

# We the Italians

**September 2025**

**N.191**

**interview with**



**Jody Valet** pag 65



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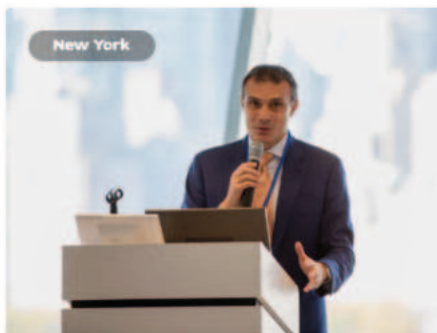


## From USA



• Sep 19, 2025

**That's Amore Italian Festival Returns to Stamford (CT) – October 11 & 12, 2025**



• Sep 19, 2025

**Fabrizio Di Michele named Honoree of 2025 Columbus Celebration Weekend**



We the Italians is a company that in 10 years has become a key relational hub between Italy and the community of the more than 20 million Italian Americans in the United States. We have built a set of information channels that monthly reaches 3 million Italian Americans.

We have also consolidated an unparalleled geographical presence, structuring a network of more than 80 Ambassadors in all the Italian regions, across all 50 American states, plus ten focused on specific themes.

## Brochure

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## Editorial

# What's up with WTI #190

by Umberto Mucci

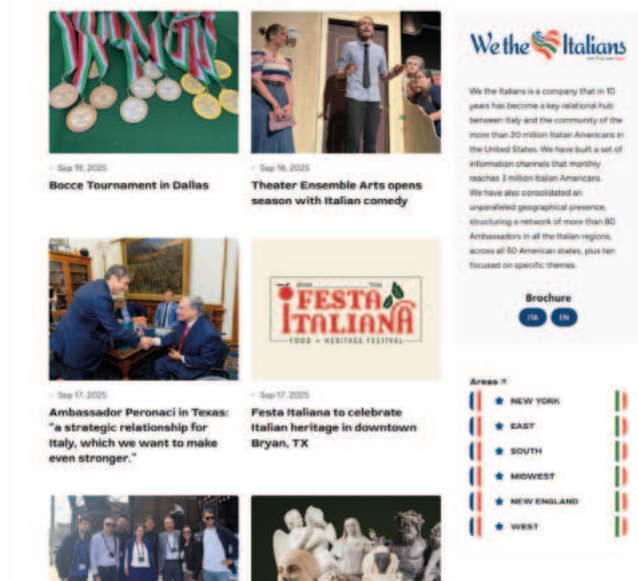
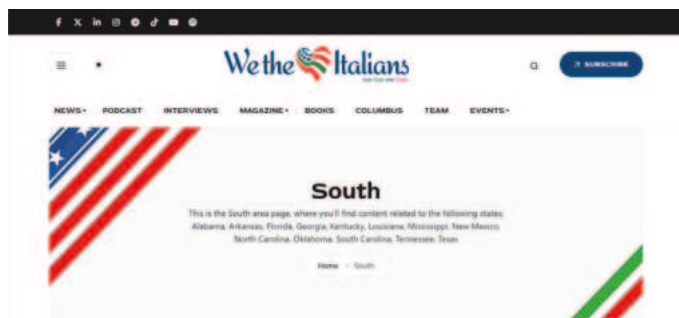
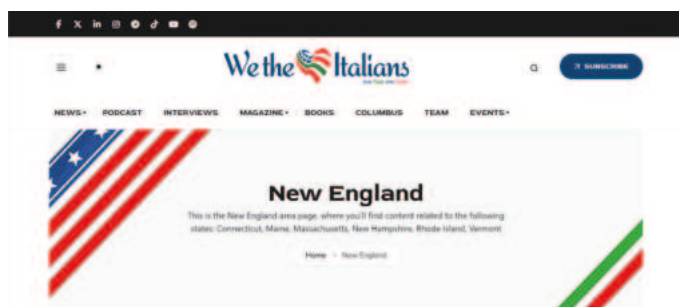
Dear friends,

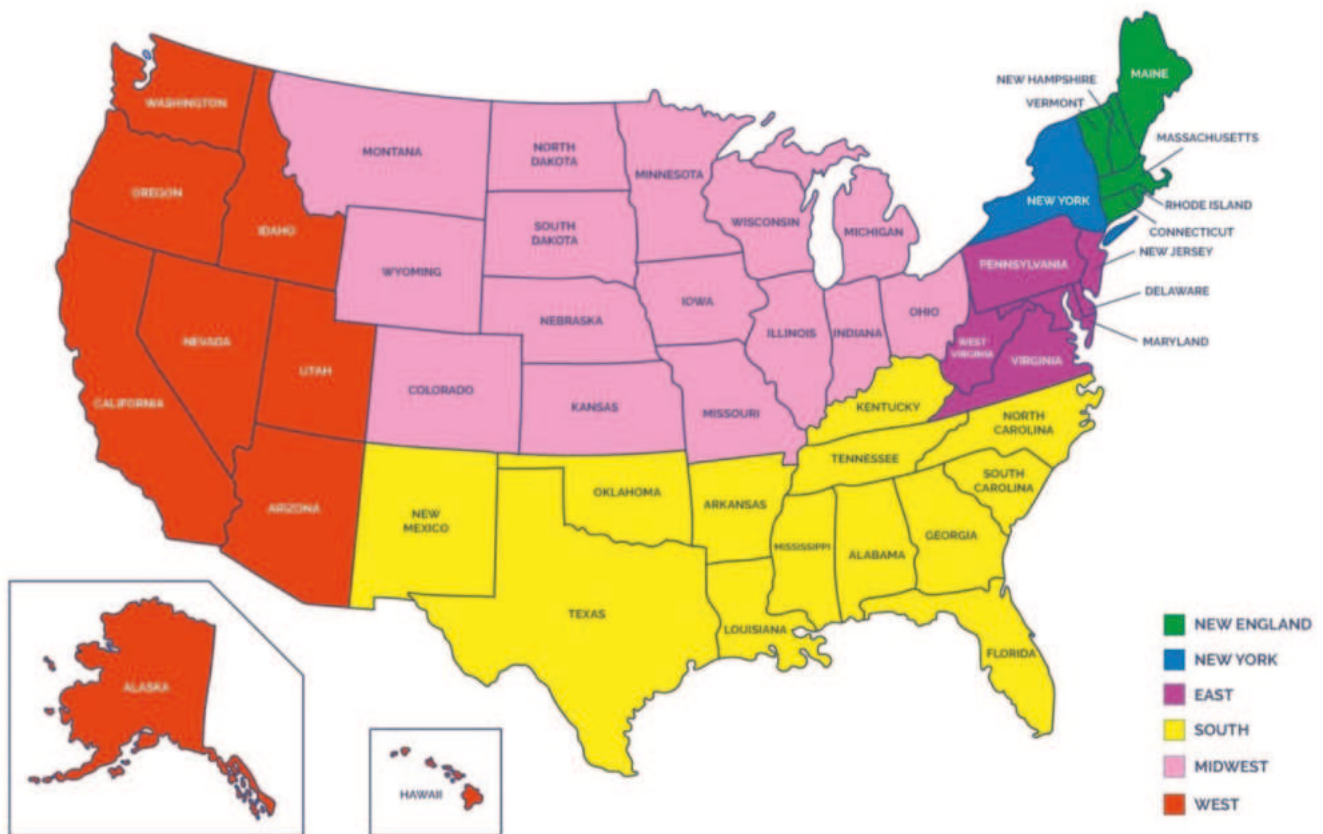
Finally, our new website is live! It's more attractive, faster, more complete, and it will soon allow us to do even more. [We invite you to visit it here.](#)

Please note that the areas we use to divide the United States have been reduced from 9 to 6: the new re-

gions are New England, New York, East, Midwest, South, and West. Starting this month, the newsletter will also follow this new structure. So, subscribers to the Great Lakes newsletter will now be part of the Midwest one; those who subscribed to the South East newsletter will be moved to the South; and California newsletter subscribers will join the West.







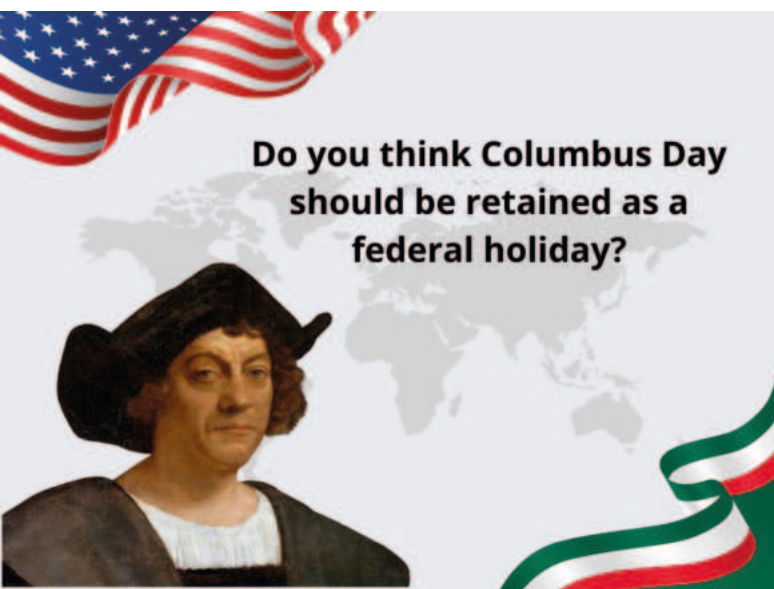
America Reputation Lab.

Last weekend, I had the pleasure of sharing some Italian American stories at the Italia-America Friendship Festival in Vicenza. I believe it's very important - especially in these times - to organize events that promote dialogue and friendship between Italy and the United States. Vicenza is a special city, home to the largest American community in Italy, and we will be celebrating it in October's monthly interview. Stay tuned!

We launched [the second We the Italians survey](#), organized within the framework of the Italia

It's September, and in the United States October is about to be celebrated as Italian Heritage Month. This is because the second Monday of October the US celebrate Columbus Day. For the vast majority of Italian Americans, Christopher Columbus has long been - and still is - a symbol of Italian pride. Of course, not for everyone. In recent years, the legacy of Columbus has come under attack, and some believe that these attacks extend to the very idea of Italian identity in the United States.





We would like to know your thoughts on this issue: **do you think Co-**

**lumbus Day should be retained as a federal holiday?**

[Please answer the survey here.](#)

As always, you'll also have the opportunity to leave a comment in addition to your response. We kindly ask you to share your opinion freely and respectfully - and we thank you for that.

Just like our first survey on dual citizenship, the results of this survey will be shared both in Italy and in the United States, and will be pre-



sented by us to the Italian institutions.

With this second survey, we are beginning to collaborate with three of the most important Italian American organizations: Conference of Presidents of the Major Italian American Organizations, Italian American ONE VOICE Coalition, Italian Sons and Daughters of America. We thank them, and we invite you to spread the word about this survey so that as many people as possible who appreciate being asked for their opinion from Italy can participate.

I mentioned the [Italia America Re-](#)

[putation Lab \(IARL\)](#), where We the Italians is happy and proud to have a partnership with my friend Davide Ippolito. A few days ago, Davide had the chance to greet the new Italian American Pope, Leo XIV, and briefly explain what the IARL is. [You can read the story of this exciting meeting here.](#)

Our Facebook page keeps growing, and we're happy to have reached another nice milestone: 80,000 followers. If you haven't already, we invite you to follow us - [you can find the page here.](#) Next goal: 90,000 followers!







## We The Italians



Follower: 80.000

This month we welcome a new Ambassador to our to the We the Italians team.

Jennifer Adriana LaDelfa is our new Ambassador in Brooklyn, New York. Jennifer grew up in Brooklyn's Little Italy managing programs for Federation of Italian American Organization's Il Centro. She was a publicist and events producer for the Columbus Day Parade on Fifth and YAA Events Chair of the Columbus Citizens Foundation for over a decade. As a Journalist, Jennifer represents



**Jennifer Adriana LaDelfa**

Giornale Italo Americano and the Italian American Museum at City Hall. Jennifer is a Board Member of the Italian Heritage and Culture Committee of New York and of the Conference of Presidents of the Major Italian American Organizations.

As mentioned last month, part of the new direction for We the Italians, we want to include our audience more than ever. We're launching a new video project aimed at giving a voice and face to Italian stories, emotions, and places across the United States. With your help, we're creating a series of short videos that tell the story of Italian America - through your eyes, from your community.

These videos will be featured on our Facebook page, which gets 5.5 million views each month, and the best ones will be selected for our exclusive Meta Subscription program. They'll also be posted on our Instagram and

TikTok channels, helping us build a more authentic and engaging social media presence while giving visibility to you and your content.

Want to make a video? Here are a few quick tips:

- Use your phone in vertical (Reel) format
- Aim for 30 to 60 seconds
- Make sure your face is well-lit with natural light (no backlighting)
- • Choose a quiet place and avoid loud background noise
- • Be yourself, smile, and have fun!

You can focus on one (or more!) of the following topics:

1. Italian festivals or events

2. Local Italian landmarks or businesses
3. “Sauce or Gravy?”

This will be a playful look at the heart of Italian American culture. Once your video is ready, you can send it to us via [email](#) or [Messenger](#).

And it doesn't stop there! 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.





