

We the Italians

two flags one heart

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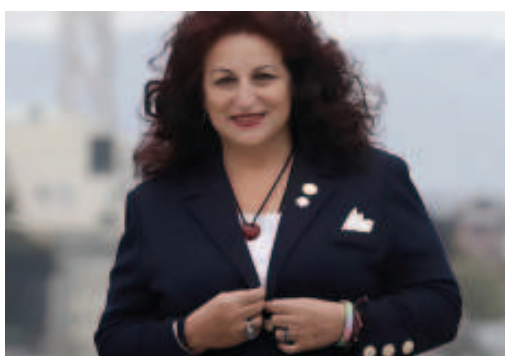
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Our Coordinators

Six coordinators. Six regions. One network.



Chris Vaccaro

Coordinator of the
We the Italians Ambassadors for

New York



Tom Damigella

Coordinator of the
We the Italians Ambassadors for

New England



Robert DiBiase

Coordinator of the
We the Italians Ambassadors for

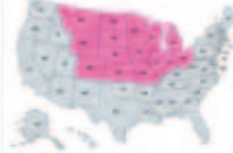
East



Ron Onesti

Coordinator of the
We the Italians Ambassadors for

Midwest



Nicola Vidali

Coordinator of the
We the Italians Ambassadors for

South



Anna Manunza

Coordinator of the
We the Italians Ambassadors for

West



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WHAT'S UP WITH WTİ

Editorial # 203

BY UMBERTO MUCCI

Dear friends,

September is turning out to be one of the busiest months in the history of We the Italians, and I could not be happier about it. We have many new projects, many ideas becoming reality, and - most importantly - many wonderful people helping us strengthen the bridge between Italy and the United States.

I want to begin with our Ambassadors. Our network is becoming increasingly structured and active across the United States. We now have six Coordinators, one for each of the six areas into which We the Italians divides the country: Chris Vaccaro for New York, Tom Damigella for New England, Robert DiBiase for the East, Ron Onesti

for the Midwest, Nicola Vidali for the South, and Anna Manunza for the West. Their role will be to coordinate and support our Ambassadors, help us understand what is happening locally, create introductions and opportunities, and make our extraordinary network even more useful to the Italian American community and to relations between Italy and the United States. Our strategy now organizes the U.S. network around six regional coordinators, alongside our territorial and thematic Ambassadors. Six coordinators. Six regions. One network.

Speaking of the future of our community, We the Italians is launching a new survey around a question we believe deserves to be measured rather than simply discussed: how strong is the Italian American community's connection with Italy today? Italian heritage lives through history, traditions, memories and identity. But connection

We the Italians
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HOW CONNECTED ARE ITALIAN AMERICANS TO ITALY TODAY?

HERITAGE **CONNECTION**

USA ITALY

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE.
SHAPE OUR FUTURE TOGETHER.

TAKE THE SURVEY NOW:
wetheitalians.com/surveys

with Italy can also be contemporary – following what happens in Italy, speaking the language, visiting the country, enjoying its culture and products, maintaining relationships with Italians, and feeling part of a bond that crosses the Atlantic. Through ten questions, we want to explore how Italian Americans relate to Italy culturally, emotionally and practically. There are no wrong answers, and this is certainly not about determining who is “more Italian.” Responses are anonymous, and the findings will be shared with the community and institutions in Italy and the United States

and will help us create the Italian American Connection Index 2026. Please take a few minutes and participate! [Take the Italian American Connection survey](#) Ten questions. A few minutes. One relationship across the Atlantic. Two Flags, One Heart. Our website now has a dedicated survey section featuring this survey and the three previous ones. [You can find it here.](#)

Another project that we first told you about last month is now ready to officially begin. [Relocals](#) is a research project by We the Italians, ITS Italy and

NOMAG

ITS ITALY



INVITO

RELOCALS



chi arriva dall'estero sta cambiando il racconto dell'Italia

Presentazione dei primi risultati della ricerca dedicata
alle persone nate all'estero che hanno scelto di vivere in Italia.



Giovedì
24 settembre 2026



Ore
17.00



Centro Studi Americani
Via Michelangelo Caetani 32
Roma

REGISTRATI QUI →

<https://www.eventbrite.it/e/biglietti-relocals-1999281604097>



DATI. STORIE. PROSPETTIVE
PER UN'ITALIA PIÙ APERTA,
CONSAPEVOLE E INTERNAZIONALE.



