

#123 / January 2020

We the Italians



INTERVIEW WITH **PAOLO BATTAGLIA**

Welcome to the Italian
American Country,
another masterpiece
by Paolo Battaglia

INTERVIEW WITH **SILVIA VERONESE**

Italy, a fundamental part
of Silicon Valley



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What's up with WTI

Editorial # 123

THE 2019 YEARBOOK

We the  Italians



We the  Italians

THE 2019 YEARBOOK



BY UMBERTO MUCCI

Ciao from Rome to all the friends of We the Italians, and Happy Holidays!

We are very happy to announce that the sixth book of We the Italians is available: the yearbook of 2019! [You can find it here!](#) In 2019 we interviewed 25 friends of We the Italians who gave us 24 different views about 24 different topics of the relation between Italy and the US. These are the topics you will find in this yearbook: Little Italies around

the US; Italy in St. Louis, Italian opera and the Italian American integration; Italy in Ohio; How the US helped Italy after World War II; Italian American Women, Food, and Identity; Dick Biondi, "The Wild I-tralian"; How to get an Italian passport; The new Italian emigration to the US; Dallara, the undisputed king of Indianapolis 500; The incredible story of Amadeo P. Giannini; the great Federico Faggin; the USA in Florence; the story of Rocco Petrone and



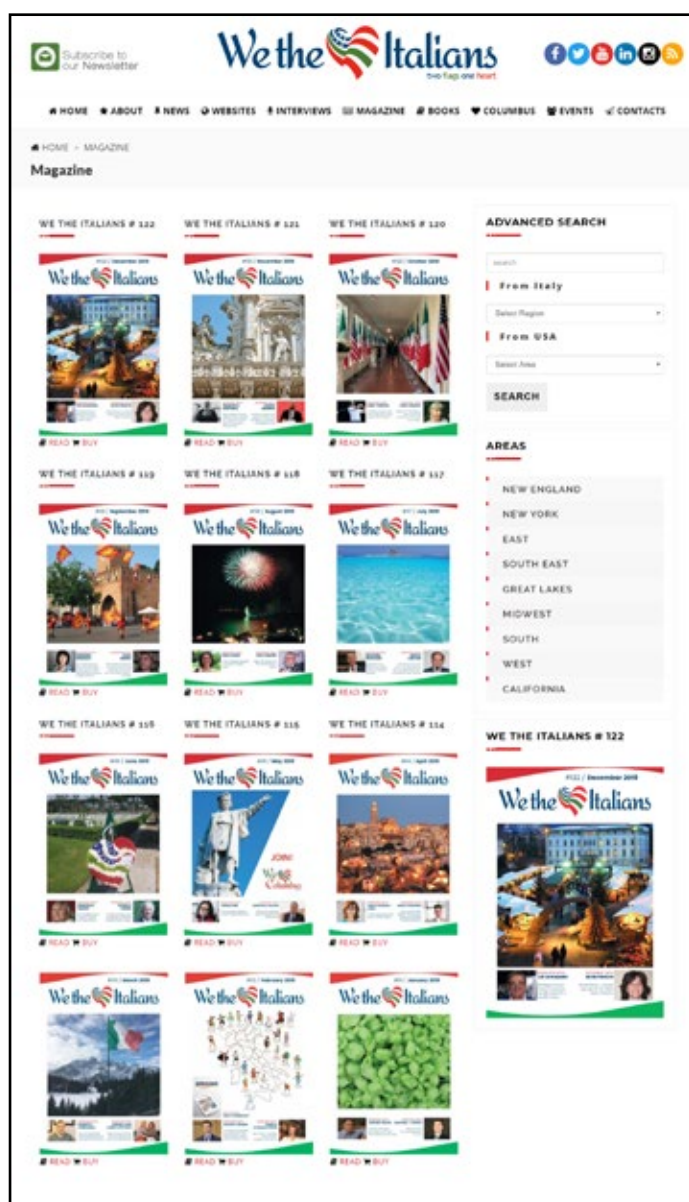


the moon; a new approach on the Italian American cuisine; the 100th anniversary of the St. Anthony's Feast in Boston; a century of Garibaldi Meucci Museum; the story of the "Fish Creek massacre" in Nevada; the heritage of the Turnesas, seven brothers all professional golfers; Christopher Columbus' quest for Jerusalem; the musicians from Catania chosen for the first American Navy musical band; the future of Italian food exports to America; the Italian American Baseball Foundation; ancient Rome as a constant inspiration for the USA.

Among our guests we've had 15 men and 10 women: we had 23 single interviews and a double one. 7 of our guests live in Italy, 18 in the US. All of them share the love for both Italy and the US. So you will find 24 interviews, each of them in two versions, in Italian and in English.

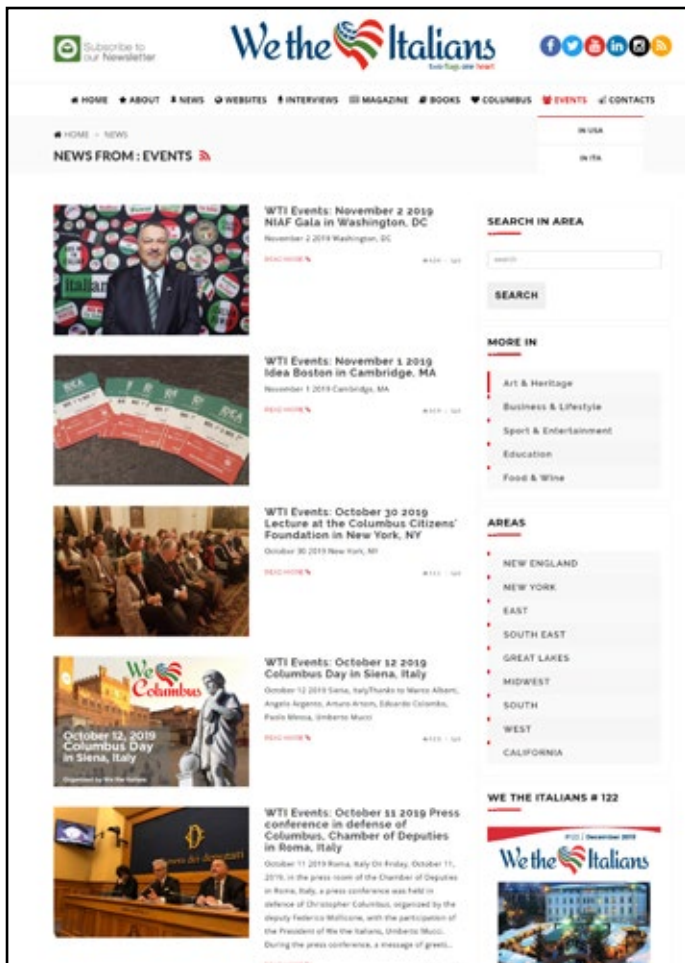
We want to thank all the interviewees that made this possible. Also, we want to thank YOU, our readers and followers on the social media we are on. And last but not least, we want to thank all the people that work hard to build and grow this network.

At the dawn of this 2020, we want to share with you a few numbers regarding our 2019, besides the interviews. During 2019 we've promoted on our website 7,686 news (2,001 of them about Italy, the other ones about something Italian in the US); published 172 articles [in the 12 issues of our Magazine](#); published one yearbook ([about the 2018 interviews](#)) both paperback and digital.



Our [archive of websites](#) regarding non-profit organizations, groups, departments, festivals, museums, associations and foundations celebrating something Italian in the US contains 1,494 records. During 2019 we've sent 1.157.831 [newsletters](#):

with 12 months, 9 areas and several of you who subscribed to more than one, this is the final number. We've passed the 43,000 likes on our [Facebook page](#): please, like us if you haven't already done. We have a [Linkedin group](#) where we're waiting for you. We're also on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#), and we're planning on improving our presence on all of these social media. During 2019 we've also organized and/or spoken at thirteen events in Italy and in the US, everything documented in the [Events section](#) of our website. It has been a great year, but once again, we're just getting started.



There is another important number that we have reached and about which we want to talk to you. We have reached (and surpassed!) the incredible number of 50,000 contents on our site: each one concerns Italy in the United States or something positive about

our beloved country. There is nothing even remotely similar on the web: just as there is no greater love than ours at We the Italians for the bond between Italy and the United States. Two flags, One heart!

Another important announcement that we are very happy about concerns our team, which is now enriched with a new element: from this month the magazine will have again the column on Italian Sport, written by one of the best Italian sports journalists, our friend [Federico Pasquali](#). We are really proud to have him with us: welcome Federico!



We remind you that you can take advantage of a 5% discount on the services of our partner [Italian Citizenship Assistance](#), reserved only for our readers, by writing an email to info@wetheitalians.com and quoting the code **ICAWTI**.

Finally, the Italian proverb. This month the letter is "O" and the proverb of the month of January 2020 is: *Ogni regola ha la sua eccezione* ("There is no rule without an exception"). Be smart, follow the old Italian traditions and proverbs, they are always right!

That's all for now. Once again, Happy 2020 from all of us on We the Italians. Stay tuned, fasten your seat belt and enjoy the ride. The future's so bright, we gotta wear shades!





NOW YOU CAN BUY
THE YEARBOOK 2019
 BY CLICKING HERE!

amazon

/by Umberto Mucci

Paolo Battaglia

Welcome to the Italian American Country, another masterpiece by Paolo Battaglia



What unites all the people I have had the good luck to interview is their relationship with an aspect of the marriage between Italy and America. Everyone experiences it from a different point of view, on this or that side of the ocean, and for We the Italians it is nice to meet people who are different in culture, sex, age, experience, tastes and values, with

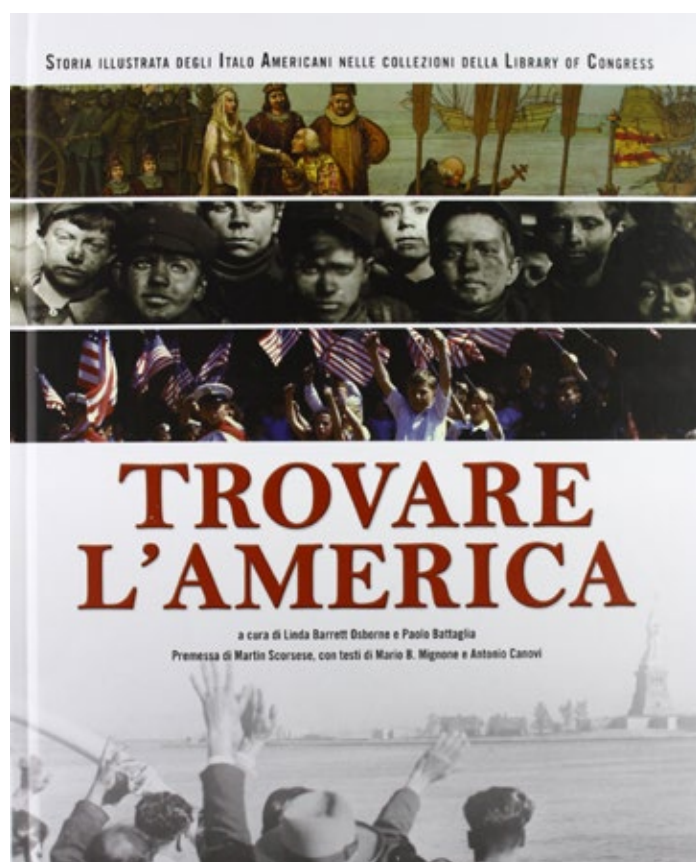
this common thread that links them to each other and to us.

Sometimes I have the pleasure of personally knowing the interviewee in person, as in this case, which is special to me. I met Paolo Battaglia a few years ago: he has the rare gift of combining curiosity and talent, humility



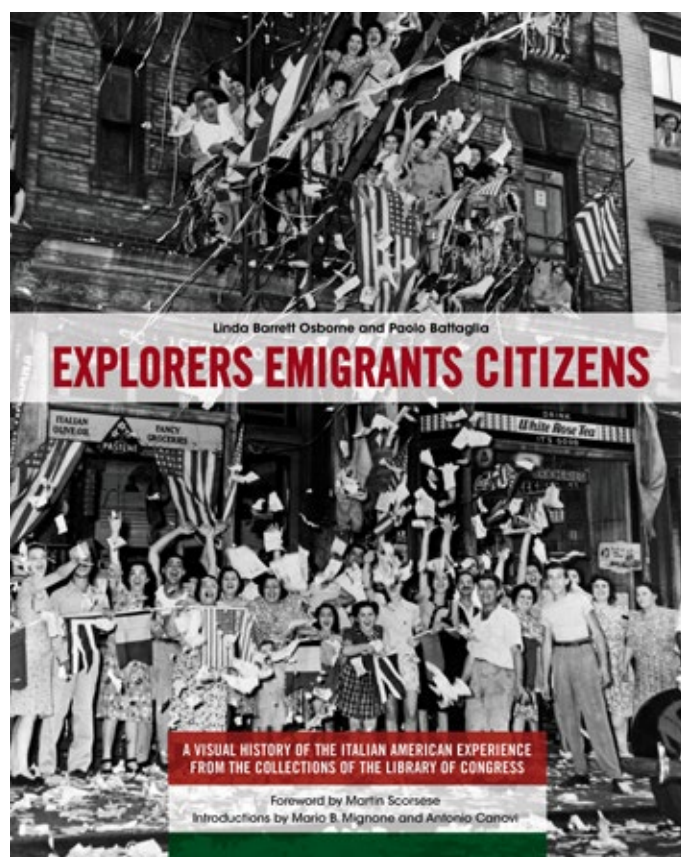
and charisma, generosity and success. I have learned a lot from him about content and method, stubbornness and sacrifice, farsightedness and research. Allow me to have the special pleasure of welcoming and thanking him, here on We the Italians

Paolo, we met a few years ago, when you completed a historic and beautiful undertaking, culminating with the publication of the beautiful book "Explorers Emigrants Citizens: A Visual History of the Italian American Experience", also in the Italian edition entitled "Trovare l'America". It is a milestone in the literature that tells the story of the Italian experience in the United States. Can you tell us how it was born and what the contents are?



