# Ambassador

National Italian American Foundation

Vol . 28, No.2 ▪ Winter 2016 ▪ www.niaf.org



A Merry Mario Christmas

Wine Tasting: Barolo Old and New

Yeah Baby! Iconic Dick Vitale

Mystery of the Shroud

Acqui Terme Hot

Melanie Dunea / CPi Syndication




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# Ambassador

The Publication of the National Italian American Foundation

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CONTENTS



32

## Features


**20** **An Italian Moment**
The 2016 NIAF Photo Contest Winners

**26** **Merry Mario Christmas**
Chef Mario Batali on Food, Traditions and Holiday Entertaining
*By Don Oldenburg*

**32** **Acqui Terme**
Hot, Hot, Hot — and Not Just the Thermal Springs
*By Michelle Fabio*

**36** **Shrouded in Mystery**
Faith, Facts and Fascination at Torino's Museum of the Holy Shroud
*By Don Oldenburg*

**40** **Hidden Parma Lowlands**
Off the Tourist Path in Emilia
*By Francesca Cuoghi*

**44** **Dickie V**
How a High School Basketball Coach Became a National Sports Icon
*By Dick Rosano*

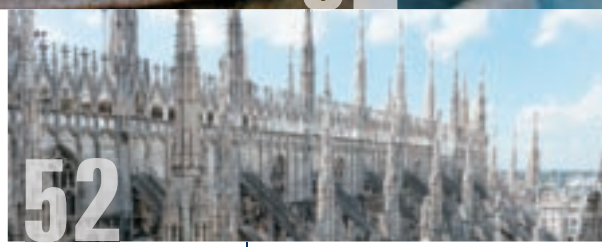
**48** **The Tasting Life**
Orietta Gianjorio Tastes Food for a Living
*By Silvia Donati*

**52** **Secrets of the Duomo**
A Behind-the-Scenes Tour of Milan's Duomo Cathedral
*Story and Photography By Heather von Bargen*

**56** **Barolo Old and New**
Testing the Controversial Difference
*By Dick Rosano*


## Sections


| | |
|---|---|
| Lettere | 4 |
| Foundation Focus | 9 |
| NIAF On Location | 11 |
| Bottega NIAF | 12 |
| Paesani | 14 |
| Ciao Italia | 18 |
| Between The Pages | 60 |
| Cinema | 66 |
| On Sports | 71 |
| Pensieri | 73 |
| NIAF Insider | 74 |
| Crossword | 80 |

52

*On the Cover: Grilling pizza for Christmas morning brunch? Just one of many unusual family traditions for some of us. Renowned Chef Mario Batali has other ideas. He talks about his family, his culinary empire, food and holiday traditions — and offers a few untraditional recipes for holiday entertaining.*

*Cover photograph: Melanie Dunea / CPi Syndication*



40


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# A Holiday Message from the Chairman

By the time this winter issue of Ambassador arrives in your mailbox, I expect you'll already be filled with holiday spirit and all the excitement and joy that makes our most cherished traditions and festive family gatherings so meaningful. So, knowing how busy you are right now, I'll keep this seasonal greeting brief.

First, I do want to tell you about another recent family gathering, one that for many of us gets the ball rolling for the holiday season each year. In mid-October, more than 1,500 members, guests and friends came to Washington, D.C., for NIAF's 41st Anniversary Gala Award Dinner. And more than twice that participated in many Gala Weekend events that included, once again, our not-to-be-missed Expo Italia, which has grown to become the largest Italian festival in the nation's capital.

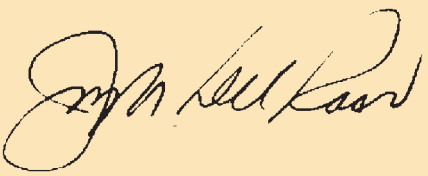
This was a spectacular celebration of the Italian American community, filled with laughs, tears, emotions, memories and talk, lots of talk, and food and drink. Think traditional Italian American Sunday family dinner, except gigantic and lasting the whole weekend! Please take a look at this issue's NIAF Insider section photos for a glimpse of the Gala — and maybe you'll decide to join us in the revelry next year!

On another uplifting note, I want to mention the amazing outpouring of kindness and support to help those areas of Italy tragically stuck by several earthquakes in 2016. As I write this, The Italian American Relief Fund (www.ItalianAmericanRelief.org), established by NIAF to help Italy in times of need, has collected $620,357 since that devastating earthquake on August 24 that destroyed parts of central Italy and claimed nearly 300 lives. Please keep Italy in your hearts and prayers as we enjoy this season of caring and generosity.

I also want to thank you all for your continued support of the National Italian American Foundation. Our educational work is important in preserving and protecting our heritage and culture, and making sure it is passed on to future generations of Italian Americans. So, grazie mille. And, in the next few weeks, as this year draws to a close and the challenges and exciting possibilities of 2017 fast approach, please consider making an end-of-year charitable donation to NIAF. Your donations make all that we do possible.

On behalf of NIAF's Board of Directors, the IALC members, and staff, I wish you a safe and happy holiday season and a healthy and prosperous New Year filled with peace and joy.

Buon Natale e Felice Anno Nuovo!



Joseph V. Del Raso,
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# Reader Feedback



## Shining Alto Piemonte

Thank you so much for the article on La Capuccina (Fall 2016 issue). And thank you for the good publicity for our territory. The upper Piemonte is at a time of high sheen. The Nebbiolo wines of "High Piemonte" are very elegant; Ghemme and Gattinara are now economical alternatives to Barolo and Barbaresco. Boca, Fara, Lessona and Bramaterra offer the highest quality products.

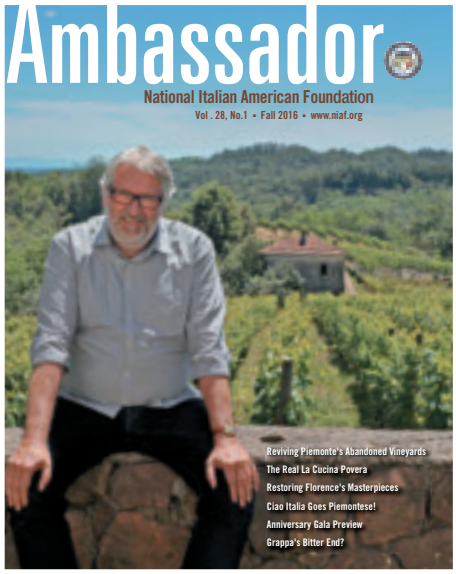
For visitors, Milano's Malpensa airport is just 30 minutes away. And La Capuccina is located a short distance from Lake Orta and Lake Maggiore, two of the most beautiful Italian lakes, and this is a great place from which to visit the Piemonte, the Langhe and Monferrato. Right now, Piemonte is one of the best wine and food destinations in Italy.

— Gianluca Zanetta
Proprietor and chef
Agriturismo La Capuccina
Curregio, Italy

## Friends of Florence Sisters

Danielle DeSimone's Friends of Florence story in the Fall issue of Ambassador is simply fantastic and so beautifully written. Simonetta and Renee deserve all the recognition in the world for the little "idea" they had that has germinated into an incredibly productive organization that has done so much good for Florence! Their efforts have led to many millions of dollars' worth of restorations, and all with diminus organizational operating costs. Brava to you both and thank you Danielle!

— M. Ann O'Brien
Friends of Florence Trustee
Chicago, Ill.







## Correction

In the "Taking the Bitter with the Heat" feature (Fall 2016 Ambassador) about Italy's new and notable Grappas, the prices for the Villa de Varda (Pinot Grigio), the Villa de Varda (Moscato), and the Villa de Varda Trie should have been $49 each; and the Villa de Varda Amarone should have been $59.




Courtesy of Quintessential

### We Want to Know What You're Thinking!

Letters to the Editor may be e-mailed to ambassadormagazine@niaf.org or mailed to Letters to the Editor, Ambassador Magazine, 1860 19th Street NW, Washington, DC 20009. Include your full name and address. Letters may be published and edited for length and clarity.

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# Celebrating Our Heritage



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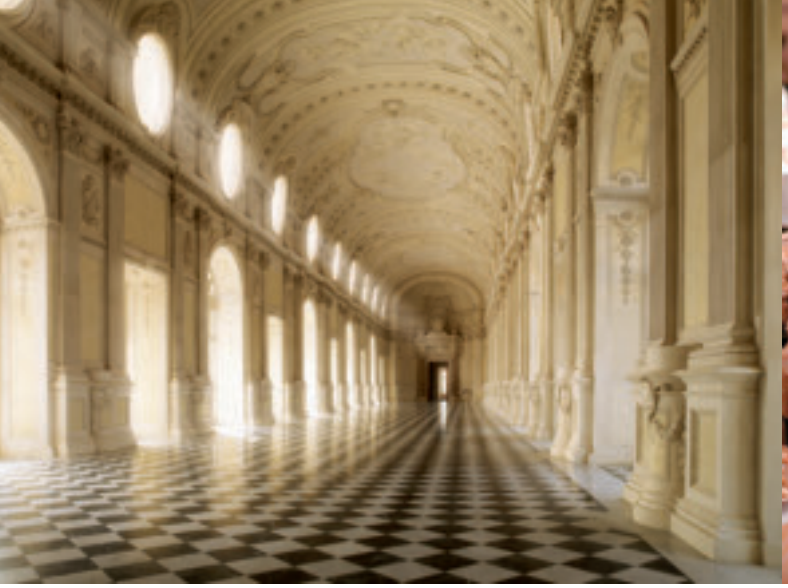
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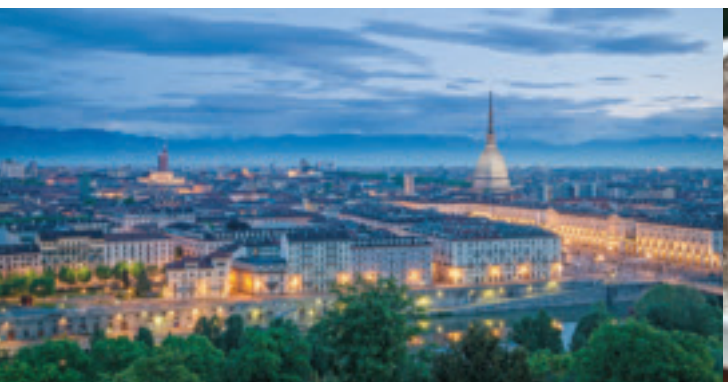
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Roaring '20s dancers set the day's tone.

# Song in the Summer Air

## *Annual Sergio Franchi Memorial Concert Attracts Thousands*

*Story and photos by Ryan Husbands*

A beautiful sunny day in Stonington, Conn., ushered in the latest presentation of the annual Sergio Franchi Memorial Concert on August 27. Already in its 22nd edition, the popular fixture welcomed more than 3,000 devoted fans and music aficionados to the sprawling New England estate the late Sergio Franchi called home with his wife, Eva Franchi.

Among a backdrop of rare vintage cars, period dancers jitterbugged away to set the tone for what would be an enjoyable day of classical music, opera and jazz presented by some of the world's brightest young musical talents. Among those taking to the stage were Italian singer and songwriter Giada Valenti; "the people's tenor" Michael Amante; American soprano Latonia Moore; opera star James Valenti, and world champion accordionist Cory Pesaturo. Once again, radio talk-show host, singer and songwriter Filippo Voltaggio returned to entertain the crowd; and conductor David LaMarche came back to lead the 32-piece orchestra.



James Valenti and Filippo Voltaggio

As a longstanding partner of the Sergio Franchi Music Foundation, the National Italian American Foundation was proud to lend its name again to this inspiring event. Proceeds from the annual concert fund the Sergio Franchi Music Foundation's scholarships program.

As the main organizer behind this celebration of song, Eva Franchi was ever present throughout the grounds, tending to every detail as she ensured the concert would go off perfectly. And the concert did not disappoint. From the moment you first hear the impressive array of performers practicing their acts during pre-concert warmups, the standard is set for an afternoon of uplifting music. From Hungarian inspired instrumentals to soulful jazz, the event manages to include a dizzying array of styles in its dramatic programming.

As the audience sat back in that lovely outdoor lawn setting, enjoying refreshing Italian gelato while being serenaded with excerpts from such celebrated operas as "La Traviata" and "La Bohème," with celebrated musicians and opera divas performing works from Puccini, Bizet and Gershwin, it's impossible to miss how classy — and magical — a spectacle the Sergio Franchi Memorial Concert is.

By building on its history with such a strong commitment to quality and education in the performing arts, the Sergio Franchi Memorial Concert has a bright future with many more editions yet to come — by popular demand. ▲

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# Finding Italy in Cleveland



**Searching for Italy's influences in America? Whether it's the top Italian restaurants, most popular festivals, the best markets or museums, in NIAF on Location, our 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 Basil Russo finds Italy in Cleveland, Ohio.**



Basil Russo with Angelo Sidari, owner of Nido Italia

### What is the most Italian part of your city?

Russo: When you set foot into Cleveland's Little Italy, you don't need to be told where you are. Mayfield Road is lined with great Italian restaurants, bakeries, old-school night clubs, a smoke shop selling Di Nobili cigars, and people sitting outside at tables up and down the street reminiscing about the old days. It is an authentic and charming neighborhood that still pulsates with energy and will hold its own with the best Little Italys in the country.

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

Russo: Step in the front door of Angelo's Nido Italia restaurant in Little Italy, and before you can blink your eyes, you've time-traveled back to 1955. Great Italian food, a packed bar, and Louie Prima singing "Angelina" or "Just a Gigolo" (live music on the weekends) gives Nido a genuine Italian American ambiance. Italian Americans love this place because you can't help but bump into old friends on any given night.

### What are your favorite Italian restaurants and bakeries?

Russo: Our city is home to many excellent Italian restaurants, including Carl Quagliata's culinary gem Giovanni's Ristorante. But Cleveland really makes a national name for itself with its two great Italian bakeries, Presti's and Corbo's. Both are located in Little Italy, both are well over 100 years old, and both make desserts to rival your Nonna's. Corbo's specialty is its cassata cake, and Presti's sheet pizza and cannoli are the best you'll find anywhere. Each has such a variety of Italian cookies, pastries and cakes, it's almost impossible to decide what to buy.

### What is the most Italian day of the year?

Russo: The Italian American community has two monster events in Cleveland each year. The first is the celebration of the Feast of the Assumption at Holy Rosary Church. This year marked the 118th anniversary of what is simply known as "The Feast." Approximately 120,000 people attend this four-day religious celebration each year. Cleveland's Columbus Day parade is also hugely popular as over 110 units parade through the streets of Little Italy while thousands of Italian Americans waive their little Italian flags and cheer the parade on.

### And for a dose of Italian culture?

Russo: Cleveland hosts two exceptional Italian cultural events each year. The five-week Cleveland Italian Film Festival screens award-winning Italian films beginning in mid-September. Each summer, the city hosts an "Opera in the Park" event where the public can listen to exceptional Italian arias performed by professional opera singers, free of charge. Both events are overseen by artistic director Joyce Mariani and sponsored by the Italian Sons and Daughters of America.

### Are there any special Italian American museums, monuments and cultural centers?

Russo: The Italian American Archives at the Western Reserve Historical Society preserves and documents the heritage and culture of Italian Americans in Northeast Ohio. Its collections include an extensive library and public exhibitions. Cleveland's Cultural Gardens represent 30 various nationalities and The Italian Garden is by far the largest and most beautiful of the group. Cleveland's Italian American community also worked diligently to establish the Bishop Pilla Program in Italian American Studies at John Carroll University — one of only a handful of universities in the country with a concentration of courses exploring the Italian American experience.

### An invitation

Russo: Cleveland has a rich and strong Italian American heritage, and a proud community that works hard to keep it that way. If you are in Cleveland, shoot me an email, or give me a call, and I'll be glad to steer you to the places that will make you feel at home and connect you to your heritage. ▲

*By Elissa Abatemarco Ruffino*

# BOTTEGA NIAF

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## Paintings to Wear

The tunic is a Bare & Gagliano original created from Michelle Gagliano's painting "Living Fossils." It features a wide neck and an asymmetrical hem line to accentuate the flow of the painting. The fabric is cotton jersey spandex, which serves as a comfortable option for all season wear. The artist also creates fabrics for interior designers. Price: $195. www.michellegagliano.com



## Cork It with Carlo

Mattia Di Rosa, one of Alessi's youngest designers, is the creative force behind Carlo, a little ghost on the top of a bottle. These unique stoppers are playful, reminiscent of fairytale characters, and highly functional. Made with thermoplastic resin, they ensure a snug, airtight fit on an unfinished bottle of wine. Price: $10.50 for the pair. www.alessi.com



## Oh! What a Handbag!

The "O bag" brand was established in Padua, Italy, in 2009, to create colorful and quirky fashion accessories personalized to one's style, outfit and taste. Simple in design, the handbags are made of EVA form rubber that is soft, waterproof, lightweight and resilient. Create your own O bag from various colors, shapes, interchangeable leather handles, inner cloth linings and trim accessories. The brand also has flower bracelets, O clock watches, sunglasses and accessories galore! Price: $50 to $150 depending on size and accessories. www.obagonline.us.com and www.obag.it




## Sensory Experience

Make brushing your teeth a taste-sensation experience with Marvis contemporary-flavored toothpaste in Amarelli licorice, jasmine mint and ginger mint. Dentifricio Marvis, as the Florentines call it, is made in Florence, Italy, and sold in more than 40 countries. Originally registered by Conte Franco Cella Di Rivara in 1958, the Italian brand was particularly effective for smokers' stained teeth. Later, bought by the Martelli family, the company is now run by son, Piero. Cost: $9 to $12 depending on tube size. Amazon.com and marvismint.com




## Timeless Classic

Gucci has taken the brand's iconic signature "G" and created an elegant revision in its watch collection. The famous interlocking "G" bezel was introduced in the 1960s. Today, the collection of interlocking watches combines minimalism and luxury. It's available in large (37mm diameter) or small (29mm diameter) with a stainless steel GG case, black or brown leather strap, and a silver, black or brown bezel. Cost: $1,290. www.gucci.com or local department stores.



## Bird in the Hand

Get inspired by Dolce & Gabbana's stunning ornithological inspired prints from its Birds of Paradise Collection. The majestic peacocks take center stage with singing swallows, wise old owls and more. The Dauphine print calfskin iPhone 6 cover and wallet has a bamboo motif to make each piece unique. Price: $175 iPhone case; $375 leather wallet. www.dolcegabbana.com




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

## Eclectic Designs



Giuseppe Demeglio opened a jewelry store and workshop in Torino, Italy, in 1922. Sixty-two years later, his grandson, Roberto, took over the business and recreated a company based in the family's rich Italian tradition in the jewelry industry. Defined shapes and contemporary pairings of a gold coat on high-tech ceramic make Roberto Demeglio's collection of bracelets, rings, earrings and pendants unique. Variations of yellow, rose and white gold are part of his collection. The patented spring-coil system slips the pieces on and off easily. Featured bracelet is from the Aura Collection. Price $1,268. www.robertodemeglio.it

## Glamour Bottled

Start your evening being eternally glamorous with Moschino Glamour. The Italian luxury fashion house founded in 1983 by Franco Moschino has created a sensual perfume that combines the elegance of mandarin with the evocativeness of absinthe in a throwback glass heart container. Price: $62. www.moschino.com or local department stores.






## Signature Signature

Bulgari, the masterful Roman jeweler, has created a distinctive accessories collection with a range of sunglasses, handbags and scarves. The "Bulgari Bulgari" Signature Bag is made of calf leather with light gold-plated metal parts, the black "Perspicio" bar with a magnetic closure, and the brand's iconic double Bulgari logo. The leather and chain strap is also adjustable. Price: $2,750 www.bulgari.com.



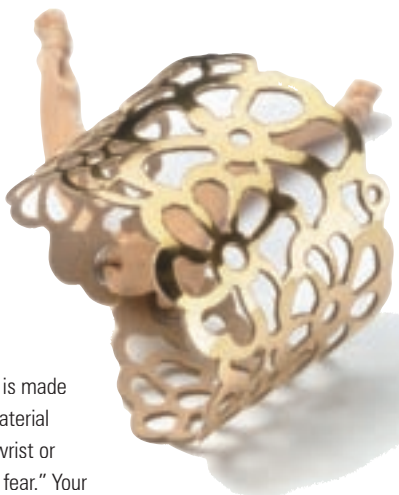
## Lather Up

Shave each morning with the tricolors of the Italian flag on a heavy resin handle. The Italian Barber, Merchants of Fine Toiletries, has created the RazoRock Barber Handle Plissoft synthetic shaving brush. It's soft and easy to lather! Price $12.99. www.italianbarber.com




## Glam Rock Sneaker

Francesca and Alessandro Gallo shared a passion for fashion and art, and created the Golden Goose Deluxe brand in 2000. The husband-and-wife team partnered with traditional Venetian craftsmen to produce chic yet beautifully constructed shoes. The "Super Star" sneaker features a round toe, star patch, lace-up front, and a distinctly distressed finish. Price: $535. www.goldengoosedeluxebrand.com



## Wear Something that Means Something

This stunning gold bracelet is made of a flexible, eco-friendly material and adjusts easily to arm, wrist or ankle. Tatú's mission is "no fear." Your purchase supports female victims of domestic abuse in Italy. Wear it to your next holiday party as well as the beach! It is sun, water and salt resistant. Made in Italy. Price: $39.99 plus tax and shipping. www.thestonescuttersaria.com/shop


Jessica Rinaldi


Jessica Rinaldi

## Throwing Dough

Tony Gemignani won first place in the Pizza In Pala division of the World Pizza Championships in Parma, Italy, in 2016, but it wasn't until he had been in the pizza business for 11 years before he realized he "had so much more to learn" about his trade.



"I wasn't respecting my craft," he explains. "That's not so much a mantra as it is a way of life for me."

Fourteen years later, Gemignani owns15 restaurants in California and Las Vegas and is mentioned twice in the "Guinness Book of World Records" for creating the world's largest pizza and for completing the most consecutive rolls across the shoulders, a pizza dough-throwing trick that only a champion *pizzaiolo* like him can accomplish.

Growing up on his grandfather's farm, Gemignani was surrounded by food. "We farmed apricots, cherries, lemons, figs and fava beans," he recalls. "Those big Sunday afternoon dinners most Italian families have? We had them Mondays through Fridays."

Gemignani says pizza is experiencing a renaissance in America because people are fed up with commercial chains.

"Pizza isn't peasant food anymore," he says. "You go into a small restaurant, and you see that white tablecloth laid out so lovingly, you know those owners respect their craft."

— *Douglas Gladstone*

## In Focus

Boston Globe photographer Jessica Rinaldi never picked up a camera until she attended college in 1998. In April 2016, she won the Pulitzer Prize for Feature Photography.

Rinaldi's heart-wrenching photographs of a physically and emotionally scarred Maine youngster were the focus of a November 8, 2015, Globe photo essay, "The Life and Times of Strider Wolf."

Ironically, at the start of 2015, Rinaldi and her editor had discussed the kind of stories she wanted to shoot. "It's a funny thing," she recalls. "I said, 'I think I could do any story other than children in peril.' Both my grandfather and grandmother instilled in me the importance of family. That's why the injustice of Strider's situation moved me. Childhood is supposed to be such a beautiful, innocent time."


Jessica Rinaldi / The Boston Globe

Of her 16 photographs published with the Pulitzer-winning feature, Rinaldi's favorite (right) is of Strider and his big brother, Gallagher, looking up at the moon from an old Ford. "It's such a metaphor," she says. "These two little boys standing on a car that's not going anywhere but looking up at the moon. I was holding my breath and hoping it was in focus."

