

Ambassador



National Italian American Foundation

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Heritage Travel in Molise
Is This Leonardo's Lost Angel?
Hiking the True Cinque Terre
Saving NYC's Historic Erben Organ
A Festival of Sculpted Wheat
NIAF Anniversary Gala Preview!

Molise

is NIAF 2019 Region of Honor



extraordinary land



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Ambassador

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Vol. 31, No. 1 ■ Fall 2019 ■ www.niaf.org

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*On the Cover:
A quaint street in
Oratino, a town in the
Province of Campobasso
that becomes a
destination in our
cover story Heritage
Travel in Molise.*

*Photo by Giambattista
Lazazzera/shutterstock*

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Message from the NIAF Chairs

The weather is cooling, and kids are back in school, which means Fall is here and the National Italian American Foundation is gearing up for our 44th Anniversary Gala Weekend, November 1-3, in Washington, D.C.! We are looking forward to celebrating NIAF's 2019 Region of Honor, Molise, and featuring honorees who are distinguished leaders in our Italian American community. Go to the Gala Preview section in this issue for details of the exciting Gala Weekend Events.

Since the Summer issue, NIAF has been actively carrying out its mission to promote Italian heritage. In June, 19 Italian American college students traveled for their first-ever trip to Italy on the Ambassador Peter F. Secchia Voyage of Discovery program. The NIAF Board of Directors met with the students there while on their Mission to Italy. They also met with business leaders and government dignitaries in Molise.

On July 25 on Capitol Hill, the Foundation hosted a VinOff where Italian American Congressional Members and staffers mingled while tasting wines from the United States and Italy, the countries we love unequivocally. The event was also Lauren Amendolara McDermott's debut as the Italian American Congressional Staff Association's new president. NIAF was also honored to host a dinner for public servants from the Italian American White House Staff Association a few days later, where guests

shared how their Italian American heritage has positively influenced their lives.

As we head into the Fall season, we hope you can become more involved with NIAF, whether that means joining, renewing or upgrading your NIAF membership or attending our Anniversary Gala. The Foundation provides incredible opportunities, grants, scholarships and experiences for Italian Americans and Italophiles of all ages. Please help make these educational and cultural opportunities available to even more individuals in the Italian American community.

Your financial support and thoughtful engagement help the Foundation preserve and promote the heritage and culture of 20 million Americans of Italian descent. On behalf of the NIAF Board of Directors, we thank you for supporting of our mission.

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Reader Feedback

Courtesy of the Mirto Museum Archive



75th Anniversary D-Day

A quick note to thank you for your interest in my dad and mom's D-Day story... and including the article in the Paesani section of Ambassador magazine (Spring 2019 issue).

It is a great honor and tribute to their service to our nation. On this 75th Anniversary of D-Day, I hope the article also served to remind everyone to acknowledge and honor the service, bravery, and sacrifice of all the military and civilian personnel who participated in D-Day and contributed to our ultimate victory in World War II....

My wife and I just returned from our trip to participate in the 75th D-Day Anniversary events at Duxford Airfield, U.K., and in Normandy, France. I flew in the "Miss Montana" C-47 over the Normandy invasion beaches and drop zones (see photo).... That was a moving experience for me. Hard to imagine what my dad and mom experienced 75 years ago. I was very proud to represent them at the 75th Anniversary events.

—Stephen P. Pedone
Lt. Col., USAF, Ret.
Naples, Fla.

Inside Palazzo Mirto

Compliments and many thanks for your most beautiful article that adds value to and shines a light on the importance of Palazzo Mirto. For us, it is truly a most important contribution that will help spread the knowledge of our cultural patrimony.

—Valeria Sola

Polo Regionale di Palermo
per i Siti culturali
Galleria Regionale della
Sicilia di Palazzo Abatellis
Palermo, Sicily



In the Zone

Thanks for Paul Spadoni's thorough story *In the Zone: Steering Around Italy's ZTL Tricky Traffic Restrictions*, in the Summer issue of Ambassador. It was helpful in understanding some of the challenges when driving in Italy. And, Frank Van Riper's *Savvy Traveling: Tips for Your Next Trip to Italy and Elsewhere* was very entertaining and useful, too.

—Giulia Davis
Los Angeles, Calif.

CORRECTION

Where's Todi? The feature *The Town of Todi: A Hidden Jewel in the Center of Italy*, in the 2019 Summer issue of Ambassador, should have stated that "the small yet stunning Umbrian hill town of Todi" is located about 90 miles north of Rome.

We'd Love to Hear from You! Let us Know What You're Thinking!

Letters to the Editor may be e-mailed to ambassador@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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Voices of the Voyage

from Rome to Molise

By Gabriella Mileti
NIAF Director of Special Programs



The Voyage of Discovery crew in Scapoli, Molise.

In June, the 2019 Ambassador Peter F. Secchia Voyage of Discovery brought 19 Italian American college students to Rome and Molise, NIAF's 2019 Region of Honor. The all-expenses paid trip to Italy helps strengthen the Italian American identity by bonding young Italian Americans to the country, culture and heritage of Italy—all thanks to generous financial support of Ambassador Peter F. Secchia.

We started our journey in Rome with four intense days of history and walking. We then made our way to Molise where the capital city of Campobasso served as our base for the rest of the trip. While in Molise, we discovered its raw beauty with day trips to towns throughout the region and discovered the real Italy. Here's what three of VOD students had to say about their experience:

Gianna DeMasi
University of Connecticut, Class of '19

The Voyage of Discovery was the trip of my lifetime. This journey left me with an expanded and enriched lens to understand who I am as an Italian American and where I come from.

The opportunity to travel with a group of similarly aged, like-minded peers with a shared goal to get to know themselves and their common history better is a unique experience unlike

anything I have come across. Having conversations with these people—sharing histories and family stories—weaved a thread through our mutual experience beautifully. And then, the most thoughtful and inspiring, my peers' newfound Italian identity blossomed as a result of the trip. Having people to share this reflection with is what made the VOD so special.

I could talk about the amazing aspects of this program for hours but, above all, the most memorable and meaningful part of our journey for me was the appreciation I developed for Italian culture—the history, art, cities, clothes, food and, most importantly, the people. To see real Italian families behaving in the same ways, in their land, was a moment where realities overlapped and it clicked for me that truly, I am Italian.

I will cherish and nourish that seed for the rest of my life so much



Sabrina Sales and Liberty Wood learning to make pasta in Fornelli.



Voyage of Discovery students surrounded Molise's famous *caciocavallo* cheese in the Caseificio Di Nucci in Agnone, which has been making cheese the same way since the 1600s

so that I want my future children to know the feeling for themselves. I highly recommend the Voyage of Discovery program to my peers. There is no better backdrop to feel yourself get lost in the pulse of Italy, to discover a not only a beautiful country, but also yourself, inside and out.

Alexander Aroneo-Perez Seton Hall University, Class of '19

When my family, friends and colleagues ask me how my trip to Italy was, I respond with a simple “amazing,” “breathtaking” or “marvelous.”

These words, however, do not give my experience justice. NIAF's VOD has left me with memories that I will cherish for the rest of my life. We arrived first in Rome. We all have learned about ancient Rome, however, seeing it up close allows you to appreciate the history even more, especially as an Italian American.

While Rome had great food coupled with a great history, Molise proved to me even more fulfilling. In Molise, we got a much more intimate connection with the population. I was able to practice my Italian almost everywhere we went. It was so satisfying to hear and see the delight in the

locals when they learned an American could speak Italian. The food was also incredibly good. But what I loved the most was being able to participate in *La Festa dei Misteri*. For multiple nights, we were able to encounter local street vendors (not just from Molise, but all of Italy), purchase authentic Italian street food, and watch the culmination of the feast Sunday morning in the procession. This experience truly made me feel like a *Molisano* myself.

What struck me as most interesting is that in almost every little town in Molise, there is something greatly historic and important to see. For instance, in Agnone we encountered the second-oldest family run business in the world—the Marinelli Bell Foundry. This foundry produces bells for esteemed clients such as the United Nations and the Vatican! These sorts of discoveries made me feel disheartened that Molise goes rather underappreciated by the rest of Italy, and perhaps the world.

From the rolling landscapes of Oratino to the quasi-tropical seaside of Termoli, I feel truly blessed to have visited Molise and Italy. Without this great opportunity given to me by NIAF and

Ambassador Secchia, my childhood dream of visiting Italy would never have been fulfilled this year. For this, I will always be grateful. I truly hope more young Italian Americans get to experience this, for the sake of preserving our beautiful Italian culture.

Nathaniel Hirschman The College of New Jersey, Class of '19

I had the honor of participating in this summer's Voyage of Discovery. To say it was a life-changing trip would be an understatement. I made friends for a lifetime, experienced Italy's beauty firsthand, and fortified my connection with the land of my ancestry.

I'm so grateful to NIAF for organizing this trip, and so lucky to have been chosen! It's difficult to pinpoint my favorite moments. There were so many incredible landmarks, restaurants and activities that I'm hard pressed to pick a few! Dinner at Le Cave di Sant'Ignazio in Rome had to be one of my favorite meals. Also memorable was lunch in Fornelli, where we enjoyed pasta and *fagioli* with pasta we made ourselves.

I was moved by the Cassino War Cemetery at Monte Cassino, a World War II battleground. ➤

The site reminded me of the connection between Italy and the United States, and the important role Americans had in Italy during the war. Visiting Vatican City was incredible, and I was stunned by the striking beauty of the Sistine Chapel. Throughout the trip, I loved being able to put my Italian skills into practice, and I became popular with the group for my translating ability!

In the city of Campobasso, we watched an incredible procession during the *La Festa dei Misteri*. At the festival, I was able to meet my cousins for the first time! Meeting them really drove home to me what this trip was all about—making a connection with the authentic Italy that my grandparents left behind to start a new life. I am so proud to be an Italian American, and this trip only strengthened this part of my identity. Thanks so much to NIAF for this life-changing experience—I'm sure I'll be back soon! ▲



Noël and Nick on their wedding day

Where They Are Now?

With 19 years of trips in the books, the Ambassador Peter F. Secchia Voyage of Discovery has not only contributed to life-changing experiences and life-long friendships, but even some alumni marriages.

We at NIAF want to send our Auguri! to Voyage of Discovery 2012 alumni Noël Giglio and Nicholas Denice who met while on their VOD trip.

Today, Nick is an attorney at Hinckley Allen in the firm's Mergers & Acquisitions and Corporate Law Practice Groups in Providence, R.I., while Noël is in-house legal counsel at Philips North America.

In March 2018, Nick proposed to Noël in Venice, Italy, on the balcony of St. Mark's Basilica. They were married in June in Rhode Island.

The VOD Class of 2012 had a unique adventure. Rather than visiting the cities of Bologna and Rome as originally planned, an earthquake struck Bologna making it too dangerous to visit. A few days before we left for Italy, the Bologna and Emilia-Romagna itinerary was replaced by a trip down the Amalfi Coast, from Ostia to Sorrento, then to Naples and the Vallo di Diano, and finally Rome.

When the trip was over, Noël and Nick went their separate ways to start the next semester of law school in the fall. But they stayed in contact, talking every now and then. In May 2013, Noël accepted an in-house corporate law position outside of Boston and relocated to New England. Not knowing many people there, she reached out to Nick, who is from Rhode Island. They met up for dinner one night and, as the saying goes, the rest is history!

Did you or someone you know participate on the Gift of Discovery or Voyage of Discovery? If so, let us know what you're up to today and join our alumni network! Email Gabriella Mileti at gmileti@niaf.org.



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Finding Italy in Orange County

The Pacific Ocean at Heisler Park, in Laguna Beach, Calif.

Whether it's the best historic architecture, Italian restaurants, popular festivals, museums or must-visit markets, Italy's influences in every-day life in America are everywhere. In NIAF on Location, our members, friends and staff provide insider information on special places that make them feel more Italian where they live. This issue, NIAF's Director of Special Programs Gabriella Mileti finds Italy in Orange County, Calif.

Jon Bifous/shutterstock.



NIAF ON LOCATION

What is the most Italian part of Orange County?

Orange County doesn't have one main city, like in Los Angeles County or San Diego County. It's made up of many smaller cities, so while there isn't a central Little Italy in the O.C., you'll find Italian spots in every city you go to, whether they are true authentic Italian restaurants and cafes owned by Italian ex-pats or Italian American spots that have been around since the '40s and '50s.

If you look at its history, Orange County was never a hub for Italian immigrants like Los Angeles and San Francisco, so you don't get that Old World feel here. When I moved to the O.C. from D.C., I actually Googled "where are the Italians in Orange County?" But, little by little, I'm figuring it out. It has become a personal mission of mine.

What are your favorite Italian restaurants there and why?

My favorite Italian food is pizza. It's the one food I don't cook at home, so I'm always on the quest to find the best slice. I couldn't have been more fortunate when my husband, Mark, introduced me to ZeroZero 39, right in Huntington Beach where I now call home. This small pizzeria is an authentic slice of Rome! Founded by Rome natives Francesco and Carlotta Zaza in 2014, the pizzeria has become the go-to pizza spot in Surf City, whether it's 10 a.m. or 2 a.m. In 2018 alone, it served more than 60,000 slices of pizza.

Francesco Zaza, Gabriella Mileti, Chef Lorenzo Manzotto and Carlotta Zaza at ZeroZero 39.



Mark Petruziello

Francesco and Carlotta's passion for surfing brought them to Huntington Beach. While here on vacation and not finding true Italian-tasting pizza, they saw a huge opportunity to open a pizza-by-the-slice shop. They were the pioneers in Southern California to open a Roman pizzeria.

And theirs is the true Roman pizza that's a popular street food in Italy consisting of medium-thin crust with simple ingredients, baked in a large rectangular iron tray, and sold by the slice (*pizza al taglio*). Francesco and Carlotta also serve salads, calzone, sandwiches, pastries and coffee—all authentically made with fresh products. And they bring warm Italian hospitality, so when you walk in their shop, you feel like family. During one of my many visits, we even discovered we have friends in common in Rome. *Tutto il mondo è paese!*

For traditional Neapolitan-style pizza, 2145 in Costa Mesa has the best in the county, hands-down. Built into a former car-repair garage and gas station, the *pizzaiolo* bakes the pizza in a wood-burning, 800°F oven made by Maryland-based company Marra Forni, that imports materials directly from Naples. While the pizza menu isn't pages-long, like in Italy, they serve all the classics, including margherita, marinara, prosciutto, spicy salami and a not-so-classic blue cheese honey pizza!

Where do you go for hard-to-find Italian ingredients?

Lucci's Italian Deli and Bakery in Huntington Beach has been in business since 1946 and features favorite Italian imports such as Prosciutto di Parma, San Marzano tomatoes, Castelvetrano olives, cheeses, semolina flour and 00 flour.

However, Cortina's Italian Market in Anaheim takes the cake for having the largest selection of authentic imported products. Cortina's is a family-owned and operated business since 1963 and carries everything from Mulino Bianco's Pan di Stelle and Balconi's MixMax snack cakes, to Prosciutto San Danielle and Sterilgarda's *panna da cucina*. The market features a bakery with freshly baked Italian bread and pastries, including cannoli and cantucci biscotti. It's worth the Southern California traffic to get there.

Where's the best morning espresso served?

I pride myself in being an espresso connoisseur, since I lived in Italy and travel there often. I know a good espresso. It's hard to find good espresso in America. Although I always make my espresso at home in the mornings with my Moka pot, the espresso at ZeroZero 39 is *perfetto*. So is the espresso at il Farro in Newport Beach, which opened in 1993 by Italian-born Domenico Maurici from Tropea, Italy. ▲

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BOTTEGA

By Gabriella Mileti

NIAF



Grateful Grating

Grating cheese can get messy. Contain the mess with this natural-oak, box-mounted grater, complete with a drawer to collect your gratings. Sagaform Cheese Grater with Drawer: \$30. www.Nordstrom.com



Mapped out Mappina

Accent your kitchen with this beautiful 100-percent cotton-towel *mappina*. The soft, durable towel features artistically designed landmarks and foods from each region of Italy. Made in Italy exclusively from Sur La Table. Italy Map Kitchen Towel, 28-by-20-inches: \$15. www.SurLaTable.com



Cutting Edge

Add a touch of sophistication to your cheese board with this set of cheese knives. Handcrafted in Italy from aged olivewood, each knife's stainless-steel blade is designed to cut a specific kind of cheese and makes for a handsome presentation. Antonini Olivewood Cheese Knives Set of four: \$59.95. www.Williams-Sonoma.com



Daily Grind

A collection of every day Italian products is coming to America, specifically at a pop-up shop at the MoMa Design Store in New York City. The e-commerce company, Fattobene is hosting the shop. And leave it to the Italians to make household necessities impossibly beautiful! The shop features shampoo, toothpaste, staplers, Paneangeli baking powder, mints—and even this vintage-looking manual coffee grinder made of cast iron and beech wood. Tre Spade: \$220. www.Fatto-Bene.com



Espresso Yourself

Sip your morning brew in this adorable mini mug. Made of ceramic in mint color with gold brim, and perfect for your espresso. Espresso Yourself Mint Mug: \$10. www.Francescas.com

Perfect Slice

Fall means truffles and if you're lucky enough to get your hands on some, you'll need a professional slicer to ensure you have perfectly sliced truffles. Made of oak wood and stainless steel, the razor-sharp laser-cut blade will deliver a consistent cut throughout your meal. You can even adjust the blade for thicker or thinner shavings. Made in Italy. Urbani Truffles: \$39.98. www.Amazon.com



Rice Ball Wizard

Make the perfect Sicilian *arancino* easily and quickly with the Arancinotto. Made in Sicily, Ragusa to be exact, this mold can pump out 180 *arancini* per hour. The package even comes with a recipe book. Available in pointed and rounded shapes, and 80-gram and 160-gram sizes. Pointed shape, 80 grams (pictured): \$19.90. www.Amazon.com



On Board!

Presentation is everything when entertaining, so for your *salumi e formaggi* you'll need the perfect board. Made from solid olive wood, which is known for its durability and rich wood grain, this board will not only stand the test of time but will impress your guests. Olive Wood Rustic Large Board: \$59. www.WestElm.com



Over the Barrel

Inspired by the tops of wine barrels, this mango wood and galvanized metal serving tray brings a rustic wine country touch to your table. Use it to display appetizers or carry your favorite vino from one room to the next. Food safe and monogramming available. Barrel Top Tray: \$79. www.PotteryBarn.com



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Dish It Out

Italy is known for its ceramics but bringing ceramics back from a trip there can be a nightmare. Luckily, you can find handmade ceramics with Italian flare right on Etsy in the Magic Moon Pottery shop. This Buon Appetito dish measuring 14¼-by-4¼-inches is ideal for serving appetizers and snacks. Buon Appetito Dish: \$36. www.Etsy.com/shop/MagicMoonPottery



Pasta Jewelry, Cause and Effect

Inspired by Barilla and its passion for pasta, the Al Dente collection is lovingly fabricated by Delicacies Jewelry for people who love pasta. (And, really, who doesn't love pasta? And jewelry, for that matter?) Cast in .925 sterling silver, the mini farfalle earrings measure just .43 inches-wide-by-.3-inches tall. The earrings are rhodium-plated to discourage tarnishing. Giving back is baked into this purchase: these earrings provide 16 meals to help feed the hungry! Delicacies Jewelry Mini Farfalle earrings: \$40. The matching farfalla charm, attached to an adjustable 15-to-16-inch cable chain, is meant to be worn just below or on the collarbone and is perfect for layering. The necklace provides 25 meals to help feed the hungry! Delicacies Jewelry Mini Farfalla Necklace: \$75. www.delicaciesjewelry.com

It's Electric!

The quintessential Italian scooter has gone electric. Vespa, who made a name for itself starting in the 1950s, has released an all-new electric scooter that's quiet and good for the environment. The Elettrica features a digital dashboard and uses a lithium-ion battery and an electric motor to travel up to 62 miles on a full charge. Just don't forget to plug it in at night! Vespa Elettrica: \$7,499. www.Vespa.com





Bill Westmoreland



In Sinatra's Footsteps

Award-winning jazz singer Barbara Fasano fondly remembers how music filled her childhood in Bay Shore, Long Island: “There was so much Sinatra! My mother would be in the kitchen making lasagna and telling stories of her bobbysoxer days, my father in the basement playing *The Summer Wind*, and Ol’ Blue Eyes was always the background to big holiday celebrations in Brooklyn with my aunts, uncles, and grandparents, who came to America from Naples and Calabria.”

These days, Fasano’s CDs and performances are praised for the emotional intensity she brings to lyrics, with author and music critic David Hadju describing her as, “an heir to Sinatra for our time.” Fasano’s repertory spans the American Songbook, from Harold Arlen to Bruce Springsteen, and she performs in clubs across the country, and abroad in London. She often appears with her husband, pianist and singer Eric Comstock, at such Manhattan venues as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center and Birdland.

“I’m forever inspired by my Italian family,” Fasano says. “They were, and still are, very free-flowing when it comes to truly expressing heartfelt emotions—from love to sorrow, anger, or compassion. They taught me to not hold back. For me, that’s the key to discovering the truth and beauty of a song.”

Website: www.barbarafasano.com

— Susan Van Allen



James Gavin

Proving Grounds

The enticing aroma of fresh-brewed coffee is unmistakable. And when the coffee beans are precisely roasted on site, that cup of java joy is as good as it gets. This year, Food & Wine magazine recognized Sam Bonasso’s Quantum Bean Coffee in Morgantown, W.Va., as the best coffee in the Mountain State.

“It was one of those pinch yourself moments—like a dream,” says Bonasso, 36, about appearing in the magazine.

The West Virginia native never worked in a coffeehouse, but he always loved a good cup of coffee. In 2007, while working in the IT field in San Diego, he tasted some great coffee that sparked his interest about roasting and brewing. When he returned to West Virginia in 2012, he started his “hobby” in the kitchen of his home and began selling brewed and bagged coffee at farmers markets in 2015. He opened Quantum Bean Coffee in 2018 with his wife, Susan. Both are West Virginia University graduates.