"Explorers Emigrants Citizens" was one of those adventures that really makes you think that the USA still has something more to

offer to those who have dreams. My dream as an Italian micro-publisher specializing in photographic books was to publish an illustrated story about the Italian presence in America. To make it a reality, I tried to aim high: I wrote to the Library of Congress in Washington proposing a joint research on everything Italian American they had in their endless collections. The surprising thing for those of us who are used to navigating between contacts and recommendations is that after a few weeks the offices of the Library of Congress answered me saying they were interested in my project.



After two years of work with their researchers, in autumn 2013 "Explorers Emigrants Citizens" was published, enriched by the contribution of Martin Scorsese who wrote the preface.

The book tells, with more than 500 images, the parable of Italians in America addressing,

three major issues. It opens with "Explorers" that examines the first centuries of European colonization when the few Italians who arrived were travelers, soldiers of fortune, missionaries and fortune seekers. These are sometimes names that have entered history books such as Giovanni da Verrazzano, the first European to enter New York Bay, and sometimes lesser-known personalities such as Carlo Gentile, one of the first photographers to portray the natives of the Southwest.

Then we continue with the most consistent chapter entitled "Emigrants", which traces the decades in which hundreds of thousands of Italians arrived every year at Ellis Island; decades in which our countrymen in America had to fight against discrimination and, in some cases, the open racism of Americans, and in which the foundations of the Italian American culture were forged.

The book closes with the chapter "Citizens" which deals with the epoch-making passage in which the children and grandchildren of emigrants are fully integrated into American culture and society, becoming fundamental protagonists of American development in every field, from politics to culture and sport.

In this book you collaborated with Mario Mignone: a wonderful Italian American, a professor with a big heart, an Italian so proud of his roots, who unfortunately left us a few months ago. We ask you for a memory of Mario, whom many readers of We the Italians have known and appreciated

One of the most important legacies of the work done to achieve "Explorers Emigrants Citizens" is the extraordinary people I met during my research. Mario was certainly the person who, together with the co-author

of the book, Linda Barrett Osborne - 100% Italian American in spite of her name - I felt closest to in these years.

His great experience, passion and sensitivity almost naturally led me to ask for his advice when I wanted to undertake some new project. And while he was always very committed to the activities of the Center for Italian Studies in Stony Brook, he was always available to offer advice and encouragement. Also last year, before facing the coast to coast that allowed me to conclude the project "Italian American Country", I had been his guest for a couple of days and, discussing with him, I was able to focus on some important aspects of this new work of mine.



Mario Mignone

We were supposed to meet last October at the end of my American presentation tour, but unfortunately the news of his sudden death reached me in California. I feel that I have lost not only a teacher, but also and above all, a good friend.

Your new work is called "[Italian American Country](#)" and it's both a book and a documentary ([here the trailer in English](#), [here the one in Italian](#)). In my opinion it's another masterpiece, and it tells stories of Italians in the American regions, far from the big cities...



Thank you for calling it a masterpiece. I don't know if it is. But I'm sure it's a unique work, at least for the past century. It had been since 1905, when Italian Ambassador Edmondo Mayor Des Planches crossed the United States to visit the most isolated Italian communities since anyone bothered to see what it means and what it has meant to be Italian far from the great cities of the Northeast.



Valdese NC

A fundamental part of this project was the journey: replacing the rails on which the ambassador's private carriage was travelling with the asphalt of the highways, I travelled for over 15,000 miles, meeting and interviewing over one hundred people and visiting dozens of places that have - or have had - a role in the history of Italian emigration. From Barre in Vermont, where the stonemasons from Carrara brought their art and their political ideas, to Pittsburg in California, where the Latin sails of the fishermen from Isola delle Femmine conquered rivers and oceans.



Tontitown AR

From Valdese, founded by Piedmontese Protestants who moved their community from the Alps to the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina, to Denver, which is now a large city, but that in the late nineteenth century when the Italians began to arrive was still a frontier outpost. Another goal that I hope to have achieved with this work, especially with the documentary, is to finally give voice to the descendants of those who, for various reasons, instead of stopping in the shadow of the Statue of Liberty, arrived in Paradise Valley, in the middle of the Nevada desert, or founded Tontitown, in Arkansas, after escaping the semi-slavery of

the Sunnyside plantation.

A few days ago I received a beautiful compliment: somebody told me that they appreciated the documentary because it was not made to support a thesis. And that's right: the documentary was made to listen, not very fashionable today, I know, but certainly useful to try to understand experiences different from ours. To listen to the voices, the testimonies, the memories of



Dawson NM



San Xavier AZ



Lake Village AR



Monongah WV

those who are Italian in an America far from the big cities.

You have presented your new book and your documentary in different rural areas of the United States. What difference have you found, if there is one, between



Wilmington DE

the Italians there and those in the cities where you presented your first book?

I believe that the substantial isolation from the rest of the Italians in America in which the communities in rural areas have lived has made them somehow more tied to the memory of Italy and its traditions than to the Italian American culture that has developed in the big cities. And it is perhaps for this



Denver CO

reason that the welcome they have given me has always been extraordinary.

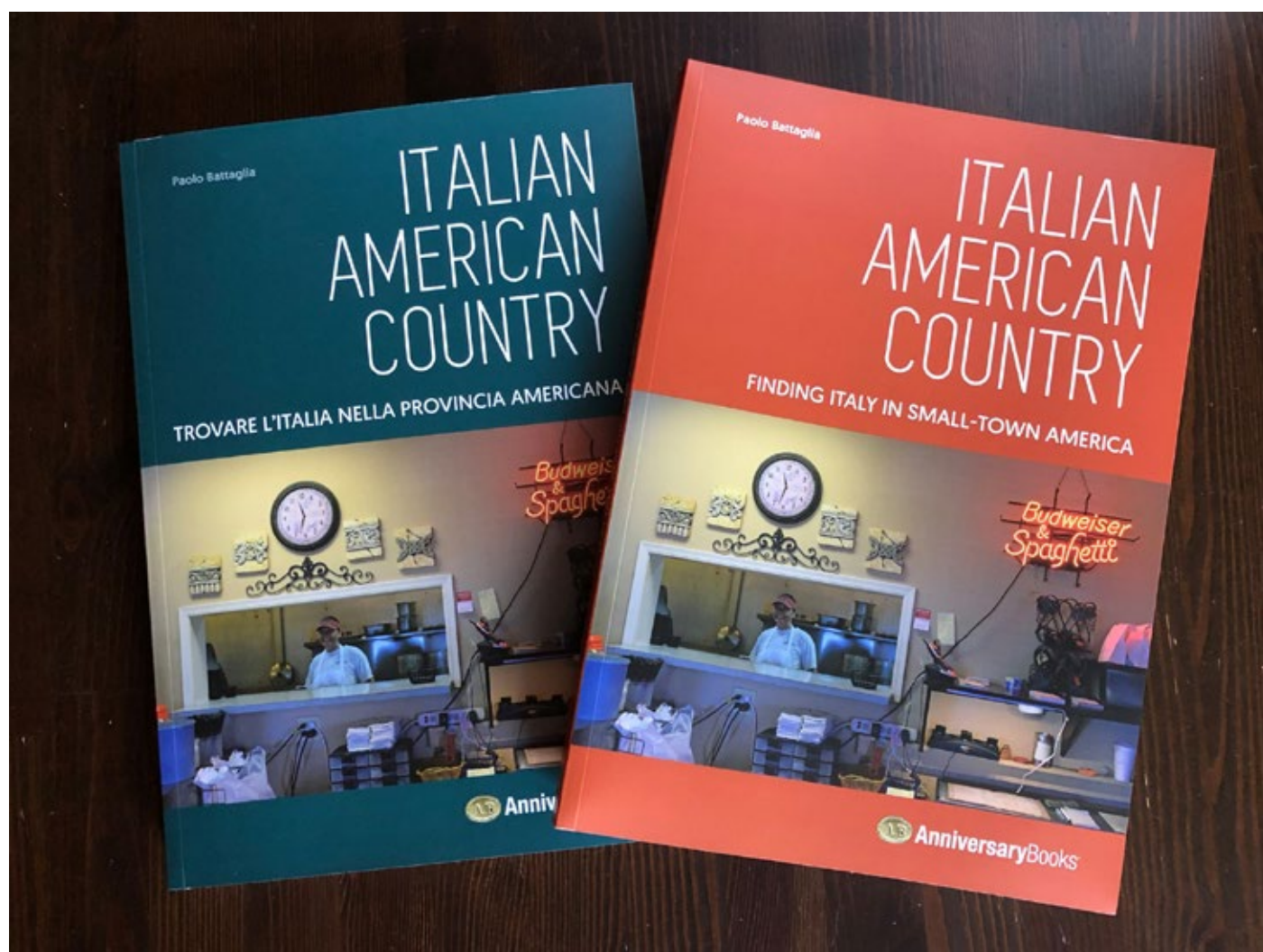
As I write in the afterword, I was struck by the "joy with which they had shared their stories with a perfect stranger, just because he had arrived with the promise that for once those stories could also be heard in the Old Country. There had been laughter and tears; there was humor, sadness, pride, but above all the desire to share with someone to whom they felt a natural connection for an innate sense of common Italianism that I discovered thanks to them."

Can you tell us a couple of curious anecdotes you discovered during your new adventure?

In every place I have visited I have met people and events worth remembering here, but if I have to choose some, I will limit myself to those who have made me feel that the Italians have also been part of the history of the American border.

I continue to suffer that childish fascination born many years ago reading books and comics or watching movies about the epic of the Wild West, and therefore could not leave me indifferent to being in Paradise Valley, Nevada (a town that, according to its inhabitants, is still "at the end of the world") and finding myself interviewing Kevin Pasquale, who presented himself with the clothing and stage presence of John Wayne and, looking at the horizon, listed the ranches owned by families descended from Piedmontese emigrants like him.

Or the story told by the volunteers of the Tontitown Historical Museum in Arkansas, where the men who arrived in those remote places from Emilia Romagna, Veneto and





Marche had been forced to face outlaws disguised as Indians, who had burned the first church of the Italian community.

Or finally, the arrival after twelve miles traveled on dirt roads - and a hundred and twenty on almost completely deserted roads - in the ghost town of Dawson, New Mexico, where the only company is that of rattlesnakes of which you are warned by a sign, and the only noise is the creaking of the gate of the cemetery where more than 100 Italian miners are buried, who died at the beginning of the twentieth century when the city was one of the most flourishing mining centers in the region.

In Italy we have a saying: "Non c'è due senza tre" (There is not two without three). Is there a third job about the Italian Americans in your future? We really hope so...

Obviously I would like to continue to tell other stories of Italians in America and I always find new clues and new tracks that

should be followed. But as you can imagine, they are projects that are difficult to sustain for a micro-publisher like me, so a lot will depend on the results that we will be able to achieve with "Italian American Country".

On the other hand, I have already started another project, much lighter in its contents, which puts the American culture in contact with the Italian one. It's called "Foodball High" and it's inspired by my passion for American football: last September, I brought to San Diego a group of four young Italian football players - three of them also wore the blue shirt of the Italian team at the European Championships - with their coach who is also a cook in everyday life. Our goal was to start a sort of "cultural barter", football for food, between our boys and the student players of a high school. On the one hand the Italian boys would participate in the training of the football team, experiencing what it means to practice that sport in its homeland; on the other hand they would teach their American teammates to cook typical Italian recipes.

A project that, as you can see, is very different



from the previous ones but that, beyond the recreational-sports aspect, has allowed us to reflect on how much our food culture, not only of what we eat but also of how we eat

it and how we prepare it, is an aspect that always identifies us. If all goes well (fingers crossed) "Foodball High" should see the light as a documentary by mid 2020.



/by Italia.it

Italian culture and history

What to do and see in Parma, Italian Capital of Culture 2020



Piazza del Duomo

A refined arts town, Parma amazes visitors with its elegant monuments, churches, museums and green spaces, but is also a city of theatre and music and a land of gastronomic excellences.

Its rich historical, artistic and culinary heritage has earned Parma the title of Italian Capital of Culture 2020: with a calendar of more than 500 events, 2020 is the perfect year in

which to go and discover this city.

What to do and see in Parma? Here are our tips on what not to miss.

Visit Cathedral Square

A visit to Parma has to start from Piazza del Duomo, heart of the city's art and sacred vocation. It hosts its two main symbolic places: the 12th century Cathedral , one



of the best examples of Romanesque architecture in Italy and a treasure chest full of remarkable Renaissance works, like the amazing dome frescoed by Correggio, and, next to it, the imposing Baptistry with octagonal plan, entirely covered in pink marble and decorated with paintings and frescoes.

