

# We the Italians

January 2026

N.195

interview with



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# We the Italians

two anniversaries one heart



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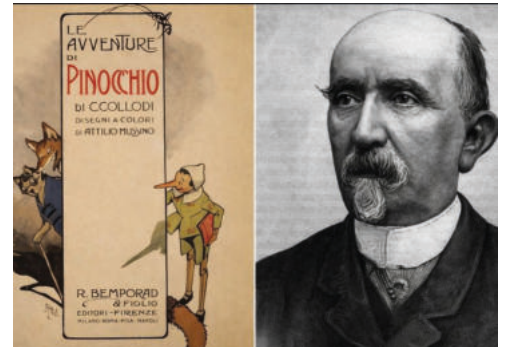
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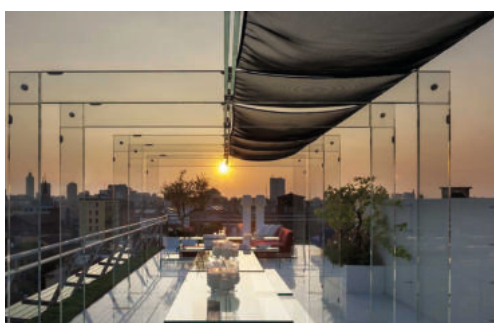
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# Editorial

## What's up with WTI #195

by Umberto Mucci

Dear friends,  
2026 for We the Italians begins with a big novelty: we're moving from 3 to 12 podcasts! Starting this January, in addition to the weekly podcasts [Italy in English](#) and [L'Italia in America](#), and the monthly [We the ItaliaNews: The Interviews](#), we're adding a podcast featuring the magazine's content ([We the ItaliaNews: The Magazine](#)), also monthly, and 8 thematic podcasts that will rotate weekly, one

per week alongside the others: [Economy and Laws](#); [Education, Art and Culture](#); [Energy and Sustainability](#); [Healthcare](#); [Made in Italy](#); [Science and Innovation](#); [Tourism and Nature](#); [Traditions, Lifestyle and Sport](#).

This is a significant editorial effort, accompanied by a change in how this kind of content is accessed. Starting this January, you'll be able to listen to and watch free 30-second pre-

views of podcast episodes, both audio and visual. To listen to the full 15-minute audio episode and watch the 7-minute visual one, we ask you [to subscribe to We the Italians, here](#).



We need the support of our loyal readers and listeners, to whom we propose this deal. The entire audio and visual episodes are published directly [on our Subscribers Facebook Group](#) and includes: a) 10 articles per week; b) 2 weekly 15' audio and 7' visual podcasts (Italy in English and L'Italia in America); c) 3 monthly 15' audio and 7' visual podcasts (The Interviews, The Magazine, and a monthly summary of L'Italia in America); d) every week, in rotation, a new 15' audio and 7' visual episode of one of the eight new thematic podcasts.

For all this content, we ask €4.99 per month, more or less the cost of a coffee. Don't tell me that your hunger and thirst for Italy

aren't worth even €5 a month, because I don't believe it. For each new thematic podcast, you can watch and listen to three free episodes related to 2025 to get an idea of what it's about: [here is the page of the podcast on our website](#), it's a good place to start. Please remember, for ten years we've been giving you our contributions for free, now totaling almost 100,000; now we're counting on you to continue doing so in an ever better way, at the cost of a coffee a month. Don't disappoint us, [please subscribe here](#).

2026 also began with the usual, wonderful mentoring experience at the Italian American Future Leaders program, now in its fourth edition. More than 330 young Italian Americans, enthusiastic and committed, gathered in Fort Lauderdale, and I had the honor of speaking with them, helping them, listening to them. The future of the Italian American community is in good hands!

There's a short video that went viral in which I try to explain to the IAFL fellows why they must not allow anyone to tell them they are not Italian: I've been told it was very much appreciated by many, which made me happy. [You can find it here](#).

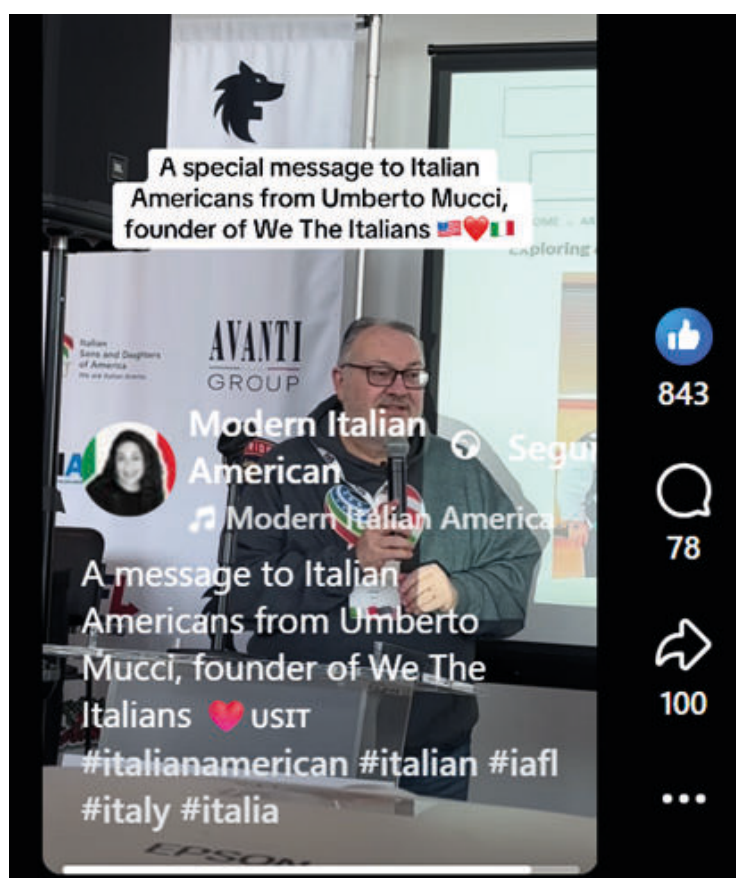
As part of the IAFL, I also had





the pleasure of recording an episode of the Italian American Podcast, which will air soon, in which we announce the episodes of the Italian-language spin-off together with four other Italian journalist friends who will help me try to explain Italian America to Italians living in Italy, who often show that they don't know the beauty of the Italian American world, and how much we who live in Italy can and must learn from it.

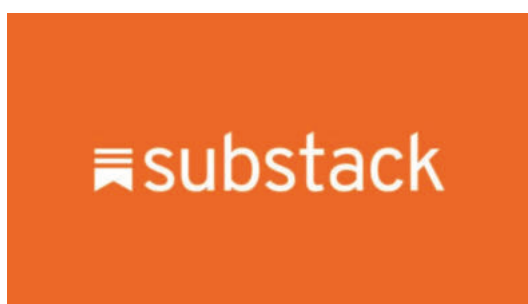
We've added two more communication channels to the previous ones: starting in January we're also on [Substack](#) and if you like you can also



IAFL



reach us on our [WhatsApp channel here](#).



Our family of Ambassadors is growing, and starting this month it can count on three new members, one territorial and two thematic. I'm happy to welcome them!

Rob Dolci is our new Ambassador in Maine. Rob has a long career as both an executive and entrepreneur in the fields of automation, IoT, and more recently AI in industrial and energy sectors. In the USA since 2010, he and his family lived in Maine for 10 years and are now in Boston, but the connection to the Pine State is

as strong as ever. Rob helps Italian companies with the Benefit Corp [www.42n.us](http://www.42n.us) together with 30 Italian professionals in America. Rob also maintains two columns on the Italian Zafferano.News, and teaches in the PhD School of Politecnico di Torino.



**Rob Dolci**

**Matteo Cerri**



Matteo Cerri is our brand new Ambassador for Relocation to Italy. Matteo is an entrepreneur and publisher with 30 years of experience

connecting the Italian diaspora, global mobility, and the revitalization of small Italian towns. He has published both in Italian and English. Editor-in-Chief of Nomag, ITSJournal and Smart Working Magazine, he also co-founded ITS Italy, delivering more than 140 regeneration projects in over 20 Italian villages. Matteo is the author of the column My Life in Italy on We the Italians' magazine, spotlighting the stories of Italian Americans who invest in Italy and choose to move there.



**Riccardo Buttarelli.**

Riccardo Buttarelli is our new Ambassador for Healthcare. Riccardo is a public health professional with expertise in European health policy, governance, and strategic communication. He currently collaborates with the Italian Ministry of Health within ProMIS, supporting EU partnerships and managing Horizon Europe and national health initiatives. He also works with the Italian National Institute of Health (ISS) on

EU-related research grants, and has collaborated with the European Medicines Agency in the Research and Innovation Unit. He is currently Vice President of Neuro Fibromatosis Patients United (NFPU), representing patient advocacy at the European level and contributing to patient-centered and sustainable health policies.

Last but not least, the final surprise. This is a year with several round-number anniversaries, and we're working on that too. One of the first things we're doing is a logo change, just for this year: we're celebrating the 250th anniversary of the United States of America and the 80th anniversary of the Italian Republic.



And it doesn't stop here! That's why [we ask you to subscribe to We the Italians](#).

It's all for now. Please stay safe and take care, and enjoy our magazine and our contents on [our website](#). Stay safe and take care: the future's so bright, we gotta wear tricolor shades! A big Italian hug from Rome.

We the  Italians  
two flags one heart

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*Italian sport*

## **Milan Cortina Olympic Games, high hopes for Italy**

Federico Pasquali

Milan-Cortina 2026 is not just the next big sporting event on Italy's calendar: it is a homecoming. The Winter Olympics will return to Italian soil from February 6 to 22, 2026, bringing

the five rings back to the Alps, the Dolomites, and major cities. It is a journey that brings together memory and future, tradition and innovation, as few other times have done.



**Federica Brignone**

Italy has a special relationship with the Winter Olympics. It all began in Cortina d'Ampezzo, in Veneto, in 1956, when

the Dolomites became the global stage for snow and ice sports for the first time. Those Olympics marked a histo-

**Sofia Goggia**





ric transition: they were the first to be broadcast on television in several European countries and established Cortina as the “queen” of winter resorts. Italy presented itself with pride, showing the world a country that was definitively emerging from the post-war period and looking ahead.

Fifty years later, in 2006, it was Turin’s turn to take up the baton. The Piedmont Olympics were a success in terms of organization and audience, but above all, they were a powerful engine of urban transformation. Turin changed its face, opened its mountains to the

world, and took on a new international identity. On the sporting front, there were also great emotions, especially with Giorgio Di Centa’s gold medal in the 50 km cross-country skiing event.

In 2026, the scenario will be even more diverse. Milan-Cortina will be a “widespread” Olympics, bringing together cities and Alpine regions, historic slopes, and state-of-the-art facilities. Milan will host the indoor competitions and the opening and closing ceremonies, Cortina will return to the center of snow sports, while locations such as Livigno, Bormio, and



Val di Fiemme will complete the mosaic. It is an ambitious project that also aims to leave a sustainable legacy, an inevitable theme when it comes to major events.

On the sporting front, Italy will field a talented team with more than one serious contender for the podium. At the top of the list is Federica Brignone, the queen of Italian alpine skiing, who will be Italy's flag bearer at the opening ceremony. In Milan-Cortina, even though she is coming off a long and very traumatic injury, she could win a medal in her last great Olympic adventure, backed

by an already extraordinary career and consistency at the highest level in giant slalom and super-G.

Alongside her, all eyes will be on another alpine skiing star, Sofia Goggia: downhill is her home turf, and Cortina is a slope she knows like few others.

Among the men, alpine skiing dreams with Dominik Paris, especially in the speed events, while in cross-country skiing, Italy can count on a solid group that looks to Federico Pellegrino as its figurehead. It is not certain that 2026 will be his last dance, but it will

certainly be a huge opportunity, with the home crowd cheering him on.

There is also a lot of attention on short track, a discipline that has brought continuous satisfaction in recent years. Arianna Fonta-

na, Italy's most decorated Winter Olympic athlete, aims to write yet another chapter in her already historic career, while behind her a new generation is growing up, ready to take up her mantle. In the men's events, Italy can count on Pietro Sighel in short



**Arianna Fontana  
and Pietro Sighel**

## Daide Ghiotto

track, who grew up in the shadow of a great family tradition, and Davide Ghiotto in speed skating, one of the strongest athletes internationally in the 10,000 meters.



The Italian biathlon team is also competitive, especially with Dorothea Wierer and Lisa Vittozzi, two champions capable of fighting for the podium without difficulty, and in the men's field with Tommaso Giacomel, who has now surpassed his status as a promising youngster to establish himself as one of the athletes capable of consistently aiming for the top positions.

In general, Italy will be represented at the Olympics by a large and competitive group, capable of making its mark in many different disciplines.

## Dorothea Wierer and Lisa Vittozzi





**Tommaso Giacomel**



**Amos Mosaner  
and Stefania Costantini**



**Michela Moioli**



In curling, for example, the benchmark remains the pair formed by Amos Mosaner and Stefania Costantini, reigning Olympic champions in mixed doubles and an inevitable reference point for all their opponents.

Looking at the freestyle disciplines, Italy can count on Michela Moiolli in snowboard cross and Simone Deromedis in ski cross, both ready to play their cards on the snow of Livigno.

Although no one is saying it openly,

the focus is on a historic goal: to try to improve on the haul from Lillehammer in 1994, when Italy ended its most successful Winter Olympics with 20 medals, seven of which were gold. An ambitious goal, but not out of reach.

Once the Olympic cauldron is extinguished, attention will shift to the Winter Paralympics, scheduled for March 6-15, 2026. Here too, Italy will arrive with high ambitions, backed by a growing tradition and athletes capable of inspiring far beyond sporting results.





## *Italian entertainment*

# **Italy's cultural year in 2025. Music, cinema, and books led by domestic success**

We the Italians Editorial Staff

2025 confirmed what has by now become a structural trend in Italy's cultural landscape. Music, cinema, and publishing all saw a strong rise in domestic products, supported by solid numbers and by an audience increasingly attentive to local content. Overall, music surpassed 95 billion stre-

ams, cinema came close to €497 million in total box office revenue with more than 68 million tickets sold, while publishing managed to keep the market's overall value stable thanks to a small number of major bestsellers.