Bonasso is grateful for his Calabrian heritage, Sunday dinners with family, and his grandfather’s wisdom. “My grandfather, Tony, always talked about having choices in life, that you get to choose your destiny, to a large part. And while I wish I would have listened to his words sooner, they sure do mean a lot today,” says Bonasso, about fulfilling his destiny—one cup at a time. Website:

<https://www.facebook.com/quantumbeancoffee/>

— Robert Fanelli Bartus Jr.





Fred Esposito



PAESANI

Brand New Ballgame

Screenwriter Robert Bruzino admits that his greatest inspiration for writing was the film *Rocky*. His Indie film, *Bottom of the 9th*, debuted this summer, starring Joe Manganiello and Sofia Vergara. Manganiello’s character, Sonny Stano, is released from prison after 17 years and is given a second chance at life and baseball.

“Somehow getting the chance to prove that you are more than that mistake, not necessarily to others, but to yourself. I kind of feel this is a universal human struggle and hope people are inspired by the human spirit of this story,” says Bruzino about his film of redemption.

A Pace University graduate who studied acting at the Stella Adler Conservatory for Acting, Bruzino has always been attracted to the arts since his high school days where he was involved with the theater. He believes that “perseverance is the key” to his life as a writer. “It took almost 16 years from the day I first put pen to paper, to the movie being made, to it then finally coming out,” says Bruzino. “Never let anybody stop you.”

How does the Bronx native celebrate his Calabrian roots? Sunday *pranzo* at 1 p.m. with his wife and two children, which he says is his favorite meal of the week. “My Italian heritage means the world to me,” says Bruzino. Website: www.robertbruzino.com
— Robert Fanelli Bartus Jr.



Saban Films

Touching Image

A photo of Michael Rosato’s mural depicting American abolitionist Harriet Tubman went viral on social media this past spring. It pictured a young girl touching the outstretched hand of the American hero who had escaped from slavery and led others to freedom on the Underground Railroad.

Rosato painted the 14-by-28-foot mural on an exterior wall of the Harriet Tubman Museum and Educational Center in Cambridge, Md. “I wanted that kind of engagement, although I never anticipated what would happen,” he says of that touching moment.

Since then, Rosato has collected dozens of photos of people reaching toward Tubman’s outstretched hand.

“African Americans see something in it that I don’t see and can’t see,” says the 59-year-old muralist who had no social media accounts in mid-May when he suddenly began receiving 50 emails daily about the mural.

The grandson of Italian immigrants from Torino and Cortese, Rosato confesses he felt some discomfort as a white, male artist commissioned to depict Tubman. “Imagine her incredible strength of character, but also her compassion, that convinced people she would get them to safety,” he says. “Standing in front of that mural, you become...the person in need, no matter what color you are.”

Rosato recalls chance meetings at the museum with African American grandmothers who thanked him for his work. “That,” he says, “is joyful.”

— Maria Garcia



Amy Taylor

Persons of Interest



Archdiocese of Boston



Courtesy of Tony Monaco

Baptism by Fire

With a fire extinguisher, Fr. Steven Clemence and Fr. Andrea Filippucci raced to Immaculate Conception Church in Marlborough, Mass., this past winter. Although they couldn't battle the blaze, they helped local fire departments locate the fire and save the church.

Filippucci almost missed that opportunity. He almost didn't become a priest. Born in Rome, Filippucci is the sixth child of 11 born to Catholic missionaries Piergiorgio and Lucia Stefania. They were a happy, devout family until 1997 when 10-year-old Filippucci's beloved dad passed away suddenly while praying, propelling the child into an angry adolescence.

In 2004, his mother made him choose between spending the summer at a Catholic center in Israel or leaving

home. He says he rediscovered God's love in Israel. He entered a seminary in Boston in 2007. "I think my personal history helps me to connect in many ways with people....," says Filippucci, now administrator of a Lynn, Mass., parish. "Since I have been through many struggles...I can help not just with words, or with what I have learned in books, but with my life."

Besides sharing his faith, and love of Rome and Italian cooking, he shares team spirit. Filippucci calls A.S. Roma the "best soccer team in the world," adding "I am a big Roma fan, and every time they come to the USA, I go and see them train and play."

— Christina Galeone



Archdiocese of Boston

Jazzed Up

Organist Tony Monaco has music streaming in his veins. A first-generation Italian American whose parents emigrated to the United States from Abruzzo, he says his father and grandfather were musicians from a town known for its musicians. His first gig? At 12, the Columbus, Ohio, native played accordion, alongside his father on the drums, at an Italian dance.

"I've played and recorded ever since," says Monaco, who over 52 years has performed at weddings, night clubs, and jazz clubs, and has released 14 CDs.

When Monaco isn't touring in support of his latest CD, *The Definition of Insanity*, you'll find him at his regular "Monaco Monday" gig at a Columbus nightclub where locals and fans from afar enjoy his bluesy, jazzy Hammond B3 organ playing in a style similar to the great Jimmy Smith—Monaco's mentor.

His latest CD's song list ranges from a Jimmy Smith's *Root Down* to a funky version of the Grateful Dead's *Truckin'*, but Monaco never forgets his heritage. It also includes the Italian pop hit *Quando Quando* and the traditional Neapolitan song *Non Ti Scordare Di Me*.

"My father would take our family to Italy at Christmas to spend it with our grandparents!" Monaco says. "I've learned many Italian cultural ways and they are combined into the person I am! I love good food, great company and family! My music expresses the love I have!"

— Dee Dee McNeil



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LAVAZZA
TORINO, ITALIA, 1895

Zucca!

ITALIAN PUMPKIN PRIDE

BY MARY ANN ESPOSITO

The symbol of the city of Mantua in northern Lombardy is not some fierce looking lion or regal eagle. No, Mantua is proud to have *zucca* (pumpkin) as the protagonist of its culinary heritage and *tortelli di zucca* (pasta stuffed with pumpkin) as its most famous dish. In Mantua, pumpkin takes on an almost mystical quality and is one of the most important agricultural crops of the region.

The uses for *zucca* go far beyond the borders of Mantua. In Umbria, *zucca* becomes plump golden yellow gnocchi. In Sicily, thin strips of *zucca* are marinated in olive oil, vinegar and herbs for salad. In Campania, especially Naples, *zucca* is combined with sausage and beans.

All this love for *zucca* leads to the belief by many that Halloween was invented in Mantua! For hundreds of years, the Mantovani have placed carved pumpkins illuminated with candles along the roads leading to the *cimiterio* (cemetery). There, these *lumere* (luminaries) are said to help the souls of the dead find their living relatives who have prepared *tortelli di zucca* for them.

Even Mantua's most famous citizen, the gifted Roman poet Virgil, was a fan of pumpkin; and, during the Renaissance, the ruling Gonzaga family embraced the pumpkin

thanks to Isabella d'Este who, it is said, asked her chefs to create pumpkin-inspired dishes.

Tortelli di zucca are a must for the Christmas season and are always the first course for the *Vigilia di Natale* (Christmas Eve). Generations have handed down their treasured recipes for these plump pasta pillows filled with pumpkin that are known in dialect as *tortei soca*.

The pumpkin used for the filling is not the bright orange types that we are familiar with at Halloween but rather dark forest green types that show their personality with rough bumps and knots on their skin and almost wooden-like stems that gives them a certain panache. Cutting one open reveals the bright deep orange pulp.

When cooked, it is deliciously sweet, and when combined with crushed almond cookies (*amaretti*) and a fruit mustard (*mostarda montovana*), made with apples and sometimes pears infused with mustard oil, it becomes a memorable, tasty filling for *tortelli di zucca*.

I have created the dish many times from the *zucca* I have grown in my home garden with seeds from Italy, but a respectable alternative would be substituting a combination of acorn and butternut squash.

Tortelli di Zucca alla Mantovani

Ingredients for tortelli filling

- 2 cloves garlic, peeled
- 2 tablespoons fresh rosemary leaves
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1½ pound well-marbled T-bone steak, about 2 inches thick
- ½ cup red wine
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 cup fresh arugula leaves

Ingredients for tortelli dough

- 4 large eggs
- 3 cups unbleached, all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon salt

Ingredients for butter and sage sauce (for 2 dozen tortelli)

- 1 stick of butter
- 4 or 5 fresh whole sage leaves
- ½ cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

Directions to make the filling

- Preheat the oven to 350°F.
- Cut the squash or pumpkin in half, scoop out the seeds, and discard.
- Place the halves cut side down in a small baking dish, add ½ cup water, and cover the dish with foil.
- Bake for 35 minutes or until the squash is easily pierced with a fork. Let cool.
- With a spoon, scoop out the pulp and place in a colander; let it drain for 45 minutes.
- Transfer the squash to a bowl and mash it well. Add the *amaretti* cookies, bread-crumbs, egg, jam, nutmeg, salt, and Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese and mix well.
- Cover and refrigerate until ready to use.

Directions to make the pasta

- Combine the flour with the salt and mound it on a work surface. Make a hole in the center of the flour and break the eggs into it.
- Beat the eggs with a fork. Then, using the fork, gradually incorporate the flour from the inside walls of the flour.
- When the dough becomes too firm to mix with the fork, knead it with your hands, incorporating just enough of the flour to make a soft but not sticky dough. You may not need all the flour.
- Brush the excess flour aside and knead the dough (adding additional flour as necessary) until smooth. Cover and let rest for 10 minutes.
- Knead the dough again for about 4 minutes and cut it into 4 equal pieces. Work with one piece at a time, keeping the rest covered.
- Roll each piece out to the thinnest setting on a pasta machine or roll it out with a rolling pin on a floured surface to a thickness of ⅛ inch.



Chicken Diavolo with Pumpkin

- Cut the dough into 3-inch squares.
- Place a generous teaspoon of the filling in the center of each rectangle, fold the rectangles in half to make a triangle shape. Pinch the edges well to seal in the filling and place the triangles on a floured towel.
- Gather dough scraps into a ball and re-roll them to make more tortelli.
- To cook, bring a large pot of water to a boil. Cook 2 dozen tortelli at a time, for 1 to 2 minutes, or until they rise to the surface. Drain them carefully with a slotted spoon and place them on a lint-free cotton-towel lined baking sheet.
- Melt the butter in a medium-sized sauté pan; add the sage and press on the leaves to release their flavor.
- Add the tortelli and gently toss until well coated with the sauce and hot.
- Transfer to a serving dish and sprinkle with the cheese. Serve immediately

Chicken Diavolo with Pumpkin

This spicy chicken dish riddled with pumpkin is full of flavor and has a little kick due to the hot pepper

Serves 4

Ingredients

- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 1½ cups diced pumpkin or butternut squash

- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 small, fresh hot red pepper, cut into strips
- 2 tablespoons fresh thyme, leaves
- 2 large sprigs fresh rosemary tied with kitchen string
- 8 skinless chicken thighs
- Fine sea salt and coarse black pepper, to taste
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 3 cups pureed plum tomatoes

Directions

- In a large skillet, heat the oil. Add the onion, pumpkin, garlic, hot pepper, thyme and the rosemary.
- Cook over low heat until the onions are soft and golden brown. Transfer to a dish and set aside. Discard the rosemary.
- Season the chicken thighs with salt, pepper and thyme.
- Add the chicken to the hot skillet and brown well, turning once or twice.
- Return the onion mixture and the wine to the pan and raise the heat to high. Cook for 2 minutes.
- Add the tomatoes, reduce the heat to low, cover, and simmer for 10 minutes or until the chicken registers 165°F on an instant-read thermometer.
- Uncover the pan and cook for couple minutes longer.
- Serve hot over creamy polenta. ▶

Pumpkin and Squash Creamed Soup

Pumpkin and squash are in the same family; combine them to make this velvety textured soup.

Serves 6

Ingredients

- 1 small pie pumpkin, quartered and seeded
- 1½ pounds butternut squash, quartered and seeded
- 1 cup water
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 cup finely minced leeks or onion
- 2 cups rich chicken broth
- ½ cup light cream
- ¼ teaspoon (or more) freshly grated nutmeg
- Salt to taste
- Toasted pumpkin seeds for garnish



John Hession

Directions

- Preheat the oven to 350°F.
- Place the pumpkin and squash quarters in a 15½- by-10¼-inch pan.
- Add the water, cover the pan with aluminum foil, and bake for 45 minutes to 1 hour, or until soft.
- When cool, scoop out the flesh and place it in a food processor.
- In a soup pot, melt the butter over medium heat; add the leeks and cook slowly over low heat just until the leeks are limp.
- Stir in 3 tablespoons of the chicken broth and continue cooking until the leeks are very soft.
- Transfer the leeks to the food processor with the pumpkin and squash and puree in batches until the mixture is blended.
- Slowly pour the broth through the feed tube with the motor running and process until the mixture is very smooth.
- Transfer the soup to the soup pot. Stir in the half-and-half or cream, nutmeg, and salt. Heat the mixture slowly until hot.
- Ladle the soup into individual bowls and top with some of the pumpkin seeds. Serve immediately.



John Hession

Pumpkin Spice Bundt Cake

This moist pumpkin spice cake makes a dramatic statement made in a Bundt pan.

Serves 8

Ingredients

- 2¼ cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon ginger
- ¼ teaspoon cloves
- ¼ cup diced candied ginger
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 12 tablespoons butter, softened
- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup dark brown sugar
- 3 large eggs
- 1 cup canned solid-pack pumpkin
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ¼ cup fresh orange juice plus zest of 1 large orange
- ½ cup well-shaken buttermilk
- ½ cup grated apple

Frosting

- 2 cups confectioners sugar, sifted
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2-4 tablespoons milk

Directions

- Preheat oven to 350°F.
- Butter a 10-inch Bundt cake pan and dust with flour, set aside.
- In a medium-sized bowl, whisk together the flour, spices, baking soda, baking powder, candied ginger and salt.
- In a bowl with a hand mixer or in the bowl of a stand mixer, cream the butter and sugars together until light and fluffy.
- Add the eggs one at a time until well combined.
- Blend in the pumpkin, orange juice,

zest, vanilla, buttermilk and grated apple (the mixture will look curdled but will smooth out when the flour is added).

- Combine the flour mixture with the egg mixture, blending well. Do not over-mix.
- Transfer the batter to the prepared pan.
- Bake for 45-55 minutes, or until a cake tester or toothpick inserted in the middle comes out clean. Invert and cool on a wire rack

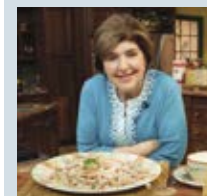
Ingredients for Frosting

- 2 cups confectioners sugar
- 2 tablespoons melted and cooled butter
- Half and Half as needed

Directions for Frosting

- In a bowl, combine all the ingredients to make a loose glaze. Drizzle over cake. Cut in wedges to serve.

The *zucca* recipes are from Mary Ann Esposito's new cookbook *Ciao Italia: My Lifelong Food Adventures in Italy*, and from her website www.ciaoitalia.com ▲

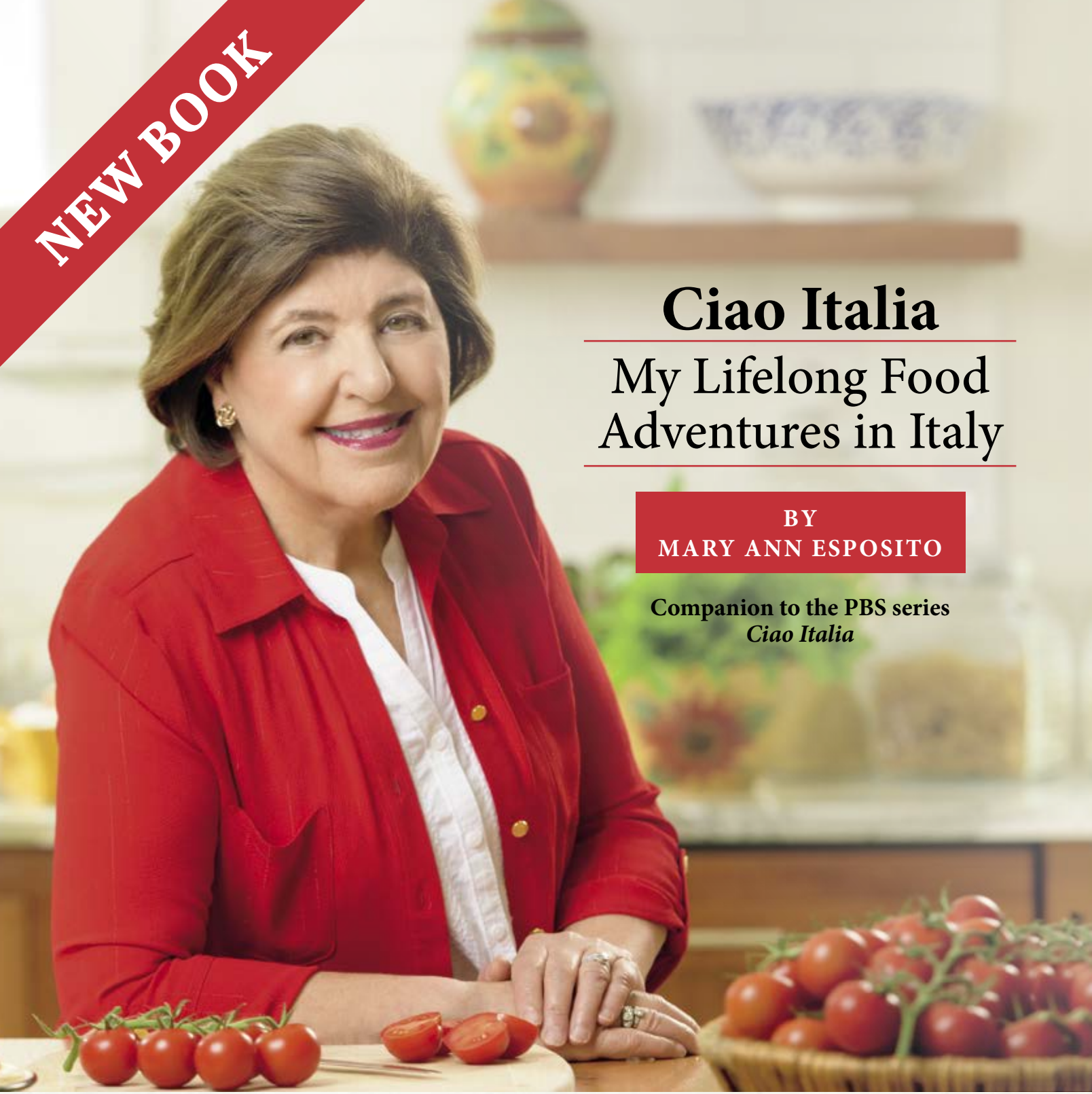


An Evening with Mary Ann Esposito

Please join us for *An Evening with Mary Ann Esposito* on Friday,

November 1, during the NIAF 44th Anniversary Gala Weekend, in Washington, D.C. Dine with Mary Ann as she takes you through an elegant, three-course dinner inspired by the cuisine of Molise, the NIAF 2019 Region of Honor. Your ticket purchase includes a signed copy of Mary Ann's latest cookbook, *Ciao Italia: My Lifelong Food Adventures in Italy*. Seating is limited, so don't wait. Visit www.niaf.org/forms/anniversary-gala.

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HeritageTravel in MOLISE

By Susan Van Allen

Connecting Molisani Family Ties

There are moments in our lives that are unforgettable.
Moments that fill our hearts beyond our imaginings.
This is one of those moments....

That was my toast at dinner with my Italian cousins I had just met in Vinchiaturò, a village in the region of Molise. My grandmother, Wilhelmina Spada, and her family, emigrated from there in 1903, to find the American dream in Newark, N.J. Nana had kept in touch with the family that stayed behind. She'd even visited them in 1957, and I found a letter she wrote about the quiet stone village set on a hillside, about the villa her uncle, a wealthy monsignor, had left to the family, and of her cousins: "They are wonderful, and gave us a grand reception."

Almost 50 years later, after many visits to Italy, I was ready to dig deeper and discover my ancestral land. I searched guidebooks and websites, finding little about Vinchiaturò, except its population (3,000) and the origin of its name, from the Latin *vincula catenis*, meaning "prison with chains." The Romans had turned it into a penal colony after conquering the Samnites, the ancient Italic inhabitants of the area. When I asked my Italian friends and travel experts about the village, I only got blank looks.

Intrigued, my sister and I set out via rental car from Naples. Within a couple of hours, we found ourselves winding through green hills, capped with white stone villages that looked like birthday-cake frostings. South of Campobasso, approaching Vinchiaturò, came a welcoming omen: an elderly *signora* dressed in black, walking along an old stone wall. "Nana!" we gasped in unison.



Susan Van Allen

13th-century Santa Croce Church in Vinchiaturò



Theater ruins at Saepinum, an archaeological site of old Roman ruins outside of Vinchiaturro

SerFeo



My Italian Family

Saepinum, a vast archaeological site of an old Roman ruins outside of Vinchiaturro, near Sepino

Forlì del Sannio is one of the Molise villages with the highest decrease in population due to emigration. Its population is now 747; in 1871, it was 2,664.

SerFeo

A grand reception with wonderful cousins of a younger generation than Nana's followed. It was a tidal wave of warmth and generosity, delicious pasta, and wine. They lived in the villa my grandmother had described, with original frescos, Juliet balconies, and grand fireplaces, but a modernized kitchen. We shared family pictures, music, a soccer game on TV, and a great feeling of deep connection to my grandmother.

It was thrilling to be the only Americans in such a beautiful spot. Dominating the village was the bell tower of the 13th-century Santa Croce Church, where my grandmother was baptized. My cousin showed us marble remains of a large laundry basin, where I imag-

ined my great grandmother washing and gossiping. A 20-minute drive away, near Sepino, we were astounded to discover Saepinum, a vast archaeological site of an old Roman settlement with ruins of a theatre and temples—bringing us even further back into thoughts of our ancestry. All of this I never would have experienced without seeking out my Italian family.