Retrace history in the Abbey of San Giovanni Evangelista



Abbey of San Giovanni Evangelista

Just a few steps from Cathedral Square you reach the Abbey of S. Giovanni Evangelista, right behind the Cathedral. Inside this

monastic complex, founded by Benedictine monks in 980, you can visit the church with 16th century frescoes by various painters (including Correggio), three different cloisters, the library and the "spezieria" (ancient pharmacy).

Take a plunge into the beauty of the Monastery of San Paolo



Monastery of San Paolo

Going back towards the Cathedral, in five minutes you arrive at the Benedictine monastery of San Paolo, providing another amazing opportunity for you to immerse

Palazzo della Pilotta



yourself in beauty. Today, the ancient monastery is a museum comprising a room frescoed by Alessandro Araldi and the wonderful Abbess' Chamber, recently reopened to the public, with its beautiful vault frescoed by Correggio.

tradition. The venue for opera and dance shows, concerts and recitals, most notably the events of the famous Verdi Festival (held each year in October, the birth month of the great composer from Parma).

Take a cultural tour of Palazzo della Pilotta

Crossing the green area of Piazza della Pace, in 4 minutes, you get to Palazzo della Pilotta, a late 16th century monumental complex comprising various buildings. One ticket admits you to all the collections and artistic treasures of the Farnese family: the National Archaeological Museum, the Galleria Nazionale, Teatro Farnese, the Bodoni Museum and the Palatine Library.

Watch a show at Teatro Regio

From Palazzo Pilotta, going back to Piazza della Pace and along Strada Garibaldi, in just three minutes you reach the Teatro Regio of Parma. Commissioned by Duchess Marie Louise during the 1820s, it is one of the most important theatres of Italian operatic



Teatro Regio



Admire the masterpieces by Parmigianino in the Basilica of Santa Maria della Steccata

Just a few meters beyond the theatre, you come across one of the most significant churches in Parma: the 17th century Basilica of Santa Maria della Steccata, worth a visit because of its large frescoed dome and the works by Bernardino Gatti and Parmigianino. Seat of the Sacred Constantinian Order of Saint George since 1718, inside, the church also houses a treasure of art and history – the Museo costantiniano della Steccata – with sepulchral chapels of the ducal family, wooden statues and religious ornaments.

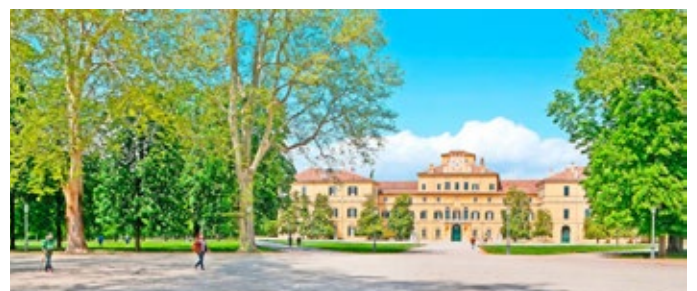
Celebrate the greatness of Arturo Toscanini

Turning right in Strada Mazzini and crossing the "Ponte di Mezzo" in a few minutes you reach the Oltretorrente quarter where Arturo Toscanini's House is located, birthplace of one of the greatest orchestra directors. Today the house is an interesting museum displaying period furniture and relics, items and opera costumes, and evocative spaces like the Piano Room and the room where Toscanini was born in 1867.



Go for a stroll in the Ducal Park

Parma boasts a large garden that stretches out just a few steps from Arturo Toscanini's House: the Ducal Park, the ideal place for a relaxing walk before leaving the city. In addition to its boulevards with centuries-old trees, statues, fountains, kiosks and playground, the park also hosts the ancient Ducal Palace and the Palazzetto Eucherio Sanvitale, dating back to Renaissance times.



Colorno Castle



Enjoy Parma's exquisite food & wine

Parma boasts a high-end food & wine tradition with dishes and specialties that are favourites all over the world, like its cured meats – especially Prosciutto di Parma (which even has its own museum) -, Parmigiano Reggiano, and traditional local recipes such as torta fritta, tortelli d'erbetta and many other delicacies. This outstanding culinary excellence allowed Parma to become the first city in Italy to win the title of Unesco Creative City of gastronomy.

Explore the castles around Parma

The beauties of the Parma area also extend well beyond the boundaries of the city's historic center: its surroundings are full of testimonies of the times when Parma was capital of the Duchy of Parma and Piacenza. Of the many castles of the Duchy, those undoubtedly worth visiting include Colorno Castle, the so-called "Versailles of Emilia", 15 km from the city center; Torrechiara Castle (20 km away from Parma), located in a panoramic position on top of a hill, one of

the best preserved castles in Italy, and Rocca Sanvitale, in Fontanellato (less than 20 km from Parma), with frescoes by Parmigianino, still entirely surrounded by a moat that preserves its Medieval beauty.



/by Paola Lovisetti Scamihorn

Italian cuisine

Savory Cantucci





I bet that many of you have eaten sweet Tuscan cantucci, the hard and crunchy, twice-baked cookies, at least once. They are often served as an after-dinner dessert to dunk in Vin Santo, a fortified sweet wine made with Trebbiano and Malvasia grapes. Savory cantucci, on the other hand, aren't so well known.

They are the reinterpretation of sweet ones which are generally given at Christmas. Almonds are not lacking in this recipe either, but there are also pistachios and grated Parmesan to transform the dessert into a tasty and appetizing aperitif, to enjoy with a glass of white wine or beer. This could be an idea for a party hors d'oeuvre. Easy and fast to make, and sinfully delicious to eat.

Nowadays cantucci are enjoyed all over the world and one of the emblems of Italian cuisine. They have only one defect: they are too good – one leads to another, and when you start it is hard to stop! They are a real temptation, resistance will be futile!

CANTUCCI SALATI (SAVORY CANTUCCI)

Total preparation time: 30 minutes

Baking time: 20 minutes

Yield: 30-35 cantucci

INGREDIENTS

- 100 g (3.5 oz) unpeeled almonds, coarsely chopped
- 100 g (3.5 oz) shelled pistachios, coarsely chopped

- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 60 ml (¼ cup) extra virgin olive oil
- 255 g (9 oz) all-purpose flour
- 100 g (3.5 oz) grated Parmesan cheese
- 3 g (about ½ teaspoon) baking powder
- 2-3 tablespoons cold water
- A pinch of salt

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 180 °C (350 °F)
2. In a large bowl mix all dry ingredients: flour, Parmesan, baking powder and salt.
3. Add the eggs and olive oil, mix well. The dough should be pretty dense. If it is too dense, add 2 or 3 tablespoons of water. Divide the dough in two equal parts. In one add the almonds and in the other one the pistachios. You can mix the nuts or use just the type you prefer
4. Divide the dough into 4 equal parts and shape each one into a 18 cm (7 inch) roll about 6 cm (2.5 inch) wide and 3 cm (1.5 inch) high. Transfer each roll, using a spatula, onto a baking sheet lined with baking paper. Leave enough space to spread while cooking. Bake for 15 minutes
5. At this time, remove from the oven and cut diagonally into about 1-1.5 cm (½ inch) wide cookies. Bake again for about 5 minutes. Remove from oven and let cool on a rack. Eat when they are completely cold.

Note: Cantucci store well for several days in a cookie container.

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Dr. Paola Lovisetti Scamihorn & Paola Palestini, PhD

/by Enrico de Iuliis

Italian art

Giulio Romano



Giulio Pippi De Iannuzzi, known to Art History as Giulio Romano, probably born in Rome in 1492, was Raphael's most famous and gifted pupil. He was trained in the workshop of the Urbino area, which now we know to have been a sort of pole of the arts where every artistic expression, from sculpture to painting, from engraving to ceramics,

Chamber of the Giants

was managed with entrepreneurial flair by Raphael himself.

Upon Sanzio's death in 1520, all his students took up different careers and many of them moved to other cities, spreading Raphael's



unmistakable style throughout Europe. Giulio Romano arrived in Mantua in 1524, through the intercession of Baldassarre Castiglioni, where he found a second home, becoming the extraordinary interpreter of the power and ambitions of Prince Federico II Gonzaga. Today Mantua is home in Palazzo Ducale and Palazzo Te of two major exhibitions dedicated to this great artist. At Palazzo Ducale is in fact scheduled the exhibition "Con nuova e stravagante maniera. Giulio Romano a Mantova" (With a new and extravagant way. Giulio Romano in Mantua) which aims to illustrate the figure of the Roman painter and his "way" of making art.

The exhibition, the result of collaboration between the Palazzo Ducale Museum and the Musée du Louvre, will present 72 drawings

from the Département des Arts Graphiques of the Musée du Louvre, which is lending them for the first time. These drawings will be used to retrace Giulio Romano's career, from his debut in Rome alongside Raphael, to the apotheosis of Mantua, highlighting his versatile and multifaceted personality. There will also be paintings, prints, majolica and other drawings from various Italian and international museums (including the Albertina in Vienna, the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle).

The exhibition has three sections. The first, entitled "Il segno di Giulio", is set up on the ground floor of St. George's Castle and examines Giulio's production as a designer, painter, architect and urban planner. The second, "Al modo di Giulio", will occupy

the spaces of Corte Nuova and the Appartamento di Troia, the official residence of Federico II Gonzaga, frescoed by Giulio Romano himself, making it possible to compare the preparatory drawings of the frescoes and the final decoration. The third section, "Alla maniera di Giulio", located in the Appartamento della Rustica, will explore Giulio Romano's architect and the artist's epigones, with an exhibition of works by his pupils and disciples.

The other important exhibition planned at the same time at Palazzo Te is entitled "Giulio Romano: Arte e Desiderio" (Giulio Romano: Art and Desire).

The 40 works on display, including "I Due Amanti", from the Hermitage, and the "Ritratto di Cortigiana", from Puskin in Moscow, investigate the relationship between the images of erotic subjects produced in Italy in the first half of the 16th century and ancient figurative inventions,

sculptures and bas-reliefs in particular. A third appointment is at the Basilica and the former Monastic Refectory of San Benedetto Po, which host the exhibition "Il Cinquecento a Polirone. From Correggio to Giulio Romano." The exhibition intends to present the renewal promoted by Giulio Romano inside the spaces of the sacred building that is part of a wider innovative ferment that, during the century, saw the intervention of Correggio, the sculptor Antonio Begarelli, Fermo Ghisoni and other creators who gave the complex a modern look.

The opening of the exhibition is entrusted to a portrait of Giulio Romano, flanked, in the same room, by a drawing by Federico Zuccari and some altarpieces that belong to the sixteenth-century furnishings of the basilica. Here, a few years before his death, Giulio Romano had signed a contract for the realization of the various altarpieces, most of which were made by Fermo Ghisoni.





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/by I borghi più belli d'Italia

Italian little Italies

Corinaldo, One thousand metres of inviolate walls



Located in a strategic position between the Marca di Ancona and the State of Urbino, the borgo of Corinaldo has its symbol in the imposing walls that have remained practically intact since the fifteenth century. The entire wall circuit, 912 meters long, can be visited with a fascinating guided tour. The gates, the ramparts, the defense towers, the Ghibelline battlements with forked merlons,

and the watch walkways mark the landscape of this rare example of fortified borgo.

The perfect set for a cloak and dagger film, the heart of Corinaldo is the Piaggia, a stairway of one hundred steps flanked by red brick houses standing in a herringbone pattern.

The borgo has a number of noble residences and important civic and religious buildings. The artistic development in the 17th and 18th centuries was mainly due to the presence of great artists such as the painter Claudio Ridolfi, who lived many years in Corinaldo and died there, and the organist Gaetano Antonio Callido, who left two exceptional pipe organs here.



Civic buildings worth a visit are the Palazzo Comunale (Town Hall), a fine example of neoclassical architecture with a beautiful loggia; the former Convent of the Augustinians, built in the latter half of the 18th century and now a hotel; the Teatro Comunale (Municipal Theater, 1861-69), named after Carlo Goldoni; and the Casa del Trecento which is the seat of the Pro Loco (local town promotion board) and is the oldest building in the borgo.

The churches reveal the spirituality of the area, once a Papal State. The Collegiate Church of San Francesco is very old (1265) and was remodeled in the 17th and 18th centuries, when the convent (1749) and new church were built (1752-59). The Sanctuary of Santa Maria Goretti, with its former monastery now used as the Costume Room of the municipal library, incorporates in an 18th century guise the old medieval church of San Nicolò. The

inside is a beautiful example of late Baroque architecture and holds numerous works of art, including a large wooden choir with a splendid Callido organ dated 1767.

The Church of the Suffragio, completed in 1640, was later demolished and rebuilt and opened in 1779. It preserves the painting by Claudio Ridolfi that had been placed on the altar the day it was first christened on January 6, 1641. Another Callido organ is in the wooden choir over the entrance to the Church of the Addolorata, consecrated in 1755.



Coming back to the walls, the visitor's first impact is with the 15th century pentagonal Tower of the Sperone, 18 meters tall.



