBride, who was chief of staff to First Lady Laura Bush, and Catherine S. Fenton, who was social secretary for First Lady Laura Bush and deputy social secretary for First Lady Nancy Reagan, joined Lloyd N. Hand, U.S. chief of protocol to President Lyndon B. Johnson, to discuss behind-the-scenes moments at the White House, including what goes awry during entertaining and ceremonial events.

Addressing the luncheon audience, NIAF President John M. Viola spoke of the 25 million Americans of Italian ancestry who self-identify with their heritage and are fiercely proud and devoted Americans. Also at the luncheon were NIAF General Counsel Arthur J. Furia; NIAF Vice Chair Patricia de Stacy Harrison; NIAF board members Robert V. Allegrini, Frank Giordano and Joseph D. Lonardo; and Italian American Leadership Council members Chris Berardini, Joe Cosentino, Maria D’Andrea-Yothers, Anthony Tamburri and Valentina Vezza.

At the closing reception, guests were serenaded with a musical selection, including “La Serenata” which was performed for President Ronald Reagan in 1981. ▲

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Finding Italy in Dallas

NIAF ON LOCATION searches for Italy's influences in America's cities and towns! Whether it's restaurants, festivals, markets or museums, NIAF members provide insider information and lead you to special places that make them feel a little more Italian in their own hometowns. This issue, NIAF Board Member Charles Turano finds Italy in Dallas, Texas.

What are the most Italian areas of Dallas?

Turano: In 1836, when Texas won its Independence from Mexico, Italian-born Texan Prospero Bernardi fought at the Battle of San Jacinto. That was only the beginning. Today, some 400,000 Italian Americans live in the Lone Star State. No identifiable Italian neighborhoods exist in Dallas, but small pockets of Italian culture are everywhere. From East Dallas to Greenville Avenue, and all the way up to far North Dallas, Italian culture, food and *famiglia* are celebrated with a Texas twist.

What is your favorite Italian restaurant?

Turano: Terrelli's on Lower Greenville has wonderful atmosphere. Canne Rosso in Deep Ellum has my favorite pizza. Taverna on Knox delivers the best risotto. My pals at Trattoria al Giardino in Frisco will make you laugh all evening. But if forced to select one Italian restaurant in Dallas, it would be Antonio Ristorante in Addison Circle. The menu is wonderful, the wine list is the best in Dallas, and owners Shawn and Stephanie Moore make you feel like family. Start with the asparagus *fritti* appetizer, then Chef Antonio's ravioli, and branzino that is so fresh it could jump off the plate. Move to the patio for a cigar and limoncello. Tell them Charlie sent you.

Are there any back-in-time authentic Italian neighborhood restaurants?

Turano: Lucia, in the Bishop Arts district, is the closest I have found to Rao's in New York. It's not as exclusive, but you will probably have to wait a couple months for a reservation. The

lamb loin with *farro verde* grits, eggplant and green garlic harissa would be on any prisoner's last-meal list.

For something more traditional, go to Adelmo's at Inwood Village. Besides wonderful pastas, the softshell crabs in-season are a must.

When you need a dose of Italian culture, where do you go?

Turano: Everyone is welcome at the Italian Club of Dallas. Luigi Mungoli, the first person to welcome our family to Dallas, is the patriarch. Friday evening *cena* draws a couple hundred people who eat, laugh and play cards.

But where you need to know someone, personally, I head over to American Landscape. Mario Bevilaqua and Joe Angeloni fire up the wood pizza oven, open a few bottles of homemade wine, and light the bocce courts. Usually cigars and cards are involved.

When cooking authentic Italian meals, where do you find the hard-to-find ingredients?

Turano: Go to Jimmy's Food Store in East Dallas where Paul and Mike DiCarlo continue a family tradition their grandfather and father started in 1946. And Marie makes the best meatballs in town. Backroom for wine tastings are every Saturday at 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

How about Italian fashion?

Turano: There is only one place to go — Lombardo Custom Apparel. Jay Lombardo is the best and has been providing true custom clothing for 25 years. Lombardo's clients include Tony Bennett, Tom Landry, Emmitt Smith, and every big-time business



Charles Turano Sr., Charles Turano and Jay Lombardo at Lombardo Custom Apparel in Dallas

and political icon you can imagine.

Every Thursday Night is "Patio Night" when Jay breaks out the wine and, if you are lucky, Charles Turano Sr. ("Mr. T"), my father, will light your cigar and share a bit of his abundant wisdom and wit. Charlie Turano III, my son, might be displaying his art.

What's the Most Italian Day of the Year?

Turano: Vincenzo Arcobelli and the Committee of Italians Living Abroad have teamed up with Lucian LaBarba and Jay Lombardo to produce a Columbus Day Parade at the Continental Avenue Pedestrian Bridge in downtown Dallas.

Who has the best morning espresso?

Turano: You just have to make sure that Dominic Ricciardi is working at Lombardo Custom Apparel. The complimentary espresso takes about 10 minutes to prepare, but there's no rushing perfection...or Dominic.

Are there any monuments to the Italian American culture in Dallas?

Turano: Nothing in stone, here the monuments to the Italian American culture are made of flesh and blood, and the knowing smiles shared in a community where we enjoy oneness with each other. Texans are notoriously proud of their heritage. The Italian Americans I know here are even more proud to be the Italian Americans who live in Texas. ▲

By Elissa Abatemarco Ruffino

BOTTEGA

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Romancing the Stone

The designer Ermanno Scervino grew up between the mountains of Cortina and Florence and founded the company in 2000 in Florence to create a brand synonymous with Italy's quality and international style. The Ermanno Scervino belt in red or black features precious jewels with a thin golden buckle. The soft bull-leather belt can be tied in a bow or knotted around the waist. Price: \$870. www.ermannoscervino.it



Swayed by Suede

For men, the Italian brand Ermanno Scervino has designed signature high-top suede sneakers made of genuine cowhide. Available in green and maroon. Price: \$885. www.ermannoscervino.it



Worldwide Organizing

Keep the world at your fingertips with a set of Cavallini World Map File Folders made from 19th century charts and vintage world map images. For more than 25 years, Cavallini has produced the highest quality gift and stationary products inspired by the culture and art of Italy (its founder spent a year in Perugia before importing art calendars from Italy). Cavallini Papers & Co. products can be found in museum shops and bookstores. Price: \$15.95 for a set of 12 folders. www.cavallini.com



In the Bag

Save My Bag was created as a classic and iconic bag by Stefani and Valentina Agazzi. They launched the brand in 2013 in Bergamo, Italy. Made out of poly-lycra fabric, the bags are rain proof, lightweight, washable and available in more than 30 colors! Handbag: \$109; Hippie clutch with fringe: \$112. www.savemybag.it



Italy in a Cup

With its full body, aroma and velvety cream, Tonino Lamborghini espresso is known by many as the "Taste of Italy." Since 1981, Lamborghini has also created a selection of Italian beverages to further spread the Italian culinary tradition worldwide. The espresso-blended coffee beans are offered in platinum, red and black. Featured is the platinum blend, Horeca, with its Arabica Santos beans from Brazil. Price: \$38. for 1kg. www.lamborghini-lounge.com



Dazzling Lobes

The Italian jeweler Roberto Coin continues to create jewelry as a work of art with his signature Tiny Treasures collection. The works are crafted in simple and clean shapes. The art deco earrings with lapis and tsavorite are set in 18 kt gold. Price: \$7,900. www.robertocoin.com



Mimicking Marble

Design talents Maurizio Galante and Tal Lancman bring together antiquity and modernity with the Louis XV Goes to Sparta chair. The gorgeous silk finish is designed from digital photographic prints of Carrara marble and available in two finishes: Grande Antico and Porta Santa. Price: \$6,830. www.baleri-italia.com



Know of a wonderful new product or design made in Italy or of interest to Italian Americans? Contact don@niaf.org



Turning Back the Clock

Since 2003, Bertucci performance watches have been designed with Italian innovative and enduring style, including retro and classic designs that are timeless. They are made from solid titanium for durability. The watch hands and markers are treated with Swiss super luminous material to intensify its glow for hours without depleting the battery. It also has a scratch-resistant mineral glass crystal. Prices: \$120-\$170. www.bertucciwatches.com

Not Blinded by the Light

The luxury Italian fashion house Max Mara teamed with Brooklyn-based artist Maya Hayuk for its latest sunglasses collaboration. The cat-eye sunglasses with a tiny gilded prism applied at the temples are made of shiny acetate and features a pattern called Optiprism. Price: \$323.

www.MaxMara.com



Cutting-Edge Design

In the 1920s, Antonio Calligaris started his small artisanal business producing chairs using wood from the surrounding mountains and straw from the Friulian lagoon. Fast forward to the 1980s, the third generation of the family takes over, and Alessandro Calligaris expands Calligaris' furnishings to include tables, beds, sofas and decorative accessories in metal, plastic, leather and glass. The Orbital extending elliptical dining room table with the tempered glass top is called by many "The Ferrari of Tables." Price: \$6,658.00. www.calligaris.us

Full Tank

Old world purveyors of olive oil have been sampling and bottling from bulk containers for centuries. La Nuova Sansone, founded in 1991 and created by Benito Giannelli, produces air-tight containers made of stainless steel for the conservation of foods. The popular model, Sansone Europa Stainless Steel Fusti, gets its name from the Italian word "the tank" (*il fustino*). The 10-liter fusti with spigot is rustproof and provides storage and dispensary for balsamic vinegars, wine, water and more! It's also certified by the National Sanitary Foundation. Perfect for the cook who has everything! Price: \$120. www.ilfustino.com



La Dolce Vita

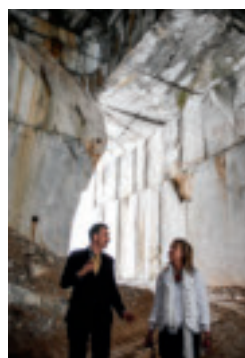
Montegrappa's popular Icons Collection of writing instruments pays tribute to the legendary actress Sophia Loren. The limited-edition line of 209 fine pens celebrates the actress' birthday on September 20. The Sophia Loren Collection features black or red resin pens accented with silver, or an 18K-rose gold fountain or roller ball pen with precious gems. Price: \$1,100 to \$13,000. www.montegrappa.com





Carrara Rocks

Like many Italian immigrants who came to America, Carol Faenzi's great grandfather was a stonecarver. Born in Carrara, Italy, he settled in Indiana to put his gothic tracery carving talent to work in limestone, the stone that graces countless American landmarks.



Faenzi traveled to Carrara to write a book about her ancestor during a career sabbatical. The result, "The Stonecutter's Aria" (2005), is based on true stories and told in the first-person voices of her family. Their bravery inspired Faenzi to leave her corporate career and embark on a life-changing journey.

Today, she leads small groups into those famous marble quarries where her ancestors worked.

They're the same locations where the Romans began mining 2,000 years ago; where Michelangelo lived and labored to find perfect statuary marble for his masterpieces; where John Singer Sargent painted the daily lives of the quarrymen; and where Charles Dickens wrote about beauty and brutality of life in the quarries.

Faenzi explains what people discovered about themselves: "Marble is made of calcite. It's in our bones. It's a visceral experience to enter the cathedral of marble. People admire the works of Michelangelo, Bernini, Canova, but going to Carrara quarries is the pilgrimage profoundly changing the way people see sculpture."

— Elissa Ruffino

Forever Young

Valter Longo moved to the United States to study music and ended up becoming a leading researcher in the study of aging and longevity.

At 16, he left Genoa and enrolled in the jazz program at the University of North Texas, but later switched to biochemistry and started his research on aging. "I thought that aging was the greatest topic to study since it was a great scientific challenge as well as a discipline which could revolutionize medicine," he says.

Longo is now a professor of biological sciences and gerontology at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, where he directs the USC Longevity Institute. He is especially known for devising the "Fast Mimicking Diet" — five days each month of limited caloric intake following strict nutritional guidelines. The diet has proven beneficial to those suffering from cancer, Alzheimer's disease and diabetes, and to everybody in general because it reprograms the body.



"Fasting rejuvenates the immune system by first killing white blood cells and then turning on stem cells to generate new and more functional immune cells," he explains.

Longo has kept strong ties with Italy, where he still lives part of the year working at the IFOM Institute of Molecular Oncology in Milan. And he has not forgotten his first love — music. In his free time, he plays the guitar and even records tunes in a studio in Dallas.

— Silvia Donati

Ambassador's Paesani department profiles in short form the lives of Italian Americans, Italians and others doing extraordinary things of interest to Italian Americans. Know someone who should be in Paesani? Send suggestions to paesani@niaf.org.

NIAF's



Raises Bottom Lines

Delivering keynote remarks on the state of financial education in Italy this past April, Annamaria Lusardi gave Il Salone del Risparmio conference participants in Milan advice they could take to the bank: “We won’t thrive if we’re not financially literate.”

The founder and director of the Global Financial Literacy Excellence Center (GFLEC) at the George Washington University School of Business, in Washington, D.C., Lusardi is a financial literacy advocate. Financial literacy means understanding how to manage money. Most people don’t.



More than 92 million Americans recently gave themselves a grade of C, D or F on their knowledge of personal finance. Lusardi knows this is a worldwide problem, similarly affecting such nations as Italy, Germany, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Japan. A November 2015 GFLEC survey found American adults ranked 14th among their counterparts in 148 countries in basic personal financial knowledge.

When Lusardi’s interest in financial literacy began, the subject wasn’t considered important among mainstream economists. “It was an irrelevant topic,” says Lusardi, who earned a bachelor’s degree in her native Italy, at Bocconi University, in Milan, studying under Mario Monti (later Italy’s prime minister), and a doctorate at Princeton, studying under Nobel Prize-winning economist Angus Deaton.

Lusardi says it’s time to stop passing the buck in raising financial IQs: “We must all be ambassadors for financial literacy.”

— Douglas Gladstone

Digs Figs

A fig’s sweetness will tempt your sweet tooth. The sugary fruit from the ficus tree has a legacy extending thousands of years through different countries and cultures. It’s even referenced in literature — from the Bible to Roman mythology. Richard DeBenedetto possesses his own legacy of experience beginning at age 7, when he started working in the family business, DeBenedetto Orchards.

In 1934, brothers Mauro and John DeBenedetto, from Bisceglie, Italy, bought their first orchard in the Golden State’s San Joaquin Valley. Mauro’s youngest son, Richard, at age 32, left the chemical industry and rejoined the family’s orchard business in 1974.

“A hard-working approach to life,” says DeBenedetto, recalling his father’s advice about cultivating the soil to earn a living. In 1984, he started his own company, DeBenedetto Agricultural Services, and currently owns and manages 4,500 acres of figs, almonds and walnuts, in Madera County, Calif.



Today, DeBenedetto Orchards is one of the largest independent fresh fig growers, packers and shippers in the United States. DeBenedetto’s 31-year-old son, Christopher, the future owner of the company, ensures that his family’s roots are firmly planted with ficus trees — using the wisdom, ethics and a family lineage that his father handed down to him. And DeBenedetto will always cherish his heritage: “Italians are a fun loving, hardworking people.” Website: <http://freshfigs.com>

— Robert Bartus Jr.

Persons of Interest



Thought for Food

When Minnesota resident Lynne Rossetto Kasper sets a table, everyone is invited. In 1993, her cookbook, “The Splendid Table: Recipes from Emilia-Romagna, the Heartland of Northern Italian Food,” received the James Beard Foundation and Julia Child-IACP Cookbook of the Year awards.

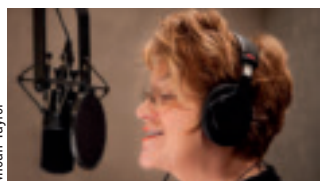
In 1994, producer Sally Swift of Minnesota Public Radio had an idea for a radio food show with Rossetto Kasper as the host — “The Splendid Table.” Produced by American Public Media, the show currently airs on 400 public radio stations where listeners can tune in to satisfy their cuisine curiosity.

Broadcast nationally from St. Paul, Minn., since 1995, the award-winning radio show is a medley of culinary conversations that covers more than just recipes. Rossetto Kasper’s guests have ranged from chefs Mario Batali, Anthony Bourdain and the late Julia Child to food historians and scientists. Underlying the programming is ongoing discussion on how all kinds of food connects us all — cultures, history and traditions.

In 1983, over a bowl of homemade tortellini in capon broth at an agriturismo in Emilia-Romagna, she first realized how “deeply Italian” she was. “The tastes seemed to resonate with all of my heritage,” Rossetto Kasper says.

With lineage from Venice and Tuscany, the inquisitive self-taught cook acquired her culinary skills from reading, asking questions, working with home cooks, chefs, artisans and other “wonderful people who guided me,” she says. And she’ll always cherish her culinary *compagno*, her well-used stove she named “Babe.”

Website: <http://www.splendidtable.org>
— Robert Bartus Jr.



Micah Taylor

Buckle Up

“I knew I was destined to do something big...something that could impact and improve the life of the entire planet,” says Bibop G. Gresta. As the COO of Hyperloop Transportation Technologies, he coordinates a team of more than 500 professionals worldwide building the first Hyperloop, a high-speed transportation system devised to move people and goods in capsule cars at a speed of up to 760 mph – almost the speed of sound.

It could revolutionize the way people live and work, even entire industries, Gresta says, citing faster delivery of life-saving organs, for example. And, if this was not promising enough, the Hyperloop is committed to being cheap, safe and entirely sustainable thanks to using renewable energy sources.

Gresta is not new to revolutionizing projects: a native of Terni in Umbria, he was a key figure in the early development of the digital market and Internet technologies in Italy. At 15, he was the head software developer at a multinational in Italy. In his mid-twenties, he founded Bibop S.p.A., a content distribution and media production company that he later sold for millions, “writing a page in the history of the Italian New Economy.”

Today, Gresta lives in Los Angeles, “a place where they still believe in dreams.” The Hyperloop’s first five-mile test track is scheduled to be built in late 2016 in Quay Valley, Calif.

Keep up with the Hyperloop project at www.hyperlooptransp.com.

— Silvia Donati



Marty Soth

NIAF's Persons of Interest

Integra limits uncertainty for patients

We Make a Difference in Patients' Lives

Integra LifeSciences is proud to support the National Italian American Foundation and its commitment to making a meaningful difference in people's lives.

Integra is a leading medical technology company providing solutions for a broad number of orthopedic, tissue and surgical specialties, helping save and sustain lives around the world. Integra employs approximately 3,400 people globally, who are dedicated to limiting uncertainty for caregivers, enabling them to concentrate on providing the best patient care.

More information is available at integralife.com

Mary Ann Esposito with Patti Bongiovanni, whose castle yard in Rocca Ciglie, near Mondovì in the Piemonte, and her kitchen, served as the set location for filming six PBS Ciao Italia episodes. In the foreground, a plate of Peppers Castellano Style, a classic Piemonte dish made from red *quadrato* peppers.

A TASTE OF Piemonte

Paul Lally

By Mary Ann Esposito



Mary Ann Esposito is the host of the PBS's Ciao Italia, television's longest-running cooking show. For these recipes, cooking demonstrations, and more, see Mary Ann Esposito's latest cookbook "Ciao Italia Family Classics," and visit her Ciao Italia website at www.ciaoitalia.com and her Facebook page at [maryannesposito.com](https://www.facebook.com/maryannesposito.com)

Sitting in the glassed-in breakfast room of the serene Hotel Villa Beccaris in Monforte d'Alba, in the northwest region of Italy known as Piemonte, I slowly sip my cappuccino as I watch the fog (*nebbia*) take a gingerly roll over the not-too distant Alps. For me, this region is like heaven on Earth, offering stunning landscapes, loads of history, fabulous food and wine, and a work ethic that is hard to beat.

Translated, Piemonte, meaning "foot of the mountain," is not that well-known to travelers, but its importance as a wine and food center cannot be overestimated. Home to the Slow Food movement, started in nearby Bra, in 1986 by Carlo Petrini, Piemonte is Italy's definitive "No" to mass-produced fast food.

The Slow Food movement's focus is on local, naturally grown foods produced in a clean environment, with respect for the environment, treatment of animals, and people's health. Slow Food promotes mindfulness of the food we eat and distains fast food and fast living.