"You are one of the lucky ones," Bianca Ottone, tells me. She's the founder of My Italian Family, a company that assists in reconnecting people with their Italian roots. "We get many requests looking for ancestors in Molise, but most only have the name of the town."

Ottone has a network of genealogists who gather

documents from churches and the comune and seek out living relatives. She sets up trips where travelers can be accompanied by a driver and translator who know the local dialect, so they can visit their ancestral village, see where their relatives lived, and meet long-lost cousins and people who knew their family. She also arranges reunion meals in local restaurants and visits to cemeteries—a point that she says "seals the unforgettable experience."

I learned from Ottone that Molise has the largest number per capita of emigrants in Italy. The biggest wave of Italian emigration, from 1880 to 1920, brought 4 million Italians to the United States, mostly from the south, including

600,000 from what was then the Abruzzi e Molise region. Not much industry has developed in Molise, so emigration continues. "These days the population of many villages is half of what it was 100 years ago, and some villages are almost abandoned," says Ottone. "Sometimes we find more living relatives in the United States or Canada than we do in Molise."

But there's a great advantage to visiting a place in Italy that's not densely populated and where tourism hasn't taken over. In Molise, along with discovering our roots, a traveler can find tranquility, unspoiled historical treasures and traditions, and natives who welcome you warmly, proud to show off their beloved home. ➤

Background photo: Baptismal certificate
 Joe Robertucci found for Angelo Robertucci, 1871,
 in his ancestral research.

Courtesy of Joe Robertucci

Joe Robertucci (left)
 sharing photos with
 relatives in Petrella



Emidio Spinogetti



Joe Robertucci (right)
 with his wife Elizabeth
 and Petrella Mayor
 Alessandro Amoroso

Emidio Spinogetti

Joe Robertucci



Giuseppe Quatrone - CC BY-NC-ND 2.0

San Giorgio Martire Church in Petrella



Monument in Petrella
 to those who left for
 the United States

Here are a couple other stories that inspire me to experience more of Molise:

Joe Robertucci visited Petrella Tifernia (population 1,400), north of Campobasso, a town known for its 12th-century Romanesque church, San Giorgio Martire, and its preserved historic center of narrow alleyways flanked by stone homes that lead to the main piazza.

“A trip to Petrella was on my bucket list for years,” says Robertucci of the town where his grandfather, Pasquale Pietro Robertucci, was born. “Even though Pasquale died when I was only 4 years old, he left a big impression on me. He lived with us in Connellsville, a mining town south of Pittsburgh, that was full of Italians, many from Petrella. I remember Grandpa smoking his pipe, cutting a pear with his pocketknife, and teaching me some

Italian words...not so nice words, as I was told later!”

Robertucci says his grandfather arrived in Connellsville in 1892, when he was 21, to join his brother. “Grandpa was set up to meet his bride, an Italian immigrant from Campania. But...the girl’s sister answered the door, Grandpa fell in love with her, they married...and family problems forever ensued!”

Though his family lost their connections to Molise, Robertucci was always curious about where his grandfather came from. About 30 years ago, he sent some forms to Petrella asking for records. Eventually a thick envelope arrived with baptismal and birth records. Recently, while planning a trip to Rome and Venice with his wife, he wanted to add Petrella to this trip and contacted Bianca Ottone. “Since I speak no Italian and didn’t know anybody there,

Bianca could help us out. She set us up with genealogists, a hotel in Campobasso, and a driver,” he says.

“Approaching Petrella, my first impression was that the landscape, rolling hills and farmland, looked so much like Connellsville,” recalls Robertucci. “Entering the town, I found it totally authentic, with a farmers’ market going on... We met our genealogists, who took us to the San Giorgio Church, which was very impressive. We met the priest, who pulled out the Robertucci records. They went all the way back to the 1700s, so old I was afraid to touch them!”

Robertucci imagined that since his grandpa’s family were farmers, he had lived in a farmhouse. “But what we found was this old stone row house,” he says. “The feeling of touching the wall of my Grandpa’s house...is something I can’t

describe. Also, very moving was a monument with a statue of the Virgin Mary, dedicated to the immigrants who left in the 1800s, wishing them a safe journey to their new homeland.”

The genealogists found a cousin Robertucci didn’t even know existed. “We had this great visit, sharing family pictures, and she was so excited that she called her sister who’d emigrated to Montreal!” Even people they weren’t related to welcomed them like family, says Robertucci. “The mayor met us, wearing his official sash, and gave us a sketch of the church as a souvenir. To top it off, my wife had mentioned that she liked truffles, which are found in the surrounding forests. When our driver dropped us off on our last day, he presented a gift: jars of black truffles, truffle honey, and truffle cream. It was a trip of a lifetime. I fell in love with Petrella and its people.”

Leslie Coakley visited Oratino (population 1,600) northwest of Campobasso, in Molise's province of Isernia. The *I Borghi Più Belli d'Italia* association calls Oratino "one of the Most Beautiful Villages in Italy," known for centuries for its stonemasons, craftsmen and painters who adorned its buildings with decorative sculptures and frescoes.

"For my 50th birthday, I decided to take my first trip to Italy and go to the place where my grandmother, Maria Louisa Petti, was born," says Coakley. "Nonna had lived with us when I was a child, and she really stuck out in our Cleveland neighborhood. She didn't speak much English, always wore long black dresses and her braided gray hair pinned up in a bun. I have fond memories of being in the kitchen with her, watching her make bracirole, gnocchi and tomato sauce."

Coakley's grandmother came to Cleveland in 1920,

at age 22, with her father and siblings, leaving behind her mother and one sister. Her father eventually went back to Oratino. In Cleveland's Little Italy, she met and married Paolo, from Matrice, a town about 12 miles from Oratino.

"I remember there were always letters between Nonna and her sister, Aniesse, in Oratino," says Coakley. "The communication stopped after Nonna died, but my mother kept the address, and took a trip to Europe in the 1980s, during which she visited Aniesse's daughter Adua. When I decided to go, over 20 years later, I telephoned Adua, hoping she spoke some English. It was during that conversation that I realized I better get better at my Italian, but somehow, we communicated. Adua urged me to come stay with her.

Stepping off the train at the Campobasso station, Coakley spotted a short, dark-haired woman who

looked like her mother. "I guessed she was Adua," she says, "and the nun standing next to her could be my other cousin, Sister Assunta."

Approaching them, Coakley asked "Cugine?" They and two other cousins threw their arms around her. "From that wonderful moment on, I was treated like royalty!" she says.

She had arrived at night, so it wasn't until the next morning when she saw how beautiful Oratino was. "I loved walking around the village, admiring the architecture and the views of the valley below," Coakley recalls. "When I'd greet people, they'd always ask me the same two questions: 'Whose family are you visiting?' and 'Are you from Cleveland?' as so many from the village had moved there."

She visited a beautiful villa built by her great grandfather, Giuseppe Petti, a famous gilder of the village. "And it was wonderful to go to the Santa Maria Assunta

Church with Sister Assunta for Mass," she says. "She introduced me to everyone as if I were a celebrity!"

Coakley had made an album of family photos that, many evenings, the cousins poured over, wanting to know all about their relatives in America. "Of course, there were always delicious family dinners," she adds. "Some of my best memories were being with Adua in her kitchen. Her mannerisms, the way she cooked, was just like my Nonna. Her sauce tasted exactly the same.

"All the time I was there, I felt so loved, that I really belonged in Oratino, and that this visit mattered as deeply to my cousins as it did to me." ▲

For more information about Italian ancestry: www.myitalianfamily.com

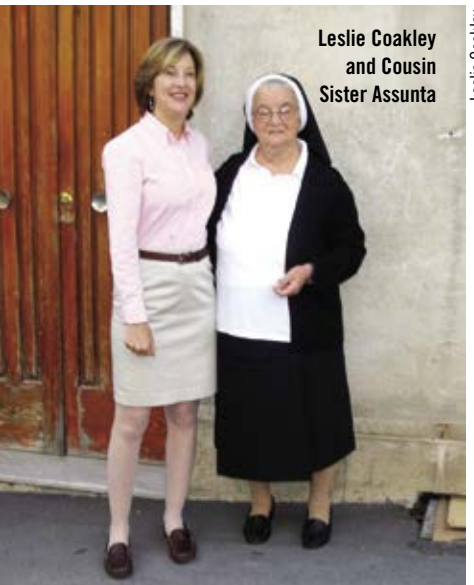
Susan Van Allen is the author of 100 Places in Italy Every Woman Should Go. She also designs and hosts Golden Weeks in Italy: For Women Only, small group tours.

Giambattista Lazzerera



The village of Oratino

Leslie Coakley



Leslie Coakley and Cousin Sister Assunta

Leslie Coakley

Leslie Coakley and her younger cousins



Paul Spadoni

LEONARDO'S LOST ANGEL

SOME EXPERTS BELIEVE DA VINCI MADE THE STATUE FOUND IN SAN GENNARO CHURCH

By Paul Spadoni

Locked away in the back corner of a little-known church in an obscure village in Tuscany is one of Italy's best kept secrets—what is one of the two or three statues believed by art experts to be the work of Leonardo da Vinci. Approximately four-foot tall, the terracotta angel is well known among aficionados of Leonardo, but to date it has received little publicity outside of Tuscany.

The statue is four times larger than the other most well-known sculpture attributed to Leonardo. It's relatively easy for art lovers to arrange a viewing. And, as a bonus, the face of the angel possibly is that of the young Leonardo himself.

The polychrome statue depicts the archangel Gabriel and is estimated to have been made between 1475 and 1482. Da Vinci was born in 1452, so he wouldn't have been 30 when the statue was made. The sculpture first received attention in 1958, when art historian and critic Ludovico Ragghianti attributed it to the workshop of Andrea del Verrocchio.

Leonardo studied under master craftsman and artist Verrocchio from ages 14 to at least 20; he qualified as a master in Florence's Guild of St. Luke, an organization of artists and medical doctors, when he was 20. His father set him up with his own workshop, but Leonardo continued to collaborate with Verrocchio until he moved to Milan in 1482 at age 30. This would place him in Florence at precisely the time the angel was judged to have been made. Leonardo did study sculpture under Verrocchio.

Eventually, the statue came to the attention of the late art historian Dr. Carlo Pedretti, widely recognized as the foremost expert on the works of Leonardo. Historian Kenneth Clark—writer, producer and presenter of the BBC Television series *Civilisation*—described Pedretti as “unquestionably the greatest Leonardo scholar of our time.” Pedretti's opinions on its authenticity, first published in 1997, have since been



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echoed by other historians. The former professor emeritus at UCLA and director of the Armand Hammer Center for Leonardo Studies, Pedretti confirmed his convictions about the statue's authorship in a three-and-a-half-hour production on the life of Leonardo on the Italian public television show *Super-Quark*, first broadcast in 2008.

Asked why he believes it to be a true work of da Vinci, Pedretti said, "That this is an early work by Leonardo can be seen immediately by the way the drapery of the arm is set. Then, there are all the positions of the body, which suggest movement, and the particular anatomy of the foot. But it is especially the hair, the hair that is typical of Leonardo in the sense of showing the movement like the motion of water or atmospheric turbulence.



From the top three details, some evidence suggests that this statue of the archangel Gabriel in the Pieve di San Gennaro could be an early work by Leonardo da Vinci.

Above: The pen drawing *Sleeve Study for the Annunciation*, by Leonardo da Vinci, c.1470 - 1473, showing meticulous folds in the sleeve of the Archangel Gabriel for his *Annunciation* painting.

"But it is especially the face that speaks the language of Leonardo. It is the face of his first images, of his early paintings, and it is the face that returns in the much later works of Leonardo. I don't need to say it; it is the statue that speaks for itself."

Another basis for the angel's authenticity comes from an early Leonardo sketch titled *Study for the Sleeve of an Angel of the Annunciation*, at the Uffizi Gallery in Florence. The meticulously detailed pen drawing of Gabriel's sleeve, drawn between 1470 and 1473, shows the folds of material that would be important in creating a three-dimensional representation of the arm. The website of the Museo Galileo in Florence states that "1475 is a probable date for [Leonardo's creation of] the angel at San Gennaro." ▶

Paul Spadoni



The door of Pieve di San Gennaro



The church and bell tower

Paul Spadoni

Why would Leonardo's work be in such an obscure location? Leonardo's home in Vinci was only about 23 miles from San Gennaro. Both are hillside villages overlooking the same valley, the Valdnievole. Records show that Leonardo was consulted regarding canal engineering for the nearby city of Florence, which controlled the Valdnievole. San Gennaro is included on a map that shows the route of one of the hydraulic engineering survey trips, so he would have passed through the area.

Evidence points to Leonardo creating numerous statues. Historian and artist Giorgio Vasari wrote that during Leonardo's time in Florence "he filled the city with things from his own hand..." Leonardo tells us himself that he worked "no less in sculpture than in painting, being equally adept at one and the other." In a letter offering his service to Ludovico Sforza of Milan, Leonardo wrote, "I can carry out sculpture in marble, bronze or clay, and I can do in painting whatever may be done, as well as any other, be he whom he may."

Why is the statue is still relatively unknown outside the circle of art historians? News of the attribution to Leonardo has been published in Italian newspapers, but few English language newspapers or magazines have picked up the story. "It's really not surprising that the discovery has received little attention," said art historian Emanuele Pellegrini, director of the Journal of Visual Arts and associate professor of art

history at the IMT Institute for Advanced Studies in Lucca. "It's quite common in Italian provinces to find many masterpieces which are relatively unknown."

Pellegrini pointed out that a crucifix on display in a chapel in Padova went largely unnoticed for 500 years before someone realized that the artist was Donatello. "Sometimes you have masterpieces right before your very eyes," he said, "but you don't see them because you don't pay attention, or someone finds some documents that show who the artist was."

No documentation has been found to verify the attribution of the angel to Leonardo. Pellegrini said until definitive records are found, he is reserving judgment. "We know that Verocchio worked in Pistoia," he said. "It's true that Leonardo probably visited this spot in Tuscany. But the problem

done by the master, or it was done from a drawing from a master like Leonardo.

"So it's quite complicated, unless you have other sources that you can rely on. If you found a document showing the sale of the angel to the parish of San Gennaro, you could be sure."

Pellegrini added, "It's also difficult to make comparisons because we have little information about Leonardo as a sculptor and so few examples. We may discover the proof in the future. The research is always ongoing."

Another sculpture which scholars attribute to Leonardo is a small beeswax model called *Horse and Rider*, approximately 10-inches tall by 10-inches long, made in 1508. Leonardo intended to use it as a model for a larger commissioned sculpture, but he died before the model could be cast in metal. The sculpture is also said to con-

Dr. Alessandro Vezzosi, founder and director of the Museo Ideale Leonardo da Vinci and author of hundreds of exhibits on Leonardo da Vinci, said that "based on a comparison with the sleeve of the Angel of the Annunciation, the hypothesis [that this is a work of Leonardo] is very reasonable."

Mention of the statue first appears in the church's archives in 1771. "A sacristan of the church, preparing the decorations, tipped over a ladder that hit the statue, which fell to the floor in a thousand pieces," Pedretti said. "It was immediately restored by a local restorer, and this is how we see it today."



Italian newspaper dated April 1998 with story of the statue's attribution to Leonardo

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is that, during the 15th and 16th centuries, we had these huge artists' workshops. They worked as industries, so it's very difficult to see if the master has done some of the work himself, or if the work was a replica of something

tain his thumbprint on the horse's breastplate. Vezzosi said the third sculpture some credit to Leonardo is the terracotta Aglietti-Gallaudt Young Christ.

And, last March, when it went on display at the



The town of San Gennaro

Paul Spadoni

Palazzo Strozzi, in Florence, Italian art scholars announced they now believe Leonardo created the 20-inch-tall terracotta sculpture known as *The Virgin with the Laughing Child*, c. 1472, from the Victoria & Albert Museum in London. It depicts a Virgin Mary with an adoring *Mona Lisa*-like smile holding a laughing baby Jesus.

While you can see the angel sculpture for yourself, the Pieve di San Gennaro is only open limited hours due to its rural location. The door is locked when the church is not in use, so either come during the hours of Sunday mass or make arrangements with the parish priest (who does not speak English).

Most visitors set up a viewing

with a local tour guide, such as Elena Benvenuti, who lives nearby in Montecarlo. She is familiar not only with the angel but some of the other notable works of art in the church. “There’s also a fantastic 12th-century pulpit there signed by Maestro Filippo,” she said. “It has some small but intricate tetramorphs that by themselves make the visit worthwhile.”

Other items of interest there are a wooden statue made in the early 13th century, an unusual statue showing a pregnant Mary, and an important painting of Renaissance artist Vincenzo Frediani. It is likely that a church existed on the site as early as the 800s. The existing *pieve* was built in the 1100s (a *pieve* is a rural

church with a baptistery upon which local churches without baptisteries depended).

Benvenuti said that since the statue remains relatively unknown, it is still easy to arrange a visit. She can combine a viewing of the statue with a visit to nearby Vinci, where one can see the home of Leonardo and visit the Museo Leonardino for an in-depth sampling of the master’s life. ▲

Paul Spadoni is a journalist who lives in Gig Harbor, Wash., and Montecarlo, Italy. He writes a blog called Living (with) Abroad in Tuscany, and has published a book An American Family in Italy: Living la Dolce Vita without Permission. Visit his website at www.paulspadoni.com.



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Victoria & Albert Museum, London

Far left:
Horse and Rider,
a beeswax sculpture
often attributed to
Leonardo da Vinci,
c. 1508–1511

Left:
*The Virgin with the
Laughing Child*, c.
1472, attributed by
some art historians
as the work of
Leonardo

Hiking the True

Cinque Terre

Beyond the Beaches and Tourists

Story and Photos by Rachel Bicha

“The trails are closed,” a tired-looking employee in the information booth said with a shrug after I asked for a trail map in Riomaggiore.

I stood in the stuffy information office, with my favorite hiking socks and two liters of water in my backpack, taken aback. Cinque Terre, the famous “Five Towns” located on the North Ligurian coast of Italy, had been on my bucket list for years. Not just for the colorful towns and fresh *trofie* pasta. The approximately six-and-a-half-mile seaside trail that connects all five towns is renowned for its sweeping views of rocky cliffs falling into the crystal-blue ocean and the whimsical towns climbing up the hillside.



Vineyards in the mountains above Vernazza



Heading up to the trail from Riomaggiore



Overlooking Vernazza



A small village on the way to Manarola

But the employee was firm and the maps on the wall with their bright-red strikethrough labels—*CHIUSO*—were clear. “But, there are other trails I can take? What about through the mountains?” I asked, nodding my head toward the verdant green mountains peeking through the faded window.

“Yes, there are...well, yes, there are trails. But I think maybe it’s too far for going to all of the towns. I recommend you to just take the trains and enjoy the beaches.”

I looked back over my shoulder at the crowds of tourists purchasing overpriced sunscreen and gaudy magnets at a nearby souvenir stand. Surely, there was more to Cinque Terre than crowded beaches and underwhelming pizza?

“But there *are* trails? Do you have a map? Do you know where...?”

The employee sighed and pointed up the street, away from the town. “Head that way, there’s another information booth. She can tell you.”

I thanked him and headed up. The street, initially bordered by colorful *focciere* and souvenir stores, faded into small inns, government offices and finally—at the very end—an information booth where a young woman wearing a bright yellow shirt pulled out a map and handed it to me.

My Holy Grail: the map painted a delicate tangle of trails, all interconnected and zig-zagging across the mountains and down into the towns, from dozens of tiny connector trails just a kilometer or two to long trails that stretched out far beyond the range of Cinque Terre’s National Park zone.

“I should start here?” I suggested, pointing to a trailhead on the map near the pin for Riomaggiore.

She nodded and pointed the way down a side street. Sure enough, at the end of the road was a trailhead that led up the mountain. The key word here being, of course, *up*. The near-vertical trail of muddy stone “staircases” wound upward for nearly an hour and was almost completely empty.

Even better, the trail was crowded with wildflowers of all kinds: daisies and lilacs, roses and red poppies, dandelions and dozens more I couldn’t name. Speckle-winged butterflies and humming bees flitted about everywhere, occasionally bumping into me. When I tried to take a selfie at the first outlook, I found my face spotted with bright yellow pollen from all the wildflowers brushing against me as I walked.

The trail quickly snaked into forest, with mossy, pine-needled dirt, quiet and insulated by thick layers of ferns and trees. I checked my map obsessively and ►



Looking out at Volastra, a small mountain town between Manarola and Corniglia



Farmhouses in the mountains above Vernazza, near Drignana



The author near an overlook on the trail



Inside one of the churches where the author paused for shade and a bit of singing

connected trail after trail, one mile turning to two, to five, until I finally emerged from the forest with views of the sea again and inland towns not on the official Cinque Terre lineup. By the time I was ready for lunch, signs were beginning to point the way down to Manarola, the second town. I scuttled down staircases, ignoring the reality that eventually I would have to walk uphill again on my way to the next town. Instead, I comforted myself with the promise of a warm lunch and a quick dip in the sea.

After about 40 minutes, the trail ended—in someone’s driveway. Rather than having landed in a seaside town with ocean waves and fresh pasta, I reached a dead end. I may or may not have sat down and shed a few frustrated tears as I realized that my uphill climb would have to be undertaken without the swim or the pasta.

I looked on my way up for a potential missed turn, a sign I hadn’t noticed, another route to try. Where was the path down to the seaside vistas and quintessential Cinque Terre pictures? There was nothing.

After another half-dozen kilometers filled with near-vertical vineyards and stunning outlooks, several moments of stopping to ask local farmers for directions, and once almost dropping the entire remains of my water supply off the edge of the mountain, I finished day one in Corniglia, town No. 3.

The second day was longer but felt lighter. Near mid-day, I saw a small road leading down into a moun-

tainside village with a sign pointing to a small church. It was deserted, aside from a few grandfatherly figures smoking worn pipes on a bench outside. Needing a respite from the sun and hoping for a moment of rest, I ducked in quietly. Doors at the back and the side were open, letting in fresh mountain air. A small candle flickering at the front and a few dimly lit chandeliers illuminated faded frescos and swinging cobwebs. I set my backpack down with an echoing thud. Wow, what acoustics, I thought, and then—I looked around to be sure no one else was there and hummed just a single note.