Rinaldi says her late grandfather was a hard-working milkman from the Italian town of Pontelandolfo. She takes pride in that he was also a shutterbug. "He chronicled his life dating back to World War II, and his photo albums were always kept so meticulously. "I wish he was here now," she says. "He really would have appreciated what I did."

— *Douglas Gladstone*

**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





LA Flashed

## Delivering Nonna

Originally from the Italian coastal city of Cesena in the region of Emilia-Romagna, Guido Pedrelli grew up spending Sundays lunching at his nonna's. Weekdays, he'd drop by for a snack at her famous trattoria in San Carlo di Cesena, once frequented by Italian poet Giosuè Carducci.



Now based in San Francisco and missing home, the tech entrepreneur started Nonna Box. The mission: to bring Italy's authentic regional flavors and traditions to our kitchens, delivering gourmet artisanal products and the stories and favorite recipes of Italian *nonne*.

Nonna Box is the first curated, monthly subscription of gourmet Italian products in the United States. Each month, Nonna Box features a different Italian region and six of its traditional, imported and hard-to-come-by products.

"At Nonna Box, we believe there is so much more to Italian food than just preparing a dish of pasta," says Pedrelli. "There's the uniqueness of each region's gastronomy; the history and tradition behind the food, its production and preparation; and of course that personal culinary touch passed down through locals' stories and recipes."

Pedrelli says his goal is to "bring these elements together, making it possible for each of us to experience the essence and variety of Italian cuisine" at our own dinner tables.

Great news! NIAF members receive 40 percent off the first Nonna Box and 10 percent off each box thereafter (valid only for subscriptions). Visit www.niaf.org/my-niaf/ if you are a member; if not, join at www.niaf.org.

*— Gabriella Mileti*

## Plating Authenticity

"Every restaurant needs a guide to accompany patrons in their gastronomic journey," says restaurateur Piero Selvaggio, who, 46 years after opening Valentino in Santa Monica, Calif., still keeps to his credo.



Ryan Forbes

A recipient of the prestigious James Beard Foundation's Outstanding Service Award, Selvaggio is the man who helped revolutionize the concept of Italian dining in the United States.

When Valentino opened in 1972, Italian cuisine in the United States meant heavy sauces, lots of garlic and tomatoes, straw flask Chianti and checkered tablecloths. Selvaggio moved past that after taking a trip back to the motherland: "I discovered a whole new gastronomic world." he recounts. "When I returned to the United States, I promised myself I would make my restaurant as good as those I had visited in Italy."

And so he did. He introduced Americans to fresh mozzarella, burrata, prosciutto, extra virgin olive oil, risotto, balsamic vinegar and white truffles. "Authentic Italian food is simple," he says. "What matters is the quality."

The food is matched by a wine list that has been a Wine Spectator Grand Award winner since 1981.

A native of Modica, Sicily, Selvaggio has come a long way since the days he was working as a busboy at Chasen's, the landmark Los Angeles restaurant once favored by the stars. Little did he know then that A-listers would one day crowd his own restaurant to enjoy what is widely considered some of the best Italian food in America.

*— Silvia Donati*

# Persons of Interest

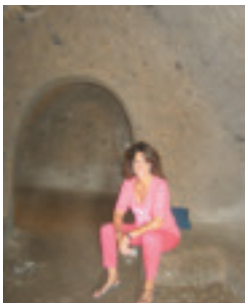




## Diggin' Heritage

San Francisco native Lisa Pieraccini truly digs her profession. When Pieraccini was young, she helped her dad on weekends at his California building sites by picking up nails and "other interesting things" from the soil. Now she digs up Italian soil. As a classical archaeologist with a doctorate in classics and art history from the University of California at Santa Barbara, she specializes in Etruscan and early Roman archaeology.

In 1978, when Pieraccini's middle-school World Civilizations teacher discussed the ancient worlds of Egypt, Greece and Rome, she found her calling. That same year, the first King Tut exhibit came to California. With tickets in hand, she traveled with her parents from their home in Sonoma County to the exhibition in San Francisco. Viewing the relics from Egypt, she says, her "imagination was set ablaze."



Pieraccini is the project director for The M. Del Chiaro Center for Ancient Italian Studies at University of California at Berkeley. She's also the co-editor of a book series entitled "Cities of the Etruscans." The first book in the series, "Caere," was published this fall by the University of Texas Press.

"Preserving the future of our past," Pieraccini describes her life's passion.

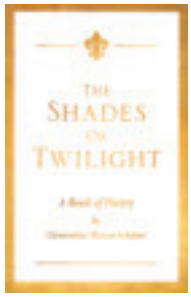
With Tuscan lineage and archaeological research in the ancient Etruscans' land now called Tuscany, her expertise in excavating the past has come full circle. "I'm digging my own roots," says Pieraccini. Visit www.mdelchiarocenter.org

*— Robert Bartus Jr.*

## Saintly Life

Born in the Italian American parish of St. Rosalia-Regina Pacis in Brooklyn, N.Y., Clementina Theresa Polite Sclafani was a poet, composer, wife, mother, widow, daily mass attendee and communicant. And so much more….

In World War II, Sclafani worked at the Brooklyn Navy Yard and was chosen to christen a ship and present flowers to General Charles De Gaulle of France. So you get the idea she was extraordinary.



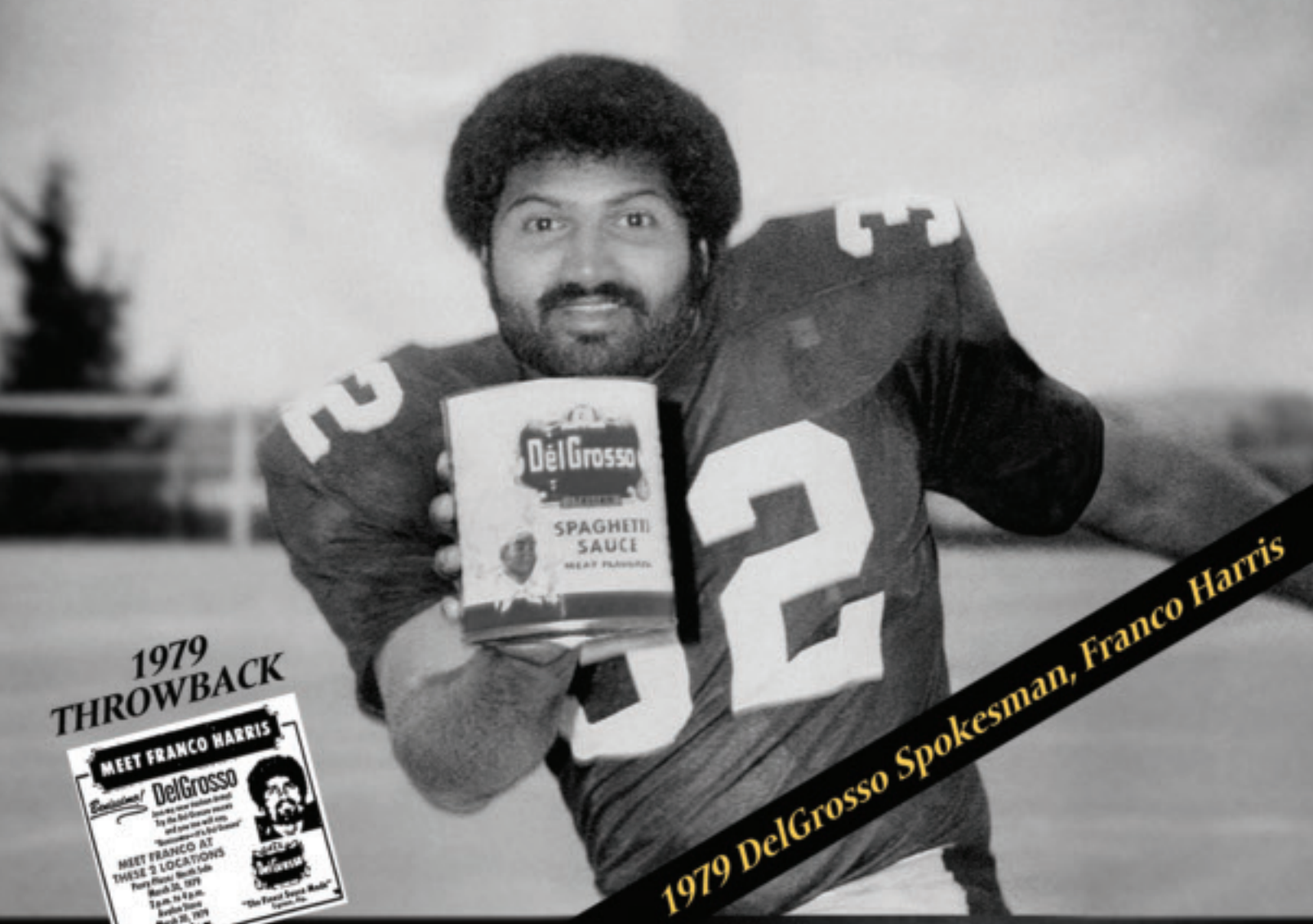

Sclafani was a God-centered woman devoted to the poor, the homeless, and to charities and missions throughout the world. When she moved to Washington, D.C., she led the Rosary daily at the Church of the Annunciation. Her life of Christian virtue and charity was recognized by notable clergymen as well as the man and woman on the street. She died on the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25, 2009. The Vatican Embassy's Nuncio sent his personal representative to concelebrate her funeral.

Since her death, Catholic Church officials have received numerous letters of healings, favors, conversions and documentation of other holy events concerning Clementina. Canonization in the Roman Catholic Church is a complex and lengthy process. The Sodality for the Cause of Sainthood for Clementina was formed in 2013, and has members worldwide. Pope Francis has a copy of her poetry.

In May 2016, the Vatican Embassy presented Clementina's newly published book of theological poetry, "The Shades of Twilight." The book is available at Amazon.com.

*— Frances A. Sclafani, Esq.*

# NIAF's Persons of Interest




1979 THROWBACK




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John Hession

## A Natale and Capodanno Twist

# Changing Up Traditional Holiday Fare

By Mary Ann Esposito



©Sandro Botticelli's "Madonna of the Pomegranate" (*Madonna della Melagrana*); circa 1487

Natale and Capodanno are two of the most revered holidays for Italians. For home cooks, they're a chance to show off those cherished and traditional dishes, like *cappelletti in brodo* for Christmas dinner, and *zampone* and lentils, a must for welcoming in the New Year.

I've followed the time honored tradition for many years, but this year will be different. The centerpiece for Natale will be a succulent roasted pork tenderloin accompanied with a beautiful deep-red pomegranate sauce that will make the presentation wonderfully festive.

For centuries in Italy, pigs were prepared during the winter months and every part was used. And pomegranates (*melagrana*) have long been a popular fall and winter fruit depicted in so many Italian religious works of art as a symbol of fertility and unity of the church. My favorite is the "Madonna of the Pomegranate" by Sandro Botticelli, which depicts the Madonna holding the infant Jesus, who grasps a pomegranate in his hand.

Also, this year, I will skip the *Zuppa Inglese* and *Befana* cake for New Years and offer a chocolate cake with walnut sauce, taking my inspiration from my Sicilian heritage. Sicily was a huge player in the development of chocolate, going back some 400 years; and Torino became the mecca for everything chocolate starting in the early 1800's and still is today. This cake is dense and fudgy and the taste is a gift to your senses.

Sometimes it is good to step out of one's comfort zone!

*Buon Natale e Buon Anno!*

## *Grilled Pork Tenderloin with Pomegranate Cranberry Sauce*

No question pork tenderloin is tender; it just isn't that flavorful on its own. So, a good way to give it more flavor is to add a delicious sauce like this pomegranate and cranberry sauce — a perfect combination for your holiday table.

*Serves 4*

**Ingredients**

2 cups pomegranate juice from 4 large pomegranates or ready prepared juice
½ cup dried cranberries
1 cup granulated sugar
½ cup apple cider
1 tablespoon rosemary needles, minced
1 tablespoon coarse black pepper
1¼ tablespoon kosher salt
1 large clove garlic, minced
1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
1 whole pork tenderloin (1½ to 2 pounds), trimmed

**Directions**

- Pour the pomegranate juice in a small saucepan; add the cranberries, sugar and cider. Simmer until the mixture is a syrupy consistency. Remove from heat, stir in the rosemary. Cover and keep the sauce warm.
- Combine the pepper, salt and garlic on sheet of wax paper.
- Rub the pork tenderloin with the olive oil, then roll it in the garlic mixture. Set aside.
- Preheat an outdoor grill.
- Grill the tenderloin for 5 to 7 minutes per side depending on thickness. For medium rare, a meat thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the meat should register 145°F.
- Remove the tenderloin from the grill and loosely tent it with foil. Allow it to rest for 5 minute before cutting it into diagonal slices.
- Drizzle the meat with some of the sauce and serve.

## *Chocolate Walnut Cake*
## *Torta al Cioccolata con Noci*

This dreamy, fudgy chocolate and walnut cake is dense in texture, almost like pudding if you don't overcook it. The sensual cream and walnut sauce takes but a few minutes to make.
*Serves 8*

**Ingredients for Cake**

2 cups walnut halves
3 ounces semisweet chocolate, broken into small pieces
½ cup unsalted butter
3 large eggs
½ cup sugar
Zest of 1 large orange
¼ teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon vanilla extract or orange liquor

**Ingredients for Sauce**

3 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 tablespoons flour
¾ cup heavy cream
Pinch salt



John Hession



Recipes from "Ciao Italia Family Classics" by Mary Ann Esposito. For more holiday recipes and cooking videos, visit www.ciaoitalia.com.

**Directions**

- Preheat the oven to 325°F
- Butter a 9-by-1½ inch round baking dish. Line the dish with a circle of parchment paper to fit the bottom of the pan and lightly butter the paper. Set aside.
- Place the walnuts in a sauté pan and stir them over low heat until they smell fragrant. Do not let them burn.
- Cool and transfer 1⅓ cups of the nuts to a food processor and process them until coarsely ground. Set aside.
- Melt the butter in a bowl in the microwave or in a small sauce pan. Stir in the chocolate and mix until smooth and well blended. Set aside.
- Beat the eggs and sugar in a medium size bowl with a hand held mixer until the mixture thickens.
- Stir in the salt, orange zest, and 1 tablespoon of the vanilla or orange liquor. Then, stir in the walnuts, then the chocolate, and pour the mixture into the prepared pan.
- Bake for about 30-35 minutes or until a cake skewer inserted in the middle comes out clean. Do not overbake the cake. It should remain moist.
- Cool the cake in the pan for 30 minutes.
- Run a butter knife along the inside edge of the pan to loosen the cake and invert the pan onto a cooling rack. Remove and discard the parchment paper. Invert the cake and place it on a cake plate.
- To make the sauce: Melt the remaining butter in a saucepan and stir in the flour. Cook for 1 minute making sure the paste is smooth and well blended. Slowly pour in the cream and stir in the remaining sugar and salt. Cook the mixture over medium heat until the sauce is smooth and thickened. Remove the sauce from the heat and stir in the remaining walnuts and 1 teaspoon of vanilla or orange liquor.
- To serve: cut the cake into wedges and pour some of the sauce over the top. Variation: Hazelnut instead of walnuts is a nice alternative. ▲



# An Italian Moment

## The NIAF 2016 Photo Contest Winners

NIAF's annual photo contest has come a long way since we launched it four years ago. That first year, the theme was italianità – the Italian spirit, the essence of being Italian. In the years since, we invited amateur and professional photographers to submit images depicting "Italy Beyond Italy" and "Italian Culture and Values."

This year, the concept was "An Italian Moment." NIAF received hundreds of images that, again, raised the benchmark for quality in our annual Photo Contest. Our judges faced the difficult task of choosing the top six photos from 26 semi-finalists, taking into consideration technical quality, composition, and how well they expressed the theme.

When the votes were tallied, the contest could not have been closer. The 2016 NIAF Photo Contest Grand Prize Winner is Maddie Arnel, a student at Wake Forest University, who won a NIAF Gala package for two, including flights, hotel and tickets to all events over the October 14-15 Gala Weekend, plus a one-year NIAF Associate Membership. Each of the five Second-Place Winners also won NIAF Associate Memberships.

Stay tuned for the NIAF 2017 Photo Contest to be announced next Summer!

### Grand Prize Winner

**Madison Arnel**
Winston Salem, N.C.

*Camera: Nikon D200 with Nikon Nikkor 50mm Ai lens and Nikon SB-80 external flash unit*

Italian moments are defined by the crevices in my grandmother's hands – hands that know skill and hard work. They gently guide those of my sister so that she will carry on tradition. As time moves forward in modernity, we relish in the comfort of heritage.

The photo was shot on September 17, 2016, in my grandmother's home in Mullins, S.C., where the essence of Italy exists: Tradition and its power to shape one generation to the generations that follow.



Maddie Arnel at the NIAF 41st Anniversary Gala Weekend




## Second Place

**Joseph Angelo Zarba**
Brooklyn, N.Y.

*Camera: Canon EOS 20D*

A moment is usually defined as a brief instant in time. However, this fisherman in Acitrezza, Italy, is repairing his nets in the same fashion as when Giovanni Verga penned his extraordinary novel "I Malavoglia" with this village as the backdrop. Much of Sicilian life has not changed. Moments can often be eternal.



## Second Place

**Joan Nova**
Boynton Beach, FL

*Camera: Fujifilm XT-10*

Ecco la sposa! Who doesn't love a wedding? This street scene depicts a memorable Italian moment as the bride and her father arrive at the church. The photo was taken on September 14, 2016, in the historic district of Lecce (Puglia), Italy.



## Second Place

**Ian Nelson**
Santa Rosa, Calif.

*Camera: Canon EOS 7D Mark ii and a Canon EF-S 18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 IS II SLR lens*

The incredible city of Assisi, in the summer of 2015, taken from the Rocca Maggiore leaving the circular stone window to offer a unique perspective. This photo contains some of my favorite qualities about Italy, the Umbrian city with its beautiful churches, the historic stone fortress, and the incredible hillside landscape with picturesque clouds that seems to always be floating over Umbria.



## Second Place

**John Frattasi**
Flushing, N.Y.

*Camera: Sony A7RII Digital*

Nostro Paese (Our town)

Photographed on August 10, 2016: The mayor of Busso, Angelo Colaneri, walks proudly alongside the local Carabinieri Marshal during the procession of San Lorenzo, patron saint of their town in the province of Campobasso, Molise.

Molise, the smallest region in southern Italy, is still bound together by the culinary, religious and folkloric traditions that are part of their day-to-day life. Often overlooked and rarely visited by outsiders, it remains a truly authentic voice of Italian pride and culture in the 21st century.

## Second Place

**Elisa Costantini**
Collegeville, Pa.

*Camera: Nikon D750*

No it doesn't make music, but it does make your stomach want to sing the moment you enjoy a bowl of Spaghetti al la Chitarra. This photo was taken by my family friends Versano Photography for my book "Italian Moms: Spreading Their Art to Every Table," capturing the lost art of traditional pasta preparation in Italy's Abruzzo region. It's a lost Italian moment on a Sunday afternoon. I hope it rekindles memories, since many nonnas who mastered this art are no longer with us. I hope my photo inspires younger generations of Italian Americans to experiment with this classic Italian tradition.






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Melanie Dunea/CPi Syndication

# MERRY MARIO CHRISTMAS

## CHEF MARIO BATALI ON FOOD, TRADITIONS AND HOLIDAY ENTERTAINING

# Mario Batali needs no introduction.

Even trying to introduce this whirlwind maestro of the kitchen risks leaving out the latest news from his constantly expanding culinary empire.

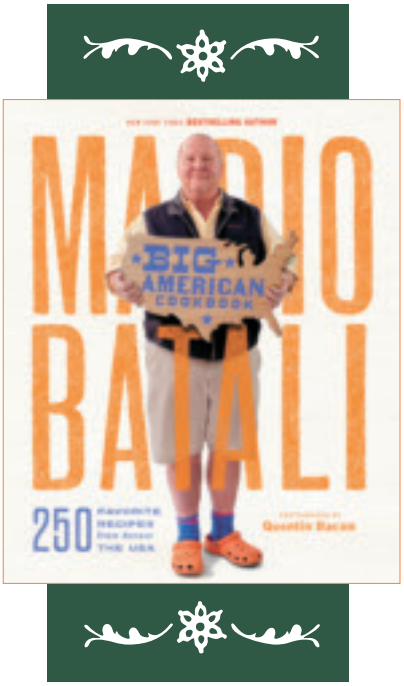
One of America's most renowned celebrity chefs, Batali is the bestselling author of 11 cookbooks; co-owner of 26 restaurants and four Eataly marketplaces (five counting Boston's new Eataly after Thanksgiving); an Emmy-winning TV personality; a philanthropist committed to feeding, caring for and educating children; a relentless advocate for the Slow Food movement and the Farm-to-Table concept; and a tireless promoter of authentic and creative Italian cuisine.

Quite a mouthful? Well, mouthfuls are what the Seattle-born-and-raised Batali is all about. In October, he took a break from his impossibly busy schedule to plan and prepare the last State Dinner for the Obama White House, honoring Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi. The menu included: Sweet Potato Agnolotti with Butter and Sage; Warm Butternut Squash Salad with Frisee and Pecorino di New York; and Beef Braciola Pinwheel with Horseradish Gremolata and Broccoli Rabe. Hail to the Chef!

Batali also took some time recently to answer questions for Ambassador magazine about writing his new cookbook, growing up in a food-focused family, and being a celebrity chef.

He also talked about food and traditions and the holiday season! Asked how he felt about outdoor-grilled Napoletano pizzas for Christmas Day brunch (see cover), a family ritual that gets my three sons rolling up their sleeves at my house, Batali says "Whatever gets your sons in the kitchen and bonds your family in deep tradition… keep doing that!

*— Don Oldenburg*




**Mario Batali's new cookbook of regional American dishes, published in October.**

Your new cookbook, "Mario Batali: BIG American Cookbook: 250 Favorite Recipes from Across the USA," goes to the heart of regional American cooking with your favorite recipes from across the country, simple dishes from San Diego fish tacos and Philly cheesesteaks to New Orleans étouffée and Midwestern pierogies. What was your inspiration?

**Batali: I'm fortunate to travel to a lot of places in my life and every time I experience a new town or region or neighborhood, I'm inspired to talk to whomever I'm working with and ask them where I can go to find something that tastes the way the wind smells when it blows down main street. More often than not, I'm led to a great neighborhood restaurant or shop that makes the best Hanky Pankie or sandwich or local specialty. Once you taste it, you know it's so right on the money.**

Which of its recipes come from your parents' kitchen or your hometown?

**Batali: Many of the recipes in the Pacific Northwest chapter remind me of home. We had a lot of Dungeness crab growing up, so the quiche is my homage to the crab omelettes of my youth. Seafood from my hometown region is my absolute favorite.**

How true to the original local recipes did you stay?

**Batali: I suggest tweaks to recipes not to suggest the way the OG's did it was wrong, but rather to inspire home cooks to use what they have available to them to make variations on dishes they already know how to make like the back of their hand. So, for the BBQ Chicken Pizza, use a barbecue sauce you love, whether it's thick and sweet or thin and vinegary. There is no right way to making any of these dishes, except for maybe cook time and temp in some cases!**

So, the folks from Trenton have bought into your suggestion for their Tomato Pie?

**Batali: I haven't received any threats yet.**

Which dishes have become your favorites?