MEDUSA FILM E INDIANA PRODUCTION PRESENTANO

# CHECCO ZALONE BUEN CAMINO

REGIA DI  
GENNARO NUNZIANTE



SANTIAGO DE  
COMPOSTELA

BEATRIZ ARJONA LETIZIA ARINÒ MARTINA COLOMBARI

UNA PRODUZIONE INDIANA PRODUCTION, con MEDUSA FILM, in collaborazione con MZI, in collaborazione con NETFLIX, realizzata da INDIANA PRODUCTION. OPERA REALIZZATA CON IL CONTRIBUTO DEL FONDO PER LO SVILUPPO DEGLI INVESTIMENTI NEL CINEMA E NELL'AUDIOVISIVO DEL MINISTERO DELLA CULTURA. SUPERVISIONE DI POST PRODUZIONE MONICA VERZOLINI, DIRETTORE DI PRODUZIONE STEFANO DANIELE, SEGRETARIA DI REDAZIONE FABRIZIA IACONA, AIUTO REGIA MARCO LIBERTY, CASTING FRANCESCO VEDOVATI, CASTING SPAGNA LUCI LENOX, FONICO DI PRESA DIRETTA MASSIMO SIMONETTI, TRUCCO DALIA COLLI, ACCORDATORE CINZIA RUZZOLINI, SCENOGRAFIA MARINELLA PERROTTA, COSTUME STEFANO CIAMMITTI, DIRETTORE DELLA FOTOGRAFIA MASSIMILIANO KUJVELLER, MONTAGGIO PIETRO MORANA, GENNARO NUNZIANTE, LUCA MEDICI, SOGGETTO E SCENEGGIATURA LUCA MEDICI, GENNARO NUNZIANTE, "PRODOTTORE ESECUTIVO PER MZI NICCOLO PRESNA", PRODUTTORE ESECUTIVO FERDINANDO BONIFAZI, PRODUTTORE DELEGATO MZI FRANCESCO MEDICI, PRODUTTORE DELEGATO INDIANA PRODUCTION CHIARA LEONARDI, PRODOTTO DA MARCO COHEN, BENEDETTO HABIB, FABRIZIO DONVITO, DANIEL CAMPOS PAVONCELLI PER INDIANA PRODUCTION, REGIA DI GENNARO NUNZIANTE

INDIANA

MZI

MINISTERO DELLA CULTURA  
OPERA REALIZZATA CON IL CONTRIBUTO  
DEL FONDO PER LO SVILUPPO DEGLI INVESTIMENTI  
NEL CINEMA E NELL'AUDIOVISIVO

**dal 25 DICEMBRE al CINEMA**

VUELTA

NETFLIX

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In the music sector, the best-selling singles of 2025 were dominated by Italian artists. At the top of the chart was “Balorda nostalgia” by Olly, a track that led digital rankings for weeks and accumulated hundreds of millions of streams. Close behind, “La cura per me” by Giorgia confirmed the singer’s artistic longevity, becoming one of the most played songs on radio. “Incoscienti giovani” by Achille Lauro stood out as one of the year’s most talked-about pop hits, while “Ora che non ho più te” by Cesare Cremonini brought singer-songwriter music back to the forefront. Rounding out the Top 5 was “Neon” by Sfera Ebbasta and Shiva, a clear symbol of the central role Italian urban music now plays in the streaming market.

Cinema also experienced a particularly favorable year for domestic productions. The most watched film of 2025 was “Buen Camino”, directed by Gennaro Nunziante and starring Checco Zalone. Buen Camino has rewritten Italian box office history. Since opening on December 25, 2025, the film has earned about €68.8 million from over 8.5 million tickets sold in Italy, overtaking Avatar’s long-standing local record of around €68.6 million and becoming the highest-gros-



sing movie ever in the country. Buen Camino also beat Zalone’s own previous top performers like Quo Vado? and Tolo Tolo. On its first Christmas Day, it brought in more than €5.6 million, one of the best single-day results ever for an Italian release. These numbers show the continuing star power of Zalone and the strong appeal of domestic comedy. Among the strongest Italian films of 2025 were also “Oi vita mia” by Pio e Amedeo and “La vita va così”, di-

Olly

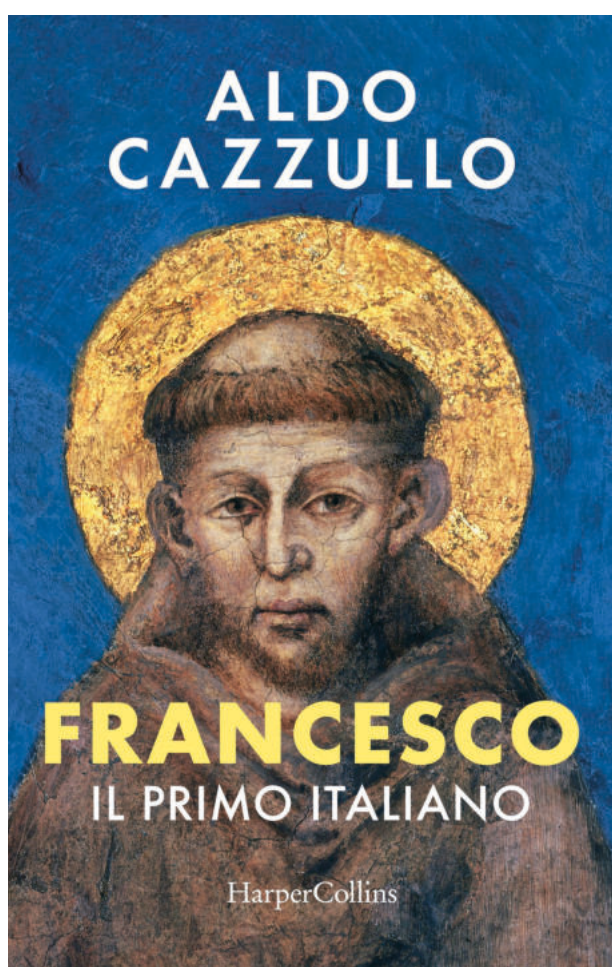


Giorgia



rected by Riccardo Milani, which together exceeded €15 million in total revenue, confirming the strength of Italian comedy.

In the book world, 2025 was marked by a small number of titles that concentrated a large share of sales. The best-selling book of the year was “the Secret of Secrets” by Dan Brown, which dominated the charts for months. In second place was Francesco – Il primo italiano by Aldo Cazzullo, a narrative nonfiction title that sold more than 300,000 copies. “The Catastrophic Visit to the



Zoo” by Joël Dicker also enjoyed major success, followed by “L'alba arriverà, starai bene” by Gianluca Gotto. Closing out the Top 5 was “The Circle of Days” by Ken Follett, which once again confirmed the British author’s strong appeal among Italian readers.

Overall, 2025 showcased an Italian cultural system capable of competing and asserting itself, with artists, filmmakers, and authors leading the charts and strengthening the bond between audiences and domestic production.



*Italian flavors*

## **Salted anchovies from the Ligurian sea**

We the Italians Editorial Staff

Along the narrow coastline of northwestern Italy, salted anchovies have long been more than a preserved fish. They are a defining product of local culture, economy, and taste. Known as Acciughe sotto sale del Mar Ligure IGP, these anchovies represent one of

the most refined expressions of Mediterranean food preservation, shaped by geography, technique, and time.

The anchovies come exclusively from the waters of the Ligurian Sea, a stretch of the Mediterra-

nean characterized by strong currents and high plankton density. These conditions favor anchovies that are smaller, firmer, and more aromatic than those found in other seas. The fishing season typically runs from March to July, when the fish reach optimal size, usually between 12 and 15 centimeters, with a fat content ideal for salting.

Processing begins within hours of the catch. Fresh anchovies are immediately cleaned by hand, with heads and entrails removed to prevent bitterness. The fish are then layered in terracotta or food-grade containers, alternating anchovies and coarse sea salt. The ratio is precise. On average, 25–30% of the total weight consists of

salt, a balance that ensures preservation while maintaining texture and flavor.

The salting phase lasts no less than 45 days, but many producers extend it to 90 or even 120 days. During this period, pressure is applied to the containers, allowing liquids to drain and compacting the fish into uniform layers. This slow transformation triggers enzymatic processes that deepen flavor, soften flesh, and create the distinctive aroma associated with Ligurian salted anchovies.

Once matured, the anchovies are rinsed, filleted, and packaged. Traditional formats include glass jars and metal tins, with net weights ranging from 80 grams to





over 1 kilogram for professional use. Despite their simplicity, the anchovies are never pasteurized, relying entirely on salt and technique for safety and shelf life, which can exceed 12 months when stored correctly.

The IGP designation protects not only the origin of the fish but also the method. Every stage, from fishing to salting, must occur within defined coastal areas of Liguria. This guarantees traceability and consistency, while also support-

ing small-scale fisheries and local processors. Today, dozens of boats and family-run facilities remain active along the coast, preserving a system that employs hundreds of workers, directly and indirectly.

Culinarily, salted anchovies from the Ligurian Sea are prized for their balance. They are salty but not aggressive, firm yet tender, with a clean finish that sets them apart from heavily cured alternatives. Before use, they are typically soaked in water or milk for 10–20



minutes, then dressed simply with olive oil. They appear in classic dishes such as green sauce accompaniments, vegetable fillings, pasta sauces, and warm crostini.

Nutritionally, anchovies are dense in value. A 100-gram serving provides roughly 200 calories, over 25 grams of protein, and significant levels of omega-3 fatty acids, calcium, and vitamin D. Despite the

salt content, moderate portions fit easily into a balanced Mediterranean-style diet.

Acciughe sotto sale del Mar Ligure are not an industrial shortcut but the result of controlled patience. In an age dominated by speed, they stand as proof that flavor still depends on rhythm, restraint, and respect for place.





## *Italian curiosities*

# **Canto a tenore. Four voices, one hidden sound**

We the Italians Editorial Staff

Four men sing, yet listeners clearly perceive five distinct voices. It sounds like a paradox, but this acoustic illusion has been part of daily life for centuries in the interior of Sardinia. It takes shape through Canto a Tenore, an ancient vocal tradition formally recognized by UNESCO as part of the world's intangible cultural heritage.

A traditional Tenore group consists of four male singers standing close together in a circle. Each voice has a specific name and function. Sa boche is the leading voice, carrying the melody and the lyrics with a clear, flexible tone. Sa bassu provides the foundation, producing extremely low, guttural sounds that can fall below 100 hertz and give

the music its earthy power. Sa contra and sa mesu boche complete the structure, inserting sharp, vibrating harmonics that sit between melody and bass. Individually, the voices sound unusual. Together, they create something entirely new.

When the singers achieve perfect balance, something remarkable happens. The interaction of vocal frequencies generates overtones that the human ear perceives as an additional sound. This acoustic byproduct, often occurring in the 2,000–3,000 hertz range, feels

like a fifth voice floating above the group. No one is singing it, yet everyone hears it. The effect is so vivid that many first-time listeners instinctively look for a hidden performer.

This phenomenon is not mystical. It is the result of precise control over breath, pitch, and resonance, refined over hundreds of years without any formal knowledge of acoustics. In the mountainous region of Barbagia, communities developed these techniques through observation and repetition. Shepherds learned how different



intervals interacted in open landscapes, discovering through experience what modern physics later explained with wave theory.

Canto a Tenore was never designed for concert halls. It belonged to everyday life. Songs accompanied agricultural work, religious festivals, and long evenings spent together. Performances could last anywhere from a few minutes to more than ten, slowly evolving as the singers adjusted rhythm, intensity, and vocal color. The repertoire includes hundreds of songs, passed down orally, with each village preserving subtle variations.

Today, fewer than 300 active Tenore groups are estimated to exist, and mastering the style

still requires years of training. Younger singers must learn how to strain the vocal cords safely while maintaining the rough textures that define *sa bassu* and *sa contra*. Despite its ancient roots, the tradition continues to attract international audiences, many of whom are astonished by the sheer physicality of the sound.

Canto a Tenore shows how the human voice, used collectively, can create complex sonic structures without instruments or technology. When ancestral knowledge and natural acoustics intersect, the result is a powerful reminder that some of humanity's most striking achievements are born from shared breath, listening, and time.





*Italian land and nature*

## **Where land and sea meet at Torre Guaceto in Apulia**

We the Italians Editorial Staff

Along the Adriatic coast of Apulia, between the cities of Brindisi and Carovigno, stretches the protected natural landscape of Torre Guaceto, an area where land and sea interact in a rare state of balance. This protected system includes both a marine reserve and a terrestrial nature reserve, extending along about 8 kilometers of coastline. Altogether, the

protected area covers more than 3,300 hectares, with approximately 2,200 hectares of sea and over 1,100 hectares of land.

The coastal landscape is shaped by a continuous sequence of sandy beaches, low rocky outcrops, and dune systems that rise up to 10 meters in height. These dunes act as a natural barrier between



the sea and inland environments, protecting fragile habitats from erosion and salt intrusion. Behind them, wetlands and seasonal ponds form shallow basins where freshwater mixes with saltwater, creating ideal conditions for diverse plant and animal life.

Vegetation in Torre Guaceto reflects centuries of adaptation to wind, sun, and limited rainfall. Mediterranean scrub dominates much of the land area, with plants such as len-

tisk, myrtle, rosemary, thyme, and wild olive thriving in sandy and calcareous soils. In spring, flowering species spread color across the dunes and fields, while summer brings a more austere landscape marked by silvery foliage and aromatic herbs. These plant communities stabilize the soil and provide shelter for insects, reptiles, and small mammals.

The wetlands within the reserve play a crucial ecological role. Shallow lagoons and salt flats





serve as resting and feeding areas for migratory birds traveling between Europe and Africa. Over the course of a year, dozens of bird species can be observed using these habitats, particularly during spring and autumn migration periods. The quiet nature of these zones allows wildlife to thrive with minimal disturbance.

Offshore, the marine environment is equally diverse. The seabed alternates between sandy plains and rocky formations, supporting extensive meadows of *Posidonia* seagrass.

These underwater meadows are among the most important ecosystems in the Mediterranean, acting as nurseries for fish and contributing to water clarity and oxygen production. Fish, crustaceans, and mollusks find food and protection within these submerged landscapes, often close to the shoreline.

The clarity of the water near Torre Guaceto is directly linked to the health of these marine habitats. In shallow areas, sunlight penetrates easily, supporting plant growth and making underwater life visible



even from the surface. Seasonal changes influence marine activity, with warmer months bringing higher biodiversity near shore and cooler months offering calmer, quieter conditions. Inland areas of the reserve transition gradually from wild scrubland to cultivated fields. Traditional olive groves and agricultural plots remain part of the landscape, reflecting a long coexistence between human activity and nature. These cultivated zones help buffer the fully protected areas and create a varied mosaic of environments. Stone walls, dirt paths, and abandoned rural structures add

subtle traces of human history without dominating the natural setting.

Geologically, the area tells a long story shaped by wind, sea currents, and sediment movement. Coastal erosion and deposition continue to reshape beaches and dunes year after year. In some sections, compact clay and limestone formations emerge, offering a contrast to softer sandy stretches and increasing habitat diversity along the coast.

Seasonal rhythms strongly define the experience of Torre Gua-

ceto. Spring brings mild temperatures and active wildlife, summer highlights the contrast between deep blue water and pale sand, autumn introduces softer light and renewed vegetation, and winter reveals a more dramatic, windswept coastline. These cycles reinforce the sense of an environment governed by natural processes rather than human schedules.

Torre Guaceto stands today as a living landscape where land and sea evolve together. Its value lies not only in its size or location, but in the continuity of ecosystems that remain closely connected, offering a clear example of Mediterranean nature preserved in its dynamic and resilient form.





## *Italian art*

# **Rome's new Metro C stop where art and archaeology shape everyday travel**

We the Italians Editorial Staff

In Rome, the recently opened Metro C stations of Colosseo–Fori Imperiali and Porta Metronia represent a very specific idea of art: not autonomous artworks added to a public space, but carefully designed museum environments in which exhibi-

tion design, spatial composition, and archaeological display become the artistic language of the station itself.