NOMAG focused on people born abroad who have chosen to live in Italy – international residents who have become partly “local” while retaining the perspective of someone who arrived from elsewhere. The first phase surveyed 103 relocals through 50 questions, exploring their experiences, expectations and relationship with Italy. This is only the beginning. In 2027, the project will continue with a roadshow of at least 12 stops across Italy, turning their perspectives into new data and practical insights for communities, institutions and businesses. And if you are in Rome on September 24, come and meet us! We will present the project at the Centro Studi Americani, from 5:00 to 7:30 PM. [Register for Relocals in Rome](#)

There is another project I am particularly proud of, because it is based on one of the most beautiful words in any language: thank you. “GRAZIE, AMERICA – THANK YOU, AMERICA. Firenze ri-

corda – Florence Remembers. 1966–2026” is a bilingual project by We the Italians and [Associazione Toscana-USA](#) marking the 60th anniversary of the terrible Florence flood of November 4, 1966. We are not interested in retelling the tragedy itself. We want to remember what happened immediately afterward: the extraordinary wave of solidarity that came from the United States and Italian America. Volunteers, students, conservators, institutions, Italian American organizations, expertise, donations and fundraising helped Florence recover and save an irreplaceable part of the world’s cultural heritage. A bilingual book, which we will present in Florence in November 2026, will tell this wonderful story of friendship and gratitude and will then travel across the Atlantic to 500 carefully selected recipients in the United States. Sixty years later, Florence remembers. And says: Thank you, America.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY USA *from Italy*

● Italy's role
in America's greatness

● Unsung Italian heroes

Maria Montessori *Enrico Caruso* *Luigi Del Bianco*

Lillian Covello *Angelo Noca* *Florence Scola* *Dominick Formento* *Francesco Vigo* *Margaret Guselo* *Mary Foglia* *Rosalie Strada* *Leo Inocencia*

Corrado Pardiacci *Mary Pallanca* *Giacomo Bellami* *Giuseppe Rosati* *Antonio Ruvelli* *Rosario and Grazia Caniglia* *Mary D'Angelo* *Mary Costantino Zore*

Caste Mapparese *Luigi Carbonetti* *Samuel Mazzuchelli* *Gianni Rizzo*

HAPPY BIRTHDAY ITALY *from the US*

Entertainment
Security and Defense
Made in Italy

250 80
USA YEARS ITALY YEARS
We the Italians

TWO ANNIVERSARIES ONE HEART AUGUST 2026

Meanwhile, our Two Anniversaries, One Heart journey continues. [The fourth insert is now online](#) in both Italian and English, once again filled with fascinating and prestigious content. In Happy Birthday Italy, we express Italy's gratitude to the United States for its contributions over the past 80 years in three areas: Security and Defense, Entertainment, and Made in Italy. Happy Birthday USA, as always, has two parts. In the first, we celebrate three extraordinary Italians who helped make

America great: Maria Montessori, Enrico Caruso and Luigi Del Bianco. Then comes another chapter of our Unsung Italian Heroes project. This time we travel through the Midwest, with 18 articles celebrating 21 remarkable Italians connected to Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, Minnesota, South Dakota, North Dakota, Montana, Wyoming and Colorado. There are so many stories still waiting to be told – and we intend to tell them.

Last month, we gave you the first clue about something truly big that We the Italians has been working on – something that, as far as we know, has never been done before. It is still too early to reveal it, but this month we are giving you another clue with two new photos. Look carefully. We won't say anything else for now. Stay tuned. We are going to surprise you. And since this story speaks of Italy and America, Naples and New York, faith and identity, there is only one way I want to end this little clue: *Ddoje bbanneire, nu santo*.

And now my favorite kind of news: the We the Italians family is growing again! Three wonderful new members are joining us.



> FABRIZIO FASANI, GERMANA VALENTINI,
AN OLD FRIEND, GIULIA GHIA, UMBERTO
MUCCI



Dr. Rosy Nigro is our new We the Italians Ambassador in Mississippi. A native of Catania, Rosy is Italian Instructor II at Mississippi State University, where she founded the Italian Program in 2008 and has directed it ever since. She holds a Laurea in Political Sciences from the Università di Catania, a Master's in Italian from the Università di Pisa, and a Master's and Ph.D. in Sociology from Mississippi State University. She first arrived in the United States in 1999 as an exchange student and has since built MSU's complete Italian minor. Today, she is also committed to expanding Italian language education into Mississippi high schools. Welcome Rosy!