**Batali: I've steered clear of desserts in most of my books because Italians don't really do desserts the way Americans do. Italians are okay with a nice piece of fresh fruit. But for this book, we went dessert-heavy. And even not being a dessert kind of guy, I have to say that those are now some of my favorites. Chess Pie, Maple Cream Pie, Fried Peach Pies. Consider me a huge fan.**

Your passion for cooking largely came from your father, who made everything from scratch…pastas, sausages?

**Batali: All true, except my mom is an excellent cook, too! We cooked a lot with Grandma Batali as well, and every Sunday we had an enormous Italian dinner with Grandma!**

What specific dishes span generations of the Batali family?

**Batali: That'd have to be Grandma Batali's Calf Brain Ravioli with Oxtail Ragu (www.mariobatali.com/recipes/calves-brain-ravioli/). I learned a lot about cooking, tradition and family from my Grandma. She was undeniably the best cook in the Batali household and her ravioli were legendary. This time of year, when we celebrate tradition, I think about her calves brain ravioli with oxtail ragu and how pure and perfect her pasta-making technique was.**

What do you most love about being a chef?

**Batali: I love feeding people and opening their palates and minds to delicious foods. Lamb's brains, offal – when I first started out, there were people that wouldn't go 10 feet from those dishes. But helping them understand the dish and respect the whole animal, many have converted and I love to see that.**

# CREAMY KALE GRATIN

This dish is the best of steakhouse-style creamed spinach with a rich mineral backbone that makes it work even better with big steak and red wine. If you want to jack it up a bit, add some bacon to the onion when you are cooking it for the béchamel.

*Serves 6 to 8*

Kosher salt
6 tablespoons unsalted butter, plus more for the baking dish
1/2 cup chopped Spanish or white onion
2 whole cloves
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
2 cups whole milk
3 bunches kale (about 1 1/2 pounds), roughly chopped
1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
1/2 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
Freshly ground black pepper

• Bring 8 quarts water to a boil and add 2 tablespoons salt. Set up an ice bath in a large bowl.
• Preheat the oven to 375°F. Butter a 9-inch round gratin dish.
• In a heavy, medium saucepan, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the onion and cloves and cook until golden brown, about 10 minutes.
• Add the flour and stir until light golden brown, about 7 minutes.
• Gradually whisk in the milk and cook until the mixture boils and thickens, about 10 minutes.



Quentin Bacon

• Reduce the heat to low and simmer, whisking frequently, for 5 minutes more.
• Remove the cloves.
• Add the kale to the boiling water and cook until just wilted and tender, about 2 minutes. Drain the kale and transfer to the ice bath to cool for 5 minutes, then drain well.
• Roll up the cooked kale in a kitchen towel or cheesecloth and squeeze out as much liquid as possible.
• Finely chop the cooked kale, then add it to the warm sauce. Add 1/2 cup of the Parmigiano and the nutmeg, season with salt and pepper, and mix well.
• Pour the mixture into the buttered gratin dish, top with the remaining 2 tablespoons Parmigiano, and bake for 30 minutes, until bubbly.

Do you feel like you're on a mission to teach the world to eat great food?
**Batali: I love to cook but I also love to educate and spread knowledge about great food. Food connects us all…. It's as simple as that.**

And that extends to television? On your new Vice Channels show "Moltissimo," you're such a natural on camera. Does that come from your work on "Molto Mario," "Iron Chef," and lately "The Chew"?
**Batali: "Moltissimo" is all about wine, food, conversation and laughs. One of the things I love about cooking for people is getting to know people and teaching them about food. It's a little bit of "Molto Mario" in that there are guests and we're chatting while making a meal….**

Was your transition from kitchen to TV kitchen as easy as it seems?
**Batali: It may look like it was an easy transition but there was a lot of blood, sweat and tears. Cooking is a tough job and not for everyone. I see a lot of young talented chefs who go to cooking school with the objective of being on TV. That's not how to do it. You have to love cooking and then the other fun stuff, like TV, will find you!**

Do you love the spotlight?
**Batali: I do, but that's also because I'm not a Gwyneth Paltrow in that I can still walk through my neighborhood and not be mobbed by people or cameras. Being a chef (that happens to have stepped into fame) makes me more relatable. Most people just shout "hey, molto!" while I'm on my Vespa and that's that.**



Quentin Bacon

What Mario Batali probably won't be cooking on Christmas Day.

# LINGUINE WITH CLAMS

Recipe courtesy of Molto Gusto (ecco 2010)

*Serves 6*

Kosher salt
6 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
3 garlic cloves, minced
6 tablespoons dry white wine
1 tablespoon hot red pepper flakes
1 pound small clams, such as Manila, or cockles, scrubbed
1 pound dried linguine cup coarsely chopped fresh Italian parsley

• Bring 6 quarts water to a boil in a large pot and add 3 tablespoons kosher salt.
• Meanwhile, combine the oil and garlic in a large pot and cook, stirring, over medium- high heat until the garlic is softened, about 1 minute. Add the wine, red pepper flakes, and clams, cover, and cook, shaking the pot occasionally, until the clams open, about 5 minutes; transfer the clams to a bowl as they open. Remove the pot from the heat.
• Drop the pasta into the boiling water and cook until just al dente. Drain, reserving about 1⁄2 cup of the pasta water.
• Add the pasta and 1⁄4 cup of the reserved pasta water to the clam broth and stir and toss over medium heat until the pasta is well coated (add a splash or two more of the reserved pasta water if necessary to loosen the sauce). Stir in the clams, with their juices, and toss until just heated through. Stir in the parsley and serve immediately.



Quentin Bacon

While consulting on the Bradley Cooper film "Burnt," you undoubtedly brought a large pinch of realism to the movie. Did working on it bring you to any conclusions about the reality of your world?

**Batali: It's definitely not a world for everyone, but it's exactly where I should be. Lots of ups, a few downs, and a heck of a satisfaction to get to bring joy on a plate to a complete stranger day in and day out.**

When people think of Mario Batali restaurants, names that come up are Babbo, Del Posto, Esca and Lupa, Eataly, of course. But, your culinary empire extends much farther. What motivates you to expand?

**Batali: Joe [Bastianich] and I never set out to have an "empire." We had a great group of talent that had trained in our restaurants and were outgrowing their space in the kitchen. When you have talent, you need to find a way to keep them happy. So we decided to give great employees the chance to have a piece of the pie, to keep them invested and excited by asking them to take the helm of new restaurants.**

**So far this has worked out well for us and we've also been able to grow and expand and bring our concepts to more people. The best part, though, is that I know that no matter where I am, I can trust that the restaurant and kitchen are under control. That piece of mind is worth its weight in gold.**

Do you get into one of your restaurant's kitchen and plate the pasta or finish a sauce anymore?

**Batali: Having so many ➤**




Kelly Campbell

**Mario Batali's famous New York City restaurant Lupa**

# PERFECT ROASTED CHICKEN


Quentin Bacon

There is almost nothing more satisfying, both to cook and to eat, than roasted chicken. Recipe courtesy of "America Farm to Table" (Grand Central Life & Style; 2014)

*Serves 4*

**Ingredients for the Brine**
1 cup kosher salt
1 stick cinnamon
1 bunch fresh rosemary
½ cup apple cider
2 quarts boiling water
2 quarts ice

**Ingredients for the Chicken**
1 (2½ to 3 pound) free-range chicken
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons kosher salt
2 tablespoons freshly ground black pepper
1 lemon, sliced thin
1 bunch fresh thyme
8 cloves garlic
6 sprigs fresh marjoram
1 small red onion, thinly sliced

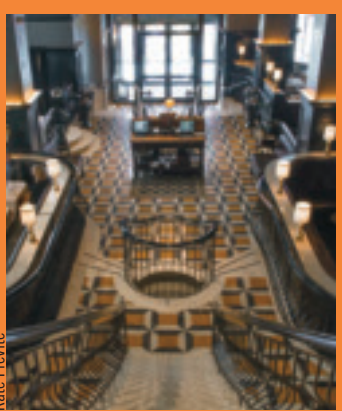
**Directions to Make the Brine**
• In a plastic container or stainless-steel bowl large enough to hold the chicken, stir the salt, cinnamon, rosemary and cider together. Pour in the boiling water and stir to dissolve.
• Add the ice and stir. Submerge the chicken in the brine. Place a plate on top of the bird to prevent it from floating. The chicken should be completely submerged throughout the brining process.
• Cover and refrigerate for 1 to 4 hours, but no longer.
• Pour off the brine, then dry the chicken thoroughly with paper towels.
• Place the brined bird on a plate and place in the refrigerator to air-dry, uncovered, for at least another hour, or — even better — overnight, before roasting.

**Directions to Make the Chicken**
• Preheat the oven to 475°F.
• Remove the chicken from the refrigerator and let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes.
• Rub the whole chicken with the olive oil. In a small bowl, mix the salt and pepper and season the chicken inside and out with the mixture.
• Place 1 slice of lemon under the skin of each breast, centered beautifully. Place the thyme, garlic, marjoram, remaining lemon slices, and onion in the chicken's cavity.
• Place the chicken on a rack set inside a roasting pan. Roast the chicken for 65 minutes at 475°F.
• Continue cooking the chicken until the thigh juices run clear and an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the thigh, away from the bone, registers 160°F.
• Transfer the chicken to a warmed platter in a warm place and let rest for 10 to 15 minutes. Carve and serve.

**restaurants, it's tough to work the line but I do make my rounds and spend time in each of my restaurants on a regular basis. It might mean just popping in and saying "hi" for 10 minutes, but that tiny bit of interaction is important.**

Now about the holidays: If not pizza, what happens on your Christmas mornings for breakfast or brunch?

**Batali: We're always gifted some beautiful panettone. We love to toast a few pieces and spread on some salted butter and homemade berry freezer jam that we made together over the previous summer in Michigan. So good!**


Kate Previte

**Interior of the acclaimed Del Posto, a collaboration of Mario Batali, Joe Bastianich, Lidia Bastianich and Executive Chef Mark Ladner, in New York City**

**For an afternoon snack I love Perciatelli con cacao e uova (Spaghetti with a hole, sheep's cheese and egg). It's a simple dish and not too distant from the more popular Roman dish, spaghetti alla carbonara. It's light enough to not ruin your dinner but luscious enough to feel like it's a special dish to celebrate the holiday. Add some black truffle, and it may be enough of a treat that you don't need a big Christmas dinner!**

Are your sons following in your orange-croc footsteps in the kitchen?

**Batali: Benno and Leo are both in college at the University of Michigan. I wouldn't say cooking is top of their mind right now, but they've grown up spending a lot of time in the kitchen with me. Should they follow after their dad, I'd love that, but I'm proud of whatever path they decide to take. What I tell them is, the trick is to find a job you love so much, you never feel like you're going to work. That's the goal.**

What holiday traditions have

# SWEET POTATO PIE

Recipe courtesy of Mario Batali Big American Cookbook (Grand Central Life & Style 2016)

*If you see a Sweet Potato Pie sporting a marshmallow top, you're probably looking at one made by a Northerner. Some people put marshmallows on their sweet potato side dish at Thanksgiving, but true Southerners don't put them on Sweet Potato Pie*

2 pounds sweet potatoes (3 to 4 large)
1/2 recipe Basic Pie Crust in 9-inch pan (see below)
3 large eggs
4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
1 cup packed light brown sugar
1/2 cup half-and -half
2 tablespoons bourbon, optional
2 tablespoons molasses, plus more for serving, optional
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
Whipped cream for serving

• Preheat the oven to 400°F.
• Line a baking sheet with foil or a silicon mat. Prick each potato several times with the tip of a small, sharp knife. Place on the baking sheet and roast for 60 minutes, turning them over halfway through, until soft. When cool enough to handle, remove the skins, put the flesh in a large bowl, and mash with a fork.
• Prebake the prepared pie crust for 12 minutes, until just tan. (You can put it in the oven during the last 12 minutes of the potatoes roasting.) Reduce the oven temperature to 350°F.
•In the bowl of a stand mixer with the paddle attachment, combine the eggs, butter, sugar, half-and-half, bourbon (if you like), molasses, vanilla, and nutmeg until smooth. Add the roasted sweet potato and mix to form a smooth filling.
•Pour the filling into the pie crust and bake for 45 minutes, until the filling begins to set. Allow to cool to room temperature. Serve with softly whipped cream and a drizzle of molasses, if you like.

**Basic Pie Crust**
*two 9-inch deep-dish pie crusts, or 1 double crust*

3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1 1/2 cups (3 sticks) very cold unsalted butter, cut into small cubes
1/2 cup ice water, or more as needed

• In a large bowl, combine flour, salt, and baking powder. Add the butter and toss to coat in the flour, then mix with a pastry blender—or the back of a fork, though that will take longer—until the butter is cut into tiny bits and incorporated through the dough. Add 6 tablespoons of the ice water and mix in until the dough just comes together, adding more water a tablespoonful at a time, if necessary. (The ingredients can be mixed in a food processor, but should be done in two batches.)
• Dust a work surface with flour and turn the dough out of the bowl. Cut it in half and form 2 discs. Dust them with more flour, then wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 2 hours or up to 2 days.
• When ready to roll out the crust, dust your work surface and use a rolling pin to roll out the dough to at least 12 inches across. Carefully line a pie pan with the dough and cut away any excess hanging over the sides. Refrigerate the crust until ready to fill. The second disc can be used for another pie, or as a top crust in double-crusted pies.


Quentin Bacon

you carried on with them from your own childhood?
**Batali: When I was a kid, I used to make pizzelle, or thin waffle cookies, with my family. We still do that. Everyone gets to create their own pizzelle sandwiches. A Batali family favorite? Nutella!**

Any specifically Italian Christmas traditions?
**Batali: Yes, we definitely honor the fishes tradition. Over the years, I've experienced the Feast of the Seven Fishes, the Feast of the Nine Fishes, and the Feast of the 11 fishes. I've observed it in Naples, Liguria, Bologna and Rome. The execution of la vigilia is radically different in each region and each household. The dishes are all geospecific, but they have been delicious on every single occasion. These days we usually settle on four or five to simplify things.**


Jeff Neira/ABC
Mario Batali on ABC's "The Chew"

Does your wife's childhood holiday traditions blend into your family celebrations?
**Batali: Susi grew up in New York City celebrating Hannukah. Every year, we make potato latkes and fresh applesauce. It's another family favorite. When we have company over, we like to put out some sour cream and fancy caviar to top the latke. It's a home run every time.**

Your best childhood holiday food memory?
**Batali: Probably picking blackberries outside of Seattle in the summer with my brother and sister and making enough preserves and blackberry pie to last us through the winter!**

In all of your recipes, all of your restaurants, what is the underlying philosophy?
**Batali: Use the best local ingredients as simply as possible and serve them with flourish and joy.** ▲



Fontana delle Ninfee at the Piazza Italia

Michelle Fabio

# Acqui Terme

## Hot, Hot, Hot — and Not Just the Thermal Springs

*By Michelle Fabio*

Perhaps no more aptly named city exists in all of Italy than Acqui Terme — a charming gem of a place nestled into the province of Alessandria in Piemonte. Its name pays homage to the ancient, natural, thermal springs (terme in Italian) that run beneath it and attract people from all over northwestern Italy and beyond for therapeutic spa treatments, often with a prescription from their doctor in hand. "Acqui," of course, comes from the Latin for water.



Michelle Fabio

A hot spring fountain "La Bollente" in the Piazza della Bollente

The town's spas date back to Roman times. And while they are extraordinary, there is so much more to appreciate about Acqui Terme, starting with its location in the Monferrat — Piemonte's gorgeous wine country, one of the most important oenological regions in the world and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. To accompany the wine, piemontese cuisine is among the finest in Italy, with its rich, rustic and soul-warming flavors.

Like everywhere in Italy, Acqui Terme is steeped in history and culture. But what sets it apart is that it manages to balance this with the vibe of a vibrant, even trendy, city that has attracted countless artists and other creative types — all while keeping the feel of a small town, thanks to friendly locals who love the intrepid travelers who find their way here. No wonder humble Acqui Terme has become one of the hottest, must-visit locations in Italy.

**History of Acqui Terme**

Over 2,000 years ago, the Romans conquered the lands of the Liguri Statielli, built a new city around the steaming waters, and named it Acquae Statiellae. The settlement soon became an important trade center and strategic battle location thanks to its protected position surrounded by hills. After the fall of the Roman Empire, the city was abandoned. But it came back to life in the 4th century as part of the Kingdom of Lombardia.

In the 12th century, it became an independent comune only to be annexed by the Marchese of Monferrat. In the 17th century, the Savoy family took control of the city and turned its thermal facilities into a popular spa destination. The spas suffered both financially and structurally under Mussolini in the mid-20th century, however, and were in near ruins before the revitalization of the city, including the investment of tens of millions of euros, over the past 30 years or so.

Although not much in Acqui Terme remains from Roman times, you can still see ancient baths, a theater, a fountain, an artisan workshop, and other ruins in and around the city center, and part of the old aqueduct around the confines of the city.

The archeological museum, housed in the 11th-century Paleologi Castle on Via Morelli, displays artifacts from the Iron Age, the Roman, and the late-medieval periods. Inside the castle is also "il Birdgarden," a botanical garden with an unmatched, panoramic view of the city out toward Villa Ottolenghi.

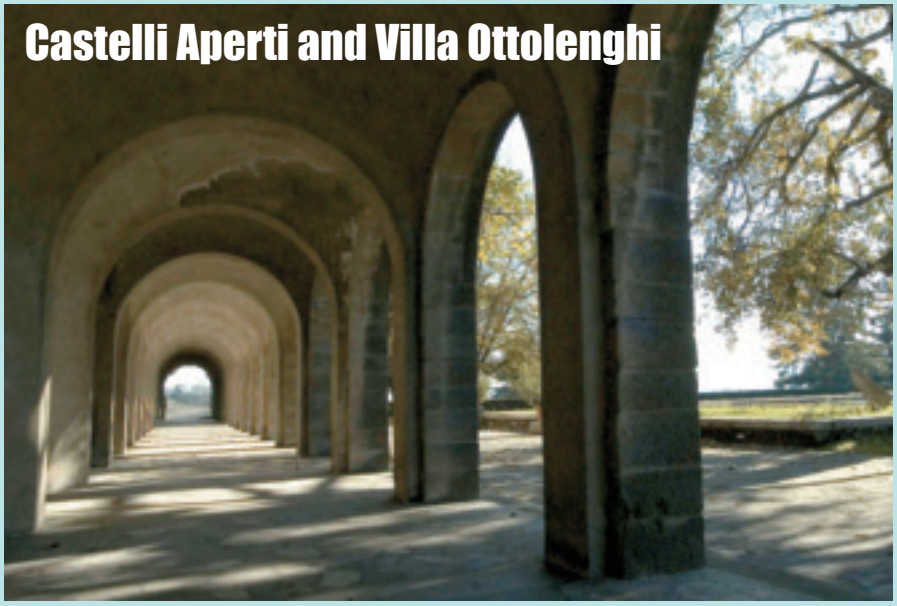
**More About the Thermal Waters**

One of the coolest — yet hottest — features in the city is La Bollente, which sits in the main square in the center of town. In Piazza della Bollente, thermal waters come to the surface and never drop below 165°F. A pavilion was built around the water source in the late 1800s and residents still visit La Bollente daily for a quick wash and even a sip.

While La Bollente offers a small taste of the waters, for full spa treatments with thermal baths you'll want to head to the Grande Hotel Nuove Terme in Piazza Italia or Lago delle Sorgenti on Viale Donati. You can stop in for a few hours, or get a day pass, for mud therapy, massages, hydromassages, sound therapy and more.

Why Acqui Terme's spas? The sulfuric, steaming water is said to ➤

## Castelli Aperti and Villa Ottolenghi



Castelli Aperti (Open Castles) is a collaboration between Piemonte and the provinces of Alessandria, Asti and Cuneo that runs from May to October. Its aim is to introduce visitors to castles, villas, palazzi, forts, churches and museums that otherwise might be inaccessible.

One of the Acqui Terme properties in Castelli Aperti is Villa Ottolenghi, lauded as the only example in Italy of a close partnership between artists, architects and patrons of the arts, which has culminated in a villa and surrounding grounds that are spilling over with impressive artwork and incredible beauty.

The project began in 1920, by Count Arturo Ottolenghi and his wife Herta von Wedekind zu Horst, with the objective of bringing painters, sculptors and other artists to the villa to be inspired and create. The villa, now owned privately, was constructed with attention to every detail, and the grounds include sprawling gardens, a pool, a wisteria arbor, a winery, a wine-tasting room in the old artists' studios, and a grand cistern. Its mausoleum, "The Temple of Herta," the portal of which is engraved in bronze, nickel and copper, is the work of Masters Ernesto and Mario Ferrari.

Villa Ottolenghi offers something spectacular at every turn, so stop in if you're in the neighborhood! For more information, visit www.castelliaperti.it and http://villaottolenghi.it/.

*— Michelle Fabio*


Nickola's Schot

Diana and Micha Baur

## Babarolo Loves Piemonte

In 2003, Italian American Diana Strinati Baur moved to Acqui Terme with her husband, Micha, and for nine years they ran one of the most successful, well-loved B&Bs in Piemonte.

Baur credits Acqui Terme's "gentle microclimate, its beautiful 2000-year-old ambience and the shy yet accepting nature of its residents" as contributing greatly to how well the couple was able to complete the renovation of a rustic, centuries-old property and turn it into a luxurious oasis for travelers nestled in the Montferrat. Baur's novel, "True Vines," published by Gemelli Press in 2012, is an ode to her beloved adopted region.

Although life has pulled the Baurs in a different direction — to the Black Forest in Germany — the couple knew Acqui Terme would never leave their hearts. Their attachment led them to create Babarolo, an online shop (www.babarolo.com) for wine and gourmet gifts from Piedmont through which they offer the region's famous wines and culinary delights.

Babarolo products are available only for shipment within Europe because of customs regulations, but the Baurs are working on spreading the word about Piemonte's rich gastronomy and oenological heritage to the United States as well.

— *Michelle Fabio*

increase blood circulation through the absorption of various minerals, including calcium and sodium bicarbonate, which in turns helps the body's organs function more efficiently. People also soak in Acqui Terme's waters for pain and stress relief.

**Food and Wine**

Acqui Terme is part of the "Alto Monferrato" (High Montferrat) and its vineyards produce the sweet, red DOCG Brachetto d'Acqui as well as the dry, red DOC Dolcetto d'Acqui. The rolling hills covered with grapevines make for stunning scenery surrounding the city.

Meanwhile, the streets of Acqui Terme are full of bustling *enoteche* — wine shops and bars — offering a fantastic selection of local varieties, including worldwide stars Barolo, Barbaresco, Barbera, Moscato d'Asti and Asti Spumante. One of the best is Ristorante Enoteca La Curia, noted for its impressive *aperitivo* — appetizer portions of food served with your choice of wine by the glass.

Speaking of sustenance, Acqui Terme restaurants and trattorie offer decadent, traditional piemontese dishes like *brasato al Barolo* (beef braised in Barolo wine), vitello tonnato (cold, sliced veal topped with a thick, tuna-based mayonnaise), *bollito misto* (up to 14 types of meat boiled with vegetables and served with different sauces), and *carne cruda* (raw, local beef served either sliced thinly or ground and mixed with olive oil, lemon juice, salt and pepper). The region's signature pasta is famously eggy and includes the long, thin and ribbon-like *tajarin* as well as *agnolotti del plin*, a kind of tiny ravioli. Truffles and mushrooms are also darlings of piemontese menus.