At Colosseo–Fori Imperiali, art takes the form of a permanent underground exhibi-

tion. The station is conceived as a sequence of curated spaces that accompany passengers from street level down to the platforms. Along this descent, archaeological finds uncovered during construction are displayed in glass cases integrated into walls and corridors. The artistic dimension lies in the way these objects are presented: lighting, proportions, transparency, and rhythm are all orchestrated to guide the eye and structure the experience. The station functions like a contemporary museum gallery, where movement replaces the traditional static visit.

There are no statues or monumental installations in the classical sen-

se. Instead, the art is embedded in the exhibition design itself. Display cases are aligned with architectural axes, sightlines are carefully controlled, and materials such as concrete, steel, and glass are used to frame the ancient remains without overwhelming them. The result is an environment where modern design becomes a silent mediator, allowing history to speak through form, light, and spatial sequencing. The act of commuting turns into a visual journey through Rome's buried layers.

Porta Metronia offers a different but complementary artistic experience. Here, the focus is on in situ preservation, and the station is bu-





ilt around a large Roman military and residential complex discovered during excavation. Frescoed walls, mosaic floors, and structural remains are preserved where they were found and made visible through large viewing windows embedded in the station's architecture. The art emerges from the contrast between the ancient surfaces and the clean, contemporary lines of the metro infrastructure.

In this station, the artistic gesture is one of framing rather than displaying. Transparent barriers, controlled lighting, and minimal graphic elements create a powerful

visual dialogue between past and present. The preserved ruins are not treated as isolated artifacts but as part of a continuous spatial composition. Passengers do not stop in front of a single object; instead, they perceive an entire ancient environment unfolding beside their daily route.

Graphic design also plays a subtle but important role in both stations. Explanatory texts, maps, and diagrams are integrated into walls and surfaces with restraint and consistency. Typography and layout are designed to be legible yet discreet, reinforcing the idea that informa-





tion itself can be part of an aesthetic system. These elements help contextualize what travelers see without breaking the visual continuity of the space.

What distinguishes Colosseo and Porta Metronia from many other “art stations” around the world is the absence of decorative intent. The artistic value lies in coherence, clarity, and restraint. Architecture, exhibition design, lighting, and archaeology are treated as a single language. Nothing is added for spectacle; everything serves the experience of understanding place.

In these stations, art does not demand attention, yet it profoundly shapes perception. Repeated daily exposure turns commuters into inadvertent museum visitors, absorbing forms, spaces, and histories over time. The Metro C stations at Colosseo and Porta Metronia show how art can exist within infrastructure not as an object, but as an experience built into movement itself, redefining what public space can mean in a city where history is never far below the surface.





*Italian territories*

## **Mountains, memory, and daily life in Carnia**

We the Italians Editorial Staff

Carnia is a mountainous area in the northern part of Friuli Venezia Giulia, close to the Austrian border and framed by the Carnic Alps. Covering about 1,300 square kilometers, it includes 28 municipalities and is home to roughly 40,000 residents. The territory is defined by steep peaks, narrow valleys, dense forests,

alpine meadows, and small villages shaped by centuries of adaptation to a demanding environment. Elevations range from valley floors below 400 meters to mountain summits rising above 2,700 meters, creating sharp contrasts in climate and landscape within short distances.

Human settlement in Carnia dates back thousands of years. The area takes its name from the Carni, a Celtic people who settled here before Roman expansion into northern Italy. Later, Roman control brought roads, trade routes, and early urban centers that linked the Alps with the plains to the south. During the Middle Ages, Carnia passed through multiple political phases, influenced by Lombard, Frankish, and later Venetian rule. Despite these changes, its remote geography allowed many customs, dialects, and social structures to survive with limited outside influence.

The natural structure of Carnia is shaped by a system of valleys carved by tributaries of the Tagliamento River. Among the most important are the Degano,

Bût, Lumiei, and Tagliamento valleys. These corridors have historically served as both barriers and passageways, connecting alpine communities while also isolating them during harsh winters. Forests cover a large share of the territory and include fir, beech, spruce, and larch. The region hosts more than 2,000 plant species and a wide range of wildlife, making it one of the most biodiverse mountain areas in northeastern Italy.

Tolmezzo functions as the main economic and administrative center of Carnia. Located at a strategic crossroads between valleys, it has long played a key role in trade, craftsmanship, and services. Smaller villages are scattered throughout the mountains, often built on terraces or sunny slopes to maximize exposure and





protection. Places such as Sauris, Sutrio, Arta Terme, and Raveo preserve strong local identities, each with distinctive architecture, dialect features, and traditions linked to farming, forestry, and seasonal migration.

Life in Carnia has always been closely tied to self-sufficiency. Agriculture developed around hardy crops, dairy farming, and livestock grazing on high pastures during summer months. Food traditions reflect this environment, combining simple ingredients with careful preparation. Dishes such as stuffed pasta with sweet and savory fillings, smoked meats, mountain cheeses, and rye-based breads tell the story of a cuisine

shaped by climate, altitude, and limited resources. These foods remain central to local celebrations and family life.

The landscape also offers significant opportunities for outdoor activities. In warmer months, hundreds of kilometers of trails connect villages, forests, and mountain huts, attracting hikers and cyclists. Lakes such as Cavazzo, one of the largest natural lakes in Friuli, and reservoirs like Verzegnis add visual variety and recreational options. In winter, snow transforms the region into a destination for skiing, snowshoeing, and alpine sports, particularly around Mount Zoncolan, known for its steep gradients and

long descents.

Modern history has left deep marks on Carnia. During the First World War, the region lay near the front lines, and traces of military roads and fortifications re-

main visible. In 1976, a powerful earthquake struck Friuli, causing widespread damage across Carnia and accelerating depopulation trends already underway. Reconstruction efforts focused on preserving village layouts and





cultural heritage while improving safety standards.

Today, Carnia faces challenges common to many mountain regions, including aging populations and limited economic diversification. At the same time, there

is growing interest in sustainable tourism, local products, and cultural preservation. Its appeal lies in authenticity rather than scale, offering visitors a landscape where nature, history, and daily life remain deeply interconnected.



The Ferrucci Institute for  
Italian Experience and Research Presents

## LANGUAGE AND CULTURE: AN ITALIAN PERSPECTIVE

**SATURDAY, February 21, 2026**

**10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.**

**Followed by Reception | Musco Center for the Arts**

Join us for a thought-provoking celebration of the languages of Italy,  
explored through both artistic and scholarly lenses.



*Italian sustainability*

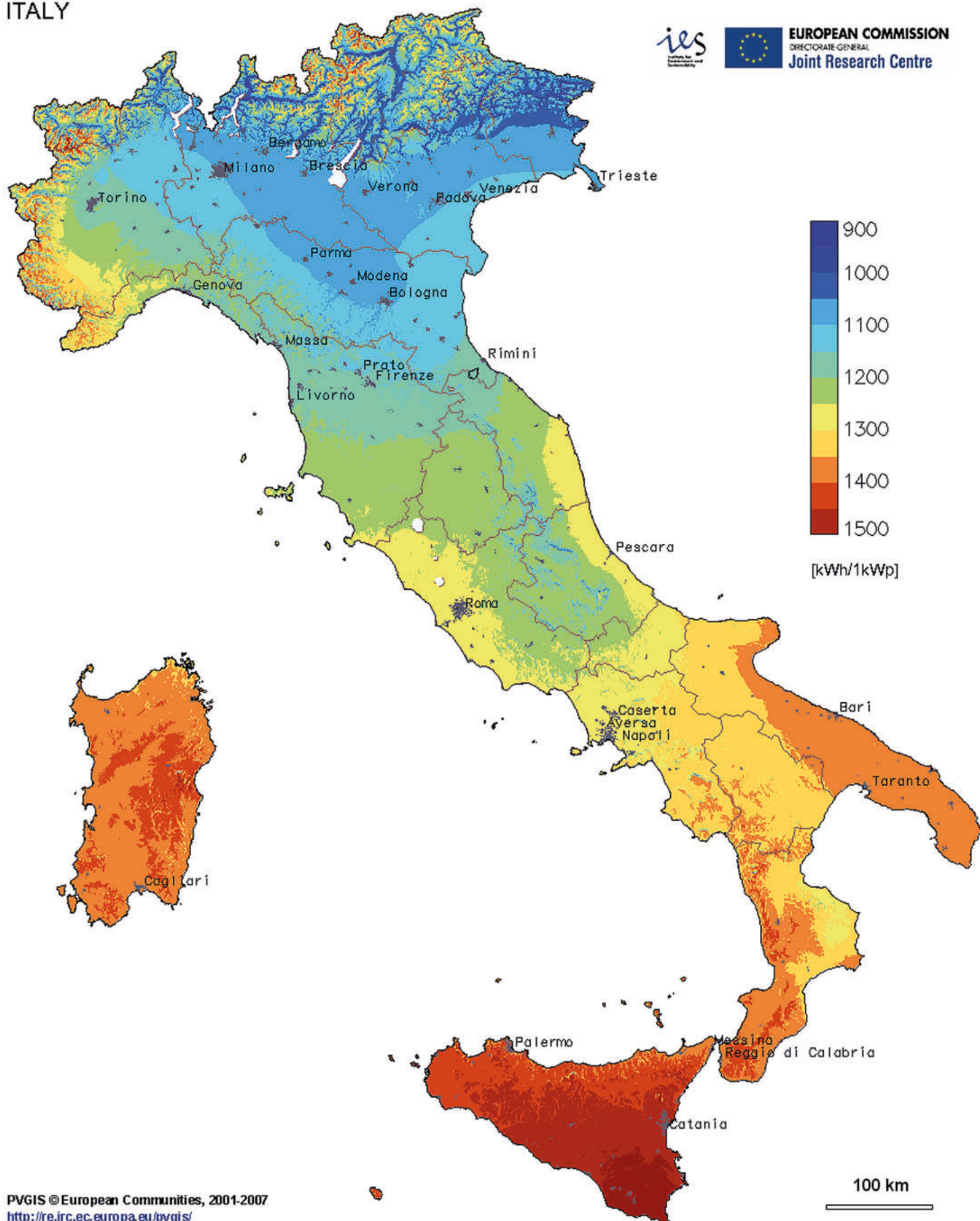
## **The new frontier of Made in Italy solar power**

We the Italians Editorial Staff

Italy is entering a new phase in the development of solar energy, one that combines technological innovation, industrial strategy, and a growing sensitivity to landscape and cultural heritage. By the end of 2025, installed photovoltaic capacity in the country exceeded 30 gigawatts, more than double the level re-

corded a decade earlier. Solar power now accounts for roughly 12% of national electricity generation, with peaks above 20% during summer months. These numbers confirm that photovoltaics are no longer a niche solution but a structural component of Italy's energy system.

Yearly sum of solar electricity generated by 1kWp photovoltaic system with optimally-inclined modules  
ITALY



What is changing most rapidly is not only how much solar energy is produced, but how and where it is produced. Italian manufacturers and research centers are increasingly focusing on high-efficiency panels, advanced inverters, and integrated systems designed specifically for dense urban areas. New generations of modules can reach efficiencies above 23%, allowing meaningful energy output even on limited roof surfaces. This is especially important in a country where space is scarce and buildings are often constrained by architectural rules.

One of the most significant shifts involves historic city centers. Until recently, installing solar panels in protected areas was almost unthinkable. Today, revised regulations and new design so-

lutions are opening the door to photovoltaic systems that blend into roofs and facades. Tiles with embedded solar cells, ultra-thin panels, and color-matched surfaces make it possible to generate clean energy without altering the visual identity of centuries-old buildings. Pilot projects launched between 2023 and 2025 in cities such as Florence, Bologna, and Lecce have shown that energy production and preservation can coexist.

At the industrial level, Italy is also trying to strengthen its domestic supply chain. While Asia still dominates global panel manufacturing, several Italian companies are investing in production lines for specialized components, automation, and recycling technologies. The goal is not mass



production at any cost, but quality, durability, and reduced environmental impact. In 2025 alone, investments in the Italian solar sector surpassed 6 billion euros, creating an estimated 25,000 direct and indirect jobs.

Despite this progress, challenges remain. Grid congestion is becoming a serious issue, particularly in southern regions where solar irradiation is highest. In some areas, connection requests exceed available capacity by 40%. Storage solutions are therefore crucial. Battery installations grew by more than 50% in 2025, with residential systems averaging 10 kilowatt-hours and utility-scale projects reaching hundreds of megawatt-hours.

Looking ahead to 2030, national targets point to at least 70 gigawatts of installed solar capacity. Reaching that figure will require faster permitting processes, clearer rules for agrivoltaics, and continued incentives for households and businesses. It will also require public acceptance, especially in landscapes where visual impact remains a sensitive topic.

The new frontier of Italian photovoltaics lies precisely in this balance. Technology is making solar more efficient, discreet, and adaptable. Policy is slowly catching up. If these trends continue, solar energy will not only support Italy's decarbonization goals but also become a defining element of a sustainable, made-in-Italy energy model rooted in innovation, design, and respect for place.





*Italian historical trademarks*

**Cimberio**

Associazione Marchi Storici d'Italia

It is easy – and at the same time enjoyable – to retrace the history of Cimberio, because doing so also means retracing the history of a country, a territory, and an era marked by young dreamers who thought like entrepreneurs without yet knowing they were.

It takes an effort of memory and, at the same time, of imagination, going all the way back to 1927. In that year, a very young Giacomo Cimberio had an intuition fueled by a good dose of courage (or, if we prefer, madness). In the area around Lake Orta, in what



would later become famous as the “faucet district,” Giacomo Cimperio, together with his friends Massimo Gioria, Giocondo and Giovanni Fortis, decided to launch a brass-processing business, taking advantage of the birth of the very first faucet manufacturers.

Those were years of great expansion, later driven by the economic boom that characterized the postwar period – an increase in customers, growth in production, and the refinement of manufacturing techniques. “F.lli Fortis-Cimperio-Gioria” grew until 1956,

when the partners, by mutual agreement, decided to part ways in order to ensure a solid future for their respective companies. And so, on January 7, 1957, Cimperio was founded, a company in which the 53-year-old Giacomo immediately involved his 19-year-old son Renzo.

The company has always operated in the manufacturing sector, specifically carrying out research, design, production, and business-to-business marketing of faucets, gate valves, valves, fittings, and related components





for water and gas distribution networks. In the 1960s, Giacomo Cimberio was able to read the signs of the economic explosion that was about to transform postwar Italy, launching a business capable of maintaining high quality standards by leveraging the technologies that time would gradually make available.

The values on which the company was founded by Giacomo Cimberio were passed on to his son Renzo, who kept them alive and handed them down to his son Roberto, the current owner and CEO. Quality and innovation

have always been the main drivers of Cimberio's activities. Over the decades, the company has established itself as one of the leading players in the production of brass valves for the HVAC and plumbing sector and, in the 1990s, opened the door to internationalization by founding its first foreign subsidiaries.

Management has always resisted the temptation to relocate production abroad, keeping the core of its operations in the two manufacturing plants in San Maurizio d'Opaglio and Berzonno di Pogno. The Cusio area, together



with the nearby Valsesia, represents the cradle of the faucet district, known worldwide as a symbol of Made in Italy in the faucet industry.