Some of the classic foods of Piemonte are legendary stars of this movement, beginning with the white truffles of Alba, where

an auction is held every fall and is attended by serious aficionados of the tuber who are willing to pay a king's ransom for the knotty looking nuggets.

Hazelnut forests dot the countryside and have made world famous the sweet confection known as *giandua*, a combination of chocolate and hazelnuts, presented in so many forms from candy to desserts to Nutella — the rich hazelnut and chocolate spread loved by kids of all ages.

An abundance of locally produced cheeses, such as *castelmagno*, *robiola*, *grana padano*, *gorgonzola* and *fontina*, are well-known table cheeses, many used for cooking. Fontina is the foundation for *fonduta*, a creamy cheese-and-milk sauce for used for dipping raw vegetables or to dress pasta.

And who has not munched on Piemonte's signature *grissini*, those pencil thin crunchy breadsticks found on every restaurant table?

In the southwest province of Cuneo, peppers rule. And there are many types, including the most famous *quadrato*, which, as its name implies, is a large square pepper with thick and crunchy flesh. The *quadrato* is

enjoyed both raw and cooked.

Not to be missed are the famous *agnolotti del plin* (tiny ravioli with a flavorful veal-and-pork filling), and *tajarin* (silky strands of pasta similar to fettucine). Piemonte cooks believe in making their pasta with up to 40 egg yolks in the dough!

Piemonte is one of the premier wine regions of Italy. The scenic slopes of its Langhe, Roero and Monferrato wine-growing areas are UNESCO world-heritage sites that produce such classics as Barolo, known as the king of wine, as well as Barbaresco and Barbera d'Asti. Some other favorites are Moscato d'Asti, Arnese, Dolcetto, Nebbiolo and Gavi.

Torino, the region's capital, referred to as "the Paris of Italy" for its outstanding palazzi, is often overlooked by tourists, but if you go, you must visit the fabulous Egyptian museum and then have a *bicerin* — a Piemontese dialect word for *bicchieri*, which mean "small glass." But it's what's in the glass that is intriguing. Go to any *caffe* in this elegant city for this most-famous, three-layered drink mixture composed of espresso, rich hot chocolate and frothy hot milk. The original recipe for making a *bicerin* is top secret. It was created in the 18th century at the Caffè Confetteria Al Bicerin, located in the Quadrilatero Romano area of the old town.

But don't think of this as just three common ingredients mixed together. Making a *bicerin* is an art form because each ingredient must be in the proper proportion and each must be layered into the glass so that when served hot, each layer is clearly visible. Most coffee houses in Torino will tell you that the "recipe" for *bicerin* is to use ¼ cup espresso, ¼ cup hot chocolate and ¼ cup foamed milk. Espresso goes in the glass first, followed by the hot chocolate, and then the frothy milk. This beloved drink is meant to be savored slowly while seated in a *caffe*.

Bicerin is often accompanied by classic Piemontese confections such as hazelnut biscotti, *gianduaia*, and *savoirdardi* (ladyfingers), named for the ruling House of Savoy.

If you're in Torino, you owe it to yourself to have a *bicerin*. Each time



Crocchette di Cuneo'

I visit Piemonte, I am drawn further and further into its enchantments that for me is the new dolce vita.

Crocchette di Cuneo' *Meat Croquettes from Cuneo'*

Many Piemonte recipes, like these meat croquettes, have a French connection to the ruling House of Savoy, that ruled it from the late 19th- to-the-mid-20th century.

Serves 4

Ingredients

1 pound ground veal
1 apple (Pipin or Cortland) peeled and minced or grated
1 egg
Flour
¼ teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons olive oil
½ cup red wine

Directions

- In a bowl, combine the veal, apple, egg and salt. With wet hands, form elongated meatballs. Coat each one in flour and set aside.
- Heat the olive oil in a large sauté pan and brown the croquettes evenly, then add the wine. Cover the pan and cook over low heat for 20 minutes. Serve hot

Peppers Castellano Style

From Costigliole d'Asti in Piemonte comes this classic dish made with *quadrato* — square sweet red peppers.

Serves 6

Ingredients

6 large sweet red peppers, washed and dried
12 thin slices prosciutto di San Daniele
12 slices Il Valcasotto a latte crudo*
Extra virgin olive oil

Directions

- Preheat the oven to 350°F.
- Place the peppers on an oiled baking sheet; bake or broil them until blackened. Cool, then skin and cut each pepper in half. Remove all seeds from the inside of the peppers.
- Arrange half of them on an oiled baking sheet and place two slices of prosciutto and two slices of cheese on each one. Consider using Fontina or Swiss cheese if you cannot find Il Valcasotto a latte crudo.
- Top with the second half of the peppers.
- Brush the peppers with olive oil and bake them about 10 minutes or until the cheese has melted.
- Serve hot or warm with good bread. Pan Bione is the typical bread of Piemonte. ➤

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Tajarin

Tajarin (Tie ya REEN) is Piemonte dialect for *tagliolini*, a narrow ($\frac{1}{8}$ inch) strand of pasta, the dough for which is egg-yolk rich; some recipes call for 40 egg yolks to 2 kilos of flour! In researching *tajarin*, I found references for many, many recipes, all with certain modifications and came to the conclusion that this *pasta fatta in casa* (homemade pasta), like so many other pastas made at home at one time, was made at the discretion of the cook and with what was on hand. Some used durum flour (a finer grind of semolina); some used all-purpose flour; and some used a combination of the two.

There are several kinds of sauce for *tajarin*, depending on local customs and of course how thin or thick the noodles are. The simplest sauce is a reflection of the natural ingredients of the region. Unsalted butter with freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano cheese is all this pasta requires, and if money is no object, and they are in season, thin shavings of white truffle over the top would signal a culinary triumph.

However there are less expensive sauces that are also popular, including hearty game sauces like wild boar or rabbit, and herb and wild mushroom sauces.



Tajarin noodles



Piemonte is known for its abundance of locally produced cheeses, meat specialties, and the thin crunchy breadsticks called *grissini*.

Ciao Italia

Tajarin Dough

Serves 6

Ingredients

2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
4 large egg yolks
1 large whole egg
Pinch salt
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

Directions

- In a food processor, combine the yolks, whole egg, salt and olive oil, and process to combine. Begin adding the flour a cup at a time until a dough begins to form and leaves the sides of the bowl. If still too sticky, add additional flour in small amounts until a soft and non-sticky ball of dough forms.
- Turn out onto a floured surface and knead for several minutes, or until the dough is smooth.
- Place it on a floured surface and invert a bowl over the top. Let the dough rest to relax the gluten for about 30 minutes.
- Cut dough into quarters and flatten each piece on a lightly floured surface with a rolling pin, which in Italy are long and thin.
- Roll each flattened piece thorough the rollers of a pasta machine until it is the thickness of a sheet of copy paper. You should be able to see your hand behind each sheet. Note: Different makes of pasta machines have different number designations as to thinness. Generally going from 1 to 7 or 8 thins the dough from the lowest (thickest setting) to the highest (thinnest setting).
- Do not attempt to cut the sheet of dough if it is too damp, otherwise the noodles will clump together; they should

remain separate as they pass through the cutter. Use either the fettucine or the vermicelli cut for this since *tajarin* are often seen as the thickness of either one, but the vermicelli cut is the more historically accurate.

- Let the noodles dry on either lightly floured cloths or hang them over wooden dowel rods.
- To cut the sheets of dough by hand, flour each sheet lightly to prevent the dough from sticking when rolled and cut. Roll each sheet up into a loose cylinder and hand cut across each on at $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch intervals. Shake out the pieces and let dry as above.
- When ready to cook, bring 4 quarts of water to a rolling boil in a pasta pot and add a generous tablespoon of salt. Add the *tajarin* and cook until al dente, which in the case of fresh pasta is just about 3 minutes. Scoop out $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of pasta water and save it to use in smoothing out the sauce.

Butter Sauce

Ingredients

1 stick unsalted butter
1 cup grated Parmigiano Reggiano cheese
Salt to taste
Shaved white truffle (optional)

Directions

- Melt butter in a sauté pan large enough to accommodate the cooked pasta; stir in the water and combine well.
- Drain the pasta and add it to the sauté pan; mix ingredients well, then toss with cheese. Serve hot.
- With or without the truffle, it is delicious! ▲

ITALY's

f o r g o t t e n

WINES

By
Don Oldenburg

How One Visionary is Reviving Northern Piemonte's Abandoned Vineyards

Terroir and tradition is where this vineyard story begins. In Italy's alto Piemonte, in the craggy foothills of the ice-capped 15,203-foot Monte Rosa and the Alpine horizon, the soil and climate leave their signatures on everything. And, like everywhere else in Italy, tradition has its say about what endures.

That's particularly true of this northern region's once acclaimed, then decades-ago lost, and now re-emerging world-class wines. Some critics have called this one of the few secret "fertile hunting grounds" in the world of wine today.

As deep as you can dig, the vine-growing earth in these steep hill-sides, originally terraced by ancient Romans, consists of porphyritic volcanic rock. The gravelly soil is unique in Italy, the last remains from one of Europe's prehistoric super volcanos. The stony pieces seem better suited for skipping across nearby Lake Orta than making fine wine.

But one of Italy's most important and most compelling grapes, Piemonte's noble Nebbiolo, and a few other indigenous varieties, thrive here —



Don Oldenburg

sheltered from winter winds by the mountains to the north, basked in the sun's southern exposure.

"You can feel it in all of our wines, they are so mineral savory. Salty, in a way. The terroir," says Christoph Künzli, as he swirls one of his highly aromatic, structured-to-last Boca vintages before sniffing over the glass, then tasting, then pleased.

"Good wine is easy to drink, it's in harmony, has acidity, good fruit and length, not only concentration," explains the burly, conversant winemaker, looking every bit the part of an artisan who can lose himself mindfully

Künzli ripens his wines in big, traditional, Slavonian oak barrels (2,000-3,000 liters), not the smaller 225-liter "barrique" barrels.



ter-roir [ter wär/] — The characteristic taste and flavor imparted to a wine by its natural environment, including the soil, topography and climate.

Don Oldenburg



A storm coming in from the Alps toward Le Piane's old vineyards

traipsing these tranquil yet rugged fields, or pass hours tinkering amid the giant oak barrels in his cool wine cellar.

During a recent private tasting at the Le Piane winery in Boca, about 50 miles northwest of Milano, Künzli's passion for his wines and these hard-scape Italian vineyards is as robust as the wines themselves. He can talk endlessly about them. And you will hang on every word.

Künzli is less forward about his role as a prime mover in restoring the ancestral wine-making territory of the alto Piemonte. You see, in the 19th century, the red wines here were considered superior to Piemonte's kindred Nebbiolo-based Barolos and Barbarescos produced in the Langhe, 100 miles to the south — top-flight wines that are, today, rightfully praised and definitely pricey.

But alto Piemonte suffered



Künzli inspects the growth of the green grapes in July.



Le Piane winery's sales and tasting headquarters in Boca

vineyard catastrophes. Like most of Italy and Europe, in the late 1800s and early 1900s, these vines were devastated by phylloxera — the insect scourge introduced from America, by way of France, that required decades of recovery. Then, two World Wars decimated those rebuilt vineyards. The '20s, economic woes led many Italians from this area to emigrate to Argentina and elsewhere in Europe. In the '50s, industrialization took a decisive toll as Italian workers, returning from the war, left the vineyards for the more financially promising factory jobs in nearby Biella and Milano. By the '70s and '80s, 40 percent of the factory work production in the Boca region was busy making high-quality bathroom faucets.

After decades of neglect, by the 1990s, northern Piemonte's once extensive and thriving vineyards were largely overgrown with forestry and shrub — to where you could not recognize that vineyards had ever existed. In much of this area, that's still true. Ancient, terraced, wine-producing lands disappeared, going from more than 40,000 hectares (99,000 acres) in the 1930s to only 10 hectares (about 250 acres) in the mid-1990s. Wine production here had practically come to a standstill. ➤



Christoph Künzli swirls one of his “Boca” vintages at the Winery’s headquarters at Piazza Matteotti in Boca.

Courtesy of Le Piane winery



Antonio Cerri and his wife, Angela.



Courtesy of Le Piane winery

At 450–470 meters above sea level, Le Piane’s partly terraced Traversagna vineyard, near the town of Prato Sesia, to Boca’s southwest, began construction in 2001, planting 6,000 primarily old vines.

Enter Christoph Künzli. Then, a 35-year old Swiss importer of Italian wines, based in Davos, across the Alps, he had worked and studied wine most of his life, spending years previously in Tuscany’s vineyards. “My passion became wine,” he smiles at the memory. “I was in Chianti too long.”

In the late ’80s, notable Tuscan winemaker Paulo de Marchi, from Isola e Olena, himself a northern Piemonte native, encouraged Künzli to take a look beyond the Boca’s forgotten vineyards and consider the potential. Künzli fell in love with the area. Teaming with Austrian enologist Alexander Trolf, the vigneron Künzli met one of Boca’s last holdout winemakers, Antonio Cerri.

Then in his late 70s, Cerri was convinced the area’s wines would go to the grave with him. Still farming his little half-hectare plot himself, he insisted on making wine the traditional artisanal way — by touch, by taste, by smell, by intuition, all his senses, foregoing modern wine-making technology and analytics. He marketed his old-style wines only locally.

For several years, Cerri resisted Künzli’s offers to buy his countryside winery and vineyard. But, he came to trust Künzli’s commitment to carry on his traditional techniques and wine-making legacy in Boca. Eventually suffering serious health issues, Cerri sold his small vineyard and his entire wine-cellar inventory to Künzli in 1995. Cerri died two years later.

Tragedy struck again as the Le Piane project was just getting off the ground. In 1998, Trolf died in a car accident, never to see his vision for Boca’s wines come to fruition. In the years since, Künzli and his international investors have, step-by-step, acquired small overgrown plots in jigsaw fashion to enlarge Cerri’s original half-hectare vineyard to create what today is Le Piane’s total nine hectares (22 acres) spread across five wine-producing properties.

Le Piane’s “Old Maggiorine” vineyard, at 440 to 470 meters above sea level, consists of more than 10 small plots of old vines grown in Cerri’s traditional Maggiorina trellising system, where three vines grow upwards in the shape of a goblet. “It’s like a muse-

um, 100 years old, the old way...,” says Künzli, walking through the fields.

His other vineyards — the Valvecchi, Mottosergo and Le Piane, some so steep that footing is treacherous — use the more standard Guyot system for training vines. The Traversagna vineyard features a plot planted originally by Cerri in 1973, with additional plantings ever since.

Künzli primarily grows “elegant, perfumed” Nebbiolo, the spicy Vespolina, and the fruity, deeply-colored Croatina grapes, along with much smaller percentages of Uva Rara, Malvasia Boca and others. He currently makes four types of wine, all cut by hand from the vines, all fermented naturally, all pressed manually with sticks, all made with sensory contact, smell, taste, feel, from the vine to the bottle — much like Cerri made his wines.

The centerpiece Boca vintages are complex, elegant reds (compared often to Burgundy) that Künzli matures for four years in giant Slovenian oak barrels, then another year in the bottle. The winery’s highly-concentrated, velvety Piane is 90 percent Croatina and ages two years in the giant oak barrels. The lighter and crisp “field mix” Maggiorina are made with 40 percent each of Croatina and Nebbiolo grapes, plus 10 other varieties, and aged in stainless steel tanks for a year. And, what Künzli calls his “normal wine of the region,” his younger, fruitier and spicier Mimmo, blends Nebbiolo, Croatina and Vespolina, and is aged for two years in the big barrels. Mimmo is dedicated to one of Künzli’s earliest old-school vineyard confidantes, the late Mimmo Staropoli.

Le Piane’s wines have gained international and critical acclaim, with some vintages winning Tre Bicchieri Awards from Gambero Rosso, Italy’s leading ratings guide, placing 23rd in “Italy’s Top 50 Wines.” They have also attracted the attention of leading U.S. wine critic Robert Parker, who awarded the 2007 Boca vintage 93 points and the 2008 vintage 96 points.

Subsequently, other high-quality winemakers are rediscovering alto Piemonte’s abandoned vineyards.



Courtesy of Le Pianes Winery



Far left: Le Pianes's sales manager for Italy, Giampi Renolfi, with the winery's four labels

Left: Much of the Le Pianes vineyard, at 420-460 meters above sea level, was planted in 1998-1999 with 88 percent Nebbiolo grapes and 11 percent Vespolina. Its original plot was planted by Antonio Cerri in 1920, and restored in 2001.

In 1999, Paolo De Marchi, who first pointed Künzli here, resurrected, with his son Luca, his family's Proprietà Sperino winery in Lessona. About the same time, Tiziano Mazzoni began buying clay-plateau hectares for his Ghemme appellation wines. Young winemaker Cristiano Garella has made a name for himself here and now consults several small producers. And some family wineries, such as Antoniolo, Travaglini and Vallana, in the Gattarina appellation, never really left but are benefitting from the area's wine renaissance.

Matt Tornabene, founder of Manhattan Wine Company, in New York City, says the wines of alto Piemonte are definitely on his radar. "I like traditional wine making so I'm scouring the Earth where I can find unique wines from unique places," he says. "And I love wines that speak to a place."

He doesn't agree with the notion that northern Piemonte wines are a lesser-priced alternative to Barolo. "The difference is the terroir," says Tornabene. "They are two different expressions of Nebbiolo in equal and compelling ways."

Künzli acknowledges the oddity of coming from Switzerland and leading the recovery of the vineyards of northern Piemonte. Locals typically refer to him as "The Swiss," he says smiling, admitting having mixed feelings about it.

"Everybody calls Christoph 'The Swiss.' It is a good thing. Because he

is Swiss," says Alessandro Francoli, whose 36-hectare vineyards in nearby Ghemme have been producing grappa and wines more than a decade. "He was the one" who brought back the vineyards in Boca.

Back at Le Pianes's tasting room, Künzli has poured his 2007 Boca, which is close to its peak 10 years of maturing. "It's a great vintage, very bold, powerful," he says. "It needed a lot of time to open up. There is sweetness...more blackberry, tobacco, and little bit of balsamic nose and Mediterranean herbs...Complex in the nose and in the mouth."

Asked how it compares to Antonio Cerri's wines, he says "They are very similar, because I make them the same way. Maybe mine are a bit more clean...."

He disappears and returns with an older grimy bottle, with no Le Pianes label. It's Cerri's final wine, from 1991, which Künzli bottled. "You see how it is mineral, fruit and...very, very soft," he says, pouring tastes.

He brings out an even older bottle, another Cerri wine, "even more round," he says, with "aspects of roses and fruit...spicy and salty....This is 1970. It's 46 years old."

When he first visited Boca, he drank this vintage, he says. "And I thought, that's amazing wine. This is what I have to do." ▲

For more information on the Le Pianes winery, visit www.bocapianes.com



The incredibly poor volcanic porphyritic rock soil from Le Pianes vineyards



Don Oldenburg

In the heart of Boca, a sculpted old-fashioned wine press as tribute to the winemaking history and tradition of the area



Farm to Farm Table

Piemonte's Rustic Agriturismo La Capuccina

Gianluca Zanetta's wine room where he specializes in the wines of the northern Piemonte



Arriving around 2:50 p.m. after a fine overnight Alitalia flight from New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport to Milano's Malpensa, and driving 45 minutes to Cureggio, we figured lunch was ancient history — this being the north of Italy.

But no sooner had we checked in and dropped our bags in our spacious rustic-chic room at the charming Agriturismo La Capuccina than Raffaella offered to pull together “a little salad.” Minutes later, we noticed her in the nearby gardens cutting fresh organic vegetables. Her little salad was the freshest-possible, nicely plated greens with wide carrot ribbons and halved grape tomatoes. Oh, and a cutting board of homemade cheeses, sausages and breads; assorted olives, fresh fig slices, and marinated peppers. A lovely welcome!

As we dined outdoors, viewing the bucolic surroundings, the plum and fig orchard behind us, dozens of white Sahneen dairy goats fenced in across the way, Gianluca introduced himself. He brought along a recently bottled Vespolina wine he made of the local spicy grape, apologizing that it was actually too young to drink, but

Gianluca Zanetta and his wife Raffaella Fortina Own Agriturismo La Capuccina, this remarkable “farm-stay,” located close to the Novara-area



Carolijn Braeken and Willem Liedenbaum from Amsterdam enjoying lunch outside at Agriturismo La Capuccina near Cureggio.