Attributed to the Sienese architect Francesco di Giorgio Martini, it has been restored several times. Other towers are the Scorticatore (where the walls reach a height of 15 meters), the Mangano, and the Calcinaro, which takes its name from the job (limepit worker) of the person living there. Starting from the Rotonda which is part of the Renaissance addition completed in 1490, and continuing toward the watch round, you'll come to the Landroni, a walkway covered by a portico. From there you can go back to the walls, which incorporate imposing bastioned gates. Perhaps the most interesting part of the wall circuit is Porta San Giovanni, as it preserves intact many defense elements.



Turning toward the Bargello well you'll come to a terrace above the archway, from where you can admire – as Prince Charles of England did in 1987 – the historic center and

the countryside stretching out below, with the view continuing as far as Mt. Conero on clear days.



The name

Due to Corinaldo's proximity to the destroyed Roman city of Suasa Senonum, according to tradition its name comes from the cry *curre in altum!* ("run uphill!") shouted out by the survivors to the barbarians' violence. But most probably the name indicates a "colle in alto" (high hill) or a "curia di Aldo" (Aldo's curia): the latter would reveal a Lombard origin.

Local products and dishes

The vineyards of the famous Verdicchio vineyards on the hills around Corinaldo produce a delicate wine with a pale straw yellow color, and a dry, harmonious flavor, excellent for fish based dishes. Though it has not yet been awarded DOC, the Rosso di Corinaldo is a very interesting red wine. The area also produces extra virgin olive oil, salami, ham, sausages, and honey.

Passatelli in capon broth is a specialty of the area as well as Vincisgrassi, a kind of baked lasagna made with layers of tomato sauce, parmesan, pasta and béchamel. Roast goose, stuffed with sage, rosemary and garlic and accompanied with thick slices of roasted potatoes, is an experience that should not be missed.



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/by Italian Citizenship Assistance

Italian Citizenship Assistance

A podcast to help you with getting Italian Citizenship

Due to the large number of people who are unable to find information about Italian citizenship by descent or who are having a difficult time finding accurate information, Italian Citizenship Assistance (ICA) has decided to produce a video podcast series where they answer questions from people all over the world about Italian citizenship by descent (Jure Sanguinis), Italian citizenship by marriage and Italian citizenship through a 1948 court case. These podcasts

are hosted by Italian attorney, Marco Permunian, and Rafael Di Furia, a content creator, known in the Italian dual citizenship community for his videos on the subjects of dual citizenship and living in Italy.

As a result, seeing the confusion and misinformation that is out there regarding Italian citizenship, Marco wanted to reach out to help people of the greater Italian community who are looking for help directly or those who may be looking to do a DIY (do-it-yourself) process to be recognized as a citizen of Italy. Marco and his team at ICA have years of experience and expertise in the field of Italian citizenship. Since this field of Italian citizenship is not only a job but also a passion of Marco's, he, along with Rafael, are making these podcasts and giving the information out for free for those who are interested and to engage with the global community. Marco approached Rafael Di Furia, a dual citizen who had completed the Italian citizenship by descent process himself, and relocated to Italy. They discussed how

they could collaborate and make a difference in people's lives. After throwing many ideas back and forth, they came up with the idea to release video podcasts on the subject of Italian citizenship.

In episode 1 of the video podcast Marco Permunian and Rafael Di Furia spoke about the basics of Italian citizenship by descent as an overview for those who are interested in the process and discussed the minimum documents required for the process.



In episode 2 the hosts of the podcast, Marco and Rafael discussed the topics of applying for Italian citizenship through an Italian consulate where you currently live whereas in episode 2 they focused more on an alternative way of applying for Italian citizenship by relocating to Italy and applying at an Italian municipality (Comune). They went over some of the similarities and the differences of applying in each place and the advantages and disadvantages.





In episode 3 of the Italian citizenship podcast, the discussion was about Italian citizenship through a 1948 judicial case. It may be necessary for some people to petition the courts if their direct family line connecting the petitioner to their Italian born ascendant went through a female ancestor who gave birth to her child before January 1, 1948. It may sound like an overwhelming task but it is quite direct and they explain what steps would be required. This is all clarified along with some of the similarities and differences to a more common Italian citizenship by descent case applying through a municipality or a consulate.



In episode 4 of the podcast the discussion is about Italian citizenship through marriage. Those who are married to an Italian citizen and have been married at least 1-3 years (depending on the circumstances which are clarified in the podcast) may be eligible for Italian citizenship simply because they are married to an Italian citizen. This is very popular

among the spouses of those who gained Italian citizenship by descent and would like to remain in Italy for more extended periods of time or for those considering residing in or retiring to Italy. The Italian government is quite liberal in its approach and allows the spouse of an Italian citizen the ability to remain in Italy with their Italian spouse with or without citizenship.



ICA is continuing to publish these video podcasts and cover all of the topics related to Italian citizenship. The regularly produced podcasts go over a variety of topics that focus on all the questions people have in a discussion format. Some of the podcasts are FAQs (frequently asked questions) discussing some of the most common questions about Italian citizenship, for example... details of who is eligible, documents required and information that is needed to decide if you are eligible and are interested in applying for citizenship.

For more of the Italian citizenship podcast you can visit the [Italian Citizenship Assistance YouTube channel](#). Stay tuned for upcoming podcasts that are released regularly.

If you are interested in more information and help with the Italian citizenship process you can visit [ItalianCitizenshipAssistance.com/Contact](https://www.italiancitizenshipassistance.com/contact) and contact Marco Permunion and his team of dual citizenship experts, legal professionals and attorneys.

/by Federico Pasquali

Italian Sports

The seven Italian sports endeavors of 2019



Filippo Tortu

2019 was an important year for Italian sport thanks to the many victories achieved at international level by Italian athletes of different disciplines. Seven endeavors, in particular, deserve to be remembered for their historical value. Below are the protagonists of these extraordinary sporting successes.

Filippo Tortu, a 21-year-old athlete born in Milan with Sardinian origins, has speed in his

blood. His grandfather Giacomo ran the 100 meters in the 40s, his father Salvino in the 80s and his older brother Giacomo was also a good sprinter. He exploded in 2018, when in Madrid, Spain, he ran the distance in 9"99, becoming the first Italian to break down the 10" wall. A goal, his, never reached by Pietro Mennea, the strongest Italian sprinter ever. In 2019, Tortu achieved another historic goal. In Doha, Qatar, he raced the 100-metre



final at the World Championships, becoming the second Italian in history to achieve this achievement (32 years earlier Pierfrancesco Pavoni succeeded, racing the World Cup final in Rome with Carl Lewis and Ben Johnson).

Simona Quadarella, a 21-year-old swimmer born in Rome, is the new rising star of Italian swimming. A determined girl who is already regarded as the new Federica Pellegrini, the greatest Italian swimmer of all time. In 2019 she dominated almost all the long races, from 400 to 1500 meters freestyle, in Europe and around the world. At the World Championships in Gwangju, South Korea, she won the gold medal on the 1500 meters and on the 800 meters she surrendered only to the American swimming legend Katie Ledecky, winning the silver medal. A few months later, at the European Championships in a short pool in Glasgow, Scotland, she scored an extraordinary one-two and won gold on the 400 and 800-metre freestyle.



Simona Quadarella

Frank Chamizo Marquez, a 27-year-old wrestler born in Matanzas, Cuba, who became an Italian citizen in 2015 thanks to his marriage to the Italian wrestler Dalma

Caneva, in 2019 achieved an historic feat that earned him the title of free wrestler of the year, a prize awarded by the United World Wrestling for the first time to an Italian. At the European Championships in Bucharest 2019, he won the gold medal in the 74 kg category, a success that made him the first European wrestler in history capable of winning three titles in three different weight categories (the other two victories: Riga 2016 gold category 65Kg, Novi Sad 2017 gold category 70 Kg).



Frank Chamizo Marquez

Dorothea Wierer, 29 years old biathlete born in Brunico, after becoming the only Italian able to win at least one race in every biathlon format (and the third in the world, after the French Martin Fourcade and Marie Dorin) in 2019 has established another historical record. At the World Championships in Östersund, Sweden, she won gold in the line start, silver in the single mixed relay and bronze in the mixed relay, three medals that helped her win the overall World Cup at the end of the season, an accomplishment never before achieved by an Italian biathlete.



Roberto Mancini was one of the greatest Italian soccer midfielders and strikers of the 1980s and 1990s. He retired in 2001 and in the same year became coach of club teams in Italy, England, Turkey and Russia. In 2018 he was called as coach of the Italian national team, a role always difficult in a country where soccer is almost a religion. His task was to obtain the qualification of the National team for this year's European Championships and he succeeded very well. In one year he won all 10 qualifying matches (and 11 consecutive victories considering his success in the friendly match against the United States), surpassing after more than 80 years the record of consecutive victories of the Italian National team, 9, which belonged to the great Vittorio Pozzo, coach of the National team world champion in 1938.

In Italy it is known as the "Settebello", in the world as the strongest men's water polo national team of all time. And 2019 increased the fame of the "terrible guys" of the 33-meter





pool, with yet another World Championship victory in Gwangju, South Korea, by the team coached by the Sicilian Alessandro Campagna, the strongest Italian coach ever. The clear victory against Spain's historic rivals in the

world final (finished 10-5 for Italy), gave the "Settebello" the fourth world title, a number never reached by other men's national water polo teams (in the women's field, the record is set by the United States with 6 wins).



Let's close the list of the seven Italian sports ventures of 2019 with the beautiful accomplishment centered by Lube Civitanova Marche, the volleyball team from Marche that has achieved a series of unrepeatable successes. In 2019, in fact, the team coached by the Apulian Ferdinando De Giorgi (a legend of this sport as a player, with three world titles won from 1990 to 1998) won the Italian championship, then the European Champions' League and finally the World Cup for Clubs, beating in the final played in Betim, Brazil, the hosts of Cruzeiro.

Lube Civitanova Marche

/by Consorzio Produttori e tutela della DOP Fontina with MiPAAF

Italian flavors

Fontina



Historical Background

The history of Fontina is linked to the history of its name. The name Fontina is frequently mentioned in ancient documents on the Aosta Valley.

References to the "De Funtina" family can be found from the mid-13th century and "de Fontines" appears a hundred years later. There are abundant references to the use of Fontina as a place name for meadows, estates and villages.

The association of the name Fontina with the characteristic cheese appears gradually: first replacing "vacherinus", then combined with "seras" and used unambiguously for the cheese starting from the 18th century.

For many centuries, Fontina was produced in Alpine pastures, where there was space for plenty of cows and therefore sufficient milk. The families of the Aosta Valley only had between one and three cows, and it was only during the nineteenth century that communal dairies were established and the milk for cheese making was pooled in a cooperative spirit.

Fontina is therefore the offspring of high mountains pastures and has taken its name from noble dynasties and common place names in the Aosta Valley.

On the Issogne frescoes in the castles of the Aosta Valley, among the ladies, knights and warriors, a medieval cheese seller's stall can be seen, with the typical forms of Fontina clearly recognisable.



The product

Fontina is a PDO cheese produced in the Aosta Valley. The product has a characteristic flattened cylindrical form with straight sides, between 8 and 12 kg in weight and 43 cm in diameter.

The rind is compact and ranges from light to dark brown, depending on the aging conditions. It has a soft, elastic, semi-cooked paste, with characteristic holes dispersed throughout the form.

The colour varies from ivory to a pale yellow colour.

The characteristic, sweet and pleasant flavour varies in intensity depending on the aging. Fontina Cheese has three distinguishing signs for product identification and marking: the marks of origin, the guarantee seal and the sale mark (tissue paper).

Production

The real “producers” of Fontina are the local mountain pastures and the native

cattle breeds, Pezzata Rossa, Pezzata Nera and Pezzata Castana, which play a vital role, thanks to their ability to thrive on the grass on the Alpine pastures and the hay from the natural meadows.

The relationship between the animals and the pastures is carefully managed and monitored by the person in charge of rotating the livestock around the various pastures, following a predetermined sequence and calendar.

The milk production from the Aosta Valley cattle varies during the year, with lower overall quantities than from other breeds, but higher quality. The cattle feed, mainly composed of Alpine grasses, also determines the nutritional content of the milk.

The processing, in accordance with the PDO production rules, does not alter the characteristics of the fresh milk. The milk is made into cheese within hours of milking, twice a day, at a temperature of 36°C, using calf rennet as a curdling agent.



The curd is then broken up into pieces the size of a grain of corn. The curd mixture is gradually heated to about 48°C, while stirring continually to encourage separation from the whey.

Heating is interrupted when the right temperature has been reached, and then the whey is completely removed while continuing to stir the curd mixture. Once this step, known as "spinatura", is completed, the curds are left to settle for a few minutes and then the curd mixture is shaped into a form.

The curds are then placed in the typical bow-sided cheese hoops. The cheeses are then left under a press to assure the removal of any whey residues.

Pressing lasts for about 12 hours, during which the forms are turned over several times. Before the final turning, the producer's consortium identification number is stamped on the form with a small number plate, which, together with the casein plate, ensures that the product is clearly traceable.

The first salting then follows, after which the forms are taken to the warehouses for aging. The average aging period last for at least 3 months, during which the surfaces of the forms are regularly brushed and dry-salted.

The forms are turned once each day during the first month, with brushing and salting on alternate days: these operations help the characteristic rind to develop. After this, these operations are then carried out at longer intervals, and the forms slowly age on spruce boards.