A small thread of music echoed. *Hmmm.* I checked again. No one. And then, quietly and almost cautiously, I sang the Doxology—an ancient church hymn that reminded me of singing in Latin at my grandma’s church as a young child and of every ancient cathedral I’d ever visited. The echoes floated across the dark church with a kind of sacred weight that was certainly beyond my own singing ability. I paused in the musty stillness, and then walked back to the trail, leaving the echoes of the last note hanging between the church walls, and taking a bit of calm back with me to the trail.

Shortly after, I noticed a fluffy dandelion—the puff of seeds, not the flower—about as big as my head. As a child, I called these “wish berries” because, of course, you can make wishes on them as you blow off all the seeds. A couple of women passed going the opposite direction as I plucked it

out from the rock. “Wow!” one said. “Better have a big wish for such a big dandelion,” the other commented.

I did—not a single wish, but a collection of wishes, hopes as unlikely as me finding my way through these mountains, through these trails to all five towns, dreams that were much further away than even Monterosso was in the eyes of the skeptical information booth staff. But, I reasoned, it was a very large dandelion.

At the next lookout, I stood as close as I could to the edge before blowing all the seeds over the cliff, letting the breeze carry them over the ocean, sticking on their way down among the bushes and ferns. And, then, with my wishes on the wind, I kept walking.

It’s always been a great comfort to me that, even if the things you wished for don’t come true, dandelions scatter a field of seeds where they land—a field of future wildflowers. Wildflowers from a wish.

Perhaps all of this, I realized, was closer to the heart of Italy than

I had expected. For miles and miles and miles, there were all the views I’d dreamt of, but with no tourists, no selfie sticks, no self-proclaiming landmarks or souvenir shops or even gelato (although I would have paid a lot for the latter). Only endless vineyards slipped down the hillsides, the quiet chirping of a songbird here, a small brook gurgling there, and always, on the hour, some church bells tolled in the distance.

Maybe, too, this points toward an older, truer Italy—the Italy that we taste for a moment when we manage to reach something a little deeper than streetside restaurants with plastic English menus. Maybe the Cinque Terre I’d been hoping for wasn’t in the beaches at all—but instead in local farmers waving to me and showing me the way to the next trailhead. Maybe it’s in an old woman calling from an upstairs window to her husband in the fields. “Come in to eat. Lunchtime.” Maybe it’s in fingers stained red from eating ripe cherries fallen

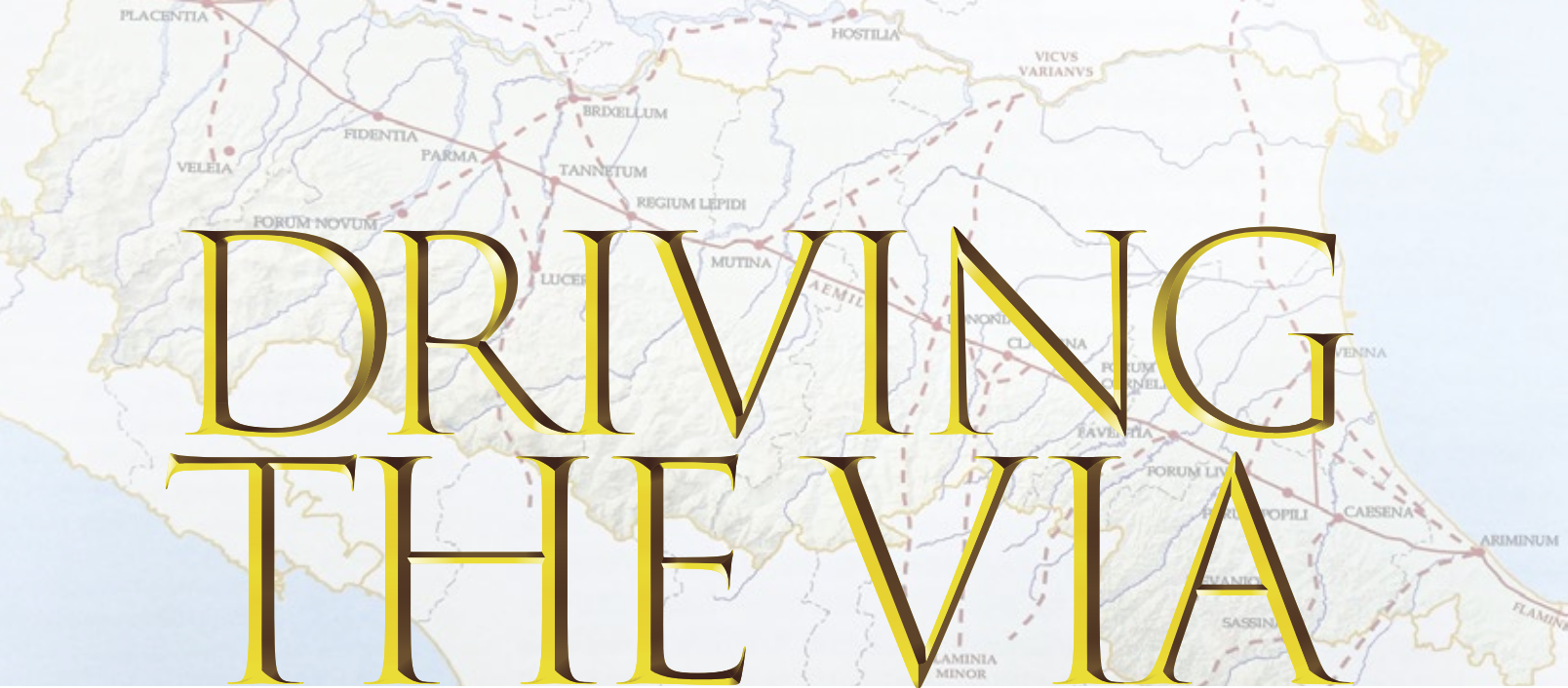
among the path. In sending out wishes on wildflower seeds.

The long days of hiking along quiet pathways were a way of exploring the Italian coastline that felt as deep and true to the roots of Italy as the rows of fruit trees planted along the way. And even before I made my way down to the final town and dove into the Mediterranean waters I’d been admiring, I realized that I’d gotten what I hoped for after all. Swimming that evening off the shore of Monterosso and thinking of the stunning vistas, quiet trails, and all the wildflowers and church bells, somehow I could hope—just for an instant—that maybe all of those dandelion wishes could come true too. ▲

Rachel Bicha writes about home, hiking, hope, and tons of other things that don’t start with the letter “h,” mostly with a cup of tea or a solid helping of Ben and Jerry’s. She’s also happy to say that, almost a year after this hiking trip, all of the wishes—in some way or another—really did come true.

Groppo, a small hamlet in the Cinque Terre mountains





DRIVING THE VIA EMILIA

By Silvia Donati

**On the Mother Road of
Emilia-Romagna**



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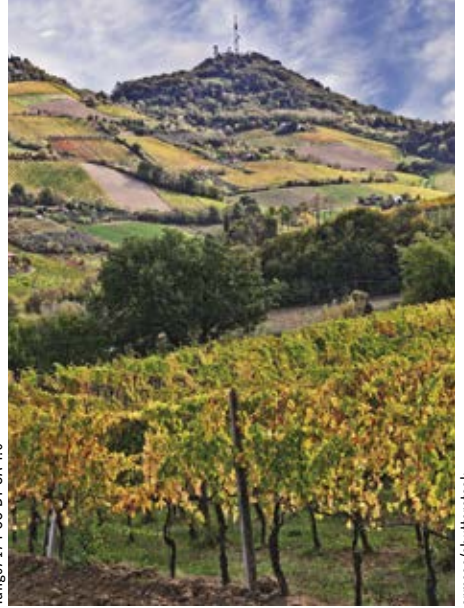
Scenic old street in Reggio Emilia



Hilltop village of San Leo in the Romagna countryside



Via Emilia travels through Bologna



Countryside near Forlì and Cesena

Emilia-Romagna is the only Italian region that takes its name from a road: the Via Emilia, one of the most important roads built by the ancient Romans to connect Ariminum (Rimini) on the Adriatic Coast with Placentia (Piacenza) on the Po River.

A straight line traversing the region diagonally from southeast to northwest, the Via Emilia divides the fertile Po Valley from the Apennine mountains and passes several art cities (Bologna, Parma, Modena, etc.) along its course.

Construction work on the Via Emilia began in 189 B.C., shortly after the end of the Second Punic War, when the Roman Senate no longer had to worry about its southern borders and could concentrate instead on the colonization of northern Italy. It was completed in only two years and was named after the consul Marcus Aemilius Lepidus, who planned the Via Aemilia to serve two functions: to help populate the productive Pianura Padana and serve as a defensive bulwark against possible invasions, especially from the East, while favoring trade. The road was also strategic for allowing armies to move quickly.

Thanks to the Via Emilia, the Romans were able to establish colonies

in the region whose vast agricultural potential soon rendered it the most populous and economically important area of Italy, even overshadowing central Italy, Rome and the South. Incidentally, Emilia-Romagna still has one of the largest agricultural productions in Italy.

The Via Emilia ended up being an extraordinary aggregating force for the people living in the region. Besides Rimini, Bologna and Piacenza, which predate the construction of the road, several more cities were established along its route, including Modena and Parma (183 B.C.), Reggio Emilia (175 B.C.), and later the smaller Cesena, Forlimpopoli, Forlì, Faenza, Imola, and more minor centers.

In connecting all these towns, the Via Emilia contributed to creating a common identity. So, traveling along it will immerse you in the soul of a region known for the quality of life of its small towns guarding art treasures and excellent food products.

Driving the Via Emilia

The Via Emilia connected at Rimini with the Via Flaminia that departed from Rome and had been completed 33 years earlier. The Arch of Augustus in Rimini is recognized as the starting point of the Via Emilia. It was built in 27 B.C. to celebrate the Emperor Augustus and is the oldest surviving Roman arch. Today, Rimini is known and frequented primarily for its beaches and nightlife, and it's fun to spend some time there in summer to experience beach life Italian-style. In Rimini's small historic center, it's worth paying a visit to the Tempio Malatestiano, the city's cathedral inspired by the great celebratory Roman architecture.

Leaving Rimini to head northwest along the Via Emilia, you may decide to go straight along the road, perhaps stopping for quick visits at Cesena and Forlì, or you may opt for detours to explore the delightful hilly countryside of Romagna, with its ➤

ernest/shutterstock

Rimini beaches



hilltop villages such as San Leo, Santarcangelo di Romagna and Brisighella. This is also where you should taste traditional foods. Try the *piadina*, known as “the bread of the *Romagnoli*,” filled with soft *squacquerone* cheese, accompanied by a glass of Sangiovese di Romagna, the red wine that is said to be like the *Romagnoli* themselves: rough at times, but candid and authentic.

The next main stop along the Via Emilia is Bologna, founded as a Roman colony in 189 B.C. (*Bononia*), two years before completion of the Via Emilia. Bologna is the regional capital, famous for its cuisine and its beautiful historic center which has preserved its medieval layout.

The presence of the University, the oldest in the Western world, has made Bologna a cosmopolitan, vibrant city since the Middle Ages, when it started attracting students and professors from all over the world; it still does today. Stroll the streets of Bologna during the day and at night and you’ll always find them filled with people. Just as always crowded are the many cafés, *trattorie* and *osterie*, where you can enjoy the classic *tagliatelle al ragù*, *tortellini* and *lasagne*.

As you proceed north from Bologna, you’ll find Modena, synonymous with balsamic vinegar, Lambrusco wine and Ferrari cars. Its Piazza Grande, along with the cathedral and the Tower of Ghirlandina, are a UNESCO World Heritage site. The Via Emilia is Modena’s most important street, cutting through town from east to west, and is lined with prestigious

public and private buildings. Two squares at each end mark the places where the city’s gates once stood.

Next stop is Reggio Emilia, which, like Modena, is cut lengthwise by the Via Emilia. Reggio Emilia is home to the Tricolore Hall and the Museum of the Italian Flag: it was here that the current Italian tri-color flag was first adopted in 1797.

About 18 miles northwest is elegant Parma, rich with artistic masterpieces such as the Romanesque Cathedral and the Camera di San Paolo, both adorned with paintings by Correggio, the master painter of Parma during the High Renaissance. Declared a Creative City of Gastronomy by UNESCO, Parma is also set to be the Italian Capital of Culture for 2020.

Between Modena, Reggio Emilia and Parma, you may want to stray from the Via Emilia to explore the countryside. This is where you’ll find producers of world-famous Parmigiano Reggiano, Prosciutto di Parma and *aceto balsamico*, and your chance to see how these delicacies are still made following a mostly artisanal process. There are even museums dedicated to Emilia-Romagna’s top products: the Musei del Cibo—Parmigiano Reggiano in Soragna, prosciutto in Langhirano, *salame* in Felino.

The Via Emilia ends at Piacenza, which some say is more Lombard than Emilian—more austere, more reserved, less jolly. Located in the center of the Po Valley, in the far northwestern corner of the region, Piacenza stands on the right bank of the Po river, only about 42 miles from

Milan. It is the oldest Roman colony in northern Italy, along with Cremona, established in 218 B.C., a few decades before the Via Emilia.

Piacenza with Parma was the seat of the Duchy of Parma and Piacenza, created in the 16th century from the branch of the Duchy of Milan south of the Po River. It has preserved artistic treasures from those times, such as the cathedral, the Gothic Palace, the Farnese Palace, numerous noble palaces, and churches. Even more pre-



Palazzo Comunale (also called Gotico) is a palace in Piacenza

cious is the local gastronomy: hearty *salumi* like *coppa*, *salame* and *pancetta*; *pisarei e fasò* (*gnocchetti* with beans, lard and tomato sauce); *tortelli con la coda* (the Piacenza-area version of tortelli with ricotta and spinach, which takes its name from its shape ending with a “tail”); and the local wines, among which the red Gutturino stands out.

At 262 km (163 miles), the current State Road 9 still follows the Roman route for much of its length, with parts of today’s road lying directly on top of the Roman road. It’s still officially called Via Emilia.

To travel along the Via Emilia’s length today is to retrace the economic and cultural evolution of a region where past and present coexist. It is to grasp the identity of a territory that was and always will be one with its “mother road.” ▲

Silvia Donati is a freelance journalist and a tour guide based in Italy. She writes about her hometown of Bologna and surrounding region of Emilia-Romagna on her blog, www.bolognauncovered.com.



Festival of the Great Grain Mother

Molise's Worldwide
Gift of Sculpted Wheat

By Kirsten Keppel


What is it about the Grain Mother that compels people from around the world to gather in a glorious festival offering gifts of sculpted wheat floating by in a procession accompanied by joyful accordions?

Leading the parade, a statue of St. Ann looks down in soft solemnity as one hand cups a child's head and the other gently raises an index finger as if to give instruction. The child nestles against St. Ann, braids resembling the braided wheat sculptures adorning the village streets. St. Ann wears a crown of wheat. Two of the faithful carry her forward as floats of exquisitely woven wheat artistry follow. Some honor St. Ann, others show families in folkloric costumes or the clothes of *contadini* (farmers). A pair of oxen pulls floats called *traglie*, small tractors pull floats called *carri*.

For 214 years, residents of Jelsi, a village in Molise's Campobasso province, have gathered every July 26 to celebrate the *sagra* known as the wheat festival, *la festa del grano*. Since July 26, 1805, when an earthquake killed almost 6,000 people, Jelsesi have gathered to honor St. Ann for lives spared and a village saved from damage and collapse.

One of this custom's myriad marvels is that, like grains scattered to the four winds, Jelsi's emigrants to the Americas, Europe and Australia continue the tradition in their own locales every year. Many also return to Jelsi for the *sagra*.

This July, a large number gathered in Jelsi's Chiesa Madre for the opening mass and blessing of the allegorical *traglie* and *carri*. Starting with a monstrance of the relic of ➤



Works of art are made
with wheat for the 2019
Wheat Festival in Jelsi,
in Molise

St. Ann, the parade featured an offering of St. Ann's bread and a procession of new brides—the *sfilata delle spose*. The newly married women hope that St. Ann, a protector of pregnant women, will bless them with children. A local folkloric music group played as floats rolled through Jelsi's streets past its colorful houses and four-dolphin fountain. Wheat sheaves glistened like gold under the southern sun.

“The heart of this feast beats with a renewed sacredness in which the

ritual of the Christian Church is accompanied by popular participation,” notes Antonio Valiante, a professor who directed one of the first studies on wheat festivals in Jelsi and elsewhere in southern Italy.

Together with the Sant'Anna Committee of Jelsi and the Università Suor Orsola Beneicasa in Naples, Valiante wants the celebration officially recognized as a part of UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage. “The custom is a symbol of *contadino* culture

connected to the earth as well as the rhythms and cycles of the season,” he says. “Today, we would call it ‘a green culture’ that is surviving the global and digital world.”

The tradition dates back to a world of ancient rituals. Its culture, based in grains and agriculture, transformed into one supplying wheat and flour for pasta. Valiante emphasizes the importance of both in Molise's current economy. Yet, few are aware that this Mediterranean culture of cereals and grains has roots in antiquity.

“We've found Ceres again!” exclaimed Professor Giuliano Scabia, Valiante's thesis supervisor, upon noticing Jelsi's Wheat Festival listed in the thesis appendix. Ceres was the Roman goddess of agriculture, fertility and motherly love. Valiante notes that grain-based cultures became encompassed within Christian rituals throughout centuries, from Medieval to Renaissance to Baroque, all keeping bread as a connecting thread.

“In these rituals, there is not only a nostalgic yearning to revive life lived in the countryside, but also a wish to connect with a world tied to the earth,” Valiante says. “It is the world of grandparents and great-grandparents, more natural and favoring a culture connected to a variety of ancient grains, as well as to local bread and food.”



Preparing for the Wheat Festival in Jelsi



Works of art are made with wheat for at the 2019 Wheat Festival in Jelsi, in Molise

Michele Passarelli, past president of the Association of Jelsesi of Montreal, in Canada's Québec province, agrees. "It's the passion and the religion that keep us together."

A catalyst for creating the parade in 1982 at the Church of Saint Simon the Apostle in the Ahuntsic District of Montreal, Passarelli and 400 members just celebrated the 42nd annual wheat festival in Quebec. Held on the last Sunday in August, because the wheat requires a month longer for harvest in nearby Ontario, the celebration welcomes Montreal's Molisani community, as well as visitors from other countries. Since Jelsi's first emigrant left for Montreal in 1894, the Province of Quebec has welcomed more than 90,000 Molisani, says Passarelli. "According to a study done by the regions, we are close to 800,000 Molisani living throughout the world."

With the Sant'Anna Committee in Jelsi, Passarelli created an exchange between float winners in Jelsi and Montreal in 2013 and 2014. The Jelsesi received a trip to Montreal, and the following year, the Montrealers received a trip to Jelsi. "The intention was to create a link," he says, "And now they go on their own."

Some 350 miles south of Montreal, St. Ann's Club of Norwalk, Conn., celebrated its 105th *fiesta* in late July. Since the original Jelsesi founders created the Club in a garage in 1914, the group moved twice before settling in its current 250-person hall at a marina on Long Island Sound. The 600-member club is open to anyone and donates between \$40,000 - \$50,000 per year to scholarships and charitable organizations.

Nicandro Cappuccia, past president of 25 years, has been involved with the Club since the 1960s. "We have a *fiesta* for St. Ann the weekend closest to July 26," he says. "From Thursday to Sunday, we have rides, games and Italian food that we make ourselves."

Known for its *pizza fritta*, the Club sold 7,200 at this year's feast. On Saturday, a procession led by a statue of Saint Ann includes a marching band, banners from Molisani villages, and wheat sculptures. "We don't do them



Decked out in wheat in Jelsi

Angelica Valiante

like in Jelsi," Cappuccia acknowledges, "but we have a little flavor!"

Fiesta ingredients are woven throughout Jelsi: the MuFeG, or Community Museum of the Wheat Festival of Jelsi, calls itself "a 360-degree educational laboratory" and eco-museum on its website. The Sant'Anna Committee's website features a school of braiding, a school of wagons, and song lyrics in Italian and dialect. The Committee's 30-50 members are elected a year before taking office to ensure a smooth transition, since planning the next year's festival begins the day after the current festival ends.

Campobasso-born film director Antonio D'Aquila's beautiful limited-edition 2011 documentary, *Sembra Oro* (Bagproduzioni) takes its title from Pope John Paul II's exclamation, "It looks like gold!" when he saw a

wheat sculpture in Jelsi of the Holy Door of St. Peter's Basilica created for the festival 2000. "He felt like he was watching the light of the sun beaming on the glistening wheat, and it looked like gold," recounts D'Aquila.

From this sun-drenched Molisani village with a population estimated at 1,775, "there is a human matrix, a cultural imprint, inclusive and shared, through the grain and St. Ann, that can be summarized in two words: survival and protection," says Valiante. "These accompany the daily lives of a community whose children, grandchildren and citizens can be found throughout the world." ▲

Kirsten Keppel is a freelance writer based in Washington, D.C. She was a semifinalist in the Russo Brothers 2017 Italian American Film Forum and is a regular contributor to Ambassador magazine.

NO PIPE

DREAM

The Master Organist Saving New York's Historic 19th-Century Erben Organ

Of all the art forms, music alone requires no sophistication, as the untrained ear listens with the heart. Music is felt in the body. And when it surrounds us, as in the presence of a pipe organ, it is like the explosion of nearby fireworks. What better feeling of harmony than to be enveloped by music? Pre-occupied with these thoughts, as I walked from the subway to St. Patrick's Old Cathedral, left me unprepared for the winding staircase up to the choir loft, to an instrument half the size of my apartment—and for Jared Lamenzo.

On that frigid January afternoon in the Lower Manhattan basilica, I looked on as he took his place at the pipe organ. Suddenly, his hands began to sweep across the organ's three keyboards or "manuals," twice pausing to pull on round knobs above and beside the keys, at the same time that his feet danced across the instrument's 30 pedals.