Photos by Don Oldenburg

vineyards and easy day-tripping to Lake Orta and Lake Maggiore. Plenty to do. But some guests, some days, do nothing but relax at the outdoor pool, take long and huge breakfasts at the terrace dining area, maybe slip into Cureggio or nearby Borgomanero for lunch, and later enjoy a delectable gourmet dinner in La Capuccina's elegant, artsy, stone-walled restaurant.

La Capuccina's main building dates to the 15th century and served as a resort for Capuchin friars. In the 1800s, Gianluca's great-grandfather turned it into a farm where his grandfather and mother were born. By the mid-1900s, some family members emigrated to the United States and others moved to nearby towns, leaving the farm deserted.

So, in 2001, when Gianluca and Raffaella decided to escape managerial careers in the textile industry and join Italy's Slow Food Movement by creating an organic, all-natural agriturismo, they restored the farm. Two years later, they were in business.

Since then, La Capuccina's seven double rooms and one suite (with

sauna) has served a worldwide clientele. Gianluca and Raffaella now have 12 employees. They're adding a wellness center, and expanded the farm's original six hectares with a six-hectare vineyard nearby. The goats produce 13 pounds of cheese and ice cream daily. They're raising their own dairy cows and cattle.

And Gianluca beams with pride in his wine cellar of 350 local wines, all from wineries within 70 miles. But his chef skills create as fine a dinner as you'll find in these parts. Our seven-course dinner included duck, chopped Piemonte beef tartare-style, agnolotti, cooked famously juicy and tender Fassoni Piedmont beef, and more.

One tip: Since La Capuccina is less than an hour from Malpensa airport, after touring Piemonte's many great destinations, this is a perfect decompression get-away spot before flying home. ▲

For more information, visit <http://www.lacapuccina.it/>

— Don Oldenburg

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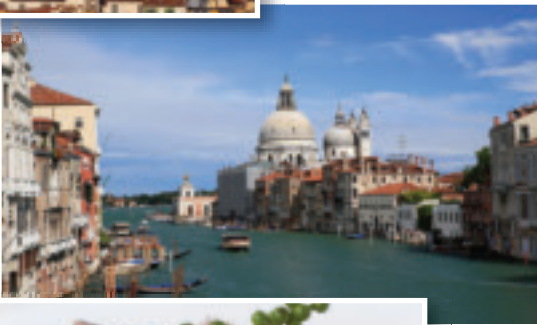
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Restoring Masterpieces

These Two Sisters are the Friends of Florence

By Danielle DeSimone



On a November morning in 1966, the Arno River, which winds its way through the Tuscan countryside, rose up and swallowed the city of Florence.

The flood killed 101 people, and destroyed buildings, businesses and countless works of art. Streets collapsed into the riverbanks. The world-famous statue of David stood in a lake of sludge. It was the most damaging flood in the history of Florence since 1557.

Although outpourings of sympathy and volunteers followed for decades, Florence's recovery has been slow and difficult. The destruction was so severe and funds for repairs so low, that today buildings and works of art still are waiting to be restored. For that, the city has turned to the American-founded

involved with a number of restoration nonprofits in Venice that worked to preserve the art and history of the city. Simonetta began to wonder why there was nothing like that in Florence, or even Tuscany, and soon decided to start her own restoration projects.

"Simonetta called me one day," Renee recalls, "... and said, 'I have this idea that will enable us to do good and help this beautiful city, but it will also be a great way for us to stay in touch while working together on something of value — something that's important.'"

Other American-founded nonprofit organizations have tried and failed to do what Simonetta and Renee completed in less than a year while working an ocean apart. Through arduous effort and sheer

large, well-known pieces, this can be fairly easy; Friends of Florence's current restoration project of the Botticelli room in Florence's world-renowned Uffizi Gallery only took six weeks to find funds and willing donors. "It was a frenzy," says Renee. "Every American knows Botticelli — it doesn't matter where you went to school or what you've studied. You've seen 'The Birth of Venus'." The 2004 restoration and continued upkeep of the David statue? That was funded in less than 24 hours.

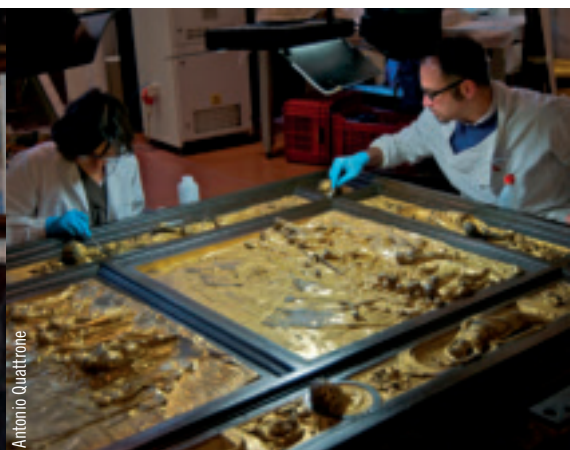
Smaller projects without international reputations are more difficult, but these often need funding the most. Local chapels preserving their neighborhood history, the forgotten frescoes — these are the works that might be otherwise abandoned to decay if not



A restorer works on the feet of Michelangelo's David



Simonetta Bradolini d'Adda and Renee Gardner



Restoration of Ghiberti's Gates of Paradise

organization Friends of Florence.

Countess Simonetta Brandolini d'Adda and Renee Gardner have built Friends of Florence out of a shared love — for the arts, for their beloved city of Florence, and, as sisters, for their family.

The daughters of an American father and an Italian mother, Simonetta and Renee's lives have always been linked to Italy. They spent a majority of their childhoods living abroad in Italy and France, in addition to studying in Italy at college. During her semester studying abroad in Florence, Simonetta met her future husband. She has been living in Florence and running her own home-rental company there ever since, while her sister, Renee, heads an event-planning business in Washington, D.C.

In the 1990's, Simonetta became

will, the sisters founded Friends of Florence as an official 501(c)3 nonprofit organization in an unheard-of six months. As Simonetta puts it, "We've been going strong ever since."

Besides Simonetta and Renee, working out of their homes, Friends of Florence only has three part-time employees whose time is entirely volunteered. Yet they have saved some of the most iconic pieces of art in Florence, from basilica frescoes to Michelangelo's statue of David. The organization is inundated with weekly project proposals and restoration requests from both local and national institutions in Italy. Once its Board of Directors has approved a project and set its budget, the real work begins.

Simonetta and Renee must first find the money to restore the art. For

for Friends of Florence. Officials in Florence appreciate the preservation of these small treasures. "It makes a difference," says Simonetta, "To really maintain these pieces for the future."

The Friends of Florence organization is successful in what it does because of the passion of the people who drive it, but also because it surpasses much of the bureaucratic red tape that slows down state-funded restoration projects. Friends of Florence pays the restoration laboratory and its workers directly, rather than going through another organization or the government. This ensures that the restorations are undertaken quickly, before further damage can be done. From there, highly-trained art restorers slowly scrape away years of neglect, rust, mold and decay, ➤



Antonio Quattrone

Before and after David's restoration

bringing masterpieces back to life.

On their own, Simonetta or Renee might not be able to pull off the work that they do, but together, they are unstoppable. Renee's background in fundraising and marketing makes her adept at dealing with the organization's development. Based out of Washington, D.C., she is the one who works with the Board of Directors, tracks down potential donors, and keeps all the paperwork in check.

Simonetta is in charge of "the relationships" with the people in Italy. As a resident of Florence, she is on the frontlines managing the restoration projects, communicating with the mayor of Florence, the Italian government, and sometimes even the Church, ensuring that things run smoothly once the projects (usually 15 to 20 at one time) are underway.

"My sister is the one who does all the work," Renee insists, chatting at her Washington, D.C., home with her sister recently. But Simonetta interrupts to disagree, explaining that they both contribute in the non-profit's work. When they speak, it is a constant back-and-forth, each sister complimenting the

other, finishing one another's sentences, and insisting that the other sister is the one responsible for the success of Friends of Florence. Their talk about their

projects and the need to save Florence's artwork rings with fiery determination — an understood agreement that, if we don't do it, who will?

Friends of Florence fills a much-needed void in the Italian art scene. The city's public, frustrated with the lack of action by the government, has turned to these Italian American women and their organization for help. Italy, for all its beauty, often finds itself floundering in red tape and inefficiency when it comes to preserving its endless historic sites and artistic achievements. With a lack of public funds, much of its iconic monuments and museums have been propped up by private investors and organizations. The Trevi Fountain in Rome, for example, was recently renovated by the grace (and money) of the Italian fashion house Fendi. The Spanish Steps are getting a facelift from luxury goods company Bulgari. But Friends of Florence has been preserving Italian artwork and history before it was even in style.

Living on opposite sides of the world, Simonetta and Renee have managed to build a nonprofit that

in 18 years has restored hundreds of pieces of invaluable art. Connected through their dedication to Florence, they have remained close and continue to track down new projects — art and history that needs saving.

During the 1966 Arno River flood, water battered the golden Gates of Paradise that stand guard at the Battistero di San Giovanni with such force that it ripped off entire panels. For almost 26 years, the doors laid in a laboratory, damaged and incomplete.

"I like to say that it took longer to restore the Gates of Paradise than it took Ghiberti to make them," Simonetta says with a smile.

Friends of Florence became involved in the project and, a year later, the doors were completely restored, once again on display for millions of travelers and Florentines alike.

Renee and Simonetta know Italian art does not belong only to Italy. Friends of Florence's efforts are not just for Florence, for Italy, for Italians, or for Italian Americans. Their work ensures the preservation of centuries of history, art and beauty that would otherwise be lost to the entire world.

For anyone who has seen in-person a restored masterpiece such as Michelangelo's David sculpture and had to catch his breath, it is the work of organizations such as Friends of Florence that makes it possible.▲

Danielle DeSimone, NIAF's assistant editor and social media manager, spent much of her childhood growing up in southern Italy.



The completed Tribune room in the Uffizi Gallery

Antonio Quattrone



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Off the Beaten cuisine in Rome

By Kitty Bean Yancey

Eating Italy Tour's Taste of Testaccio

Today's experienced travelers want to venture off the beaten tourist track to sample authentic local dishes. That has stirred up tasting tours in destinations worldwide, including eternally popular Rome, where it's hard to find restaurants without American accents booming from the next table.

All photos by Eating Italy Tours except where noted.

Clockwise from top left: Eating Italy Tour's Twilight agenda includes sampling Piero's famous porchetta Antica Norcineria; The carbonara at Flavio al Velavevodetto restaurant; Caprese salad among the tour samples; Chocolate tiramisu.



A top lunch spot for local Testaccini, Volpetti Più in Testaccio specializes in classic pizza margherita

On a recent sunny Saturday, 13 visitors from as far away as Australia bring an appetite for locally popular bites to the narrow streets of the working-class neighborhood of Testaccio, where mom-and-pop businesses have been dishing up delicacies for generations.

"We're off the (tourism) grid," announces Alexandra Bruzzese, the American-born guide for this Eating Italy outing. It promises samples of a dozen dishes during a seven-stop "Taste of Testaccio" walking tour. That's an appetizing prospect for foodies from overseas who have been unsuccessfully trying to eat like locals in tourist-oriented eateries in the city center.

For the next four hours, they'll tag along with upbeat brunette Bruzzese to snack on salami infused with Barolo wine, aged Parmigiano Reggiano cheese, bruschetta (say "broo-sket-ta," she coaches), buffalo mozzarella (*mozzarella di bufala* derived from the milk of water buffalos, few knew), and melt-in-your-mouth cannoli made from Sicilian ricotta cheese and dusted with pistachio. The tour price: 84 euros for adults; 72 euros for teens 13-17; and 50 euros for children 4-12.

Eating Italy is flourishing, growing from one outing five years ago in Testaccio, founder Kenny Dunn's neighborhood, to a dozen "Eating Europe" options in Rome, Amsterdam, Florence, Prague and London. Elsewhere, tasting attractions offered by other companies, from Bites &



Guide Alexandra Bruzzese offers cannoli on the Taste of Testaccio Eating Italy Tour.

Beau Vancey

Sites in Nashville, Budapest and elsewhere, to various New York pizza tours, are being gobbled up, too.

Dunn says he began by "showing off all of my favorite places to eat" to friends. "I decided to turn it into a business," he adds. "What our clients tell us the most is that they never would have discovered the neighbor-

hood and the places we take them. It can be difficult to get off the tourist path to get a glimpse into daily life."

On this day in Rome, everyone is happily sampling, spiced up with historical and cultural commentary. Bruzzese says Testaccio once was home to Europe's biggest meat slaughterhouse, that to indicate ➤

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Eating Italy Tours

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something's delicious, Italians put their second finger on a cheek and twirl it.

A visit to the venerable Volpetti gourmet food store drops jaws when Bruzzese points out a bottle of aged balsamic vinegar costing 1,500 euros. At tiny Trapizzino, she passes around a tray of 2-euro fried rice balls, a Roman snack food.

On the way to a crowded covered market where locals shop and vendors include a couple who share the secret of more than five decades of marital bliss (agree that the wife is always right), Bruzzese leads tour participants through the small, serene cemetery where expats, including British poet John Keats, are buried.

Some participants on the tour start to flag at stop six, the grotto-like Flavio al Velavevodetto restaurant, where décor includes vintage terracotta shards from the time when the site was a dumping ground for olive oil containers and other pots. Heaping platters of Spaghetti Carbonara, Rigatoni all'Amatriciana and Cacio e Pepe (a local-favorite dish of pasta tossed in olive oil, pepper and Pecorino cheese) await at a long table.

But everyone has been saving room for dessert: heaping helpings of gelato at the hole-in-the-wall, century-old Giolitti close to Eating Italy owner Dunn's apartment (he and his wife moved to Italy from the United States in 2009 when she received a tempting job offer).

It's the sort of unassuming place that those not in the know might bypass, Bruzzese says before dishing out a lesson in gelato: Avoid bright colors (real mint and banana flavors aren't glow-in-the-dark green or sunshine yellow). "You can't judge a book by its cover," Bruzzese says. "The most boring-looking gelato is the best."

Then, she asks if anyone has more questions. No one does. Her charges are too busy spooning up the last creamy bits of goodness — and so sated that some are debating whether to cancel their dinner reservations. ▲

For more information, visit eatingitalyfoodtours.com or eatingeuropetours.com

Kitty Bean Yancey, a former USA TODAY travel writer, is a Washington, D.C.-based freelancer.

Eating Italy tasting tours are so popular that founder Kenny Dunn has expanded them to Florence this year. In addition to the Testaccio tour, he currently offers visitors to Rome four other options to experience local, genuine cuisine and culture:

Trastevere for Foodies Tour

Amble through cobblestone streets in this historic former Jewish quarter, trying tidbits from pastry to fried balls of Arborio rice stuffed with cheese at small, family-run businesses. Start hungry — you'll be working your way through prosciutto, gnocchi, sweet biscotti and more. This tour includes a stop at the Trastevere market. Hope that luscious Italian cantaloupe is in season.

Twilight Trastevere Tour.

Expect wine pairings — maybe sparkling prosecco with fried artichoke to start — followed by pizza topped with white cheese and olive oil. The area west of the Tiber River can be packed in the evenings with tourists dining at popular restaurants, but you'll be scouting out unassuming gems that they'll probably miss.

Cooking With Nonna

A real Italian grandmother shares her culinary techniques and teaches participants to put together a traditional four-course meal in an apartment. Loosen up with a glass of sparkling prosecco before learning how to prepare dishes such as homemade fettuccini or gnocchi, lemon-accented Polpetta di Carni (meatballs), pan-fried veal with prosciutto and sage, and to-die-for tiramisu. Participants join Nonna to savor their culinary creations.

Italian Wine & Food Pairing Class

You'll taste six Italian wines that complement various dishes while enjoying a convivial dinner in a private room at a neighborhood trattoria. A sommelier might pair prosecco with mozzarella di bufala to start, followed by Bucatini all'Amatriciana (pasta with bacon, red pepper flakes and Pecorino cheese) with a Montepulciano d'Abruzzo red, and Chianina beef in tomato sauce with a Chianti Classico. Clink glasses and say *Salute!*

— Kitty Bean Yancey

Chewing

THE FAT

A Journey
into the
Kitchens of
Fascist Italy

Story and
photos by
Karima
Moyer-Nocchi

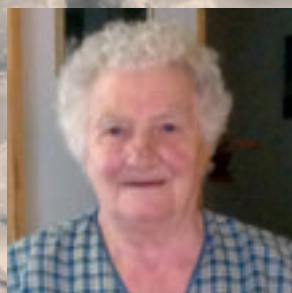


Ida Pace making
brufadei in
the kitchen of
her daughter's
restaurant in
Persone, Italy.

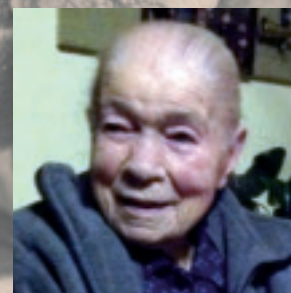
Karima Moyer-Nocchi

Italian food is arguably the most universally loved of all world cuisines. But what exactly are we talking about when we refer to Italian cuisine?

The gastronomic nostalgia industry would have us believe that Italian cuisine is, and has pretty much always been, a timeless buffet of both simple, delectable dishes, as well as more complex gastronomic masterpieces, all of which have flourished since time immemorial.



Ida Pace



Aida Pacini

But that's a culinary fantasy, impervious to social, economic and political realities. If we take even a few small steps back in time, we come face to face with the fact that, while this vision may appeal to the romantic gastronome in us — it simply wasn't so.

I have lived more than half my life, 27 years, in Italy. Over those years, I have witnessed a most puzzling concomitance: a decline in the quality and craftsmanship of Italian foodstuffs, in both retail and restaurants, a skyrocketing deification of Italian cuisine both nationally and internationally, together with an intense attachment to a supposed past that is increasingly more "fakelore" than folklore.

The more I studied the scholarly annals of Italian food history, the more pronounced these incongruences seemed. The words "traditional," "authentic," "genuine," "classic,"

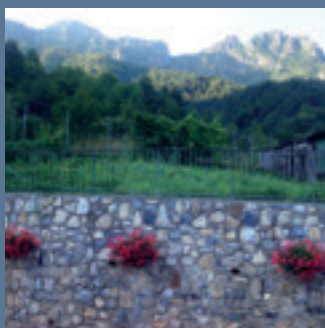
"country-style," and the like, blared from label after label of industrially manufactured foods in supermarkets. They hawked pretty pouches of heirloom dried beans and artisanal pasta to tourists in quaint boutiques. They peddled an endless array of eno-gastronomic tour packages, and were freely bandied about by Trip Advisor reviewers supping their way across Italy. It surely seemed as if the time had come to take a step back to get a reality check.

I began my mission by setting up a premise that went something like this: What resemblance does the modern commercial packaging of Italian culinary lore bear to the actual experiences of those who lived that history before it morphed into "tradition"?

I decided to use oral histories as my main research vehicle for this trip back into time. Eyewitness accounts naturally limit historical reach to whatever human longevity (and lucidity) accommodates. These days, it is not too difficult to find people living

well into their 80s; in fact, the average life expectancy for Italian women is 85. Given that longevity statistics are based on averages, finding women who were still active and independent in their 90s was not unrealistic. I began my pursuit of "expert testimony" in 2013, when a 90-year-old woman would have been born in 1923, and lived out her entire youth during the *Ventennio fascista* — the 20-year reign of Mussolini.