After aging, qualified technical personnel from the DOP Consortium of Protection examine the Fontina cheeses, under the



supervision of the control body authorised by the ministry.

Only Fontina cheeses meeting the quality standards specified by the production rules are given the characteristic DOP marking.

The local Area

The Fontina production area is the Aosta Valley, an autonomous region in the Western Alps, where dry summers and harsh winters mark the passage of time for the flora, fauna and inhabitants.

Only the combination of flowers, grasses and water in this land can give the cows' milk that special fragrance, and only the air of the Aosta Valley allows Fontina to age properly.

About 200 Alpine meadows are used for the production process. These are livestock settlements located between 1,800 and 2,300 metres above sea level.

The pastures at these altitudes are rich in fragrant grazing that gives the milk a wide range of distinctive aromas. Despite being an animal origin product, Fontina from the Alpine meadows has a high amount of unsaturated fats and is rich in important nutrients. These molecules are synthesised directly by rumination, thanks to the fine, high mountain pasture diet.

/by Italia.it

Italian land and nature

Santa Maria di Leuca



Apulia has long been a crossroads of peoples and cultures for its natural and geographic attributes; a bridge between East and West, it is a promontory that separates the Adriatic from the Tyrrhennian Sea.

A hamlet of Castrignano del Capo, in the Province of Lecce, Santa Maria di Leuca is the southernmost point in Salento, striking

the visitor's eye for its colors and unreal silence. At the center of it all is the Church, the original Santa Maria: first a sanctuary, today it is the Basilica of Santa Maria De finibus terrae (at the ends of the earth).

Also standing on this promontory with Santa Maria di Leuca is the famous lighthouse (157 ft tall, standing at 335 ft above sea level),

while Marina di Leuca is situated further below, made up of Punta Mèliso to the east (at the feet of the promontory) and Punta Ristola in the west.

The Basilica was fortified in 1700 to protect against Turkish and Saracen assaults, but visitors today need not worry: they can frequent the buzzing seaside of Leuca in peace, admiring its ancient port and strolling its charming coast, rich as it is in oleanders and Art Nouveau villas (sometimes made eclectic with additional Moorish designs). These 19th-Century residences, although dramatically touched by the events of the Second World War - they were used to house the displaced, while their balustrades and railings were converted into arms - are still an important tourist attraction (open for interior visits in the month of May).

But above all, a visit to Leuca is a significant review of a long history, marked by rupestrian settlements, crypts, churches, castles, hundred-year-old olive trees, hidden coves

and inlets, and a sea that is blue like no other.

And it is from the port of Leuca that fishermen and tourists alike set sail for the nearby grottoes – dei Giganti, del Presepe, del Diavolo and del Drago – they were actually settlements in the Neolithic Era, while today they draw plenty of tourists due to the efforts by local tourism groups to organize visits by boat and underwater excursions. The Grotta del Diavolo (i.e. Devil's Grotto) takes its name from the urban legend that demons inhabited it, thus explaining the loud and lugubrious rumblings that can be heard there. Meanwhile, the Porcinara, that spans three different environments, bears incisions on its walls referring to Jupiter and other mythological characters, and the Grotta del Presepe owes its name to the stalactite formations that resemble a Nativity Scene (in Italian, presepio).

Santa Maria di Leuca has also been part of the Otranto Coastal Park - Santa Maria di Leuca and Tricase Forest for several years





now, created to preserve not only the important plant and animal species – but also the architectonic treasures – of the Apulian coast.

Leuca, approximately 43.5 mi from Lecce, is within the zone known as Salento, which it exhibits fully via its perfumes, sounds and colors.

The sounds of the Taranta, the smell of tomatoes, olive oil and oregano that top the typical frise (or friselle), and the blue hues of sky and water that, from the promontory, bleed into one. The summation is a singular experience for any visitor venturing to Leuca, that is, to “the ends of the earth.”



/by Umberto Mucci

Silvia Veronese

Italy, a fundamental part of Silicon Valley



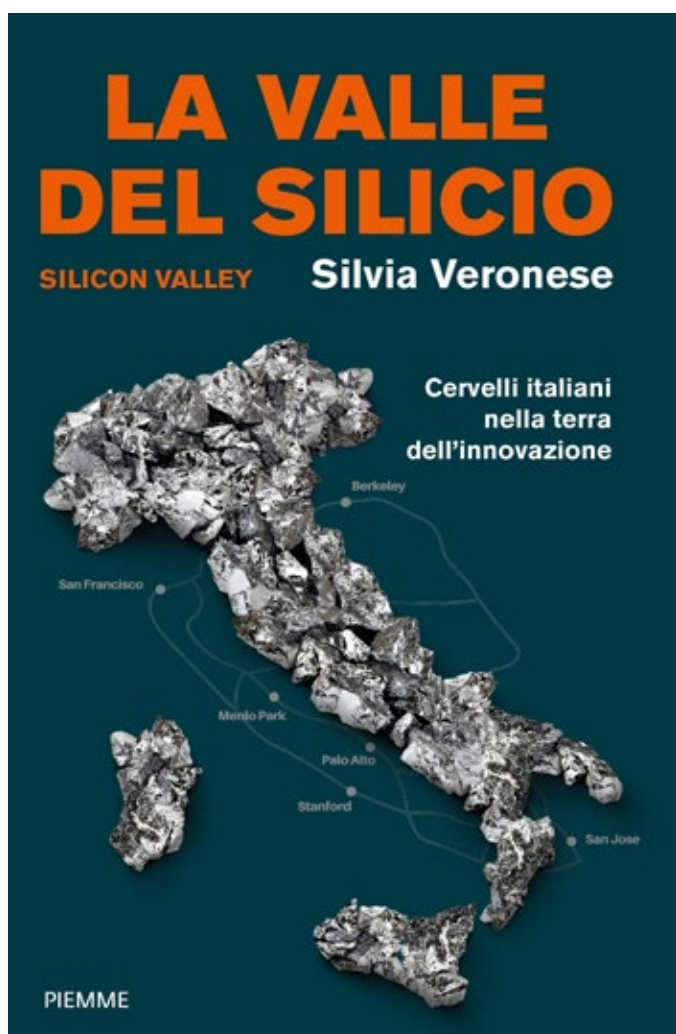
The stories of the successful Italians in Silicon Valley have a meaning that goes far beyond the simple yet wonderful description of our compatriots who see their talent recognized in the most innovative and competitive environment in the world. These stories convey that innovation and competition are perfectly combined with Italianism, and for this reason they should be pursued and supported much more than what is done in Italy.

That's why we are grateful to Silvia Veronese

for writing the beautiful book "La valle del silicio" and for being the protagonist of this interview on We the Italians, which we are particularly pleased about.

Silvia, first of all, tell us something about you. Where were you born, what brought you to Silicon Valley, and what do you do now?

My family is from Verona, and that's where I was born not too many years ago, but I've been around a lot. Ten years in Brescia, then



So I said to myself, "Why not?" and I ended up working in the field of quantum chemistry (which is absolutely not my specialization, since I am a mathematician) and more precisely in the team that built the first parallel computer, capable at that time of executing operations of several orders of magnitude faster than the computers of that time. It was the dawn of artificial intelligence. That was the same computer that beat Garik Kasparov, chess world champion and considered by many the greatest player of all time.

Between NY and Silicon Valley there was a stop in the middle of about 10 years at the University of Utah, where I taught and did research in the Mathematics Department. These were very interesting years because these were the dawn of Big Data (which at the time was not that), where the development of new computer architectures made it possible to create increasingly precise mathematical models in all fields, from medicine to biology to economics.

near Piacenza and Aosta Valley, study in Pavia, first job in Milan. Then came, almost by chance, a job offer from IBM Milan and one from IBM New York. In New York the position was the so-called 'post-doc', which would have allowed me to work in the field of scientific research.

I didn't move to Silicon Valley because of its fame and its name. That was another one of those serendipitous "why not?" moments, in 2000. If you move from Utah to California you can do it by driving, and even there it was an



University of Utah



invitation, from someone who later became a dear colleague and friend. We created our first startup; it was the time of the Internet. We would measure the performance of the Internet, the speed at which the various sites were reachable by users. An office in Menlo Park as big as a closet, IKEA furniture that we assembled ourselves, and access to Yahoo's data center, which then became our first customer. We were a physics and mathematics group at Stanford, working on everything, there were no defined roles, writing software, working with clients, and at the same time courting VCs, the Venture Capitalists, to get the next round of funds. Since that time I ventured in other jobs: another startup (in the field of high frequency trading), consulting, and board member of various startups. Today I'm Senior Vice President for Thales, a large multinational company that develops artificial intelligence and machine learning systems in aerospace, telecommunications (Thales produces SIM cards in mobile phones), security and defense.

How did you come up with the idea to write the book?

It was a couple of years ago. I'd say it was almost a challenge to myself. I was never cut out for writing, and honestly, I've had a bitter memory of it since school. In those days there was no literary vein, it was hard to write and fill the two fateful exam sheets with thoughts that were not trivial. What we didn't understand at the time (or at least I didn't understand) is that the act of writing is not only for us, but by writing we become messengers. Writing is not an end in itself; it is a way to send a message of change and reflection to those who read it. Over the years, and being far from Italy, you want to tell stories, to capture what is escaping in this society. To capture the "humans of the Silicon Valley", or rather the Italians of Silicon Valley.

The occasion for the book then came when the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation announced an initiative for special projects through the



Comites. I wrote the proposal in less than half an hour, one evening after work. Absolutely in a hurry, with lots of ideas and maybe even lots of dreams. Sent to the Consulate in San Francisco, the proposal was accepted almost immediately. And then, with that unawareness of how I get into something bigger than myself, I really had to do the book.

The book tells the stories of some of the great Italians in Silicon Valley: entrepreneurs, academics, visionary innovators... please, tell us some of these stories.

There is the story of Janet Napolitano, a woman who is not easy to forget, the first woman to hold the position of Secretary of

National Security of the United States. She tells, in the words of her grandfather who landed at Ellis Island, how she regrets not speaking Italian well: because, as she told

Janet Napolitano



me, "in my days we had to integrate as soon as possible so as not to be marginalized".

And then there is the story of Federico Faggin, who is the best living representation of those who believe in themselves and their intuitions. Federico, pioneer and creator of the first microprocessors, tells with incredible simplicity how he is studying knowledge. Bill Gates once said about him: "Before Faggin, Silicon Valley was simply the Valley."



Federico Faggin

I discovered from Luca Maestri, Apple's CFO, who gets up at 4:30 in the morning, that working at Apple is like belonging to an army and, at the same time, to a monastery.



Luca Maestri

Because iron discipline is necessary in

everything you do. But Luca doesn't lose his Italianness. Among the billions he manages for Apple, he also finds time to join the Juventus club in Silicon Valley with his friends.

I was so fascinated by the story of Michele Battelli who was able to marry his work at Google with the mountains. He climbed Everest in the infamous year of the earthquake that killed more than 9000 people in Nepal. Although we didn't know each other at the time, we almost met in Kathmandu; my daughter and I had arrived there to work with the communities in the Everest valley that had been most affected. He was returning from his expedition where he had lost his partner in an avalanche.



Michele Battelli

And among scientists and innovators, there are also artists. There is the story of Carlo Di Lanno, the Billy Elliot of America, who started out from a small town near Naples, with enormous sacrifices by his family, and is now the Principal Dancer of San Francisco Ballet.

What is the typically Italian common element that has allowed these compatriots of ours to succeed in such



a competitive environment as Silicon Valley?

The Italian brings with him the Renaissance genetics of being able to act under the most diverse circumstances. To be successful you need to transform and adapt. Silicon Valley is a relatively small place. It's just a little bit bigger than Rome. Now think of a place where 60-70% of people work in the same field, either high-tech or bio-tech. Relationships are very close, there are no "6 degrees of separation" here, there are 2, 3 at most. Italian people excel in social relations

and we excel in science, thanks to our schools and our tradition in science. In the end, it is a combination of many qualities that helps us.

One of the concepts your book insists on is failure: "Failure is a symbol of progress, not a stigma." We know that in Italy, unfortunately, it is the opposite, and it is a big mistake. How can we reverse the approach here too?

Unfortunately, the stigma of failure is something that permeates Italy. From an early age we are obsessed with the threat of "not

making a good impression". In my opinion, in Italy we can't let go of the image and really be ourselves. It almost seems that each of us builds a Facebook-like image, always cheerful, always happy and always on holiday. What Italians in Italy don't understand is that you learn more by observing others, not trying to be ahead of everyone. We need to change the way people, young people in particular, are rewarded. And above all, create more dynamism in the system. Let's give up the permanent position. But let's be clear: failure is not a pleasant thing. It's not the goal. It's not what we have to aspire to. Failure is not part of the educational process, as it is to make mistakes. When a child learns to walk, takes one step at a time, falls and cries, that's not failure. If the child does not get up and does not want to learn to walk, that is failure. Making mistakes during a growth process is part of how we learn. And what we call here "trial and error."



What would you transplant from Italy to America?

Food. The art, the beauty of our cities. The respect for history and traditions. Our school.

And what if you had to take something American and put it into the macrocosm formed by the Italian environment,

economy, society, business and culture?

The pioneer spirit, positive attitude, social mobility, respect for diversity.