Founded as an artisan-style operation, today Cimberio is a global company that works and lives exactly as its founder had envisioned and dreamed it – guided by the ideal of quality and innovation.

This is why it was only natural from the very beginning for Cimberio to be counted among the Italian companies awarded the title of “Historic Brand.” Because the history of Cimberio truly mirrors the history of Italian enterprise and entrepreneurship, with those unique and distincti-

ve characteristics that make our SMEs something one of a kind in the world.

Today the challenges continue, in a constant balance between respect for the company’s history and a drive toward the future. The challenges calling us forward involve adapting to new markets and ongoing international changes, as well as sustainability and environmental awareness. Challenges that Cimberio has embraced by adopting technology and the new potential of artificial intelligence to move into the world of energy efficiency – dreaming of a different future made of smart buildings and increasingly sustainable solutions, made of innovation and also – indeed, above all – of history.





*Italian good news*

## **Vespucci world tour and Villaggio Italia honored at the 2025 best event awards**

We the Italians Editorial Staff

The “Vespucci World Tour & Villaggio Italia” has earned one of the most significant recognitions in the global events industry, taking center stage at the Best Event Awards 2025 - an international showcase often likened to the Oscars for event design and innovation. The

project rose above hundreds of competitors from around the world, securing three major honors: best public-institution event, best B2B event for its measurable economic impact, and best non-profit / CSR initiative for its partnership on social-inclusion programming

with the Ministry for Disabilities. This triple win adds to an already remarkable track record. Since 2023, the tour has accumulated 22 awards, reflecting both the scope and the ambition of a project conceived to represent Italy on a global stage. Organizers describe the initiative as a cultural voyage - a way to spotlight the country's maritime heritage, creative talent, and social values through a moving festival that adapts to each port of call.

Across its many stops, the Vespucci World Tour & Villaggio Italia drew more than 1.2 million in-person visitors. These crowds engaged with interactive instal-



lations, craftsmanship exhibits, performances, training programs, and heritage experiences designed to tell Italy's story in a contemporary, accessible way. Online, the response was even more striking - social media posts, streaming content and digital campaigns associated with the tour surpassed 1.3





billion views, helping transform the initiative into a viral cultural phenomenon. The estimated total economic impact exceeded 3 billion euros, a result attributed to tourism growth, commercial partnerships and widespread international exposure.

The closing events offered a fitting finale. In Genoa - a city long associated with seafaring, trade and Mediterranean exchange - the tour hosted a major “Marina Militare Day”, drawing residents, visitors and institutions together for a celebration of naval tradition and civic pride. Shortly after, a final press event at the Colosseum served as a symbolic handoff between Italy’s maritime history

and its ancient cultural legacy, reinforcing the narrative that the tour sought to share with the world.

Genoa, in particular, benefited from heightened attention. By showcasing the city’s port facilities, its role in logistics, and its expanding tourism presence, the tour strengthened Genoa’s profile as a gateway between Europe, the Mediterranean and global trade. Local businesses and cultural institutions reported increased visibility and new opportunities for collaboration - an example of how a traveling event can stimulate development far beyond entertainment value.



The project's success also stems from its multidisciplinary approach. It blends live events with immersive technology, cultural education with social responsibility, and national branding with community engagement. This combination allowed the tour to resonate across age groups, languages and cultures - effectively turning the Vespucci into a floating ambassador of Italian identity.

Looking ahead, the momentum continues - the next edition will reach New York in 2026, bring-

ing Italy's narrative to one of the world's most influential cultural capitals. The goal is not only to celebrate Italy abroad but to strengthen ties with international communities, institutions and industries.

In many ways, the Vespucci World Tour & Villaggio Italia demonstrates how a well-conceived cultural initiative can unite history, innovation and civic purpose - generating visibility, economic value and a renewed sense of national pride.





*Interview with Marco Mazzieri*

## **Baseball, a bridge between Italy and the US**

Umberto Mucci

Americans call it “America’s pastime”: baseball is much more than just a sport. It arrived in Italy thanks to American soldiers during World War II, who gave us back our freedom and taught us their favorite sport.

In Italy, the Federazione Italiana Baseball e Softball (Italian Baseball and Softball Federation) manages everything related to America’s pastime, and it is obviously very important to us as well. We welcome FIBS President Marco Mazzieri, who will

also tell us about a historic game between Italy and the United States that will take place in Houston in March.

**President, first of all, please tell us about your passion for baseball and how it intersects with your relationship with the United States.**

My passion for baseball began early on as a bat boy, thanks to a neighbor of mine who was a few years older than me and who, along with other kids in the village, had started playing this “strange” game. Baseball is a sport that teaches you about timing, waiting, and respecting roles and rules. It is a





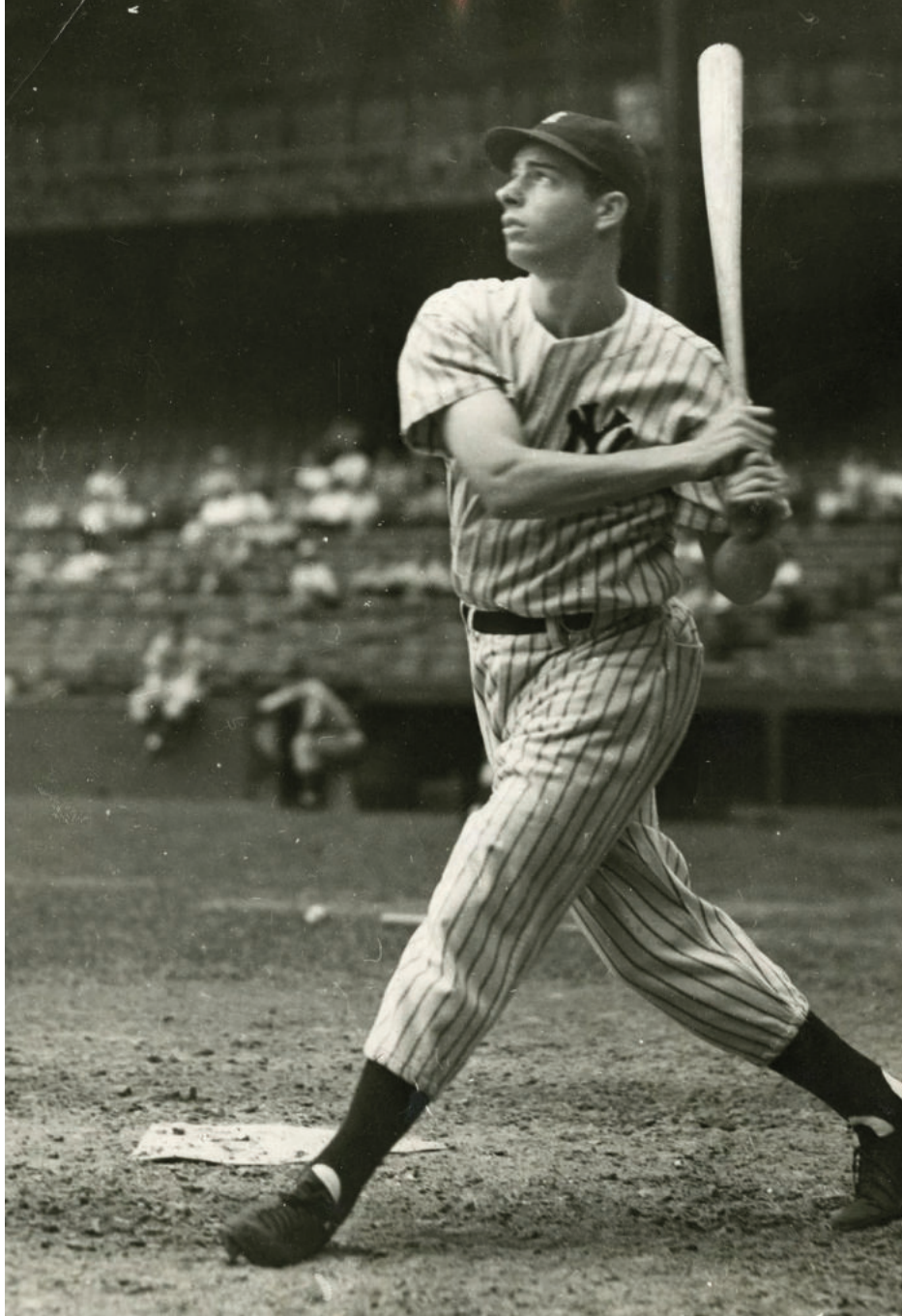
deeply strategic game, but also a human one, where every action is the result of a balance between individuality and teamwork.

My relationship with the United States naturally intertwined with this passion: baseball is an integral part of American culture and, for those who love it, the United States represents a sort of ideal home. As a child, I read everything I could find about baseball and immediately learned to love the great Italian American players who made history in this sport.

**Can you explain to our readers the importance that baseball has had and continues to have in relations between Italy and the United States?**

Baseball is one of the strongest cultural bridges between Italy and the United States. It arrived in our country after World War II, brought over by American soldiers.

Through baseball, sporting exchanges, institutional relations, personal friendships, and opportunities for many Italian athletes



to compete in the American professional world have developed. It is a sport that tells a lot about the shared history between the two countries and continues to be a vehicle for dialogue, especially thanks to the Italian American communities.

**Which Italian American baseball players from the past are**

**you most attached to, your favorites?**

There are many, and it's difficult to choose just a few. Certainly figures such as Joe DiMaggio, an absolute symbol not only of baseball but of Italian American pride, represent a point of reference for everyone. Among other things, both as a player and as a coach, I

chose the number 5 on my jersey in honor of the great Joe.

But I also think of many other players who embodied that strong link between Italian roots and the American dream, demonstrating how identity can be an asset even in top-level sport.

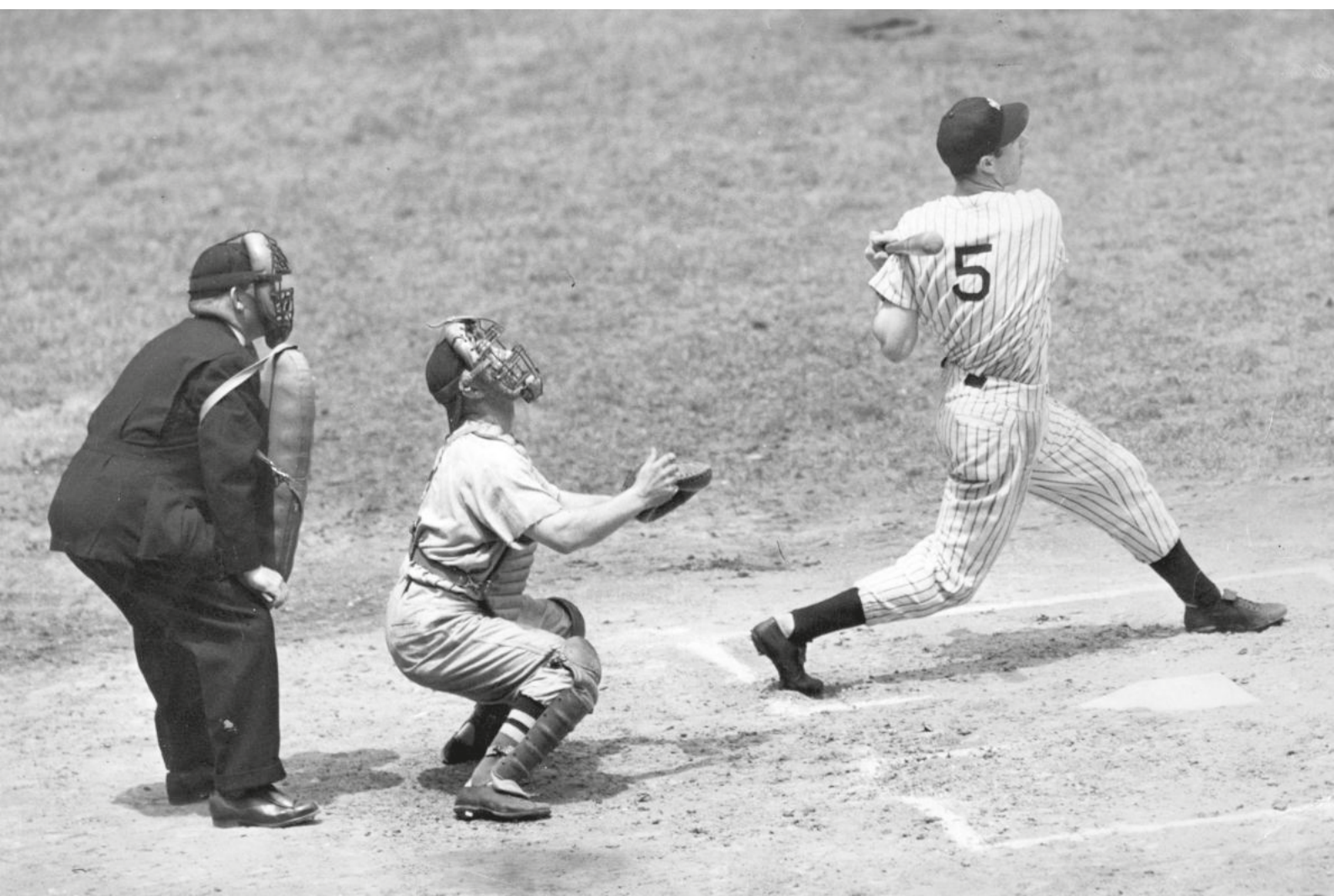
**What is the history and what are the activities of the Italian Baseball and Softball Federation, which you have been leading since last year?**

The Italian Baseball and Softball Federation has a long history, built on the sacrifice and time given

by the many volunteers who are part of our movement.

Today, the Federation is engaged on several fronts: the development of grassroots activities, the consolidation and growth of the women's movement, the training of coaches and managers, the strengthening of the leagues, Baseball for the Blind, Baseball<sub>5</sub>, and the promotion of the national teams. The goal is to make baseball and softball increasingly accessible, modern, and recognizable in the Italian sports landscape.

**For several years now, the Italian national team has been able**



to count on a number of Italian American players: which ones will be wearing the blue jersey at the World Classic?

The Italian national team in this event will be a very interesting mix of athletes trained in Italy and Italian American players who play in North American professional leagues.



# MARCH 5-17, 2026

## WORLD BASEBALL CLASSIC 2026



AUS



BRA



CAN



TPE



COL



CUB



CZE



DOM



GRB



ISR



ITA



JAP



MEX



NED



NIC



PAN



PRC



KOR



USA



VEN



## WORLD BASEBALL CLASSIC.

At the World Baseball Classic, we will have several athletes with MLB experience, who bring technical quality, a professional mentality, and great pride in wearing the blue jersey. It is a project that does not distort Italian identity but strengthens it, making it more competitive globally, especially in an event like this. I cannot name anyone because, at the moment, we are not authorized by WBC policy.


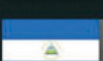
**Let's talk about the World Classic. While we wait for Italy's soccer team to qualify for the World Cup in America, Italy's baseball team has qualified well and will play in the world championships of your sport in Houston, Ame-**

**rica. Can you tell us what will happen in March?**

The World Baseball Classic is the biggest international event in our sport, a sort of World Cup that brings together the best professionals in the world. It's the best of the best.