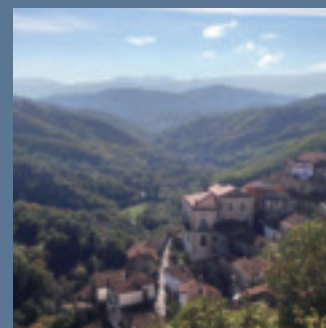
Knowing well how *passa parola* works in Italy, I got the word out through my network of friends and acquaintances and started setting up interviews from north to south. Having a good deal of gastronomic experience and study under my belt, I felt confident. But, in spite of my preparation, the experience proved to be beyond anything I had anticipated. The premise of talking about the food "of the old days" became the calling card, the common ground that would allow me entry into the larger picture of daily life during the *Ventennio*. ►



Persons in the Pre-Alpine mountains

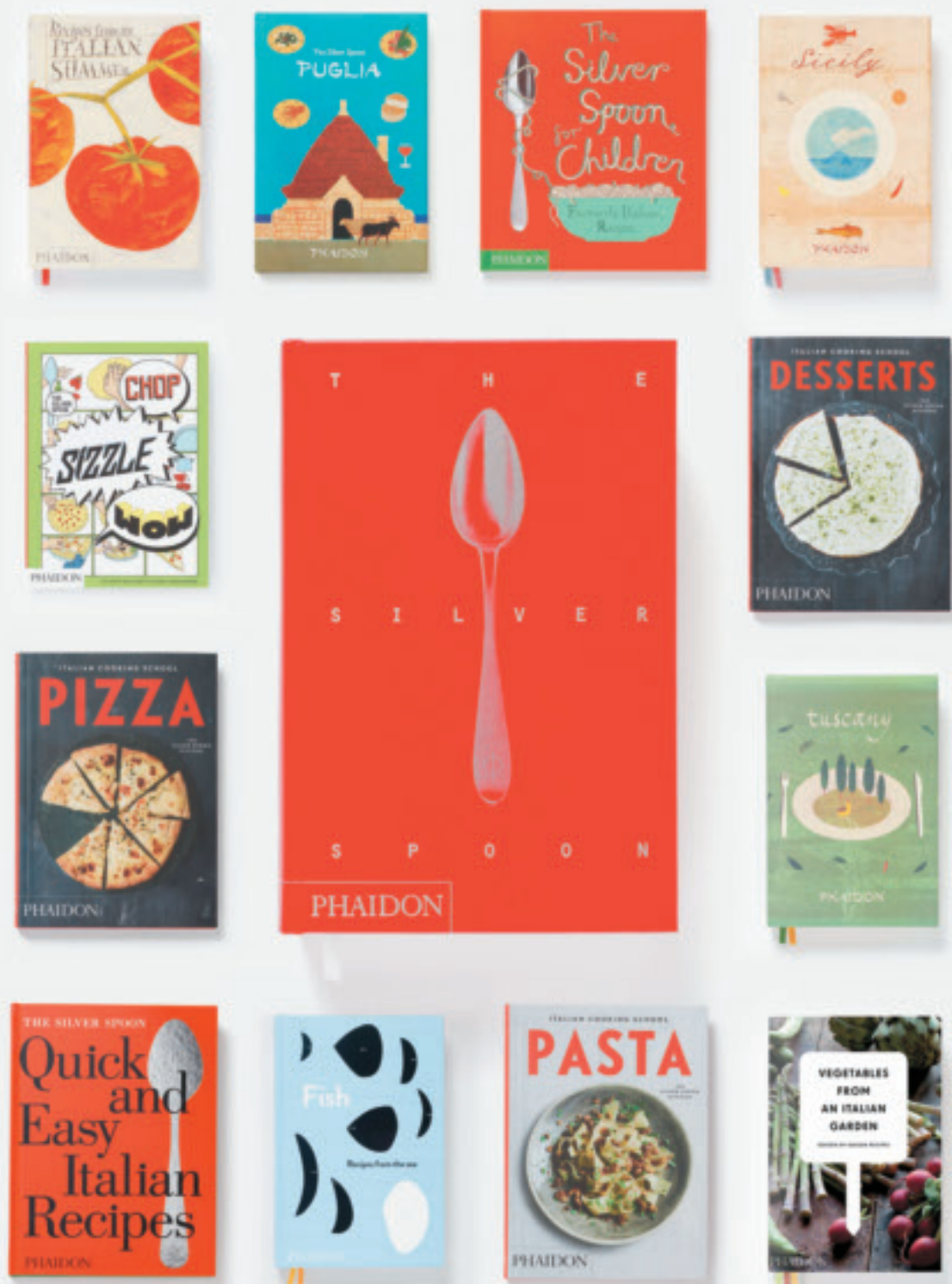


Moerna, in Lombardia



Castronuovo di Sant'Andrea in Basilicata

Karima Moyer



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I quickly discovered that I was dealing with a veritable lost generation, and that if I was to hold up my end of the conversation, proficiency in the language, and a background in food studies was not sufficient.

Like most people my age, I don't often encounter nonagenarians in my social circles. The generation gap between those born before WWII and those born after seemed vastly wider in Italy than the same generational differences I had encountered in the United States. To bridge that gap, I needed to become fluent in their points of reference, conversant in their values, self-assured in the framework and jargon of their youth.

Furthermore, I had to be knowledgeable about how these varied in each context from north to south, from rich to poor, from city to town to village to farm. I started digging for diamonds, only to discover that the rough around

those gems was just as valuable, if not more so. Instead of trying to flush information from the entanglement, I used my premise to flesh out a fuller, richer history — a history that has been overlooked by writers and scholars, historians and master chefs.

The first-hand accounts about the state of Italian food prior to the *miracolo economico*, the so-called “economic miracle” that took off after the 1960s (the same year as the release of the film “La Dolce Vita”) revealed the extent to which we have idealized the standard diet, now romantically referred to as *la cucina povera*. Many of the women underscored the fact that the difference between their generation and the previous ones was that Italy had progressed from “who could afford to eat” to “who could afford to eat what.”

At the same time, there was a far cry between filling your stomach and eating adequately. In the words of Ida

Pace, from the Valvestino in Lombardia: “Used to be families was numerous and it was hard feedin’ all them mouths. They say ‘no one died of hunger,’ but there was lots of children died from diseases and things ‘cause there wasn’t enough nutrition. Who cares if you was fillin’ your stomach if the food wasn’t doin’ you no good?”

Giuditta Salvadori, whose family lived the better part of the year in the Lombardia woods near the Swiss border, working as colliers, or charcoal makers, recalled that her family had polenta for breakfast, lunch and dinner: “It was up at dawn and then working straight through the morning to lunchtime. Then, back to the hut for more polenta and goat’s milk. No point in hiding it. That’s what we had for every meal. We had it with beans or potatoes, or what we found. Day in, day out.”

As a part of their stories of daily life under Mussolini, each woman ➤

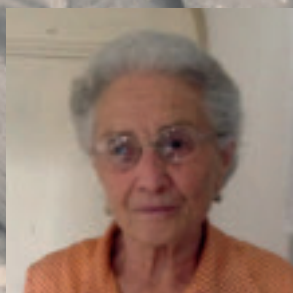
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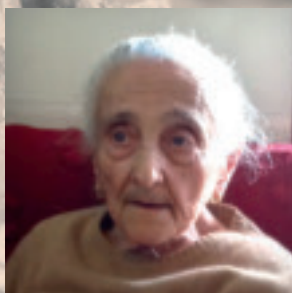
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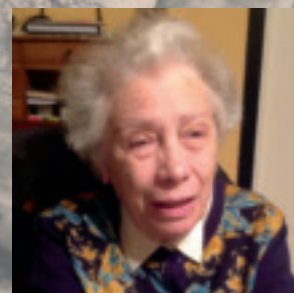
Giuditta Salvadori

Karima Moyer-Nocchi



Concetta Bulfaro

Karima Moyer



Carla Belgrano

also passed on a recipe or two that reflected, in her view, what real Italian food used to be. If they were able and willing, we prepared the dish together.

For example, Giuditta, who later worked as a *perpetua*, the housekeeper for a priest, made a cornmeal cake for me that was one of the priest's favorites. He could afford a bit of sugar now and again, she said.

With Ida, I was treated to *brufadei*, a savory pudding-like dish made with "rice" formed by sprinkling milk onto flour and rubbing it between your fingers. Ida's daughter owns a rustic restaurant called Antica Osteria Pace, in the pre-Alpine town of Persone in Lombardia. I asked if she served this sort of food, and she replied, "There are no generations of grandmothers behind the food at this restaurant. Why not? Because no one really wants to eat that food. Standard menus today that you find in a 'rustic' eatery are like what people my mother's age ate when it was a holiday, and probably not even that!"

Tastes indeed change with the passing of generations, and it is interesting to compare our concept of standard Italian fare with the once typical recipes that have fallen into obscurity, such as braised guinea pig. Concetta Bulfaro, of the town of Castonuovo di Sant'Andrea, in Basilicata, said, "I heard that some children keep them as pets these days. How strange! They are tasty so many ways."

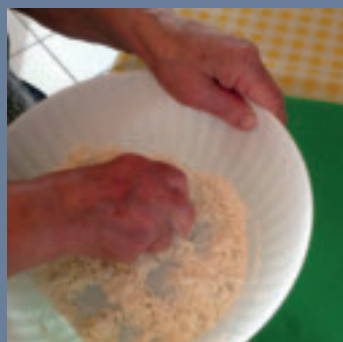
Carla Belgrano, from the town of Imperia, in Liguria, attributed her longevity, in part, to Mussolini-era dishes such as Lettuce Soup. "My doctor says, when I go for a check up, 'I don't know what it is about your family, you don't have cholesterol or triglycerides,'" she said. "I think it is recipes like this that have kept us going."

In central Italy, Aida Pacini, of Camporeggiano, in Umbria, recalled stuffed chicken necks, pointing out that the birds were not the plump supermarket fowl we are accustomed to: "There was already so little for us, we could only toss 'em [the chickens]

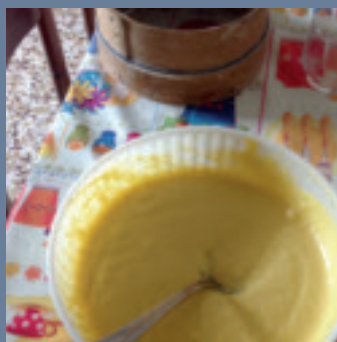
what we couldn't get down ourselves. Weren't a scrap of it went to waste when we slaughtered a chicken, though. Even used the head."

Based on the research, I wrote the book "Chewing the Fat – An Oral History of Italian Foodways from Fascism to Dolce Vita," which brings the unsung voice of a lost generation of Italian women into the light of day. In it are 18 narrations derived from interviews with women from all over Italy, from the pre-Alpine mountains to Sicily, and the former colony Libya, and former territory Istria. Together they form a mosaic that recreates a portrait of daily life during the *Ventennio fascista* that reveal surprising facts about the origins of world's most loved cuisine.

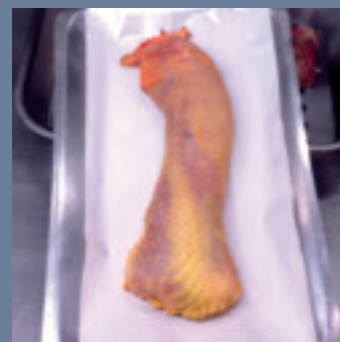
Karima Moyer-Nocchi is a food historian and professor at the Università degli Studi di Siena. She is an Italian American, residing in Città di Castello, Umbria, with her husband Simone. The book "Chewing the Fat" is available through Amazon. ▲



Making brufadei



Making polenta cake



Making stuffed chicken neck

Karima Moyer



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Taking the Bitter with the Heat

Italy's Famed
Grappas and Amari

By Dick Rosano

On my favorite trip to Italy – my honeymoon – we stopped in a café and I ordered an espresso, properly called just “caffè.” The barista asked me, “Corretto?” I knew he meant “corrected,” but I didn’t have any idea how he intended to correct my espresso.

I watched him pour a shot of clear liquid into the cup, a liquid I was sure was grappa, and my first thought was,

“Hey, sure. Why not?”



Distiller and Production Manager Mauro Dolzan noses the Amarone Riserva Grappa, assuring it meets the same exacting standards of excellence that his father, grandfather, great- and great-great grandfathers fostered through the centuries.

Right? Wrong. It was one of the old-style grappas, reminiscent of grain alcohol, which did more to set fire to the cup o’ joe than correct it.

Although I was in Tuscany at the time, most grappas come from the north, frequently from Piemonte, but also from Lombardia and Veneto to the east. These northern regions make some of Italy’s best wines, but they also offer the cerebral grappa and the seductive amari (more on that below).

Years later, I stood before a clutch of elegant, long-necked bottles looking more like come-hither perfume bottles, and I was guided through a tasting of the Jacopo Poli line of grappas.

I was right about the perfume. These delicate and aromatic nectars challenged my ability to describe them. There were hints of anise and cherry in one, honey and licorice in another, lavender and vanilla in the one next to



Above: The purity of Vila de Varda single varietal grappas from Italy's Trentino region starts from using the finest pomace from both the distilleries' own vineyards and from some of the finest Amarone, Pinot Grigio and Moscato producers in Italy, as well as distilling the grappas seven times — a system known as "The de Varda Method."

Right: Sibona Distilleria Chief Executive Luigi Barbero (right) and his father, Bruno Barbero



Sibona Antica Distilleria

them. A taste of coffee lingered on my palate from another, on a sensuous foundation of blackberries and walnuts. I was so mesmerized and, at the same time, so speechless that I couldn't get the adjectives down on paper fast enough.

I have remained a committed Poli-ophile ever since. But when I returned to the subject of grappas this spring, I realized that there were more producers of this fabulous liquid heaven; in some cases, with more exotic and sumptuous flavors than even the gorgeous sips I enjoyed from Jacopo Poli.

I was introduced to the Berta and Sibona distilleries from Piemonte, the Nardini Distillery from Veneto, and Villa de Varda from Trentino Alto-Adige. Centuries ago, bad wine in Europe was distilled to make it palatable, but these northern Italian producers rely on good wine as the base and, as a result, their grappas soar with bright aromas and delectable flavors.

Any stories you've heard about the potent, hair-on-fire grappas of the past

are wrong. And if you encounter one that still fits that description, pour it out. My advice to you is try one of the list I describe below. You will conclude, as I have, that these liquors are fragrant and balanced, attractive and soft, and provocatively seductive.

Now on to amari. It's likely that we owe the current panoply of amari to the monks who spent the cold months in their mountain abbeys inventing alcoholic concoctions out of the herbs they farmed during the summer months. It's not by accident that many of the amari are produced in the same northern, cooler regions that serve up grappa. Sibona and Nardini are noted above, from Piemonte and Veneto, respectively. But, not to be outdone, the monks from Florence created the Nicola Vignale Amaro di S. Maria al Monte, while the Ischia Sapore Rucolino — though named after the Isola d'Ischia — is made in Campania.

Herbal liqueurs are a broad category, but the amaro of Italy is a specif-

ic subset, relying on the herbal base but highlighting the bitter flavors that give the drink its name.

The bitterness varies with the product, with Aperol and Campari on the lighter end, and Fernet toward the top. Amaro fall about in the middle of this spectrum, but they add a more velvety mouthfeel to the experience, softening the delivery and lingering longer on the palate.

As *digestifs*, they are thought to be at their best after dinner, to settle a stomach full of the evening repast. Sipping them in this way, straight up or over ice, relies on the slightly bitter taste and texture to quell the feelings of overeating.

But with ample body and distinctive flavors, amari also find their way into cocktails, serving as the foundation for other, lighter and more idiosyncratic flavors. I have enjoyed the amari that way, and sometimes pour it into a tumbler over ice, but mixing it with soda water and a slice of orange — a la Campari and soda — is more refreshing than a bitter end. ➤



One of two state-of-the-art Nardini distilleries in the Veneto Region of Italy making grappas and grappa-based liqueurs that evoke the rich traditions of this region.

Jacopo Poli Sarpa Barrique (\$65/750ml).

Rich and forward, exotic aromas of grape and earth; smooth texture reminiscent of nuts, honey, and cocoa. Score: 93 (Winebow)

Jacopo Poli Sarpa (\$56/750ml).

In-your-face aromas, distillates and grape skins; the floral accents lighten the impression, yet it delivers a potent brew. Score: 90 (Winebow)

Nardini Grappa (\$41/litre).

Bright aromas of licorice, anise and toast. Very soft delivery, tantalizing acidity, bright finish. Score: 93 (Winebow)

Nardini Grappa Riserva (\$52/litre).

A delicate approach, highlighting floral and fruit aromas, intense flavors and deeply textured. Score: 92 (Winebow)

Paolo Berta Riserva del Fondatore Grappa Brandy (\$350, Nebbiolo and Barbera grapes).

Honey colored, soft fragrance of fruit and rose petals, gentle approach, silky mouthfeel. Subtle flavors of fruit and pomace, exceedingly long finish. Score: 97 (Gheusis Imports)

Paolo Berta Bric del Gaian Grappa (\$200, Moscato grapes).

Copper colored, scented with caramel, oak, and toast. Very soft on the palate, gentle notes of caramel and honey, lingering finish. Score: 97 (Gheusis Imports)

Sibona Grappa Uve di Langa (\$58, primarily Moscato).

Clear, fragrant with violets and dried fruit, soft approach and delivery. Score: 91 (Vias Imports)

Sibona Grappa Riserva Botti di Rovere (\$59, primarily Dolcetto).

Golden yellow, warm oaky aromas on first blush, fruit and oak with subtle hints of toast and ash. Score: 94 (Vias Imports)

Villa de Varda (\$49, Pinot Grigio).

Elegant and smooth, fruity delivery, with a hint of smoke. Soft landing. Score: 89 (Quintessential)

Villa de Varda (\$49, Moscato).

Aromas reminiscent of the sweet moscato grape. Velvety on the palate, long finish with slight licorice accent. Score: 90 (Quintessential)

Villa de Varda (\$59, Amarone).

Honey colored, smoke, leather, and unroasted coffee bean on nose, hints of saddle leather and light smoke on palate. Score: 91 (Quintessential)

Villa de Varda Trié (\$49, Teroldego, Pinot Blanc, and Müller Thurgau).

Amber/honey colored, coffee and cream on nose, soft palate impression, yet vivacious acidity to match the fruit. Score: 93 (Quintessential)

Nardini Amaro (\$48).

Hints of herbs, licorice, and coffee on nose; mouth-filling, nicely textured, a luxurious after dinner drink. Score: 87 (Winebow)

Nicola Vignale Amaro di S. Maria al Monte (\$30).

Coffee-like in appearance, aroma, and flavor. The accent of herbs lends a distinctive flavor to the *digestif*, which can be served with coffee or in coffee, straight up or on the rocks. Score: 87 (Vias Imports)

Sibona Amaro (\$30).

Aromatic with brown spice, vanilla, and herbs on nose. Soft mouthfeel, intense concentration of flavors including caramel, chocolate, coffee, and toast. Producer even suggests pouring this over ice cream, cakes, and desserts, as well as serving it in the glass. Serve chilled, on the rocks, or in a cocktail. Score: 89 (Vias Imports)

Ischia Sapore Rucolino (\$n/a; arugula, citrus peel, herbs, roots).

Herbs and minerals on the nose with a touch of vanilla bean, velvety approach, herbal impressions. Score: 93 (Empson USA)

Dick Rosano is a wine, food and travel writer whose columns have appeared here in Ambassador magazine, as well as The Washington Post, Wine Enthusiast, and other national magazines. He is the author of the three mysteries set in Italy: "The Secret of Altamura: Nazi Crimes, Italian Treasures," "Tuscan Blood," and "Hunting Truffles," as well as a history book "Wine Heritage" on the influence of Italian Americans on wine.



The Dolzan family has owned Villa de Varda since the 19th Century. The current Dolzans (left to right) are headed by Dr. Luigi Dolzan, with his two sons, Michele and Mauro, and his wife, Clara Tait, posed at an old, grape press.

Meet Grappa Maker Alessandro Francoli

By Don Oldenburg

It's a summer Sunday morning and Alessandro Francoli and his staff are busy assisting customers at the stone-and-wood, chalet-like CasaFrancoli as closing time approaches. Aisles of countless bottles of Francoli-made grappa, other spirits, and wines are on display.

"Taste it," urges Alessandro, president of Distillerie Francoli, ushering shoppers to the large wooden bar where he pours wine and grappa samples.

The flagship store of Fratelli Francoli Distillerie and the Torraccia di Piantavigna winery is located on the edge of the Piemonte town of Ghemme, in the foothills of the ice-topped Monte Rosa, set in the Alpine horizon separating Italy and Switzerland. Nearby is where Francoli's father, Luigi, opened his commercial grappa distillery in 1951.