What is the future of Silicon Valley, in general and in particular with reference to the Italians who live and work there?

First of all you have to define what Silicon Valley is: is it a place, a name for a certain type of industry or a group of people united by time, geography and a common mission? I hope that this area will continue to thrive on ideas, but above all I hope that Silicon Valley will become an example to be replicated in Europe and in Italy. I hope that a similar model will be copied and adapted. We must try to create points of interest, think tanks that allow those who want to brainstorm to try and try again.

In the book you write that the Italians of Silicon Valley "did not close a door behind them, they did not run away from anything, but opened a door in the future, they followed an opportunity. Immensely grateful and proud to be Italian, they have never forgotten Italy and count on coming back". What must Italy do to facilitate their return, your return?

I want to dispel a myth, a myth that perhaps was created at the beginning of the century when the Italian left by ship for America and never came back. The new generation of the 21st century is made of people who come and go from Italy. They live here for a few months, but they are connected to their alma mater, to their city. They participate in entrepreneurial activities, organize, help in schools, and serve as inspiration to young students. Look at the example of Fabrizio Capobianco who



Fabrizio Capobianco

directed his company from here, but with engineers in Pavia, or like Andrea Carcano from Nozumi Networks who did something similar. There are also examples like Massimo Sgrelli and Luigi Baietti, Italian venture capitalists that look for investors here, to propose Italian startups to them. In Italy, the contribution of the Italians of Silicon Valley is starting to be felt, because we are all looking for the opportunity and it doesn't have to be abroad. Not everyone is coming back, but what matters is to continue to open the channels of collaboration.

Andrea Carcano



/by Camera di Commercio di Firenze with Unioncamere

Italian handcrafts

Florentine Goldsmithery



Historical background

The art of the Florentine goldsmiths dates back to the 12th-13th century and covers a range of techniques, such as open work, burin engraving, chasing, "niello", damascening, "cesoro", soldering, cuttlebone casting, crucible casting, and foil and wire lamination. Over the centuries, the techniques have been applied to both the manufacture of

jewellery and gold sculptures, and to sacred gold work, with the production of crosses, chalices, reliquaries and missal covers.

The Florentine goldsmiths' art is the legacy of the Renaissance workshop: internationally renowned artists, such as Brunelleschi, Ghiberti, Donatello and Luca della Robbia, were born as artisans and trained in goldsmiths' shops, as this was one of the



most prosperous activities in medieval and renaissance Florence.

The works of these artists, who progressed from working in gold to sculpture and architecture with great ease, were mainly focussed on the subjects of sacred art.

For this reason, in 2012 the world's first and only Sacred Art School was established in Florence, with the aim of reviving contemporary sacred art production in harmony with centuries of Florentine handicraft and artistic production.

The history of Florentine goldsmithery is also the history of its economy: the Republic began minting gold coins in the mid-13th century, and thus the gold florin was born, as a sign of its economic power. Florence was

powerful indeed, considering that, aside from the Byzantine and Islamic Empires, no other state had minted its own coins since the fall of the Roman Empire.

The florin first appeared in 1252 and marked a genuine watershed in the city's economic history, acquiring an importance in the middle ages similar to that of the US dollar today.

From this period, gold work spread in unimaginable ways, from gold leaf in paintings and frames to the production of precious silk fabrics with metallic gold yarn.

The local area

Florence has been a production centre for hand-crafted jewellery since the middle



ages. Still today, the charming, narrow streets of this Renaissance city surprise visitors with their artisans' workshops and studios, which produce artistic and refined gold work with unmistakable Florentine skill.

Despite times of crisis, the artisans are still busy in numerous small workshops, where the work is done by hand using old Florentine techniques.

The Ponte Vecchio is a symbol of Florentine gold jewellery: goldsmiths have been forging, engraving, boring and chasing here since 1593, when Ferdinando I de' Medici decreed the transfer of the gold, silvers and jewel merchants' shops.

Since the sixteenth century, Florentine goldsmiths have excelled in three different types of work: the first, produced in the Grand-Ducal workshops with continuous court commissions, was experimental and lavish, open to foreign influences and very refined. The second, equally refined and experimental, with a wealth of references, symbols and spirituality, was sacred gold work, commissioned by both the Catholic Church and the Grand Ducal Court.

In the workshops on the Ponte Vecchio, however, a more traditional production developed, aimed at satisfying a more commonplace demand and the needs of the growing bourgeoisie.



Italian traditions

The feasts of St. Anthony, between bonfires and blessing of animals

In Italy we have a real veneration for St. Anthony the Abbot (not to be confused with Anthony the patron saint of Padua): let's review the dozens of events organized in his honor on January 17th, the date of his death, from Lombardy to Sicily. And yet, reading some hints of his biography one discovers that the saint has no connection with our country: Anthony was an Egyptian hermit, who lived in the fourth century A.D., to whom we owe the beginning of the so-called "Christian monasticism", or rather the choice to spend his life alone in search of a more intense communion with God. Evidently this "primacy" was enough to spread the cult throughout Europe, to which many popular traits were added over time.

Since medieval times, St. Anthony has been invoked in the West as the patron saint of butchers, farmers and breeders and as the protector of domestic animals; this, perhaps, because from the pig the Antonians (Anthony's followers) extracted the fat to prepare emollients to be spread on plagues. Antonio, tradition says, was also a thaumaturge capable of curing the most terrible diseases. And then, there is the popular belief that the Saint helps to find lost things. In northern Italy they say "Sant'Antoni dala barba bianca fam trua quel ca ma manca" (St. Anthony with the white beard let me find what I miss) and in

the south - where he is often called Saint Anthony, to distinguish him from Anthony of Padua - "Sant'Antonio di velluto, fammi ritrovare quello che ho perduto" (Saint Anthony of velvet, let me find what I have lost).

THE FOCARA OF NOVOLI

Among the many rites performed in honor of St. Anthony, that of lighting fires occupies an important place. Starting from Novoli, in Salento (Apulia), where the show is really impressive, as well as the affluence: 200,000 people are expected for the feast of Focara and St. Anthony Abbot.



Novoli's Focara, Apulia



From January 16th to January 18th, in fact, the focara is lit: a huge bonfire, the largest in the Mediterranean basin, consisting of a giant pyre 25 meters high and 20 meters wide, made by 70,000 bundles of vines, which is set on fire according to precise rituals and traditions. A spectacle to be seen at least once in a lifetime, ending with a great fireworks display.

THE FEASTS IN LOMBARDY

Lombardy is one of the regions where Saint Anthony is most celebrated. Only in the southwest of Milan, on January 17th, bonfires are traditionally lit in 12 municipalities! They are: Albairate, Bernate Ticino, Besate, Boffalora sopra Ticino, Cassinetta di Lugagnano, Corbetta, Cuggiono, Cusago, Morimondo, Ozzero, Robecco sul Naviglio and Turbigo.

We then point out, among the many, the fires of Erba (Como), Casorate Primo (Pavia), Pontoglio (Brescia), Orezzo (Bergamo), Sant'Angelo Lodigiano (Lodi) - where offelle, a typical local dessert, are distributed - Vimercate (Monza Brianza), Varese. On St. Anthony's Day, at 11 am, on the churchyard of the church of Sant'Antonio alla Motta in Varese there will be the blessing of animals and the throwing of balloons by primary school children. In Saronno (Varese) there will be the 18th festival with the blessing of animals and cars, followed by the bonfire in the Alpini park.

IN MAMOIADA THE CARNIVAL STARTS

In some villages, St. Anthony's Day is traditionally preceded by Carnival. This is the case of Mamoiada, in the province of Nuoro in Sardinia, where it is celebrated

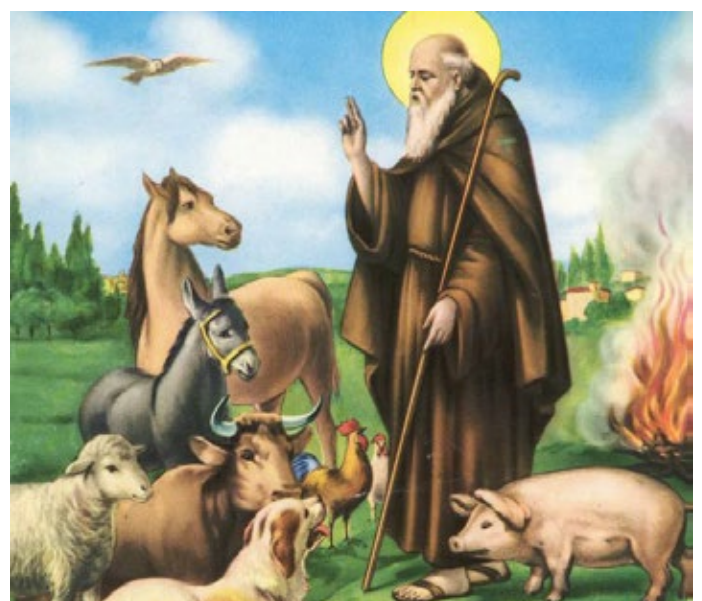


on January 16th and 17th: all night long, bonfires light up various squares of the town, propitiating the advent of the new year. At the same time, the traditional masks of the Mamuthones and Issohadores come out of the houses and dance around the fire, giving life to the first carnival "parade": one of the most evocative and ancestral spectacles of the Sardinian land. Of course, there are also tastings of local products, prepared by the wise hands of the women of the town, such as the typical sweet papassinu biancu and nigheddu and the coccone 'in mele (sweet bread with honey and saffron).

The fires are also protagonists in Ottana, Sorgono, Samudio and many other Sardinian municipalities.

BIG FEAST IN SICILY

In Troina (Enna) St. Anthony the Abbot is celebrated with two feasts during the year, one in January and one in July. The first one starts many days before the actual feast, with young people from the various districts collecting large piles of wood that will be burned on the eve of the 17th.



Sant'Antonio Abate



It is in fact on the evening of January 16th that the "pagghiara" are lit, huge bonfires that are built in all districts of the town: those who come to admire them, there are many typical delicacies on offer. The traditional event is organized by the Confraternity of St. Anthony.

ABRUZZO'S FARCHIES

In Abruzzo, in Fara Filiorum Petri (Chieti), on the afternoon of January 16th, the farchie, imposing cylindrical bundles of reeds tied with branches of red willow, 7-9 meters high and with a diameter of about one meter, leave the districts in procession. They are carried into the square in front of the small church of St. Anthony the Abbot, erected by force of arms and set on fire, among ritual songs and incitements. At this point there is also a dispute to judge the best farchia: the straightest one, with the right alignment of the knots, the correct arrangement of the reeds to avoid swelling or twisting, the dimensions.

The flames wrap the high columns of reeds and reach the top by exploding the firecrackers hidden at the top that contribute to feed the big torches and the popular rejoicing. The tradition comes from the legend that in 1799 St. Anthony stopped the French, who wanted to occupy Fara, by setting fire to the wood they were supposed to cross. (thanks to Elio Torlontano for his

contribution)

IN CAMPANIA, THE MUSIC OF MACERATA

The feast of Sant'Anthony celebrated on January 17th and in the days preceding it in Macerata Campania (Caserta) is one of the most unique in the region. Young people, adults, old people and even children, join forces for the preparation of this event, especially in the creation of the huge floats of Sant'Anthony, which on the feast days parade through the streets of the town together with 20 other floats.

On the floats takes place the baton of pastellessa, that is a particular orchestra composed of about 50 performers - percussionists, called bottari, conducted by the baton leader in the role of maestro. The instruments used are barrels, vats and scythes, common tools of the earth that for the occasion are adequately beaten by the over 1000 bottari present and assume a new musical function. A millenary tradition at the base of which there is the typical music of Sant'Anthony, a rhythm performed by the people of Macerata with the aim to ward off evil; a music against the devil that is renewed year after year, which has never lost its role as a core of identity and popular cohesion, handed down and taught to children from father to son. (thanks to Vincenzo Capuano for his contribution)



Fara Filiorum Preti, Abruzzo

/by Giulia Casati for the Italian School NJ

Italian language

Keep, Let Go, and Move On

COOL-ALCOLE	CROISSANT-CORNETTO	KRAPFEN-BOMBOLA	VEDETTE-VEDETTA
TOGOAL-AUTORETE	CURACAO-CURASSO	MARRON GLACÉ-MARRONE CANDITO	VESTITO A PAILLETES-VESTITO ALLUCCIOLATO
ERE UN FLIRT-FIORELLARE	DANCING-SALA DA DANZE	MENÙ-LISTA	VERMOUTH-VERMUT
SINO-CASINO	DEPLIANT-PIEGHEVOLE	OUVERTURE-APERTURA	WAFER-VAFER
AQUE-CLACCHE	DESSERT-FIN DI PASTO	PARQUET-PAVIMENTO DI LEGNO	WALZER-VALZER
INSOMMÈ-CONSUMATO	DOSSIER-INCARTAMENTO	PARURE-FINIMENTO	WATER CLOSET-SCIACQUONE
ICK-CRICCO	DRIBBLING-SCARTO	PARVENU-PESCECANE	WHISKY-ACQUAVITE
DET-BIDÉ	DRY-SECCO	PASSEPARTOUT-CHIAVE COMUNE	YOGHOURT-YOGURT
ITER-AMARO	ELIXIR-ELISIR	PUNCH-PONCE	
EU-BLU	EXTRA DRY-STRASECCO	RAID-TRANSVOLATA	
IB-GUIDOSLITTA	FERRY-BOAT-TRAGHETTO	SANDWICH-TRAMEZZINO	
IOKMAKER-ALLIBRATORE	FESTIVAL-FESTIVALE	SELTZ-SELZ	
IOCHE-BRIOSCIA	FILM-PELLICOLA	SHOCK-URTO DI NERVI	
IOCHURE-OPUSCOLO,FASCICOLO	GANGSTER-MALFATTORE	SLALOM-OBBLIGATA	
IFFET-RINFRESCO	GARAGE-RIMESSA	SPRINT-SCATTO	
ICHET-CIALDINO	GIN-GINEPRELLA	TABARIN-TABARINO	
IRRE-LOMBATA	GOULASH-SPEZZATINO ALL'UNGHERESE	TOAST-FETTA DI PAN TOSTO	
ELLOPHANE-CELLULOIDE	HANGAR-AVIORIMESSA	TOUR-GIRO	
IAMPAGNE-SCIAMPAGNA	HOCKEY-DISCO SU GHIACCIO	TOURNEÉ-TORNATA	
ITTAGE-VILLETIA	HOTEL-ALBERGO	TRAINER-ALLENATORE	

It's January 2020, a new year, a new beginning, a new era. This is the time of the year in which we make new resolutions and leave the past behind, so I thought it would be a good idea for some words that (thankfully) we left behind. I am talking about Italian words that were created during the Fascism regime when all foreign loan words were seen as a threat, so words were made up or translated to substitute all foreign words that had been part of the Italian language. Some just sound ridiculous today, others are still very common, and most Italians don't even know they come from that time period. Let's take a look.