In March, Italy will be competing in Houston in a high-level tournament, facing very strong teams, including Mexico and the USA. For us, it is a great showcase, but also an extraordinary opportunity for technical and cultural growth. Playing in America, in front of a knowledgeable and passionate audience, especially against the United States, repre-



2026 WORLD BASEBALL CLASSIC	
POOL A	POOL B
 PUERTO RICO	 UNITED STATES
 CUBA	 MEXICO
 CANADA	 ITALY
 PANAMA	 GREAT BRITAIN
 COLOMBIA	 BRAZIL
POOL C	POOL D
 JAPAN	 VENEZUELA
 AUSTRALIA	 DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
 KOREA	 NETHERLANDS
 CZECHIA	 ISRAEL
 CHINESE TAIPEI	 NICARAGUA

sents a historic moment for the entire Italian movement.

**We're not asking you for a prediction, but we would like you to explain to our readers how you will feel when, on March 10, Italy's opponents will be the United States of America...**

It will be a very strong emotion. Facing the United States, which has a team made up of ALL STARS, is something that goes beyond the sporting result.

I will feel pride, respect, and a great sense of responsibility. Pride in our boys, respect for an immense tradition, and the awareness of representing Italy in a world-class context.

**What initiatives are you preparing in Houston on the sidelines of the tournament?**

We are working on several initiatives that will involve the Italian

American community, institutions, and baseball fans.

The idea is to transform the World Baseball Classic not only into a sporting event, but also into an opportunity to promote Italy, our sporting culture, and the historical ties between the two countries.



**Finally, we would like to ask you to recommend some prospects who play or could play for the Italian national team in the future, both among those born in Italy and among Italian Americans.**

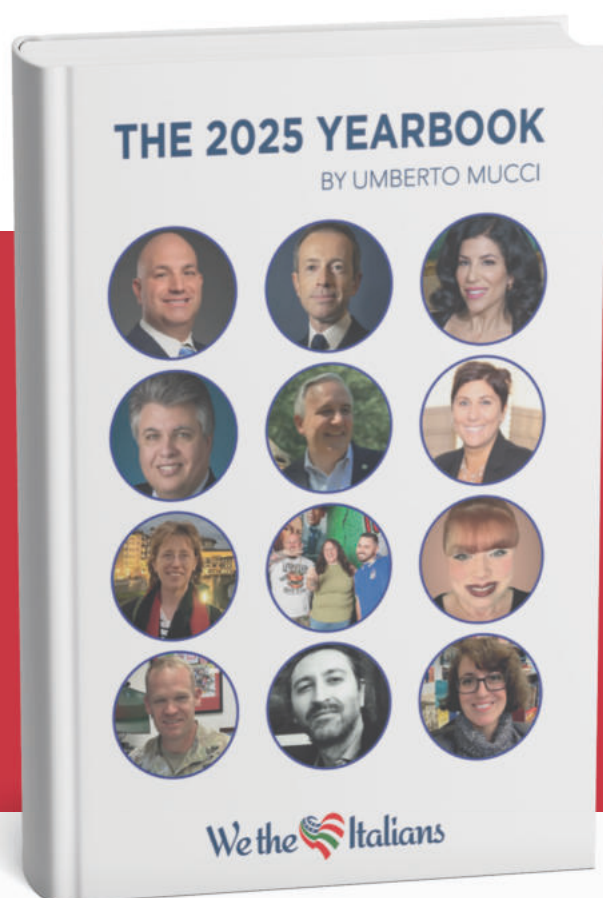
The Italian movement is rich in interesting young players, both among those who grew up in our youth teams and among the many who grew up in other countries and are now emerging in the North American leagues.

We are investing in scouting and

training because the future of the national team depends on the ability to combine talent, athleticism, identity, and planning. I can say with conviction that Italy's baseball and softball teams have a generation ahead of them that will bring great satisfaction. I don't want to name names because we have several players born between 2004 and 2009 who, by continuing to train hard and make sacrifices every day, will be able to give us great satisfaction.



# THE 2025 YEARBOOK OF WE THE ITALIANS



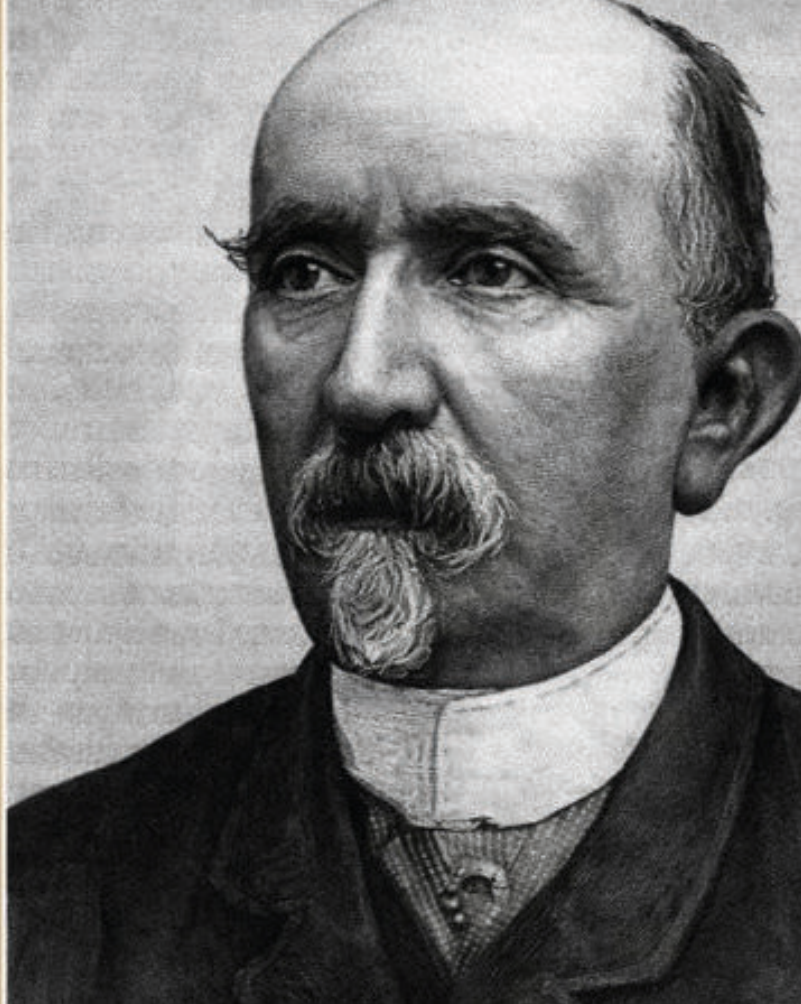
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## *Italian design*

# Two hundred years of Collodi, the father of Pinocchio, a universal design

Alberto Improda

The year 2026 marks the bicentenary of the birth of Carlo Collodi, pseudonym of Carlo Lorenzo Filippo Giovanni Lorenzini, journalist and writer.

Collodi, who was born in Florence on November 24, 1826, decided to take the name of his mother's

hometown, Angiolina Orzali, as his pen name.

The young man, inspired by strong republican and Mazzinian ideals, took part in the Risorgimento revolts of 1848-49 when he was just over twenty years old.

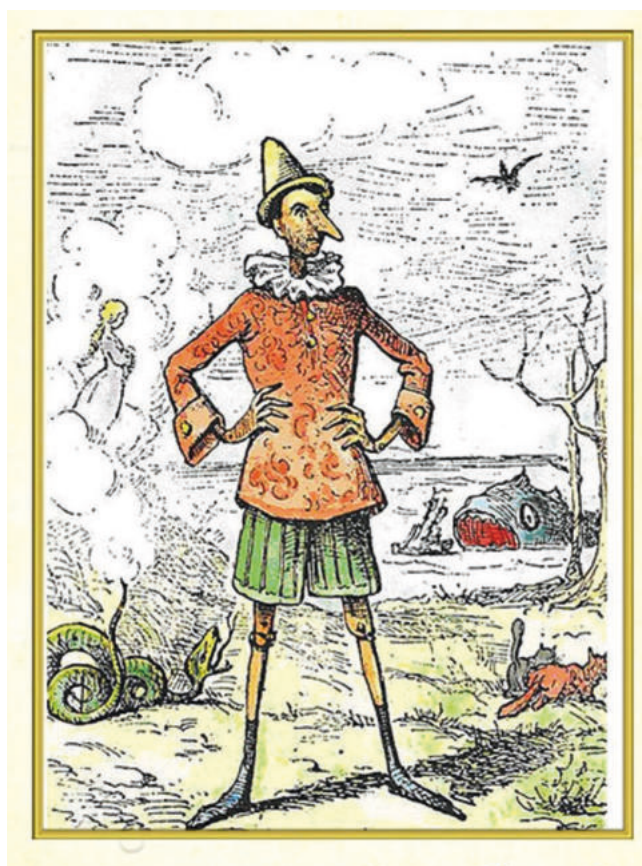
In his early days as a journalist, he devoted himself to describing the bizarre and amusing aspects of Tuscany at the time, with entertaining coffee-house stories and brilliant linguistic inventions.

Stimulated by these early creative experiences, he exercised his ability to bring contemporary life to life through his poetry.

In 1956, at the age of just thirty, with “Un romanzo in vapore, Da Firenze a Livorno” (A Novel on Steam, From Florence to Livorno), he was among the first to highlight the technological innovation brought about by the railway. As an official of the newly formed unified state, he translated Perrault’s fairy tales and then worked on various educational books for schools, thus embarking on the path that would lead to his consecration.

In fact, after *Giannettino* (1875) and *Minuzzolo* (1877), he wrote his masterpiece “The Adventures of Pinocchio,” which first appeared in the “*Giornale dei bambini*” in 1881, under the title “The Story of a Puppet,” ending with the fifteenth chapter.

In the following months, Collodi resumed work on the book, which he completed in 1883, giving it its definitive title.



Recent studies show that “The Adventures of Pinocchio” is the most widely read Italian book in the world, with 669 translations into 192 languages and dialects.

But the work is much more than a great literary success.

The book gave rise to a character who became a masterpiece of design, a concentration of meanings, a universal figure: the puppet Pinocchio, with his proverbial and distinctive long nose.

So much so that at the end of 2023, on the 140th anniversary of the book’s first edition, the ADI Design Museum in Milan dedicated an important exhibition to

the puppet, entitled “Carissimo Pinocchio” (Dearest Pinocchio).

The project, curated by Giulio Iacchetti and designed by Matteo Vercelloni, saw the contribution of Marco Belpoliti for the historical iconographic selection and Federica Marziale Iadevaia for the graphic component.

The cover of the magnificent catalog, published by ADIper, featured an unpublished drawing by the centenarian artist Attilio Cassinelli.

Upon entering the museum, visitors were greeted by the historical-iconographic section, in which

Marco Belpoliti used photographic reproductions of drawings, book covers, magazines, and advertising posters to offer a broad overview of Pinocchio’s publishing success.

There were also references to the first films and plays dedicated to the famous puppet, such as the 1952 Italian comedy Totò a colori, in which Prince De Curtis gave a stunning mechanical interpretation of his movements; or Carmelo Bene’s play of the same name, which premiered in 1961, was adapted for radio in 1974, and then for television in 1999.

The heart of the project was the second section, which presented





ADI Design Museum

62 new projects by 31 product designers and 31 graphic designers who, at the curator's invitation, had tried their hand at creating three-dimensional and two-dimensional versions of Pinocchio. Regarding the relationship between Pinocchio and design, Giulio Iacchetti wrote in his catalogue essay: "Dear Pinocchio, I think I can say that you definitely have a place in this story, which is the story of Italian design, and I'll tell you why.

Have you ever looked at yourself in the mirror? You are a simple but highly effective combination of a few geometric shapes: a cylinder, a sphere, the cone of your hat, and of course the pointed, thin protrusion of your nose. Your ico-

nic power is directly proportional to your immediate formal recognizability. Yes, because you are an icon symbolizing Italianness, just like the Tizio lamp, the Fiat Panda, or the Olivetti typewriter! From such a simple formal recipe, countless versions of you have sprung up over the years, both in terms of graphics and shape: all different, but all clearly traceable back to the archetype (which would be you).

Pinocchio, with his unmistakable silhouette, original design, and proverbial long nose, has become a global icon.

His story and characters have even undergone various adaptations in different countries, with



the aim of making them as relevant as possible to the local reality.

In a Persian edition, for example, the Talking Cricket becomes the Talking Cockroach, due to the scarcity of crickets in Iran.

A Swiss edition from 1936 offers a Swiss variation on the story: when Pinocchio climbs onto a pigeon, which will take him to the sea, the bird at one point deviates and flies over mountains and glaciers typical of the Alps.

In Russia, also in 1936, Buratino appeared, whose story closely resembles that of Pinocchio: in the second part of the text, the protagonist becomes a sort of socia-

list Pinocchio, who tries with his companions to emancipate themselves from the oppressive Mangiafuoco.

In Africa, Pinocchio becomes black, like Geppetto, who is described at work using tools typical of African craftsmen.

In Chile, during the dictatorship, the posters put up by the opposition significantly featured “Pinocho”: a lying Pinochet.

In short, the figure of Pinocchio seems today to be more relevant than ever to the dictates of the most modern and advanced design, combining extreme stylistic originality with a distinctive and iconic semantic value.