*Italian wine*

## **Lambrusco, the sparkling red that conquered the world**

We the Italians Editorial Staff

When people think of sparkling wine, their minds often go straight to the golden fizz of Champagne or the crisp bubbles of Prosecco. Yet in the heart of northern Italy, there is another sparkling treasure that tells a different story - one written in

shades of ruby and garnet. That wine is Lambrusco, a red with a lively effervescence and an even livelier history. It is both ancient and modern, rustic and refined, deeply tied to its homeland but increasingly beloved across the globe.





Ancient roots and rural traditions

The name “Lambrusco” does not refer to a single grape but to a family of varieties that have grown wild in the Emilia Romagna region for centuries. References to these vines appear as far back as Roman times, when writers praised a sparkling red that accompanied soldiers and farmers alike. Unlike many cultivated varieties, Lambrusco thrived in the flat plains and fertile soils of the Po Valley, adapting naturally to the rhythms of local agriculture.

For generations, farming families made their own Lambrusco, often bottling it while fermentation was still active. The result was a wine that carried a natural sparkle, earthy aromas, and a vibrant acidity. It was never meant to be a luxury

product. Instead, it was the wine of the people - affordable, refreshing, and perfectly suited to the hearty dishes of Emilia, from rich pastas to cured meats.

### A modern reinvention

The 20th century transformed Lambrusco into a household name. Advances in winemaking allowed producers to harness its natural effervescence in a more controlled way, giving the wine consistency and international appeal. By the 1970s and 1980s, Lambrusco had become one of Italy’s most exported wines, particularly popular in the United States. Sweet and lightly sparkling versions charmed American drinkers, offering an approachable alternative to heavier reds.



This success, however, came with a price. The image of Lambrusco as a simple, sugary wine overshadowed the depth and variety it could offer. Serious wine drinkers often dismissed it, forgetting that at its best, Lambrusco is complex, versatile, and deeply connected to one of Italy's richest culinary traditions.

### **Diversity in the glass**

One of Lambrusco's greatest strengths lies in its diversity. There are several sub-varieties, each with its own character. Lambrusco di Sorbara, for example, is known for its pale color, floral notes, and bright acidity. Lambrusco Grasparossa produces deeper, more robust wines with darker fruit flavors and a

fuller body. Lambrusco Salamino combines the best of both worlds, offering freshness and structure.

Beyond these, countless local variations exist, reflecting the creativity of winemakers across Emilia Romagna and neighboring Lombardy. Some Lambruscos are bone-dry, while others retain a touch of sweetness. Some are light and playful, others bold and tannic. This range allows Lambrusco to move easily from casual aperitifs to elegant dining tables, surprising those who only know it from its most commercial versions.

### **The perfect match for Emilia's cuisine**

If you want to understand Lambru-





sco, you have to taste it alongside the food of its homeland. Emilia Romagna is famous for dishes that are rich, savory, and indulgent: tortellini in broth, lasagna layered with béchamel, tagliatelle topped with ragù. Add to that a world of cured meats - prosciutto di Parma, mortadella, culatello - and cheeses like Parmigiano Reggiano.

Lambrusco is the ideal companion for these flavors. Its bubbles cut through fat, its acidity refreshes the palate, and its fruitiness balances the saltiness of cured meats and aged cheeses. Few wines achieve such harmony with regional cuis-

ne. This is why Lambrusco is more than just a beverage - it is part of the cultural fabric of Emilia, inseparable from the meals and gatherings that define life there.

### **The global comeback**

In recent years, Lambrusco has been experiencing a renaissance. Wine lovers, increasingly curious about authentic and lesser-known varieties, are rediscovering its appeal. Producers have responded by emphasizing quality, tradition, and the unique terroir of their vineyards. Dry and artisanal bottlings are now reaching international



markets, offering a very different experience from the mass-market Lambruscos of the past.

This revival has also been fueled by the growing popularity of sparkling wines worldwide. Consumers who once reserved bubbles for special occasions now enjoy them year-round, appreciating their versatility and celebratory feel. Lambrusco, with its approachable price and food-friendly profile, fits perfectly into this trend. As a result, it is once again one of Italy's most exported wines, holding its own alongside white sparklers like Prosecco.

### A symbol of identity

For the people of Emilia Romagna, Lambrusco is more than just a product. It is a symbol of local pride and identity. Vineyards and wineries often remain family-run,

passing down knowledge from one generation to the next. Each bottle carries the story of a region that values tradition while embracing innovation. Festivals, tastings, and celebrations keep the connection alive, reminding both locals and visitors that Lambrusco is not simply consumed - it is shared.

The wine's resilience also reflects the spirit of the region itself. Emilia Romagna has endured wars, economic upheavals, and cultural change, yet it has always preserved its culinary and agricultural heart. Lambrusco embodies this endurance: humble, adaptable, but never losing its authenticity.

### Looking ahead

The future of Lambrusco seems bright. Younger winemakers are experimenting with organic practices, traditional bottle fermentation,



and limited editions that highlight specific vineyards. At the same time, established producers are investing in quality and expanding their reach abroad. The challenge remains balancing global demand with respect for local roots, ensuring that Lambrusco never loses the charm that makes it unique.

What is clear is that Lambrusco has earned its place among the world's great wines, not by imitating others but by staying true to itself. Its vibrant sparkle, crimson hues, and joyful spirit continue to win over drinkers from Modena to New York, from Parma to Tokyo.



### A wine of celebration

To drink Lambrusco is to embrace a tradition that stretches back centuries, yet still feels fresh and modern. It is a wine that brings people together, whether around a family table in Emilia or at a dinner party halfway across the globe. With every glass, it offers not only refreshment but also a reminder of resilience, community, and the simple joy of sharing.

In a world overflowing with choices, Lambrusco stands out for its authenticity and character. Sparkling, red, and endlessly versatile, it proves that sometimes the most unexpected wines can leave the most lasting impression.







*Italian entertainment*

## **The queen of Italian television. Why Maria De Filippi's shows keep winning**

We the Italians Editorial Staff

Italian television has many stars, but only one undisputed queen. For decades, Maria De Filippi has managed to capture the attention of millions of viewers with shows that consistently dominate ratings. She does not rely on dazzling beauty or flashy

on-screen presence - she rarely appears in front of the camera compared to the celebrities she helps launch. Instead, her power lies in her instinct for understanding what audiences want and in her ability to turn simple ideas into cultural phenomena.





Three of her most successful programs - *Amici*, *Uomini e Donne*, and *C'è Posta per Te* - explain why she remains at the center of Italian entertainment.

Before having this huge success, Maria started becoming famous when she married Maurizio Costanzo, one of Italy's most influential journalists and television hosts. But then she started shining on

her own because of her talent.

### ***Amici: Turning Young Talent Into Stars***

When *Amici* first aired, it broke away from the usual format of talent competitions. Rather than focusing on one-off performances, the show built a school-like environment where young singers,



dancers, and performers trained day after day under the guidance of professionals. This approach allowed the audience to watch talent grow and evolve in real time.

The appeal of *Amici* lies in the emotional investment it creates. Viewers are not just watching contestants sing or dance; they witness the struggles, setbacks, and triumphs of young people chasing their dreams. Every episode feels like part of a larger story, and fans become attached not only to the performances but also to the personalities behind them.

The program also offers a springboard to genuine careers. Many of today's most popular Italian



singers and entertainers got their start on that stage, proving that the show doesn't just produce television - it produces stars. In a media landscape often filled with fleeting fame, *Amici* has distinguished itself by turning raw potential into long-term success stories.





### **Uomini e Donne: Romance, Drama, and Real Emotions**

Another jewel in De Filippi's crown is *Uomini e Donne*, a dating program that has redefined how love stories are told on television. At first glance, it might seem like a typical matchmaking show. But what makes it unique is the way it blends authenticity with entertainment.

Unlike many dating formats that feel overly staged, *Uomini e Donne* thrives on unpredictability. The participants are real people with strong perso-

nalities, and their interactions often lead to explosive arguments, heartfelt confessions, or unexpected romances. The conversations feel raw and unscripted, giving viewers the impression that they are witnessing genuine moments of vulnerability and passion.

Over the years, the show has also expanded its reach by including different types of participants. From young adults searching for their first big love to older individuals looking for companionship later in life, the program reflects the diversity of relationships in contemporary society. This



inclusiveness has kept the format fresh and allowed multiple generations to see themselves on screen.

Ultimately, *Uomini e Donne* succeeds because it taps into a universal desire: the search for love. By combining humor, tension, and authenticity, it keeps audiences glued to their screens season after season.

### **C'è Posta per Te: Stories That Touch the Heart**

While *Amici* highlights ambition and *Uomini e Donne* thrives on passion, *C'è Posta per Te* is built on empathy. This pro-

gram gives people the chance to reconnect with lost family members, reconcile after conflicts, or deliver long-overdue messages to loved ones. At its core, it is about communication, forgiveness, and second chances.

The format is simple but powerful: an envelope is delivered, someone opens it, and a deeply personal story unfolds. What makes the show unforgettable is the emotional intensity. Tears, hugs, and sometimes rejections play out in front of millions of viewers, reminding everyone of the complexities of human relationships.





Audiences are drawn to *C'è Posta per Te* not only because of the dramatic revelations but also because of the catharsis it provides. Watching others face their past, ask for forgiveness, or declare love encourages viewers to reflect on their own lives. The show creates a sense of shared humanity, proving that everyone, regardless of status or background, experiences joy, pain, and longing.

### **The Secret of De Filippi's Success**

The triumph of these three programs reveals the qualities that make Maria De Filippi such a dominant force. First, she understands storytelling. Whether it's the journey of a performer, the unpredictability of romance, or the drama of family reunions, each show revolves around narratives that viewers can connect to on a personal level.

Second, she trusts authenticity. Even when the settings are constructed for television, the emotions are real. Audiences sense that the tears, laughter, and conflicts are not scripted but emerge naturally from the participants' lives.

Finally, she constantly adapts. Over the years, De Filippi has fine-tuned her formats to reflect cultural changes and evolving audience tastes. This flexibility allows her shows to remain relevant while others fade into memory.

### **A Lasting Legacy**

Maria De Filippi's genius is not about chasing trends but about shaping them. *Amici*, *Uomini e Donne*, and *C'è Posta per Te* demonstrate her ability to touch on universal themes - dreams, love, and forgiveness - while packaging them in formats that feel fresh and compelling.

In a world where television faces competition from countless digital platforms, she continues to prove that strong storytelling and genuine emotion can still bring millions together in front of the screen. Her shows are not just programs; they are cultural touchstones, and their continued success confirms that De Filippi's reign as the queen of Italian television is far from over.







*Italian design*

## **Farewell to Giorgio Armani, king of fashion, explorer of design**

Alberto Improda

Giorgio Armani, who passed away in Milan on September 3, 2025, was without question one of the greatest figures of our time in both business and the arts. There is no need to underline the influence of the designer from Piacenza in Emilia Roma-

gna – known to all as “the King” – on the world of fashion.

Journalist Serena Tibaldi once wrote: “King Giorgio. An absolute legend of fashion, a universal icon of contemporary style, liberator of women, inventor of

trends, looks, and above all, ways of being.”

Patrizia Vacalebri described him as “the king of minimalist style, the inventor of contemporary elegance, admired and celebrated by the public, the press, and celebrities alike.”

But Armani’s role in society and his influence on the modern era went far beyond fashion. “King Giorgio” embodied an inimitable style, a distinctive vision of the world, and a unique, unmistakable way of looking at reality.

This is what gave rise to the idea of the “Armani Code.” As critic Angelo Flaccavento explained: “The vibrant purity of the Armani code is not for everyone, but it wins people over. It feels modern, stripped-down, elegant, yet also warm and human.”

The Armani Code led him to play an authoritative role not only in fashion but also in design, a field where he was both a brilliant pioneer and an endlessly curious explorer. His foray into design emerged naturally, almost inevitably, as an extension of his unmistakable stylistic language.







Leonardo Castiglione captured this perfectly in his essay “When Fashion Breathes Like Architecture”: “Armani never created fashion the way others did. His minimalism – elegant and implacable – breathed with the same rhythm as the great masters of modern architecture. His deconstructed jackets, falling lightly on the body as if the fabric breathed on its own, were small exercises in balance: between void and volume, sartorial memory and futuristic anticipation. Light structures

of a building where every seam and fold was an invisible pillar. Every fabric – from cashmere to linen, from velvet to technical cotton – became a building material, clothing not only the body but also the mental space of the wearer.”

This relationship with design became fully explicit, and structurally entrepreneurial, in 2000 with the launch of Armani/Casa. As Annabelle Dufraigne recalled in a recent conversation with Armani, he reflected on key mile-

stones: “The creation of the brand 25 years ago was without doubt a crucial moment. The opening of the boutique on Corso Venezia in Milan, in the former De Padova showroom, was a turning point for Armani/Casa; it was like taking ownership of Milanese design. And the two presentations at Palazzo Orsini were also fundamental steps, connecting the worlds of fashion and design, emphasizing the dialogue and continuity between the two.”

In 2010 came the debut of the Armani Hotels – luxurious five-star spaces defined by understated

refinement. These in turn opened the way for the first Armani-branded residences, once again reflecting the Armani Code’s vision of lifestyle and elegance.