For five generations, the Francoli family has been making grappa from pomace (grape skins, seeds and stalks) recovered from the bottom of wine-makers' presses. Theirs is a modernized process of how Italian vineyard peasants, unwilling to waste leftovers, started making the traditional, high-octane brandy in the 12th century. Only today's finest grappas have graduated from rustic, headache potency to subtly flavored digestifs, embraced by connoisseurs and reviewed like wines.

"I was literally born at the distillery," says Alessandro, whose English is nearly fluent from spending time in Orange County, Calif., where his brother-in-law Alberto Tilicone owns a highly-rated northern Italian restaurant, Francoli Gourmet.

"My parents' bedroom was located right on top of the pot stills and was heated with the hot water of the distillery's condensers," he says. "That was very good because I was born in that bedroom on the December 9, 1955 — during one of the coldest winters recorded in Northern Italy."

Grappa production alone wouldn't guarantee steady growth for the company, says Alessandro. So, Luigi Francoli and his four brothers, who had joined him to create the Fratelli Francoli Distillerie, started producing other Italian liqueurs as well, including amaro, sambuca and fernet.

By the mid-'70s, the brothers decided to get into the wine business — to make their own wine and to make pomace for grappa from their own grapes. They planted their first seven hectares with the Piemonte's noble nebbiolo grape near the remains of the medieval castle Castello di Cavenago. Alessandro takes great pride in telling the story of how Torraccia del Piantavigna, the vineyard's name, means "old tower" (Torraccia) and "the man who plants the vines" (Piantavigna), which is the surname of the Francoli family maternal grandfather, Peter Piantavigna.

"At that time, I was 20, and I remember very well helping the workers drilling the holes to plant the vines," says Alessandro. "It was all done by hand, very tough job!"

When you stop in to visit CasaFrancoli on your next trip to Piemonte, you might hear Alessandro proudly tell another favorite family story. Despite the meaning of the Piantavigna name, his grandfather was actually a textile worker. He only grew enough grapes to make wine for him and his wife.

"There was always a fight between him and my father," recalls Alessandro, smiling as he pours tastes of his crystalline Grappa Luigi Francoli Nebbiolo (aromas of ripe red fruits and hints of sage and licorice to a full-bodied flavor and deep aftertaste) and the amber-colored Francoli



Don Oldenburg

Alessandro Francoli at CasaFrancoli, the Distillerie Francoli store in Ghemme, Italy.

Grappa 3 Year Oak Aged (traces of vanilla, tobacco and leather balanced with the bitterness of the wood and clean aftertaste).

"My father was teasing him saying that his wine was good as a salad dressing (vinegar, in other words!)," he says.

"And my grandfather used to reply saying that my father was originally from the mountains and did not understand wine. He used to call my father 'pesta fioca' (step on the snow) to remind him his Alpine origins!"

There's something else the Francoli family takes great pride in these days. "Something very special about the distillery is that it is classified as a company with no impact on the environment," says Alessandro of the distillery's zero environmental footprint. "We use only vegetal fuel and truly clean power."▲

For more information on Distillerie Francoli and Torraccia di Piantavigna winery, visit www.francoli.it and torracciadelplantavigna.it.



THE FALL

ITALIAN AMERICAN READER

Fall officially began Thursday, September 22, the autumnal equinox when day and night are each about 12 hours long.

In fact, the word equinox comes from the Medieval Latin for “equal night.” In addition to darkness and light being equal to the occasion, it’s also when the sun comes up precisely at due east and sets precisely at due west.

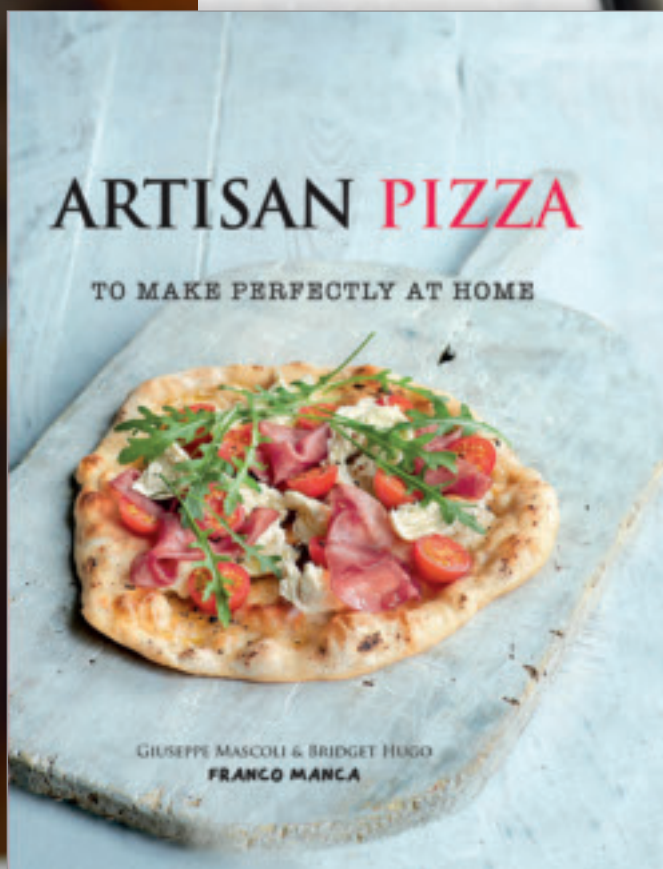
And, then, suddenly, almost overnight, you could say, everything loses its short-lived equilibrium. Days start getting shorter; nights longer. And that continues until Wednesday, December 23, the winter solstice — the day when, like clockwork, it all reverses again and days incrementally start getting longer.

What’s this have to do with our Fall reading list? The season’s growing night hours are prime reading time; its dropping temperatures are made for curling up with a good book... And we’ve chosen a few good books for Fall to match its reflective spirit.

As always, these are books written by Italian American or Italian authors, or are of interest to Italian American readers, or both. Along with each book’s cover, you’ll find a sentence or two of a telling passage. Our reviews are short, meant only to get your attention.

Buona lettura!





Photos courtesy of "Artisan Pizza: To Make Perfectly At Home"

Artisan Pizza: To Make Perfectly at Home

By Giuseppe Mascoli & Bridget Hugo
Kyle Books; 128 pages
\$19.95 hardcover

When you find yourself eating in a Neapolitan pizzeria watching the skilled artisans working with flour, water, and a few local ingredients, you are the latest in a very long line of customers. Pizza is the ultimate, delicious, fast, affordable meal ...

If you listen to Giuseppe Mascoli, making pizza is totally about using simple authentic ingredients and taking simple easy steps — almost. “Integrity” isn’t exactly listed alongside the tomatoes, cheeses, and other toppings, but Mascoli will tell you it’s a requirement to make “perfect” (see title) pizza. Or even a really good one. And he knows how....

Mascoli is the co-owner of the UK’s booming pizza chain Franco Manca, described often by British restaurant critics as “the best in Britain.” His co-author and restaurant

partner, Bridget Hugo, is the winner of the Young British Foodies 2012’s “New Best Alchemist of the Oven” award for her bread-baking skills. Together, they’ve created this lovely, appetite-stirring, everything-you-need-to-know guidebook for making imaginative, delectable pizzas at home — specifically for cooks who don’t have a traditional, 900-degree, wood-burning ovens.

Right you are, the UK is not Italy; London is not Naples. And Naples, after all, is the epicenter of genuine pizza making. But Mascoli is a Naples-expat who tips his hat to the Neapolitan masters. Not that he doesn’t have his own ideas.

Soon as the authors run you through a checklist of the right tools for the job, they dive into the dough — everything including the specific types and proportions of the flour, salt, water, and yeast. Mascoli makes all Franco Manca pizzas with a sourdough starter, not fresh or dry yeast (though he includes dough recipes for both). He recommends letting the dough ferment for 24 hours. And, he even ➤

Sausage and broccoli rabe pizza



Wild mushroom and tea-smoked cheese pizza



Pancetta, caramelized onion and blue cheese pizza

includes one dough recipe for baked and fried pizzas and another for sheet-baked pizzas.

Once you check out his tomato passata, salsa and salsa lardiata recipes; his specs for cheeses; and tips on oils and fats, you're ready for the pizza recipes! And gorgeous photo after photo of the pizzas themselves!

So, what would the authors have

you make? Start with the benchmark margherita pizza: "Use this recipe to test your skills and the quality of your principal ingredients before venturing into the wonderful world of other toppings."

Beyond the basics, this uplifting cookbook (you will feel certain you can make everything in it) provides 45 more pizza recipes, from "bresaola,

cherry tomatoes and buffalo mozzarella" and "pancetta, caramelized onion and blue cheese" to "mixed cheese with radicchio" and "zucchini, gruyère and goat curd."

If your mouth isn't watering, check your pulse. Or, consider an "artichoke with sundried tomatoes, parmesan and buffalo mozzarella" pizza, or a "sausage with field mushrooms and pecorino" pizza. Got a beat now?

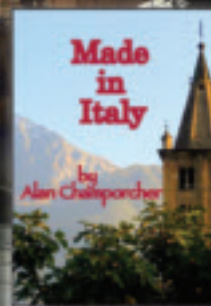
One great thing is that the book is somewhat tailored to fit for different cooking levels and skills. And, besides lots of insider info about ingredients and how-to's, "secrets" of the Neapolitan pizzaioli are sprinkled throughout!

Mascoli also borrows from the Slow Food Movement's basic principles, encouraging readers to "know your products, your sources, and what you are eating..." adding that "any time spent seeking out the best ingredients will bring rewards that utterly justify your efforts."

—Don Oldenburg

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In Other Words

By Jhumpa Lahiri

Translated by Ann Goldstein
Knopf Doubleday; 256 pages
\$26.95 hardcover

To know a new language, to immerse yourself, you have to leave the shore. Without a life vest. Without depending on solid ground.

Pulitzer Prize-winning author Jhumpa Lahiri makes her Italian writing debut in grand fashion in this unique memoir.

"In Other Words" is a short volume of essays that revolve around themes of identity, alienation and belonging as Lahiri explores her evolving relationship with Italian from how she became enamored with the language to her time living in Rome, when she began writing exclusively in Italian.

Along with Lahiri's personal reflections are two impressive and profound short stories (her first com-



posed in Italian), which are stellar and stand well on their own.

This U.S.-published version includes both the original Italian and an English translation, which Lahiri specifically left to another translator — the supremely talented Ann Goldstein — so she would not be tempted to allow her English proficiency to "smooth out [her Italian's] rough edges." This choice is perhaps the bravest aspect of this already courageous project.

Lovers of the Italian language will enjoy this book, and so will those inter-



ested in stories of finding one's place in the world.

— Michelle Fabio

Seeking Alice

By Camilla Trinchieri

Excelsior Editions — An Imprint of SUNY Press;
222 pages; \$19.95 paperback

I love him, the children love him. We are a happy family. We are safe. All I have to do is pretend the war doesn't concern me. Keep my opinions to myself. Be Alinka, not Alice. Fold my conscience and tuck it out of sight like the lace handkerchief I keep in my purse in case of a sudden gust of tears.... I take a glass of champagne from the tray a waiter offers, walk over to Lilli and say, 'The flower arrangements are gorgeous.' At least that's true.

Camilla Trinchieri's "Seeking Alice" tells the story of an Italian diplomat, his American wife, Alice, and their children during the height of World War II. The author, whose previous novels include "The Price of Silence" and "The Trouble with a Bad Fit," shuttles ►

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Captain Artemio Battaglia, a young World War II pilot, who when repulsed by the brutality of Mussolini's fascist state, joins a partisan band to fight the Nazi death squads that were terrorizing Italian citizens.

Nicholas Gage, author of bestselling *Eleni* praised *Heaven Cries* for reminding "us of the true spring waters of freedom: hope, kindness, courage, and love. In the dark light of recent events, this history is particularly relevant."

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the reader back and forth in time, from Alice's perspective in Europe in 1942, to her daughter Susie in Massachusetts in 1956, showing different character's perspectives.

As Alice attempts to flee to Switzerland with her children in the midst of escalating conflict, their family begins to unravel from the pressure and emotional toll of war. Fourteen years later, Susie struggles to uncover the mystery of what happened to her mother those years ago, when she disappeared as they snuck across borders to safety. In this gripping novel, Trinchieri provides the reader with a horrifyingly realistic portrayal of war, and the damage it inflicted on families in World War II.

—Danielle DeSimone

The Italian Divide

By Allan Topol; SelectBooks
320 pages; \$16.95 paperback

Frederico looked around the room nervously as if he was being pursued. Then he leaned forward in his chair and spoke softly.

Author and attorney Allan Topol's fifth book in the Craig Page series, "The Italian Divide," is a swiftly paced, dialogue-driven fiction with an international plot. Should Italy be divided (north and south) for its own economic and political survival? Topol delves into the world of power, greed and loyalty, with protagonist Craig Page. When Page is fired as CIA director, he begins a new life, with some plastic surgery, as race-car driver "Enrico Marino," on the European circuit.

Page's spy instincts are revived when his sponsor, friend and Italian banker, Federico Castiglione, is killed during a jewelry robbery at Castiglione's summer home in Biarritz, France. Was it a robbery gone awry, or a ruse by a foreign power to gain a foothold into European banking by controlling an Italian bank?

Page wants revenge for his friend's death, while a high-ranking foreign official has Page in his crosshairs, for his own vendetta. Page enlists help from confidants to solve Castiglione's murder — CIA Director Betty Richards, director for the EU Counterterrorism Agency



Giuseppe Mercurio, and journalist Elizabeth Crowder.

Topol performs his due diligence with a litany of global locations and characters from Italy, England, Russia, China, France, Switzerland and the United States — he leaves no stone unturned. If you're looking for a thriller immersed in politics, revenge and intrigue, unfolding on an international stage, start reading.

—Robert Bartus Jr.

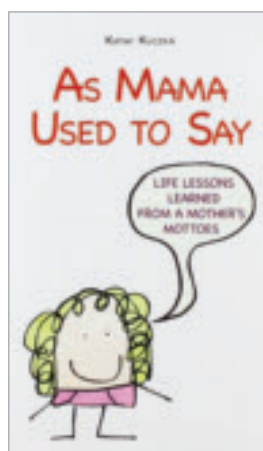
As Mama Used to Say: Life Lessons Learned From a Mother's Mottoes

By Kathy Kuczka
St. Pauls/Alba House
164 pages; \$9.95 paperback

I believe that you, like me, will discover that a mother's voice has sustaining power. The seeds of wisdom harvested from a mother's favorite sayings will never go out of style.

A mother's sayings sow seeds that yield bountiful wisdom and guidance in the art of living well. In "As Mama Used to Say," CNN news reporter Kathy Kuczka, of Italian descent through her maternal grandmother, shares a harvest of 35 of her mother Vi's life lessons.

Each maxim reveals a way to walk in the world on a solid foundation no matter how often the ground changes. "I'm sending a letter to Ralph Nader!" meant being unafraid to admonish corporations for creating shoddy products. "The time nobody sees, but the work everybody sees," bespoke the need to allow sufficient time for a task. Kuczka's Italian connection occurred at the table,



where "Eat slow and chew your food" translated to "savor food and life."

Having inherited her mother's "nose for news and a heart directed toward the divine," Kuczka blends her eye for detail with humor to relay the wisdom that "can take a lifetime to ponder." You may be moved to recount tales from your own personal harvest.

—Kirsten Keppel

Auntie Poldi and the Sicilian Lions

By Mario Giordano
Bitter Lemon Press
320 pages; \$11.45 paperback

... bright shards of ceramic glazed on one side, none bigger than a fingertip. Lying at the outermost edge of these was a yellow crystal of the kind one can sometimes be lucky enough to find on Etna.

Mario Giordano's debut crime novel, "Auntie Poldi and the Sicilian Lions," is an enticing murder mystery intertwined with humorous scenes courtesy of the book's central character, Auntie Poldi. An alcohol-imbibing, passionate, brash and lovable, she is a 60-year-old widow who leaves Germany and retires to Sicily to live among her in-laws, and is pulled into a murder investigation. Giordano imparts elements of the classic whodunit with some clever clues — small pieces of glazed tile, several old letters, a trip to an abandoned sulfur mine, and guardian lions made of stone.

When handyman Valentino is murdered, Poldi is resolved to find the killer by invoking her amateur gumshoe skills taught to her by her father, who was a ►

detective in Germany.

Giordano presents a cast of characters with plenty of distinctive personalities, including Poldi's sisters-in-law, Luisa, Caterina and Teresa, plus Uncle Martino — all of whom support Auntie in her adventures. Or, at times, mis-adventures, from an amusing dream conversation with a "lightly built," clipboard-carrying figure of "Death," to aiming an unloaded gun at a suspect and yelling "Bang. Bang. Bang." Poldi and her beloved Inspector Vito Montana establish an entertaining bitter-sweet crime-solving duo, with Poldi leading the investigation in her unabashed style in this appealing, appetizing and fulfilling mystery novel with all of the right ingredients.

— Robert Bartus Jr.

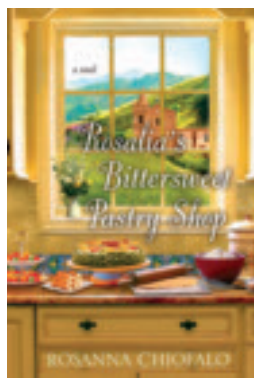
Rosalia's Bittersweet Pastry Shop

By Rosanna Chiofalo
Kensington Books
304 pages; \$15 paperback

Claudia let out a long sigh. She had almost blown it by bringing up so soon the secret ingredient in Sorella Agata's cassata. But she was beginning to think the nun was telling the truth about not having a secret ingredient, if only for the fact that she was a woman of God and most likely averse to lying. But she was also human. Claudia sensed there was something else about that cake that unnerved Sorella Agata other than everyone's claiming it possessed a secret ingredient.

A convent, a cake, and a caveat of an Italian nun who is as reluctant to unfold her story as is Italian American food writer Claudia Lombardo to discover the secrets that comprise this plot of intrigue, romance and nourishment set against Sicily's sensual scenery.

Stories abound about the cassata cake made in the convent of Santa Lucia del Mela, yet the confection's exquisite secret ingredient remains a



mystery. Claudia's determination to uncover it unfolds secrets that Sorella shares through confections whose recipes are included: *biscotti all'anice* (anise cookies), *chiacchiere* (fried pastry ribbons), *zeppole* (St. Joseph's Day doughnuts), *torta al limone* (lemon cake), *piparelli* (crunchy spice cookies), *torta savoià* (chocolate

hazelnut cake), *pignolata* (honey clusters), *pan di spagna con crema pasticcera* (sponge cake with pastry cream) and the cassata cake itself.

The novel recounts the bitterness as well as the sweetness of life, and this makes it a believable, mouthwatering page-turner. Chiofalo's secret ingredient is storytelling that triggers our memories of food as both physical nourishment and soul fulfillment, with memory serving as spacious sanctuary for deep connection to life. ▲

— Kirsten Keppel

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Anna Magnani's performance in the 1955 film "The Rose Tattoo" earned an Academy Award for Best Actress.

Anna Magnani

IN RETROSPECT

By Maria Garcia



In Vittorio De Sica's 1941 romantic comedy "Doctor, Beware," Anna Magnani plays a gold-digging showgirl.

THE LINCOLN CENTER FOCUSES ON ONE OF ITALY'S GREATEST ACTRESSES

In "la Voce Umana" ("The Human Voice," 1948), a short film directed by Roberto Rossellini, a disheveled Anna Magnani (1908-1973) paces restlessly around her room, stopping to adjust her shawl, and to contemplate her puffy eyes in the mirror. Misery leads her back to her bed where she reaches for

a black dial telephone. She picks up the receiver and then cradles it. Across the room, Magnani's real-life canine companion Micia whines in sympathy with her mistress. Finally, the telephone rings. It is her lover, calling to comfort her — but he has already abandoned her for another woman.

Watching “la Voce Umana” again, in the flickering perfection of 35mm, at the La Magnani Retrospective in New York City, it was impossible not to revel in the singular sensibilities that this great artist brought to every role. The Film Society of Lincoln Center/Istituto Luce Cinecittà’s spring festival featured 24 narrative features in their original 35mm or 16mm format, screened on film projectors, a rare treat in this age of digital scanning and projection. It emphasized Magnani’s international career, and was blissfully unfettered by pre- and post-screening curatorial blather.