Michelle Fabio

An absolute must when you're in the region is *bagna càuda*, a mouthwatering blend of garlic, anchovies, olive oil and butter served like fondue for vegetable-dipping. *Bagna càuda* is often served as part of the traditional piemontese Christmas Eve meal and throughout the colder months.

One of the most delicious local specialties, though, is also one of the simplest: the quintessential piemontese street food, *farinata*. This salty focaccia made with chickpea flour can be eaten plain, or sliced and filled with prosciutto and cheese, or whatever you like.

**Hip Urban Culture**

Also lining Acqui Terme's cobblestone streets are chic boutiques, modern home design shops, and happening cafes like Caffè dei Mercanti on Portici Saracco — full of fashionable locals and busy with wine tastings, book presentations and "*aperitivi musicale*," happy hours with live bands. A quick look at Acqui Terme's website shows there's always something happening on the weekends through temperate months.

With around 20,000 residents, Acqui Terme is a decent-sized city, but it seems smaller with a neighborhood-like feel. Of course, it's entirely walkable as long as you remember cobblestones and heeled shoes don't get along.

So, whether you're looking for a relaxing visit to a thermal spa, full immersion into the world of piemontese food and wine, a stay in a hip but historical place, or all of the above, the answer is the small, charming, old-but-modern Acqui Terme.

For more information, visit http://comune.acquiterme.al.it/. ▲

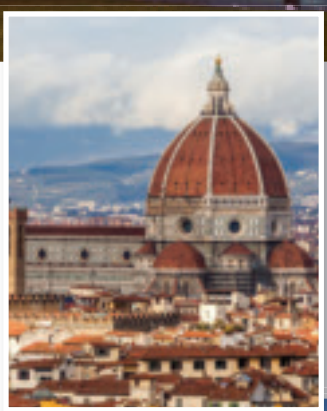
*Michelle Fabio is a freelance writer based in southern Italy and the author of "52 Things to See & Do in Calabria."*

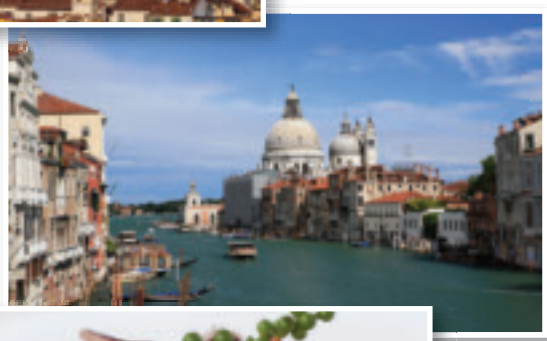
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Above: The shroud has been kept at the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist in Torino for more than four centuries
Left: A banner bearing the visage of the Man of the Shroud at the Cathedral

# Shrouded in Mystery

## Faith, Facts, Fascination and the Holy Shroud

*By Don Oldenburg*

TORINO, Italy — Christianity's most sacred, most scientifically investigated, and certainly most mysterious relic is kept here in Torino, and has been for 438 years. As we stepped from the Piazza San Giovanni into the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, Enrico Simonato whispered a quiet caution that this would be "a personal encounter."

We were fortunate to have a leading "sindonologist" (Shroud expert) guiding our private tour. The general secretary of the International Centre of Sindonology, an organization based in Torino that publishes Sindon, the official journal of Shroud studies, Simonato has researched and analyzed the Shroud for decades. He has personally seen the Shroud on public display three times. Hard to imagine, but he has held in his mortal hands this lengthy piece of ancient linen believed by many to be the cloth in which the body of Jesus was wrapped following his crucifixion.



Enrico Simonato at the Museum of the Holy Shroud

Simonato's forewarning was dead-on. No matter your faith or beliefs, the impact of a day spent

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Behind the old altar of the Presbytery of the Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist is a large tromp-l'oeil representing the view of the Chapel of the Holy Shroud, currently closed for restoration.



Last displayed in public in 2015, the shroud is kept in this chest, behind glass, to the left front of the cathedral.



Water-damaged Frescos painted on the ceiling of the Church of the Holy Shroud, part of the Museum, that a NIAF grant will help restore



At the Museum of the Holy Shroud, in the Church of the Holy Shroud presbytery, a Holy Trinity fresco towers above the main altar and a full scale photographic copy of the Shroud encased in the golden frame used for the public expositions of 1931 and 1933

All photos by Don Oldenburg except where noted.

"in the presence" of the Shroud, in Torino, is not to be underestimated. For skeptics, it is, at the very least, fascinating and a challenge to reason. For others, in that moment standing before this widely revered historic artifact, deep emotions surface, disbelief is suspended, controversy is irrelevant, all debate is briefly silenced.

Encountering the Shroud is indeed profoundly personal. Pilgrims travel from around the world to view it. The experience has been known to change lives.

Entering the front doors, the Cathedral's Renaissance-style interior is immediately striking. Arranged in the shape of a cross, the nave is defined by gray stone columns supporting a white arching ceiling. Along the walls behind the columns are 13 small chapels.

"Regardless of your perspective on the Shroud, the cathedral is a very interesting and historic place," said Simonato. "The organ and Christ chapel are especially beautiful, but other side chapels also have historic importance and interest."

As we walked to the front of the cathedral, Simonato pointed out a giant, floor-to-ceiling tromp-l'oeil at the back of the apse. It's the only current "view" of the Chapel of the Holy Shroud that was built adjoining the Cathedral in the late 1600s to be the permanent home of the Shroud. The rotunda-like chapel with a spiral-domed roof suffered structural damage and a fire in the 1990s, and has since been closed for restoration.

On this day, and every day since 2005, except when on public display, the Shroud itself is located to the left of the apse and main altar in the last side chapel. It is encased in a closed, casket-like, climate-controlled container, covered in a red-and-gold pall, and protected by a bullet-proof glass wall. Hanging above it is a large image of a tortured, wounded, crucified face, reproduced from the incredible image of "The Man of the Shroud." Visitors reverently stare. Some sit on benches meditating; others pray.

This delicate piece of ancient woven fabric, just over 14-feet long and 3-feet-7-inches wide when fully extended, showing the scientifically unexplained, three-dimensional, front and back impression of a bruised and battered body of a crucified man whose bloody wounds correspond to Biblical descriptions of the crucifixion of Jesus, doesn't get out much. And it didn't get out for our visit.

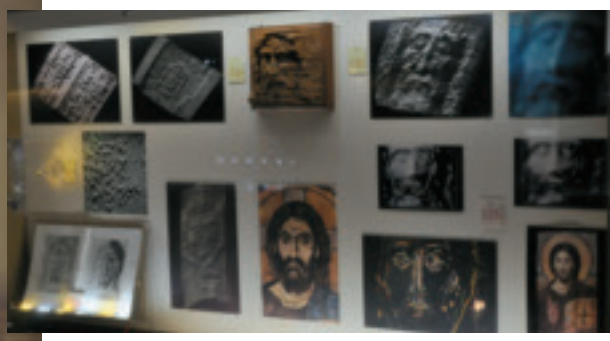
It has been displayed only six times since its 1933 showing. The most recent time was last year, in 2015, when over two months it attracted some 3 million visitors, and Pope Francis as well, who said: "The shroud draws [people] to the tormented face and body of Jesus and, at the same time, directs [people] toward the face of every suffering and unjustly persecuted person."

Formally, the Catholic Church has neither endorsed nor renounced the Shroud, but has acknowledged it as an important relic and a remarkable source of faith…without judging the scientific controversy.

No one knows for sure when the next public display will happen, Simonato told us, while pinpointing each year and occasion it has been shown going back two centuries. Apparently 2025 is on the calendar. As for length of each public display, and his concerns about preservation, Simonato said with a smile, "The Church would like to do it for six months. The technical people would like to do it for six hours. Last year, it had been around 100 days." ➤



Inside the Museum of the Holy Shroud (left)
Photo by Fabrizio Pece



An exhibit of face representations of Jesus



Close-up of the model of the Man in the Holy Shroud created by American Shroud of Turin Research Project scientists based on the three dimensional relief data obtained by a VP-8 image analyzer.



Luigi E. Mattei's sculpture of the body of the Holy Shroud Man, cast from 3D imagesv of the Shroud of Turin



One of the museum's Shroud-related art pieces, "Rescue of the Shroud" by Salvatore Vitale



Replicas of the crucifixion nails

Leaving the Cathedral through a side door, we walked into the Piazetta Reale and then Piazza Castello, both dominated by the historic Royal Palace of the House of Savoy that first brought the Shroud to Torino. We crossed Via XX Settembre and head up the narrow Via IV Marzo for a 10-minute stroll past lively sidewalk cafes, quaint restaurants, espresso stops, and tiny shops through Torino's cobblestoned, historic district, so much like Paris' Latin Quarter, on our way to the Museum of the Holy Shroud.

Except for a modest brass Museo della Sidone plaque and vertical banner, the museum's exterior is so nondescript that it's easy to miss. Inside is a different story, however — and not to be missed.

The Museum of the Holy Shroud was created in 1936, but didn't move into its current location, the 18th-century, piedmontese baroque-style Church of the Holy Shroud, until 1998. What started as a small collection of Shroud-related and religious objects gathered over centuries has now grown into the world's most complete repository of Shroud-related artifacts and knowledge — historical, scientific, artistic and spiritual. Here, intellect and reason coexist with faith and belief.

Our tour of the museum begins in the presbytery of the Church of the Holy Shroud where we are drawn immediately to the large, gold-plated, wooden frame used for the Shroud expositions of 1931 and 1933. With a backdrop of a classic fresco of a Holy Trinity, resurrection and Shroud scene, the frame now holds the official, life-size photographic copy of the Shroud taken in 2002.

Adjacent to the main fresco, along the church's ceiling, are additional frescos — some suffering water damage. Since NIAF's Mission to Italy in June, when board members toured the museum, the Foundation has awarded a $30,000 grant toward the restoration of the museum's paintings.

Other Shroud artifacts are on display throughout the museum's four distinct rooms. Shown in the church's crypt, the museum's main room dedicated to the most important stages of the history of the Shroud, is the 16th century silver-and-hard-stone reliquary that contained the Shroud.

Another room displays old art as well as modern reproductions of the Shroud, including the box camera and first-ever photograph of the Shroud taken in 1898 by amateur photographer Secondo Pia, whose negative photo plate revealed the three-dimensional image that touched off all modern Shroud research.

The museum documents scientific research from the beginning of the 20th century. Everything from studies of substances and texture, to the historic weave of the linen, to micro traces of soil found in the fabric, to forensic, medical and legal investi-

gations, to fingerprints and traces of Roman coins found in the cloth, to iconographic analysis, it is all here… and nowhere else.

There are even hypothetical replicas of the crown of thorns and of the nails used in the Crucifixion. Providing a sobering emotional impact is the remarkable life-size sculpture created by Luigi E. Mattei of the body of the Holy Shroud man, cast from 3-D images of the Shroud of Turin.

But the highlight of the museum's extensive exhibits, that can take hours to view, is an exact duplicate of the Shroud — created precisely because you can't often see the true Shroud. Yes, it's not the real thing, but it is impressive.

Our tour ends where many visitors' tours begin — at a high-tech room showing a multilingual multimedia movie and a dramatic series of large, backlit images of the Shroud. More than 30,000 people visited the museum this year, said Gian Maria Zaccone, the museum's scientific director. "Visitors are increasing by about 10 percent every year." For most of them, this is an amazing and moving museum experience.

Finally, a word about the controversy. Simply explained, believers contend that the Shroud is the burial cloth of Jesus Christ, the face and body image was miraculously imprinted on it at the time of his resurrection. Though tour guides and the Catholic Church itself typically refer to the crucified image as "The Man of the Shroud."

Skeptics contend the Shroud is a fraudulent medieval relic made more than 1,000 years after the time of Jesus, most likely by a gifted forger. Both sides draw on science and history to support their points.

Zaccone calls the Shroud an important application of the relationship between science and faith. "However, one must be very careful not to confuse the two.The first deals mainly [with the] aspect of the material and its authenticity; the second [with] the message that comes from that image in relation to the description of the Gospels of the Passion of Christ, regardless of the problem of its origin. Each has its questions and expectations.… Many things have been discovered, but many questions remain open.… The comments that visitors leave in the guest book tell us that they all find the answers they seek." Or, as Enrico Simonato put it, for each who visits the Shroud Cathedral and the Museum, it is "a personal encounter." ▲



**The evocative work "Resurrection" by the contemporary Polish artist Bartsoz Keska di Zakopane, that through the luminous body's outline beneath the Shroud captures the moment Christ comes back to life.**






© Mauro Davoli

The world's largest labyrinth in Fontanellato

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# Hidden Parma Lowlands

## Off the Tourist Path in Emilia

Italy hides so many undiscovered neighborhoods far from tourist routes. Emilia is a prime example. In this region surrounded by Lombardia, Veneto and Tuscany, places exist that are so surreal and beautiful, you think they're from a children's fairytale.



Soragna's medieval fortress dominates the small lowlands village.

www.castellidelducato.it

*By Francesca Cuoghi*



Busseto, in the province of Parma in Emilia-Romagna

APT Servizi Emilia Romagna

The small rural gems in the Province of Parma, in the northeastern zone brushed by the great Po River, are celebrated for their culinary delights produced here for centuries and today exported worldwide.

This limited but rich itinerary travels the road from Parma to the Bassa Parmense. It is filled with historic residences and medieval fortresses, a trip dedicated to a strip of Emilia that's the cradle of Italian cuisine and wine culture, and of symphonic music — the homeland of Verdi and Good Food that inspired creative greats such as Bernardo Bertolucci and Giovannino Guareschi with its mysterious foggy landscape.

While Parma has always had a cultural importance, it's also a place of important crafting, manufacturing and farming that has made it famous all over the world. Its roads run through tiny villages renowned for the production of the Spalla cotta, Fortana wine, and the Parmigiano cheese. In the countryside, you experience a captivating, authentic, small-town feeling wherever you go.

Our tour starts in Fontanellato and follows the Via Emilia. The beauty of this small town is characterized by the Fortress, which dates back to the Middle Ages, to 1124, when the first defensive tower was built by the Pallavicino, an Italian noble family whose fiefdom was later granted from the 12th-century Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa. ➤



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APT Servizi Emilia Romagna

**From the top:**
**The Antica Corte Pallavicina;**
**Fontanellato's labyrinth**
**Busseto street scene**

The walls were erected from the north squared turret after 1386 by the Sanvitales, the *condottiero* (military leaders) who acquired the castle from the Viscontis of Milan. The whole structure was completed in the 16th century, and later evolved from a military structure to a residence. Now restored, the 15th-century vaulted staircase leading to the upper gallery still exists and the underground portico on the northeast wing is original. Since 1999, 11 new rooms on the ground floor create an exposition area of historical maps and lithographs.

In Fontanellato, other treasures await. Franco Maria Ricci, a well-known publisher and passionate art collector, has devoted the past decade to creating a brilliant visionary project: the largest labyrinth in the world. The star-shaped, masterpiece maze, which opened in 2015, covers more than 17 acres. It consists entirely of bamboo plants, about 200,000, their heights ranging from a few inches to nearly 50 feet. The maze's path is almost 1,000 feet long — a great walk where you can get lost and let your mind wander.

The magic of the labyrinth stays with us heading towards the next stop. Soragna, 17 miles from Parma, is a small lowlands village rich in local history, flavors and hospitality. It's a joy to wander through the little lanes of the old town, stopping for an espresso in one of its 1970s-style cafés where the inebriating aroma of the creamy black Italian brew fills the room. Locals invite us to chat and discover the hidden secrets of the imposing Meli Lupi Fortress, which dominates the center of the village.

Built amid Soragna's medieval feudal era in 1385, the fortress later became the splendid residence of Princes Meli Lupi during 17th century. Her progeny still own it and live there. Its rooms are enriched by baroque furniture and witness a previous age. The fortress still has frescoed decorations and it is surrounded by a romantic English-style park, with a lake, a greenhouse, and a café haus.

This enchanting patch of Emilia, the Bassa Parmense, will astonish you stop after stop with its cultural riches and warm hospitality. Little shops and workshops from times gone by fill the historic town centers. When you arrive at Roncole di Busseto, where the great Giuseppe Verdi was born, the feeling of joy is overwhelming. "Native House" is a modest building, located at a crossroads in the village. Verdi's father ran an inn and an attached grocery store, while his mother was a spinner. According to recent studies, the Verdis were a family of small literate landowners. Yet, the sight of the unadorned and unfurnished rooms contrast with the triumphs of the world-renowned composer who grew up there.

Busseto and its small neighboring fractions is the heart of the Land of Verdi, distinguished by a simple, gentle way of life. As you enter the town center, marked by Via Roma and Piazza Verdi, and dominated by the 15th-century Palazzo del Comune, the collegiate church of St. Bartolomeo and the Rocca, built in 1250, is clearly the stronghold.

And, here, the presence of Giuseppe Verdi is everywhere. The theatre which opened in 1868 with Rigoletto and Un Ballo in Maschera and Villa Pallavicino is now converted into a museum dedicated to the great musician.

Further along, you come to the little town of Polesine Parmense. Of all of the towns in the Bassa Parmense, Polesine is the one that has, for better or for worse, the strongest ties to the Po River. Starting with its name, derived from the fact that in the distant past the village stood on a *polesine*, a little island in the Po, it was dragged by the current, expanded, and eventually connected to the river bank.

Stopping at the Antica Corte Pallavicina, you can experience the culinary traditions of Emilia and the Parma hinterland. More than a just an elegant restaurant, it hides a long, important history and tradition that have lived here for centuries. The Corte was built in the early 15th century on an earlier fortification, and it boasted spectacular cellars where *culatelli* (cured meats), cheeses and wine were aged. After 1780, this court became a barracks, occupied by

"dragons" involved in smuggling from the banks of Po River. From 1850, the Corte became small dwellings for peasants, fishermen, carters and craftsmen. Eventually, the river took it over, flooding it, trashing it.

After a meticulous restoration by the Spigaroli family, the Antica Corte Pallavicina has been returned to its former splendor. The cellars are once again filled with *culatelli*, Parmigiano Reggiano and fine wines. The restaurant (awarded a Michelin star) serves the best of Bassa Parmense cuisine. The elegant guest rooms provide a remarkable view of the Po and the flood land. Chef Massimo Spigaroli celebrates an amazing cuisine with his own quality produce and meats.

In these lands, food becomes art, culture and poetry are tradition. The Bassa Parmense hinterland is a place where you can discover the breath-taking magic of a little strip of Emilia through history and culture — all of it reached in just 20 minutes from Parma and an hour from Bologna. ▲

*Francesca Cuoghi is a journalist, communication specialist and storyteller with a degree in foreign languages. She has created the storytelling travel blog www.CiaoEmilia.com about Emilia, the region where she was born and raised.*



Culatello di Zibello is one of the most prized salumi in Italy, dating back to the 15th century.

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Antica Corte Pallavicina Relais

Interior of the Antica Corte





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# DICKIE V

*By Dick Rosano*

## How a High School Basketball Coach Became a National Sports Icon




Steve Johnson

**ESPN men's college basketball analyst Dick Vitale in 2010 in Sarasota, Fla.**



Peter Lockley/NCAA Photos



Thomas LaGrega / ESPN




Joe Faraoni / ESPN Images

**From left: ESPN's Dick Vitale during the pre-game broadcast of the 2013 NCAA Men's Division I Basketball Final Four Championship game in the Georgia Dome in Atlanta; Crowd surfing before a North Carolina-Duke game at Cameron Indoor Stadium in Durham, N.C., March 3, 2012; During a Louisville University Cardinals basketball game at the KFC Yum! Center in Louisville, K.Y. in 2015**

**The interview had hardly begun, when "That's awesome, baby!" rang out from the telephone earpiece. It was a heartfelt explosion, one that conveyed the laughter from the person at the other end of the line, and one that can hardly be mistaken by any true fan of college basketball.**

"That's been me forever," he said, the smile coming through the telephone, "not manufactured for TV."

The caller was Dick Vitale, Hall of Fame announcer and fan favorite. I had requested an interview with this giant personality, the one who is right now on your television, broadcasting the most critical college basketball games of the season.

For those who know Dick Vitale, no introduction is necessary. For those who don't, it may not be too great an exaggeration to say that college basketball would not be the huge entertainment success that it is today if he had simply retired in 1979 when his coaching career ended.

Laudatory stints at New Jersey's Garfield High School and East Rutherford High School led predictably to a chance at college coaching, which led to the pros, coaching the Detroit Pistons for two seasons. But after compiling a record of 78-30 at the University of Detroit, his stint in the National Basketball Association didn't go as well.

Vitale — let's dispense with journalistic style and just call him "Dickie V" like the rest of the adoring world does — struggled with the Pistons and posted a less impressive record than he was used to. That was when the college game on television got its biggest gift in a century.

Pistons' owner Bill Davidson decided to make a coaching change and Dickie V was out of a job. ESPN saw an opportunity and quickly hired the effervescent former Pistons' coach to broadcast games from the booth.

"Absolutely no way," was Dickie V's initial response. "I know nothing about TV." But his wife, Lorraine, encouraged him to take the job and just have fun with it, a fill-in position until another coaching job came up.

Initially he was reluctant, but that quickly reversed. In a very short while, Dickie V's ebullient style of reporting caught on. Sports nuts who were fanatical about college basketball soon fell in love with the coach-turned-sportscaster and crowned Dickie V the sport's grandest celebrity. He became a larger-than-life commentator who ensured that the athletic superiority on the court would be matched by insightful commentary, rounds of humor, and memorable witticisms coming from the edge of it.




Phil Ellsworth / ESPN Images

**Dick Vitale during a regular season Louisiana State University game at the Pete Maravich Assembly Center in Baton Rouge, La., in 2016**

So who is he? Richard John Vitale was born in 1939 into an Italian American family in Passaic, N.J.

"I was just kid chasing a dream, came from a blue collar family," he says. "My mother had nine siblings, my father had nine siblings."

By his own admission, he was an "average high school player" — although one article quoted him as saying he was a "bald, one-eyed, Italian from back in Jersey who couldn't run or jump or play a lick."

"But my mother always told me, 'Even with one eye, you can be what you want to be.'"

Despite his lack of prowess with the ball, he knew how to coach others who held it in their hands. "To get ahead in football at the college or pro levels," he told me, "you have to have played it. I loved the game of basketball and saw that it was the best sport for me to climb the ladder."

His record in high school and college is proof enough of that wager. And, truth be told, his modest success at the pro level may have led to his dismissal, but it also led to the initiation of the college game's favorite announcer.

And just like another Italian American in sports, Yogi Berra, Dickie V became known for his signature phrases. "That's awesome, baby!" isn't trademarked, but he doesn't have to take that step. Everyone knows who it belongs to.

Where did you get these, I asked him. "Talking to athletes," he replied, "locker-room kidding around, things I carried from watching the games."

"Diaper Dandy" is his favorite phrase for young stars. "PTPer" refers to a prime-time player. "All Mystique" means a player that's inconsistent in his play. The "rock" is the ball, so "dishing the rock" means passing it. "Mr. Pac Man" is a player who will eat you alive on defense, "Space Eater" is a big man, and "All Windex Team" is one that can out-rebound the opponent and clean the glass.

There are many more memorable phrases from Dickie V, but none are so eagerly awaited than his signature outburst, "That's awesome, Baby!"

I asked him what were among his fondest memories of coaching and he was quick to recall the times at the high school level. "Winning back-to-back state championships," came first, but he quickly added how much he loved watching the kids play with enthusiasm.

And what about the rest of life, I asked. A serious subject deserves pause and reflection, but Dickie V didn't have time for that luxury. "Cancer, flat out, sucks," he said. "Quote me on that."