> ROSY NIGRO



› PAOLO MANGIA

Paolo Mangia is our new We the Italians Ambassador in Miami. Born in Galatina, Puglia, in 1971, Paolo moved to Miami when he was 24 and built his professional career in international freight and logistics, founding MP Freight Logistics in 2002. A U.S. citizen based in Florida, Paolo is President of Casa Italia Miami, Miami Coordinator of MAIE, and President of the Development Committee and a Board member of the ITALIC-US Foundation. For years, he has worked to promote Italian culture, business relationships, community initiatives and stronger connections between Italy and Florida. Welcome Paolo!

Last but certainly not least, Marlo DiCraсто joins We the Italians in a new role: Chief Visual Storyteller. Marlo is an American singer, actress and dancer with dual U.S.–Italian citizenship who divides her time between New York and Rome. Fluent in English and Italian, she has worked internationally in theatre, film, television, musical theatre and live performance since beginning her professional career at the age of twelve. Her Italian credits include Francesca Archibugi's *Il Colibrì*, alongside Pierfrancesco Favino and Nanni Moretti, as well as productions for Rai Cinema and SKY



› MARLO DICRASTO

Italy. She also leads the Rome-based band Lady Luck and curates custom Italian travel experiences for American visitors. Welcome Marlo – there are many visual stories ahead for us to tell together, and now we have a Chief Visual Storyteller to help us tell them! In the meantime, there's a brand new section on our website for our videos: [it's here](#).

Ten different pieces of news in a single editorial – and believe me, there is much more happening behind the scenes. We keep growing, researching, connecting people, creating projects and telling stories because we remain convinced that the relationship between Italy and the United States, and the extraordinary Italian American community at its heart, still has enormous unexplored potential.

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

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.



Based in Washington, D.C., NIAF's mission is to celebrate and advance the inspiring achievements and uplifting values of the Italian culture and presence in America and to strengthen and empower ties between the United States and Italy.

The National Italian American Foundation (NIAF) is a nationwide organization headquartered in Washington, D.C., and is the largest and most loyal representative of the more than 20 million Italian American citizens living in the United States. NIAF was founded in 1975 and is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with no political affiliations.

NIAF's two most important purposes are to encourage Italian Americans to continue keeping their culturally rich heritage and traditions alive and present, and to ensure that the entire community never forgets the great contribution that Italians have made to the history and progress of the United States. To this end, the Foundation actively collaborates with the United States Congress and the White House on all major issues affecting Italian Americans.

To celebrate the great legacy that unites us and all the objectives achieved so far, NIAF organizes its Anniversary Gala every October in Washington, D.C., which is usually attended by the President of the United States; figureheads from the political, financial and cultural arenas; illustrious Italian Americans; and about 1,200 guests from the United States and Italy.

On this occasion, the Foundation awards honors to eminent Italian and Italian American personalities who have distinguished themselves in their professional or civic role.



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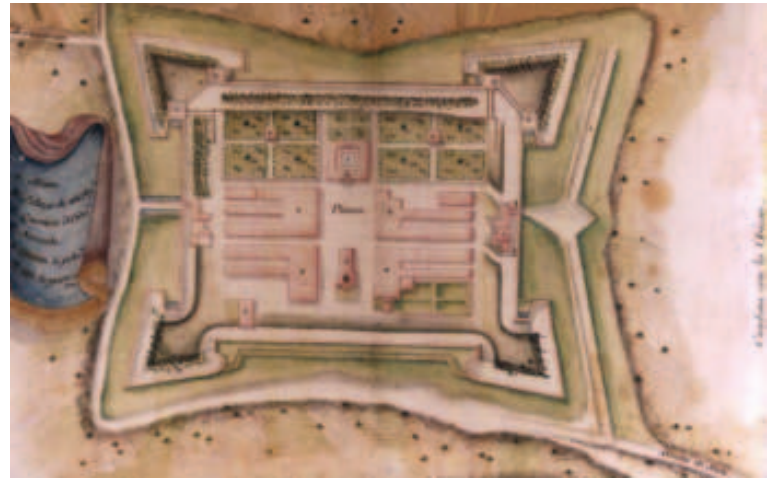
ITALIAN CULTURE AND HISTORY

Terra del Sole, where the Medici turned power into an ideal city

BY WE THE ITALIANS EDITORIAL STAFF

Terra del Sole began as a political idea expressed through architecture. Near Forlì, where the Montone valley opens toward the Romagna plain, Cosimo I de' Medici envisioned a settlement whose streets and buildings would proclaim the authority of his government. Founded in 1564, the town joined Renaissance ideals of proportion and rational order with the demands of military defense and territorial administration.