Let's start with some really funny ones: names. Do you remember Ciorcil? No? He was one of the most famous British prime ministers. Yes, I am talking about Churchill, whose spelling was changed to fit the Italian spelling and pronunciation. And Vosintone? Nothing? How is that possible!? The US capital is named after him! Washington! And how can we forget the great musician Luigi Braccioforte. Just a little hint for you: braccio means "arm," forte means "strong."

And the list is long: "panorama" became tuttochesivede, literally "all-you-can-see," "sandwich" became traidue - between-two, "bar" became quisibever - here-you-





drink, "boy-scout" became giovane esploratore – young explorer. "Papillon" – "bow tie" – became cravattino which is "little tie," "smoking" became giacchetta da sera – little evening jacket, "pullover" became maglione, which is actually still used today to indicate a pullover.



Sports and terms related to the sports world were translated into Italian as well. "Tennis" became pallacorda – ball-rope, "football" (or soccer in American English) became palla al calcio – ball to kick – which became calcio – kick – and it's still used in modern Italian. "Rugby" became gioco della volata – game of the sprint – and gioco della palla ovale – game of the oval ball. "Hockey" became palla-rotelle – ball-wheels – for grass hockey and disco su ghiaccio – disk on ice – for ice hockey, whole "bob" became giodoslitta – drive-a-sleigh. "Basketball," today known in Italy simply as basket, became palla al cesto

– ball to the basket – and pallacanestro – basketball. You can still hear old people using the latter. "Volleyball" became pallavolo, which is a literal translation and it is still the common name, together with volley.

Many many words were simply translated: "film" was pellicola, "garage" was rimessa, "stop" was alt, "buffet" was rinfresco, "chauffeur" – driver – was autista, "record" was primate, "hotel" was albergo. Others adapted: "dancing" was sala da danze – room for dancing, "dessert" was fine pasto – end of the meal, "toast" was (and still is) pane tostato – toasted bread, "bunker" was fossa di sabia – sand hole. Words which contained foreign countries or nationalities were changed: the Prince of Wales fabric which was tessuto principe di Galles was

changed to simply tessuto principe or "prince fabric," wrench which is "English key" – chiave inglese – in Italian was changed to chiavemorsa – vise-key, and the dish known as "Russian salad" – insalata russa – was changed to insalata tricolore – tricolor salad, in honor of the Italian flag. Others were completely made up instead like velivolo for "airplane," and eja eja alalà for "hip hip hurray" which in Italian is hip hip hurrà.

Some of these words were changed to stay, others fell with the regime fell. We are not here to judge the linguistic changes, but to acknowledge them and keep only what worked and what was useful in the economy of the language, as usual, as we all should do with the past. Keep what worked, let go of the worse, and move on.





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Italian gardens

Nature Reserve of Collemeluccio

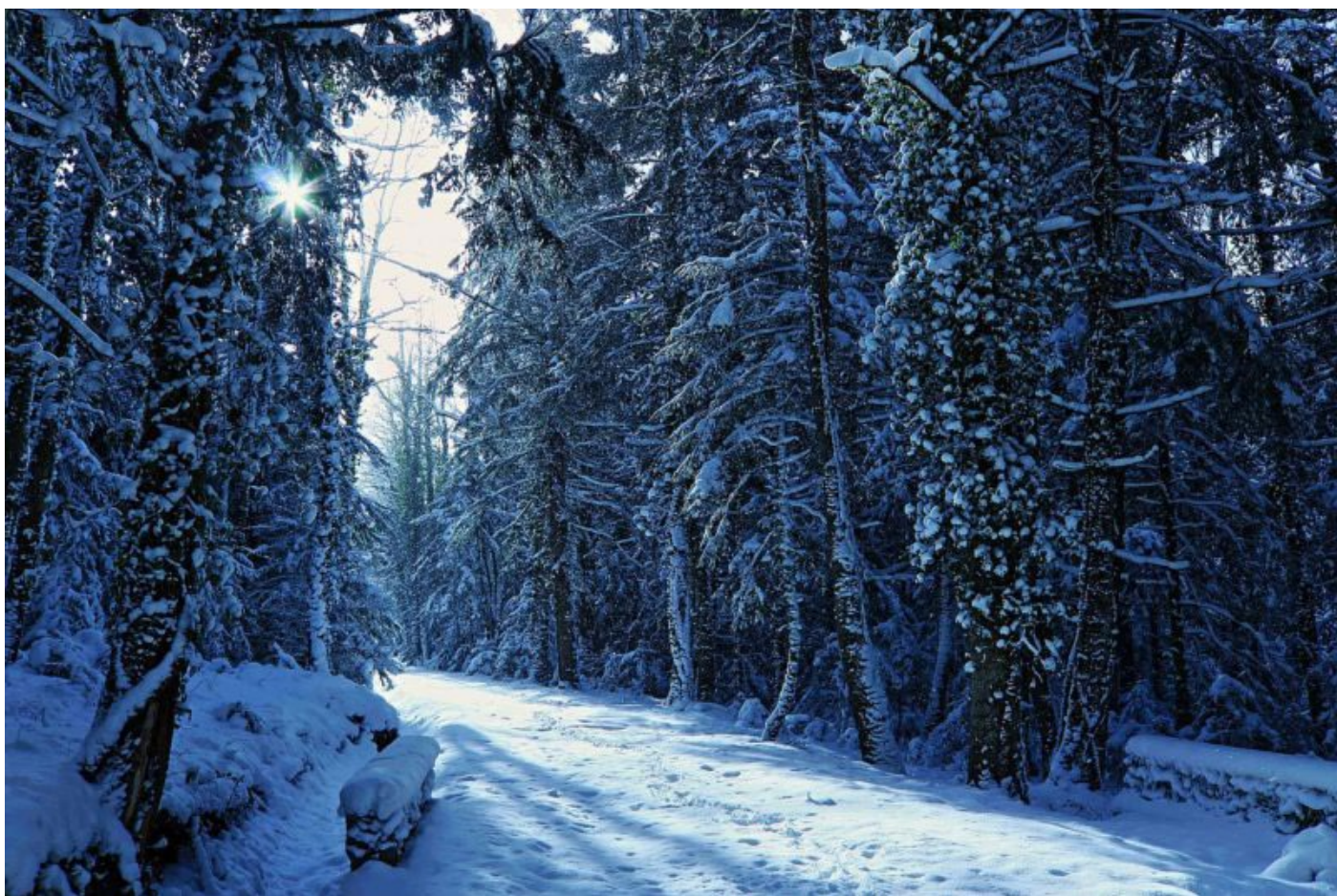


Owned by the Duke D'Alessandro of Pescolanciano and extending over about 500 hectares, the wood of Collemeluccio was brought as a dowry to him by the noblewoman Desiderata Mellucci, from whom the name seems to derive and who purchased it in 1628 from the University of Pietrabbondante. It remained the property of the D'Alessandro family until 1895, when the Banco di Napoli sold it to local families.

Today the Nature Reserve of Collemelluccio is a protected natural area in the Molise region, in the province of Isernia. It falls entirely within the municipal territory of

Pescolanciano and covers an area of 347 hectares. It was established in 1971 and is a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, awarded of the international qualification by UNESCO for conservation and protection of the environment, within the program on Man and Biosphere - MAB.

The forest is characterized for more than 80% by silver fir, present in Collemeluccio with spontaneous formations as a relict of the ancient abetine that in millennia covered the Apennine ridge and that today, in addition to Molise, are found with small nuclei in Abruzzo, Tuscany and Calabria. In this



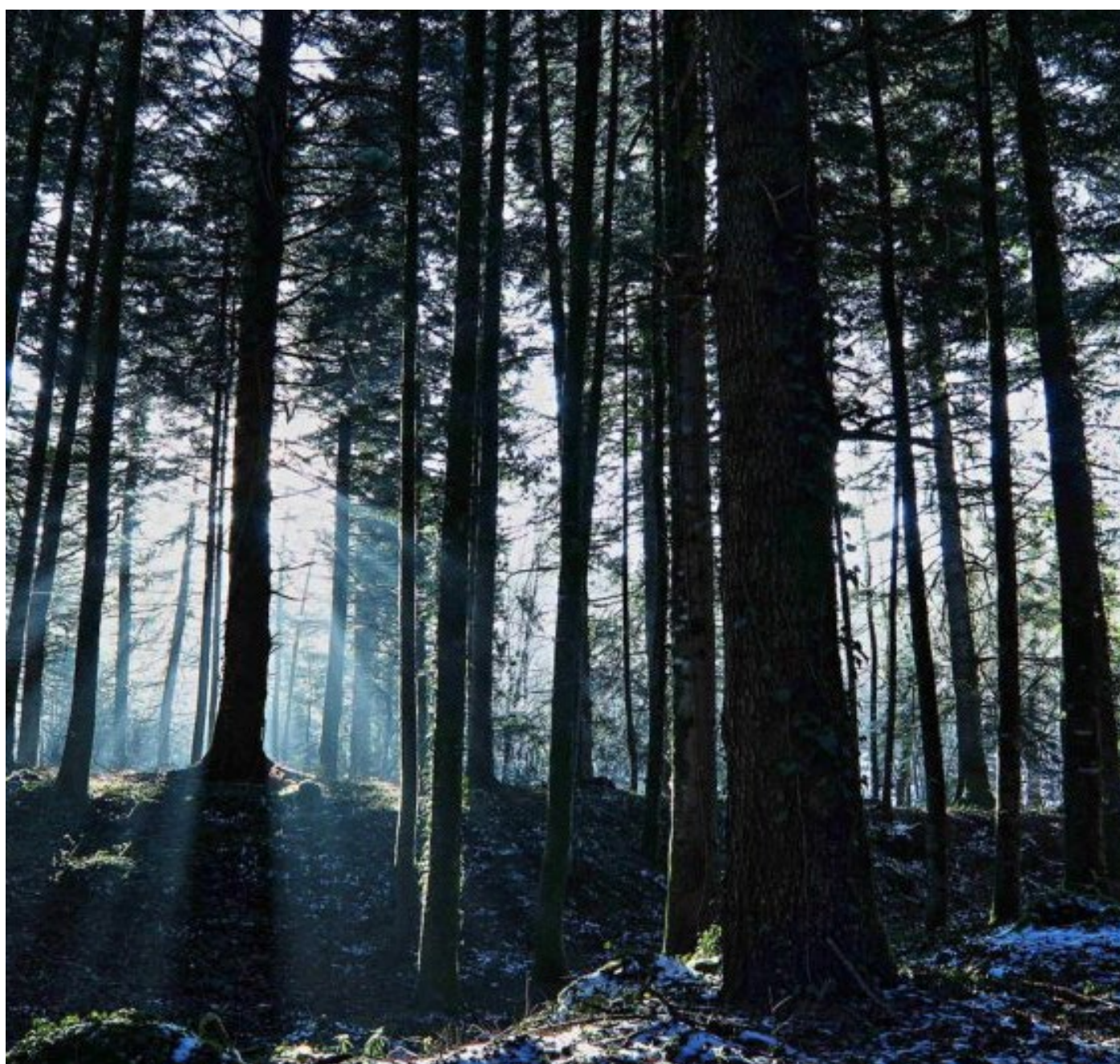
particular reality, in fact, past management, based on a moderation of cuts and their distribution over the entire surface of the forest, have led to an excellent preservation of the silver fir.

The other dominant species is the turkey oak (*Quercus cerris*), which characterizes the areas on the edge. Beech is associated with fir in cooler exposures. To these are added

the hornbeam, the field maple, the field elm, the ciavardello and the greater ash.