Armani’s bond with the United States was particularly strong. He often recalled with emotion his first arrival in New York: “My first trip to New York was exhilarating. To see the city in person, after dreaming of it and watching it only in movies, left a lasting impression on me. It was the 1970s, America was bursting with energy, and I felt part of it.”

## Armani casa





As recently as October 2024, Armani personally inaugurated the brand's new "universal home" in Manhattan: a 12-story building on Madison Avenue, with eight streetfront windows and nearly 100,000 square feet of space. Inside were the new Giorgio Armani and Armani/Casa boutiques, an Armani Ristorante, and from the fourth to the twelfth floors, the Giorgio Armani Residences – all designed under his direct supervision in collaboration with New York-based Cookfox Architects.

Reflecting on the project, he said: "The Madison Avenue building was completely redesigned, evoking the architecture of the 1940s, which has often inspired

me. It stands out for its timeless elegance yet blends seamlessly into its surroundings. My hope is that it communicates, in both architecture and design, my message of subtle restraint and balanced, yet luxurious, beauty. This opening marks a new chapter in a dialogue that began in the late '70s and has continued ever since."

On that same occasion, Armani spoke openly about his personal relationship with design: "For me, design is essential. At a certain point in my career, I wanted to explore a new realm, applying the same principles I used in fashion to an important and rewarding challenge. Armani/Casa and the



Armani Hotel Dubai





## Armani on Madison Avenue

projects I have worked on – and continue to work on – represent a complete experience. They embody my entire idea of lifestyle.” Armani’s connection with design was thus profound and enduring, reflected in his creations, his ventures, and his life itself.

As designer Francesco Trabucco once said, design means “confronting history.” With that in mind, one cannot forget Armani’s open letter to the fashion world on April 17, 2020. At a time when the industry – and the world at large – was reeling from the shock of the COVID-19 pandemic, Armani, with stunning clarity, offered a vision of meaning and direction for the future:

“This crisis is a wonderful opportunity to slow everything down,



to realign everything, to sketch out a horizon that is more authentic and true.”





*Italian flavors*

## **Cuneo red apple, the pride of Piedmont**

We the Italians Editorial Staff

In the rolling valleys of Piedmont in northwestern Italy, framed by the Alps and nourished by a perfect balance of sun and cool breezes, grows a fruit that has become a symbol of its land. The Cuneo Red Apple is not just another apple on the market shelf - it carries



with its centuries of tradition, a unique environment, and a reputation for quality that has earned it recognition well beyond Italian borders.

### Roots in history

Apples have been grown in the Cuneo area for generations, with farmers perfecting their techniques over time. The local climate, shaped by both mountain and Mediterranean influences, created the ideal setting for cultivation. Long summers with warm days and cool nights helped the fruit develop a vivid color, while the mineral-rich soil gave it an in-

tensity of flavor that set it apart. Over time, the red apple became not only a staple of local agriculture but also a marker of identity for the communities that grew it. The unique growing conditions

What makes the Cuneo Red Apple special is the land itself. Orchards stretch across valleys where fresh Alpine air mixes with sunshine, creating the perfect natural balance. During the day, the apples ripen under steady sunlight; at night, cooler temperatures slow the process, locking in sugars and aromas. This daily contrast deepens the skin's rich red hues while keeping the flesh crisp and juicy.



Gala





**Red Delicious**

Water from mountain streams irrigates the orchards, ensuring purity and consistency, while traditional farming practices emphasize respect for the land. Many growers have adopted sustainable methods, reducing chemical use and encouraging biodiversity. The result is not only healthier orchards but also apples that reflect the integrity of their environment.

### **A range of varieties**

The term “Cuneo Red Apple” does not describe a single variety, but rather a group of apples that share the region’s distinctive qualities. Gala, Red Delicious, Fuji, and Braeburn are among the most common, each offering its own balance of sweetness, acidity, and aroma.

What unites them all is the unmistakable stamp of their territory. Whether it is the floral notes of Gala, the crunch of Red Delicious, or the fragrant intensity of Fuji, every apple grown in Cuneo carries a brightness and depth that make it stand out. Consumers can



**Fuji**



recognize them instantly thanks to their glossy skin, deep coloring, and perfect balance between crispness and juiciness.

### **A symbol of local identity**

For farmers in Piedmont, the Cuneo Red Apple is more than a product - it is a heritage. Orchards often remain family-owned, passed down through generations. Harvest time is not just an agricultural event but a cultural one, bringing communities together to celebrate the fruit that defines their landscape. Local festivals highlight the apple as both food and

symbol, with tastings, traditional dishes, and events dedicated to sharing its story.

This strong connection between people and product is part of what gives the Cuneo Red Apple its value. It embodies a lifestyle rooted in respect for nature, patience in cultivation, and pride in tradition.

### **From local orchards to global markets**

While the Cuneo Red Apple has always been central to local life, its reputation now extends across borders. Export has become a vi-





tal part of its success, with apples traveling to European markets and beyond. Their visual appeal and reliable quality make them attractive to consumers everywhere, while the guarantee of origin assures buyers they are getting something authentic.

The growing international demand has not changed the essence of production. Farmers continue to prioritize careful harvesting and handling, ensuring that apples arrive fresh and flavorful. This combination of tradition and modern logistics has helped the Cuneo Red Apple carve out a strong place in

the global fruit industry.

### **Culinary versatility**

Beyond being eaten fresh, the Cuneo Red Apple plays a starring role in the kitchen. Its crisp texture and balanced flavor make it perfect for both sweet and savory recipes. It can be baked into pies, roasted with meats, or sliced into salads, adding freshness and contrast. Traditional Piedmontese dishes often feature it alongside local cheeses, hazelnuts, and honey, highlighting the apple's ability to complement rich and delicate flavors alike.

Even in modern cuisine, chefs value the apple for its versatility. Its acidity balances sweetness in desserts, while its crunch adds texture to gourmet presentations. From rustic kitchens to refined dining rooms, the Cuneo Red Apple adapts easily, proving itself a true culinary ally.

### **A future rooted in sustainability**

Looking ahead, the future of the Cuneo Red Apple rests on balancing tradition with innovation. Growers are investing in eco-friendly practices, from renewable energy in orchards to reduced water consumption and packaging designed with the environment in mind. These efforts not only protect the land but also meet the expectations of today's consumers, who increasingly seek products that align with sustainable values.

At the same time, research continues into new varieties and methods that enhance quality while respecting natural cycles.

The goal is not mass production but refinement - producing apples that continue to reflect the uniqueness of Cuneo while reaching more tables around the world.

### **A fruit that tells a story**

The Cuneo Red Apple is more than a fruit: it is a story of land, people, and passion. Each bite carries the crispness of Alpine air, the warmth of Piedmont sun, and the dedication of generations of farmers. Its journey from orchard to table is not just about nourishment but about heritage and identity.

In a world where many foods have become anonymous and industrial, the Cuneo Red Apple reminds us that authenticity still matters. With its vibrant color, balanced flavor, and cultural significance, it stands as a proud ambassador of its region - a fruit that continues to win over hearts and palates far beyond the valleys where it was born.







*Italian land and nature*

## **Gole del Nera, Umbria's hidden river gem**

We the Italians Editorial Staff

Nestled between Narni and Stifone in the heart of Umbria, the Gole del Nera carve out a breathtaking natural sanctuary. Far from a simple sightseeing stop, this gorge brings together a rich tapestry of geology, wildlife, and history. What makes it unique is a dramatic display of emerald and

turquoise waters flowing through rocky cliffs, punctuated by ancient ruins and inviting walking paths.

An enchanted path by the water  
A standout feature of the Gole del Nera is a gently winding path built atop a former railway line.





Stretching roughly five miles (around six kilometers), the trail is wide and accessible, inviting both hikers and cyclists. As you proceed, the sound of rushing water underscores every step. Here, the Nera River meanders beneath arches of dappled sunlight, occasionally giving way to the vivid hues of an emerald pool known as Le Mole di Narni - nature's own gemstone set amidst the cliffs.

### **Echoes of ancient times**

This path also unfolds a timeline of history. Vestiges

of Roman times are dotted throughout - among them, the remains of the Augustus Bridge, a once-strategic crossing dating back to the first century BC. At Stifone, you can still glimpse where shipyards and a river port operated centuries ago, a reminder of how the Nera was once a route of trade and travel. Higher up, the abbey of San Cassiano peers over the gorge, a solemn witness to centuries past.

### **A living tapestry of nature**

Beyond its historical allure,











the Gole del Nera hold ecological importance. The area hosts a diverse mix of Mediterranean flora - from holm oak and small box shrubs to wild orchids hidden in the undergrowth. Its rock faces and hidden springs also support a variety of birds. You might spot rock thrushes nesting in the cliffs, or hear the distant call of owls and other birds of prey. Marshy zones and tree-lined banks invite species like doves, blackbirds, herons, and even snapping green frogs, weaving a lively chorus through the gorge.

### **A walk that tells a story**

One of the most rewarding ways to enjoy this area is with a loop trail that starts in the center of Narni. This roughly 11-kilometer walk takes you through the village's medieval streets, along the river to the gorge, passing through Stifone, and finally climbing back into Narni through a scenic ascent. The entire journey takes a few hours, offering a balanced mix of history, nature, and fresh air.







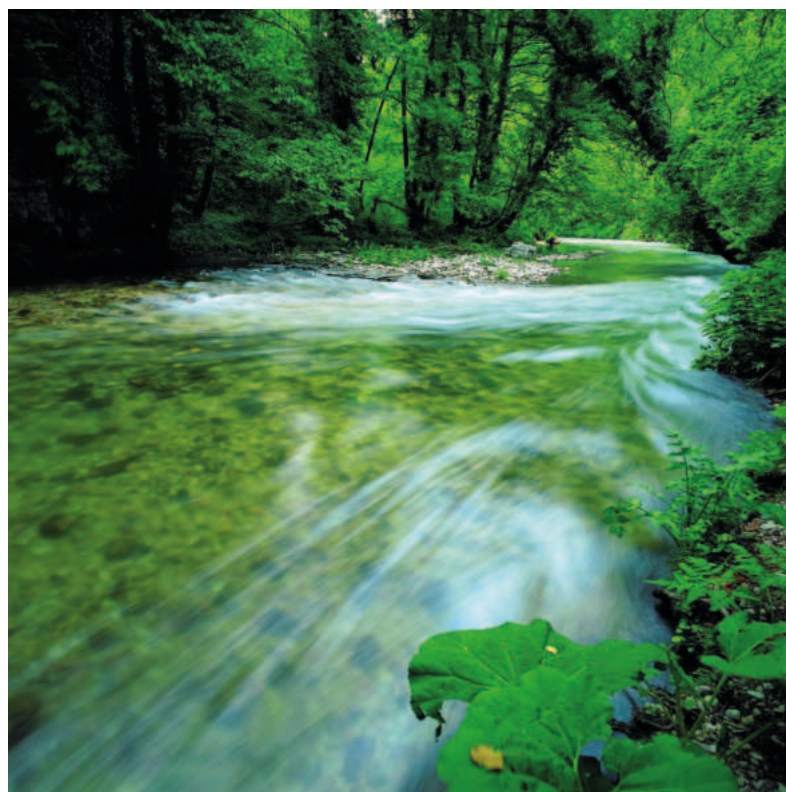
### A place steeped in legend

There's also a touch of myth in the air. Local lore whispers of a tragic love between the shepherd Velino and the nymph Nera - a tale that ends with the birth of the majestic Marmore Falls. These cascading waters are said to mirror the heart-break of unfulfilled devotion, making the gorge not just a place of beauty, but of stories etched into the landscape.

### A celebration of unforgettable contrasts

The Gole del Nera stand out because they combine contrasts: winding paths through water and rock, ruins and fresh greenery, quiet reflection and vibrant ecosystems. Whether you're stepping along the old railroad trail, pausing at a hidden spring, or gazing at the turquoise depths, the gorge invites you to slow down and absorb it all.

In a world crowded with famous destinations, this gorge is a quiet jewel - ready to surprise, refresh, and inspire those who wander through its folds.







*Italian art*

## **Milo Manara at 80, the art of seduction, controversy, and timeless imagination**

We the Italians Editorial Staff

Comics are art too, and Italy has produced some of the finest. One of the most charismatic, provocative, and successful among them turns 80 this month.

Reaching 80 is an extraordinary moment for any artist - but for Milo Manara it marks a celebration of creativity that has stretched across half a century. Known around the world for his mastery of erotic illu-



stration, Manara has transformed sensuality into a refined language of storytelling, blending beauty, irony, and fantasy into images that continue to fascinate and provoke.

Born in Luson, Trentino Alto Adige, in 1945, Manara grew up in a country still healing from war. His early passion for drawing and narrative soon evolved into a career that would take him far beyond the borders of his homeland. By the late 1970s his name was already associated with a unique style

- flowing lines, luminous faces, and female figures that embodied both mystery and independence.

Manara's visual universe is unmistakable - elegant, detailed, playful, and often daring. While erotic art had long existed, he pushed it into new territory, avoiding vulgarity in favor of suggestion, humor, and dream-like scenarios. For him, eroticism was not only about desire but about freedom - an exploration of the human imagination without censorship.



Over the years, his talent attracted collaborations with some of the greatest creative minds of his time. Federico Fellini sought his hand for visual projects, Hugo Pratt shared narrative experiments, and other partnerships stretched into cinema, literature, and music. Whether illustrating a classic tale, designing a poster, or creating a new comic, Manara brought his instantly recognizable style - sensual yet intelligent, provocative yet sophisticated.