Its location mattered. This was the edge of the Medici territories, facing the Papal States, where a new urban center could make sovereignty visible. Today part of the municipality of Castrocaro Terme e Terra del Sole, the settlement occupies a valley setting beside the Apennine foothills. The surrounding landscape placed it between routes



crossing the Apennines and the neighboring territories of the papacy.

Construction began on December 8, 1564, with a procession and solemn Mass. The project unfolded over years: the defensive enclosure was completed in 1568, while 1579 marked the town's inauguration as the seat of the grand ducal commissioner. Those dates reveal the scale of the undertaking. Establishing a functioning capital required hous-





ing, government offices, military facilities, and places of worship within a coordinated plan.

Giovanni Camerini played a central role in the design. Baldassarre Lanci, Bernardo Buontalenti, and Simone Genga also contributed to the undertaking as collaborators or successors. Their involvement connects Terra del Sole to the architectural and engineering culture of the Medici court, where artistic invention and practical expertise frequently belonged to the same profession.

The result was a fortified rectangle enclosed by roughly 2 kilometers of walls, approximately 1.25 miles, with 4 projecting corner bastions. Their angular forms accommodated artillery and protected the adjoining defensive walls. Two fortified gateways controlled entry. This geometry embodied a response to changing warfare, as powerful firearms reshaped the relationship between cities and their defenses.

Inside, the main streets of Borgo Romano and Borgo Fiorentino organize movement around Pi-

azza d'Armi. Their width, about 9 meters or 30 feet, corresponds to the height of the neighboring houses. Such proportions brought the ideal city into ordinary experience: residents encountered its governing principles simply by walking between their homes and the central square.

Piazza d'Armi gave that order a public and ceremonial focus. The Church of Santa Reparata faces the Palazzo dei Commissari, also known as Palazzo Pretorio. Religious and governmental authority thus occupied opposing sides of the same civic space. The arrangement expressed a vision of society in which architecture reinforced institutional relationships and made the workings of power physically legible.

That vision included punishment. The commissioners' palace contained prisons and underground cells, where surviving graffiti offer traces of people caught within the judicial system. These marks complicate the polished image of Renaissance harmony. Terra del Sole housed officials and soldiers, but also defendants and prisoners whose

experiences belonged to the same urban order.

Its administrative role continued until 1784, when the province of Florentine Romagna was abolished. Later generations found other ways to preserve and interpret the town. Established in 1972, the Museo dell’Uomo e dell’Ambiente now uses 25 exhibition rooms to explore local history, rural households, agricultural work, craftsmanship, and customs alongside the fortress’s development.

Historical memory also enters the streets through the Palio di Santa Reparata, held on the first Sunday of September. Costumed processions and crossbow competition renew the rivalry between Borgo Romano and Borgo Fiorentino. These modern commemorations give residents an active role in interpreting their inheritance. Terra del Sole’s enduring cultural value lies in this meeting of

design and lived experience – a place where an ambitious Renaissance plan remains visible, while museums, traditions, and material traces restore human complexity to its ordered streets.





ITALIAN CUISINE

Timballo Teramano

WALTER POTENZA

Northern Abruzzo historical savory crepe torte.

Timballo is made with these crepes called “scrippelle” or “scorpelle” (depends on where in Abruzzo you’re from), plus tomato sauce, mozzarella, parmigiano, and meatballs. You really need more than one person if you want to get it done without losing your mind. One person has to make the batter and crank out 40–50 crepes. Another person has to shape the meatballs—and tradition says they have to be super tiny and all roughly the same size. Let’s just say... I hate being the one stuck making the meatballs! Then someone else cuts the mozzarella into cubes, preps the sauce, and gets the oven ready.

This recipe is a project, but the result is unforgettable. The key is the combination of textures from the different pastas and the complex layers of flavor.