Lamenzo is Music Director at the Nolita church, and among his many responsibilities are choosing the music for all of the church's services, conducting the choir, and caring for the 20-ton pipe organ built by master craftsman

Henry Erben (1800-1884). The Erben, Lamenzo explains, is sensitive to the chilly air, its wooden parts expanding in winter. No matter. The sound is sublime.

Listening to him speak about the Erben's quirks, it is hard to imagine it as inanimate. "The moment I got here, I knew this organ was different and beautiful," the accomplished Italian American musician recalls. He has performed on dozens of historic pipe organs in Latin America and across Europe. "When you hear this organ," Lamenzo says, "you are listening to the past."

Unlike other pipe organs built in the 1860s, the Erben has nearly all its original components. "That's a curse and a blessing," Lamenzo says. "The Erben has a unique sound because it possesses its original acoustics base."

When describing an organ, musicians refer to the instrument's "voicing," the sound of each pipe but also the instrument's overall resonance. "The builder regulates the pipes to produce particular sounds in the room," Lamenzo says. "This was done 150 years ago and that's what we're hearing now. Very few

Jared Lamenzo practices on the 1868 pipe organ in its original acoustic space at the Basilica of St. Patrick's Old Cathedral.



Jared Lamenzo hosts pipe organ visitors from the Manhattan School of Music: Andrew Henderson, Organ Department Chair, and Raymond Nagem, Instructor of Organ Improvisation/Literature/Service Playing (College), with students Shannon Murphy and Hannah Lingen Chen.



The original three-manual console of the 1868 pipe organ with ivory covered stops.

Background: Inside New York City's first cathedral, the Basilica of St. Patrick's Old Cathedral.

instruments survive from that century, and this is the only intact Erben organ of its size.”

That afternoon, a European musician arrives to rehearse his Baroque trumpet to the accompaniment of the Erben. Asked why, Lamenzo says the blending of that longer trumpet and the Erben produces a sound that is difficult to duplicate. “I can play Baroque music on this organ because Henry Erben’s design was conservative for the time,” Lamenzo says. “There was something in him that told him you can’t have an organ without a full plenum, a full complement of stops. Stops are the principal chorus of the organ, and the Erben’s is warm, vocal and grand.”

Stops are the knobs and levers that allow the organist to control the “ranks,” or sets of pipes, each possessing a different timbre. Pulling on a stop closes or opens pipes to pressurized air (like blowing into a whistle); some stops let the organist mimic the sound of orchestral instruments, and others control where the sound will be heard or felt in the room. Lamenzo often uses stops for large pipes in the facade of the organ because they are best heard in the church’s nave where worshippers are seated.

Originally a mechanical organ, the Erben has about 2,500 pipes, many coated in dust. Its “windchest,” on which the pipes are arrayed, is cracked. Not all of the Erben’s other parts are in working condition, and some have temporary repairs made by Lamenzo, who holds an engineering degree from Harvard.

“My degree helps a little bit, but mostly it was tinkering on cars with my dad when I was a boy,” says Lamenzo, who has played piano from the age of 4. He first became enamored of the organ at the Connecticut church his family attended.

As for the Erben’s dusty interior, and its needed repairs, both exceed Lamenzo’s talents, which is the reason he co-founded Friends of the Erben Organ. The non-profit’s goal is to raise \$2 million to clean and repair the instrument that, despite its condition, rings through the lovely cathedral on Mulberry Street, as it has since the 1860s.

At a recent fundraiser, Martin Scorsese recalled listening to the Erben as a boy in the late 1940s, when St. Patrick’s Old Cathedral was his family’s parish. The basilica and its grounds ►



Austrian recitalist Stefan Donner performs on the Erben organ on his 2019 U.S. tour while Jared Lamenzo pulls the stops.



Joshua South/Sidewalk Productions

View from the church floor: The three-story-high pipe organ, its 2,500 hand-crafted wood and metal pipes signed by the immigrant craftsmen who made them.

served as settings in three of his films. Celebrated for his film preservation work, Scorsese serves as honorary chair of Friends of the Erben Organ.

Cleaning and mending a pipe organ are tasks not easily undertaken. While all of these instruments have components in common, in terms of sound design, no two are alike. “We want to conserve the organ, so first we need to do forensics when it is taken apart to learn how the builders did what they did,” Lamenzo says.

Altogether, Lamenzo estimates that the Erben has 100,000 components. “A restoration like this means that the organ gets moved to a facility outside the city,” he says. “After specialists do the cleaning, the organ is reassembled. It’s all very expensive.”

For Lamenzo, who has played the Erben for the past 17 years, the instrument possesses a particular character. “The beautiful thing about this organ is the way it’s voiced, and it was voiced for this space,” he says.

The Erben was built shortly after the Civil War, and Henry’s two sons, Henry and Charles, the latter an organ builder, fought in that war. “They were saying something with their craft,” Lamenzo explains. “Charles

was at Antietam, and probably was a different man afterward.” Charles’ signature is visible on some of the Erben’s pipes. “There is a magnificence to this instrument, a triumphalism and sophistication, and then there is its unmistakable melancholy sound.”

No visit to the Erben is complete without inspecting its pipes that are housed in a space of about 500 square feet behind the facade. Fifty thousand visitors have peered inside the organ in the last year. Lamenzo climbs up several steps in the dimly lit interior and points to a spot on one of the taller pipes. “That is wax from the people who used to go up there to tune it by candlelight,” he says. “Just like listening to the past when I play, I encounter it every time I have to adjust something.”

Just then, there is a fleeting glimpse inside this husband and father of two of the boy who was first captivated by the beauty and symmetry of pipe organs—and classic cars.

As he brushes off dust from the pipes, Lamenzo talks about his favorite pieces of classical music. “It’s hard to get started because, for me, this goes back to my dad,” he says of his beloved father, who died recently. “We used to listen to Bach’s Magnificat in the car. We listened to a lot of Bach, but



Lana Krakovsky/Friends of the Erben Organ

Jared Lamenzo with summer music campers.

I love the Mendelssohn and Brahms symphonies. I just love early music,” says Lamenzo. “As a child, music was connected for me to the voice of the divine. That has remained—I think music itself is divine.” ▲


To donate to Friends of the Erben Organ, please visit <https://erbenorgan.org/>.

Maria Garcia is a New York City-based author, writer and Ambassador magazine’s Cinema columnist. Her reviews and feature articles also appear regularly in the Los Angeles Times and Cineaste. Her book, Cinematic Quests for Identity: The Hero’s Encounter with the Beast, was published in 2015. Visit her Facebook page, MariaGarciaNYC. See Maria’s Cinema column Four New Films by Italian Directors, on page 56.



Lana Krakovsky/Friends of the Erben Organ

Jared Lamenzo speaks to children from St. Brigid’s School about the Erben organ.



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THE NORTH END

VISITING BOSTON'S LITTLE ITALY

By Francesca Montillo

My first exposure to the North End came in the spring of 1988. Since I had just moved here from Italy, my mother found it fitting to take us for a visit to the Italian section of Boston.

I wasn't yet feeling nostalgic enough for Italy that I needed such a trip, but I think what prompted my mom's visit was nostalgia for her own upbringing. Born in Italy, she moved to Boston's North End at the age of 8. She spent the next 15 years or so living in what was once the go-to destination for Italian immigrants in New England.

The North End is Boston's oldest residential neighborhood, one of the oldest in the United States. Once home to Italian immigrants who couldn't wait to move to the suburbs, it is now one of the most sought-after neighborhoods in Massachusetts.

Originally the Puritans, then the Irish, Portuguese and Jewish immigrants, all have called it home. But throughout the 20th century, Italians arrived and started making it their own by opening businesses, restaurants, bakeries and other food establishments. The Prince Macaroni Company, for instance, was born on Prince Street in the North End in 1912 by three Sicilian immigrants.

Italians also brought with them their religious customs and festivals. Summer weekends in the North End are like one giant street party. The religious celebrations are accompanied by musical bands playing old Italian tunes, street vendors, food stalls, face painting for youngsters, and religious processions. This year, the feast of Santa Maria di Anzano kicked off the festivities on June 2 and Santa Rosalia di Palermo ended the season on September 8. In between are other festivities, including the 100th anniversary this year of the largest feast of all, dedicated to St. Anthony of Padua the last Sunday in August.

With its narrow and dense streets, the one-square-mile neighborhood is home to approximately 10,000 residents. Visitors flock to the North End to eat at its more than 100 restaurants and bakeries. Hanover Street is the North End's "Main Street" where you can easily spend several hours strolling and stopping at the shops or historical sites along the way.

Today, the North End is a vibrant neighborhood that captures both the heart of the historic Freedom Trail, Boston's iconic 2.5-mile route leading past 16 historic sites, as well as the city's Little Italy. An estimated 3.2 million visitors walk this way every year. If you're among them, here's what to see and do:

Keith J Finks/shutterstock



Nina Deuterio

NORTH END LANDMARKS

OLD NORTH CHURCH: At 193 Salem Street, this is one of the oldest and most visited sites in Boston. The Old North Church dates to 1723 and is one of the major stops on the Freedom Trail. Visited by more than a half million sightseers annually, you can opt for a self-guided tour or one led by a guide.

THE PAUL REVERE HOUSE: Built in 1680, the home of famous Patriot Paul Revere at 19 North Square is the actual wooden house where he started his legendary ride, and its still standing (90 percent is original), though it has been restored several times.

THE NEW ENGLAND HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL PARK: Located at 98 Union Street just a few steps from the main strip of the North End and the Freedom Trail, the Holocaust Memorial Park, erected in 1995, pays tribute to the millions of Jews killed during the Holocaust. With steam rising from metal plates on the ground, the memorial was inspired by Holocaust survivors living in the Boston area.

COPP'S HILL BURYING GROUND: The second oldest cemetery in Boston, Copp's Hill is the final resting place for more than 10,000 people. A stop on the Freedom Trail and visited by thousands yearly, Copp's Hill is named after William Copp, an early settler who made his home on Prince Street. The cemetery has some 1,200 marked graves whose names one can still be read.

ST. LEONARD'S CHURCH: Celebrating Mass in Italian every Sunday at 10:30 a.m., Saint Leonard of Port Maurice Church at Hanover and Prince streets is where many North End Italian residents come together weekly. Having just completed a multimillion-dollar remodel, the church is frequently visited by visitors from near and far. ➤



Matt Conti

Paul Revere Statue with Old North Church Spire



Jon Bilous/shutterstock

Statue and gardens at St. Leonard's Church

LUNCH

GALLERIA UMBERTO: Its menu is limited and cash only. The décor is rustic at best, and it's open only from 10:45 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., or whenever they sell out. And you'll be served wine in a plastic cup. But a visit to the North End would not be complete without a stop at what locals simply call Umberto's at 289 Hanover Street. If it's around noon, a line will wrap around the outside. Don't let it scare you; it moves quickly and Umberto's pan pizza, calzones, *arancini* and *panzerotti* are worth the wait.

BRICCO PANETERIA: Hidden behind Hanover Street at 11 Board Alley, you might walk past Bricco Panetteria without knowing it's there. Owned by native Italian restaurateur Frank De-Pasquale, who owns and runs numerous North End eateries, Bricco Panetteria is a combination bread shop, pasta shop, *salumeria* and importer of Italian meats, oils and canned tomatoes. With a few tables hidden in the alley, it serves delicious panini, and a few select hot items.

SALUMERIA ITALIANA: Located on the Freedom Trail, Salumeria Italiana at 151 Richmond Street is a staple for North End residents and visitors alike. An all-around small Italian grocer, it offers limited panini during lunch hours. Carrying imported products such as salumi, cheeses, canned tomatoes, tuna packed in oil, and Italian packaged cookies, you can find hundreds of Italian products here.

DINNER

PREZZA: As if the handmade pasta, homemade meatballs, creamy polenta and braised meats weren't enough to prompt a visit to Prezza at 24 Fleet Street, wine aficionados will certainly appreciate the 6,000 bottles of wine from more than 600 labels. Named after the Abruzzese village where owner Anthony Caturano's grandmother hails from, Prezza is sure to please the most discerning eater.

LUCCA RESTAURANT AND BAR: Serving Northern Italian delights, Lucca at 226 Hanover Street is a favorite among locals, tourists and local companies hosting corporate parties. Hailed as one of Boston's best fine-dining experiences, Lucca boasts a large dinner menu with handmade pastas, seafood and grilled meats.

CARMELINA'S: If your taste buds are craving spicy, head over to Carmelina's at 307 Hanover Street. Serving typical Sicilian cuisine, it's one of the newest North End restaurant at around seven years old. While the menu offers various selections, some of the seafood favorites include the spaghetti *puttanesca*, exploding little neck clams, and tuna *arrabbiata*.



DESSERT

MODERN PASTRY: A staple in the North End for over 70 years, Modern Pastry at 257 Hanover Street is where all Italian and Italian Americans go to for their wedding cakes, rum cakes or any other specialty cake that requires a taste of true, authentic Italy. Don't miss indulging in its filled-to-order cannoli and ricotta *pasticcio*, a miniature of their best-selling ricotta pie. Or its ever-popular lobster tail—large enough to be shared by at least two.

BOVA'S BAKERY: What this shop lacks in luxury, it makes up for in taste. A North End institution, Bova's is open 24-7 all year. It has been at 134 Salem Street since 1926. Equally famous for its breads and pastries, the old-fashioned Italian dry cookies and biscotti here are a perfect match to your espresso or cappuccino.

MIKE'S PASTRY: With its unmistakable blue-and-white carry-out boxes, Mike's Pastry at 300 Hanover Street is the go-to shop for all tourists and visitors from out of town. Founded by native Italian Michael Mercogliano in 1946, the bakery has Americanized its menu over the years, but you'll still find Italian classics such as tiramisu, *parigini* and *sfogliatelle*. Mike's offers ample seating, but those seats fill quickly, so grab some goodies to go and make your way down Hanover Street eating right out of the box like almost everyone else. You'll be in good company. ▲

Francesca Montillo is a native Italian cookbook author and the owner of Lazy Italian Culinary Adventures, which hosts culinary-themed trips to Italy. Visit www.thelazyitalian.com.



Galleria Umberto on Hanover Street, known locally as Umberto's, is a lunchtime must in Boston's North End



Crowd gathers in front Mike's Pastry on Hanover Street

As it is in life and politics—in wine, geography is destiny.

Molise is the southern portion of a region that had formerly been called Abruzzi e Molise. In 1963, the two areas separated into distinct regions, making Molise the youngest and second smallest region in Italy. The jury is still out whether the split benefited Molise on the economic front—or any other front for that matter.

the wines of

MOLISE

easier to drink than to find

By Dick Rosano



Di Majo Norante vineyards

So, what could be said of its prospects for wine? Often referred to as the “forgotten region,” Molise is seldom given much credit. A lengthy article in *Italy Magazine* titled *The Secret Region of Italy*, only mentions wine once...as an ingredient in a dish called *Mostarda d’Uva!*

Its former sibling, Abruzzo, lies to the north. It is renowned for a few idiosyncratic wines, principally the reds made from the Montepulciano

d’Abruzzo grape, whites made from Trebbiano, a varietal that was common as far back as the Roman empire, and a rosé called Cerasuolo made from the red Montepulciano. Each is an interesting wine worth pursuing while

touring Abruzzo or searching the stacks in your favorite wine store.

Abruzzo slopes down from the ridge of the Apennine Mountains to the sandy beaches of the Adriatic Sea. Despite the mountainous terrain, the region manages to do a good job with the wines listed above, plus great tonnage that is sold away for blending. Molise’s other neighbors, Puglia and Campania, have more highly regarded histories of winemaking, including Primitivo from the former and Aglianico from the latter.

But what can be said about Molise that is squeezed in among these regions? Walled off from the historic Roman influence by the towering ridge of the Apennines, the region developed a unique culture internally, so it was not unexpected that the wines of the region would follow the less-traveled wine themes of Abruzzo.

Three sub-regions in Molise have acquired status under the Italian government’s system of control, *Denominazione di Origine Controllata*: Pentro d’Isernia, Biferno and Molise. Within these areas, the three grapes that get the most attention are the Aglianico, Montepulciano, and Sangiovese. However, as Joseph Bastianich and David Lynch warn in their seminal work, *Vino Italiano*, most are “truly local—as in go to someone’s house and drink them locally.” >



Di Majo Norante Winery near Campomarino Lido

Ben Giliberti, former wine columnist for The Washington Post who now consults for Calvert Woodley Wines in Washington, D.C., says, “While it’s rare for someone to come in and ask for a Molise wine, they do sell steadily as affordable options in the Italian category.”

Since wines from Molise are not widely available in the United States, we used Wine-Searcher.com to find where Molise wines are sold. Using the site’s filter for the entire United States, we found shops with a bottle or two; some had three or four. Narrowing the search to stores closest

to us (Washington, D.C., area), the pickings got slimmer.

A closer examination of Molise immigration patterns which clustered in the decades from the late 19th and early 20th centuries shows a connection to availability. Early immigrants from Molise and Abruzzo to the United States, from 1863 to 1963, were mostly laborers who settled in small towns and rural areas of America’s eastern states to find similar work. Not surprisingly, we found most of the wines from Molise in places like New York City (e.g., Astor Wines & Spirits, a renowned merchant in the East

Village), New Jersey, and Connecticut.

Later immigrants from Molise kept up the demand, which may explain why state-operated wine and liquor stores in the Harrisburg, Pa., area have carried Molise wines (including four from Di Majo Norante) and list another 12 available on special order. In Elkton, Md., State Line Liquors carries four varieties of Molise wines from the Campi Valerio winery in Isernia.

One of the most widely available Molise wines in the mid-Atlantic area and northward through New Jersey and New York is Di Majo Norante, especially the estate’s 2017 Sangiovese Terre degli Osci. Many larger warehouse wine stores such as Total Wine & More as well as smaller shops with more limited inventories still recognize the quality of this estate and carry the wine in various vintages.

So, are there hidden gems on those hidden shelves? Our tasting notes prove there are, and that importers and wine stores should do a better job seeking out the wines of Molise and making them available to the U.S. wine-buying public. ▲

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Tasting Notes



RED

Cantine Salvatore 2015 Rutilia (\$22)

Deep, purple red, toast and light smoke on nose; soft, forward and richly textured, black cherry and smoke on mid-palate, hint of clove, low in acidity, thins out a bit on finish. Score: 86 (Astor Wines & Spirits, in the East Village, New York City)

Campi Valerio 2015 Calidio Rosso del Molise (\$11)

From Montepulciano grapes, rich purple red, coffee bean and dark fruit aromas; medium body, cherry and blackberry flavors, fresh and fruity with little earthy structure. Score: 84 (Calvert Woodley, Washington, D.C.)

Campi Valerio 2015 Opalia Tintilia Del Molise (\$20)

Deep coloration; smoke and dense fruit aromas; dense and chewy, a robust richly textured wine, dried cranberries and raspberries. Score: 89 (State Line Liquors, Elkton, MD)

Cianfagna 2012 Sator Tintilia del Molise (\$32)

Rich deep red color; pungent aromas of deep forest and black fruit; peppery, black fruit flavors, meaty and robust. Score: 90 (Astor Wines & Spirits, in the East Village, New York City)

Di Majo Norante 2014 Ramitello Biferno Rosso (\$18)

From Montepulciano and Aglianico grapes, dark fruit, tobacco leaf, and forest floor on nose; forward and fruity, cherries, black cherries, and plums on palate, fades a bit near the finish. Score: 87 (Importer: Winebow)

Di Majo Norante 2017 Sangiovese Terre degli Osci (\$15)

Coffee and slight tobacco on nose; licorice, smoke, and black coffee, soft and forward, superb balance. Score: 88 (Importer: Winebow)

Di Majo Norante 2014 Contado Aglianico del Molise Riserva (\$20)

Smoke, slightly charred wood, dark fruit on nose; medium body, moderate textures, red fruit flavors, soft tannins, long finish, approachable. Score: 87 (Importer: Winebow)

Di Majo Norante 2013 Don Luigi Montepulciano del Molise Riserva (\$39)

Aromatic and forceful, coffee, tobacco leaf, toasty oak on nose; richly textured, big and forceful, dark red fruit, long lingering finish. Score: 92 (Importer: Winebow)

Cantine Salvatore 2015 Biberius Rosso (\$17)

Rich, dark fruit aromas; highly textured, black fruit and raisined on palate. Score: 90 (Astor Wines & Spirits, in the East Village, New York City)

Tenimenti Grieco 2016 200 Metri Tintilia Del Molise (\$23)

Medium red, too smoky on nose; mushroomy and dense, not right. Score: 82 (Unwined, Alexandria, Va.)

Campi Valerio 2017 Fannia Falanghina del Molise (\$12)

Bright brilliant fruit and refreshing aromas, peach, slight touch of apricot on finish. Score: 85 (State Line Liquors, Elkton, Md.)

Campi Valerio 2018 Rosa Dei Campi Rosato (\$14)

Listed as a rosé but pale enough to pass as a white. Honeysuckle, floral, bright and refreshing. Score: 85 (State Line Liquors, Elkton, Md.)

WHITE



TASTERS NOTE



Rustian Semichew/shutterstock

Avvinare is a word peculiar to the Italian language, with no equivalents in English, French or German. It means to “rinse the glass with the next wine,” and refers to serving a second and subsequent wines after first pouring a tiny amount in the glass, swirling it, then pouring it out to chase the impression of the preceding wine.

Dick Rosano's columns have appeared in The Washington Post and other national publications. His novels, often are set in Italy and capture the beauty of the country, the flavors of the cuisine, and the history and traditions of the people, include Vivaldi's Girls, A Death in Tuscany, The Secret of Altamura, A Love Lost in Positano, Hunting Truffles, and To Rome, With Love. See a review of his new novel, The Vienna Connection, in the winter issue of Ambassador.