Yet his fame has also brought criticism. Manara's focus on the female form - often nude,

often idealized - has fueled debate about the line between art and objectification. Some critics accuse him of perpetuating stereotypes, presenting women as fantasies crafted through a male gaze. His defenders argue the opposite - that his heroines, though erotic, carry a sense of power, autonomy, and playfulness that transcends cliché. The tension between admiration and critique has followed him for decades, making his art not only visually striking but culturally contested.

One famous controversy erupted when he created variant covers for American comic books,









including depictions of well-known female superheroes in highly sensual poses. The images sparked heated arguments - some praised his audacity and style, while others condemned the work as outdated or inappropriate. For Manara, these debates underscored the cultural divide between seeing eroticism as art and treating it as scandal.

Despite polemics, his place in visual culture is undeniable. His women remain iconic - embodiments of seduction mixed with irony, figures who move through surreal landscapes that blur the borders between reality and fantasy. Whether one views them as liberating or problematic, they have ensured that Manara's work continues to inspire conversation, not just admiration.

At 80, exhibitions and tributes honor both his achievements and his complexity. They reve-

al an artist who has never shied away from risk - who has chosen to keep creating regardless of shifting tastes or criticism. His art is still alive, vibrant, and unafraid to stir debate.

The legacy of Milo Manara rests not only in the elegance of his line but in the way his drawings compel viewers to question - about beauty, desire, freedom, and representation. Few artists sustain such relevance across decades. He has managed it by remaining true to himself - daring, inventive, and unwilling to separate art from controversy.

Today, as he continues to draw, Manara proves that creativity knows no expiration date. His work remains seductive and divisive - a reminder that great art often lives precisely where fascination and discomfort meet.





*Italian cuisine*

## **Roasted Plums with Mascarpone Cheese**

Amy Riolo

Mascarpone cheese is a soft Italian cream cheese which hails from the Lombardy region. It has a sweeter and butterier flavor than American cream cheese and is recognized as a *prodotto agroalimentare tradizionale* when made according to Italian

standards. The combination of cool, creamy mascarpone cheese enhances the flavor of roasted summer fruit while transforming it from a sweet treat to a main event. This easy, delicious, and refreshing dessert can do double duty as a snack





or on brunch/breakfast tables.

Recipe from the Diabetes Desserts Cookbook For Dummies by Amy Riolo.

**Prep time: 10 min**

**Cook time: 25 min**

**Yield: 4 servings**

### Ingredients

2 Tablespoons Amy Riolo Selections or other good quality olive oil, divided  
4 ripe plums, pitted and halved

4 teaspoons sugar

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup plain Greek yogurt

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup mascarpone

2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh basil

2 teaspoons honey, divided

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400F degrees.

2. Oil a large baking dish with  $\frac{1}{2}$  Tablespoon olive oil and place plums, cut side up, inside the dish, and sprinkle 1





teaspoon sugar over each. Bake, uncovered, for 25 minutes.

3. While plums are baking, stir together yogurt, mascarpone, basil, remaining 1 ½ Tablespoons EVOO and 1 teaspoon honey.

4. Divide 1/2 of yogurt mixture onto bottom of each of 4 plates, or a large serving platter.

5. When plums are finished baking, remove from oven and place 2 halves over yogurt on each plate. Fill holes with yogurt mixture and serve warm.

**Per serving:** Calories 207 (From

Fat 133); Fat 15g (Saturated 7g); Cholesterol 25mg; Sodium 19mg; Carbohydrate 16Xg (Dietary Fiber 1g); Protein 6g. Sugars 14g

**Tip:** After completing step 4, spoon the remaining cream mixture into a pastry bag fitted with a star tip for an elegant presentation.

**Note:** Be sure to make this recipe when plums are in season. Plums are a rich source of fiber and are a low GI fruit, making them an ideal fruit for people with diabetes and heart disease.

**Vary It!** Swap out peaches for plums if desired.





*Italian territories*

## **Garfagnana, Tuscany's untouched alpine valley**

We the Italians Editorial Staff

Tucked away in northern Tuscany, the Garfagnana is a slice of Italy often overlooked by tourists - a land shaped by mountains, forests, and centuries of history. This remote valley lies between the jagged Apuan Alps and

the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines, with the Serchio River cutting through its heart and countless chestnut trees draping its slopes. Its rugged beauty, cultural treasures, and culinary traditions offer a timeless escape.

### Land of layers and landscapes

The Garfagnana's geography is striking. Its western side rises in rocky peaks of the Apuan Alps, while gentler, rolling hills define the eastern edge. The highest summit in Tuscany, Monte Prado (2,054 meters), stands guard over the region, and ancient chestnut forests blanket its valleys. These lands feel both wild and welcoming - perfect for hiking, mountain biking, or simply breathing in pristine, forest air.

Cultural echoes carved in stone

Pass through narrow roads and you'll encounter medieval hill towns like Castelnuovo di Garfagnana and Barga, each perched against green-backdropped slopes. Castelnuovo, the valley's largest town, is home to the centuries-old Rocca Ariostesca and a sturdy cathedral with Baroque touches. Barga, favored by poet Giovanni Pascoli, enchants with its red-roofed skyline and photogenic streets.

In San Romano you can hike to the dramatic Fortress of Verrucola, a commanding stronghold







from Este times, now reachable via a humble rack railway. While browsing cobbled alleys, you may stumble across stories of local legends and ancient disputes - echoes of Garfagnana's shifting loyalties through history.

### **Flavors rooted in tradition**

Garfagnana's cuisine leans into its agricultural heritage. Chestnut flour - used for treats like necci or castagnaccio - has been a staple since days when chestnuts were a primary food. The high-altitude farro, a hulled wheat variety,

has remained in cultivation since ancient times and lends itself to soups, breads, or savory tarts.

These ingredients, layered into slow-cooked stews or rustic polenta dishes, are best enjoyed in local taverns where hearty fare meets alpine ambiance.

### **Untamed nature and hidden wonders**

For lovers of the great outdoors, Garfagnana is a natural paradise. Beyond forests and peaks, unique sites beckon: the Devil's bridge,



Fortress of Verrucole



Devil's bridge



the wind-carved depths of Grotta del Vento, the rugged chasm of Orrido di Botri, and myriad hiking routes threading through wild scenery. Streams and hidden lakes reflect Apuan summits while trails step lightly through fern-lined woodlands.

Seasonal changes bring vibrant transformations - from lush spring greens to chestnut-lit autumn tones - inviting year-round exploration.

### **Preservation amid change**

Although remote, Garfagnana isn't frozen in time. Local efforts are underway to revive small villages facing depopulation, with incentives and social hubs aimed at preserving life in the valley. These initiatives highlight a striking blend of resilience and tradition - villagers working to keep their mountain heritage alive.

### **Why Garfagnana matters**

Amid Tuscany's postcard views and Renaissance fame, the Garfagnana offers something different - authenticity, quiet beauty, and the echo of centuries. Here, every fortress, farm lane, and mountain pass feels alive with stories. It's a place where history meets home and nature still writes the day's rhythm.

### **Grotta-del-Vento**



Whether you're tracing chestnut trees, sampling age-old recipes, or simply losing yourself in mist-topped valleys, Garfagnana invites a slower kind of discovery - one shaped by respect for land and time.



### **Orrido di Botri**



## *Italian sport*

# **Sofia Raffaeli, the “Atomic Ant”**

Federico Pasquali

When Sofia Raffaeli steps onto the mat, silence falls. Then the music begins, and the world watches a performance that blends precision, power, and artistry. At just 21, the Italian gymnast from Chiaravalle, a small town in the Marche region, has already

redrawn the map of rhythmic gymnastics, becoming both a global star and a national icon at home.

Her path into the sport started almost by chance. As a child she practiced artistic gymnastics,





but she was instantly drawn to the elegance of the ribbon and the ball, and switched to rhythmic gymnastics – the discipline adored by little girls everywhere. From there came years of grueling training, up to eight hours a day, five days a week, shaping her into an unstoppable athlete.

Her international debut came at the 2019 Junior World Championships in Moscow, where she won three silver medals. Two years later, at her first senior Worlds in Kitakyushu, Japan, she climbed the podium again,

taking bronze with the hoop and silver in the team event. The turning point arrived in 2022. In Tel Aviv, Sofia became the first Italian gymnast ever to win a European gold medal in rhythmic gymnastics. Weeks later, at the World Championships in Bulgaria, she stunned the entire sport by collecting a record five gold medals – in the all-around, hoop, ball, ribbon, and team competition. For Italy, a nation that had never produced a champion at the top of this discipline, it was a historic breakthrough.

Sofia kept winning at every international stage, quickly establishing herself as a leading contender for Olympic glory. At the Paris 2024 Olympic Games she did not disappoint, capturing the bronze in the individual all-around. It was an unprecedented milestone for Italy – the country had never before celebrated an individual rhythmic gymnastics medal at the Olympics. Beyond medals, Raffaeli has also left her mark on the rulebook itself. She introduced such an original move during her routine that it was officially added to the code of points. Known simply as

the “Raffaeli,” it ensures her name will live on in gymnastics history alongside the great innovators of the sport.

Her achievements did not stop with the Olympics. Earlier this year in Milan, performing in front of her home crowd, she dazzled fans by winning two golds and a silver at the World Cup. Then in August, at the World Championships in Rio de Janeiro, she added yet another gold with the hoop and a bronze with the ball to her already impressive collection.









Nicknamed the “Atomic Ant” for her petite frame and explosive energy, Sofia combines athleticism and artistry like few others. Each of her routines tells a story – from Hitchcock-inspired suspense to timeless Sinatra melodies, to choreographies exploring powerful social themes. She is more than a champion: she is a pioneer. Sofia has proven that Italian rhythmic gymnastics can not only stand beside the traditional giants, Russia and Bulga-

ria, but even surpass them. With the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics on the horizon, the world may have only seen the beginning of her legend. From a small Adriatic town to the greatest stages of world sport, Raffaelli’s journey is a testament to talent, discipline, and imagination. And in every soaring ribbon and every daring leap, she carries the spirit of a sport she is helping transform with her extraordinary brilliance.





*Italian historical trademarks*

## **Margherita di Savoia**

*Associazione Marchi Storici d'Italia*

Margherita di Savoia is a stunning destination in northern Apulia, nestled between the Adriatic coastline and the ancient salt pans - the largest in Europe. Thanks to this privileged setting, the air is especially pure and rich in iodine,

making it ideal for respiratory wellness. With its mild climate all year long, the town is a perfect choice for a wellness-focused vacation from spring through fall. The Margherita di Savoia Thermal Baths have been renowned

for nearly a century for their salso-bromiodic mother waters and their excellent natural virgin muds, which prevent and treat numerous respiratory, musculoskeletal, and dermatological conditions, thanks to their powerful natural anti-inflammatory, draining, and detoxifying effects.

The Thermal Baths offer inhalation treatments, nasal and vaginal irrigations, mud baths with hydromassage, specialized treatments for hearing and skin, as well as post-Covid wellness programs, complete motor and respiratory rehabilitation packages, hydro-kinesiotherapy in a seaside thermal pool, physiotherapy, and postural gymnastics in the fitness center. Patients can also undergo a wide range of specialist visits, examinations, and hearing tests.

Inside the spa complex is the modern Acqua di Sale Spa, offering rituals, wellness circuits, and wonderful massages with exclusive products from the thermal cosmetic line, made with top-quality ingredients: iodine- and bromine-rich mother waters, natural salts, and detoxifying muds. The wet area features a relaxing thermal pool with hydromassage, a healthy Kneipp path alternating hot and cold thermal waters to improve leg circulation, a purifying Hammam, and other exclusive comforts for a vacation dedicated to relaxation and well-being.



Overlooking the enchanting seaside promenade - between the soft sandy beach and the salt mountains of the ancient pans - the Grand Hotel Terme di Margherita di Savoia is a four-star hotel with a panoramic restaurant serving sweet and savory local specialties and traditional Apulian dishes. The bright rooms, many with sea views, come with private balconies. Located in the heart of town, the hotel is directly connected to the Thermal Baths, with a treatment wing reserved exclusively for guests to ensure maximum comfort. Guests also benefit from the expertise of the thermal medical staff and enjoy many advantages and discounts on services.

The Margherita di Savoia Thermal Baths and the Grand Hotel Terme offer complete stay packages, combining therapeutic treatments with moments of total wellness. Programs always focus on relaxation, body care, fitness, and discovering the rich





local heritage of art, history, and culture. Guided tours include the breathtaking Salt Pans, a protected natural oasis and home to pink flamingos, as well as wine and food tastings of Apulia's finest products and cooking classes at the hotel.

For families seeking greater privacy, there's Palazzo Novecento, a fully restored historic building belonging to the Terme group, which offers elegant seaside apartments equipped with every comfort. All the services of the Grand Hotel Terme are available upon request.

In summer, just across the pedestrian promenade, guests can enjoy the sea at Lido Terme, relaxing on comfortable sunbeds beneath white umbrellas well spaced along the golden sand.

A snack bar, restaurant, and wood-fired pizzeria are open for both lunch and dinner.