Ingredients

For the Meat Ragù (Sugo di Carne):

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 ounces of pancetta, diced
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 1 carrot, finely chopped
- 1 celery stalk, finely chopped
- 14 oz. of mixed ground meat (traditional: pork, veal, and a little chicken liver)
- ½ glass red wine (Montepulciano d’Abruzzo)
- 28 ounces of tomato passata or peeled tomatoes
- Salt and pepper

For the besciamella:

- 1 liter of whole milk
- 4 tbsp. of unsalted butter
- 4 tbsp. of all-purpose flour
- A pinch of nutmeg
- Salt

For the Assembly:

- 14 scrippelle (thin Abruzzese crepes)
- 10 oz. of maccheroni alla chitarra (or rigatoni/penne)
- 8 oz. of small meatballs (polpettine), pre-cooked
- 8 oz. of provola or mozzarella cheese, diced
- ½ cup of Pecorino Abruzzese, grated
- 3 hard-boiled eggs, sliced
- Butter for greasing the pan.

Instructions:

Prepare the Components (can be done ahead)

The Ragù: Sauté pancetta and vegetables in oil. Add ground meat and brown. Deglaze with wine, let it evaporate. Add tomatoes, season, and simmer for at least 2 hours until rich and thick.

The Besciamella: Melt butter, whisk in flour to make a roux. Cook for 2 mins. Gradually whisk in warm milk until smooth. Add nutmeg and salt. Cook, stirring, until thickened. Let cool slightly.

The Scrippelle: Make a simple crepe batter (150g flour, 3 eggs, 350ml milk, pinch of salt). Cook into thin, large crepes. Let cool. (This replaces pasta sheets as the main structural layer.

The Pasta: Boil the maccheroni until very al dente. Drain and toss with a little ragù to prevent sticking.

The Meatballs: Make tiny, marble-sized meatballs from the same meat mix and brown them in

a pan.

Assemble the Timballo: Preheat oven to 180°C (350°F). Generously butter a large, high-sided springform pan (26-28cm).

Line the pan: Place the scrippelle (crepes) one by one, slightly overlapping, to cover the bottom and sides of the pan entirely, letting the edges hang over the sides. You will use these to wrap over the top later.

Create the layers: First Layer: Spread a layer of Besciamella on the bottom. Second Layer: Add a layer of cooked maccheroni. Third Layer: Spoon over a generous amount of ragù, scatter some meatballs, diced provola, and sliced eggs, and sprinkle with pecorino. Repeat these layers until the pan is nearly full, finishing with a layer of besciamella and pecorino. Fold the overhanging scrippelle over the top to encase the filling. Add a final crepe or two to cover any gaps.

Bake for 45-60 minutes until the top is golden brown and the interior is bubbling. Let it rest for at least 30 minutes after taking it out of the oven. This allows it to set and makes slicing possible. Carefully unmold from the springform pan onto a large platter. Slice into wedges to serve.

Tips & Traditions:

The Secret: The scrippelle are what make it uniquely Teramano. They create a delicate, non-starchy crust that's different from pastry.

Make-Ahead: All components (ragù, besciamella, scrippelle, meatballs) can be made 1-2 days in advance.

Variations: Some add sautéed mushrooms, peas, or slices of mortadella between layers.

Serving: It's often served at room temperature, making it perfect for a feast.





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ITALIAN ENTERTAINMENT

80 years later, Roberto Rossellini's
“Paisà” still feels like cinema
discovering reality