The retrospective’s daily mix of screenings illustrated Magnani’s comedic and dramatic range, although it ignored chronology. While variety is good for the box office, some attention to screening films in date order would have educated audiences to Magnani’s place in film history, and illustrated her substantial contributions to film acting.

“La Voce,” undoubtedly Magnani’s greatest performance, is a case in point. In 1948, she was an international star and widely regarded as the best actress of her time. “La Voce” represents one half of Rossellini’s omnibus film

same copyright status as literary works. While Rossellini was a well-known director, Magnani was the reason audiences went to see “l’Amore.” Her performance in “The Miracle” is excellent, but the short itself pales in comparison to “la Voce.” Rossellini’s inspired direction of the one-woman play (written by Jean Cocteau) allowed Magnani to transform a stereotypical female character into one with tragic dimensions. The year it was filmed, Magnani was approaching her 40th birthday. One could easily imagine a lover abandoning her for a younger woman, as Rossellini did two years later.

Among the two dozen films at the La Magnani Retrospective, many have not screened in the United States since the Museum of Modern Art’s retrospective of the actress’s work in 1988, among them Alfredo Giannetti’s 1972 film “1870,” set during the Risorgimento, and co-starring Marcello Mastroianni. Others, such as Alberto Lattuada’s “il Bandito” (“The Bandit,” 1946), in which Magnani is a co-star, and Luigi Zampa’s “l’onorevole Angelina” (“The Honorable Angelina,” 1947) and Giannetti’s “La Sciantosa” (“The Chanteuse,” 1971), in which

with her work when her character felt authentic, and when she could shape it to fit her personality. “I can’t obey technique,” she told a biographer. “I have to invent.”

Her proto-feminism also led her to bristle against the stereotypical Madonna and *mala femmina* roles she played throughout her career. With Rossellini and other Italian Neo-Realist directors, Magnani had an easier time of it because the filmmaking process was highly collaborative. For instance, she contributed to the characterization of the sainted but also pregnant and unmarried Pina, the hero of Rossellini’s Italian Neorealist classic, “Roma, Città Aperta” (“Rome, Open City,” 1945). It was Magnani’s breakout role, the one for which she is best-remembered.

Director Luigi Zampa allowed her to make significant contributions to Angelina, one of Magnani’s most famous *popolana* roles (woman of the people), and a film that at the retrospective benefitted from being seen on a large screen. The title character is based on a real female activist who protested against living conditions and corruption in the slums of Rome. Magnani received her sole screenwriting credit on the movie, and Zampa said she also picked the extras. Among the women who showed up to apply, Magnani spied one who wore a skirt she asked Zampa to buy. It defined the character for her, and she wore it for most of the film. Hollywood costume designer Edith Head tells a similar story about Magnani’s unerring sensibilities for characterization. The actress showed up on the set for George Cukor’s “Wild is the Wind” (1957), her second American film, with a high-neck, sleeveless black dress of her own design that Head had copied.

Magnani wears it in the birthday scene in which she sings “Scapricciatello,” the classic Neapolitan canzone. While producer Hal Wallis allowed Magnani to reshape her character, Gioia, the Italian-born wife of a sheep rancher, he refused to accept her script changes. He later regretted it, and the fact that he was never able to work with Magnani again. The actress’s ability to play such generic Italian characters ➤

All Photos by Istituto Luce Cinecittà/The Film Society of Lincoln Center



Anna Magnani co-starred with Amedeo Nazzari in Alberto Lattuada’s 1946 film “il Bandito.”

“l’Amore.” The other short, “il Miracolo” (“The Miracle”) also starred Magnani and imagines the Madonna as a simple-minded shepherdess raped by a man she thinks is St. Joseph. It received considerable attention when “l’Amore” had its New York City debut in 1950.

Cardinal Spellman demanded that Rossellini’s movie be banned, and the theater complied. The imbroglio that followed ended in a landmark case which granted cinematic works the

Magnani portrays the title characters, were only available on VHS or on Italian DVDs. Most films at the retrospective were in good condition, soundtracks having survived better than picture in a few instances — the latter a joy for those who understand standard Italian or have an ear for Neapolitan, Roman and Sicilian dialects.

Magnani, who could sing folk songs from all three regions, often remarked that she was most satisfied

as Gioia, and Serafina in "The Rose Tattoo" (both screened at the retrospective), prompted lively speculation about her roots among audience members at one of the screenings. Magnani was born in Rome to a single mother, and raised there by members of her extended family in the city's Portia Pia neighborhood.

In several of the films that screened at the retrospective, Magnani plays a chanteuse or *sciantosa*, and she sings in nearly all of them, including Jean Renoir's "The Golden Coach" (1952), a movie in which she was prepared to act in French, a language she spoke fluently.

Italian audiences of the World War II generation remember her best for her rendition of the Neapolitan ballad "O surdato 'nnammurato," a song written in the voice of a lovelorn soldier. Magnani sings it in "La Sciantosa," one of a quartet of made-for-TV films, all directed by Giannetti in the early 1970s, that celebrated characters immortalized by Magnani during her 38-year career as a film actress. In this wonderful movie, set during World War I, Magnani

plays Flora, an aging *sciantosa* who has not worked in three years.

Flora receives an invitation to entertain the troops, and she heads to the front with her maid Cristina, portrayed by the delightful *Napoletana* Rosita Pisano. Her guide while she is billeted with the soldiers is Tonino, another Neapolitan, Massimo Ranieri, who also came by his melodious accent naturally. He heads the platoon's band whose ballads and marches are not the diva's métier. Up to this point, the film is a comedy, but at the big performance, and confronted with the wounded soldiers, Flora sings the mournful "O surdato 'nnammurato." It is a vocal embrace in which Flora represents womanhood and motherland, both mourning the lives that will be lost.

Another standout at the La Magnani Retrospective was the second of Giannetti's films celebrating the actress's career, "1870." In this epic, named for the year Rome joined a united Italy, Magnani plays Teresa, the impoverished wife of a jailed nationalist (Marcello Mastroianni). Teresa has little use for politics. Like the wives

in John Ford's cavalry films, she survives to rebuild a nation, not in the name of any abstract philosophy, but of necessity. Teresa is the antithesis of Magnani's Pina in "Open City," who dies in arguably the most famous 13-second clip in film history.

Defying categorization, and every appellation filmmakers, critics and film scholars confer upon her, Magnani and her films need to move on from retrospectives to wider distribution. ▲

Maria Garcia is a New York City-based author, writer and frequent contributor to Ambassador magazine. Her reviews and feature articles also appear regularly in Film Journal International and Cineaste. Her new book, "Cinematic Quests for Identity: The Hero's Encounter with the Beast," was published this Spring. Visit her website at mariagarciawrites.com.



In Roberto Rossellini's classic 1945 film "Roma, Città Aperta" ("Rome, Open City"), Anna Magnani plays Pina, an Italian Resistance fighter during WWII — her breakout role.




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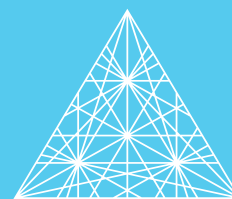
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A Day in My Life

By Wayne Randazzo

Buses, planes and baseball. That's what life feels like for six months when you're following around a Major League Baseball team. I have the fortune of being one of the radio broadcasters for the New York Mets. It's a position I started just last year when the Mets also happened to play in the World Series for the first time since 2000.

Every day, I'm around the very best baseball players in the world. Most teams have a strong international influence in addition to the dozen or so American-born players. The Mets are no exception, with skillful athletes brought in from Cuba, Venezuela and the Dominican Republic currently on the roster.

On any given day, I provide the pregame and postgame coverage before and after Mets games on WOR-AM in New York City and many other affiliates that also air our broadcasts. On some days, I'll step in on the play-by-play of the actual game when either Howie Rose or Josh Lewin has the day off. Rose has been affiliated with Mets broadcasts since 1987, was one of the original hosts on famed sports-talk station WFAN-AM, and is a virtual encyclopedia of Mets history. He attended his first Mets game when the team still played at the Polo Grounds before Shea Stadium was erected in 1964.

Having grown up in Chicago, I'm not as well versed on Mets history as Howie, but I have become quite the expert on the most up-to-date version of the New York National League ball club. Prior to every game, I have a chat with Terry Collins, the Mets' 67-year-old manager — the oldest in the majors. One of Collins's favorite pastimes is to share his anecdotes of a long career that probably won't last much longer.

Sometimes, Collins recalls his days on the Pirates coaching staff when Jim Leyland was trying every trick he could think of to get the most out of clubhouse cancer Barry Bonds. On other occasions, Collins reminisces about his work in the Dodgers organization that started decades ago and carried him to the post as their Triple-A manager in Albuquerque. Collins himself played for Albuquerque for parts of six seasons but never did earn that call to "The Show."

Life in the big leagues is fun, of course, but it can also be grueling. There are plenty of long days, late nights, and lots of time away from the people that are most important. What balances that out is being able to achieve a lifelong goal and get to pour my efforts into work that has always been what I'm most passionate about.

I fell in love with baseball before I knew how to read. And I knew I wanted to be a baseball announcer long before I knew I would ever need a job. Harry Caray, Steve Stone, Al Michaels and Bob Costas are just a few of the names that inspired me to follow this career path, while

Courtesy of the New York Mets



Wayne Randazzo interviews Mets' player Eric Campbell at Citi Field.

current announcers like Pat Hughes, Len Kasper, Cory Provus, Brian Anderson and so many others have been instrumental in helping me move along at the rate in which I have.

I realize some of the people I've looked up to the most have not even had the opportunity I received in my rookie year — to cover their team in the World Series. Last year was a dream run for the Mets, and I was right in the middle of it.

I broadcasted game three of the National League Division Series and was able to deliver the call of Yoenis Cespedes' epic three-run homer that sealed a pivotal win in that series against the Los Angeles Dodgers. As a Chicago native, it was extremely bizarre to be on the field with the Mets as they celebrated winning the National League pennant at Wrigley Field.

So many experiences come across every day, whether it's interviewing a player about his game-winning hit, learning about the potential direction of the franchise from one of the most well-respected executives in the game like General Manager Sandy Alderson, or getting to interact on a regular basis with the strong-willed, loyal fanbase in Queens.

Regardless of what it is, I'm honored to serve in this role, and I hope to continue to so I can become the type of announcer for the next generation that I so much looked up to when I was a kid.

While I work on that, I'll enjoy the many trips to the most beautiful ballparks in the world, the countless number of miles flying from one majestic metropolis to another, and the sweet, beauty of the game I love. ▲

Wayne Randazzo is the New York Mets pregame and post-game show host and fill-in play-by-play announcer on WOR-AM. He's also a freelance television play-by-play announcer for ESPN and Big Ten Network.



Mets broadcasters Steve Gelbs and Wayne Randazzo during an away game at The Chicago Cubs' Wrigley Field.

Courtesy of the New York Mets

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Before joining SunAmerica in 2005, Mr. Voegel was a portfolio analytics specialist at FactSet Research Systems Inc., a provider of financial information and analytics. Between 1998 and 2000 he was a mergers and acquisitions analyst at John S. Herold Inc., an independent research firm specializing in the energy sector.



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When Italy Needs Us

By John M. Viola, NIAF President

I had every intention of spending an idyllic, e-mail-free week in the small Abruzzese town of Pescasseroli, in the little house where my fiancé's father grew up. The clean mountain air, the warm Abruzzese people, and the abundance of natural treasures to discover (coupled with the all-too-rare but very welcomed lack of cell phone service) meant that in the wee small hours of Wednesday, August 24, I was enjoying the last precious days of a peaceful Italian holiday.

Waking up that morning to the horrific news that a devastating 6.2 magnitude earthquake that had occurred less than 90 miles away from the bed in which I was sleeping meant that vacation was over and my sole focus over the coming days would be rallying Italian American support for the previous night's events.

As I frantically searched for the few bars of cell-phone service that could be found in my little corner of Italy that morning, I was preparing to beg, cajole and convince a coalition of often too-disparate Italian groups to come together for a devastated Italy. Don't get me wrong, throughout our proud history, the Italian American community has always been proactive in answering the call to aid from our beloved Madre Patria. In fact, we at NIAF had created the Italian American Relief Fund for just this type of event after the 2012 earthquake in Emilia Romagna. But I also knew the effort that would be required to reach out to donors and supporters to ask for their help and consideration. And, let's face it, we Italian Americans are often better at tearing one another apart than building efforts together!



Michelle Capobianco's front-yard fundraising in Port Washington, N.Y.



Courtesy of Michelle Capobianco

When I finally made contact with our team here in Washington, however, I was incredibly and pleasantly surprised to find that so many of you, the members and supporters of our Foundation, had not only beat me to the punch, but had begun to send donations, plan events, and undertake your own local fundraising projects so that we could do our part for these shattered regions. I was thrilled to find the member organizations of our Italian American Relief Fund coalition (see page 5) had already begun to rally to the cause, and dozens of new Italian American groups were not only reaching out to partner with us, but were already working on countless initiatives to support the fund.

In the first 24 hours after the disaster, with nothing more than a few e-mails and social media posts, our community raised over \$60,000. By the next day, as I boarded a flight from Rome to New York, my final glance at the relief website revealed that we had doubled that amount; and soon we had raised more than one-quarter of a million dollars in grass roots donations.

At the time of this writing, our coalition has grown to include individuals like you and me, dozens of Italian American organizations throughout the country, and engaged corporate partners like Brooks Brothers and CNH Industrial who have continued to raise funds to support not only immediate needs, but future reconstruction efforts in the affected areas.

Over these last few trying weeks, stories about NIAF members of all ages, lending themselves to these efforts in so many creative ways, have

reached us from around the country. I've learned of people going door-to-door in their neighborhoods, hosting fund-raising dinners, and doing all they can to spread the word. I particularly loved the story of Michelle Capobianco, a private chef from Port Washington, N.Y., who along with her family sold 21 pounds of pasta on their lawn, raising nearly \$2,000 for the relief efforts! Italian Americans bringing food and family (two things we do better than anyone else) together to help those in need.

I'm so proud of the fact that our Italian American community, even after generations in the United States, continues to see ourselves as somehow responsible to be an aid and support in times of need for Italy. I'm even more proud, however, of the fact that as our community continues to grow and evolve, we do so in an ever-closer and more selfless way. The money we will send and the projects we will support will be testament to the great things our great Italian American family can accomplish when we come together. But that will not be the only testament we leave. The legacy of cooperation, selflessness and support that the institutions and individuals throughout our community have displayed in these critical days and weeks will be yet another step in the march towards an ever stronger and more effective, and united Italian American community. Because, at the end of the day, we might bicker and infight, but in times like these, when our efforts really matter, we Italian Americans continue to put others before ourselves...and that is something I am very proud to be a part of. ▲

41st Anniversary Gala Preview

COME CELEBRATE NIAF'S 41 YEARS WITH US!

It's that time of year again! Please join us October 14-15 for the National Italian American Foundation's special annual weekend of Italian American pride when we celebrate our 41st Anniversary at the Washington Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, in Washington, D.C.!

This year, NIAF enters its fifth decade since a small group of visionary and dedicated leaders of the Italian American community joined together to create a national organization designed to serve the Italian American community. The first NIAF Gala Dinner took place at The Washington Hilton and attracted more than 2,000 guests, including such notables as President Gerald Ford, presidential candidate Jimmy Carter, vice-presidential candidate Walter Mondale and 150 Members of Congress. "Never before in history" had there been "a meeting with such political power present in one room," Pulitzer Prize-winning Washington Post columnist Mary McGrory wrote of that spectacular evening.

NIAF invites you to join us this October to commemorate 41 remarkable years of fulfilling our mission as the only national organization dedicated to preserving and protecting the Italian American heritage, educating tomorrow's leaders of the Italian American community, speaking for Italian Americans in the nation's capital, and facilitating positive cultural, commerce and government connections between the United States and Italy. Today, the Italian American community is beginning to come together like never before to ensure a promising future! When you attend NIAF's Anniversary Gala, you'll not only become part of the excitement, you're also supporting NIAF's continuing evolution and service to the community.

This year's Gala promises to be a weekend filled with guest stars, distinguished and accomplished honorees, plus memorable entertainment and events that can change your life! The two-day affair will feature NIAF University, a Friday-night Gala kickoff party with live entertainment, several film screenings, our now famous all-day Expo Italiana festival including the popular Mike's Deli free lunch and wine tastings, and dozens of vendors, all culminating with Saturday evening's receptions and the NIAF 41st Anniversary Gala Awards Dinner. And, if you've never stayed for the After Gala Party, known to go all night long, well, you have missed out. Don't miss out this year — on all of the Gala events!

Reserve your tickets today! Proceeds benefit NIAF's educational programs. For tickets or sponsorship opportunities, contact Jerry Jones at 202-387-0600 or jerry@niaf.org. For more information and to register online, visit www.niaf.org/gala.



NIAF UNIVERSITY

Dig deeper into your Italian heritage and uncover what you may have forgotten with NIAF University!

Discuss the importance of discovering your Italian roots with "Genealogy Roadshow" (PBS-TV) cohost Mary Tedesco! Learn the basics of *la bella lingua* with the Italian Cultural Society of Washington, D.C. Enjoy a delicious cooking demonstration showcasing the best traditional recipes with Domenica Marchetti, author of seven Italian cooking books. Take in a history lesson on gelato and learn all there is to know of the delicious Italian delicacy during this

gelato tasting with recently crowned World Gelato Champion Gianluigi Dellacio of D.C.-based Dolci Gelati. And, join Umberto Mucci, author of "We The Italians," as he discusses 100 interviews he conducted through four years in the United States and Italy.

All NIAF University seminars are free and open to the public, and a great way for Italians and those with a love for Italy to connect with the heritage. Friday, October 14, with seminars scheduled from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Seating is limited. For more information, please call 202-939-3107.



JOE PISCOPO & LENA PRIMA KICKOFF NIAF'S 41ST ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION!

Bring Your Swing for this dance-crazed, Italian American Variety Show with Joe Piscopo and Lena Prima, the singing daughter of music legend Louis Prima! Whether this veteran Vegas entertainer and New Orleans musical fixture is revisiting her father's upbeat songs or lowering the house lights with beautiful ballads, Lena Prima will dazzle you. And Piscopo does Sinatra and the great American Songbook like no one else.

So dance the night away! The beat goes on late into the wee hours as Lena is joined by several

guest-star performers in an atmosphere recalling Piemonte, NIAF's 2016 Region of Honor! Our open bars will be serving custom Italian cocktails! And don't forget to check out the evening's selection of amazing silent auction items and bid on once-in-a-lifetime live auction opportunities — including Italian luxury items and special trips to Italy!

Insider Tip: Check out NIAF's Dine Around roster of nearby excellent restaurants offering ticketholders to this show special dinner prices for kicking off the night right! For a listing of participating restaurants, visit www.niaf.org/gala.

This ticketed event is open to the public, so we're expecting a full house. Make your reservations now! Doors will open at 9 p.m. For more information, 202-939-3100 or buy tickets online at www.niaf.org/gala.



EXPO ITALIANA

Showcasing the best of Italy, NIAF's one and only Expo Italiana has become the largest Italian festival in the nation's capital and one of the largest on the East Coast! Last year's Expo attracted more than 3,000 visitors!

The Expo is FREE and open to the public, so expect a big, fun-loving, Italophile crowd all day on Saturday, October 15.

Enjoy the familiar tastes, sights and sounds of Italian American life and of Italy while mingling among the Italian and Italian American exhibitors. Indulge in food and drinks, coffee and sweets, provided by our premier partners, from Peroni Nastro Azzurro and Lavazza to DelGrosso Foods and Dolci Gelati, among others.

Spend Saturday morning and afternoon visiting the brands and products you love or discover new ones, from Amina



Rubinacci to Via Umbria! Learn about Italian dual citizenship, genealogy, language and travel programs with Your Italian Passport to My Italian Family. Plan your VIP Baseball experience with Mint Pros! View NIAF's 2016 Photo Contest winners' images and visit our Italian American Museum exhibit, curated by NIAF's Museum Fellows.