True to that passion, Dickie V has dedicated himself for many years to fighting childhood cancer. The annual Dick Vitale Gala draws millions of dollars to cancer research, and Dickie V's tireless efforts to draw dollars and attention has earned a loyal following among those committed to solving this medical challenge.

Richard John "Dickie V" Vitale pours passion into everything he does, whether calling plays from the sideline or calling out society's responsibility to stop the ravaging effects of cancer on young people.

"I learned more about life and love at the family dinner table: 'Richie,' my Dad used to say, 'be good to people, and people will be good to you.'"

The best way we can honor the man we know on the sportscast is to enlist in his mission to cure cancer. Visit http://www.dickvitaleonline.com/v-foundation.html and offer your services. I, for one, will donate the pay I receive from this article to that cause. ▲

*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.*

## Jim Valvano,

another basketball coach and fellow Italian American, died of cancer at an early age. His North Carolina State team won the national college basketball championship in 1983, but he was diagnosed with metastatic cancer several years later and died in 1993.

In an emotional speech at the ESPY awards shortly before his death, "Jimmy V" announced the V Foundation for Cancer Research. His closing words drew a standing ovation: "Cancer can take away all my physical abilities. It cannot touch my mind, it cannot touch my heart, and it cannot touch my soul." To connect and contribute to the V Foundation, visit: www.jimmyv.org.







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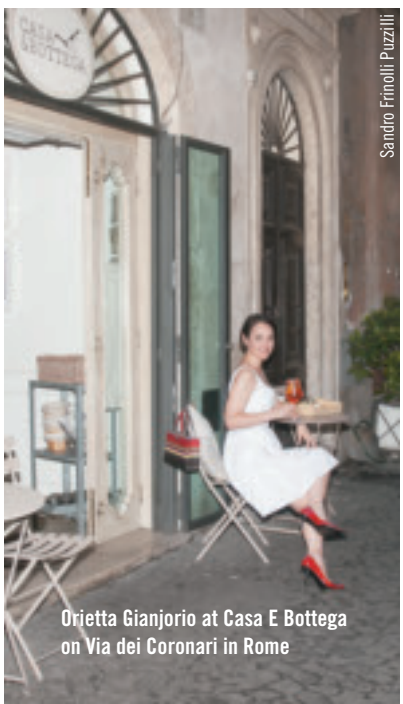
Karen Stepps

Orietta Gianjorio a traditional winemaker's "tastevin" to taste wine at the Miraflores Winery in Placerville, Calif., where she is the head sommelier and selects wines for the winery's food-and-wine-pairing events.

# The Tasting Life

## Orietta Gianjorio Tastes Food for a Living

*By Silvia Donati*



Sandro Frinolli Puzzilli

Orietta Gianjorio at Casa E Bottega on Via dei Coronari in Rome

If tasting food for a living sounds like the ideal job to you, then meet a woman who does exactly that: professional taster Orietta Gianjorio.

A third-level advanced sommelier, a certified olive-oil and honey taster, and an expert in sensory evaluation, Gianjorio is hired by companies to look, smell and taste their products to guarantee quality. She also works with academic organizations, chiefly among them the University of California at Davis, for research. She contributed to the 2010 UC Davis report finding that 69 percent of imported olive oil labeled as extra virgin was not, which eventually led California lawmakers to apply more stringent quality standards.

It's this type of contribution that makes Gianjorio most excited about her work: bringing her knowledge to consumers.

When she moved to America from her native Rome in 2008, she was surprised to discover that her all-Italian values of "shopping for the best ingredi-

ents, conviviality around the table, and slowing down to enjoy food" were mostly lacking. She remembers interning at a TV station in Sacramento, where she moved after marrying her American husband, and being the only one to go to the lunch room, prepare the table, and sit down with knife and fork.

"For my co-workers, eating was something they did while doing something else," she recalls. "But there are studies that show that conviviality around the table has an influence on the longevity of the population. Americans think that, by injecting vitamins, they're going to live longer, but the reality is that the way we eat makes a difference."

Gianjorio was already a certified sommelier when she moved to the United States, although she had obtained certification just for personal interest. She was trained in journalism and she intended to keep working in that industry until things took a different turn. Shortly after her move, she was assigned to cover the opening of the Olive Center at UC Davis, which was putting together a panel of olive-oil experts to do the study that came out in 2010. Already trained in sensory evaluation, she took the test to be part of the panel and passed it. Thus, her tasting life began.

She was first hired as an apprentice. Later, she traveled to Puglia in Italy to become a certified olive-oil taster, a member of the National Italian Board of Olive Oil Experts. Three years ago, she began to taste chocolate for a joint project by Mars and UC Davis, and then honey for UC Davis' Honey and Pollination Center.

"It was easy for me to go from wine and olive oil to chocolate and honey because once a person has learned a sensory evaluation, it's easy to look, smell and taste any product," explains Gianjorio, who is on her way to becoming one of only two people in the United States certified as an advanced-level honey taster.

In fact, anybody can learn to taste like a taster does, she says. Because reaching consumers is what she is most passionate about, Gianjorio founded Orietta LLC, a company that offers gourmet tastings, cooking classes, and consumer education for adults and children. She hopes to "inspire people to shop for quality ingredients and to look at food like a taster does: with love, curiosity, appreciation and fun."

During her tastings and cooking classes, Gianjorio teaches not only how to make specific dishes, she also teaches how to select ingredients, how to taste looking for quality, and how to detect low-quality ingredients that have no health benefits.

"Cooking is not the whole thing," she says. "It's important that consumers understand there's a job that needs to be done before cooking, which is being able to select high-quality products, and one after cooking, which is to sit down and eat with awareness."

Through her work with academic organizations and by talking to scientists and experts, she has learned that the quality of a product makes a difference in whether that product is healthy for you or not. Case in point: extra virgin olive oil.

"A low-quality olive oil is not going to have the same benefits as a high-quality olive oil, but we don't teach that to consumers," she says. "Even the American Heart Association on its website states that consumers should use a spoon of olive oil a day for their heart, but there's no mention of the quality. In reality, olive oil is fat, so it's not going to be healthy for you if you ingest a spoon of liquid fat. Only high-quality extra-virgin olive oil will have the health benefits that you need."



Orietta Gianjorio tasting chocolate as a member of the Mars-University of California at Davis Chocolate Taste Panel

Olive oil is the product that Gianjorio tastes the most, especially during certification season, from November to February. That's when she tastes olive oils submitted to the California Olive Oil Council (COOC), the non-profit organization representing most of about 400 olive-oil producers in California, to be certified as "extra virgin." This past season, she and her fellow panel members tasted as many as 600 samples from the 4 million gallons of olive oil produced!

To be certified as extra virgin, an olive oil must meet both chemical and sensory standards, and be completely free of defects. "As a taster in olive oil, you're called to be able to detect defects," Gianjorio says. "If you say an oil has defects, the producer cannot get the extra-virgin certification label, ruining the harvest for the year. So it's a big responsibility."

So how does professional tasting work? Gianjorio's "office" is generally a little booth inside a temperature controlled room where she tastes different samples and records data on a computer. In the case of olive oil, using a blue, tulip-shaped tasting glass, she first smells the oil looking for defects, then describes the aromas that she smells. She tastes by drinking a little quantity of olive oil, pulling oxygen into her mouth which allows her to pick up taste and flavors (called "retro-nasal aromas"). She then swallows to detect pungency in the back of her throat: both bitterness and pungency are general indicators of good quality in olive oil. Finally, she cleanses her palate ➤




Passionate about educating consumers, Orietta Gianjorio hosts an olive-oil tasting at the Italian Cultural Center in San Diego



A tasting and book reading with children in Tuscany

with green apple, water and, when the olive oil is very bitter, with some yogurt.

In sampling chocolate and honey, she first looks at the color and physical state of the samples as indicators of quality. Then, for chocolate, she snaps a piece and listens to the sound for "a clear snap" indicating a low percentage of fat. Low fat content means high cocoa content, which is healthier.

For honey, she spreads the sample around the glass to open the different aromas and she smells. With both chocolate and honey, she lets the sample melt before chewing. "In the meantime, I connect with my brain and I exhale to stimulate my retro-nasal receptors," Gianjorio says.

Because by the end of a tasting day the amount of food can be a lot, professional tasters generally spit. "Unless it's honey," Gianjorio says. "Honey is very difficult to spit because it melts so easy and so fast. So, by the end of the day, I get a sugar rush!"

As consumers, we should all learn to taste like a taster does, she says, explaining that means mostly being in the moment and connecting with our brain and senses. "By learning to taste, you can learn two things you can take into your daily life. One is single tasking and being aware, and the other is being able to detect quality, which determines whether something is healthful for you or not." ▲

*Silvia Donati is a freelance journalist and a contributing editor at ITALY Magazine. A native of Bologna, she divides her time between Italy and California, which she considers her second home. Silvia specializes in everything Italy-related and has a passion for Italian American topics."*

# Orietta Gianjorio's Shopping Tips



Orietta Gianjorio is the author of "A Guide to Olive Oil and Olive Oil Tasting" and two children's books about olive oil and tasting, "Coratina" and "Come visit the Teeny Tine Town of Taste." She offers these tips on shopping for high-quality olive oil, chocolate and honey:

## Olive Oil

- Look at the bottle. To preserve quality, olive oil bottles must be made of dark glass.
- Pay attention to seals. Tasting panels guarantee quality with their seals. Just be aware that seals will not help if the olive oil bottle was not stored in the appropriate conditions or for longer than the suggested amount of time.
- Pay attention to the year of production. Olive oil does not get better with age. Look for the words: "Harvest in" or "Harvest date." If you cannot find it, consider putting the bottle back on the shelf.

## Chocolate

- Look at the label: cocoa should be the first ingredient, and cocoa percentage should be at least 60 percent.
- Look at the packaging: chocolate should be in a dark, well-sealed wrapper. The more chocolate is protected from light and moisture, the longer its shelf life will be.
- When you open the wrapping paper, the chocolate should have a uniform color.
- Put the chocolate bar close to your ear and break it: high-quality dark chocolate should make a snapping sound to show that there is not a lot of fat besides cocoa butter.

## Honey

- Try to buy a chunky or pasty honey. When honey is nice and clear, there is a strong possibility that it has been adulterated. Because studies have shown that consumers prefer honeys that are golden in color, transparent and not crystallized, producers will try to prevent honey's natural crystallization process by using centrifuge and microfiltration after warming up or cooking the honey. With a crystallized honey, there are less chances of manipulations and damaging microfiltration.

*For more information on Orietta Gianjorio, visit her website at www.orietta.net and Facebook page at www.facebook.com/orietta.gianjorio*




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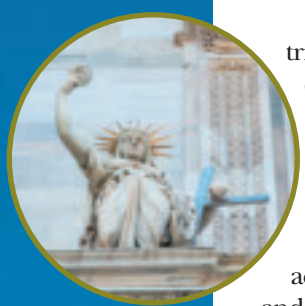
# SECRETS OF THE DUOMO

*A Behind-the-Scenes Tour of Milan's Duomo Cathedral*

**Story and Photography by Heather von Bargen**









Milan's Duomo Cathedral, the symbol of the city, its gothic features softened by exquisite statues and delicate spires piercing the sky, was constructed with donations. In 1387, Duke Visconti started it by opening the Candoglia marble quarries to the Veneranda Fabbrica to build it. Over six centuries since, patrons have contributed large sums and small to the construction of the fifth-largest church in the world. Although mostly completed in 1965, the Duomo's constant restoration requires ongoing donations.

Last year, the National Italian American Foundation was the principal donor to the Save the Saint campaign to restore the spire of Madre Francesca Cabrini, the first American saint. Sent by Pope Leo XIII in 1889 to care for the influx of Italian immigrants in America, she established orphanages, hospitals and schools across the United States.

My husband, Matt, and I also contributed to the campaign and, for our donation, received a private tour of the Duomo. Our guides were Dr. Marcello Menni, director of Communications for the Veneranda Fabbrica del Duomo, which still operates the Duomo and its cultural activities, quarries, museum, archives and choir, and Riccardo Tovaglieri, of the fundraising International Patrons of Duomo di Milano. And their unforgettable tour revealed secrets of the Duomo we would have never seen without their guidance.

As we started, explaining that "the Duomo has a connection with America," Tovaglieri pointed out a sculpture above the central front door that strongly resembles the Statue of Liberty. Menni suggested that Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi took inspiration from this piece when he created America's landmark statue that stands on Liberty Island in New York Harbor.

**Left: Milan's Duomo Cathedral**
**Inset, from top: Dr. Marcello Menni showing one of the Duomo's secret passageways; the "New Law Statue," added to the Duomo's exterior in 1810, precedes its look-alike Statue of Liberty by 76 years; unusual sculpture of Italian heavyweight boxing champion Primo Carnera.**



The Duomo's bronze door known for its remarkable sculpted figures…and for visitors rubbing them for good luck.

As we passed by one of the bronze doors of the Duomo, tourists lined up to rub the legs of sculpted figures that have become shiny from the attention. "People have begun doing that only in the last 20 years," Menni laughed. "They say if they touch it, they will be lucky."

The cathedral largely survived the bombing of World War II that destroyed much of Milan. But a bomb did explode in the front plaza, damaging the doors, and some scars remain. The rightmost door shows the history of the Duomo, depicting workers quarrying, marble traveling via canals designed by Leonardo da Vinci, and Archbishop Borromeo's procession through Milan in 1576 praying for salvation from the plague.

Near the entrance, a bronze inset runs the length of the interior floor and up the wall. Sunlight passes through a hole in the wall and forms a dot on the line at solar noon. On the solstices, the light follows the line up the wall. It's a solar clock installed in the 18th century "to try to get the people on time," Menni said. Zodiac characters along the line mark the date. "Some archbishops did not agree with astrology and took it away," he added. "Others put it back."

In the main area of the cathedral, 52 marble pillars divide five naves. Light streams through stained-glass windows. Menni taught us to read them from the bottom up. Contemporary sculptures and paintings on exhibit accent traditional art. "Our institution is very open to modern art, to the future," he said.

Near the main altar is the Duomo's pipe organ, the largest in Italy with more than 17,000 pipes. The organists teach at the Veneranda Fabbrica's music school. Boys have sung in the Duomo's choir since 1402. "The Veneranda Fabbrica has songs that were discovered on this site of the previous cathedral from the 4th century Roman period," Menni said.



The largest pipe organ in Italy with more than 17,000 pipes

Pointing to a 16-foot tall Jewish-style candelabrum, Menni said, "This is one of the largest menorahs in the world. It was donated to the cathedral. From the 12th century, it is a masterpiece of bronze art from medieval times."

The candelabrum's base is a riot of sculpted sword-bearing monkeys, figurines and dragons. "We light it at Easter and Christmas," Menni said.

On the interior's rightmost wall is the sarcophagus of Marco Carelli, a Milanese merchant who made his wealth selling spices, wool and slaves. He left his estate in 1391 to the Veneranda Fabbrica, his bequest, worth 30 million euros today, making him the largest benefactor of the Duomo. With Carelli's funds, work commenced on the first rooftop spire, named in his honor.

The Duomo's best-known relic is a nail from the crucifixion cross. A golden cross inset in a larger golden medallion hangs near the ceiling of the 160-foot high nave. "See a little red light? This is the place where the Holy Nail is, for safekeeping," said Menni.

The Saturday before the 14th of September, the Archbishop rises to the medallion and cross near the ceiling inside the Nivola (a cloud-shaped and cloud-and-angel-decorated mechanical lift). He reaches to the red light, removes the holy nail, and puts it on the main altar for public viewing. "It's one of the most special rites," added Menni.

At one point, our guides ushered us past velvet ropes through a nondescript door, and down an iron staircase. "Milan was a dangerous place in the Middle Ages," Menni explained. At the bottom of the stairs was a secret underground passageway to the priests' residence across the street.

Returning to the Duomo, we noticed someone pass behind an open door in the corridor. "Under the cathedral we have a cemetery, and under the cemetery, we have a sort of city," Menni said. "We have restrooms, showers, ➤

The Duomo's most famous relic is a nail from the crucifixion cross, kept in an enclosure on the golden cross (indicated by a red light) in a medallion near the ceiling of the nave.







stores and kitchens for our workers."

At the Duomo Museum, Menni showed us the "best things." A closer look at a painting by Cerano revealed that the "good animals" were near Adam and the "bad animals" near Eve. A painting by Tintoretto featured Titian, dressed in yellow, the color of heretics at the time. "It is to say, you are very bad," Menni laughed, mentioning that Titian had dismissed Tintoretto as a student.



**Left: The rooftop statue of Saint Cabrini**
**Right: Whimsical cat-and-mouse statuette on rooftop terrace**

We took the elevator to the rooftop terrace where the intricate pinnacles and spires astonished us — almost 3,000 statues embellish the exterior on pedestals, spires and walls. So do some things unexpected, including a statuette of a cat biting a mouse by its tail. Pumpkins, artichokes, and grapes decorate the coping. And there are sculptures of men boxing — one of them, the famous 1930s Italian heavyweight Primo Carnera. "Very uncommon for a cathedral," Menni said.

The Alps and the Apennines rose majestically in the distance. At the Duomo's highest point, high above us even on the rooftop, stands the gold Madonnina, representing St. Mary's Assumption to Heaven, 300 feet above the city. Lightning strikes her, so she is re-gilded every 30 to 40 years, we're told.

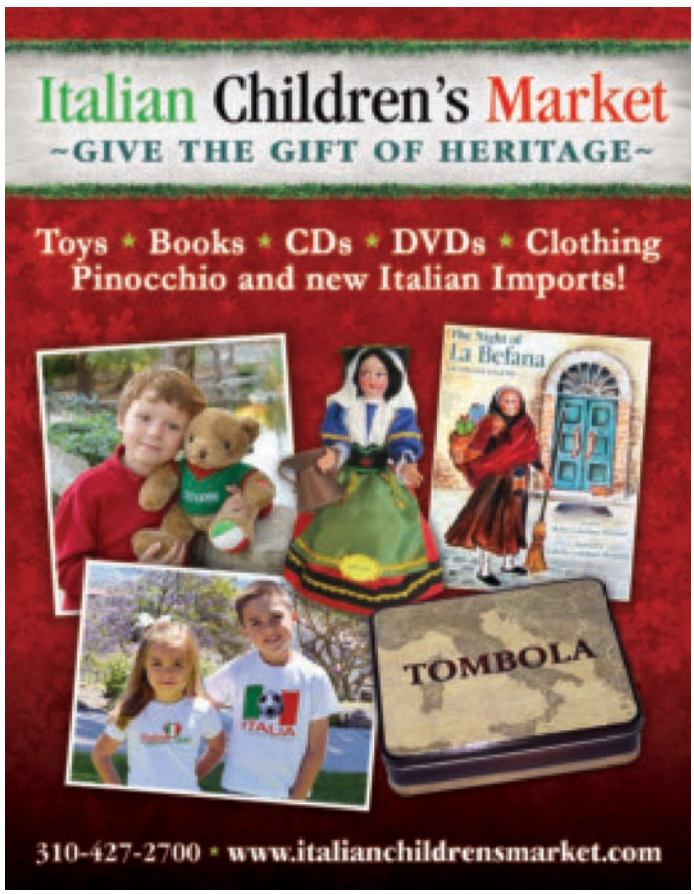
Until 1960, no building was higher than the Madonnina. "There is a tradition now," Menni said. "When a new skyscraper is built in Milan, the builder will put a statue of St. Mary on top, for respect."

Mother Cabrini's spire is in an area closed to the public. Menni called security to open the gate. We approached a large terrace surrounded by eight soaring spires. To our left, I saw a spire with a plaque. It was her.

As we approached, Tovaglieri said, "Thank you so much for your contribution." Our gift was small compared to what NIAF and others gave, nonetheless he thanked us profusely.

I looked in awe as Mother Cabrini's white marble seemed to glow against the azure sky. In this place of ineffable beauty, I was grateful we played a small part in saving her. ▲

*Heather von Bargen is a writer and photographer who focuses on travel and all things Italian. She lives in Tampa, Fla.*




A Christmas STORY

BY EMILIO IODICE

# THE IMMIGRANT AND THE REPORTER



© Associated Press

Construction workers line up for pay beside the first Rockefeller Center Christmas tree in New York in 1931. The Christmas tree went on to become an annual tradition and New York landmark.

IT WAS CHRISTMAS EVE. A New York City reporter set out to write a tale of human interest. He wanted to uplift the spirit of his readers. They were ravaged by the onslaught of the Great Depression. It grew worse day by day. He didn't know what to prepare.

He wandered to midtown. He walked into the city's largest construction site. The place was abandoned except for one man. A single laborer was toiling in the freezing wind and rain. He was an immigrant from Italy. He was laying bricks. He was restoring an old wall attached to a house of prayer.

Despite the elements, the man continued his task. He mixed his cement and gently placed one stone upon another like an artisan from the Renaissance. He looked carefully at his work. He was concerned about precision, appearance and quality. For this immigrant, it was more than a wall. It was something important. It had meaning. The wintry weather, his wet clothes and freezing fingers had no effect on him. He persevered.

The reporter followed the laborer. He watched his movements, hour upon hour. He was confused. Why was this man working so hard? What was driving him? Why was he so passionate? After all, this was only a wall. He was being paid a paltry sum. It was Christmas Eve. Did he have a family? Did anyone care about him? Why was he laboring like Michelangelo creating the Pieta?

Finally, he asked him a question. "Aren't you weary? You have been laying bricks all day in this miserable weather." The immigrant stared at him. He smiled. His black eyes, dark complexion and rough beard glowed in the rays of the sun setting over Manhattan. "Sir, you don't understand anything," he said, "I am not laying bricks. I am building a cathedral."

The reporter was stunned. He was lost. Suddenly, he understood. It was a revelation. This man knew the meaning of work and of life. It was that no matter what our state; no matter what our duties; no matter how menial our tasks seem to be; we are doing something that is always part of a larger vision and we each have a mission on this planet. The Italian discovered the secret to achievement, success and hope.

That immigrant was my grandfather. ▲

*Emilio Iodice is an award winning writer, educator, executive, decorated American diplomat, presidential historian, and professional public speaker. His works include his bestselling book "A Kid from Philadelphia, Mario Lanza: The Voice of the Poets"; "Profiles in Leadership from Caesar to Modern Times"; and "Reflections: Stories of Love, Leadership, Courage and Passion." His latest book is "2016 Selecting the President: The Most Important Decision You Will Ever Make."*

# BAROLO

## OLD and NEW Testing the Controversial Difference

*By Dick Rosano*

Barolo is one of Italy's most famous wines. In fact, the winemakers of this stylish and historic beverage would say that it ***is*** Italy's most famous wine. In a crowded field of Nebbiolo-based offerings like Spanna, Ghemme, Sizzano, Gattinara — even the supremely elegant Barbaresco — Barolo stands alone at the summit of great wines from the Piedmont region of northern Italy.

This grand example of the country's wines has a long history, with written records of the name stretching back to the early 19th century. So it would be with some trepidation, bordering on angst, that the winemakers of the region would tamper with the traditions and methods of Barolo production.

So-called "old style" Barolo, that is to say, nearly every wine that was made for 180 years, relies on open-top fermentation and long barrel aging to produce an sophisticated wine with great prospects for aging. The downside is that this wine is not necessarily easy to consume in its first 10 years. As I've noted before: "Buy Barbera for tonight, Barbaresco for your cellar, and Barolo for you children."

As wine consumption and globalization opened up markets around the world for all nations' wines, tastes changed, and so did the desire to satisfy those tastes. The American market has driven winemaking practices since World War II, and Americans are an impatient lot, not likely to wait so many years to pour the wines they poured their money into buying.