In the lush undergrowth grow hawthorn, holly, blackthorn and hazelnut.

In the clearings and along the edges are frequent apple trees, wild pear trees, rowan trees and among the bushes the dog rose and the wild plum tree.



Jennifer Martin is the author of the popular blog Vino Travels: www.vinotravelsitaly.com.
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/by Jennifer Gentile Martin for www.vinotravelsitaly.com

Italian wine

A Taste of Tuscany's Gran Selezione



Within Italian wine you have the typical designations of vino da tavola (table wine), climbing up to IGT, DOC and then DOCG wines. Within the Chianti Classico DOCG in particular there is another set of categories starting at the "annata" level, known as vintage. Above that are your Chianti Classico Riserva wines with additional aging. Then comes the newer category known as the Gran Selezione.

The Gran Selezione was established in 2013 and dates back to wines at the 2010 vintage and beyond. These wines are intended to be the cream of the crop, but we know as that goes it's all personal preference and I

never believe a wine is better because of its designation or price point. Judge for yourself. Overall though the wines are to be grown in the vineyard's best grapes with many coming from single vineyard sites. The wines are required to be at least 13% alcohol and a minimum of 30 months of aging with 3 of those spent in the bottle. The wines also go through a tasting and lab analysis in order to carry this particular designation.

The Wines

2015 Borgo Salcetino "I Salci" Chianti Classico Gran Selezione DOCG

One of the brands under Azienda Agricola Livon's umbrella, Borgo Salcetino began in 1996 with about 30 acres planted to grapes. The owners and winemakers, Valneo and Tonino Livon, actually hail from the region of Friuli. They wanted to try out winemaking in the Chianti Classico district, located particularly in Radda in Chianti. It seems they are really revamping the winery and vineyards so I'd be interested to see the future progression.



I couldn't find the technical sheet on this wine, but was told at the tasting it was about 80-90% sangiovese with 10% canaiolo and spends about 2 years in wood, which was very apparent upon tasting. Bright acid with dried cherry flavors and spice. Some gripping tannins so I'd like to see this wine tasted in the future as I believe it stills need some time or decanting, but I'm all about these characteristics hence why I'm a lover of sangiovese. ABV 14.5% SRP \$50

2015 Castello di Ama Chianti Classico San Lorenzo Gran Selezione DOCG

The estate of Castello di Ama has a rich history unfortunately destroyed in the 15th century under the Aragonese invasion and rebuilt later into the 18th century. Even though winemaking of this area dates far back Castello di Ama has been producing wine for the last 35 years when over 200+ acres of vineyards were replanted. Today the winery is run by one of the young daughters, Lorenza Sebasti, whom married a well-known agronomist and prior President of the Chianti Classico Consortium, Marco Pallanti.



Marco's early on research project over 10 years helped to define the vineyards of Castello di Ama to ensure that the best quality grapes were being grown on the right parcels of land throughout the estate. His dedication to the region to make sure that the wines of Chianti Classico are produced at optimum quality is very important to him and others of the region.

The 2015 San Lorenzo Gran Selezione is made of 80% sangiovese, 7% malvasia nera and 13% merlot. Aged in 18% new oak barrique for 10 months. Juicy black cherry and blackberry with herbal qualities and a hint of tobacco. A bit of earthiness on this wine. Although the tannins seem rather chewy up front they seem to become more velvety on the finish. A layered and beautiful wine. ABV 13% SRP \$55

2015 Barone Ricasoli Castello di Brolio Gran Selezione DOCG

Last, but not least I received this wine as a sample for the group. I've yet to try the extra virgin olive oil, but I have a special place in my heart for the olive oil of Tuscany. The Ricasoli family is one I've written about a few times at Vino Travels and earlier this year featuring the Chianti Classico and Chianti Classico Riserva. This time around I had the opportunity to try their 2015 Gran Selezione. Produced from 90% sangiovese, 5% cabernet sauvignon and 5% petit Verdot spending 18 months in 30% new tonneaux barrels. Medium-bodied and a well-balanced wine with nice elegance. Pure red fruits expressed finishing with notes of sweet tobacco and vanilla nuances. ABV 14% SRP \$70





Courtesy Roberto Palmas,
Giuseppe Palmas Photographic Archive

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/by Patricia Gatto Puglia

Italian lifestyle and fashion

Ode to Italy's fashionable silent film diva



Silent films can be an acquired taste. The melodramatic plots and absence of synchronized sound are not to everyone's liking, but those aren't good enough reasons to dismiss the genre as archaic or tedious. There's much more to these films than meets the eye, including the story behind the Italian divas who defined the genre, Lyda Borelli first among them. Borelli put her own imprint on the genre and helped to raise its stature in surprisingly modern ways. She used the films to build her own celebrity status, and in the process, set fashion trends in motion,

much as our film stars do today.

The background: Italy's burgeoning silent film industry

The silent film industry was big business for Italy before World War I. The films were widely circulated abroad and popular in Europe, the Americas, and even Asia. In his book *A History of Italian Cinema* (Bloomsbury, 2009), the [late Peter Bondanella](#) notes that in the years between the birth of the cinema in Italy and 1930, nearly 10,000 Italian silent films of

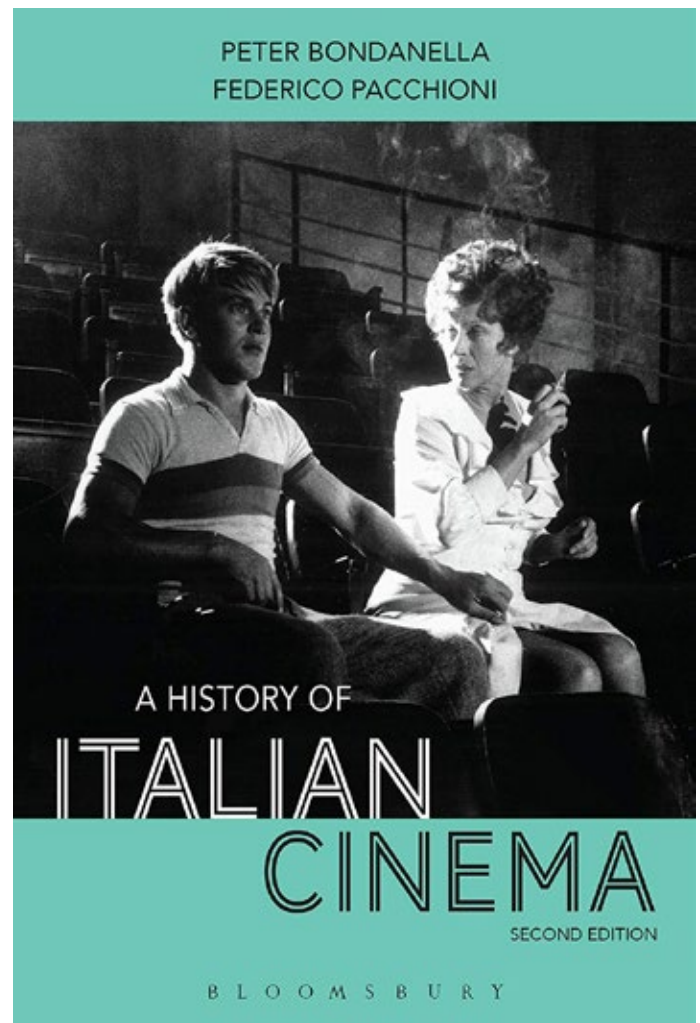
various lengths were made, far more than in any subsequent era, including the postwar years (1945 to 1959), when Italy produced approximately 1,500 films, including the works of legendary Italian directors Rossellini, Visconti, Antonioni, Fellini, and others.

From the 1910s on, people had become regular moviegoers. These were heady days of innovation; the public was primed to be wowed – and entertained. The automobile, electricity, chemicals and the airplane had all emerged in most Western countries at the same time. The cinema was also in the mix, becoming the first form of industrialized mass entertainment.

Intellectuals seized upon cinema's potential. Italy's avant-garde Futurists wrote a manifesto on cinema in 1916 recognizing it as a new art form, distinct from old standards. Many Italian Itinerary greats gave the fledgling medium respectability: the Italian writer and poet Gabriele D'Annunzio wrote the intertitles for the 1914 epic silent film based on the story of Cabiria; and in 1915, Luigi Pirandello wrote *Shoot!* (in Italian, *Si gira: Quaderni di Serafino Gubbio*), a novel about a movie camera operator. Even composers got on board. For instance, Piero Mascagni, the composer of *Cavalleria Rusticana* wrote the musical score accompaniment (delivered live, of course) for *Rapsodia Satanica*, the Italian silent film gem starring Borelli. Bondanella notes that some established theatrical actors at first snubbed the new medium "but that simply made more room for actors who were willing to make the bold switch." Diva Borelli was one of them. She was already an admired theatrical star before she turned to cinema.

Hail to the Italian "divahood"

The term diva was first coined to refer to



A-list opera sopranos but soon became an identifier for the femme fatales in the early silent films of Italy. Lyda Borelli (1894-1959) was part of a triumvirate of divas that also included Francesca Bertini (1892-1985) and Pina Menichelli (1891-1981). Each woman's persona and acting style was delightfully distinct from the other. Bertini, for example, was known to be less histrionic than Borelli in her gestures and more measured; Menichelli, in the words of Eugenia Paulicelli, CUNY Italian professor, fashion and film scholar, and author of *Italian Style: Fashion & Film from Early Cinema to the Digital Age* (Bloomsbury 2016) was the "sex symbol" of the three, remembered for her "power of seduction and femininity in sinister and almost diabolic form."

That said, Borelli set the course for "divahood"





Francesca Bertini



and became an influential trendsetter. Working class women, in particular, were great devotees of silent films. They imagined themselves in the elegant attire that paraded before their eyes. Fashion mattered for Borelli, and she used it brilliantly to add to her personal allure and create context for her characters. She was a follower of the couture of her time and devotee of the fashions of Paul Poiret and Mariano Fortuny. Borelli's fashion wardrobe extended to accessories such as gauzy veils and shawls that she used to drape and undrape, to veil and unveil, her characters, helping her to punctuate melodramatic storylines and make them unforgettable.

Borelli made her silent film debut in *Ma l'amore mio non muore* (Love Everlasting) in

1913, but her most consequential film role was as Alba d'Oltrevita in *Rapsodia satanica* (Satanic Rhapsody) directed by Nino Oxilia in 1915 and released in 1917. In this Faustian-inspired tale, an elderly Alba makes a bargain with the devil to regain her youth. He grants her wish on the condition that she must never love again. Alba is dramatically transformed to her beautiful former self in a series of dazzling stage and costume changes.



Pina Menichelli

She is soon courted by two brothers, one of whom falls madly, and fatally, in love with her. She rejects this brother's love but not the other's, prompting the forsaken brother to kill himself. The spell is broken, and Alba turns ethereal, enveloped in yards of gauzy, undulating veils, from which her true elderly

self re-emerges.

Marketing, early 20th century-style

Borelli achieved great success with this film role. But she had been effectively building her image for some time by using the era's media and media distribution channels. For instance, Giorgio Bertellini, University of Michigan professor of film and media history, in his article "Cinema and Photography, and Vice Versa," (published in *Italian Silent Cinema: A Reader*, University of Indiana Press, 2013), said Borelli had come into the public eye after winning a national contest for Italy's most beautiful woman. In 1908, an Italian publication had published a one-page article on her, including a large, professionally taken photograph with some accompanying text. The photograph, said Bertini, was one of many future photographs that "continuously sustained her performative glamour."

The film scholar Ivo Blom, in his article "Diva Intermedial: Lyda Borelli between Art, Photography, Theatre and Cinema" (published in *Performing New Media, 1890-1915*, Indiana Press, 2014) points to how the four media forms converged to propel an actress such as Borelli to celebrity status. Case in point: In 1911, a painting of Borelli by the renowned Milanese portraitist Cesare Tallone that became a sensation and set off a stream of merchandising techniques that enhanced Borelli's image.

Blom called the painting "larger than life," a 248 cm x 112 cm (approximately 8 ft x 4 ft) portrait. Borelli struck a beckoning pose, wearing the same gown she had worn in the theater production of Oscar Wilde's

Salome. The painting would then be photographed by Milan's renowned studio photographer Emilio Sommariva (essentially the era's photographer to the stars – from nobility, to the bourgeoisie, to actors of the stage and screen) and inspire a series of photographic postcards of Borelli that were the rage among moviegoers, fans, and potential fans. And that's not all. Close-ups of Borelli might have been popularized in posters, brochures and illustrated articles in magazines, all part of a well-oiled publicity machine that foreshadowed our own modern-day merchandising of film, fashion, and celebrities.

Borelli had developed a cult-like following of young women who dyed their hair to match the blonde diva's shade, followed her fashion cues, and slimmed down so they could replicate her almost serpentine poses in her films. A term was coined to describe these young women – *le borelline*. Parallels to Twiggy mania in the mid-1960s? Imagine what would have developed if Borelli had had social media in her media arsenal.

The end of the silent film era

In the years following World War I, Italian films were eclipsed by Hollywood and its glamorous stars. America became the driving force of the industry. Sadly, Italy's divas withdrew from the film scene. But luckily for us, we can still revel in their dramatic roles – there's nothing archaic or tedious about the emotions they were able to evoke, or the fame Borelli was able to secure.





Lyda Borelli

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