GRAN CAFFÈ L'AQUILA

EAT LOCALLY, SUPPORT ABRUZZO

By Kirsten Keppel

This November and into 2020, Philadelphia's Gran Caffè L'Aquila will offer diners the chance to enjoy award-winning cuisine locally while supporting Abruzzese producers. The Forza L'Aquila Forza Abruzzo initiative will promote Abruzzese products used in dishes from the menu as well as sold retail. In the restaurant, you'll find signature delights like saffron-and-ricotta gelato—a succulent confection blending the famous *zafferano dell'Aquila* celebrated in the film *Ratatouille* and ricotta from Amatrice, created by co-owner and International Gelato Champion Stefano Biasini.

"It's the next step in our philosophy of recovering from the earthquake," says co-owner Riccardo Longo, a Philadelphia-based award-winning restaurateur who emigrated from Italy at age 5. "We want to focus on the future of L'Aquila and Abruzzo and what we can do to promote all the great artisans."

Innovation and combinations of unlikely pairings define Gran Caffè L'Aquila's ethos, born from an unexpected partnership formed in 2011 between Longo and L'Aquila-based gelato master and coffee roaster Biasini, and fellow coffee roaster Michele Morelli.

The restaurant honors the legacy of its namesake, the original Gran Caffè L'Aquila, in Abruzzo, that in 2007 won Caffè of the Year for all of Italy. In 2008, it was recognized for the "Official Coffee" of the G8 summit in Italy. Then, the devastating 2009 earthquake that killed 309 people and injured more than 1,500 others also destroyed the original Gran Caffè. In 2016, another major earthquake hit the area devastating much of the town of Amatrice, about 30 miles north of L'Aquila.

In 2017, Longo and his wife, Dawn Tancredi, joined Morelli, who had since returned to Italy, and his father, Pasquale, to present a check to Amatrice Mayor Sergio Pirozzi for \$12,710 for the Amatrice Disaster Relief Fund. At their Philadelphia restaurant, Biasini and Longo decided the relief initiative would feature Amatrice's

famous sheep's' milk ricotta as an act of solidarity.

In the Forza L'Aquila Forza Abruzzo initiative, you'll also find Abruzzese *arrosticini* with a savory mustard gelato whose cooling properties counter the heat to leave your palate awash in flavor, along with *peperoncino*. Classic pastas like *pappardalle al ragù l'aquilano* and *chitarra* follow delectable L'Aquila *scamorza* cheese paired with Abruzzese *prosciutto*. Abruzzo's sugar-covered almonds, *confetti*, *torrone* nougat and chocolate tempt your sweet tooth. Four blends from Italy highlight regional differences in Italian coffee: lighter northern style Torino, central Italian coffee L'Aquila, natural decaf Roma, and strong, dark Napoli.

Italy's prestigious Gambero Rosso dining guide honored Gran Caffè L'Aquila in March with its Restaurant Excellence Award, making the establishment the first in Philadelphia's to be named one of the best Italian restaurants in the world.

Destiny's hand seems written all over Longo's first visit to L'Aquila. He travels to Italy every three months to tour seven cities in 10 days, researching culinary history and meeting with local chefs and winemakers. His first visit to L'Aquila was a fluke daytrip resulting from an unexpected free day. In L'Aquila, a local gentleman urged Longo to visit the local Basilica di Santa Maria di Collemaggio and do something in America to remember L'Aquila. Inside

the Basilica, Longo had an epiphany. He immediately rescheduled his return flight. He met Biasini and Morelli in L'Aquila and invited both to Philadelphia, where they decided to recreate Gran Caffè L'Aquila in the City of Brotherly Love. Philadelphia's formal partnership with the Region of Abruzzo dates from 1997.

The partners hired the Italian architect who built the original Gran Caffè L'Aquila to design everything as if it were in Italy. That, and adding an American architect and Philadelphia contractors to make certain everything conformed to code, doubled the budget. "This was never about making money," he says, "but a product of passion, of joy, of expounding authentic Italian culture through education and the experience we created."

Five years after opening in Rittenhouse Square on Christmas Eve 2014, Gran Caffè L'Aquila has won multiple awards, including the *Gambero Rosso Tre Cicchi* (Three Beans), the highest award for coffee in Italy; Best Restaurant in Philadelphia by the Philadelphia Area Concierge Association;

Wine Spectator Award of Excellence; International Press Gelato World Champion; Best Gastronomic Gelato at World Cup of Gelato Stefano Biasini; Italy America Society Italian Food Culture Award; Best of Philly "Best Italian Restaurant" and "Best Gelato"; *Eccellenze italiane* award for excellence in promoting Italian culture; Philadelphia Style "Best of Style"; and the Filitalia Italian Entrepreneurship Award.

This winter, when the Forza L'Aquila Forza Abruzzo initiative goes live online, products will include coffee subscriptions, Italian-made cups and glasses, chocolate, olive oils, and even a logo fedora and kitchen apron. Longo and Biasini have declined offers to open restaurants in San Francisco, Miami, New York, Los Angeles and D.C., to stay close to the soul of their mission.

"Gran Caffè L'Aquila is our little piece of Italy here that we've done as an example of the possibilities of what an authentic representation of Italy can be, and of what kind of impact it can have," says Longo.

Gran Caffè L'Aquila remains a community affair and mix of Italians, Philadelphia's many Italian Americans with Abruzzese roots, and Italophiles. Its popular Tambo Long Hots dish is named after Philadelphia business development consultant Carol Tamburino. "I'm the only thing on the menu that's not authentically from Italy!" she says. "In South Philadelphia language, long hots means hot peppers."

Local Italian teacher Anna Maria Murray brings students to Gran Caffè L'Aquila every year. "They are really taken with the elegance, high quality, and different experience..." she says.

About 25 percent of the restaurant staff is Italian and the rest love Italy. "We look at ourselves as a *famiglia* – if you're passionate and love Italian culture, it's the same for us," says Longo.

Seven years after Longo met the gentleman in L'Aquila who told him to do something in America so L'Aquila would not be forgotten, Longo and Biasini continue to fulfill that promise. ▲

Visit the Gran Caffè L'Aquila website at <https://grancaffelaquila.com/>.

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New Films by Italian Directors

Reporting from the Toronto Film Festival

By Maria Garcia



Giuseppe Capotondi's *The Burnt Orange Heresy*



Lorene Scafaria's *Hustlers*



Marco Bellocchio's *The Traitor*



Pietro Marcello's *Martin Eden*

Four films by Italian and Italian American directors screened at the 2019 Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) in September: Marco Bellocchio's *The Traitor*, Giuseppe Capotondi's *The Burnt Orange Heresy*, Pietro Marcello's *Martin Eden*, and Lorene Scafaria's *Hustlers*. Winning a place on the festival's slate of 245 feature-length films (chosen from nearly 8,000 submissions in all categories) immediately confers prestige on the filmmaker and guarantees a broader audience for the movie.

Each of the four films may be understood as a contemplation of "character as fate," or the ways in which the protagonists' personalities and the circumstances of their birth determine their destiny. The belief in *il destino* and the fated life is often expressed in Italian folklore, although not always with a sense of doom. This may account for a distinctive quality of Italian cinema: dramas are frequently tinged with wry humor, and *commedia all'Italiana* always possesses a touch of the tragic.

Bellocchio's Italian-language drama, the standout among the four films, screened in TIFF's Masters category, reserved for the world's most influential art-house directors. The eponymous traitor is Sicilian Mafia turncoat Tommaso Buscetta, who died in 2000 in the United States. He was granted U.S. citizenship after the "pizza connection" case in the 1980s, when he assisted authorities in identifying members of organized crime who were smuggling heroin into the country.

The Traitor chronicles Buscetta's efforts to leave the Cosa Nostra, and his testimony in Italy's "Maxi Trial" in the late 1980s and early 1990s. That trial sent hundreds of Mafiosi to prison. In a beautifully calibrated performance, the Roman-born actor Pietro Favino plays the man the Bobbio-born filmmaker views as the consummate "man of honor." Buscetta plays by rules that he claimed, in confessions to the famed Mafia prosecutor Giovanni Falcone (Fausto Russo Alesi), became outmoded when the various Italian

gangs entered the drug trade. Bellocchio reads that personality as single-minded and destined to regret and guilt.

While the 80-year-old writer-director understates Buscetta's bigamy and his brutality, he does not exaggerate his status as a prominent *pentito* (penitent), the moniker given to Mafia informers. Buscetta's confessions to Falcone led to the convictions of Salvatore Riina, a Sicilian *capo*, and former Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti for colluding with the Cosa Nostra. Bellocchio's style is reminiscent of 1970s crime dramas, and while some audiences may feel the movie is a sprawling throwback, the writer-director's status as maestro is apparent in every sublimely lit frame. Touches of humor are reserved for speakers of standard Italian and southern Italian *dialetti*.

Caserta-born Pietro Marcello's Italian-language film, *Martin Eden*, is an equally fateful story that follows a mariner (Luca Marinelli) of humble birth and little education who aspires to becoming a writer. The film begins with Martin spying a young man being beaten on a nearby pier; he intervenes, easily overcoming the attacker, and the two run away. The boy's affluent family is grateful and, at first, embraces the charming Martin, as does the boy's older sister. Based on a novel by Jack London, the movie flags after this promising start because of the insertion of archival documentary footage that mourns the historic position of the working classes and takes the audience out of the story. TIFF's closing night film, *Martin Eden* is lengthy, and fueled by tedious political theories rather than its protagonist's emotions. Even Marinelli's brilliant performance fails to rescue the static narrative.

Writer-director Lorene Scafaria's movie *Hustlers*, which screened in the Gala category that is reserved for high-profile, commercial films, also centers on working-class characters. It is inspired by a 2015 *New York Magazine* story about a group of prostitutes who work in a New York City strip club. ►



Giuseppe
Capotondi's
*The Burnt Orange
Heresy*

Toronto International Film Festival



Pietro Marcello's *Martin Eden*

Toronto International Film Festival



Pietro Marcello's *Martin Eden*

Toronto International Film Festival



Pietro Marcello's *Martin Eden*

Toronto International Film Festival

Jennifer Lopez leads the cast of this cynical drama in a credible performance as the mature dancer Ramona, although events unfold through the eyes of the club's newcomer Destiny (up-and-comer Constance Wu of *Crazy Rich Asians*). Set after the 2008 stock market crash, it follows the women as they scramble for work in the absence of many of their former clients, affluent Wall Street businessmen.

Ramona, a single mother, hatches the ultimate hustle in order to sustain her luxurious lifestyle, once funded by a rich client. Working as a team, she and Destiny lure their former customers to a bar, drug them, and then max out their credit cards. *Hustlers* is the writer-director's first Hollywood-style film, and no match for her first, a highly original narrative feature, *Seeking a Friend for the End of the World* (2012). That starred Keira Knightley and Steve Carell as two lonely neighbors who find friendship in the days leading up to the apocalypse.

With its glitzy veneer, and its undercurrent of working-class triumph, *Hustlers* is entertaining and likely to do well at the box office. Its rather super-

official message of female empowerment is balanced by a weighty subtext that touches on the barriers of gender, class and lack of access to education that prevent the dancers from earning a living any other way. The movie suggests the larger "hustle" that all women are forced to engage in, irrespective of their line of work, in order to achieve independence in a male-dominated world. *Hustlers* will put Scafaria in the spotlight and might lead to an Oscar nomination for JLo.

Capotondi's English-language genre thriller, *The Burnt Orange Heresy*, also screened in the Gala category. It is shot from the point-of-view of an art critic, James Figueras, portrayed by Claes Bang, whose lust for power and money leads him into shady deals with collectors and museum curators. The 52-year-old Danish actor, who became an international star in 2017 for his role as a violent museum curator in Ruben Östlund's Palme d'Or winner *The Square*, resembles a brooding James Mason opposite the equally impressive newcomer Elizabeth Debicki as Berenice. A woman who suffers from a less serious lapse of morality, she rather

improbably finds the critic irresistible.

The two are soon off to a weekend at an art collector's (Mick Jagger) estate. James discovers that Debney, an iconic, aging painter (Donald Sutherland), whose works were destroyed in a fire, lives there and may agree to meet with him. The Roma-born writer-director again flirts with improbability after Berenice realizes James's true nature and the real reason for his interest in Debney. Because James is such an unlikeable protagonist, and the roots of his sociopathic personality are left unexplained, audiences may find this skillfully directed film a predictable portrait of moral decay—although no one would argue against James's destiny, the unique province of white males. ▲

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 book, Cinematic Quests for Identity: The Hero's Encounter with the Beast, was published in 2015. Visit her Facebook page, MariaGarciaNYC.



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BIRRA BEAUTIFULLY

THE Autumn ITALIAN AMERICAN Reader

With Summer changing into Autumn, we decided a seasonal change in this issue's Between the Pages section was in order as well. So, instead of a book review, we're leading with an insightful, entertaining interview that writer and frequent Ambassador contributor Silvia Donati conducted with author Stacy Adimondo, whose new cookbook would make a tasty addition to anyone's cookbook shelf.

The rest of the section, as always, is filled with reviews of books—some critically acclaimed, some under the radar, but all written by Italian American or Italian authors, or otherwise are of interest to Italian American readers.

Besides the review, we provide book covers and a sample sentence or two to give you some idea of what you'll find inside their pages.

Buona lettura!
— Don Oldenburg

Growing up in an Italian American family, Stacy Adimondo learned to cherish the value of togetherness, which, of course, was cemented around the table. Food and family have been the staples of her life. Her grandparents instilled in her a love for cooking and Italy.

Now Adimondo, who until recently was executive editor at *Saveur* magazine, continues to be inspired by her Italian heritage. Her latest cookbook, *Piatti* (Italian word for “plates”) originates from her fondness for Italy's abundant platters of regional *antipasti* (appetizers), which she came to appreciate during frequent trips to Italy, especially when visiting her relatives in Reggio Calabria, the town in southern Italy her great-grandfather left to emigrate to America.

Piatti is a fun, unfussy blend of Italian, American, Italian American, and family recipes and ingredients. It features 90 dishes, organized by the season and ranging in size and variety. Its beautiful photos will make you drool.

It includes useful *Antipasti* Building Blocks and *Antipasti* Pantry sections, and insights into Italian food culture and traditions throughout, such fun facts as: “In parts of Italy's sun-bleached south, it is rare to visit a country house that does not have a string of *peperoncini* hanging outside the door to dry.”

Based in the Red Hook neighborhood of Brooklyn, where she grows food in her backyard, including her favorite, broccoli rabe (*vapini* or *friarielli*), Adimondo has actually and virtually traveled to lands near and far, learning about the cuisines of the world, and examining food through the lens of culture, identity and traditions.

We caught up with Adimondo just ahead of the release of her new cookbook.



Stacy Adimondo on a culinary trip to Puglia

Eva Kolenko

How did the idea for *Piatti* originate?

Adimondo: When I was visiting my relatives in Reggio Calabria, during one of my first meals with them, they had put out a huge amount of food, like sausages, eggplant parmigiana, all kinds of *salumi*, bread, and I ate and ate and ate. Then they took that away and brought the *primi*, and I thought, oh my gosh, that was just the *antipasti* and I ate too much!

In America, when we entertain we put out little snacks, like crackers and cheese, or chips and dip, and to me that's so much less satisfying than these beautiful platters of fresh ingredients, of vegetable *antipasti*, seafood *antipasti*, room-temperature meats, and that sort of thing.... I wanted to share that tradition, abundance and creativity with American cooks. I also have a special love for that feeling of just grazing a little bit and picking on everything to make a whole meal.



Chronicle Books

Piatti is inspired by the cuisine of Italy, but also incorporates some of your family's recipes, elements of Italian American cooking, and your own creative spin. How did you select which dishes to include?

Adimando: What ended up inspiring me was thinking that *antipasti*, or any course in Italy, is very much based on the ingredients that they have available in the area, and that's where the true traditions come from. I thought I should make a book that feels true to that concept. So, I wanted to incorporate the things that Americans have at their farmers' markets, the ingredients that they get excited about, and look at them through an Italian lens. Some of the recipes are much more Italian than others, but the main inspiration is the way of life of the Italian cook, who uses seasonal ingredients and makes things that are sort of effortless but beautiful.

How immersed in Italian lifestyle and culture were you growing up and can you describe your relationship with Italy?

Adimando: My grandparents were born in America, and my father grew up on Mulberry Street, which is the center of Little Italy in New York. All of them grew up not speaking Italian, but they cooked many of the same meals that their parents and grandparents cooked. The food traditions stayed alive, but a lot of the language and the other traditions were lost. When I got to a certain age, I started to realize how precious my Italian heritage is and I really wanted to hold on to it. So, I started learning as many recipes as possible from my grand-

Piatti: Plates and Platters for Sharing, Inspired by Italy
By Stacy Adimando
Photographs by Linda Pugliese
Chronicle Books
224 pages; \$29.95 hardcover



Chronicle Books

parents, and I started to travel to Italy at least once a year, trying to see as many different regions as I could. I also tracked down what family I did have left in Italy and I met some of my distant relatives in Reggio Calabria, which was so special. I got to see where my great-grandfather was born and his house in the hills of Calabria. It became a mission for me to keep as much of my heritage alive so that it's never forgotten through my lineage.

During your travels to Italy, did you discover any aspect of Italian food culture that surprised you or you didn't know about?

Adimando: Yes, every time I travel to a different part of Italy, I learn something new. One thing that's been really fun has been identifying the food that my family cooks and finding it in some parts of southern Italy, and saying, "oh, this reminds me of what my grandmother did with her eggplant, this reminds me of what my great-grandmother did with her escarole pie." It was a really eye-opening experience to go to the south of Italy and realize that is definitely where some of my food traditions have come from.

What's your favorite region in Italy for food and why?

Adimando: The one region I know and love and will always return to is Roman cuisine. I love how rustic it is, how comforting it is. I love the spirit of the trattorias of Rome, the *antipasti* of Rome, the *carciofi*. I love their pastas like the *amatriciana* and *carbonara*. But I also have my eye on southern Italy, just to get a little bit closer to my family's food

traditions. And there's so much of northern Italy I want to explore...

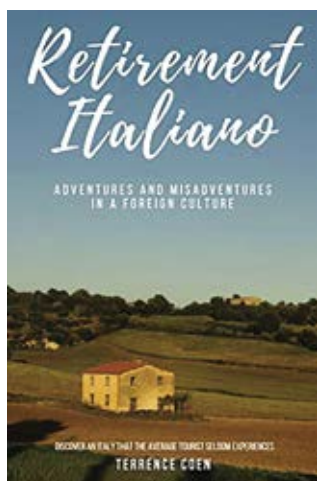
What's next for you?

Adimando: I want to incorporate my Italian American traditions into my work more frequently and more consistently. Something that has been special to me about this book is that, for the first time ever, we're writing down some of our family's recipes, and I feel honored to be the first person in my family who was able to do that. Now I know that they will be preserved forever.

What do you think makes the food culture of Italy unique?

Adimando: There is something about Italian food that truly does reach my soul. I'm not sure if that is a product of growing up around it or because I just have an infatuation with so much of Italian culture now. But Italian food has the perfect combination of traits: it's simple in ingredients but takes so much pride and such a labor of love that commands respect and gratitude; it's so rustic and familial and comforting, but the combination of flavors is also fresh and invigorating and makes you feel transported. And, when I'm cooking it, I feel as if I can really hold hands with all the generations before me and experience an amazing connection. It just never lost touch with itself, and thanks to tradition and loyalty and some Italian stubbornness, I don't think it ever will. Visit Stacy Adimando's website at: <http://stacyadimando.com> ▶

— Silvia Donati



Retirement Italiano: Adventures and Misadventures in a Foreign Country

By Terrence Coen
Donaldson Bain
198 pages
\$12.99 paperback

“One thing about living in another land is that you begin to see your world differently. I began to see my world through the eyes of Italians... Talking with people here in Italy gave me an entirely new perspective on life on this planet.”

Retirement Italiano encourages the notion that it’s never too late to start something new—especially if it involves moving to Italy. As a 70-year-old, recently retired business executive, Terrence Coen avoids succumbing to conventional retired life and embarks on a new adventure with his Italian-born wife, Laura, to run an *agriturismo* for six months on the outskirts of Farnese, a small village in Northern Lazio.

Coen underestimates the work he signed himself up for. He must learn the ropes of managing an old farm property as a bed and breakfast, deal with the difficult owner of the property, La Signora, and adapt to a foreign culture and learn a new language.

Coen’s memoir tells a humorous and humble account of realizing that living in Italy is vastly different than being a tourist. However, his positivity and willingness to adapt prove that the rewards of living in an Italian community, being surrounded by Italian cuisine and countryside, has benefits that undoubtedly outweigh its challenges.

As he writes later in the book, “...I found myself reflecting again about how we had not merely visited Farnese. For nearly half a year, we had truly lived Farnese. We were not just tourists looking in from outside, but we were truly engaged.”

As a bonus, the book includes authentic Italian recipes contributed by Coen’s wife. Lesson learned: don’t wait to begin your own adventure. Read *Retirement Italiano* and get inspired!

— Natalie Wulderk



Love Me Not

By Jacqueline Falcomer
Jacqueline Falcomer
437 pages
\$18.99 paperback

What I had accomplished was, by any stretch of the imagination, inconceivable, but right from the start, Maria had taught me to do the impossible.

In *Love Me Not*, magical realism mingles postwar Tuscan Sangiovese and olive oil with clairaudient bracelet bangles and butterflies in a tale of a young woman’s survival and social ascension.

Orphaned at age 3 when her mother joined the butterflies, Hortensia is raised by three peasants: midwife Maria, cook Anna, and estate manager Rubino. The trio guide Hortensia through the birth of an heir that will allow Villa Angeli to prosper, then dispatch her to rival Villa Trianni in a

plot to link the two properties.

As Hortensia accepts lovers and marriage, navigates the shrill *scirocco* or beguiles the mayor with roast peppers and goat cheese canapés, she relies on earthly and other-worldly talents to move herself from maidservant to *signora*.