BY WE THE ITALIANS EDITORIAL STAFF

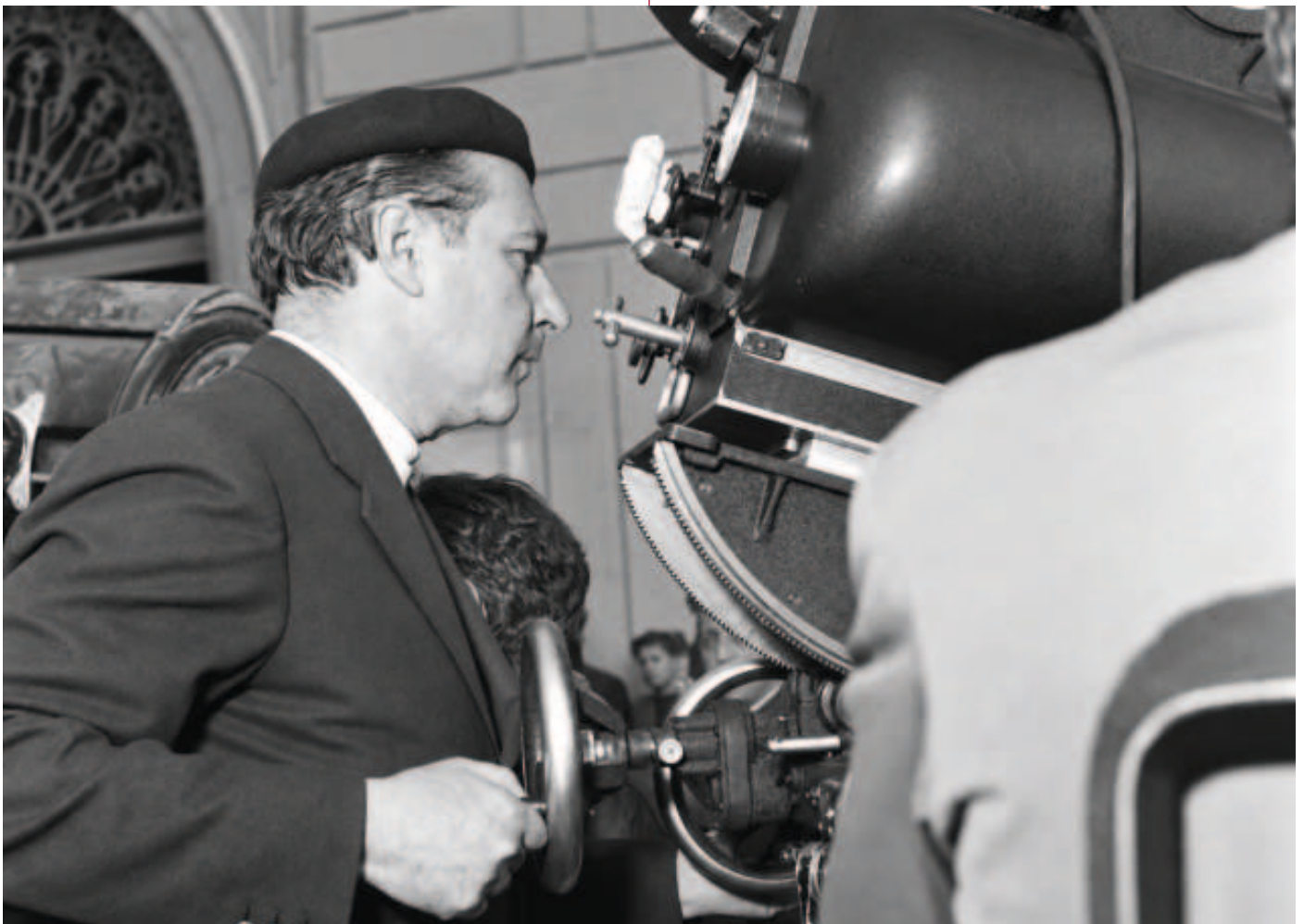
Eighty years ago, Roberto Rossellini released a film that seemed to dismantle the rules of moviemaking while the camera was rolling. “Paisà,” first presented in Venice on September 18, 1946, was neither a conventional war movie nor a traditional drama. It was cinema built from fragments – six stories, six locations, changing characters and a country that becomes the movie’s real protagonist.

Coming immediately after “Rome, Open City,” Rossellini’s international breakthrough, “Paisà” became the second chapter of the director’s cele-

brated War Trilogy, later completed by “Germany Year Zero.” Yet its structure was strikingly different. Instead of asking viewers to follow one group of characters, Rossellini follows the Allied advance through Italy, moving geographically from Sicily through Naples, Rome, Florence and the Apennines before reaching the Po Delta.

The result is approximately 2 hours of cinema that often looks as though fiction has accidentally wandered into a documentary.

That impression was deliberate. Rossellini filmed extensively on location and mixed professional performers with people who had little or no acting experience. Italians and Americans appear together, and their inability to understand one another becomes almost as important as the military events surrounding them. Language is not





polished away for the audience's convenience. Confusion, translation, accents and silence become dramatic material.

The filmmaking itself reinforces that rawness. Otello Martelli's black-and-white cinematography observes bombed cities, streets, countryside and ordinary people without turning destruction into spectacle. Eraldo Da Roma edited the film, while Renzo Rossellini composed the music. The writing credits involved an extraordinary collection of talent, including Sergio Amidei and a young Federico Fellini, who also worked as an assistant director. Fellini would later become one of world cinema's defining filmmakers.