Slip behind the wheel of featured high-end cars on display, like the new California T Ferrari! Throughout the day, we will have live music by singer/songwriter Ciro Di Lorenzo; and face painting and other fun activities at the Kids Korner.

Expo Italiana is the place to meet, mingle and feel at home during the NIAF Gala Weekend! No registration necessary, no tickets to buy, just show up and enjoy! For more information, please call 202-939-3107.



NIAF BOCCE AND PINSTRIPES BOCCE OPEN

In the spirit of the Summer Olympic Games in Rio, NIAF and local favorite Pinstripes Georgetown are teaming up to present our first official Bocce Tournament! Thirty-two teams (of two players each) will compete in a single-elimination competition through the Expo Italiana festival.

Our Gold, Silver and Bronze medalists will all go home with great prizes — with the top team winning a pair of round-trip flights to Italy courtesy of Alitalia! Registration is required. For full tournament rules and details and to register your team, please visit niaf.org/bocce. The Bocce Tournament is FREE and open to the public; for more information, please call 202-939-3107.



FILMMAKERS WORKSHOP & FORUM WITH ANTHONY AND JOSEPH RUSSO

In a special Filmmakers Workshop, join the phenomenal film-making duo Anthony and Joseph Russo, directors of TV's "Arrested Development" and "Community," and on the big screen "Captain America: The Winter Soldier" and "Captain America: Civil War," for an in-depth discussion on the art of filmmaking. And stay afterward for an exclusive Meet & Greet with the Russo brothers. Saturday, October 15, 1-3 p.m. This event is FREE and open to the public, but seat is limited seating. For more information, please call 202-939-3107.



SPECIAL FILM SCREENINGS

Over the Gala Weekend, guests and the public are invited to view screenings



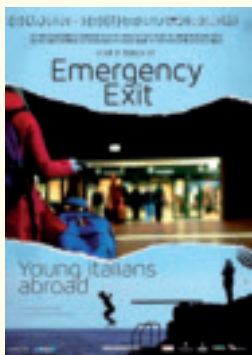
of three exceptional films. On Friday, NIAF University will feature a 12 noon screening of filmmaker Mary Paley's remarkable documentary "The Neighborhood that Disappeared," about a massive 1962 urban renewal

project that removed the cultural and ethnic heart of Albany, N.Y.

On Saturday, at 9:30 a.m., NIAF presents "When the World Answered: Florence, Women Artists and the 1966 Flood," a PBS-produced documentary about the devastating Flood of the Arno River in Florence, Italy, that damaged or destroyed thousands of works of priceless art.



And, on Saturday at 11 a.m., please join Italian director and producer Brunella Fili for an exclusive screening, followed by a Q&A, of "Emergency Exit," which tells the tale of the consequences that the last 20 years of Italian politics have had on Italy's young generation. This event is FREE and open to the public, but seating is limited. For more information, please call 202-939-3107.



MIKE'S DELI BRINGS BACK THE FREE LUNCH!

For the third consecutive Gala weekend, NIAF's great friend and amazing partner, David Greco and his world-famous Mike's Deli, direct from Arthur Avenue in the Bronx, N.Y., will again dish out an old-fashioned Italian sandwich lunch with trimmings! For Free! It's our way of saying thank you to our supporters and friends.

And, new to Expo Italia and Mike's Deli will

be a Wine-sampling Pavilion. Just purchase your wine-tasting tickets in person, next to Mike's Deli, to sample some of Italy's finest! To buy wine tasting tickets ahead of time, visit www.niaf.org/gala.



RESERVE YOUR ROOM NOW AT THE WASHINGTON MARRIOTT WARDMAN PARK HOTEL

NIAF will be hosting its 41st Anniversary Gala weekend at The Washington Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, one of the premier hotels in the nation's capital, located at 2660 Woodley Rd NW, Washington, D.C. We're excited about the great accommodations, classy ballroom and spacious exhibition area!

Join your friends and support our efforts by booking your room(s) within our room block at the Washington Marriott Wardman Park for some of the best rates in town. Book your reservation at www.niaf.org/gala or call the hotel at 1-800-328-2000 and ask for a "NIAF room block" reservation.



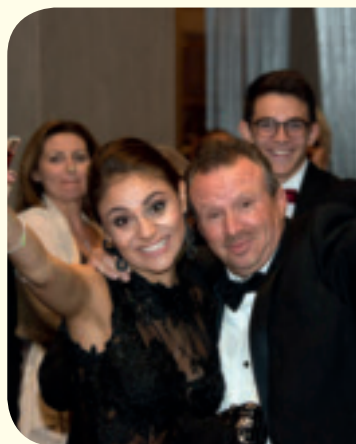


BUT, WAIT! THERE'S MORE!

Throughout the Gala Weekend, you're invited to sit in on several other workshops and seminars exploring topics of interest to Italian Americans and the Italian American community. Among them are the "Women Leaders in Advanced Cancer Research" Conference; the annual NIAF-Ieri, Oggi, Domani Forum that this year focuses on "The Future of Little Italys"; and the NIAF-IALC Leadership Forum discussing the problems and benefits surrounding dual citizenship and the Italian American vote. These events are FREE and open to the public. For more information, please call 202-939-3107.

WINDING DOWN (OR UP) AT THE NIAF AFTER HOURS CELEBRATION...

Untie your bowtie after the Gala and join in the most famous Italian party in America, featuring live music and spirited sing-alongs with singer/songwriter **Ciro Di Lorenzo**. This is an After Hours party not to be missed!



NIAF Toasts Its Distinguished Honorees

This year's honorees exemplify Italian and Italian American achievement at its highest levels! NIAF's 2016 Gala honorees:

Joe & Anthony Russo

Film Directors of "Arrested Development," "Community," "Captain America: The Winter Soldier" and "Captain America: Civil War," among others..



Stefano Pessina

Executive Vice Chairman and CEO of Walgreens Boots Alliance Inc.



Franco Harris

NFL Pittsburgh Steelers and Seattle Seahawks Hall of Famer



Linda Mastandrea

Paralympian Track & Field Athlete



Tony Renis

Italian Singer & Songwriter



The National Organization of Italian American Women

SUNDAY MORNING HIGH MASS IN ITALIAN

Conclude Gala Weekend at Holy Rosary Church, the Italian National Parish of Washington. Holy Rosary Church was established in 1913 to serve the Italian immigrants who first lived in its immediate neighborhood. 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. at the Holy Rosary Church, 595 3rd St NW, Washington, D.C.



Visit www.niaf.org/gala for updates on honorees, special guests and celebrities attending the Gala, and for more information on purchasing tickets, sponsoring the gala and becoming part of NIAF's 41st Anniversary Gala and Convention.

Big Apple Strong!

**NIAF's
New
York
Gala
2016**



Excitement filled the air as guests entered the legendary Cipriani 42nd Street for the National Italian American Foundation's annual New York Gala on April 28 — an event that has become a power-packed mainstay of the Big Apple's social-and-networking calendar.

Sports fans lined the entrance outside awaiting the arrival of honoree Mike Piazza, who would be inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in July. Gala guests and notables mingled inside during the pre-dinner reception featuring Bellini cocktails beneath the towering Renaissance-inspired marble columns.

Along with Piazza, legendary St. Johns University basketball coach Luigi P. "Lou" Carnesecca headlined the list of distinguished honorees of industry executives in business, finance and real estate — Frank Bisignano, chairman and chief executive officer of First Data Corporation; Michael J. Inserra, Americas vice chairman at EY; and Arthur J. Mirante II, principal and tri-state president at Avison Young.

Joining the honorees and guests were actors Michael Badalucco and Tony LoBianco; former MLB managers Ken Aspromonte and Bobby Valentine, MLB third baseman Bob Aspromonte; and Denver Nuggets Sr. Vice President Pete D'Alessandro. Italian dignitaries included Italy's Consul General in New York Francesco Genuardi and delegates from the Foundation's 2016 Region of Honor — Piemonte, Italy.

Before the program, guests viewed Silent Auction's sports memorabilia, fine jewelry and designer women's purses. And, later, radio personality Skeery Jones kicked off the live auction with two tickets to the Hollywood premier of the upcoming Martin Scorsese movie "Devil in the White City" starring Leonardo DiCaprio; and a NIAF dinner series with actor Paul Sorvino.

Guests dined on Italian specialties — pan seared sea scallops, prosciutto with fresh mozzarella and baby arugula salad. Opera singer Cristina Fontanelli sang the U.S. national anthem and Italy's national anthem. And the Sicilian Tenors serenaded guests with a selection of songs, including "O Sole Mio" and "Mistero."



To close the festivities, guests enjoyed ricotta cheese cake and espresso by Lavazza while NIAF's President John M. Viola thanked the honorees, guests and sponsors (including Title Sponsor, First Data; and Presenting Sponsors, Bank of America, Columbus Citizens Foundation and SkyBridge Capital LLC). "We Italian Americans are the luckiest people in the world," said Viola.

— Elissa Ruffino

Jason Isolini for the National Italian American Foundation



NIAF Board member Charlie Turano; NIAF President John M. Viola; Patricia Russo and NIAF Board Member and ISDA President Basil Russo



iItaly-TV interviewing NIAF Chairman Joseph V. Del Raso



Grand performance by The Sicilian Tenors — Aaron Caruso, Elio Scaccio and Sam Vitale



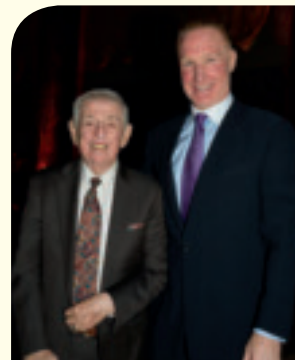
Hall of Fame Inductee and Gala Honoree Mike Piazza with Former Baseball Manager Bobby Valentine



NIAF President John M. Viola; Joseph R. Guccione, recipient of the second-annual Mario M. Cuomo Award in Public Service and newly elected NIAF Board member; and NIAF Board member Vincent Viola



NIAF Board member Linda R. Carlozzi and NIAF Vice Chair Patricia de Stacy Harrison remember the late Marie L. Garibaldi, NIAF executive vice president and former New Jersey Supreme Court Justice who passed away in January.



Honoree Luigi P. "Lou" Carnesecca, legendary coach of St. John's University's basketball team, with former NBA player and current St. John Red Storm Head Coach Chris Mullin



New York Gala Dinner Chairman and NIAF Board member Gerard S. LaRocca and NIAF Vice Chairman Gabriel A. Battista



Gala host Joe Piscopo and honoree Frank Bisignano



Actors Michael Badalucco and Tony LoBianco with Alyse LoBianco

NIAF's Mission To Italy

BOARD AND IALC MEMBERS VISIT PIEMONTE

Annually, an official delegation of NIAF's executive committee, Board members, and Italian American Leadership Council (IALC) members tour the cities, government centers, industrial complexes, and countryside of that year's NIAF Region of Honor. The purpose: to build cultural bridges and strengthen economic ties between the United States and Italy.

From June 5-11, NIAF Chairman Joseph V. Del Raso, President John M. Viola, and members of the delegation traveled to Piemonte, NIAF's 2016 Region of Honor. Besides meeting with government officials, corporate executives and entrepreneurs, the delegation's itinerary in Torino, the region's capital city, included visiting the Restoration Center of La Reggia di Venaria, one of the residences of the Royal Savoy Family. The group privately toured the National Museum of Cinema; Torino's famed Egyptian Museum; and the neoclassical Church of Gran Madre di Dio. During a stirring visit to the Turin Cathedral and Chapel of the Holy Shroud, and to the Museum of the Holy Shroud, the delegation pledged a NIAF grant to help repair water-damaged ceilings in the museum's lovely historic chapel.

NIAF leadership also visited FIAT Chrysler Automobiles' Abarth plant, FIAT's racing division, where they test drove a FIAT 500 Abarth; and ALTEC S.p.A., an aerospace logistics and engineering company that works on the International Space Station.

As is tradition during the NIAF Mission to Italy, the delegation met the 20 college students in the 2016 Ambassador Peter F. Secchia Voyage of Discovery Program — NIAF's annual all-expenses paid trip introducing participants to their ancestral homeland.

The delegation also visited the city of Biella, known for the Sanctuary of Oropa, site of religious pilgrimages, and met with executives at the Unione Industriale of Biella.

After Torino, the delegation traveled to the medieval commune of Santo Stefano Belbo and enjoyed the surrounding Langhe area famous for its wines, cheeses and truffles.



Carlo Piccolo

The NIAF delegation with Guido Curto, director of the Palazzo Madama e Casaforte degli Acaja, a palace in Torino, overlooking Piazza Castello, that was the first Senate of modern Italy.



NIAF Italia

NIAF Board member and NIAF Italia President Paolo Catafamo, NIAF Chairman Joseph V. Del Raso and NIAF President John M. Viola on stage at the NIAF Italia Cena di Gala in Torino



NIAF Italia

NIAF President John M. Viola interviewed by an Italian TV crew



Carlo Piccolo

The NIAF delegation visits the FIAT Chrysler Automobiles' Abarth plant,



NIAF Italia

NIAF Chairman Joseph V. Del Raso and President of the Region of Piemonte Sergio Chiamparino, at Palazzo Madama in Piazza Castello, Torino



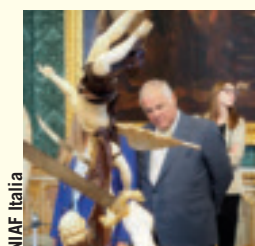
NIAF Italia

NIAF General Counsel Arthur J. Furia, and NIAF Board members Louis E. Tosi and Joseph R. Guccione stroll through the courtyard of the magnificent La Venaria Reale, once a residence of the Royal House of Savoy dating to 1675.



NIAF Italia

NIAF International Liaison Carlo Piccolo, Dorothy Giordano and NIAF Board Member Frank Giordano; Patricia Russo and NIAF Board Member Basil Russo. In back, NIAF Board Member Louis Tosi and Mary Ellen Tosi talk with actor Daniel McVicar (Clarke Garrison on "The Bold and the Beautiful") at the Piazza Carlo Alberto in Turin



NIAF Italia

NIAF Board member Frank Giordano in the art museum at the Palazzo Madama



NIAF Italia

Dinner at La Smarrita Restaurant



Carlo Piccolo

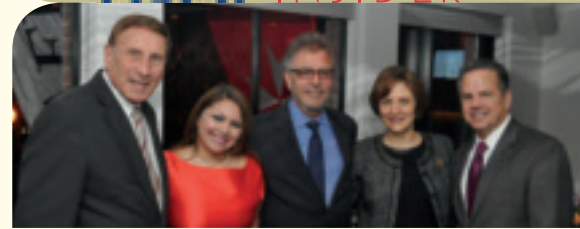
NIAF Board Members Frank Giordano, Basil Russo and Robert Allegrini; Archbishop of Torino Monsignor Cesare Nosiglia; NIAF Chairman Joseph V. Del Raso; NIAF President John M. Viola; NIAF Board Member and NIAF Italia Chairman Paolo Catafamo; Davide Rafanelli of NIAF Italia; and NIAF Board Member Louis Tosi, at the Church of the Holy Shroud in Turin where NIAF was presented with one of only three official, blessed, full-sized replicas of the Holy Shroud of Turin.

IALC Congressional Dinner

On March 1, at the IALC Congressional Dinner, NIAF Board members and members of the Italian American Leadership Council converged at the famed Cafe Milano in Georgetown to welcome longstanding and new members of the Italian American Congressional Delegation. The culinary evening was topped off when U.S. House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi escaped a busy schedule to join the celebration.



NIAF President John M. Viola and U.S. House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi



U.S. Rep. John Mica; NIAF Secretary and Ohio State Sen. Capri S. Cafaro; WETA Producer of the PBS documentary "The Italian Americans" Jeff Bieber; U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici and U.S. Rep. David Cicilline.



NIF Board Member Dr. John P. Rosa, Keith Rosa, and NIAF Board Member and former congressman Mike Ferguson



U.S. House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi and NIAF Vice Chair Patricia de Stacy Harrison



U.S. Rep. Pat Tiberi, co-chair of the Italian American Congressional Delegation; NIAF General Counsel Arthur J. Furia; NIAF Treasurer Robert E. Carlucci; and NIAF Board Member Joseph D. Lonardo



IALC Member Sam Vitale and Leesha Vitale

All IALC Congressional Dinner Photos by Don Oldenburg



U.S. Rep. John Mica with U.S. Sen. Joe Manchin and NIAF Board Member Frank Giordano



NIAF Board Member Anita Bevacqua McBride and Cafe Milano owner Franco Nuschese



NIAF Board Member Robert V. Allegrini with IALC member and NIAF Area Representative Al Minite



Nancy DeSanti, Abruzzo and Molise Heritage Society 1st Vice President; U.S. Rep. Pat Tiberi; and IALC Member Maria D'Andrea, President of the Abruzzo and Molise Heritage Society – a NIAF Affiliate

Public Policy Forum On Capitol Hill

On April 21, NIAF hosted a Frank J. Guarini Public Policy Forum luncheon on Capitol Hill welcoming Italy's new Ambassador to the United States, the Hon. Armando Varricchio. NIAF Board members, IALC members and members of Congress were on hand to hear Varricchio's remarks about Italy and U.S. relations, and his appreciation for the Italian American community.



Italy's new Ambassador to the United States Armando Varricchio



NIAF Vice Chair Patricia de Stacey Harrison, Ambassador Armando Varricchio, and NIAF Board Member Anita Bevacqua McBride



Ambassador Armando Varricchio and House Democratic Leader Rep. Nancy Pelosi



U.S. Rep. Rosa L. DeLauro, Ambassador Armando Varricchio, and U.S. Rep. John Mica

NIAF's 4th Annual Congressional Bocce Tournament

NIAF once again took to the rooftop outdoor bocce court at the offices of sponsor Venable LLP in downtown Washington, D.C., and once again the annual tournament pitting members of Congress and Foundation Board and IALC members was forced inside by stormy weather. This was the fourth consecutive rain-out, so experience prevailed as guests rolled-up their sleeves and paired off for some casual competition and political conversation rolling the bocce balls across the carpeted floors.



IALC Member Maria D'Andrea, president of the Abruzzo and Molise Heritage Society, and NIAF Board Member Louis E. Tosi by the outdoor bocce court before the rain came



NIAF Board Member Joseph D. Lonardo and NIAF Director of Programs Gabriella Mileti



Above: Congressmen Pat Tiberi and Bill Pascrell Jr. take on IALC Member Sam Vitale and his son Jon Vitale



NIAF Board Member Joseph M. Della Ratta, NIAF Vice Chair Gabriel A. Battista, NIAF Treasurer Robert E. Carlucci, NIAF Vice Chair Patricia de Stacy Harrison, Co-Chairs of the Italian American Congressional Delegation U.S. Rep. Pat Tiberi and U.S. Rep. Bill Pascrell Jr., NIAF Board members Joseph D. Lonardo, Mark Valente III, Louis E. Tosi, and Michael J. Zarrelli



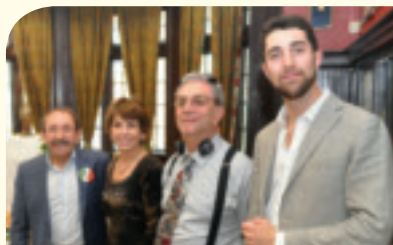
Above: Paolo Toschi, diplomatic counselor at the Domestic Political and Congressional Affairs Section at the Italian Embassy; U.S. Rep. Bill Pascrell Jr.; and Andrea Catalano, first counselor at the Press and Information Office at the Italian Embassy



NIAF Treasurer Robert E. Carlucci, NIAF Board Member Joseph M. Della Ratta and NIAF Vice Chair Gabriel A. Battista strategizing

St. Joseph's Table

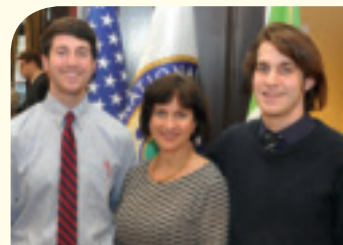
On March 16, NIAF celebrated the traditional Italian and Sicilian "La Tavola di San Giuseppe" (The Feast of St. Joseph), inviting the public to our St. Joseph's Table. Some 75 members and friends brought non-perishable food items that NIAF donated to local charities, and enjoyed an evening of wine and appetizers with freshly homemade zeppole donated by Mike Savino of National Masonry, who is a member of the Holy Rosary Church in Washington, D.C.