*Italian culture and history*

## **The Piedigrotta cave church in Pizzo**

We the Italians Editorial Staff

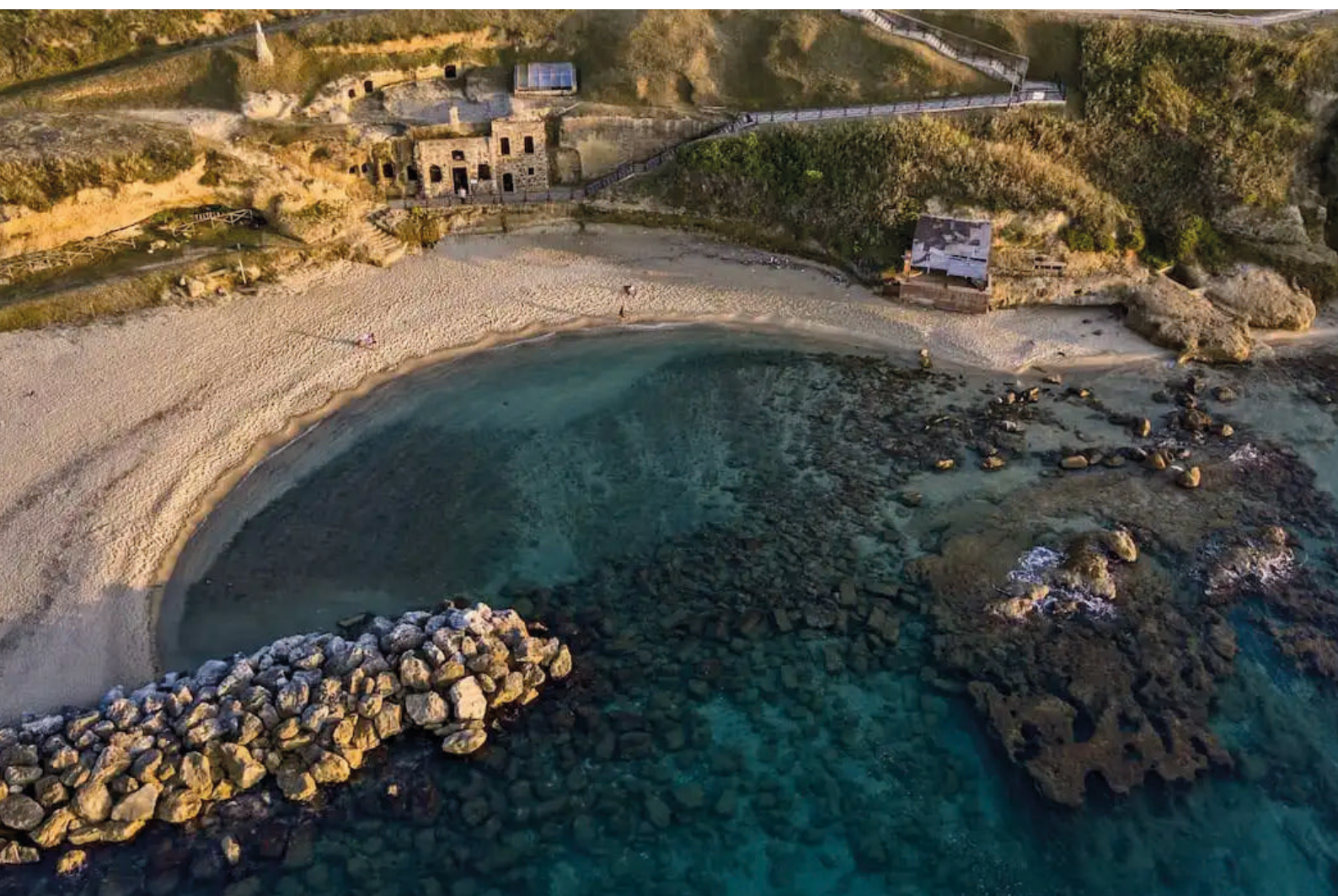
Carved directly into a cliff overlooking the Tyrrhenian Sea, the Chiesetta di Piedigrotta is one of the most unusual religious sites in southern Italy. Located about 1 kilometer north of Pizzo, Calabria, this small sanctuary appears to emerge naturally from the

coastal rock, blending faith, folk art, and landscape into a single, powerful experience. More than a traditional church, it is a space shaped by devotion, patience, and human hands over centuries. The origins of the church are rooted in legend and survival. In

the late 17th century, a ship sailing near the Calabrian coast was caught in a violent storm. According to local tradition, the crew prayed to an image of the Madonna kept on board, promising to build a place of worship if they survived. The vessel was destroyed against the rocks, but all sailors reached shore alive. Along with them came the sacred image and a bronze ship's bell dated 1632. In gratitude, the survivors carved a small cave into the soft tuff stone

and placed the image inside, marking the birth of Piedigrotta.

For nearly 200 years, the site remained a modest grotto chapel, used mainly by fishermen and local residents. Its transformation into the space seen today began at the end of the 19th century. A local craftsman, Angelo Barone, undertook the ambitious task of expanding the cave and decorating it entirely by hand. Using simple tools, he carved altars, co-







lums, and figures directly from the rock, gradually turning the hollow cliff into a sculpted interior. After his death in 1915, his son Alfonso continued the work, adding further statues and architectural details.

Today, the interior contains dozens of carved figures. Saints, angels, biblical scenes, and decorative elements emerge from walls, pillars, and ceilings, all sculpted from the same stone. Some statues stand nearly 2 meters tall, while others appear in bas-relief, integrated seamlessly into the surrounding rock. Natural light enters through the main opening and small side apertures, illuminating the carvings and changing their appearance throughout the day.

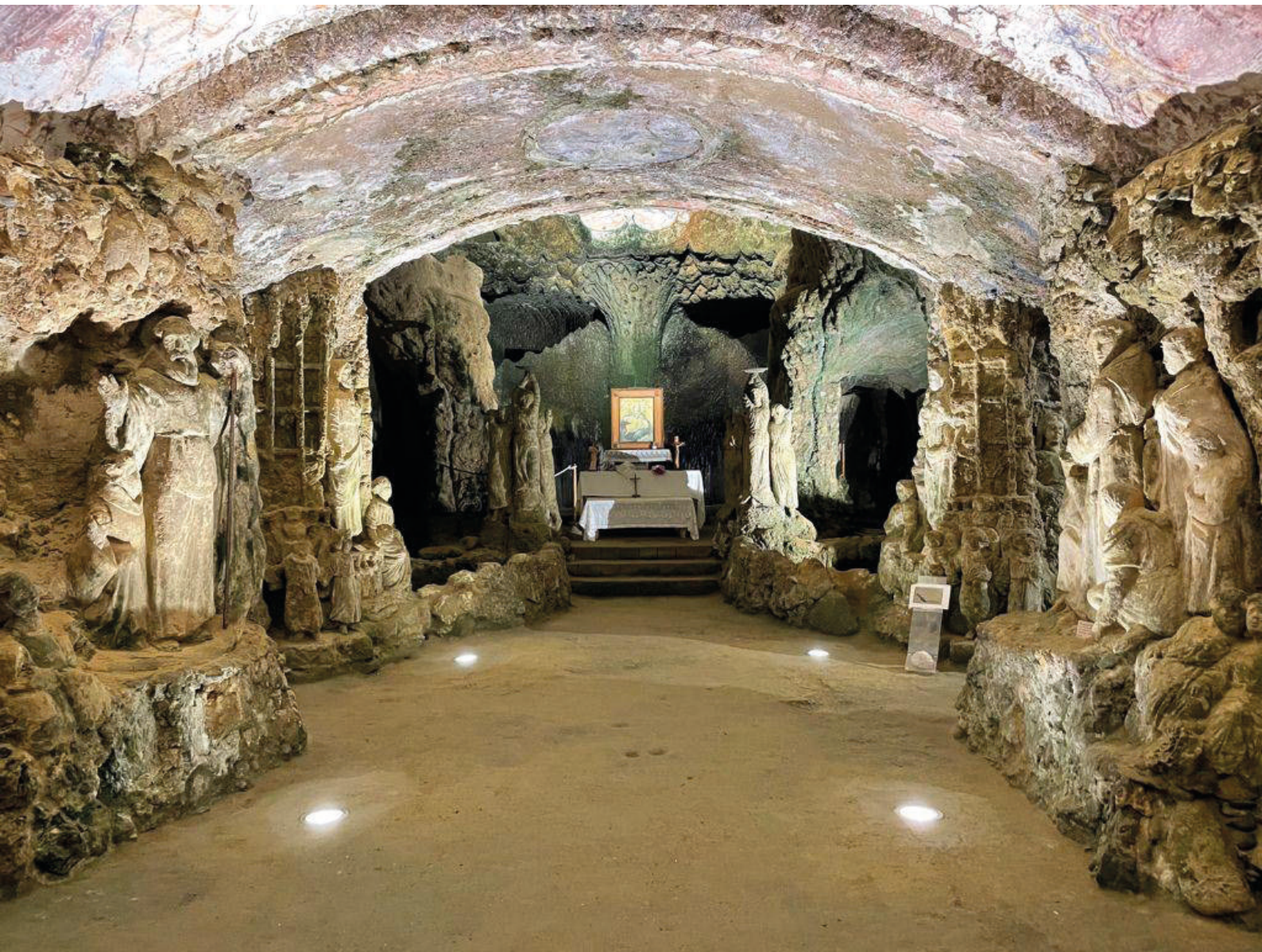
The setting plays a central role in the experience. The church opens directly onto a small beach, where waves gently reach the base of the cliff. The constant sound of the sea, combined with the cool air inside the cave, creates a quiet, contemplative atmosphere unlike that of any conventional church. Visitors descend a short staircase from the coastal road, passing abruptly from open sunlight into a stone-carved sanctuary shaped by faith and labor.

Despite its intimate size, Piedigrotta remains an active place of worship. Religious services are still held on special occasions, particularly in early July, when the Madonna is honored with celebrations that include a procession by sea. During this event,

boats accompany the sacred image along the coast, linking the church's maritime origins to contemporary devotion.

Beyond religion, the site has become an important cultural landmark in Calabria. It attracts thousands of visitors each year, drawn by its mix of legend, art, and natural beauty. Neither purely architectural nor purely sculptural, the Chiesetta di Piedigrotta stands as a rare example of

how belief, environment, and craftsmanship can converge. What began as a simple act of gratitude evolved into a living monument, carved slowly from stone and memory, facing the sea that gave it life.





*Italian healthcare*

## **Gene therapies and Italy's push to become a global research hub**

We the Italians Editorial Staff

Italy is positioning itself to become a major global hub for gene therapy and advanced medical research, leveraging growing scientific capacity, strategic investments and collaboration between public

institutions and private companies. Over the past decade, the country has significantly expanded its efforts in gene therapy, RNA-based treatments and precision medicine, fostering a network of research

# RNA & GENETHERAPY

ch centers and biotech firms that are increasingly drawing attention from international investors and partners.

Gene therapy aims to treat or potentially cure diseases by correcting genetic defects at their source. This approach differs from traditional drugs in that it works directly with the DNA or RNA within a patient's cells. Recent progress has led to approved gene therapies for conditions such as hemophilia B and rare immune disorders, with some treatments costing millions of dollars per dose but offering the promise of long-term benefit after a single administration.

In Italy, a key pillar of this

transformation is the National Research Center for Gene Therapy and RNA-based Drugs, a large multidisciplinary effort involving more than 1,500 scientists from over 30 universities and research institutes. Funded with more than €320 million under the national recovery plan, the center is focused on both fundamental research and the development of clinical candidates that could enter trials within a few years. In addition to public research, Italian biotech companies are growing in number and capability. Firms based in cities such as Milan and Bologna are developing novel gene therapy platforms, working on cancer immunotherapies and exploring patient-specific tre-





atments that harness modified cells to fight disease. Over the past five years, these companies have participated in hundreds of collaborative projects with hospitals, academic labs and international partners, helping to build critical expertise within Europe.

Italy's network also includes advanced manufacturing facilities capable of producing viral vectors and other key components for gene delivery. These facilities serve both domestic research and commercial partners abroad, offering a foundation for scaling up production as therapies move from the lab to broader clinical use. Investments in infrastructure are designed to reduce dependence on foreign suppliers and attract clinical trials that might otherwise take place elsewhere.

In parallel with laboratory innovation, the Italian healthcare ecosystem is adapting to incorporate new therapeutic paradigms. Regulatory frameworks are evolving to accommodate advanced treatments, while specialized training programs are preparing clinicians and researchers to work with cutting-edge technologies. Precision medicine initiatives

aim to tailor treatments based on a patient's genetic profile, integrating big data analytics, diagnostics and targeted therapies into routine care.

International collaboration is another important factor. Italian research teams are engaging with counterparts in North America, Europe and Asia, participating in joint projects and scientific exchanges. These relationships help bring best practices to Italy while offering foreign partners access to the country's growing talent pool and unique patient populations for clinical studies.

The combined effect of these developments is a more dynamic and interconnected gene therapy ecosystem within Italy. With increasing expertise, growing investment and a commitment to innovation, the country is becoming an appealing destination for research that might shape the next generation of medical treatments. Over the next decade, Italy's contributions to gene therapy could significantly influence how complex diseases are treated worldwide, bringing new hope to patients with conditions that have long lacked effective remedies.



*Italian economy*

## **After tariffs, beyond tariffs. Why the economic ties between Italy and the US run deeper than politics**

Fabrizio Fasani

Every time the issue of tariffs resurfaces in American and European public debate, the economic relationship between Italy and the United States is portrayed as if it were suddenly fra-

gile, exposed to political shocks capable of deeply damaging it. It is a narrative that works in the media because it strikes recognizable symbols: wine, cheese, fashion, everything that embo-

dies Made in Italy in the collective imagination. But it is also a partial narrative, which risks obscuring the real nature of a much more complex and resilient economic relationship.

In recent history, tariffs have often been used as a tool of political pressure rather than as a structural economic lever. They serve to respond to internal needs, to rebalance consensus, to demonstrate negotiating strength. Rarely, however, do they succeed in undermining trade relations based on decades of industrial integration. The relationship between Italy and the United States falls squarely into the latter category.

For years, the United States has been the leading non-European market for Italian exports and one of Italy's main trading partners overall. Even

in times of heightened tension, trade has never really stopped. On the contrary, in recent years it has continued to grow, consistently exceeding €70 billion per year, with a balance that is often favorable to Italy. This fact alone would be enough to dispel the idea of a relationship in permanent crisis.

But it is by looking beyond the aggregate data that the true strength of this relationship emerges. Italy exports not only highly recognizable consumer goods to the United States, but above all intermediate and high-tech goods. Industrial machinery, automation systems, advanced components, specialized chemicals, pharmaceuticals, energy equipment, and food industry equipment. These are sectors that directly affect American productivity and are difficult to replace without significant costs.



In this sense, Italy is an integral part of US value chains. It is not a casual supplier, but a structural partner. As the International Monetary Fund has repeatedly observed, the most resilient trade relations are those based on deep productive interdependencies, not on flows of easily interchangeable goods. This is precisely the case with the economic relationship between Italy and the United States.

Tariffs affect what is visible, rarely what is essential. They can slow down certain segments, temporarily increase costs, and push companies to reorganize their pricing or distribution strategies. But they are unlikely to disrupt industrial relationships based on

specific skills, certified quality, and long-term reliability. It is no coincidence that, even in periods of heightened trade friction, many American companies have continued to rely on Italian suppliers, often considered irreplaceable for their standards and know-how.

There is also one factor that distinguishes Italy from other European partners: the structure of its productive fabric. Italian companies, particularly SMEs, have developed a remarkable capacity for adaptation over time. Accustomed to operating in complex regulatory environments and fragmented markets, they have often responded to tariffs not by withdrawing, but by increasing their direct presence in the US market through subsidiaries, joint ven-



tures, or productive investments. Paradoxically, this strategy has strengthened economic ties rather than weakening them.

This dynamism is also reflected in investment flows. The United States is one of the main foreign investors in Italy, especially in technology- and capital-intensive sectors. At the same time, many Italian companies choose America as their primary market for internationalization, not only because of the size of the market, but also because of cultural, legal, and entrepreneurial affinities. Despite their differences, the two economic systems share a similar vision of doing business, the role of innovation, and the value of quality. Contributing to this even deeper bond is a factor often overlooked in traditional economic analyses: the human and relational capital represented by the Italian-American community. Over twenty million people form a natural bridge between the two countries, not only culturally but also economically. Managers, entrepreneurs, professionals, and investors who are familiar with both realities facilitate dialogue, reducing information asymmetries and barriers of trust.

This relational capital cannot be measured in percentage points of

GDP, but it has a concrete impact on investment decisions and strategic choices made by companies. It is one of the reasons why, despite cyclical political tensions, the economic relationship between Italy and the United States continues to show surprising underlying stability.