You’ll want to eat while reading this book. You may find inspiration from the author’s website. Its blog describes delectable dishes, while another page offers print and audio versions of the first chapter. *Love Me Not* is the second of Jacqueline Falcomer’s *Tuscany Lovers* trilogy. Your mouth will still be watering as you turn the final page.

— Kirsten Keppel



Food of the Italian South: Recipes for Classic, Disappearing, and Lost Dishes

By Katie Parla
Clarkson Potter Publishers
255 pages
\$30 hardcover

I want to spotlight the people, ingredients, and recipes that are so deeply anchored in the Italian south that they haven’t had the opportunity to travel very far. Not until now, anyway.

Three years after her debut cookbook *Tasting Rome* brought the gospel of Roman cuisine to American tables, Katie Parla has now returned with *Food of the Italian South*—an ode to the often-overlooked cuisines of Italy’s southern regions. In Parla’s research for this cookbook, she traveled to

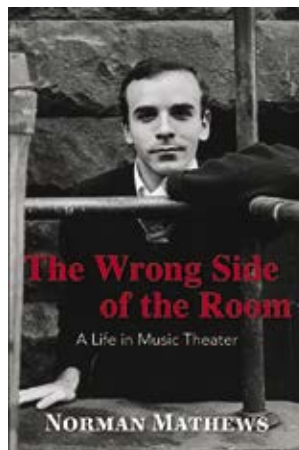
places rarely mentioned in guide-books, showcasing the forgotten cuisines of Southern Italy as well as the everyday Italians—butchers, *nonnas*, cheese-makers and fishermen—who still carry on these traditions.

This is not your standard Italian cookbook. While Parla features well-loved recipes like pizza margherita, she mostly focuses on more unique dishes, such as *Sicchie d'a Munnezza* (roughly translated to “garbage can pasta”)—a Christmas specialty of a small town near Mount Vesuvius, made with olives, dried fruits and nuts. Other notable recipes include *Spezzatino all’Uva*, pork stew cooked with red grapes in the eastern foothills of the Apennine Mountains of Molise, and *Mulignana c’a’ Ciucculata*, a dessert native to the Amalfi Coast, made of fried eggplant smothered in chocolate, nuts and candied oranges.

In *Food of the Italian South*, Parla aims to not only highlight the beauty of simple, Southern Italian cooking, but also preserve its most ancient and traditional recipes, which are quickly

disappearing from Southern Italian tables. Interspersed with personal travel stories, historic insights into each dish, stunning photography and anecdotes of her own Italian roots in Basilicata, Parla’s *Food of the Italian South* offers readers a taste of Italy’s most vibrant—and forgotten—regional cuisines.

—Danielle DeSimone



The Wrong Side of the Room: A Life in Music Theater

By Norman Mathews
BookBaby
324 pages; \$18 paperback

Good storytelling riveted my attention from my earliest years, whether a yarn about our family, a schoolmate, or one told in a theater. I loved being taken to the movies.

The proverb “If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again,” could be the subtitle to Norman Mathews’ autobiography *The Wrong Side of the Room: A Life in Music Theater*.

Mathews (born Ignatius Norman Cancelose) writes about his Sicilian roots, family, relationships and life in the arts with an energetic cadence combined with witty and lively stories. Humor, sadness, triumphs and missteps pack the pages. He vividly describes his life and career from his childhood days in Illinois during the 1940s to living and working in New

An American Family in Italy



Living *la dolce vita* without permission

Paul Spadoni

CAUTION: Purchase may cause strong desire to book flight to Italy!

“An American family spends a year in Italy—a dream, a disaster, laughter and tears, an unforgettable memory.”

—Maria Coletta McLean, author

“Anyone who has Italy in their blood should read this adventure. It will take you here vicariously until you have time to come in person.”

—Elena Benvenuti, Italian tour guide

“Wonderful humor about the pitfalls of uprooting your family to live in Italy make this a heartwarming joy to read.”

—Lizzie Harwood, author

York City. You'll also follow his journey, step by step, to become a dancer, playwright, composer and pianist, all while reinventing himself.

"All my life, I've been a very late bloomer at everything," writes Mathews, who feels he was born in the wrong era for his music style (think art songs and chamber music).

With the emergence of rock 'n' roll, Mathews comments about the lack of "elegant harmonic progressions" in rock music: "Surely, it's just a fad that will fade in a year or two.... Here was the nascent indication that I was not a man of my own times."

He also describes how he ends up on the "wrong side" of the room for signing a contract. After reading his memoir, you'll realize that Mathews' constant pursuit for success in the arts applies to life—never give up.

— Robert Fanelli Bartus Jr.

The Novel of Ferrara

By Giorgio Bassani

Jamie McKendrick (Translator)

W.W. Norton & Company

800 pages
\$39.95 hardcover

He came from far away, from much further away than he had actually come. Returned when no one expected him: what was it he wanted now?

The Novel of Ferrara addresses what being Jewish and Italian meant before, during and after the World War II. Published in English for the first time and in one masterwork, Bassani's collection of works, originally published separately between 1952 and 1956, gets unified by the author's revisions in this one large volume. Each story examines the myriad ways in which communities reject their own.

Ferrara serves as backdrop of unease and lost warmth lingering long after the war, as a frightened, scurrying middle class dumps fascism overnight for the Social Republic of Salò. Each story tells of exile that occurs like a slow riptide. A doctor's homosexuality goes undiscussed and tolerated until he is exposed. A Jewish aristocrat's social position evaporates.



A survivor of Nazi camps returns to find himself fêted, then forsaken.

The renowned Italian author and critic, Bassani knew the exile of which he wrote: he and his wife lived under assumed names in Florence and Rome when the Social Republic of Salò controlled northern and central Italy. *The Novel of Ferrara* is a story not only of Italian Jewry but of the price paid by all for human exclusion. ▲

— Kirsten Keppel

SECRETS OF ALTAMURA
Nazi Crimes, Italian Treasure
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The Summer Dining Room of Livia

By Carla Gambescia

More than any other city, Rome is home to the most extraordinary and well-preserved ancient art and monuments. A bit lost in that incredible shuffle of antiquity is probably the least well-known and least visited, and perhaps most sublimely beautiful: The Summer Dining Room of Livia Drusilla, wife of the Emperor Augustus.

The existence and location of the Villa of Livia had been well-documented by Pliny the Elder and was finally unearthed in 1861; the triclinium's (dining room's) luxuriant painted paradise was an astonishing but imminently imperiled discovery. Due to its state of disrepair, a drastic decision was made to save the frescos painted circa 30-20 B.C. by meticulously removing them from the rock walls they were painted on. In 1998, the detached frescos were installed in

Palazzo Massimo, Rome's Archeological Museum, in a special room built to the dimensions of the original.

Evidently, the Romans knew how to stay cool during the dog days of summer. Livia's semi-subterranean dining room was dug into rock, a common setting for rooms used in the scorching summer months. In lieu of dining *alfresco*, a serene summer oasis of the imagination was rendered. You can feel the sensation of coolness by the mood created by the stunning illusionist garden that spreads out and encircles you, removing any sense of confinement as the walls seem to dissolve into a serene, open, airy vista.

Allow yourself to be completely immersed as Livia's garden casts its spell of enchantment. A lush Eden improbably blossoms as doves, partridges and gold finches take flight

in sky whose color variations create a mesmerizing atmospheric effect. You can almost hear the rustling of a gentle breeze through leaves so well-rendered that, in certain trees, you can see both the silvery underside of some and darker top side of others. Scholars have recognized a plethora of vegetation, including umbrella pine, oak, red fir, cypress, quince, pomegranate, fig, orange, myrtle, oleander, date palm, strawberry, laurel, acanthus, rose, poppy, iris, violet, chamomile, and more!

Palazzo Massimo also has an extensive collection of statuary, mosaics, frescoes and coins; an absolute must next time you visit Roma! ▲

Carla Gambescia is a writer, photographer and author of La Dolce Vita University. Visit her websites at www.ladolcevita.com and www.postcardsfromtheboot.com.

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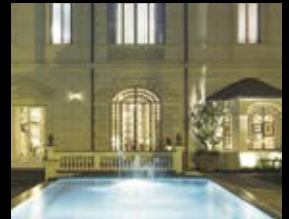
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Versilia Golf Resort
Forte dei Marmi, Versilia



Villa Cortine Palace Hotel
Sirmione, Lago di Garda



Villa del Quar
Verona

George

By Wayne Randazzo

Saying goodbye is never easy. There have been countless songs written about it, novels penned at just the mere thought of it. In goodbye's various formations, death looms the largest, a person's life and work cast aside for eternity. It brings the sorts of sadness and reflection that most find uncomfortable, albeit necessary.

On July 29, 2019, the Italian American community had to say goodbye to one of its purest icons. George Randazzo, Vietnam War veteran, husband, father, grandfather, friend, mentor and founder of the National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame (NIASHF), passed away suddenly in the Chicago suburbs at age 77.

George started the NIASHF in 1977 as a vision that expanded from a hobby. He loved collecting photographs and keeping tabs on all of his childhood heroes, the great Italian American boxers of his youth. Rocky Marciano, Rocky Graziano, Primo Carnera and Willie Pep were men that George not only looked up to but felt inspired by to the point that he chose to devote most of his adult life to honor them.

George's inspiration and passion for this project was so strong that he quit his day job as a buyer for Motorola and started on what would become a 42-year journey to properly value the strength and courage of the Italian American athlete. With his wife, Linda, by his side for every step, hardship and victory, George took the Hall of Fame from the back of a law office in Elmwood Park, Ill., to a multi-level shrine in the name of Jerry Colangelo, smack dab in the center of Chicago's Little Italy neighborhood on Taylor Street.

It was truly a unique place with some of sport's greatest treasures protected inside. Alan Ameche's Heisman Trophy, Matt Biondi's Olympic medals, Tommy Lasorda's Manager of the Year Award, and a helmet that represented Franco Harris's Italian Army were just a few of the innumerable priceless artifacts that George received as donations. These items were displayed, never to solely show off athletic achievement but to signify and educate about the values of discipline, hard work, commitment and faith—and how far they could take you.

That's what George Randazzo was all about. He was the type of person that was always looking out for others. He wanted to teach, and he used the NIASHF as a vessel to do that. George made many friends in sports, politics, the food industry, and corporate businesses, but the end goal was always the same. It was always about helping people and endlessly giving back.

George was my grandfather's first cousin. I started to become familiar with the Hall of Fame around age 11,



George Randazzo

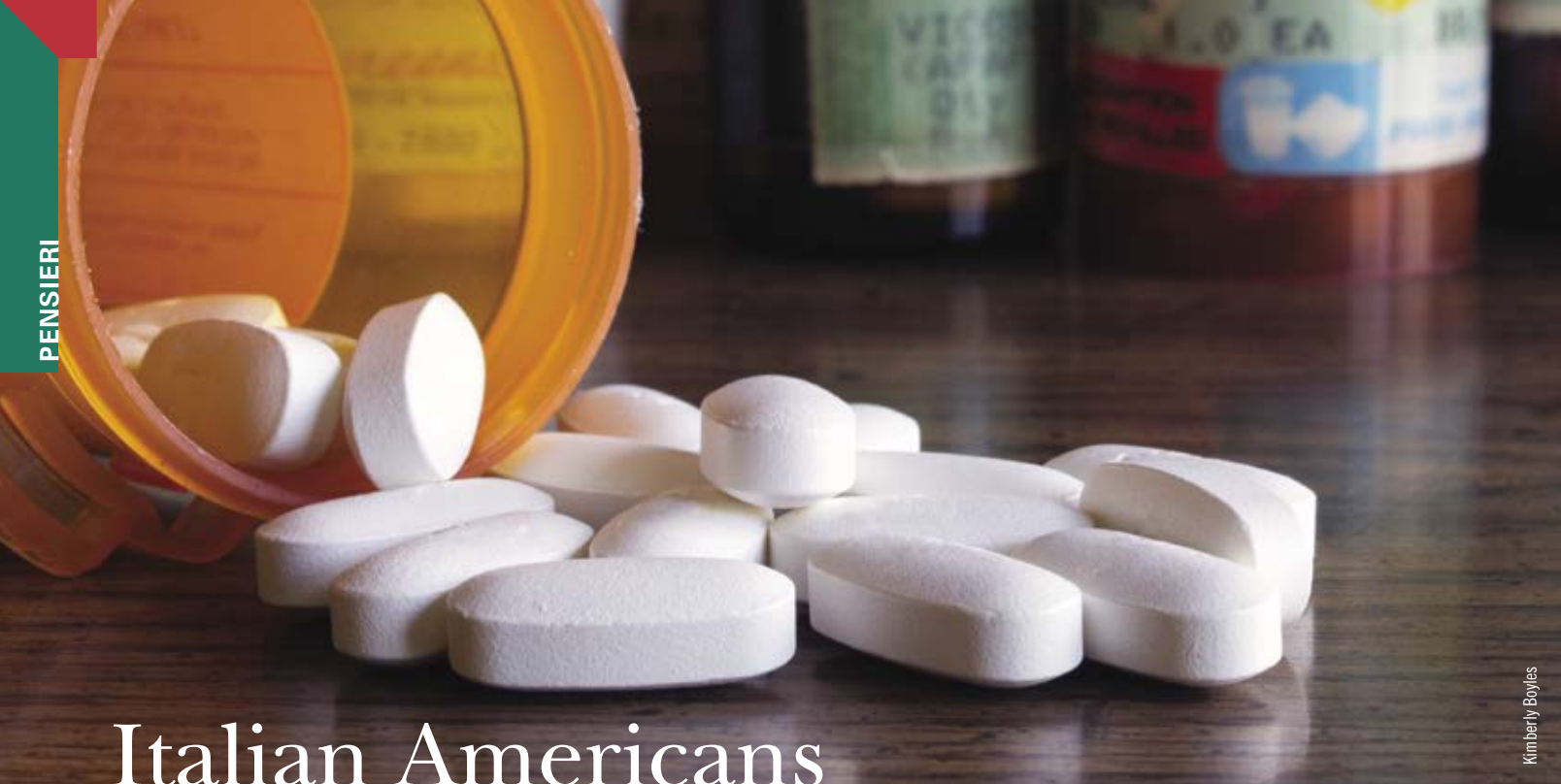
and I'll never forget my first time attending an induction ceremony with my father. I met Mike Ditka, Lasorda, Tony Danza, Sal Bando, but even more importantly, I recognized it as a way to honor our heritage. It was instilled in me then, and as I got older, I spent a lot more time around George and the NIASHF. I've interned for them, written and edited their official magazine, and have now emceed many of their induction ceremonies. In the midst of all that was George standing alongside me as a doting mentor, who was not afraid to boast about the way I was moving up in the broadcasting industry.

He wasn't just like that with me because we were related. He was like that with all young people that found a serious passion in their lives and that came across his powerful, professorial grips. Red, White & Green Magazine launched the careers of several in the media industry, including Barry Rozner, John Kass and Dan Pompei, who all became titans in Chicago newspapers. Mike LaCassa, Los Angeles Angels director of minor league operations, interned for the Hall of Fame as well around the time I did, and hundreds of others were similarly impacted by George.

It's within all of that which makes this goodbye particularly hurtful with a side dish of being simply unready. However, the words of the great Jackie Robinson provide some solace: "A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives."

In that case, George Randazzo, his legacy and the National Italian American Sports Hall of Fame, will live on forever. ▲

Wayne Randazzo is a play-by-play announcer for New York Mets broadcasts on WCBS Newsradio 880. He's also a freelance television play-by-play announcer for FS1, ESPN and Big Ten Network, and the longtime sports columnist for Ambassador magazine.



Italian Americans and The Opioid Epidemic

By Dr. John Rosa
NIAF Board Member

The Italian American culture is not truly Italian nor truly American. It's a culture derived from the necessity to stay close to the family and *paesani* for support and sense of community. Like so many others, I sum up this culture as “the Four F’s... Family, Friends, Faith and Food.”

Family and friends are terms used loosely in the Italian American community. As if our families are not large enough with aunts, uncles and cousins by the dozens, we throw in the fictitious family members for the fun of it. It was quite disappointing to find out that Uncle Tommy and Aunt Tina were not really my aunt and uncle but came from the same town my mom came from in Sicily. Community at its best.

Faith is an integral part of this community, with Mass every Sunday, prayers each night, celebration of all the Feasts of the Saints, and don't forget the parties for every sacrament received by all family and *paesani*. And, food is the glue that gives celebration and community that extra smile. It is a focal point of getting together. The dinner table is a daily celebration of

life and an opportunity to have family how-was-your-day time.

Unfortunately, the new post-industrial society and digital age have given way to a lack of family structure and less commitment to faith. This has made it easier for us to feel alone and unhappy. Now more than ever, we see addiction at work, Netflix bingeing, cell phones, video games, portable device apps, the 24-hour news cycle, porn and drugs. We selfishly crave instant gratification instead of the delayed gratification derived from dedication to hard work and cultivating meaningful relationships. When you think of how we grew up, with a strong identity of culture and community, it is easy to recognize a correlation between loss of cultural and social values and the current addiction crisis.

To put this theory in perspective, consider a Canadian study known as “Rat Park,” published in 1981, that evaluated the habits of two environments. The first environment was a single rat in a cage with two bottles—one containing plain water, the other water with morphine. The second

environment, called “Rat Park,” also contained two water bottles—one with and one without morphine.

The difference was the environment. Rat Park housed 16 to 20 rats with spin wheels, balls and abundant food. The solitary rat in the other cage developed a preference, over time, for the morphine-laced water and eventually overdosed. In Rat Park, however, the rat community was surrounded by the daily activities of food, fun and intimacy. In Rat Park, most of the rats drank only once from the morphine-laced bottle and never returned to it.

Researchers concluded that, in the absence of isolation, the sense of community and will to thrive was a much better reality than the false reality experienced while on the opioid. There is a reason why some people who take a prescription opioid do not like how they feel while others look for the escape.

I want to be clear that the lack of community is not the only reason someone becomes addicted to opioids. Some people, young and old, start taking opioids as a cool way to party

or get high and, as a result of overuse, become addicted. For many years, doctors have over-prescribed opioids for acute and chronic pain, which has resulted in addiction. Drug dealers add much stronger and more addictive opioids to street-sold products that ramp up the addictive process.

The point I would like to make is that the more isolated we are, the more vulnerable to addiction we become.

I own and manage 14 Integrative Medicine Clinics in Maryland and Virginia that concentrate on pain management. As an expert in this field, I have dedicated my professional life to helping people avoid the need for pain medication. For 20 years, I have experienced firsthand the devastation of the Opioid Crisis through my patient base. I have educated myself and others from every angle of this crisis over the years and continue to lecture, write position papers and consult for local municipalities and the federal government. My specialty is in addiction prevention, so I would like to share some thoughts and advice with you which, sadly, only scratch the

surface of this complex problem:

- Make children aware that taking opioid prescription drugs recreationally is a path to addiction and death. Just because it was prescribed to someone in their household or a friend's household by a doctor does not mean it's okay to take. With this in mind, immediately go into your medicine cabinets and dispose of all unused medications. Ninety percent of children who start recreational use begin at home.
- If your doctor prescribes an opioid for non-cancer or nonsurgical pain, ask for an alternative. In some cases, severe trauma will warrant such meds but this should be the exception. Millions of opioid prescriptions have been written for common ailments and minor-to-moderate trauma that could have easily been managed with anti-inflammatories and a good chiropractor, physical therapist or acupuncturist.
- Put the phone down, turn off the tablet and computer, leave your work at work, and sit down to dinner with your family. Whether

you call it "sauce" or "gravy," learn how to make it, and make enough to invite family, friends and neighbors for some pasta. Celebrate life at every turn, not alone but with the ones you love. Be thankful for the treasure of life that has been bestowed upon you and thank God every day, while in prayer at home and on Sundays in church.

This multifaceted and complicated problem we call the "Opioid Crisis" has no easy fix. But a good start would be to take a page out of the Italian American playbook. Let's hold on to our heritage and continue to pass down the Four F's of Family, Friends, Faith, and Food to the generations to come. It will mean our survival. ▲

Dr. John Rosa is a state and national consultant to Opioid Task Forces and to the White House, Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, the Drug Enforcement Administration and other federal agencies.

For more information on the Opioid Crisis, visit Dr. Rosa's website at Drjohnrosa.com, or contact him at jr@drjohnrosa.com.



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CELEBRATE
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The NIAF Anniversary Gala Preview

It's that time of year again! Please join us November 1-2 for the National Italian American Foundation's annual weekend celebrating our shared heritage and culture, and Italian American pride!

Our 44th Anniversary Gala Weekend takes place at the Omni Shoreham Hotel, in Washington, D.C. If you have attended any of our Anniversary Galas in recent years, you know these are heartfelt, life-changing events you will never forget.

In 1975, a visionary group of dedicated leaders came together to create a national organization designed to serve and represent the Italian American community. The initial NIAF Gala Awards Dinner took place at The Washington Hilton and attracted more than 2,000 guests, among them such notables such as President Gerald Ford, presidential candidate Jimmy Carter, vice-presidential candidate

Walter Mondale, and 150 Members of Congress. Washington Post columnist Mary McGroarty attended that benchmark event and wrote, "Never before in history" has there been a meeting with more political power.

Since then, NIAF has grown in so many ways! We invite you to join us during the first weekend in November to salute 44 years of fulfilling our mission as the only national organization dedicated to preserving and protecting the Italian American heritage, culture and language; educating tomorrow's leaders of the Italian American community; advocating on behalf of Italian Americans in the Nation's Capital; promoting a positive image of Italian Americans; and serving as a bridge for cultural, commercial and governmental ties between the United States and Italy. That's what you support when you donate to NIAF and when you attend

NIAF's Anniversary Gala!

Meanwhile, the Gala Weekend schedule is filled with events and festivities, distinguished honorees and memorable moments! For two days, Italian Americans and our friends from Italy will take over the Omni Shoreham Hotel. We're kicking off the weekend on Friday with NIAF Aperitivo! for young professional Italian Americans and Italophiles. Friday evening also features "An Evening with Mary Ann Esposito" — a special, elegant dinner created and hosted by our favorite Celebrity Chef!