Beyond its golden beaches and crystal-clear waters, Margherita di Savoia is an excellent starting point for exploring Apulia's historical, artistic, and archaeological treasures. Nearby are fascinating cities such as Bari - the regional capital - with its Basilica of Saint Nicholas, Castle, and old town; Trani, with its magnificent seaside cathedral; Barletta, with the famous Colossus and the Swabian Castle; and Canosa di Puglia, celebrated for its Roman archaeological sites.

For nature and culture lovers, must-see excursions include the Gargano National Park, with its breathtaking landscapes and the charming towns of Monte Sant'Angelo and Vieste, or a visit to Castel del Monte, the mysterious octagonal castle built by Emperor Frederick II, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Margherita di Savoia is the perfect destination for anyone seeking relaxation, wellness, and the chance to explore one of Italy's most authentic regions.

Visit: [www.termemargherita.it](http://www.termemargherita.it) and [www.palazzo-novecento.it](http://www.palazzo-novecento.it)



*Interview with Jody Valet*

## **The Neighborhood: The North End becomes Columbus Park in Kansas City**

Umberto Mucci

We're back on the road across the United States, exploring Italian American traces, stories, and people in each of the 50 states. Today we stop in Kansas City, home to a vibrant community dedicated to celebrating its Italian roots.

Jody Valet has graciously agreed to serve as our Ambassador in Kansas, and she is working on an exciting documentary that will soon tell the story of Italian immigration in Kansas City - and how the name "Columbus Park"





still carries deep meaning for that history today.

*Good morning, Jody. Which part of Italy did your family come from before moving to the United States?*

My family comes from the Sicilian towns of Campofelice di Fitalia in the province of Palermo and Castelvetro in the province of Trapani. Our family's journey from Sicily to Kansas City began in 1891, with the last members arriving in 1968.

I have strong ties to my ancestral town of Campofelice di Fitalia. Many families from this small town immigrated to Kansas City, and the Campofelicesi cherish their American cousins, just as we love them. We even have a social club here in



Kansas City called Club Campofelice di Fitalia for the descendants of our town.

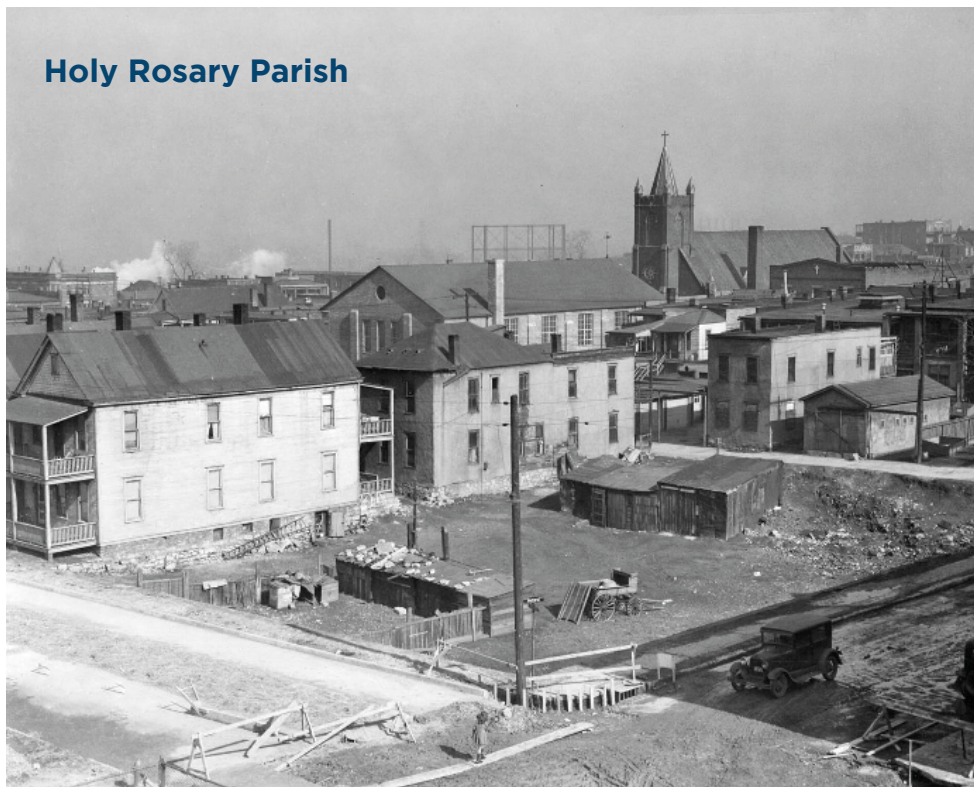
*What Italian presence is there today in Kansas City? Are there any landmark places, associations, or activities?*

Although our community is spread throughout the Kansas City metropolitan area, encompassing both Missouri and Kansas, we remain a tight-knit and connected group. I





## Holy Rosary Parish



use my Facebook page, Kansas City Italians, to share information about events and keep everyone updated on what's happening in our community.

We have our neighborhood, Columbus Park, and the heartbeat of our community has always been and remains Holy

Rosary Catholic Church. The Don Bosco Center, built by the Kansas City Italian community, holds a special place in the hearts of many who grew up spending time there. The American Sons of Columbus have a hall and bocce courts, which serve as a location for many events.



## Holy Rosary Carnival





There are 5 Italian clubs here in Kansas City: American Daughters of Columbus, American Sons of Columbus, Camporealese Society, Club Campofelice di Fitalia, and the Kansas City Chapter of UNICO National.

Among the activities, I'd like to mention St. Joseph's Day, Feast of Our Lady of the Audience

(brought here by immigrants from Sambuca di Sicilia, Sicily), UNICO's Festa Italiana, Tom Gialde Memorial Bocce Tournament, Italian Heritage Day at the K, and Carl J. Di-Capo Italian Heritage Festival. Members of our community host many events that are not listed here, most of which raise money for various charities and scholarships.



## Holy Rosary Carnival



### *What's the history of Italian immigration in Kansas City?*

The earliest records of Italian immigrants in Kansas City date back to the period of 1859-1860, but significant immigration began in the 1880s. The early immigrants primarily came from Northern Italy, followed by those from Southern Italy. Sicilian immigrants started arriving in the 1890s, and by the 1920s, they had become the majority of the Italian population in the area. Approximately 80-85 % of the Italian population in Kansas City is of

Sicilian descent.

The railroad was a major attraction for Italian immigrants coming to Kansas City. Many also settled in the area because they had friends or relatives from their hometowns in Italy who could help them adjust to life in America. Kansas City has a significant population of immigrants from specific towns in Sicily. Some of the towns with large immigrant communities include Campofelice di Fitalia, Camporeale, Corleone, Ragusa, Cefalù, Castelvetro, and Sambuca di Sicilia.





Forest Dairy



Lapetina

FELIX  
H.C.



*You're working on the documentary about Kansas City's Little Italy, "The Neighborhood: The North End Becomes Columbus Park." How did you come out with the idea of a documentary?*

A couple of years ago, I discovered that the Columbus Park neighborhood, originally known as the North End, was much larger than it is today. Many people my age and younger are unaware of the neighborhood's history and how it has evolved into its current form. Several highways, two bridges, and a public housing project have significantly reduced the neighborhood's size, effectively isolating it and turning it into a small island in the middle of Kansas City.

The new information sparked my interest, and I was eager to learn more. How has the neighborhood changed over the years? What was it like to grow up in a vibrant and close-knit Italian American community? These are the questions our documentary explores, shedding light on a compelling story that has yet to be told.

In Kansas City, the narrative surrounding Italian Americans often highlights those involved in the Mafia and crime. However, it is crucial to recognize that this group constitutes only a small percentage

of our community, yet their activities have received extensive coverage in books and documentaries.

In truth, the untold history of the Italian American community in Kansas City is one of hardworking, honest, and educated individuals who came to the United States in search of opportunity and prosperity, along with the neighborhood they built. This is the story we aim to share, and it is far more significant and interesting than the prevailing stereotypes.

I have partnered with the Kansas City Chapter of UNICO National and Crossroads Media Group on this project. Proceeds from the documentary will be used to help fund a monument honoring Kansas City's Italian immigrants, which will be placed in Columbus Park.

*I know you put out a questionnaire: what kinds of questions did you ask?*

The questions differ from person to person because everyone's story is unique to them. Here are several questions we ask everyone:

Where in Italy did your family originate?

Do you know why your family





Columbus Park

chose to settle in Kansas City, Missouri?

What is your favorite memory of growing up in the neighborhood? Is there a specific smell, food, or object that brings you back to that memory?

How did growing up in an Italian neighborhood shape your sense of identity and your values? Did you feel a strong sense of community and belonging?

*Is there an interesting or unusual story you discovered during your research?*

I met an extraordinary woman who is 93 years old, and she has lived on the same street her en-

tire life. She is so full of life and has a sharp memory. I can't wait for everyone to hear her story! To me, every story we've heard holds something truly special.

*You're also creating an archive of Italian objects from Kansas City, with the hope that someday an Italian American museum or an Historical Society will be established in the area. How can we help you?*

That's a great question! I believe that advice from individuals who have successfully started a museum or historical society would be incredibly valuable. What are the most effective ways to raise funds for this type of project? Are there any grants available



specifically for Italian American initiatives like this? We always welcome advice and donations.

*Speaking of Columbus Park: has there been any controversy over the name? Has anyone tried to erase Columbus from Kansas City as well?*

It can be difficult to find a place in the United States that hasn't made efforts to diminish the significance of Columbus, and Kansas City is no exception. However, I believe that Columbus will always hold a significant place in Kansas City's history due to our rich connection with Co-

lumbus Day.

Colorado was the first state to officially recognize Columbus Day as a holiday in 1907, and Missouri followed suit in 1909, thanks to Senator M.E. Casey from Kansas City, who introduced a bill to make it a legal holiday in the state, encouraged by the local Italian community. Interestingly, this community in Kansas City had already been celebrating Columbus Day since 1883, even before it was officially recognized in 1909. In 1967, the name of the North End was changed to Columbus Park through a public vote, and a Columbus monument is now

## The North End







## Italian Heritage Day at KC Royals 2024



located at Holy Rosary Catholic Church in Columbus Park.

We just finished writing a children's book tonight about the first Columbus Day parade in Kansas City, which took place after it became an official state holiday in 1909. I would love to share more details with We the Italians! We plan to have it available for purchase by Columbus Day, and the proceeds will support the Heritage Committee of the Kansas City Chapter of UNICO.

Over the years, many Columbus Day festivities in Kansas City have diminished, yet we remain proud and hopeful about reviving the cherished traditions we've lost.

*What's the timeline for completing the documentary? When and where will we be able to see it?*

We do not have a completion date for the film yet, but we are thrilled to announce that there will be a premiere in Kansas City. A preview of the film, along with a presentation, is scheduled for Sunday, November 9, 2025, at 2:00 PM at the Central Library, Helzberg Auditorium, 14 West 10th Street, Kansas City, MO.



**UNICO Festa Italiana**



# The 2024 yearbook of We the Italians

Two flags, One heart



## THE 2024 YEARBOOK

BY UMBERTO MUCCI



We the  Italians

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*Italian traditions*

## **Opera dei Pupi, Sicily's timeless marionette tradition**

We the Italians Editorial Staff

Opera dei Pupi, translating to “The Puppets’ Opera,” is the celebrated Sicilian marionette theater tradition. It emerged in the early 19th century and became immensely popular among working-class audiences. Centered

on the exploits of medieval knights from the Carolingian and Arthurian legends, these performances weave together epic storytelling, visual spectacle, and expressive puppetry. In recognition of its cultural significance,



UNESCO inscribed the art form on its Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2001.

Rooted in the traditions of medieval troubadours and Renaissance chivalric epics, *Opera dei Pupi* presents serialized tales from works like *Orlando Innamorato*, *Orlando Furioso*, and *Gerusalemme Liberata*, compiled in Giusto Lodico's "History of the Paladins of France" beginning in 1858. Although epic narratives dominate—featuring heroes such as Count Roland, Renaud, Ruggero, Angelica, and the traitor Ganelon—the reper-

tory also extends to Sicilian historical romances, brigand tales, and even Shakespearean works, including *Romeo and Juliet* and *Macbeth*.

The signature "pupi" are large, armored marionettes crafted on wooden frames, standing about 110–130 cm tall and weighing up to 30 kg. Their bodies are mounted with pads to stiffen movement, and their arms are manipulated via metal rods and strings, controlled by puppeteers from an elevated bridge behind the stage. Characters fall into two styles: armored knights and







comedic “in page” figures like Peppininu in Catania or Nofrio and Virticchio in Palermo. Visual cues—such as shields, helmet plumes, and facial features—help audiences distinguish between Saracens and Christians.

### Two Regional Traditions

Opera dei Pupi splits into two primary Sicilian styles: Catania (eastern Sicily) and Palermo (western Sicily), each with distinct theatrical approaches:

- **Catania Style:** Puppets are hefty (110–130 cm, 20–30 kg), with static legs to bear weight. Puppeteers stand on a backstage bridge, speaking offstage to voice characters. Dialogue is often improvised, with orchestral accompaniment or recorded music. Painted “cartelli” announce the evening’s episode.
- **Palermo Style:** Puppets are lighter (90 cm, 5–10 kg), with articulated knees and drawing mechanisms. Puppeteers operate onstage from the side wings, visi-





ble and handling lighting, sound, and dialogue. Performances were traditionally accompanied by violin or barrel organ, and cartelli panels depict multiple scenes from the epic.