Giving in to new market pressures, some winemakers in Piedmont began to change their ways, producing what are now called "new style" Barolo. These wines differ from their predecessors with riper harvesting, closed and/or temperature-controlled fermentation, and aging in newer, smaller barrels for shorter periods of time. The result is a wine that tastes and smells like Barolo — perhaps with riper, fruitier profiles — that doesn't require the years of aging to open up.

Which is best? We wondered the same thing, and whether each has its own place on the table and market.

To delve into the differences, we (Ambassador magazine's editor, Don Oldenburg, and I) collected two dozen bottles, and two additional and well-respected professional wine critics: Ben Giliberti and Scott Greenberg. We grouped the wines into "old" and "new" styles if the producers voiced their opinion on the style, then used our own tasting impressions to label the Barolos that were not pre-termed as such by the producers.

The tasting was amazing, as one would expect. Not without its surprises, though with no disappointments. The old and new styles stood out clearly, and while one might fit nicely into a certain menu, another might stand out with another.

The real test is which wine each consumer prefers. To help with



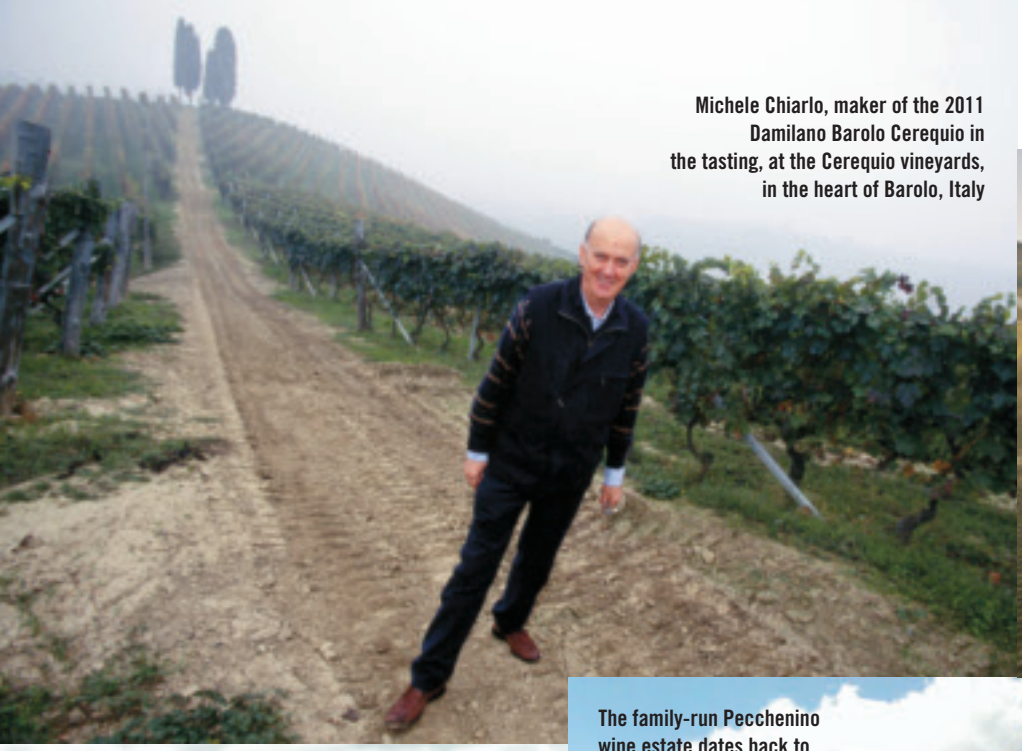
Courtesy of VIAS Imports Ltd.

sorting through the possibilities, the tasting notes — reflecting mostly mine but with valuable input from the rest of the panel — follow.

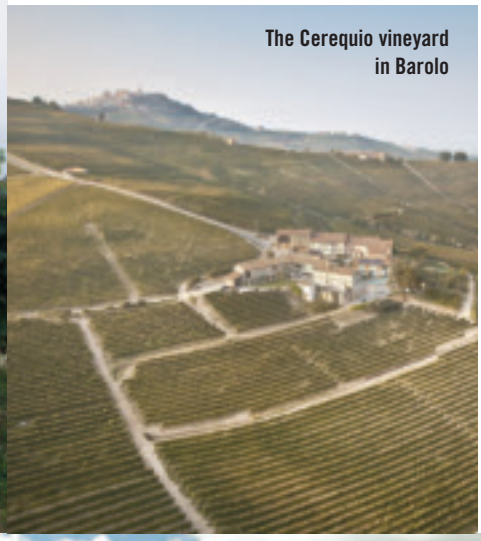
### Old Style Barolos

*Age most of these for 10-20 years*

- 2010 Attilio Ghisolfi Barolo Bussia ($60). Taut, dried fruit, tannic, good acidity, good balance. *Score: 93*
- 2011 BelColle Barolo ($60). Earthy, aromas and flavors tightly wrapped but waiting to explode. *Score: 91*
- 2012 Bruno Giacosa Barolo Falletto ($250). Soft and aromatic; nice front palate impression with good balance, cherry and blackberry accent. *Score: 94*



Michele Chiarlo, maker of the 2011 Damilano Barolo Cerequio in the tasting, at the Cerequio vineyards, in the heart of Barolo, Italy



The Cerequio vineyard in Barolo



The Damilano vineyards in Barolo, Italy's beautiful Langhe region



The family-run Pecchenino wine estate dates back to the late 1700s and today has vineyards the Commune of Dogliani and in Monforte d'Alba.

Courtesy of VIAS Imports Ltd.

- 2012 Ca Rome Barolo Rapet ($103). Bright aromas of fruit braced with tobacco, oak, and light tannins. Tangy and long. *Score: 93*
- 2011 Damilano Barolo Cerequio ($87). Fragrant nose, tart and tingly, dried fruit on front palate, soft tannins, leather and toast on back palate. *Score: 94*
- 2011 Damilano Barolo Cannubi ($94). Cherry up front, a bit of mint and raspberry deeper into the palate. *Score: 93*
- 2011 Damilano Barolo Liste ($85). Lightly fruity on nose, taut flavors of cherry and raspberry, dried fruit and soft tannins. *Score: 91*
- 2012 Damilano Barolo Lecinquevigne ($47). Lean and slow to develop, cherry with a touch of tobacco on palate. Very well balanced, which makes it a reliable wine. *Score: 89*
- 2010 Marcarini Barolo Brunate ($79). Dried fruit yet provocative aromas, delicious palate impression of ripe fruit and soft tannins. Score: 92
- 2011 Marchesi di Barolo Tradizione ($51). Thin and a bit short, not very interesting. *Score: 85*
- 2010 Marchesi di Barolo Barolo di Barolo ($93). Ample fruit, okay, forward impression of black cherry and plums, some leather, rewarding finish. Although made in the old style, oddly modern on the palate. *Score: 94*
- 2012 Pecchenino Barolo San Giuseppe ($64). Luscious fruit, soft tannins, elegant presentation, a bridge between the old and new. *Score: 92*
- 2012 Pecchenino Barolo Le Coste di Monforte ($72). Soft fruit, cherry and tar accents, leather and toasty oak dominate the back palate. *Score: 93*





**Far left: The Damilano family vineyards date back to the 1890s. Today, Paolo, Mario and Guido Damilano, the fourth generation, are bringing new vigor to the family's wine-making business while upholding Damilano's traditional philosophy.**

**Left: Orlando Pecchenino whose vineyards produce the 2012 Pecchenino Barolo San Giuseppe and the 2012 Pecchenino Barolo Le Coste di Monfort in the tasting**

Photos Courtesy of VIAS Imports Ltd.

## New Style Barolos

*Can be held for 15 years, or consumed sooner*

- 2012 Cascina Bongiovanni Barolo Pernanno ($75). Lush, brilliant dark fruit flavors, cherry, plum, and light spice. *Score: 91*
- 2012 Conterno Fantino Barolo Vigna Del Gris ($95). Hints of the old style in the leather, toast and oak; but it veers toward new style with the mint, cherry and tangy acidity. *Score: 95*
- 2009 Luca Bosio ($44). Crisp, fruity, forward, hints of tobacco, vanilla, and black cherry, savory finish. *Score: 91*
- 2011 Paolo Manzone ($80). Aromatic and oaky on nose, very tannic, flavors of cherry and licorice, prominent features of oak on the nose and finish. *Score: 92*

## Styles as Judged by the Panel

- 2012 Ceretto Barolo ($55). The Ceretto wines straddle the old and new styles, producing wines of depth and age-ability but with a fruitiness not found with some wines produced by the old methods. This one has lots of oak, vanilla and toast, with a hint of black pepper on the finish. *Score: 93*
- 2011 Ceretto Barolo Brunate ($130). Tight and reserved, the oak, cherry, berry, and licorice flavors are slow but sure to develop. *Still in its infancy, so the score (92) will assuredly rise, probably to 95.*
- 2011 Fontanafredda Serralunga d'Alba Barolo ($45). Nice aromas of juicy red fruit, slightly tannic on palate, soft and forward. True to the modern style. *Score: 90*
- 2010 Fontanafredda Barolo la Rosa ($113). A straight up Barolo, lightly finessed, with light tannins (showing the element of brief aging). Soft fruit flavors, lovely finish. More modern in style. *Score: 91*
- 2011 Marchesi di Barolo Barolo Coste di Rose ($85). Medium body, forward and fruity in the modern style, a bit overripe. *Score: 87*
- 2011 Marchesi di Barolo Barolo Sarmassa ($184). Full bodied from the start, dark fruit with accents of chocolate and light spice, great balance. It has the depth of an old style wine but the approachability of a new style. *Score: 94*
- 2011 Marchesi di Barolo Barolo Cannubi ($107). Ripe, fresh fruit with hints oak (modern style) and bracing acidity. *Score: 94*
- 2011 Prunotto Barolo ($60). Soft forward fruit, lite tobacco accents, soft mature tannins; light body but firm tannins. Old style. Score: 92
- 2010 Prunotto Barolo Bussia ($91). Aromatic, ripe yet soft approach, black cherry and tea flavors. *Score: 92* ▲

*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 Barolo Folklore

There's a persistent rumor that Barolo was originally a sweet wine. The folklore is based in part on the fact that the grape, Nebbiolo, is slow to ripen and, by the time it is mature enough for harvest, the sugar is so high in the fruit that warm fermentation would be halted by the late-autumn cold weather. A so-called "stuck fermentation" leaves some residual sugar, and the wine doesn't ferment out dry. This "sweet wine" rumor also suggests that it was a French oenologist, Louis Odart, who transformed Barolo into a dry wine. *Mon Dieu*!

In fact, new research shows that Paolo Francesco Staglieno is the true father of Barolo, a dry wine from its inception. In the 1830s, when many wines were still being bottled sweet, Staglieno was called upon by Camillo Benso to make a dry, agreeable wine from the Nebbiolo grown on his property. One aspect of the translated tradition even calls the whole idea of dry wine making the "Staglieno method," in honor of the man who drove fermentation methods in that direction. And Chianti was originally a white wine. Really! But that's a story for another time.

*—Dick Rosano*

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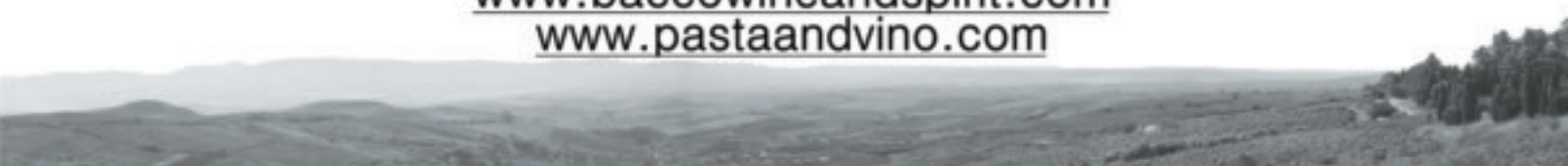
On the palate it expresses great personality and it is pleasantly soft. The finish is spicy and intense with fruity notes.

Aromas reminiscent of black berries and ripe cherries compliment fresh, fragrant, full and rich flavors in the mouth.

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# The Holidays Italian American Reader

Winter is the ideal time for reading. Christmas is the ideal time for giving. Makes sense to combine the two, right? Here are 10 reasons why good books make great gifts during the holidays:

- Books are easier to wrap than socks, underwear, and kitchen utensils.
- Warning: May cause drowsiness. But what's better than to cozy up with a book in front of a fire on a cold winter night and doze off.
- Buying the right book for the right person is a personal journey that is far more meaningful than buying the right tie or coffeemaker.
- As Groucho Marx once said, "Outside of a dog, a book is man's best friend. Inside of a dog it's too dark to read."
- No batteries required.
- They're a way of sharing a literary experience you loved.
- Good ones are priceless but not that expensive.
- In this digital age of the latest techie gadgetry gifts, you can spill coffee on it, scribble notes in it, and leave by your bedside.
- One size fits all imaginations.
- To repeat Garrison Keillor's wonderful witticism: "A book is a gift you can open again and again."

Any of the books on this year's holiday reading list would make a great gift for just the right person. They are all written by Italian American authors or are of interest to Italian American readers, or both. Because when browsing in bookstores, we instinctively study the cover and then turn to the first page for a glimpse, here we provide a brief but telling passage from each book's beginning as well as its cover.

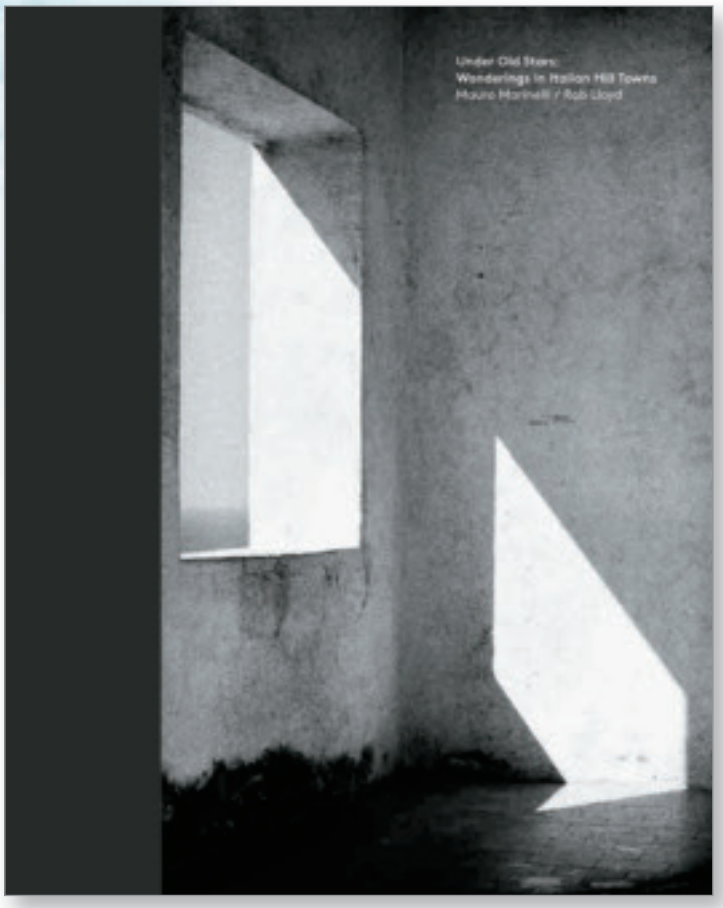
Keep in mind, our brief reviews are meant to be nothing more than a soupçon, just enough to get your interest, or suggest a perfect gift!

*Buona lettura!* And *Buon Natale!*





Photographs © Mauro Marinelli









**Under Old Stars:**
**Wanderings in Italian Hill Towns**
Photographs by Mauro Marinelli
Prose Sketches and Poems
by Rob Lloyd
Kehrer Verlag; 160 pages
$40 hardcover

This book of stunning, stark, black-and-white images from small hill towns in Italy's Molise province was born from the recurring dreams of photographer Mauro Marinelli's uncle Peter. As a boy in upstate New York, Marinelli listened intently at dinnertime to his elderly immigrant uncle tell of his recurring dreams of his childhood home in southern Italy.

Years later, Marinelli went looking for those dreamscapes, focusing his camera lens on people and scenes of Molise's remote villages, their broken cobbled streets, their scarred frescoed churches. The artful results fill this beautiful book's pages with mesmerizing, visual studies in stopped time, contrasting shadows and light, and stilling motion and detail.

Marinelli's photos range from deeply wrinkled ancient men to young children with haunting stares. Grainy images reveal distant mountainous terrain turned through hillsides toward the sea. Crumbling walls, upkept altars, a sleeping dog, old women in black, a crooked sconce, hanging laundry, a threadbare laborer, a shepherd and flock in a hillside pasture, they all whisper the primeval reality of Italy's second-smallest and largely overlooked region.

Interwoven with the pages of Marinelli's photographs are Rob Lloyd's captivating prose sketches and poems, narrative kin to the photos but not connected.

Like the old uncle's dreams, Lloyd's vignettes, scenes and voices, coexisting with Marinelli's exquisite images, evoke a dream-like surreality of a place and time gone by. This is a fascinating book.

*— Don Oldenburg*



## The Secret of Altamura: Nazi Crimes, Italian Treasure

By Dick Rosano
CreateSpace Independent Publishing
282 pages; $12.99

*And the remainder would be sent to Berlin — enough to convince his superiors to keep him in charge of this mission to search and seize Italy's wealth.*

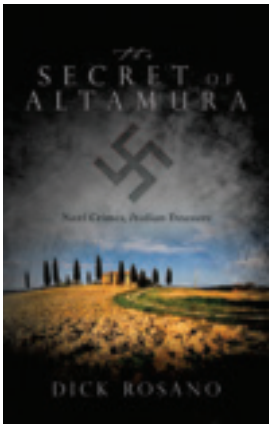
In his third mystery, "The Secret of Altamura," author Dick Rosano presents an entertaining melding of history with fictional plots and characters, including ruthless Nazi officer Col. Anselm Bernhard. Bernhard and his squad are sent to Italy during WWII to "save," actually plunder, Italian artwork and bring it to Germany. The colonel is driven by his obsession for wealth — to find the "secret" treasure for his own cache that he believes is hidden in the southern Italian town of Altamura.

The quest for riches is the running theme of the story. And Rosano artfully links the past with the present, from a 1943 suicide in a Venice hotel room that leads to "an eye for an eye" retribution, to present-day German art historian Martin Bernhard, who uses his grandfather's (the colonel) journal to help return artwork to its rightful Italian owners. Possessing the journal and its information directs the narrative into sub-themes of murder, revenge, family loyalties, guilt and religion.

Rosano, who is Ambassador magazine's wine writer, skillfully adds modern-day characters that keep the storyline flowing. Carlo de Vito, an Italian American from St. Louis, is in Italy to learn about his heritage with help from the Filomena family and is drawn into the search for the Altamura treasure. A quiet man named Nino (later chapters) also provides engaging scenes.

What and where is the "secret" treasure? Rosano's clever answers might blindside you — in a good way.

— Robert Bartus Jr.







## Birds Of Passage

By Joe Giordano
Harvard Square Editions
274 pages; $22.95

*"On the pier the high-pitched voice of a young tenor rose with a plaintive song, Addio a Napoli. Other voices tried to join in, but cracked with sadness."*

In a tale of fiction covering the early 20th century, author Joe Gior-



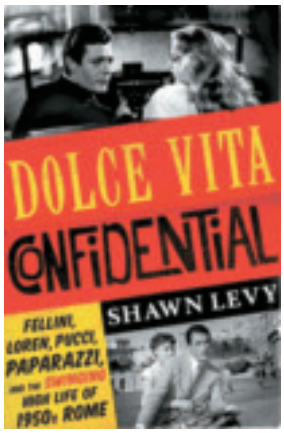
dano delivers a novel with abundant characters in "Birds of Passage." With a landscape stretching from Naples, Italy, to New York City, the pages of this compelling narrative create vivid images of the Big Apple's Italian immigrants and their struggles in America, for better or worse.

Giordano's ability to keep a full deck of characters and plots from becoming dull is a credit to his prose. Leonardo Robustelli leaves Naples for America aboard a steamliner in 1905 for a job and a new life. But he gets involved in murders, works for a gang boss, and eventually discovers family ties that have been kept secret for the sake of honor. Carlo Mazzi flees Naples and is hiding in America after killing Pero Silvestri, the leader of a crime (Camorra) family. A powerful gang boss in Naples, Salvatore Mazzi (father of Carlo), adds robust drama to the storyline.

With a New York City cast of gripping personalities, including Lower East Side gang leader Frank Rizzo and union boss "Big" Jim O'Neil, there's no shortage of machinations.

A "bird of passage" is a person who travels from his home country to another country for work, but never intends to stay. With Giordano's skillful and lively storytelling, you'll enjoy staying with this book, from the first chapter to the last.

— Robert Bartus Jr.




*…To live life alla Romana has meant different things at different times, but among those meanings has always been, surely, to live fully and sweetly, in beautiful form and happy company, with an attitude of knowing-but-not-entirely-caring, at a high rate, in plain view, steeped in confidence and élan and flair…*

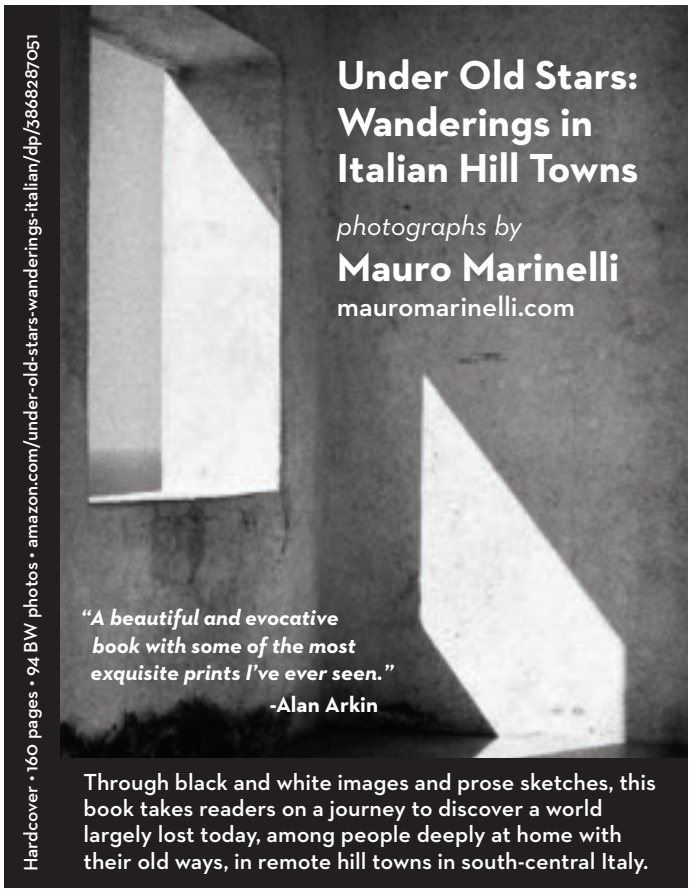
**Dolce Vita Confidential: Fellini, Loren, Pucci, Paparazzi, and the Swinging High Life of 1950s Rome**
By Shawn Levy
W.W. Norton & Company
447 pages; $27.95 hardcover

*Rome is eternal, all roads do lead to it, and the locals, with their daily acquaintance with depths of history, art, culture, religion, and eccentricity, really do offer a model for living, whether you are in Rome or not.*

Film, fashion, and the flash of paparazzi cameras in post-war Rome feature the city as backdrop, catalyst, and sculptor of an unlikely post-war rise that made Italy synonymous with glamor, glitter and glitz.