Major international institutions also emphasize how global trade is evolving towards more selective models based on regulatory affinities, strategic alliances, and shared values. The World Trade Organization estimates that over 70% of trade today takes place within regional value chains or between countries with strong institutional convergence. In this scenario, Italy and the United States remain firmly connected, beyond the fluctuations of trade policy.

Looking beyond tariffs therefore means adopting a long-term perspective. It means recognizing that trade tensions are part of the physiology of international relations, but rarely determine the final outcome. The economic link between Italy and the United States is not based on contingent convenience, but on trust built over time, converging interests, and deep industrial complementarity.



For the Italian-American community, all this also represents a responsibility. Being a bridge today means not only preserving the memory of our origins, but also actively contributing to a more mature and informed understanding of economic relations between the two countries. It means remembering that behind every discussion about tariffs there are supply chains, territories,

businesses, and people. And that when ties are strong, the economy can withstand even the most uncertain winds of politics.

Tariffs come and go. Structural relationships remain. And it is on these that, often far from the spotlight, Italy and the United States continue to build their common future.



*Italian handicrafts*

## **The wooden dolls of Val Gardena**

We the Italians Editorial Staff

Tucked into the Dolomites of northern Italy, Val Gardena became internationally known not for paintings or textiles, but for wooden dolls. These simple yet expressive objects turned a remote Alpine valley into one of Europe's most recognizable centers of toy making, long before mass production

reshaped the global market.

The tradition emerged out of necessity. Until the 18th century, farming in Val Gardena was limited by altitude and climate. Snow often covered the ground for 5–6 months a year, leaving families with little agricultural work during winter.



Wood, however, was abundant. Linden and Swiss pine were soft, lightweight, and easy to carve indoors. During long evenings, parents and children alike began shaping small figures, initially as toys for local use.

By the late 1600s, wooden dolls had become a recognizable product. These early figures were modest in size, typically 10–20 centimeters tall, with cylindrical bodies and lim-

bs attached by wooden pegs. This jointed structure allowed movement and durability, making the dolls ideal for play rather than display. Faces were minimal but expressive, often painted with just a few strokes. Simplicity was not a limitation, but a strength.

During the 18th century, production expanded rapidly. As trade routes improved, Gardena carvers carried dolls on foot or by mule to regional



markets. By around 1750, dozens of families were involved in doll making, and by the early 1800s the number had grown into the hundreds. Some estimates suggest that in peak decades of the 19th century, several hundred thousand wooden dolls were produced annually in the valley.

These dolls traveled far beyond the Alps. By the mid-1800s, they were exported throughout Europe and across the Atlantic. In the United States, they became widely known as peg wooden dolls and were sold as af-

fordable toys for working- and middle-class families. Their low cost, durability, and handmade character gave them an edge over porcelain dolls, which were fragile and expensive.

The doll trade transformed the local economy. In some villages, more than 60–70% of households depended partially or entirely on wood carving. Work was highly organized. One family might rough-carve bodies, another specialize in heads, while women and children often handled painting and clothing.





This division of labor allowed efficient production while preserving handcrafted quality.

Toward the end of the 19th century, competition increased. Industrial toys made of metal, rubber, and later plastic flooded the market. Wooden dolls from Val Gardena gradually lost their dominance as everyday toys. By the 1930s, large-scale doll production had declined sharply. Many workshops closed, and others shifted toward religious figures, decorative objects, or artistic sculpture.

Yet the tradition never disappeared. Today, wooden dolls remain a cultural symbol of the valley. In towns such as Ortisei, artisans continue to carve dolls

inspired by historical models. Production numbers are far smaller, often limited to dozens or hundreds per year per workshop, but quality and detail have increased significantly. Modern dolls may include hand-sewn clothing, natural pigments, and certificates of origin.

Wooden dolls from Val Gardena are no longer simple toys. They are heritage objects, linking centuries of manual skill with contemporary appreciation for craftsmanship. What began as a winter necessity became a global product, and today survives as a refined expression of identity, memory, and enduring Alpine creativity.



*My Life in Italy*

## **Beyond the €1 Homes Dream. Why Italy is not an outlet store - and why living comes before investing**

Matteo Cerri

Over the past decade, Italy has been marketed abroad in two radically opposite - yet equally misleading - ways. On one side, there are the crime hea-

dlines and cautionary chronicles, the kind that make any foreign country feel intimidating if you only experience it through the news.

On the other, there is the glossy dream: television shows, lifestyle features and reality formats where charming villages appear frozen in time, renovation projects wrap up in weeks, and local builders speak fluent English while smiling patiently at confused newcomers.

Reality, as usual, lives somewhere else entirely.



The now-famous €1 homes story became the perfect container for this contradiction. For many Americans - especially Italian Americans - it sounded like the convergence of everything they were looking for: roots, beauty, affordability, reinvention. Add to that a steady stream of articles in major US media outlets, YouTube channels documenting “my Italian house journey,” and social media posts promising a simpler life, and the narrative was complete.

A house in Italy, for almost nothing. What could possibly go wrong?

### *Between headlines and happy endings*

Recent news stories in Italy have reminded everyone that things can, in fact, go wrong. Judicial investigations linked to property schemes and renovation incentives have made headlines and inevitably rea-

ched international audiences. That is understandable - and, frankly, unavoidable. Every country has its share of bad actors, opportunists and outright fraud.

Italy is no exception. But Italy is also not unique.

If you invest in real estate remotely, without understanding the system, the language, the timelines and the culture, risk exists everywhere - from Florida to Portugal, from Mexico to Eastern Europe. The problem is not Italy. The problem is distance combined with illusion.

At the opposite extreme, popular reality shows and viral videos have created the impression that buying and restoring a home in Italy is mostly a lifestyle upgrade with a charming soundtrack. That you can land, pick a village, hire a contractor who speaks perfect English, and

be sipping wine on your restored terrace before the season ends.

Anyone who has actually done it knows how fictional that picture is.

*Italy is not hard - but it is real*

Italy's villages are not hostile places. They are not traps. They are not scams waiting to happen. But they are real.

Living in a small Italian town is not an "extended vacation." It means adapting to local rhythms, limited services, regional differences, and a bureaucracy that values procedure over speed. Re-

novation projects involve layers of planning permission, historical constraints, technical surprises and delays that no television edit will ever show.

This does not mean things do not work. It means they work differently.

Projects in villages are slow. They often change course. Sometimes they stall. This is not failure - it is the baseline condition of working in historic, fragile contexts. What should raise red flags are promises of speed, simplicity and guaranteed outcomes.

Complexity is normal. Deception



is not.

*The real misunderstanding: investment before life*

One of the most common mistakes made by foreign buyers - particularly Americans - is starting from the wrong question.

The question is not: "Is this house a good deal?"

The question should be: "Do I want to live here - and doing what?"

Italy is not a plug-and-play country. Where you live matters enormously. What you plan to do matters even more. A beautiful house in the wrong place, or without a clear life project, quickly turns into a distant, illiquid and stressful investment.

This is why the healthiest paths always look the same:

People come first to experience, not to buy.

They rent.

They stay for months, not weeks.

They test daily life outside the tourist season.

They deal with documents, residency, healthcare, visas, taxation - properly and legally.

Only after that does property begin to make sense.

Skipping this phase is how Italy turns from a life choice into "just another investment," only farther away, harder to manage, and emotionally loaded.

*Italy is affordable - not cheap*

Another illusion worth dismantling is the idea of Italy as a bargain country.

Italy can be affordable. In many areas, you can still find extraordinary places where €100,000 goes a very long way. That is real. But affordability does not mean cheap, and it certainly does not mean effortless.

Italy is not a cultural outlet store. It is not a clearance sale of landscapes, food and identity.

Places are affordable precisely because they ask for something in return: time, commitment, presence, adaptation. When Italy is approached as a discount opportunity, expectations inflate and disappointment follows.

And disappointment, everywhere in the world, attracts the wrong incentives.

*Less social media, more soil under your shoes*

Social media is not the enemy. But it is a terrible decision-making tool.

What Italy asks for is presence. Walking the streets in February, not August. Standing in line at a local office. Learning how people actually live, work, complain and cooperate.

Less scrolling. More listening.

This is why, whenever I speak with people considering a move or an investment, I always suggest the same thing: do not start with the house. Start with the place. With the community. With the question of what that location can offer you - and what you can realistically offer in return.

Only then does real integration begin.

*Roots, health, rhythm - and then value*

For many Italian Americans, this journey is also about rediscovering roots. That adds depth and emotion, but also responsibility.

Returning to a place of ancestry is not about recreating a postcard from the past. It is about becoming part of a present.

Italy can offer extraordinary improvements in quality of life: food, rhythm, relationships, proximity, meaning. For many, it also brings tangible benefits in health and wellbeing. These are not secondary outcomes - they are often the real return on investment.

Economic value can follow. Many people build successful projects, businesses and properties over time. But that value grows slowly, from engagement, not from shortcuts.

*Not fear - discernment*

So, should people be afraid of €1 homes, village projects or small-town Italy? No.

But they should be discerning.

Italy is neither a crime scene nor a fairy tale. It is a complex, generous, demanding country that gives back in proportion to what you put in - not to what you expect to extract.

Do not let headlines scare you away. But do not arrive as easy prey either.

Italy rewards those who come everywhere:

prepared, curious and grounded. Those who treat it not as a deal, but as a relationship.

Your time.

Your presence.

Your life.

Because in the end, whether a house costs one euro or one hundred thousand, the real investment is the same

And that is not something you should ever buy on impulse.





*Italian street food*

## **Emilia Romagna street food has many names, but one tradition**

We the Italians Editorial Staff

Street food in Emilia Romagna reads like a living poem made of flavors, dialects, and shared habits. Across an area of about 22,000 square kilometers, similar ingredients take on different names and forms depending on the province, yet they all express the same devotion to quality and tradition. Here,

eating on the go does not mean compromising. Even the simplest snack carries centuries of know-how and a strong sense of local identity.

One of the clearest examples is fried dough. In Modena and Reggio Emilia, it is called gnocco fritto. The dough is

**Crescentina from Bologna**



made with flour, water, salt, and lard, then cut into rectangles or diamonds and fried until it puffs dramatically. As it cooks, it inflates and becomes hollow inside, creating a pocket of air that makes it light yet indulgent. In Bologna, the same fried dough often goes by the name *crescentina*. The name changes, but the ritual stays the same. It is served hot, usually within seconds of leaving the fryer, and paired with local cured meats and soft cheeses. A single

portion can include 3–5 pieces, easily enough for a quick lunch.

Then there are *tigelle*, also known as *crescentine modenesi*. These are small, round flatbreads cooked on a hot surface rather than fried. Traditionally, they were baked between terracotta disks, which gave them their name. Today, steel or cast-iron griddles are more common, but the result is similar. Each *tigella* is about 8–10 centimeters wide and split



**Tigella from Modena**



**Borlenghi**

open while still steaming. The classic filling is *cunza*, a spread made from finely chopped lard, garlic, and rosemary. The heat melts the fat instantly, releasing aroma and flavor. *Tigelle* are especially popular in the hills and villages of the Apennines, where they are sold at festivals, food trucks, and casual eateries.

Another specialty, less known outside the region but deeply rooted in local life, is *borlengo*. It looks like an ultra-thin crepe, often no more than 1 millimeter thick, cooked on a

large, blazing-hot metal plate. The batter is extremely liquid, made with water, flour, and salt. Once cooked, the *borlengo* is folded into quarters and seasoned generously with lard, garlic, rosemary, and grated aged cheese. Crisp, salty, and intense, it is typically eaten standing up and shared among friends, especially during winter gatherings.

In other areas, particularly around Parma, similar fried dough may be called *torta fritta* or *pasta fritta*. The thickness may vary by a few mil-



### **Pasta fritta from Parma**

limeters, or yeast may be added or omitted, but the purpose remains unchanged. It is food meant to be eaten with the hands, accompanied by conversation and local wine.

In Emilia Romagna, street food is not a trend but a habit shaped over generations. Whether fried, griddled, or paper-thin, these foods show how simplicity, when handled with care, can become culture.



*Italian Citizenship Assistance*

## **2026 Changes to the Registration of Minor Children**

*Italian Citizenship Assistance*

Those interested in acquiring Italian citizenship for themselves or their children might already be aware of the changes that have taken place in the process during the past year. There are now stricter rules around applications for jure sanguinis ci-

tizenship, and even citizenship for minor children. However, promising changes came about with the new year regarding the latter. In the below article, we talk about how minors acquire Italian citizenship and how the rules have changed recently.

## How minors acquire Italian citizenship

There are a couple distinctions to be made. Minors born in Italy to non-Italian parents are not automatically Italian, but if they have continually and legally resided in Italy, then they can apply for Italian citizenship for one year upon turning 18. The rules laid out in this article does not affect such persons. It does, however, concern children born abroad to Italian parents, or at least one parent who is Italian. It has been, and still is, the case that such children can be recognized as Italian citizens, provided that their birth certificate is registered in Italy. The timing of when this can be done, though, has changed.

## The Tajani Decree and changes to Italian citizenship by descent

On May 20, 2025, the [Tajani Decree](#) was officially voted into law, altering the rules for Italian citizenship by descent. Whereas before, the rules were flexible and allowed for a vast majority of those with Italian ancestry to claim citizenship, now only those with an Italian parent or grandparent can do so.

It is also important to note that those who filed an application prior to the Tajani Decree, or received a notification of an appointment before March 27, 2025 at 11:59 p.m. Rome time, will be processed under the old rules.

## The old rules

Prior to the Tajani Decree, Italian parents to a child born abroad could register the child's birth certificate in Italy any time before the child turned 18 in order to claim



their Italian citizenship. If above 18, the child could make an application for citizenship *jure sanguinis*. Regardless, the child would be recognized as an Italian since birth. The Tajani Decree changed both the timeline for this process and the way in which citizenship is recognized.

### How minors are registered after the Tajani Decree

The first change to come for the registration of minor child is the time in which it must be done. Following the Tajani Decree, registration of the child's birth certificate had to be done within one year of birth or adoption. If the child is older, then following registration he or she must reside in Italy for at least two consecutive years. The exception to the latter is if the parents register the birth certificate before May 31, 2026. If the child turns 18 before that date, he or she can submit the declaration themselves.

The second significant change is that in this process, the child is considered to have citizenship by "benefit of the law," as in, from the moment of registration than from birth. A €250 fee was also introduced.

### How minors are registered as of January 1, 2026

The 2026 Budget Law, however, provided a promising alteration to the abo-



ve regarding the registration of minor children. As of January 1, 2026, parents now have a three-year window in which to register the child's birth certificate for Italian citizenship instead of one. The €250 fee was dropped as well. These changes will only apply to applications made after January 1st. Also, children born before May 24, 2025 still need to be registered before May 31, 2026 and pay the €250 fee.

Registration can be done with the Vital Statistics clerk at your local consulate, or at your local comune if you reside in Italy.

### Conclusion

Italian Citizenship Assistance is well-prepared to answer any questions you might have about the registration process, other Italian citizenship-related questions, or visas and relocation concerns. You can contact them at [info@italiancitizenshipassistance.com](mailto:info@italiancitizenshipassistance.com) or visit them online at [www.italiancitizenshipassistance.com](http://www.italiancitizenshipassistance.com).