Smaller, regional variants can be found in Acireale and Syracuse, each with modifications to puppet size, control systems, and stage design.

Opera dei Pupi is passed down through apprenticeships, often within families. Puppeteers (pupari, pupanti, teatrinari) teach techniques—puppet crafting, painting, dialogue, and stagecraft—through daily observation

and performance. In 2018, thirteen Sicilian puppet families formed a network to safeguard and promote the tradition, officially recognized by Italy's Ministry of Culture.

Despite dips in popularity—due to competition from cinema in the 1930s and urban migration in the 1950s–60s—Opera dei Pupi has endured. UNESCO recognition in 2001 and its 2008 inclusion on a global heritage list revitalized interest. Contemporary performances, apprenticeships, and internet-based preservation ensure its survival.

The Antonio Pasqualino Inter-

national Puppet Museum in Palermo houses the world's largest collection of pupi—over 5,000 puppets from Palermo, Catania, and Naples—alongside posters and stage pieces. Founded in 1975 by folklorist Antonio Pasqualino, the museum hosts the annual Morgana Festival, showcasing traditional and modern puppetry, global collaborations, exhibitions, and workshops.

Opera dei Pupi's influence has spread beyond Italy. In early 20th-century New York, Palermo immigrants such as Agrippino Manteo brought the tradition to Coney Island; today, his descen-

dants remain among the last active puppeteers in the U.S. and a collection of some of his artworks are on display at the Italian American Museum in Little Italy, Manhattan. The art continues to inspire modern artisan puppet makers, such as Girolamo Botta of Sulmona, who crafts compact touring theaters with 70 cm high puppets depicting Italic legends and other tales.

Opera dei Pupi combines craftsmanship, performance, oral tradition, and visual storytelling. It's not only an artistic inheritance, but a living tradition reflecting Sicilian identity, history, and hu-







man creativity. With its rich choreography of sword fights, heroic narratives, and captivating puppetry, Opera dei Pupi remains a vibrant cultural force—preserved

in theaters and museums, yet alive through public performances, apprenticeships, and global adaptations.







*Italian good news*

## **Art and culture investments boost Italian productivity and wages**

We the Italians Editorial Staff

Over the past decade, Italian companies that have invested in art and culture have recorded extraordinary gains in performance. Between 2015 and 2022, their productivity rose by about 71%, compared with a 53% increase among similar firms that did not pursue cultural initiatives.

Looking at the entire ten-year period up to 2024, the difference becomes even more striking: productivity surged by roughly 75% in these companies, while others grew by just 13%.

These cultural investments have also paid off for employees. Ave-



rage gross wages in art- and culture-oriented companies have grown at 2.2 times the annual rate of other businesses. Over ten years, per capita compensation has climbed by around 25%, a clear signal that creative engagement benefits not only efficiency but also earnings.

A nationwide survey of businesses involved in cultural projects in Italy - together generating close to €192 billion in annual revenue - highlights the wider strategic

advantages. For 42% of respondents, the most important gain was a stronger corporate culture and identity. Another 32% cited improved prestige and visibility, giving them a competitive edge in the marketplace. Twelve percent viewed cultural initiatives as genuine innovation tools, helping to spark creativity and fresh ideas. The positive effects extend beyond company walls. More than 80% of Italian business leaders agreed that art and culture produce value not just for the enterprise but for







the community and the territory where it operates. When asked about the benefits for local areas, 37% pointed to the preservation of cultural heritage, 29% emphasized broader access to art, and 26% mentioned economic growth driven

by cultural and tourism activities.

Another key factor in these results is direct management of initiatives. Nearly eight out of ten companies handle their cultural





projects internally, integrating them into governance and long-term planning. This hands-on approach ensures alignment with corporate goals and keeps cultural engagement from becoming a short-lived public relations exercise.

The conclusion is clear: integrating art and culture into business is not a decorative choice - it's a

strategic move with measurable impact. Higher productivity, faster salary growth, enhanced brand identity, and tangible benefits for communities all point to the same outcome. Italian companies that embrace culture position themselves for sustainable growth, deeper employee engagement, and a stronger connection to the places they call home.



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*Italian culture and history*

## **Burano named the most colorful place in the world**

We the Italians Editorial Staff

Burano, a small island in the northern Venetian Lagoon, is one of Italy's most colorful and charming destinations. Just a short boat ride from Venice, it has a

history that blends fishing traditions, artisan craftsmanship, and a vibrant community spirit.

What makes Burano instantly



unforgettable is its explosion of color. Every house is painted in a vivid hue - turquoise, coral, lemon yellow, emerald green, and more - creating a patchwork that seems straight out of a painter's imagination.

The island's first homes were built on stilts, and only later were they replaced with brick structures. But why are Burano's houses so colorful?

Two local legends explain why each home is painted in a different shade.

The first is tied to fishing and the

fog. For centuries, fishing was the main activity sustaining the island's economy. Fishermen decided to paint their houses in distinctive colors so they could recognize them from afar and find their way back home, even in the densest fog.

The second legend says that the different colors helped distinguish the island's families. Although the population was small, many residents shared the same last names. As a result, they often referred to each other by nicknames or simply by the color of their house. Today, the colors are carefully regulated to maintain the island's







distinctive charm.

Walking through Burano feels like stepping into a living postcard. Narrow canals reflect the kaleidoscope of buildings, while small bridges connect peaceful streets lined with flowers and laundry swaying in the breeze. The island is compact enough to explore on foot, yet every corner offers new perspectives and photographic delights.

Beyond its visual appeal, Burano is also known for its warm, welcoming atmosphere. Local trattorias serve fresh seafood, parti-

cularly the catch of the day from the surrounding lagoon, paired with regional wines. Visitors can browse small shops for handmade lace, a perfect keepsake of this artistic island.

This summer Burano has been named the most colorful place on Earth, according to a new ranking by creative design studio Berlew. The studio analyzed 125 of the world's top travel spots using a unique method: computer vision technology scanned high-resolution photos taken by local photographers, identifying the five most prominent colors



in each image. The results were used to measure two main factors - chromatic diversity and vibrancy intensity.

Out of all the destinations, Burano stood out with its rainbow-colored houses, where nearly every building is painted in bold shades of red, blue, green, and yellow. From shutters to doorways to window frames, the entire island bursts with color. But it's not just about looks - these vibrant colors have histo-

rical roots. According to local tradition, Burano's fishermen painted their homes in bright hues so they could spot them through the thick Venetian fog when returning from sea.

Berlew described Burano as "a living piece of art" and "a vivid expression of creativity and culture." The colorful homes set against the still waters of the lagoon, with striped curtains, laundry drying in the sun, and reflections dancing on the ca-



nals, create an almost dreamlike scene.

Italy didn't stop with Burano. Another destination, Cinque Terre in Liguria, also made the top 10, landing in sixth place. With its picturesque seaside villages perched on cliffs and painted in pastel shades, Cinque Terre further underscores how color

is deeply tied to Italian cultural and architectural identity.

Berlew's list highlights how vibrant colors do more than catch the eye - they tell stories, reflect local heritage, and bring entire communities to life through design. And Burano, without a doubt, paints the most unforgettable picture of them all.







## *Italian sustainability*

# **Quality, concern, and ethics drive Italian growing commitment to sustainability**

We the Italians Editorial Staff

A recent study, “Sustainability Is Quality,” reveals that three main forces are pushing Italian consumers toward more sustainable choices: quality, concern, and ethics. According to the findings, 69.6% of respon-

dents see quality as the decisive factor, with innovation and the high perceived standard of sustainable products being the most influential aspects. This is followed by growing concern over climate change and





the planet's future (22.0%) and moral or ethical considerations (7.4%). The results suggest that in Italy sustainability is no longer seen solely as an environmental matter - it has evolved into a multidimensional commitment combining perceived excellence, global awareness, and moral values.

The study sees the strong emphasis on quality as a cultural shift with important implications. Not long ago, sustainable products were often perceived as less effective or less satisfying, chosen mainly for ethical reasons rather than performance. Today, however, 67% of Italians have a generally positive view of sustainability. The share of "committed supporters" has risen to 26% from 24% in 2023, while another 41% are open to the concept.



Now in its third year, the report also examines sectors vital to Italy's economy, particularly agri-food and construction. In the food sector, roughly six in ten Italians consider themselves ethical and sustainable consumers. 89% are willing to pay more for high-quality animal-based products, and 87% for plant-based equivalents. Compared to their European counterparts, Italian food companies stand out for prioritizing



zing quality (52%).

In construction, sustainability is linked to quality when it combines environmental certifications, good integration with the local area, and worker safety. Energy efficiency ratings strongly influence property purchases (74%), while proximity to green spaces plays a slightly smaller role (66%).

88% would pay more for a high-quality home, with sustainability a decisive factor for 48% of them.

In short, sustainability today offers companies a real opportunity - those that pursue it sincerely are rewarded by increasingly aware and value-driven consumers.







*Italian handcrafts*

## **The master shipwrights of Campania**

We the Italians Editorial Staff

In the coastal towns of Campania, the figure of the Maestro d'Ascia - the master shipwright - remains a symbol of skill, heritage, and deep connection to the sea. These artisans are the keepers of an ancient craft: the construction of wooden boats shaped by hand with the precision of traditional tools, especially the axe from

which their title derives.

A Maestro d'Ascia is more than a boatbuilder. He is a master of wood, able to select the right tree, read the grain, and know instinctively how each piece will behave in water. The craft involves shaping frames, ribs, and keels without relying on industrial

molds. Every cut is guided by experience and an understanding of both the material and the sea it will face.

Along the Sorrentine Peninsula, the Cilento coast, and the islands of the Gulf of Naples, small boatyards continue to echo with the rhythm of this work. Here, wooden fishing boats and leisure craft are still built, and historic vessels - sometimes with remarkable parts - are restored to their former

glory. These yards are often located just steps from the water, their slipways running straight into the sea, creating a seamless connection between land-based craftsmanship and maritime life.

In Cilento, towns like Castellabate and Marina di Pisciotta have long been centers of wooden boatbuilding. The masters here still follow time-honored methods, from shaping the curved ribs to assembling the hull plank by





plank. Many of their boats are designed to suit the local waters, with forms adapted for stability in the region's coastal currents.

Becoming a Maestro d'Ascia in Campania requires years of apprenticeship. Traditionally, young men would spend seasons in the yard learning not only how to cut and join wood, but also how to read weathered blueprints, design hulls, and maintain a vessel throughout its life. The final step is a rigorous examination that grants the license to work independently and design vessels up to a significant tonnage without the oversight of a naval engineer.

The story of one craftsman illustrates the path. After losing his job in metalwork, he returned to the material he loved most - wood - and trained for years under an experienced master in coastal boatyards. His dedication led him to earn his license, and his first independent project was the construction of an eight-meter wooden fishing boat. That vessel, crafted with patience and precision, became a personal testament to the resilience of the craft itself.

Elsewhere in Campania, some shipwrights have embraced both tradition and innovation. In Salerno, for example, a certified master oversees a yard specializing in the restora-



tion of wooden boats, the construction of new ones in classic planking styles, and even the refitting of vessels in mixed materials. This blending of old and new reflects the adaptability required to keep the profession alive in a changing maritime world.

Despite its prestige, the craft faces serious challenges. The spread of fiberglass and mass-produced boats has greatly reduced demand for wooden construction. Where once entire communities depended on local shipwrights for fishing vessels, tourism boats, and cargo craft, many yards now survive mainly through restoration work or by catering to a niche market of enthusiasts.

Yet the atmosphere of a working yard in Campania still captures the essence of the craft. Visitors may find themselves enveloped in the scent of freshly cut timber, the sound of axes and adzes striking wood, and the sight of shavings curling to the ground. The boats themselves seem to grow organically in these spaces - keels laid, ribs rising, planks fastened - until the final launch into the harbor marks the end of one journey and the beginning of another.

The Maestri d'Ascia of Campania are also storytellers. Their work preserves not just techni-



ques, but also the history of local fishing fleets, the traditions of coastal navigation, and the identity of seaside communities. Every vessel they produce is tied to its place of origin, reflecting both the natural resources of the region and the aesthetic sensibilities passed down through generations.

In many cases, the boats they build are designed to endure decades of service. Well-main-



tained wooden hulls can last for generations, each repair and re-fit adding another layer to the vessel's life story. These boats are not disposable products but companions of the sea, shaped by human hands and sustained by care.

While the number of practicing masters in Campania has diminished, those who remain are committed to passing on their knowledge. Some take on apprentices, others work with maritime museums or participate in cultural festivals that celebrate the region's seafaring traditions. Their dedication ensures that the craft, though rare, is not forgotten.

The survival of the Maestro d'Ascia's art in Campania depends on both passion and adaptation. Wooden boatbuilding may no longer be the primary economic engine of coastal towns, but as long as there are people who value tradition, beauty, and the intimate bond between artisan and vessel, this heritage will endure. In the hands of these masters, each boat remains a living expression of the sea's history - an enduring link between past and present, between the shores of Campania and the waters they have navigated for centuries.





## *Italian economy*

# **The silent battle reshaping Italian finance**

Fabrizio Fasani

When Americans think of Italy, design, food, and fashion immediately come to mind. But behind the scenes, in the heart of Milan and Siena, a high-stakes financial drama is unfolding, one that could have come straight out of a Tom Wolfe novel.