Mike Savino, Judy Damiani, Tony Spadaforu and Stefano Zordan



Joe Falcone, Nicci Falcone and their son Leo Falcone



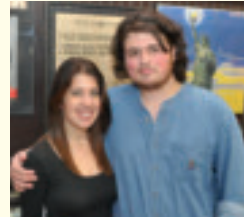
IALC member Jeanne Allen with sons John and Ted



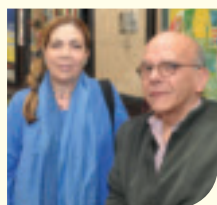
Sarah Scott, Joe Cianfrani and Mario Principe



NIAF President John M. Viola and Joe Cosentino, IALC member and Regional Vice President of the NIAF Capital Region



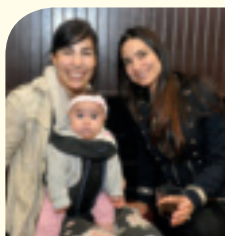
Haylee Pearson and her brother Graham Pearson, who participated in NIAF's 2015 Voyage of Discovery program in Lombardia



Lucia Ruggiero and Eustacio de la Roche

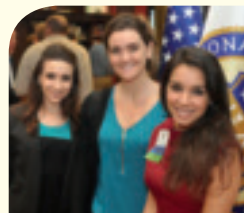


Antipasti and sweets



Andrea Rojas with her baby, Donatta, and actress Raffaella O'Neill

Michelle Tomasetti, Katie Collins and NIAF Director of Programs Gabriella Mileti



NIAF New York Golf Tournament

NIAF's annual New York Golf Tournament kicked off on June 7 with a reception and scholarship ceremony at the Pier A-Harbor House in Battery Park, the southern tip of Manhattan. A month later, the tournament tee'd off on August 8 at the beautiful fairways and greens of the Old Westbury Golf & Country Club in Old Westbury, N.Y. Each year, the tournament benefits the Foundation's scholarship and educational programs for the New York area.



Frank Mancini;
Antonio Biondi;
James Halpin;
Nicholas Caiazzo



Howard Wechsler



Emmy-award winning journalist and co-anchor of NBC 4 New York's "Today in New York" Michael Gargiulo with St. Francis College student Alexa Castelluccio, of Astoria, Queens, N.Y. She was awarded the first National Italian American Foundation Michael Gargiulo Scholarship in Broadcasting and Communications.

NIAF Board Member Nicholas Caiazzo during the NIAF New York Golf Kick-Off Reception



NIAF Board Member Nicholas Caiazzo, Anthony Migliore, Monsignor Jamie J. Gigantiello, Dorotea Cicco and Catherine Cicco

Howard Wechsler



Joseph Bellina; Stephanie Merkel; Bill Masella and Jeff Duarte

Howard Wechsler

Howard Wechsler

Denise Vivolo;
NIAF Greater New York Regional Coordinator Susan Paolercio;
NIAF Board Member Nicholas Caiazzo; and Angelo Vivolo



NIAF on Campus

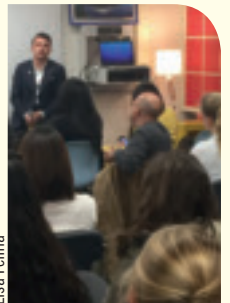
In its continuing mission to recognize, support and mentor the future leaders of the Italian American community, the Foundation's NIAF On Campus program connects with college students actively involved in university Italian clubs nationwide and

On April 13, NIAF On Campus made a road trip to American University, in Washington, D.C., where, at a reception (far right), NIAF President John M. Viola spoke to students involved in AU's Italian Studies curriculum. At right, Viola and Ranieri Moore Cavaceppi, American University professor and one of the NIAF on Campus Fellowship professors.

And, on April 23, members of the University of Delaware's Italian Club visited NIAF Headquarters at the Ambassador Peter F. Secchia Building in Washington, D.C., where NIAF President John M. Viola (at left) toured the students and faculty through the Foundation's Italian American Museum exhibits.



Lisa Femia



Lisa Femia

The NIAF 2016 Regional Spring Tour

In an unprecedented effort to connect with NIAF members and affiliates, and reach out to other Italian American organizations nationwide, NIAF President John M. Viola, NIAF Board members and NIAF staff members made a whirlwind NIAF tour this spring, traveling to eight U.S. cities in six days, from April 15-20.

First stops were in Dallas and Houston. In Dallas, the NIAF contingent met with NIAF Board Member Charlie Turano and local leaders of the Italian American community at Lombardo Custom Apparel, followed by a luncheon at Antonio Ristorante. The Houston itinerary included an event at the Italian Cultural and Community Center where ICCB Board members and the Consul General of Italy in Houston joined in.

On April 16, the NIAF Regional Tour swept into Phoenix to meet with local Italian American organizations in Arizona and NIAF's Desert Regional Vice President Al Carfora, discussing collaboration and the future of the Italian American community at a luncheon at Veneto Trattoria in Scottsdale.

In Las Vegas, on April 17, the NIAF contingent visited one of NIAF's affiliate organizations, the Italian American Society Club. The Italian American Club of Southern Nevada hosted NIAF at its annual Italian American Scholarship Awards Ceremony, where Clark County

students received awards in collaboration with The Augustus Society, The Sons of Italy and NIAF.

On April 18, in Grand Rapids, Mich., NIAF President John M. Viola and Board members Dr. John Rosa and Anita Bevacqua McBride met with Ambassador Peter F. Secchia to discuss the Foundation's signature Voyage of Discovery program which the Ambassador graciously endowed.

In Cleveland, the NIAF group met with a NIAF affiliate organization, the Northern Ohio Italian American Foundation (NOIA), and local Italian American leaders at Michaelangelo's in Cleveland's Little Italy neighborhood. The NIAF travelers also met with NIAF Board Member and Regional Coordinator Basil Russo, president of the Order Italian Sons & Daughters of America, at Angelo's Nido Italia Restaurant.

NIAF hosted an event at the Heinz History Center, in Pittsburgh, on April 19, where guests took a private tour of the Italian American Exhibit by Melissa E. Marinaro, curator of the Italian American program.

The last stop on NIAF's Regional Tour was the vibrant Italian American community of Providence, R.I., where NIAF well-traveled reps visited the historic Federal Hill neighborhood and hosted a reception at the Aurora Civic Association with Judge Frank Caprio and honored guests.



NIAF Board Member Anita Bevacqua McBride speaks with Italian American community and business leaders in Dallas.

Doug Dellasandro, Jay Lombardo, Luigi Mungoli at the NIAF luncheon at Antonio Ristorante in Addison, Texas.



NIAF Board members Dr. John Rosa and Charles Turano with Jay Lombardo, NIAF President John M. Viola, and Dominic Ricciardi at Lombardo Custom Apparel, in Dallas.

Ambassador Peter F. Secchia gives the NIAF representatives a tour of his historic photography and memorabilia from his days as the U.S. Ambassador to Italy.



NIAF President John M. Viola and NIAF Board members Dr. John Rosa and Anita Bevacqua McBride meet with Ambassador Peter F. Secchia



Dinner with NOIA and local Italian American leaders at Michaelangelo's in Cleveland's Little Italy neighborhood.



Above: After lunch, Basil Russo took the NIAF contingent on a tour of Cleveland's Little Italy; stopping by Presti's to purchase cookies to take on the road!

Left: Basil Russo, NIAF Board Member and Regional Coordinator; John M. Viola, NIAF President and COO; and Dr. John Russo, NIAF Board Member





Board members and staffers of NIAF and the Italian Cultural and Community Center in Houston with Elena Sgarbi, the Italian Consul General of Texas (center).



Above: NIAF Board member Dr. John P. Rosa, NIAF Executive Vice President Kenneth J. Aspromonte, NIAF President John M. Viola, and NIAF Board Member Charles Turano in Houston.

NIAF's Regional Event Manager Andrea Bartlett; Marino Godi, president of the Italian Association of Arizona; and Mare Chiaramonte, president of the Arizona Sons of Italy



NIAF Regional Event Manager Andrea Bartlett, NIAF President John M. Viola, and Italian Cultural and Community Center Board members Margie Di Puma and Jo Ann Pinkerton in Houston



NIAF Board member Charles Turano, and NIAF Executive Assistant to the President Stephanie Gordon at Scottsdale's Veneto Trattoria.

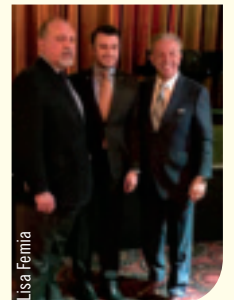


Working session with Jay Fuller (at the end of the table), president of the Arizona American Italian Club, and to his left, NIAF's President John M. Viola and NIAF Desert Regional Vice President Al Carfora

Right: NIAF President John M. Viola and Edward Bevilacqua of Ciao Tutti, the publication of the Italian American Club of Southern Nevada



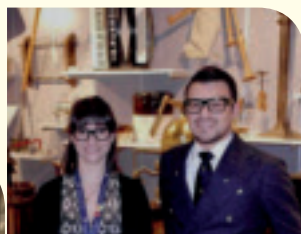
NIAF President John M. Viola, and NIAF Board members Charles Turano and John Rosa at the Italian American Social Club of Las Vegas.



Dominic Gentile, editor in chief of La Voce; NIAF President John Viola; and Angelo A. Cassaro, president of the Italian American Club of Southern Nevada



NIAF Area Representative Claire DeMarco, Pittsburgh Councilman Corey O'Conner, and Mary DeMarco, Claire's Aunt.



Melissa E. Marinaro, curator of the Heinz Museum's Italian American Program, and John M. Viola, NIAF President



NIAF President John M. Viola with NIAF Scholarship recipient Serena Schibetta and her family during a luncheon at the Italian American Social Club of Las Vegas



View of the Italian American Exhibit at Heinz Museum in Pittsburgh



Judge Frank Caprio and NIAF President John M. Viola



Rev. Anthony Verdelotti; NIAF Regional Coordinator of New England and IALC member Valentina Vezza; NIAF President John M. Viola; and Judge Frank Caprio

NIAF Hosts Events at the Republican and Democratic National Conventions

In July, NIAF hosted events at both presidential nominating conventions to celebrate Italian American delegates and politicians.

At the Republican National Convention in Cleveland, Ohio, NIAF hosted a VIP dinner that was attended by members of Congress, delegates, NIAF leadership, and prominent members of the Cleveland community, including the CEO of the Cleveland Cavaliers.

At the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia, Pa., NIAF co-hosted a late night party with the Italian American Democratic Leadership Council. Leader Nancy Pelosi and Mayor Bill DeBlasio welcomed guests, including members of Congress, prominent Italian American democrats, delegates, and supporters of the community from around the country.

— Lisa Femia



NIAF Board Member Mark Valente III, Majority Whip U.S. Rep. Steve Scalise, and Quicken Loans CEO William Emerson at the RNC dinner



Marlene Collucci, Shelley Hymes, NIAF Board Member Anita Bevacqua McBride, and Maria Cino. Behind: Mike and Marilyn Uffner at the RNC dinner

IALC Member Chris Berardini, Vice President of Federal Government Affairs, Quicken Loans; Len Komoroski, CEO of the Cleveland Cavaliers and Quicken Loans Arena; U.S. Rep. Pat Tiberi; Quicken Loans CEO William Emerson and NIAF Board Member Mike Zarrelli at the RNC dinner



Above: Members of the DNC Wyoming Delegation
Below: House Democratic Leader Rep. Nancy Pelosi and New York Mayor Bill DeBlasio at the DNC party



NIAF Executive Vice President John F. Calvelli and his son John Domenico Calvelli, with Engel Congressional staffer Bill Weitz, and Congressman Eliot Engel, at the DNC party



CALENDAR

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

NIAF is offering the following special events in the coming months.

For more information, visit niaf.org.

OCTOBER 2016

NIAF 41st Anniversary Awards Gala Weekend

Dates: October 14-15

Location: The Washington Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, Washington, D.C.

Contact: Jerry Jones at 202-939-3102 or jerry@niaf.org

MARCH 2017

NIAF New York Spring Gala

Date: March 22, 2017

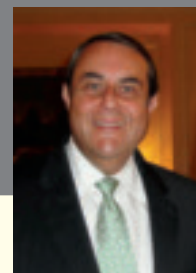
Time: 6:30 p.m. Cocktail Reception; 7:30 p.m. Dinner

Location: Cipriani 42nd Street, 110 East 42nd Street, New York, N.Y.

Contact: Jerry Jones at 202-939-3102 or jerry@niaf.org

REMEMBERING

Since our last Anniversary Gala, the NIAF community has lost two of its remarkable and proud Italian American leaders — Judge Marie L. Garibaldi and Mark Valente III. They will be greatly missed and always remembered by their colleagues on NIAF's Board of Directors and all of their friends at the National Italian American Foundation.



Tony Podesta, founder and President of Podesta group, and Italian journalist Paolo Valentino at the DNC party



THE COLUMBUS CITIZENS FOUNDATION PRESENTS

COLUMBUS CELEBRATION 2016

GALA DINNER:

Waldorf Astoria Ballroom
Saturday, Oct. 8th
6 pm - 11:30 pm

**COLUMBUS CIRCLE
WREATH LAYING:**

Columbus Circle
Sunday, Oct. 9th
10 am - 11 am

MASS:

St. Patrick's Cathedral
Monday, Oct. 10th
9:30 am - 10:30 am

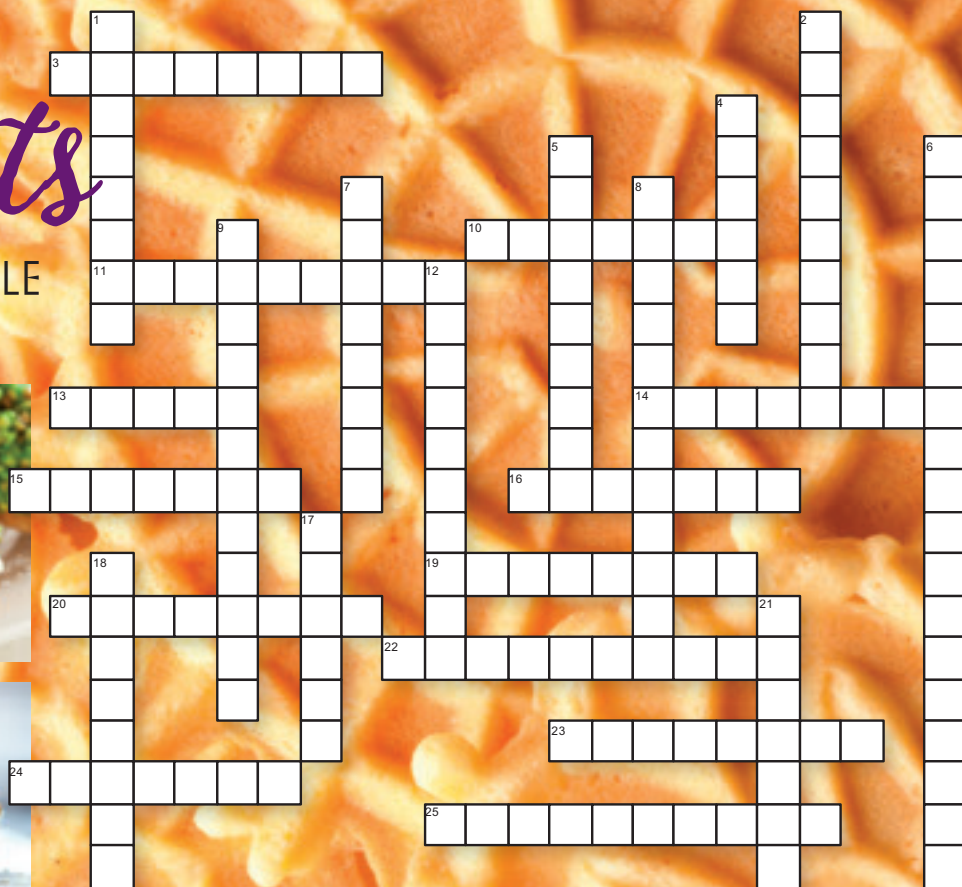
PARADE:

Fifth Avenue
44th - 72nd Street
Monday, Oct. 10th
11:20 am - 4 pm

For more information, visit our website at www.columbuscitizensfd.org.

Desserts

ITALIAN AMERICAN STYLE



by Leon J. Radomile
www.leonradomile.com

ACROSS

- 3 A style of Italian dessert wine. Its name most likely originated from the wines used with the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.
- 10 An Italian pastry dessert of the Sicilian region. They are tube-shaped shells of fried pastry dough, filled with a sweet, creamy filling usually containing ricotta.
- 11 A Neapolitan dish made of deep-fried balls of dough about the size of marbles. Crunchy on the outside and light inside, often mixed with honey and other sweet ingredients.
- 13 Puffy fried chips of dough covered in powdered sugar. A bit of citrus or anise can be used to enhance flavor. Known as "Liar's Cookies" in English.
- 14 These sugar-coated almonds are given out at weddings and baptisms (white coating), or graduations (red coating). Often wrapped in a small tulle bag to give as a favor to guests.
- 15 A molded Italian ice cream made with layers of different colors and flavors, usually containing candied fruits and nuts.
- 16 A fried Italian doughnut. Popular in southern Italy, also known as "St. Joseph's Day cake."
- 19 Italians claim that, in 1565, Bernardo Buontalenti, at the request of Cosimo de' Medici, invented a concoction of cold cream, zabaglione and fruit. As we know it today,

what had Buontalenti invented?

- 20 Italian waffle cookies made from flour, eggs, sugar, butter and flavored with anise or anisette. They were originally made in the port city of Ortona, in the Abruzzo region of southern Italy. The name comes from the Italian word for "round" and "flat."
- 22 A class of semi-frozen desserts, typically ice-cream cakes, semi-frozen custards, and certain fruit tarts.
- 23 A traditional Italian dessert containing fruits and nuts, it dates back to 13th-century Siena.
- 24 A brand name of a sweetened hazelnut cocoa spread.
- 25 A type of hazelnut- or almond-flavored cookie made in Prato, central Italy. Its Italian name translates to "ugly but good."

DOWN

- 1 Originating in the 1960s from the city of Treviso in Veneto, it's a popular coffee-flavored Italian dessert, made of lady's fingers, layered with a whipped mixture of eggs, sugar and mascarpone, flavored with cocoa.
- 2 From the royal court of Savoy and Piedmont came this most famous of all Italian puddings.
- 4 Some of Italy's sweetest wines come from this region where the hot sun concentrates the flavor of the grapes and makes them sweet.
- 5 Cupola-shaped, sweet, bread loaf originally from Milan. A popular Christmas treat.
- 6 Made up of blocks of vanilla, chocolate and strawberry ice cream side-by-side in the same container.
- 7 An Italian baked tart or pie.
- 8 A flourless traditional Italian chocolate-and-almond cake named for the island off the shores of Naples.
- 9 An Italian dessert layering custard and sponge cake, perhaps derived from English trifle.
- 12 A sweetened frozen dessert made with fruit (often from concentrates, juices or purées) that is similar to sorbet.
- 17 The Italian word for ice cream. It typically contains less air and more flavoring than other kinds of frozen desserts, giving it a density and richness that distinguishes it from other ice creams.
- 18 They are twice-baked, oblong-shaped, dry, crunchy and dipped in wine.
- 21 This white nougat has roots in ancient Rome and Spain. The Italian version is a winter and Christmas confection in Italy and first appeared in Cremona in the early 15th century.

Solution

ACROSS
3 Vin Santo
10 Cannoli
11 Struffoli
14 Confetti
15 Spumone
16 Zeppole
19 Ice Cream
20 Pizzelle
22 Semifreddo
23 Panforte
24 Nutella
25 Bruttiboni
DOWN
1 Tiramisu
2 Zabaglione
4 Sicily
5 Panettone
6 Neapolitan
7 Crostata
8 Torta Caprese
9 Zuppa Inglese
12 Italian Ice
17 Gelato
18 Biscotti
21 Torrone

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Sharing VALUES makes you Family!

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