No fluff piece, "Dolce Vita Confidential" explores Rome's role as the Eternal City whose ruin-to-rise flame never gets extinguished. Rome is revealed as romantic root of Italy's rise from post-war ruin to a worldwide symbol of style, sparkle and charm. From penury to fashion competitor ➤



of Paris, Rome served as creative catalyst for the rise of Italian couturiers, including Pucci, Brioni and the Fontana sisters. Cinecittà, or "Hollywood on the Tiber," rose from refugee camp to epicenter of the 1950s film industry. From Audrey Hepburn and Gregory Peck's whirlwind "Roman Holiday" to Elizabeth Taylor and Gregory Peck's passionate "Cleopatra," Rome made Italy known worldwide as a care-free destination for the gelato, Vespa rides, Trevi Fountain trysts, and Spanish-Step swank still sought.

This book will appeal to film buffs, fashionistas, and flash photography aficionados seeking a real or virtual Roman holiday.

*— Kristen Keppel*




**52 Things to See & Do in Calabria**
By Michelle Fabio
Locals Know Italy Travel Guide
184 pages; $6.99 Kindle

Look, when one of your favorite ex-pat writers in the south of Italy writes a guidebook to her ancestral region, the location she adopted 13 years ago after escaping her lawyerly existence in the States, and then raised goats and savored espresso there, then married and had her baby there, you pay attention.

Michelle Fabio knows this ancient land between 500 miles of coastline along the Tyrrhenian and Ionian seas because it is her life. So if you're thinking of going to Calabria, her firsthand insights are a must read. Calabria is often called "Italy's Best Kept Secret." Lucky for us Fabio can't keep a secret!

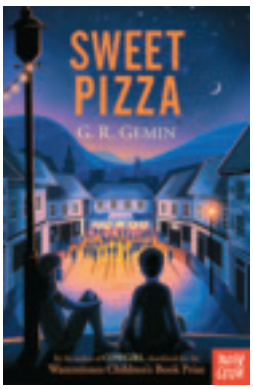
The book starts with an overview of the region, its natural beauty, history, geography and culture — and, of course, its spicy food.

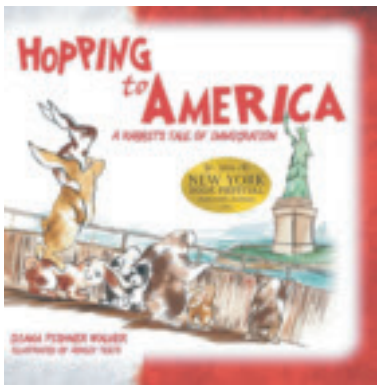
Fabio doesn't avoid Calabria's downsides. She smartly addresses why this is one of the least visited regions in Italy — language issues, crime concerns, more travel obstacles than farther north, and less tourist information, especially in English.

Which is why Fabio wrote this guidebook. She covers the highlights of each of Calabria's five provinces, along with a special section on beaches. Scattered throughout the well-more-than 52 things to see and do are great photos and lots of insider tidbits you won't find in conventional guidebooks.

What you won't find here, however, are hotel and restaurant recommendations. Fabio sticks to the "things to do" and where to go, and leaves the ratings to others. For a concise travel guide to the region that's the toe to Italy's boot-shaped peninsula, you won't go wrong with this friendly guide.

*— Don Oldenburg*




**Sweet Pizza**
By G.R. Gemin
Nosy Crow Ltd
272 pages
$8.75 paperback

*When Joe tasted a mouthful he was amazed how delicious it was — a dense taste, better than any pasta he'd eaten before. Food was suddenly different — he felt as if his taste buds were doing the cha-cha-cha on Strictly.*

**Hopping to America: A Rabbit's Tale of Immigration**
By Diana Pishner Walker
Illustrated by Ashley Teets
Headline Books: 32 pages; $16.95 hardcover

*Cousin Dominick came to meet Joby's family at Ellis Island to take them to their new home in West Virginia.… It was not a very big home for all of Joby's family. The family had to share bedrooms. Mamma Rosa made sure there were enough seats at the table for everyone in the family to sit together at dinner time. The Riepule family always stopped whatever they were doing to come to the table to share a meal and say a blessing for their food.*

In a beautiful homage to family and the Italian immigration story, these two children's books offer an excellent opportunity to teach kids about both Italian history and what it means to be the descendants of Italian immigrants.

G.R. Gemin's "Sweet Pizza" (ages 11+) follows the story of Joe, a teenage boy of Italian descent, who tries desperately to save his great grandfather's café by reconnecting with his roots and bringing Italian food back to his family's business. Joe's determination and love of Italian immigrants' history during World War II not only brings his family back together, but also brings life back to his small, struggling town. Although this novel takes place in Wales, the story's focus on the lessons our ancestors can teach us is something many Italian Americans can relate to.

Diana Pishner Walker's "Hopping to America: A Rabbit's Tale of Immigration" (ages 4-7) follows the story of an Italian family of rabbits arriving in America for the first time, and learning to adjust to a new way of life. Told from the perspective of Joby, the young rabbit immigrating to the United States with his family, this beautifully illustrated book is a great tool for parents to share their ancestors' immigrant experience with younger generations.

*— Danielle DeSimone* ▲

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Samuele Pucillo in "Fire at Sea"

# Documenting the Refugee Crisis on LAMPEDUSA

## Filmmaker Gianfranco Rosi's "Fire at Sea"

*By Maria Garcia*



"Fire at Sea" scene

Gianfranco Rosi's feature-length documentary "Fuocoammare" ("Fire at Sea") is set in Lampedusa. The rocky shores of this small Sicilian island, 70 miles from Tunisia, have for the last 15 years served as a safe landing for refugees from the Middle East and Africa. It was this mass migration of hundreds of thousands that led Rosi to wonder how Lampedusa's 6,000 inhabitants were faring. He expected a cacophony of foreign languages, a nearly imperceptible but definitive alteration in the character of the island — and he anticipated the stories of friendships and culture clashes that would shape his documentary.



Refugees in "Fire at Sea"

In a telephone interview from the New York Film Festival this past October, the filmmaker recalled that his expectations were almost immediately dashed. "I thought I would find a place where these two elements of life were somehow interacting, but instead I found the separation of these worlds," Rosi said. "The border of Lampedusa had been moved to the middle of the sea."

Several disastrous sea rescues had taken place off the coast of the island in 2013 and 2014, when Rosi had first visited Lampedusa. In 2015, despite the fact that Italy had saved a record number of lives, the U.N. Refugee Agency recorded 1,600 deaths in the first four months of that year. The figure makes the sea corridor from Tunisia and Libya to Lampedusa one of the most dangerous in the world for refugees, most of whom are fleeing wars at home. "Europe and the European Union will collapse," Rosi said, "if this crisis is not resolved."

The opening sequences of "Fire at Sea" feature Samuele Puccilo, one of Rosi's subjects, cutting off small pieces of a tree limb that are later used to fashion a slingshot. The documentary, which unfolds without narration, then moves to a desperate call for help received by the offshore rescue ship. The next morning, Lampedusa's local radio station reports that 206 refugees had been pulled from the sea, but that over 50 had perished. The radio announcer is also one of the subjects in "Fire at Sea," as is Dr. Pietro Bartolo, Lampedusa's sole physician. He examines survivors, and identifies the dead. Samuele's father and grandmother, and a mysterious diver who collects cuttlefish off the rocky coastline, round out Rosi's representation of everyday life on the island.

During production, the Eritrean-born, Italian filmmaker shot dozens of arrivals of refugees, and two of these dramatic debarkations are shown in the documentary.

"Most refugees reach Lampedusa at night, and they are transferred to the Italian ship," he said. "Afterward, they are taken to a center by bus and, except for the doctor and the authorities who rescue them, no one ever sees them."

Rosi was given remarkable access to the refugees, and filmed women and men as they were processed at the center. He also follows one group of men who play soccer, and another that chronicles their difficult journey in a rap song.

The second rescue, near the end of "Fire at Sea," is a grim, yet cathartic moment in which Rosi leads the audience to question which of the worlds that comprise the documentary constitutes the real aberration, the relatively bucolic existence of the Lampedusians, or the horrifying scene in the hull of the ship. While Rosi's leitmotif appears to draw from such disparate circumstances, the filmmaker actually relies on archetypal patterns to illustrate the ways in which Lampedusa and its denizens are a microcosm of Europe.

The interwoven threads of the documentary's narrative are Samuele's coming-of-age, Dr. Bartolo's middle-age despair, and Nonna Puccilo's gentle preservation of home and family. "Samuele's adolescent struggle to accept the uncertainties and harshness of life," Rosi observed, "his journey, so to speak, his anxiety attacks, resemble Europe's reaction to the refugee crisis."

The doctor, who performs an ultrasound on a pregnant refugee as attentively and compassionately as he treats Samuele's shortness of breath, is Rosi's Virgil. "He is the inner world, the conscience of the island," Rosi explained. "Without the doctor, we would never be able to watch the tragedy of death in the film. He is a the narrator for these conditions."



Samuele Pucillo in "Fire at Sea"

As for Nonna Puccilo, she is the embodiment of historical memory as she recalls the original "fire at sea," World War II's Battle of Pantelleria and the Pelagie Islands; she also personifies the continuity of life and culture in her preparation of the island's signature cuisine. It harkens back to the time of the Ancient Greeks who may have ➤

given the island its name. In a particularly evocative scene, Signora Puccilo makes her bed, and in her progress around the room, prays to the statues of saints. "I was there one day, visiting her, and it took her 30 minutes to make the bed," Rosi said. "I thought: 'What an incredible world of ritual.' Lampedusa is not just the site of tragedy. It represents the connection to the ancient past and to the sea."

Upon hearing the radio announcer's report of 50 refugee deaths at the beginning of the documentary, Signora Puccilo exclaims: "Poor souls!" She and the doctor, and the announcer represent the view of most Italians with regard to the refugees.

"The look in the radio man's eyes when he must deliver the news about them is unforgettable," Rosi said. After having to report a second series of deaths at sea, the radio man plays one of Gioachino Rossini's famous arias, "Dal tuo Stellato Soglio" ("Your Star-studded Throne") from "Mosè in Egitto" ("Moses in Egypt," 1822). A mournful prayer, it precedes the drowning of the Israelites in the Red Sea.

As for Samuele, who points his slingshot at the island's cacti, and then covers the resulting holes with duct tape, Rosi said: "That is a metaphor for how Europe is trying to patch up this crisis." Samuele also stalks birds with the slingshot, but at the end of "Fire at Sea," he makes a surprising reversal of this habit, adding a note of hope to Rosi's despondency.

"Fuocoammare" is Rosi's breakout documentary, the filmmaker having garnered the top prize at the 2016 Berlin Film Festival. Among his three previous documentaries, only one received limited distribution in the United States, "El Sicario, Room 164" (2010), an interview with a Mexican hitman. During the New York Film Festival, "Fuocoamare" was named Italy's entry for the Best Foreign Film Oscar in 2017. Rosi credits his unusual boyhood as the inspiration for his craft. His family moved often because of his father's work.

"I am Italian, but growing up in different countries and on different continents gave me this experience of never having a place of identity," he said. "What is important as an artist is to escape your own identity, and move to another place in order see something."

Rosi moved to Lampedusa, and lived there for a year during production on "Fuocoammare." He said, "I want to say profound things in my films, but with a lightness."

Rosi's intensity often precludes "lightness," yet the diver in "Fire at Sea" adds a touch of magic realism. He is the filmmaker's extraordinary expression of singularity in a documentary about a crisis that, ironically, because of its scale, remains faceless. "The diver and his undersea world are these moments of reflection in the film," Rosi said. "He cannot be explained, as in life — not everything has a reason."▲

*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.*



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# Next Colangelo Challenge

## *Making the 76ers Great Again*

*By Wayne Randazzo*



Scott Romer Photography

**Jerry Colangelo at the National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame's 39th annual Induction and Awards Gala, November 12, in Chicago, with Vinny Del Negro, former NBA head coach and currently an analyst with NBA TV.**

Always at the forefront of success in sports, business or any type of venture has to be a vision. There has to be this uncanny, unprovoked dream that compels someone to make it into a reality.

For the Colangelo family, in particular Jerry and his son, Bryan, that vision has always seemed to include a round ball and a hardwood floor.

Jerry Colangelo grew up in Hungry Hill, a largely Italian American neighborhood on the distant south side of the Chicago suburbs. His talent and his height were natural gifts that persuaded him to follow the voice of the round ball to the University of Illinois, where he excelled.

Jerry's true gift, as it turned out, was not as a player but as a leader, a doer, who saw the Chicago Bulls grow up from its infancy, who turned the Phoenix Suns from a desert expansion into a true NBA contender, who made the Arizona Diamondbacks take an impossible ride from baseball's newest franchise to its youngest ever champion.

When Jerry Colangelo, a beloved past-chairman of the National Italian American Foundation, got his hands on something, even the most unlikely of outcomes suddenly has a spark. Take USA Basketball, for example. When the change was made to allow NBA players to represent their home countries, the Dream Team shined gold on the rest of the world with relative ease.

Several years later, the dream crashed, and the American basketball squad wasn't as eagerly approaching its summer love. That's when Colangelo stepped in with his years of wisdom and steady dose of accountability. With Mike Krzyzewski at his side, Colangelo guided USA Basketball back to their rightful place at the top of the mountain.

With USA Basketball finally in a good place, the Colangelos have taken on a new hill to climb. Bryan Colangelo is the new president of basketball operations and general manager of the 76ers. He has already been a successful general manager in the NBA. He oversaw some very good seasons in both Phoenix and Toronto. This, however, is a different type of undertaking. So his dad is consulting as the 76ers' adviser.

The 76ers aren't a young franchise that's never been to the top, nor are they an older franchise that's been always kicked around. The Philadelphia 76ers is one of the proudest franchises in NBA history. With a trail of greatness from Moses Malone to Julius Erving to Charles Barkley and Allen Iverson, the Sixers have been there and done that.

That's why the Colangelos are in the City of Brotherly Love. It's time for the 76ers to do it again. A plummeting to one of the worst single-seasons in NBA history won't be tolerated in Philly any longer.

During their careers, the two Colangelos have been named NBA Executive of the Year a combined six times. They have the infrastructure being put into place, and the 76ers are looking to use the 2016-17 season as a leap forward.

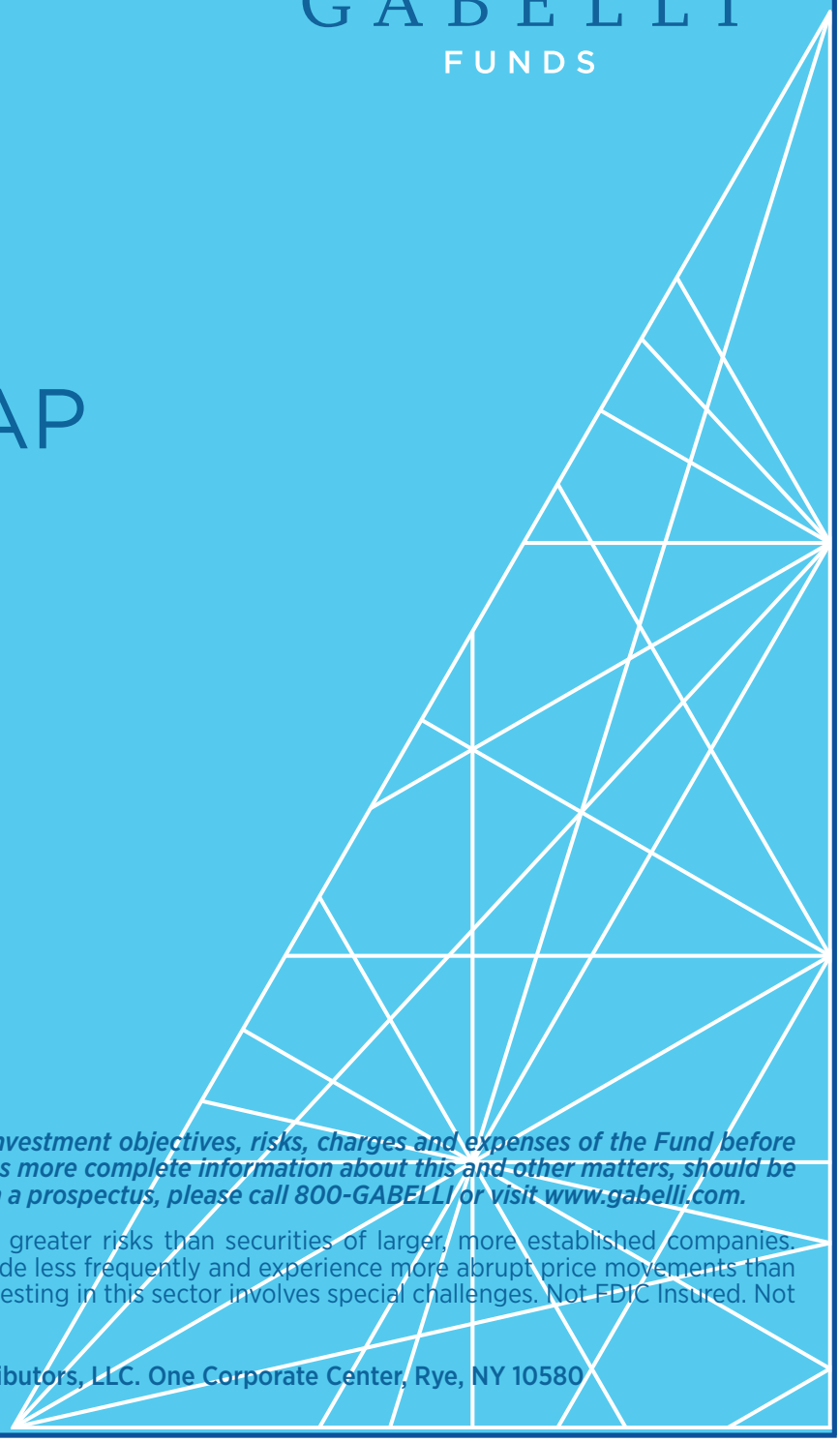
They'll have to do that without Ben Simmons for at least a couple months. The highly regarded forward out of LSU was the number one overall pick in last year's draft but hasn't played his first pro game yet due to a foot injury.

Still, the hope remains strong in Philadelphia that with Jerry and Bryan Colangelo on board, visions of future playoff appearances and, just maybe, the first NBA Championship since 1983, are right around the corner. ▲

*Wayne Randazzo is the New York Mets pregame and postgame 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. Read his first-person column, "A Day in My Life," about being radio broadcaster for the New York Mets, in the Fall issue of Ambassador.*

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Mickela Mallozzi leads the crowd in a tarantella dance at the Gala's Friday night Variety Show

Andy DelGiudice / DGDC Photography

# A NIAF Gala for (All) the Ages!

*By John M. Viola, NIAF President*

I attended my first NIAF Gala Weekend at age 16 and, overwhelmed by the joy of such an incredible event, I was immediately hooked! I realized, even then, that there is no better way to expose people to the great works of this Foundation than to bring them into this special weekend of Italian American celebration.

Five years ago, when I joined the NIAF team, our Board and I set out to grow this venerable tradition, so that it might be a more inclusive and accessible weekend for Italian Americans of all ages, from every corner of the country. Last month, as we celebrated our 41st Anniversary Gala Weekend, I think it was abundantly clear to the thousands in attendance that our efforts are paying off.

This year's celebration, recognizing the 2016 NIAF Region of Honor, Piemonte, and celebrating the accomplishments of eight remarkable honorees, was certainly one for the record books. From our kick-off dinner at the White House Historical Association Thursday evening, to the revelry at the Variety Show on Friday night, through Saturday's jam-packed Expo Italiana and emotional Gala Dinner, every guest I encountered declared this year the most electrifying and jubilant in a long while.

To me, much of this great energy was due to the unprecedented turn out of Italian American young people, who continue to join our festivities in greater numbers each year. While many in the community attest to the difficulty in engaging the next generation of Italian Americans, we at NIAF are proud to see a growing number of young and enthusiastic Italian Americans at our events.

But it's not simply the presence of these young people that makes a difference. It's the way that they are embraced and engaged by older generations of our community, long the heart of our Foundation's work, who so enthusiastically share their pride in our heritage with these newcomers.

Believe it or not, this beautiful melding of age groups was not a forgone conclusion. I had knots in the pit of my stomach as we kicked off Friday night's Variety Show. As guests trickled into the Ball Room, I cringed at the vision of empty tables and an audience reluctant to embrace this new type of event. But, at the conclusion of each act, I began to notice a crowd of Italian Americans of all ages reveling in the incredible talents on stage, in one another's euphoric company, and in the sheer joy of being in a room filled with proud Italian Americans!

One final act at the end of the night brought me the most anxiety. At the recommendation of one of our newest team members, I had invited a young Italian American named Mickela Mallozzi, the Emmy Award-winning host and producer of the American Public Television series "Bare Feet with Mickela Mallozzi," to present a lesson in traditional Italian dance to the 800 guests who had packed the ballroom that evening. I was terrified that her efforts to get our audience to the dance floor for a tarantella lesson would be met with silent resistance.

Working backstage, I tensed as Mickela took up the microphone and begin her cajoling, certain I would poke my head out to find her begging a reluctant audience. But, to my amazement, instead I found a sight that will stay with me for the rest of my life. There, on the dance floor, was a rapturous tidal wave of hundreds of Italian Americans, young and old, in the throes of that most Italian of dances.

The swell of uninhibited delight was so overwhelming that I simply sat and watched in disbelief as this effervescent young Italian American woman brought forth, for all to see, a physical manifestation of the efforts our leadership has made of the past five years...an authentic, inviting and joyous celebration for Italian Americans of all ages.

For all of the great successes and unforgettable honorees that were to crown our weekend the following night, it will be this moment that stays with me. The moment I realized that our aim of passing on NIAF and our remarkable heritage to the next generation was not only attainable, but truly underway. ▲



Italians in DC children's group performing the Italian and U.S. national anthems

Andy DelGiudice

# 41st Anniversary Gala Celebration

**NIAF's 41st Anniversary Gala proved to be a weekend-long celebration of Italian and Italian American traditions, music, food and pride. Held at the Washington Marriot Wardman Park Hotel in Washington, D.C., the nation's premier Italian American party was presented by this year's NIAF Region of Honor, Piemonte, and Walgreens Boots Alliance.**



Emcees NIAF President John M. Viola and Joe Piscopo

Andy DelGiudice

Don Oldenburg



Andy DelGiudice

NIAF Vice Chair Patricia de Stacy Harrison and NIAF Executive Vice President John F. Calvelli introducing a video on NIAF's Italian American Relief Fund

The weekend's centerpiece, the black-tie Gala Awards Dinner on Saturday, October 15, started with Gala Weekend Chairman Frank Giordano welcoming



Andy DelGiudice

NIAF Chairman Joseph V. Del Raso

1,500 guests. NIAF Celebrity Ambassador Joe Piscopo and NIAF President John M. Viola co-hosted the evening's program which recognized NIAF's 2016 distinguished honorees: TV and film directors Joe and Anthony Russo; National Football League Hall of Famer Franco Harris; Executive Vice Chairman and CEO of Walgreens Boots Alliance Stefano Pessina; legendary Italian singer and songwriter Tony Renis; Giuseppe Lavazza, vice chairman of Lavazza; philanthropist Maria Franca Ferrero of the Ferrero Group; and National Organization of Italian American Women (NOIAW) founder Dr. Aileen Riotto Sirey.