Three historic names – Assicurazioni Generali, Mediobanca, and Monte dei Paschi di Siena – are now at the center of a power struggle that could reshape Italian capitalism.





To grasp the weight of this battle, it's enough to recall who they are. Generali, the “Lion of Trieste,” is Italy’s largest insurance company, a symbol of reliability and strength. Mediobanca, born in the postwar years, was for decades the “salotto buono,” the cozy parlor where the destinies of Italy’s industrial giants, from FIAT to Pirelli to Olivetti, were decided. Monte dei Paschi di Siena, the world’s oldest bank, founded in 1472, has witnessed popes, emperors, wars, and crises, surviving everything, even state bailouts in recent years.

Today, these three players are intertwined in a contest of survival and conquest.

This year, fearing a takeover bid from Monte Paschi, Mediobanca tried to play offense. It drafted a plan to acquire Banca Generali, the private banking arm of the Lion of Trieste. The goal was to grow larger and stronger, making itself harder to swallow. To do so, Mediobanca was even ready to sell part of its historic stake in Generali, a move many read as a break with old alliances.

But in August, shareholders rejected the plan. Powerful families like the Del Vecchio and Caltagirone clans, silent protagonists of Italian capitalism, voted against it or abstained. Mediobanca’s defenses crumbled, and the field opened for Monte Paschi.



# MEDIOBANCA

The Siena-based bank successfully completed its takeover bid, securing 62.3% of Mediobanca's capital and seizing control. The deal, sweetened with extra cash along the way, paved the road to a possible full merger of the two institutions. For participating shareholders, payment is set for September 15, while from September 16–22 the offer will reopen to allow MPS to edge closer to the two-thirds threshold needed for extraordinary resolutions.

For Italian Americans and others who look at Italy as the land of their roots, this is not just a matter of stock exchanges or banks. What's at stake is who controls the savings of Italian families,

who finances the small and medium-sized businesses that bring Made in Italy to life overseas, from Tuscan wine to Milanese handbags, from Emilia's engines to Turin's design. If Mediobanca falls under Monte Paschi's control, Italy's banking system will face a new giant, stronger yes, but also more concentrated. And Generali will be forced to rethink its strategies, with ripple effects that could be felt across the Atlantic.

The game now enters phase two: governance and integration. In Milan, a board reshuffle is expected along with the resignation of CEO Alberto Nagel, as MPS looks to quickly set the team and industrial course of the new group (tax credits are also on the table). Regulators and markets





are watching closely: S&P has placed Mediobanca on negative CreditWatch due to short-term execution risks, while noting that in the medium term synergies and a stronger profile could emerge.

One thing is clear: Italian capitalism, so often described as static and resistant to change, is moving quickly. And as always in Italy, it's not just about numbers: it's about families, power balances, and centuries-old stories. From Mediobanca's "salotto buono" to Trieste's Lion to the world's oldest bank, Italian finance is writing a

new chapter. A chapter that inevitably concerns those who, from overseas, follow their ancestral homeland with pride and passion. A parallel with the United States. For an American reader, some comparisons may help. Mediobanca, with its role as the "salotto buono," can be compared to Goldman Sachs, not in size, but in its historical influence on big industrial decisions. Generali, with its insurance muscle and international presence, resembles AIG or MetLife, global giants managing risks and assets. Monte dei Paschi di Siena, despite its

past crises, remains unique: think of it as a JPMorgan with five centuries of history, surviving revolutions, world wars, and epochal transformations.

And just as in the U.S. the Treasury Department or the Federal Reserve keep a close eye on major bank mergers, mindful of system stability, so too in Italy the government is following this saga. Because this is not just a battle between shareholders: it's about the solidity of household savings, the financing of businesses, and, ultimately, a slice of the nation's economic sovereignty.

tions

It should not be forgotten that both Generali and Mediobanca count American investors among their shareholders, pension funds and asset managers interested in Italian stability. Moreover, many Made in Italy companies that export to the United States, from luxury goods to food and wine, depend on financing from institutions like Mediobanca or MPS. Any shift in Italy's banking balance of power could therefore ripple into economic relations with the U.S., creating new opportunities but also new uncertainties.

Consequences for Italy–U.S. rela-

In the end, this is not just an Ita-





lian story, it's a tale of global finance, linking savers in Siena and Trieste with investors in New York and Boston, a reminder of how deeply the destinies of both sides of the Atlantic remain intertwined.

Practical box – What does it all mean?

Takeover bid (OPA): When a bank or company offers to buy another company's shares at a set price for all shareholders. It's the most direct way to "conquer" a business.

Mediobanca: For decades, the behind-the-scenes director of Italian finance, the table around which strategic decisions were made. Generali: Italy's flagship insurer, with clients worldwide and a history intertwined with the country's destiny.

Monte dei Paschi di Siena: With over 550 years of life, the oldest bank still active. Scarred by crises, but now attempting a comeback as a key player.

Timeline of the saga

- 1472: Monte dei Paschi is founded in Siena, the world's oldest active bank.
- 1831: Assicurazioni Generali is established in Trieste, destined to become Europe's "Lion" of insurance.



- 1946: Mediobanca is created, driving Italy's postwar industrial rebuilding.
- April 2025: Mediobanca announces plan to acquire Banca Generali to defend against MPS.
- August 21, 2025: Shareholders reject the Banca Generali plan; Mediobanca's defense collapses.
- September 8, 2025: MPS takeover of Mediobanca closes with 62–62.3% acceptance; MPS gains control.
- September 11, 2025: S&P places Mediobanca on negative CreditWatch after the takeover success.
- September 15, 2025: Shareholders who participated receive payment.
- September 16–22, 2025: Offer reopens as MPS pushes for the two-thirds threshold.



## *Italian street food*

# **Olive ascolane, a crispy taste of Marche region**

We the Italians Editorial Staff

In the charming region of Le Marche, in central Italy, one of the most beloved street-food delights is the olive ascolane - golden, crunchy olives stuffed with savory meat, breaded and fried to perfection. Hailing from the picturesque city of Ascoli Piceno, these olives are a

tasty emblem of local culinary artistry and warm hospitality.

The origins of olive ascolane trace back to around 1800, when Ascoli's noble households had an abundance of leftover meats from lavish feasts. Resourceful cooks devised a bril-





liant solution: they pitted tender green olives, filled them with finely minced, seasoned meat, breaded them and gave them a crisp fry. What started as a clever way to prevent waste evolved into a regional treasure - savory bites born from ingenuity and tradition.

Although the stuffed olive in its current form dates to the 19th century, the story goes even deeper. Ascolana olives themselves - known as Ascolana Tenera - are an ancient variety, celebrated since Roman times and mentioned by authors like Cato, Martial and Petronius. Traditionally cured in brine with aromatic herbs, these

plump, flavorful olives were preserved and loved long before they were ever stuffed and fried - a testament to centuries of culinary heritage.

Crafting olive ascolane is a labor of love. First, the olives are pitted using a precise spiral cut that allows them to be re-formed after stuffing - a delicate technique requiring steady hands. The filling is a rich blend of meats such as beef, pork, and often chicken or turkey, sautéed with a soffritto, stewed in white wine, then combined with Parmesan or Grana Padano, nutmeg, and in some recipes a hint of lemon zest or clove. Once assem-



## CHICCO D'OLIVA D'AVELLANO



FRUTTA



PATATE



PIZZA/PIZZELLE  
TRUCCO



CEVE  
MEDITERRANEA



CEVE  
E PASTICCIO





bled, each olive is lightly floured, dipped in beaten egg, and coated with breadcrumbs - then fried in hot oil until crunchy and golden. A squeeze of lemon brings out the warmth and depth of flavor in every bite.

Though originally a refined dish for aristocratic tables, olive ascolane has become a favorite snack across Italy and beyond. In Ascoli Piceno and neighboring towns, street-food stalls serve them piping hot - often in a paper cone

alongside other fried treats like cremini (fried custard cubes) and fried vegetables. They're popular at festivals, fairs, enotecas and even local caf  s, where you can enjoy this indulgence with a crisp white wine - perhaps a Verdicchio or a Pinot Blanc.

To preserve authenticity, the Oli-va Ascolana del Piceno DOP was officially recognized in 2005. This certification ensures that the olives are of the traditional Ascolana Tenera variety, grown and proces-





sed in the Piceno area, and that the recipe standards are respected. In fact, production rules stipulate meat ratios, olive size, and quality controls to safeguard the dish's heritage and unrivaled taste.

Each August, Ascoli Piceno hosts the Ascoliva Festival, a cultural and gastronomic extravaganza celebrating the olive ascolana and other regional specialities. Held in the historic Piazza Arringo, visitors can sample handcrafted bites, meet producers, and enjoy lively entertainment - a vibrant tribute to local food culture and centuries-old tradition.

Today, olive ascolane remain a symbol of regional pride - the perfect appetizer at home, the star of an aperitivo, or the highlight of street-food exploring. Whether you crave nostalgia, tradition, or simply crave something indulgent and crunchy, these stuffed olives capture the essence of Marche - rustic yet refined, historic yet alive in every bite.

In sum, olive ascolane are more than a snack - they're a storied expression of Italian culinary creativity, a delicious bridge between past and present, and a must-taste for lovers of authentic flavors.





## *Italian Citizenship Assistance*

# **New Italian citizenship rules for minor children**

### Italian Citizenship Assistance

Recently, the rules governing the recognition of Italian citizenship have undergone important changes with the conversion of the Tajani Decree ([Decreto-Legge 36/2025](#)) into [Law No. 74/2025](#) on May 24, 2025. Many wonder

how exactly the new provisions apply to minor children of Italian citizens. The Ministry of the Interior issued several memos to clarify how the law should be applied: [No. 26185](#) on May 28, 2025, [No. 59/2025](#) on June 17, 2025, and,

most recently, No. 36356 on July 24, 2025. This article will review the contents of these memos and outline how exactly minor children born abroad to Italian citizen parents can be recognized as Italian under the new legislation.

### Before and After the Law Change

Before the new law came into effect on May 24, 2025, children born abroad to an Italian parent (who was either born in Italy or acquired citizenship *jure sanguinis*) could be recognized as Italian if the parent registered their birth in Italy before the child reached the age of 18. Even

when the child had already reached adulthood, it was still possible to apply for recognition through what was known as a “1st-generation application.” In both instances, it’s imperative that the chain of citizenship was unbroken from parent to child at the time of the child’s birth; and upon recognition, the child would be Italian retroactively from their date of birth.

Law 74/2025 has altered the legal framework, particularly by introducing a two-generation limit for citizenship recognition through *jure sanguinis*. Also, it created a clear distinction between the acquisi-





tion of Italian citizenship “from birth” (*jure sanguinis*) and acquisition “by benefit of law.”

### Citizenship “By Benefit of Law”

Under the new rules, minor children born abroad can acquire Italian citizenship through a declaration process, meeting either of the following scenarios:

- Parents must file the declaration within one year of the child’s birth or adoption
- Parents may file the declaration and the child legally resides in Italy continuously for at least two years

The law also establishes a transitional period where parents may submit the declaration by May 31, 2026. This applies to children born before the law came into effect, whose parent was born in Italy or acquired citizenship *jure sanguinis*. If the child turns 18 before this date, they can submit the declaration themselves by May 31, 2026. By acquiring Italian citizenship “by benefit of law”, these children will not be recognized as Italian retroactively from birth. Instead, the law states that they will be recognized from the day after the requirements have been met, either the declaration within one year of birth or the 2-year residence in Italy. Another change introduced by the new law is a required registration fee of €250 per child, which must be paid to the Ministry of the Interior



prior to submitting the declaration. The memos also note that the declaration must be filed in person at the Italian consulate abroad or, if living in Italy, and the local comune. Required documents include the child’s birth certificate and evidence of the parent’s Italian citizenship.

### Citizenship “From Birth”

There are still circumstances in which a child born abroad can obtain Italian citizenship from birth (*jure sanguinis*). This occurs if either:

- The parent holds only Italian citizenship and never acquired another citizenship
- The parent is a dual citizen holding Italian citizenship and lived in Italy for at least 2 consecutive years after acquiring Italian citizenship and before the child’s birth.
- The grandparent held only Italian citizenship at the time of the child’s birth, provided that the parent

was also Italian. (If the grandparent had passed away before the child's birth, they must have maintained their Italian citizenship until the time of death)

In these cases, the previous procedure remains in place and no declaration is required. The parents would still need to provide documentation such as the child's birth certificate and proof of the parent's or grandparent's Italian citizenship or two-year residence in Italy.

### **Circolare No. 36356**

On July 24, 2025, the Ministry of the Interior issued Circolare No. 36356, which reiterated the provisions of Law 74/2025 and earlier memos while offering additional clarification. In particular, it confirmed the interpretation of Article 3-bis, lett. d of Law 74/2025, which allows a child to be recognized as Italian if a parent or adoptive parent resided in Italy for two consecutive years after acquiring Italian citizenship and before the child's birth or adoption. It specified that this rule applies whether the parent acquired Italian citizenship by descent (*jure sanguinis*), naturalization, or by benefit of law.

### **Conclusion**

With the new citizenship rules, it's important that Italian parents understand the requirements to have



their minor children born abroad recognized as Italian. Particularly, parents of children born before the enactment of Law 74/2025 must submit a declaration by May 31, 2026, and for children born after the law, a declaration must be filed within one year of the child's birth or adoption. Otherwise, a declaration and 2-year residence in Italy will need to be completed for the child to be recognized.