On Saturday morning, the hugely popular Expo Italiana, the largest annual Italian festival in the Nation's Capital, opens its doors to the public. It's free and it's fun! Last year the Expo attracted more than 2,500 guests, so get there early and stay the day!

Saturday evening starts with

the Gala black-tie receptions that lead into the centerpiece of the entire Gala weekend—the NIAF 44th Anniversary Gala Awards Dinner where the Foundation will celebrate the 2019 NIAF Region of Honor, Molise, and recognize distinguished honorees. On the menu? A Molise-inspired dinner and plenty of live entertainment! As the evening winds down, some guests who are just getting started head to the infamous NIAF After Hours Party featuring Italian music, sing-alongs and dancing that goes late into the night!

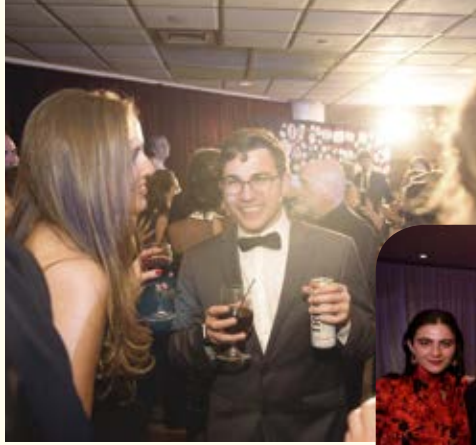
So, don't miss out this year's Gala Weekend events! Buy your tickets today! Corporate and personal tribute sponsorships are available. For more information, contact Jerry Jones at 202-387-0600 or jerry@niaf.org.

For the Gala's complete schedule of events and to register online, visit www.niaf.org/gala.



NIAF Aperitivo!

Young professional? Kick off the NIAF Gala Weekend with our NIAF Aperitivo! on Friday, November 1, from 6 – 8 p.m. This special event for young Italian American and Italophile professionals will feature Italian-style cocktails and complimentary aperitivo bites while mixing and mingling with leaders of the Italian American community. It's a primo opportunity to expand your network. Open to the public. For tickets, visit www.niaf.org/gala.



An Evening with Mary Ann Esposito

Reserve your seats (or entire table!) now to experience a memorably delectable evening with Celebrity Chef Mary Ann Esposito as she takes you through an elegant, three-course dinner inspired by the cuisine of Molise, the NIAF 2019 Region of Honor.

Mary Ann is the creator and host of the nationally televised PBS series, *Ciao Italia with Mary Ann Esposito*, now celebrating its 30th year, making it America's longest-running TV cooking series. She is also the author of 13 cookbooks. Each ticket purchased includes a signed copy of her latest cookbook, *Ciao Italia: My Lifelong Food Adventures in Italy*. Seating is limited, so buy your tickets

now at www.niaf.org/gala.



Reserve Your Room Now!

NIAF will be hosting its 44th Anniversary Gala Weekend at the Omni Shoreham Hotel, one of the premier hotels in the nation's capital, located at 2500 Calvert St NW, in Washington, D.C. Come experience a weekend at these accommodations, the classy ballroom and spacious exhibition area! For reservations, call: 1-800-THE OMNI (843-6664) and ask for the "National Italian American Foundation" room block.

Expo Italiana—Free! Open to the Public!

NIAF's Expo Italiana is the largest annual Italian festival in the Nation's Capital and among the largest on the entire East Coast! More than 2,500 guests came to last year's Expo!

We're preparing for another record-breaking, fun-loving, Italophile crowd on Saturday, November 2, from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m., when Expo Italiana will showcase entertaining, educational and commercial offerings and samples from Italian and Italian American exhibitors, plus live entertainment!

While emphasizing Molise products and culture, this year's Expo will feature the best Italian wines, demonstrations and samples of Italian culinary artistry, free beverages and espresso, iconic Italian Vespas, curated tours of Italy, Tuscan cigars, and so much more!

Throughout the day, learn about Italian language and travel programs; watch a presentation about Luigi Del Bianco, chief carver of Mount Rushmore; brush up your Italian language skills with the Italian Cultural Society of Washington; view the top three finalists' films for The Russo Brothers Italian American Film Fo-

rum; head to Gelato 101 for a lesson and tasting with World Gelato Champion Gianluigi Dellacio, owner of the D.C.-based Dolci Gelati; join award-winning author and chef Amy Riolo and Italian Sensory Experience's chef and Sommelier Antonio Iuliano for a virtual tour of Molise culture, wine and cuisine; drop in on a presentation of Molise's "hidden gems" by Jenifer Landor, founder of Live and Learn Italian; and see the winning photographs from the 2019 NIAF Photo Contest.

Come meet our special Expo partners, including Peroni Nastro Azzurro, DelGrosso Foods (will there be a return of the famous Meatball Martini?) and Lavazza, among many other Italian and Italian American exhibitors. Lunch served by Clemente Bakery from South Hackensack, N.J.! And don't forget to stop by the free and fun NIAF photo booth!

Gala guests staying at the Omni Shoreham Hotel will find Expo Italiana an easy go-to place all day on Saturday. This event is Free and Open to the Public! No registration, no tickets to buy, just show up and enjoy! You will feel your Italian bloodline pulsing through your veins!



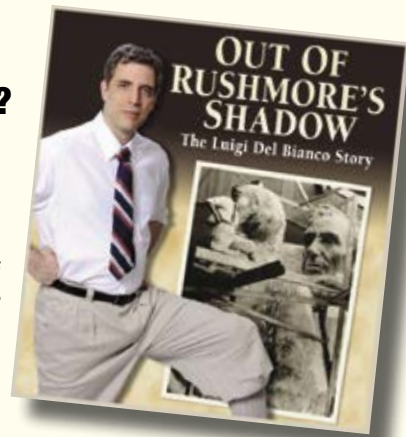
Screening the 2019 Russo Brothers' Italian American Film Forum Finalists

During the Expo Italiana, sit in on the free screenings of the 2019 top grant finalists for The Russo Brothers Italian American Film Forum, an initiative that funds film makers depicting and exploring the Italian American experience. If you don't know the Russo brothers, they're the Hollywood directors of the box-office record-breaking Marvel series of blockbusters (think *Captain America: Civil War* and *Avengers: Endgame*). The winner will be announced during the Gala Awards Dinner.



Wait, Who Built Mount Rushmore?

Italian immigrant Luigi Del Bianco has been recognized as Mt. Rushmore's chief *intagliatore* thanks to the tireless work by his grandson, Lou Del Bianco, author of *Out of Rushmore's Shadow: The Luigi Del Bianco Story – An Italian Immigrant's Unsung Role as Chief Carver*. Lou fought for years for recognition of his grandfather's contribution to American history. Now you can hear his and his grandfather's story at this special presentation.



Sunday Morning Mass in Italian

Finish Gala Weekend with a Sunday Mass, conducted in Italian, the morning of November 3, at the Holy Rosary Church, at 595 3rd St N.W., Washington, D.C.



There's More! Live Entertainment!

Throughout the Gala Weekend, workshops and seminars exploring topics of interest to the Italian American community are free and open to the public. Plus, live entertainment will pop up everywhere! Don't miss the popular i-Talians band playing during the Expo Italiana. Special guest Italian singer and songwriter Chiara Izzi (from Molise) will entertain guests during "An Evening with Mary Ann Esposito" on Friday and the Gala Awards Dinner on Saturday.

The Sicilian Tenors make a highly anticipated return engagement, as will actress and singer Christina Carlucci!



Saturday Night Gala Dinner

NIAF's Gala Award Dinner is legendary. Besides a lineup of fantastic honorees whose personal stories will make you stand up and be proud to be Italian American, expect the wine to flow, the Molise-inspired dinner to be memorable, and the entertainment to amaze you. Prepare for standing ovations! And don't forget the Live Auction featuring elite travel experiences and luxury items.

The NIAF After Hours Party!

Untie that bowtie, change out of that gown, let your hair down! After the Gala ends, more late-night begins! Join in the most famous Italian Party in America, featuring live music, spirited sing-alongs, and dancing! Lots

of dancing! The band i-Talians will be playing a mix of today's top hits along with Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin classics! If you miss this party, just say you were there!

Visit www.niaf.org/gala for updates on honorees, special guests and celebrities attending the Gala, and for more information on purchasing tickets, sponsoring the Gala and becoming part of NIAF's 44th Anniversary Gala.

For more information about the NIAF 44th Anniversary Gala, contact us at 202-939-3107 or visit www.niaf.org/gala today!

Introducing NIAF's 2019 Honorees

This year's honorees exemplify Italian and Italian American achievement at its highest levels!

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Maria Bartiromo
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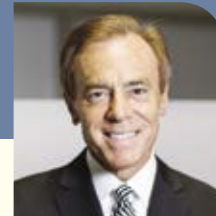
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Mission to Italy 2019: Molise and Rome

From June 23-28, members of NIAF's Board of Directors traveled to Italy's Region of Molise and to Rome for the 2019 Mission to Italy, NIAF's annual visit to strengthen political, economic and cultural ties between the United States and Italy.

While in Molise, NIAF Chair Patricia de Stacy Harrison, along with the delegation, visited Campobasso for the celebration of *I Misteri*, a religious procession comprised of 13 allegoric floats parading through Campobasso's streets.

On June 24, the delegation met with the Vice President of the Region of Molise Vincenzo Cotugno, followed by a lunch hosted by NIAF's corporate sponsor, Colavita S.p.A., at St. Francis Convent in Sant'Elia a Pianisi. The delegation then visited the convent and the Colavita facility before enjoying a wine tour and dinner at the Cantine Di Majo Norante in Campomariano, hosted by Amato Berardi.

On June 25, in Pozzilli, the delegation visited Neuromed, a center specializing in neurosurgery, neurology and neurorehabilitation, and met with its founder Aldo Patriciello. Later that day, NIAF Board members traveled to Agnone, where they met with Agnone's Mayor Lorenzo Marcovecchio and toured the Marinelli Pontifical Foundry, Italy's oldest family business, known for manufacturing bells, bronze portals, bas-reliefs, and church artifacts. That evening, in Campobasso, NIAF Board members met with the 19 students participating in the 2019 Ambassador Peter F. Secchia Voyage of Discovery program for dinner.

On June 26, the delegation traveled to Rome and attended the Secretary of State of the Vatican Cardinal Pietro Parolin's private Mass in the Saint Peter's Basilica, followed by an exclusive dinner in the Vatican Gardens.

On June 27, NIAF Board members had their annual Board meeting in Leonardo S.p.A.'s headquarters in Rome. That evening, Chairman Emeritus and Chairman of NIAF Italia Joseph V. Del Raso hosted a dinner for the delegation and other NIAF friends in the beautiful venue of the Mirabelle Restaurant at the Hotel Splendide Royal.

— Carlo Piccolo



NIAF Chair Patricia de Stacy Harrison, Senator Basilio Giordano, President of Colavita S.p.A. Enrico Colavita, Vice President of Molise Vincenzo Cotugno



NIAF Chair Patricia de Stacy Harrison, Molise Vice President Vincenzo Cotugno, NIAF Secretary Linda R. Carozzi, NIAF General Counsel Joseph D. Lonardo, and NIAF Board Member Anthony S. DiSandro Jr.



NIAF Chair Patricia de Stacy Harrison, Owner of Colavita S.p.A. Enrico Colavita, and NIAF Secretary Linda R. Carozzi



NIAF's Voyage of Discovery at dinner with the Mission to Italy delegation



Former NIAF President John M. Viola, Princess Beatrice, NIAF Chairman Emeritus Joseph V. Del Raso, and NIAF Vice Chair Anita Bevacqua McBride at Mirabelle Restaurant in Rome



NIAF Mission to Italy delegation inside Saint Peter's Basilica

Photos by Carlo Piccolo



Agnone Mayor Lorenzo Marcovecchio and wife with the NIAF delegation



The delegation at Neuromed in Pozzilli



NIAF Chair Patricia de Stacy Harrison address the Mission to Italy delegation during its dinner with the students in NIAF's 2019 Voyage of Discovery trip.



Princess Beatrice, John Viola (center at back) and the NIAF delegation in the Vatican Gardens

Italian American Congressional Delegation Dinner

On July 11, NIAF hosted a reception and dinner at RPM Italian in Washington, D.C., honoring Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi and the Italian American Congressional Delegation (IACD).

Between courses of authentic Italian fare, the 15 Members of Congress in attendance – including IACD Co-Chairs Rep. Bill Pascrell and Rep. Mark Amodei – gave remarks on their Italian heritage, and what it means to them. NIAF also welcomed two keynote speakers from either side of the political aisle to speak on the current political landscape. Attorney and RNC Committeeman Bill Palatucci represented the Republican Party, while former Deputy Chief of Staff to President Obama and current CEO of the Messina Group Jim Messina represented the Democratic Party.

The evening was a wonderful way for NIAF to celebrate Italian American culture alongside Italian American public servants and thought leaders.

— Phillip Donofrio



Former Congressman and NIAF Board Member Mike Ferguson, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, and Jeff Paravano, Tax Group Chair and Managing Partner at BakerHostetler, which sponsored the dinner.



Rep. Bill Pascrell, co-chair of the Italian American Congressional Delegation, with NIAF General Counsel Joseph D. Lonardo



Co-chairs of the Italian American Congressional Delegation Rep. Mark Amodei and Rep. Bill Pascrell, with NIAF Co-Chair Gabriel A. Battista



Kraig Siracuse, Rep. Brian Higgins and Rep. Mike Doyle



NIAF Vice Chair Robert E. Carlucci and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi



Front row: NIAF Chair Gabriel A. Battista, NIAF Vice Chair Anita Bevacqua McBride, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, Rep. Bill Pascrell, NIAF Chairman Emeritus Joseph V. Del Raso and former Congressman Mike Ferguson; Back row: NIAF Vice Chair Robert E. Carlucci, NIAF Vice Chair John F. Calvelli and Rep. Mark Amodei



Rep. Virginia Foxx, former Congresswoman Connie Morella, Rep. Doug LaMalfa and Rep. Rosa DeLauro



NIAF Vice Chair John F. Calvelli, former Congressman Rick Lazio, and CEO of the Messina Group Jim Messina



NIAF Executive Vice President Frank Giordano, Rep. John Larson and NIAF Vice Chair Anita Bevacqua McBride

Photos by Don Oldenburg

NIAF Hosts White House Staff Dinner

On July 30, NIAF hosted a dinner honoring the Italian American White House Staff Association (IAWHSA) at Aperto, in Washington, D.C. Guests enjoyed an authentic four-course meal prepared by Chef Luigi Diotaiuti.

Present at the dinner were several Italian American White House staffers, including Public Liaison Assistant Andrew Giuliani, who leads IAWHSA. The dinner's special guests included Caroline Casagrande, deputy assistant secretary for Academic Programs at the State Department, as well as the Deputy Chief of Mission and Charge d'Affaires Maurizio Greganti of the Italian Embassy.

Guests enjoyed a four-course meal which included the delicious Cacio e Pepe as and Chef Diotaiuti's flavorful tiramisù.

— Phillip Donofrio



Top: Richard Chalkey, Steven Munistieri, Dr. John Rosa, and Joseph Bottari; Right: Andrew Giuliani, Phillip Donofrio, and John Calvelli; Left: Anita Bevacqua McBride, Dino LaVerghetta, and Embassy of Italy Deputy Chief of Mission Maurizio Greganti



Photos by Natalie Wulderk



Capitol Hill Wine Tasting

Which are better wines, Italian or American? On July 25, at NIAF's "VinOff" on Capitol Hill, more than 150 congressional staffers and NIAF friends sampled sparkling, white, and red wine wines from the United States and Italy and voted on which they preferred.

NIAF Board Member and NIAF Government Affairs Committee Member Christopher Berardini welcomed the crowd and explained NIAF's mission and involvement with the Italian American Congressional Staff Association (IACSA). He also thanked A. Latteri, Beni di Bataciolo, Colavita, Liber, Rodman's, RWK Imports, Schneider's, Sogno Toscano, Valdo, The Wine Institute, Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America for their generous donations for the evening's tasting.

New IACSA President Lauren Amendolara McDermott welcomed new IACSA members while IACSA vice presidents Aaron Bill, Carla DiBlasio and Michael DeFilippis mingled with IACSA members and congressional staffers.

The evening was full of energy and excitement. At the end, NIAF Government Affairs Manager Phillip Donofrio tallied the votes and announced that the Italian wines won!

— Natalie Wulderk



Natalie Wulderk

Amanda Shaffer and Dennis Hull



IACSA Executive Board: Aaron Bill, Carla DiBlasio, Lauren Amendolara McDermott and Michael DeFilippis



Congressional Staffers Stephanie DeMarco, Angela Herron and Noah Sadlier



Francesco Portello

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Voyage of Discovery in Rome and Molise

In June, the Ambassador Peter F. Secchia Voyage of Discovery sent 19 Italian American college students to Rome and Molise, NIAF's 2019 Region of Honor. The all-expenses paid trip to Italy helps strengthen the Italian American identity by bonding young Italian Americans to the country, culture and heritage of Italy, all thanks to the financial support of Ambassador Peter F. Secchia.

The two-week trip began in Rome with four days of history and walking—visiting all the major sites the Eternal City has to offer. The students took a break from the crowds for a day trip to Tivoli where they found peace and quiet at Hadrian's Villa and Villa d'Este.

On their way to Molise, they paid homage to the American heroes of World War II at Monte Cassino. The capital city of Campobasso served as our base for the rest of the trip where the students discovered Molise's raw beauty with day trips to towns throughout the region—towns like Sepino, Oratino, Fornelli and Frosolone, all nationally recognized as "Borghi più belli d'Italia." In Agnone, they visited Italy's oldest foundry, Fonderia Marinelli, learned how to make *caciocavallo* cheese at a small artisan shop, learned about the ancient tradition of bagpipes in Scapoli, and witnessed Campobasso's annual *Festa dei Misteri* procession. The trip wrapped up with a wine tasting in Larino and a visit to the original Colavita factory in Sant'Elia a Pianisi.

— Gabriella Mileti



Julia Streisfeld

President of Colavita SpA Enrico Colavita takes VOD students Alessandra Mitrano, Mike Fraioli, Jack Englehart, Alex Aronco-Perez on a private tour of the Colavita grounds.



Gabriella Mileti

The 2019 Ambassador Peter F. Secchia Voyage of Discovery group at Colavita headquarters in Sant'Elia a Pianisi.



Gabriella Mileti

The students at the Coliseum in Rome where the 2019 trip kicked off.

Josiah LaRocco, Gabriella Santucci, Sabrina Sales, Joel Walley and Nathaniel Hirschman during an espresso break in Oratino.



Julia Streisfeld

NIAF Golf Tournament

On June 18, at the Classic Car Club in New York, N.Y., NIAF's New York Golf Kick Off Reception hosted legendary racecar driver Mario Andretti who presented a National Italian American Foundation scholarship to Trevor Tesoriero, a graduate student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Shiny luxury race cars and vintage classics dazzled guests as they enjoyed cocktails and views of the Jersey City skyline on the Hudson River.

The evening's host NIAF Board Member Nicholas Caiazzo welcomed guests, and connected NIAF's mission to empower young Italian Americans through its robust scholarships program to the evening's purpose. He later conducted a Q&A session with Andretti on stage in which Andretti spoke of his family's emigration from Italy and his remarkable six-decade racing career. This year marked the 50th anniversary of his 1969 win at the Indianapolis 500.

On August 19, at the Glen Oaks Club in Westbury, N.Y., Golfers tee'd up to benefit NIAF membership and educational programs at NIAF's 15th Annual Tournament proved to be another sold-out fundraising event.



Natalie Wunderk

At the tournament kickoff in June, Trevor Tesoriero, NIAF Board Member Nicholas Caiazzo, and Mario Andretti



Howard Wechsler

Event Chair and NIAF Board Member Nick Caiazzo with scholarship winner Frank Caravella and Scott DiSarno

Chris Vitale; scholarship winner Christian De Biasi, and Event Chair Nick Caiazzo



Howard Wechsler



Howard Wechsler

Bruce Arella, Steven Markowitz, former New York Gala Honoree Anthony Cammarata and Joseph Tranchina



Howard Wechsler

Frank Mancini, James Halpin, Susan Paolercio, Kevin DePicciotto, Enzo Paternostro, Joseph Bellina, Nick Caiazzo, Scott DiSarno, Joseph Tranchina, Antonio Biondi, Sal Mazzeo and Chris Vitale

Italian Musical Terms



by Leon J. Radomile
www.leonradomile.com

ACROSS

- 2 A drama set to music for singers and instrumentalists
- 4 Excited and fast
- 7 A keyboard instrument
- 9 A one-act comical opera
- 12 Genre of operas with storylines based on everyday life
- 14 With fiery manner
- 15 Large drums

- 18 Second-highest vocal line
- 19 Leading male role
- 21 Sung with no instrumental accompaniment
- 23 A work containing the words of an opera, musical or ballet
- 24 Very deep bass voice
- 25 An ensemble of instruments

DOWN

- 1 The highest vocal line
- 3 A tiny woodwind instrument
- 5 Moderately slow walking pace
- 6 Very slow
- 8 A vocal register right above to modal voice range
- 10 Little by little, slowly but steadily
- 11 Piece of music, usually for a singer
- 13 A stringed instrument in the arm
- 16 Leading female role
- 17 Very loud
- 20 Very fast
- 22 Slow and solemn, slower than largo

SOLUTION

- 25 Orchestra
- 24 Basso Profondo
- 23 Libretto
- 21 A Capella
- 19 Primo Uomo
- 18 Alto
- 15 Timpani
- 14 Con Fuoco
- 12 Verso
- 9 Farsa
- 7 Piano
- 4 Agitato
- 2 Opera
- 1 Soprano
- 3 Piccolo
- 5 Andate
- 6 Pianissimo
- 8 Falsetto
- 10 Poco a Poco
- 11 Aria
- 13 Viola da Braccio
- 16 Prima Donna
- 17 Fortissimo
- 20 Presto
- 22 Grave

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