"We feel blessed to have had a classic Italian American upbringing," said the Russo brothers, accepting their honor and announcing a new NIAF grant program, The Russo Brothers Italian American Film Forum, to fund young filmmakers. "We stand on the shoulders of our parents and their parents."

Between honoree speeches, Italian singer Alma Manera and World Champion accordionist Cory Pesaturo performed as guests enjoyed an elegant dinner of Barolo risotto cakes with eggplant strips, Barolo braised beef with roasted potatoes and carrots, and Barolo wine from Piemonte.

Among the notable attendees were actor Sebastian Stan; Congressman Tom Marino; Former Congresswoman Connie Morella; and Lawrence Romo, director of the Selective Service System. Italian dignitaries included Ambassador Philip Reeker, U.S. Consul General in Milan; Senator Renato Turano, Italian Senate; and Antonella Parigi, head of culture and tourism of the Piemonte Region.

Special events and extraordinary dinners for NIAF leadership and VIPs filled out the entire weekend. NIAF University offered forums, demonstrations, films and lectures, from pasta and gelato making to genealogy and filmmaking.

Saturday's signature Expo Italia drew more than 3,000 people to what is the largest Italian festival in the Nation's Capital, highlighted by David Greco of Mike's Deli in the Bronx serving complimentary Italian foods; Cibo Italia's meats and cheeses; beer samples from Peroni; Chazz Palminteri's BIVI Sicilian Vodka shots; La Famiglia DelGrosso's "Meatball Martinis," and many others.

Friday night officially kicked off the entire Gala Weekend with a lively Variety Show, cocktails and dancing.

The Gala Awards Dinner drew to a close honoring outgoing NIAF Chairman Joseph V. Del Raso before guests moved to the Weekend's traditional finale, the late-night revelry, singing and dancing of the Gala's famed After Hours Party. There's nothing like a NIAF Anniversary Gala Weekend!

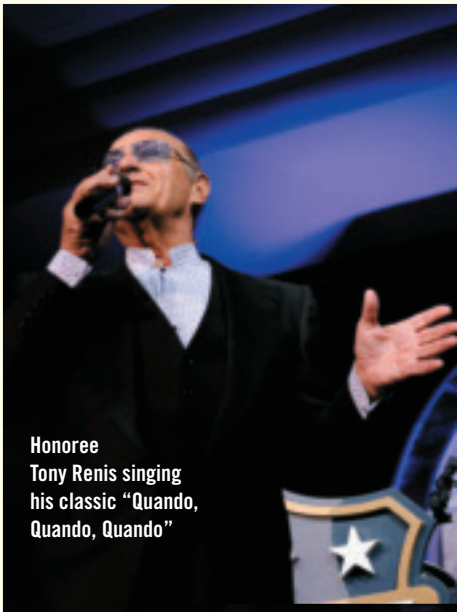
To view more photographs from the NIAF 41st Anniversary Gala Weekend, visit www.niaf.org. To order prints, go to https://dgdcphotography.shootproof.com/gallery/NIAF-41st-Gala/.

All Section Photos by Andy DelGiudice


Honorees Joe and Anthony Russo

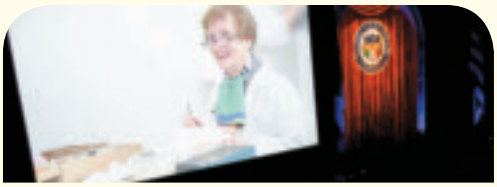

Honoree Dr. Aileen Riotto Sirey

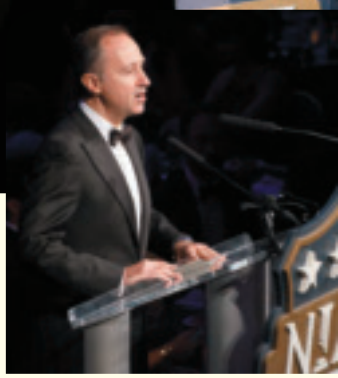

Honoree Franco Harris


Honoree Tony Renis singing his classic "Quando, Quando, Quando"


Honoree Giuseppe Lavazza


Honoree Stefano Pessina


Honoree Maria Franca Ferrero accepts by video from Italy


Italy's Ambassador Armando Varricchio thanking NIAF for raising funds for earthquake relief work in central Italy


NIAF Board members honoring Chairman Joseph V. Del Raso

## VIP Reception


Sally Valenti, NIAF President John M. Viola, Francesca Milingi, with NIAF Board members Joseph D. Lonardo and Dr. John P. Rosa


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Torino-based businessman and engineer Paolo Pininfarina and NIAF Board member and Gala Weekend Chair Frank Giordano


Andy DelGiudice

Drs. Mina Massaro-Giordano and Ilaria Macchi


Andy DelGiudice

The popular photo backdrop at the VIP Reception attracted guests


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Kimberly Arduini, Allessandra Arduini and NIAF Board member Peter J. Arduini


Vasilisa Catalfamo, Chiara Delfini, Giovanna Guarino and Gaia Ceccaroli


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NIAF Board member Nicholas R. Caiazzo and Karen Caiazzo with Kandice Pelletier and Jim Halpim


NIAF Board member Michael J. Zarrelli and Leslie Zarelli


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NIAF Vice Chair Salvatore M. Salibello and Lisa Salibello with John Kozup and Veronica Rockova

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## VIP Dinner at Decatur House

On Thursday evening, October 13, NIAF Board and Italian American Leadership Council (IALC) members, and VIPs, attended a reception and dinner hosted by the White House Historical Association at the Decatur House a block from the White House.



Singer Deana Martin, daughter of legend Dean Martin, with husband John Griffeth; actor Tony Lo Bianco with wife Alyse; and singer Lena Prima, daughter of the legendary Louis Prima, with husband and bassist Tim Fahey



NIAF Executive Vice President John F. Calvelli with NIAF Board members Anita Bevacqua McBride and Joseph R. Guccione



Guests tour historic Decatur House built in 1818.



NIAF Chairman Joseph V. Del Raso with his mother Dolores and wife Anne.

## NIAF University

Throughout the day on Friday and extending into Saturday of the Gala Weekend, numerous NIAF University lectures, demonstrations and films, all open to the public, allowed guests to learn more about their heritage and culture. Among the events: book discussion of "We the Italians" with author Umberto Mucci; film screenings of "The Neighborhood that Disappeared" and "When the World Answered: Florence, Women Artists and the 1966 Flood"; the NIAF on Campus Conference; the NIAF – Ieri, Oggi, Domani Forum on the Future of Little Italys; Women Leaders in Advanced Cancer Research symposium with NIAF Board member Dr. Antonio Giordano; and the Forum on Dual Citizenship.

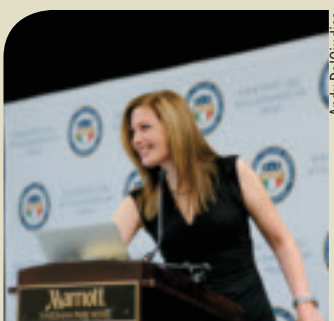






Clockwise from above: Gelato 101 with master gelato maker Gianluigi Dellaccio; pasta cooking demonstration with author and chef Domenica Marchetti; Explore Your Italian Roots lecture with genealogist and PBS-TV "Genealogy Roadshow" host Mary Tedesco; Filmmaking Workshop and Forum with TV and film directors Anthony and Joe Russo; an Italian lesson with the Italian Cultural Society of Washington D.C.

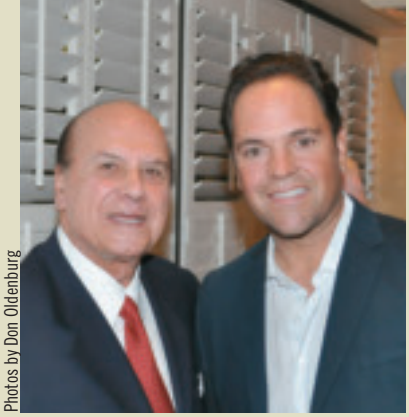




Andy DelGiudice

## NIAF Board Members at Villa Firenze and Café Milano

On Friday evening, October 14, following a cocktail reception at Villa Firenze, official residence of the Italian Ambassador in Washington, NIAF Board members and VIPs enjoyed dinner at Georgetown's famed Café Milano.



Photos by Don Oldenburg

Former Major League Baseball players Kenneth J. Aspromonte, a NIAF Board member, and MLB Hall of Famer Mike Piazza



Tony and Alyse Lo Bianco with Franco Harris and NIAF Treasurer Robert E. Carlucci and wife Aileen Carlucci



NIAF Board members Joseph R. Guccione and Louis E. Tosi with Giuseppe Lavazza (center)



NIAF Vice Chair Patricia de Stacy Harrison and Claudia Valente



NIAF Board member Paolo Catalfamo, his wife Vasilisa, and NIAF General Counsel Arthur J. Furia



NIAF Board members Linda R. Carlozzi and Joseph M. Della Ratta with Deana Martin (center)

## Friday Night Gala Kick-off Celebration!

Photos by Andy DelGiudice except where noted

On Friday, October 14, the ballroom doors opened at 9 p.m. for NIAF's Gala Kickoff Variety Show, featuring a late evening of music, dancing, cocktails and carousing. Always entertaining emcee Joe Piscopo sang his favorite Sinatra songs, and even broke out his guitar later to play some Springsteen, all along with The Radio King Orchestra. Comedian Joe Matarese did an Italian American stand-up act. The Lena Prima, daughter of the legendary Louis Prima, and her high-energy New Orleans-based band, performed swing ballads and her father's jazz that got guests on their to the dancefloor. Deana Martin, daughter of the great Dean Martin, joined in as well. And, at the end of the evening, Mickela Mallozzi of the PBS TV show "Bare Feet with Mickela Mallozzi" lured partygoers back to a crowded dancefloor for an amazing group dance of the tarantella!



Emcee Joe Piscopo sings Sinatra



The Radio King Orchestra kept the beat all night.



Mickela Mallozzi gets the crowd dancing



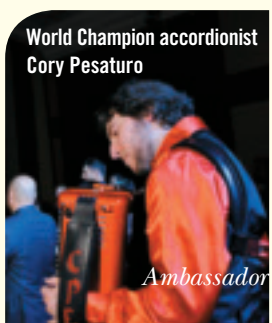
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Kevin & Lená Burns enjoying the show





Joe Piscopo joins in with Lena Prima and her band.



World Champion accordionist Cory Pesaturo

## Festive Expo Italia!

Mark the Saturday Expo Italiana on your calendar for next year! No other Italian festival in the Nation's Capital is a bigger, more fun or more vibrant a marketplace! Once again, our signature festival drew more than 3,000 guests! David Greco of Mike's Deli, in the Bronx, brought complementary Italian comfort foods and served, again, a free Italian lunch to hundreds of hungry attendees. Among the many fabulous vendors were Peroni serving samples of Italian beer; Cibo Foods handing out samples of Italian meats and cheeses; and LaVazza Café doling out fresh espresso; Via Umbria from Geortgown bringing hundreds of porchetta sandwiches; businesses from the Region of Piemonte giving samples of chocolates, fine wines, and other delicacies; Ferrero distributing hundreds of sample sweets; Chazz Palminteri's BIVI Sicilian Vodka pouring gratis shots; and many others. And throughout the Gala Weekend, guests could find quiet moments viewing the full-scale replica of the Holy Shroud, blessed by the Archbishop of Turin and given to NIAF this summer.



Don Oldenburg

David Greco of Mike's Deli making mozzarella at the Expo



Andy DelGiudice

All Gala weekend, the Italian acoustic quartet Rudy Valentino ei Baleras, "The Italian Swing Style Band," delighted attendees.



Don Oldenburg

NIAF President John M. Viola and Michael DelGrosso toast one of the Expo's big hits, the "Meatball Martini," at the DelGrosso booth.



Don Oldenburg

Mint Pros' Joe Quagliano with Mike Piazza



Maserati of Arlington brought the finest of rides



Don Oldenburg

Cibo Italia slicing Italian meats and cheeses



Andy DelGiudice

Alitalia, Italy's favorite airlines, let guests test its first-class accommodations!

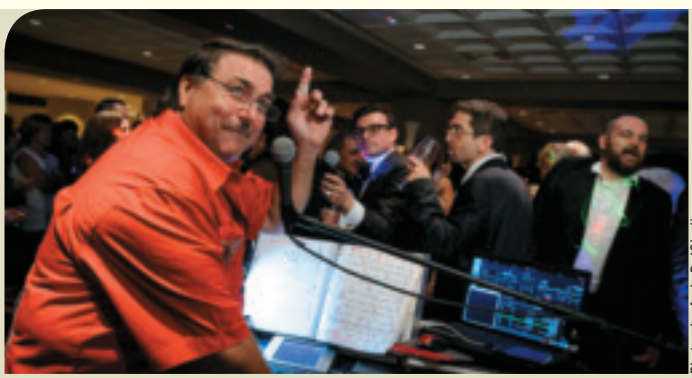


Andy DelGiudice

Mike's Deli serves free lunch to hundreds!

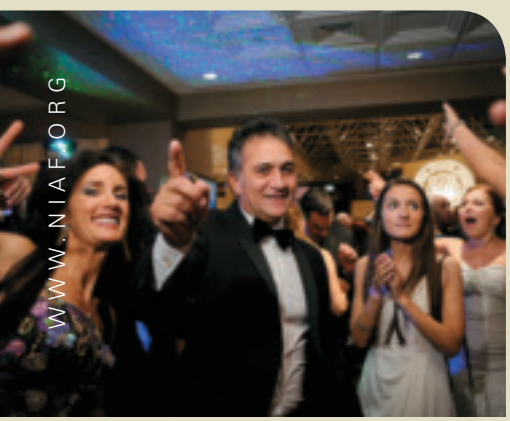
## The Gala After Hours Party Lives On!

You may have heard tales of the infamous After Hours Party that ushers the Saturday night Gala well into Sunday morning. And they're all true…mostly. This year's was a revelry not to be missed!



Photos by Andy DelGiudice

Singer-Songwriter Ciro Di Lorenzo fuels the After Hours Party with Italian American sounds



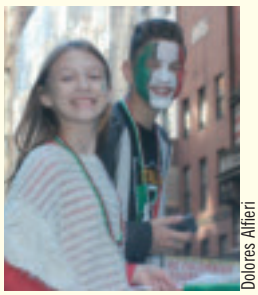
After Hour Party revelers





## NIAF at NYC Columbus Day Parade!

On October 10, NIAF again participated in New York City's famous, nationally televised, Columbus Day Parade, with a lively float packed full of NIAF Board members, members, and staff traveling the traditional Fifth Avenue route. The crisp yet sunny weather was a beautiful backdrop to celebrate Columbus Day and Italian American heritage, with more than 100 groups, bands and floats, 35,000 marchers, and nearly 1 million spectators!



Dolores Alfieri




Dolores Alfieri



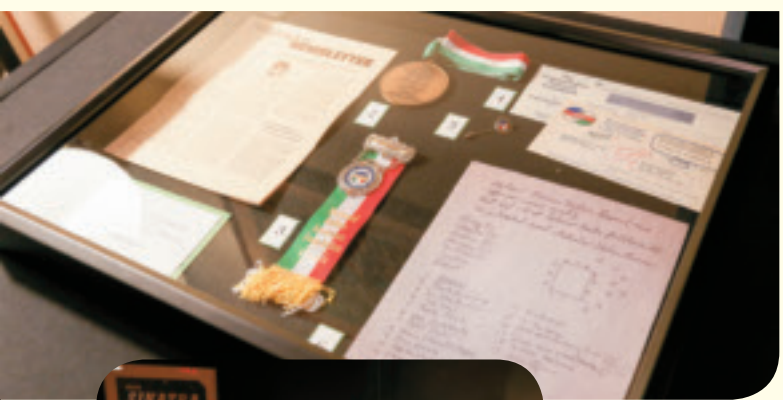
Dolores Alfieri

**Clovkwise from top: Sofia Alfieri and Zachary Blumenstyk; Those aboard the NIAF float waved Italian and American flags and jubilantly sang along to Italian American classics as spectators joined in all along the parade; NIAF Board member Anita Bevacqua McBride with her daughter, Giovanna, on NIAF's float.**

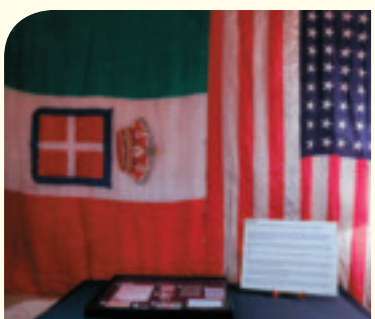
## NIAF Italian American Museum Exhibit

During the Gala Weekend, NIAF's Museum Fellows curated a temporary exhibit of items selected from the Foundation's larger permanent collection at NIAF's headquarters.

Photos by Andy DelGiudice / DGDC Photography





**The Gala display attracted the curiosity and interest of many guests with historical and rare artifacts such as: (top) NIAF artifacts such as notes from the first meeting where NIAF was created, the first newsletter, membership brochure, awards, etc.; (left) posters from NIAF predecessors such as the American-Italian Anti-Defamation League (Frank Sinatra, chairman) and the Italian American Civil Rights League; and (right) two wall-size antique flags from the early 1900s.**

# MARK YOUR CALENDAR

NIAF is offering the following special events in the coming months. For more information, visit niaf.org.

**DECEMBER 2016**

**Applications Available for 2017 NIAF Ambassador Peter F. Secchia Voyage of Discovery Program**

Apply online at www.niaf.org/voyageofdiscovery
*Deadline:* January 31, 2017
*Contact:* Gabriella Mileti at 202-939-3116 or gmileti@niaf.org

**NIAF Scholarship Applications available for 2017-2018**

Online at www.niaf.org/scholarships
*Date:* December 1
*Contact:* Julia Streisfeld at 202-939-3114 or scholarships@niaf.org

**IALC Member Event – Washington Capitals vs. Boston Bruins**

*Date:* December 7 *Time:* 8 p.m.
*Location:* Verizon Center, 601 F Street NW, Washington, D.C.
*Contact:* Alex Benedetto at 202-939-3117 or abenedetto@niaf.org

**NIAF-Frank J. Guarini Public Policy Forum**

*Date:* December 12
*Details forthcoming*
*Contact:* Lisa Femia at 202-939-3120 or efemia@niaf.org

**NIAF Open House Christmas Party at Foundation's Headquarters**

*Date:* December 14
*Time:* 6 to 9 p.m.
*Contact:* Andrea Bartlett at 202-939-3118 or abartlett@niaf.org

**JANUARY 2017**

**Deadline for the 2017 NIAF Ambassador Peter F. Secchia Voyage of Discovery Program Applications**

*Date:* January 31
*Time:* 11:59 p.m. EST
*Contact:* Gabriella Mileti at 202-939-3116 or gmileti@niaf.org

**MARCH 2017**

**Deadline for the 2017-2018 NIAF Scholarships Applications**

*Date:* March 1
*Time:* 11:59 p.m. EST
*Contact:* Julia Streisfeld at 202-939-3114 or scholarships@niaf.org

**NIAF New York Spring Gala**

*Date:* March 22
*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

**NOVEMBER 2017**

**NIAF 42nd Anniversary Awards Gala Weekend**

*Location:* The Washington Marriott Wardman Park Hotel
*Date:* November 3 and 4
*Contact:* Jerry Jones at 202-939-3102 or jerry@niaf.org

# Italy's 20 REGIONAL CUISINES

***Italian cuisine is noted for its regional diversity. How many of Italy's regions can you identify by their culinary style and popular dishes?***


















*by Leon J. Radomile*
www.leonradomile.com

**ACROSS**

7 Draws as heavily from its Germanic roots as it does from its Italian heritage, resulting in a unique blend of the two cuisines. Pizza and pasta are as likely to be on the menu as sauerkraut. Popular dish: *Canederli*

9 Known as a composite of sophisticated Venetian food; influences from the Austrian/Slavic cultures and Fruilian peasant fare. Popular: *Gulasch con polenta*

13 Although this region's cuisine is Italian, over the course of two millennia, a variety gastronomic influences include Greek, Spanish, French and Arab contributions. *Pasta con le sarde*

16 *Brodetto*, or fish soup, may contain any number of types of fish and is often seasoned with vinegar, garlic or saffron, and thickened with flour. *Maccheroncini*

18 Its unique sauce blends basil with extra virgin olive oil, pine nuts, garlic and Parmigiano Reggiano, and is used in pasta, soups or rice dishes. *Pesto alla Genovese*

19 Best known for its prosciutto and the "king of cheese," *Parmigiano Reggiano. Tortellini Pasticciati all Bolognese*

20 The cuisine of this Italian region remains a rural one, deeply anchored in peasant traditions. Mutton and lamb are the favorite meats. *Pignata di pecora*

**DOWN**

1 Its specialties, such as *Spaghetti alla carbonara, Coda alla Vaccinara*, (braised oxtail), and *Gnocchi alla Romana*, are known throughout the world.

2 The most famous of this region's meats features a three inch Porterhouse steak, marinated simply in olive oil and garlic, grilled over hot coals, until medium rare. *Bistecca alla Fiorentina*

3 Fava beans are used to make hearty soups seasoned with pork rinds and rosemary. This region is also the home of the Perugina Baci. *Pollo in Potacchio*

4 French, Swiss and Piemonte influence has created its cuisine, an entirely unique set of dishes, despite being the smallest region in Italy. *Minestra di castagne e riso*

5 The region's location between two Seas ensures a steady supply of seafood. Oysters and mussels are the preferred shellfish, but octopus, squid, sea urchins and fish dishes are renowned throughout the peninsula. *Polpi arricciati*

6 Like Abruzzo, this region's recipes often contain hot peppers affectionately referred to as *diavolino*, or little devil. *Pezatta*

8 Known for its antipasti, its famous *bagna càuda* begins the meal with pieces of raw vegetables served with a heated sauce of garlic, anchovies, mixed olive oil and butter. *Insalata di carne cruda*

10 The first dish most people would say is a hallmark of this region would be *Risotto alla Milanese*.

11 Known since ancient times for its Luganega sausage. *Pesce alla Marinara*

12 The cuisine from this region is regarded as exotic and exciting. Its recipes often call for seafood. When it comes to wine, think *Soave, Bardolino* and *Pinot Grigio. Polenta Pastizada*

14 Its unpretentious pizza is usually either *pizza marinara*, topped with tomato, garlic and oil, or *pizza margherita* with tomato, basil and mozzarella. *Ziti al Ragù*

15 Many meals from this region begin with a pasta course like *Maccheroni alla chitarra*. Other recipes feature fresh seafood from the Adriatic. *Porchetta*

17 The heart of this region's cooking is said to be the humble meals of the peasants, primarily roasted and preserved meats, aged cheese and wines. Their cooks are masters of cooking over the open flame. Herbs and woods are used in the flame to flavor the food. *Bistecchine di Cinghiale*

## Solution

**ACROSS**
7 Trentino-Alto Adige
9 Friuli Venezia Giulia
13 Sicilia
16 Marche
18 Liguria
19 Emilia-Romagna
20 Basilicata

**DOWN**
1 Lazio
2 Toscana
3 Umbria
4 Valle d'Aosta
5 Puglia,
6 Molise
8 Piemonte
10 Lombardia
11 Calabria
12 Veneto
14 Campania
15 Abruzzo
17 Sardegna

Map: Michal Baranski | Dreamstime.com




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Ferrero proudly supports The National Italian American Foundation and congratulates Mrs. Maria Franca Ferrero and all of the 2016 NIAF Gala Honorees.

# Ambassador

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