For more information on Italian citizenship or assistance with minor children recognition, feel free to [contact us](#) directly, [subscribe to our Podcast](#), or visit our website at [italiancitizenshipassistance.com](https://italiancitizenshipassistance.com).



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## *Italian healthcare*

# **Toward a new humanism in health**

Vincenzo La Regina

The Italian and American health - care systems represent two models of excellence, each with unique characteristics and distinct strengths. Italy, with its National Health Service, is recognized for its universality, accessibility, and focus on social equity, guaranteeing care for all citizens regardless of economic status. The United

States, on the other hand, stands out for technological innovation, cutting - edge scientific research, and the ability to attract resources and talent from around the world, serving as a driving force in neuroscience, digital health, and health - care management practices.





In an era when health is increasingly interconnected and global, the exchange of knowledge and experiences between the two systems is not just an opportunity but a necessity. Integrating Italy's universal approach with America's innovative drive can generate a model that combines equity and excellence, accessibility and innovation, human - centered care and technological power.

It is within this context that we introduce the idea of a New Humanism in Health: a philosophi-

cal and scientific vision that bridges diverse health - care systems with the ultimate goal of promoting human well-being - physical, mental, and social - expressed through the model of the "Triangle of Health."

This multi - dimensional concept is rooted in the bio-psycho- social model introduced by the World Health Organization and further enriched by the contributions of medical humanities and medical anthropology. It redefines the very notion of care as a deeply



human act - integrating scientific knowledge with philosophical wisdom to build a future in which health is both a universal right and a shared responsibility. Our mission is to transform the very concept of health, making it a cornerstone of a fairer and more sustainable society.

Our vision is to spark a cultural and philosophical revolution in health care, grounded in the idea of a “New Humanism in Health,” where the dignity and uniqueness of the suffering individual are placed at the center of every reflection and practice.

Within this vision, the role of neuroscience applied to leadership is crucial for educating a

new generation of healthcare professionals - individuals able to navigate the complexities of the modern world with ethical and behavioral competence. Neuroleadership provides tools to enhance collaboration, innovation, and effectiveness in healthcare organizations, creating environments where every team member feels valued and actively involved in the healing process.

The goal is to move beyond national boundaries and positively influence global healthcare practices, promoting a model of care that is not only technologically advanced but also profoundly human. We aim to build a healthcare system that not only addresses the challenges of



the present but is also prepared to lead the future - toward an era where safe care is synonymous with respect, understanding, and compassion for humanity in all its forms. This includes fostering new classes of healthcare leaders who embody this vision. Idealrealists who strike a balance between rationality and emotion, ethics and science.

Our goals, consistent with the vision of a New Humanism in Health, include:

- Humanizing care: Developing a more mature, multi-dimensional concept of health that integrates biomedical, bio-

psycho-social, and systemic ecological approaches.

- Organizational well-being: Ensuring a continuous commitment within health-care organizations to promote balance, proactivity, and the well-being of healthcare workers.

- Safety of care: Making patient safety the top priority of all care processes, improving quality of services and outcomes through concrete actions.

The tools identified to achieve these goals include:

- Empathetic communication (la comunicazione empatica)



To humanize medical practice, special emphasis is placed on the patient experience, empathetic understanding, and effective communication between doctors and patients. Listening, storytelling, and critical reflection are recognized as essential elements of care.

- Emotional leadership (la leadership emotiva)

In contrast to traditional Taylorist management models, recent research - especially in the U.S. - has introduced approaches to human resource management based on emotional intelligence. By fostering healthy work environments, organizations can see tangible benefits in performance and results.

- Alliance of minds (l'alleanza delle menti)

This refers to the coordination of efforts and knowledge among two or more individuals in a spirit of harmony, aimed at achieving a common goal. It highlights the importance of collaboration, sharing, and mutual understanding.

In recent decades, medicine has witnessed increasing specialization and subspecialization to provide greater expertise in treating complex diseases and conditions. While this has advanced



clinical precision, it has also led to the “pervasion of technology in medicine,” weakening symbolic and relational dimensions in the doctor - patient relationship. Alongside scientific progress, we must also work on culture - placing at the center the vision of a “New Humanism in Health,” which represents a paradigm shift. It reaffirms health as an inestimable value and common good. To translate these principles into practice, we need a collective effort - healthcare professionals, institutions, and communities - developing a cultural pathway enriched by scientific, anthropological, and philosophical perspectives.





## *Italian curiosities*

# Monza, 110 days to build a legend

We the Italians Editorial Staff

Monza is not just the “Temple of Speed.” Monza is also the symbol of a titanic achievement that still leaves people speechless: the construction of the entire racetrack in just one hundred and ten days. A number that, even today, feels almost unbelievable.

It was 1922, more than a century ago. There were no modern machines, no digital design software, and yet in less than four months a circuit more than six miles long came to life - complete with straights, sweeping curves, grandstands, and infrastructure that was considered state-of-the-art

at the time. Work began on May 15, and by September 3, before an enthusiastic crowd, the first official race was already underway. To call the birth of the Autodromo Nazionale di Monza a record in engineering, organization, and determination is no exaggeration. Think about what “110 days” really means. Today, building a Formula 1 circuit takes years: endless studies, red tape, and construction projects that seem to drag on forever. At Monza, in 1922, men turned a dream into reality in just over three months, coordinating thousands of workers, architects, and engineers with near-military precision. It was postwar Italy, eager for redemption and modernization. The project of the race-

track was a way to show the world that the country could run fast not only on the track but also in real life.

Speed was already part of Monza’s DNA before the first line of asphalt was ever laid down. Each day, hundreds of meters of track were paved, grandstands rose from the ground, and tunnels and service roads took shape. The site never stopped, with relentless shifts and an organization that anticipated modern industrial methods. It was a collective effort that combined the strength of manual labor with the vision of those who imagined a circuit worthy of international prestige.











When the first race began on September 3, Monza was already a legend. Not only because it was the third racetrack in the world after Brooklands and Indianapolis, but because no other had been built with such speed. The 110 days remain an unwritten record, one that will likely never be broken. No other sporting facility - let alone one of global stature - has ever been created with such urgency and precision.

From that moment on, Monza became synonymous with re-

cords: the fastest laps in Formula 1 history, top speeds that reached over 230 miles per hour, and pole positions decided by thousandths of a second. But if today the circuit is universally known as the "Temple of Speed," it is because its very first record was its construction. Without those 110 days of sacrifice and ingenuity, there would have been no legendary victories, no roaring engines shaking the forests of Brianza every September.

Monza is, in truth, a double tem-







ple: a temple of speed and a temple of rapid creation. Its birth was itself a race against time. And that record, set in 1922, still stands un-

challenged - a monument to the courage and efficiency of those who knew how to turn dreams into reality.





*Italian innovation*

## **Bio-inspired artificial skin that feels like human skin**

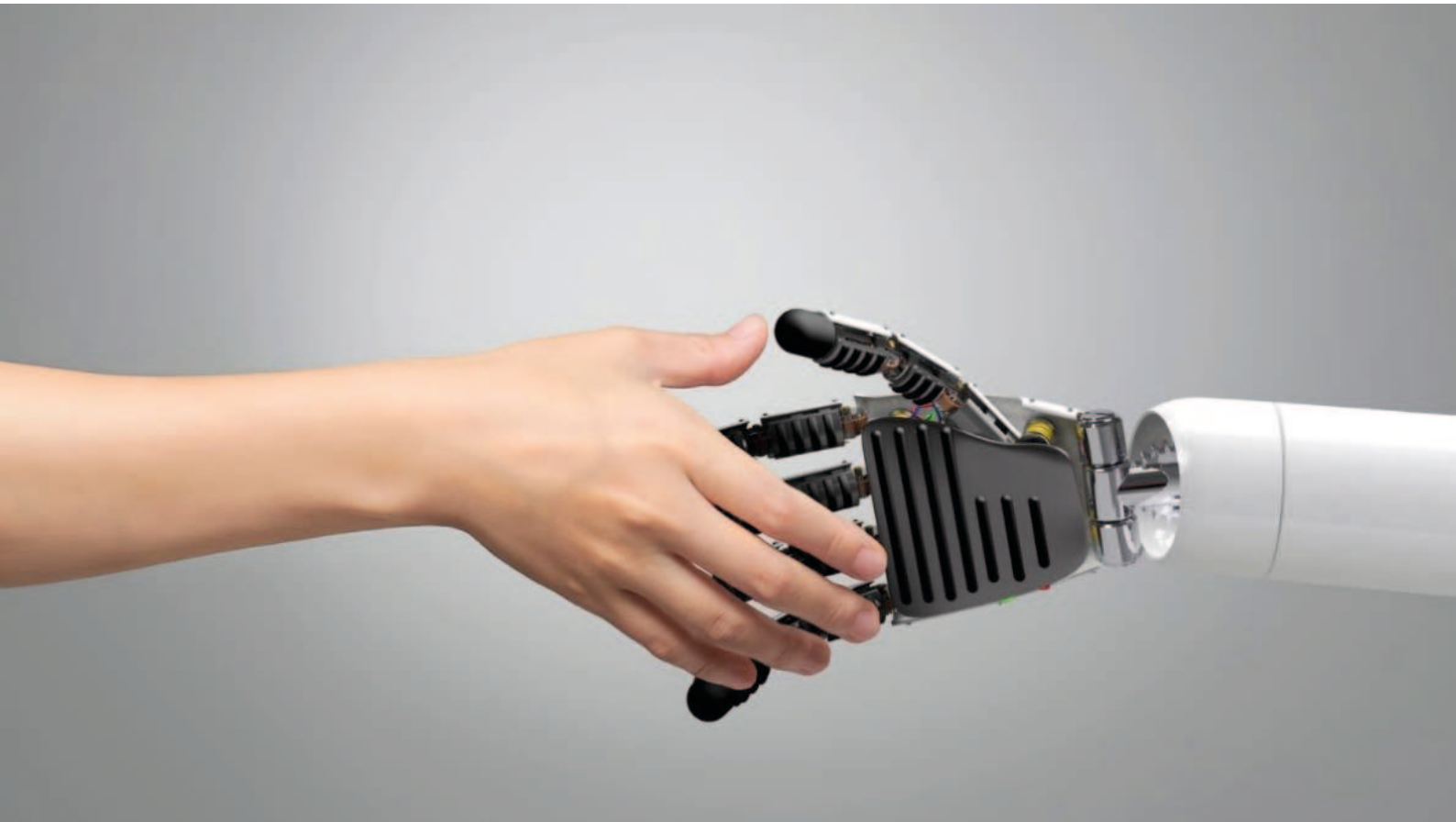
We the Italians Editorial Staff

A groundbreaking development in sensory materials has emerged from a collaboration between researchers in Italy and Brazil: a wide-area artificial skin capable of feeling touch much like human skin. This bio-inspired skin not only detects the location of contact with millimeter-level

precision, but also measures the intensity of the touch, making it a significant leap toward more lifelike sensory interfaces.

At its core, the innovation relies on a flexible surface embedded with optical fiber sensors that respond in real time to pressure and





gentle touches. But the true magic lies in the computational backbone - a spiking neural network - that processes tactile data in a way that mirrors the mechanisms of the human nervous system. This neural architecture enables the system to interpret and localize stimuli with remarkable accuracy and responsiveness.

Unlike traditional artificial skins that merely register basic touch, this new system offers a nuanced sensory experience shaped by both advanced hardware and biologically inspi-

red software intelligence.

The implications are significant for fields such as robotics and prosthetics. Robots outfitted with this skin could perform delicate tasks that require fine sensory feedback - opening doors without slamming, grasping fragile objects without crushing them, or dialing in the perfect grip on complex surfaces. For users of prosthetic devices, the addition of precise, lifelike tactile sensing brings us closer to restoring natural touch and improving functionality and user comfort.

Beyond robotics and prosthetics, the skin's versatile design opens doors in areas like virtual reality, where realistic sensory feedback is crucial, and in medical training or rehabilitation, where tactile realism can enhance effectiveness.

While this breakthrough marks a major milestone, it also invites further exploration. Future improvements may include expanding sensitivity, speeding response times, and refining durability under various conditions. Integrating

additional sensory dimensions - such as temperature or texture differentiation - could further enhance its realism.

In summary, this bio-inspired artificial skin blends cutting-edge sensing technology with neural network processing to mimic human touch with astonishing fidelity. It represents a powerful convergence of material science, optics, and computational neuroscience - one that promises to transform the way machines perceive, interact with, and ultimately relate to the human world.





*Italian proverbs*

## **Fatta la legge trovato l'inganno**

**We the Italians Editorial Staff**

Fatta la legge trovato l'inganno literally translates “once the law is made, a way to evade it is found”. Every new law inevitably inspires someone to find a way around it. No matter how strict a regulation may seem, there's always an unforeseen loophole. The Italian saying comes from the ancient Latin motto *facta lex, inventa fraus*.

It speaks to those who, with cunning, sidestep legal obligations without necessarily breaking the law. In the Italian DNA - rich in ingenuity and creativity - there's also the knack for bending rules through clever interpretation, exploiting technicalities to bypass limits that others might dutifully obey.



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**N.191 • September 2025**

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