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## *Italian innovation*

# **Italian-led repair project brings robotics and AI to the reconstruction of Pompeii's frescoes**

We the Italians Editorial Staff

The RePAIR project in Pompeii has concluded after nearly four years of research, marking a major achievement for Italian innovation in the field of cultural heritage conservation. Launched in September 2021, the project was conceived, coordinated, and largely developed in Italy, brin-

ging together Italian archaeologists, conservators, engineers, and university researchers with the goal of solving one of archaeology's most demanding problems – the reconstruction of fragmented ancient frescoes.

Rooted in Italy's long tradition



of archaeological research, RePAIR focused on frescoes from Pompeii that were shattered by the AD 79 eruption of Mount Vesuvius, further damaged during World War II, and affected by later collapses. Thousands of fragments, many measuring only a few centimeters, had remained stored for decades due to the extreme difficulty of manual reassembly. In some cases, traditional restoration timelines could stretch beyond 20 or 30 years for a single decorative cycle.

To address this challenge, the Italian-led team developed an intelligent robotic system that combines artificial intelligence, computer vision, and pre-

cision robotics. Each fragment was digitally scanned using high-resolution 3D imaging to capture shape, thickness, pigment distribution, and edge geometry. Over the course of the project, tens of thousands of fragments were processed and cataloged, creating one of the most advanced digital archives of Roman wall painting fragments ever assembled.

The core of the system was designed and tested in a dedicated laboratory inside the Pompeii Archaeological Park. Here, the robot analyzed digital data to propose possible matches by comparing colors, surface curvature, and break patterns. Once a match was identified

virtually, the robotic arms physically tested the assembly with millimeter-level precision, ensuring safe handling of extremely fragile materials.

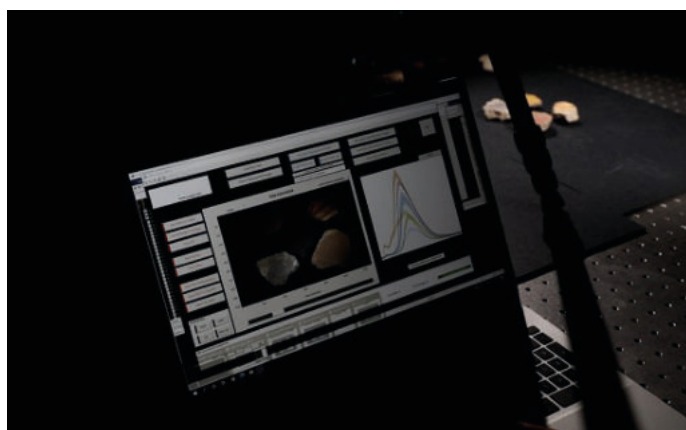
Italian conservators and archaeologists remained central throughout the process. Rather than replacing human expertise, the robotic system functioned as a support tool, dramatically reducing repetitive manual work while leaving interpretive and conservation decisions to specialists. This collaboration between Italian scientific research and hands-on conservation practice proved to be one of the project's strongest features.

The system was applied to frescoes from important Pompeian buildings, including the House of the Painters at Work and the Schola Armaturarum. In experimental trials, the robot successfully identified cor-



rect fragment matches that would have taken months or even years to locate using traditional methods. Researchers estimate that similar systems could reduce reconstruction time by more than 50 percent for highly fragmented frescoes. By the end of 2025, RePAIR delivered a fully operational prototype capable of working with authentic archaeological materials under real conservation conditions. The project stands as a clear example of Italian leadership in combining technology, archaeology, and heritage protection.

Beyond Pompeii, the results open new possibilities for applying Italian-developed methods to archaeological sites worldwide, reinforcing Italy's role at the forefront of innovation in cultural heritage conservation while setting new standards for the preservation of ancient art.





*Italian traditions*

## **Italy maps its living traditions with a national census of intangible heritage**

We the Italians Editorial Staff

Italy has launched an unprecedented effort to document and map its intangible cultural heritage, creating the first comprehensive national census of living traditions,

rituals, local knowledge and community practices. This initiative, officially begun in 2023 and now showing substantial progress, is designed to record the customs and

expressions that form the cultural backbone of communities across the country.

At the heart of this project is the recognition that Italy's identity extends far beyond monuments and museums. Everyday practices, from spring rituals and religious processions to regional dialects and seasonal festivals, hold layers of meaning that connect present generations with their ancestors. Until now, many of these traditions existed only in local memory, maintained by families, neighborhood groups, volunteer associations and informal cultural custodians. The census aims to

ensure that these living traditions are documented, shared and safeguarded before they fade away.

So far, more than 30,000 distinct elements of intangible cultural heritage have been recorded nationwide. These entries include traditional ceremonies, culinary customs, folklore events, historical reenactments, floral carpet festivals, local dialects, oral storytelling, music and unique artisanal skills. The project organizes this material into nine thematic areas and 43 subcategories, offering a structured framework that reflects the extraordinary diversity of Italy's cultural practices.





The initiative relies on a broad national network of volunteers and institutions working closely with local governments. Nearly 3,000 museums and ecomuseums are involved, alongside more than 2,600 researchers, scholars and trained volunteers who gather, verify and catalog information directly within communities. Their work highlights the strong link between intangible heritage and local identity, especially in rural areas and small towns.

A dedicated digital platform plays a central role in the project. This online system allows users to explore tra-



ditions through interactive maps, search by region or category, and access detailed descriptions of each cultural element. The platform already includes over 3,000 images, helping to



visually document rituals, costumes, performances and community gatherings. By combining data and imagery, the platform makes intangible heritage accessible not only to specialists but also to schools, tourists and the general public.

Municipalities are a key focus of the census. Italy has more than 5,500 towns with fewer than 5,000 residents, representing over 70 percent of all municipalities in the country. These smaller communities often preserve highly localized traditions that are ra-

rely documented elsewhere. In many cases, the census has uncovered practices that exist in only one village or even a single neighborhood, underscoring the fragile nature of this heritage.

Organizers see the census as an ongoing process rather than a one-time project. New entries continue to be added, and existing ones are updated as traditions evolve. Beyond preservation, the initiative is intended to support education, cultural planning and sustainable tourism, while strengthening community pride and



intergenerational connections.

By systematically recording Italy's living traditions, this national census marks a major step toward recognizing intangible cultural heritage as a vital and dynamic part of the country's identity, deserving the same attention and care as its famous physical landmarks.





## *Italian wine*

# **Roots and character of Umbria's wines**

We the Italians Editorial Staff

Umbria is a small, landlocked region in central Italy, often described as the country's green heart. While it lacks a coastline, it makes up for it with rolling hills, forested landscapes, and a long tradition of agriculture. Wine has been a

central part of Umbrian life for centuries, shaped by a continental climate with warm summers, cold winters, and significant day-to-night temperature swings that help preserve acidity and aromatic intensity in grapes.

Vineyards in Umbria cover roughly 13,000 hectares, most of them planted on hillsides between 200 and 600 meters above sea level. Annual production averages around 900,000 hectoliters, with red and rosé wines accounting for about 53 percent and white wines making up the remaining 47 percent. Despite its relatively modest size, Umbria has a structured quality system that includes 2 DOCG denominations, 13 DOCs, and 6 IGT designations.

Historically, winemaking in Umbria dates back to the Etruscan period, well before the rise of

Rome. Archaeological findings show that vines were already being cultivated in the region more than 2,500 years ago. During Roman times, Umbrian wines were traded across central Italy, valued for their balance and reliability. In the Middle Ages, monasteries played a key role in preserving viticultural knowledge, maintaining vineyards and refining production methods. Wine remained a staple of rural life through the Renaissance and into the modern era, though quality varied widely until the second half of the 20th century, when stricter regulations and investments in vineyard manage-





ment led to a renewed focus on excellence.

Umbrian viticulture today is defined by diversity rather than volume. The region grows a mix of native and international grape varieties, allowing producers to craft wines in many different styles. Among white grapes, Grechetto is the most emblematic, known for its structure, herbal notes, and aging potential. Trebbiano Toscano, Malvasia Bianca, and Verdello are also widely planted. Red varieties include Sagrantino, Sangiovese, Monte-

pulciano, Ciliegiolo, and Barbera, along with smaller amounts of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Pinot Noir.

White wines from Umbria tend to be dry, fresh, and food-friendly, with aromas of citrus, apple, almond, and wild herbs. Reds range from easy-drinking, medium-bodied bottles to powerful, long-lived wines with firm tannins and deep concentration. Soil types vary significantly across the region, including limestone, clay, sandstone, and alluvial deposits, contributing to

distinct expressions even within short distances.

Three wine areas stand out for their historical and qualitative importance. Near Perugia, the hills around Torgiano are considered a cornerstone of modern Umbrian winemaking. This area was among the first in the region to pursue quality-driven production, earning DOC status in 1968 and DOCG recognition in 1990. Wines here include structured reds based on Sangiovese, fresh and balanced whites, rosés, and even traditional-method sparkling wines.

Further south, Montefalco has become internationally known for wines made from Sagrantino, one of Italy's most tannic and

age-worthy grapes. Sagrantino di Montefalco DOCG requires 100 percent Sagrantino and extended aging, often exceeding 30 months before release. These wines are deep in color, rich in alcohol, and capable of aging for 20 years or more. Alongside them, Montefalco Rosso offers a more approachable style, typically based on Sangiovese with a smaller percentage of Sagrantino.

In western Umbria, the area around Orvieto has long been associated with white wine production. Orvieto wines are traditionally blends dominated by Grechetto and Trebbiano Toscano. Once famous for sweet styles, modern Orvieto is primarily dry, producing crisp, approachable whites with moderate alcohol





levels, usually between 11.5 and 13 percent. These wines are designed for everyday drinking and pair well with local cuisine.

Other zones such as Colli del Trasimeno, Colli Amerini, and Colli Perugini add further complexity to the regional picture. Around Lake Trasimeno, vineyards benefit from a milder microclimate, and Gamay has been cultivated there for over a century, producing light to medium-bodied

reds with bright fruit character.

Today, Umbrian winemakers increasingly emphasize sustainability, lower yields, and site-specific bottlings. While production remains relatively small compared to larger Italian regions, Umbria continues to gain recognition for wines that reflect both ancient roots and modern precision, offering authenticity, balance, and a strong sense of place.



*Italian industrial districts*

## **The Vasto-San Salvo glass district in Abruzzo**

We the Italians Editorial Staff

The glass district of Vasto-San Salvo is one of Italy's most significant industrial centers for flat glass production, with a strong focus on automotive and construction applications.

Located in southern Abruzzo, the district has shaped the economic identity of the Vastese area for decades and continues to play a strategic role in national manufacturing as it moves into 2026.

## SIV

The modern industrial phase began on May 23, 1962, with the founding of Società Italiana Vetro, known as SIV. The company was created under the leadership of Enrico Mattei, who transformed a local limitation into an opportunity. A methane deposit discovered in Abruzzo was unsuitable for domestic consumption, but it proved ideal for fueling glass furnaces. This decision allowed large-scale production to take root locally. Within a few years, SIV became Europe's second-largest producer of automotive glass, capturing a market share of 22%. The arrival of heavy industry sparked rapid industrialization, generating jobs, improving living standards, and reshaping the social fabric of the southern Abruzzo coastline.

Behind this modern success lies a much older story. Glassmaking in the Vasto area dates back several



centuries. By the end of the 17th century, two glassworks were active in Vasto, confirming the town's early role in the sector. Murano glassmakers had been present in the area as early as the 14th century, but written evidence becomes clearer later on. A document dated 1671 records shipments of glass panes from Vasto to Naples, along with mirrors and thousands of individual sheets, suggesting an already well-organized workshop capable of sustained production and trade.



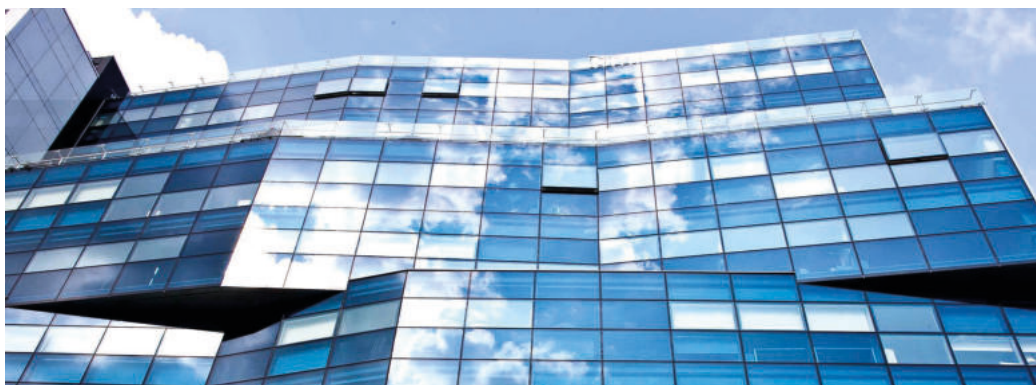
**Enrico Mattei**



The most prominent early factory was founded in 1694 by Lorenzo Del Moro, a Murano glassmaker who established his operation with the backing of the Marquis of Vasto. For nearly nine years, the glassworks contributed to local employment and craftsmanship. In 1702, however, a fire destroyed

the facility, bringing this first industrial chapter to an abrupt end. Despite the closure, glassmaking knowledge did not disappear. Techniques survived through local artisans, laying a cultural foundation that would resurface centuries later.





Today, the district is concentrated around San Salvo, alongside Gissi and Atessa, within the province of Chieti. The area includes 15 municipalities and hosts a dense network of small and medium-sized enterprises working alongside major industrial plants. These companies specialize in transparent and white flat glass, as well as decorative and architectural products such as panels, doors, tabletops, lighting elements, and mosaics. While not a historic district like Murano, the Vastese cluster is considered modern, adaptive, and technologically advanced.

In the 1990s, SIV was acquired by Pilkington, later incorporated into the Japanese NSG Group in 2006.

The San Salvo plant now employs more than 2,000 workers, with a similar number active in the supply chain. Current production stands at 140,000 tons of flat glass per year. Planned investments for 2026 include a new float glass furnace that will raise output to 160,000 tons annually, an increase of 14%. The upgrade will also expand production into architectural and design glass. Energy efficiency is central to the project, with expected savings of 3.5 million cubic meters of gas and 260,000 cubic meters of water per year. Designed to support future hydrogen and electric melting technologies, the new furnace reflects the district's long tradition of adapting innovation to local resources.



## *Italian proverbs*

# **Meglio l'uovo oggi che la gallina domani**

We the Italians Editorial Staff

Meglio l'uovo oggi che la gallina domani (literally “Better an egg today than a hen tomorrow”) is a proverb that means that it is wiser to accept a small, certain, and immediate benefit (the egg) rather than risk waiting for a larger but uncertain gain in the future (the hen), which may never materialize. It promotes a cautious, conservative approach to decision-making, valuing security over speculation. With ancient rural roots, the saying reflects everyday survival logic: an egg provides guaranteed nourishment, while a hen might never be born or could be lost. The same idea was already discussed by philosophers such as Aristotle and later popularized in literature by Carlo Goldoni, notably in *La Locandiera*, where certain gain is contrasted with uncertain promises.



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