Each episode changes the emotional temperature. In Sicily, an American soldier and a local woman struggle to communicate. Naples pairs a Black American military policeman with a street child. Rome turns a chance encounter between a soldier and a woman into a melancholy story about memory and recognition. Florence places its characters inside an urban battle. A monastery offers a quieter collision of faiths, while the final Po Delta epi-



sode strips the war down to survival and death.

What connects these stories is not plot but filmmaking. Rossellini repeatedly creates the expectation that two people might finally understand each other, then allows circumstances to interfere. Characters meet briefly and disappear. Relationships remain incomplete. There is rarely the emotional resolution audiences had been trained to expect from studio cinema.

That makes "Paisà" particularly fascinating 80



years later. Its importance is not limited to what it records about 1944–45 Italy. The film helped demonstrate that a feature could be episodic, geo-

graphically expansive and dramatically powerful without depending on stars, elaborate sets or a tightly engineered screenplay.



Its influence also traveled far beyond Italy. What became known internationally as Italian Neorealism offered filmmakers another way of looking at the world – real locations, unfamiliar faces, available light, social reality and stories discovered in ordinary life rather than imposed upon it.

The film's international recognition followed. "Paisà" received an Academy Award nomination for its writing at the 22nd Oscars, with Alfred Hayes, Federico Fellini, Sergio Amidei, Marcello Pagliero and Roberto Rossellini credited by the Academy. Decades later, its reputation remains remarkably strong: in the 2022 Sight and Sound critics' poll, it ranked joint No. 196 among the greatest films ever made.

And the movie itself remains accessible rather than trapped in film history. A restored version has circulated internationally, including a restoration associated with Cineteca di Bologna and CSC – Cineteca Nazionale, while Criterion has made the full original-release version available to contemporary audiences.

Eight decades after its premiere, "Paisà" still has the nervous energy of something newly invented. Rossellini did not simply make a movie about a shattered Italy. He found a cinematic language capable of looking directly at that shattered world – and trusted the camera to find stories inside it.





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ITALIAN SPORT

Curtis and Pellacani, the Italian queens of water

BY FEDERICO PASQUALI

Two Italian athletes with two different life stories, united by the same passion for water, victory, and records. Last August, the European Swimming and Diving Championships were held in the French capital. Italy finished second in the medal standings, confirming its status as one of the continent's greatest aquatic powers.

Among the many Italian champions who earned victories and medals, two made history in swimming and diving: Sara Curtis and Chiara Pellacani. These young athletes gave Italy two complementary images of triumph. The first challenged the water by racing through it; the second passed through it from above, in the fleeting instant between leaving the springboard and making a perfect entry.

Their backgrounds, ages, and places of origin are different, but in the French capital they transformed their talent into a very clear message: Italian sports can be young, diverse, and international.

Sara Curtis was born in Savigliano, in the province of Cuneo, on August 19, 2006, to an Italian father and a Nigerian mother. She grew up in Piedmont, supported by a family and a region that nurtured the early emergence of an athlete with extraordinary natural ability.

Swimming soon became the arena in which she tested herself: short distances, explosive speed, and the ability to combine power with precision. Curtis gradually added the backstroke to her already formidable talent as a freestyle sprinter.

In Paris, she made the leap from promising young athlete to global star. In the semifinal of the 50-meter backstroke, she swam 26.63 seconds,





> CHIARA PELLACANI

setting a world record. The following day, she won gold in the final and lowered the world record again, to 26.56. Two world records in two races, at only twenty years old.

Her Italian story now continues in the United States. Curtis chose the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, where she studies psychology and participates in American college athletics, balancing her education with training in one of the NCAA's most competitive swimming programs.

Her move was not an escape, but an investment: a young Italian national team athlete bringing her experience into an international system so she can learn, develop, and return to her national team with new strengths. One of her inspirations is Gretchen Walsh, the outstanding American swimmer and University of Virginia athlete whom Curtis has described as both an idol and someone from whom she wanted to learn.

Sara thus embodies a second-generation Italy, firmly rooted in her country while remaining open to the world—identities that do not simply coexist, but become a source of competitive energy. Beyond the hundredths of a second and the stopwatch, her record tells that story as well.

Chiara Pellacani was born in Rome on September 12, 2002, to Italian parents. She discovered diving almost by chance when she was eight years old: a classmate encouraged her to try the springboard, and that first experience sparked a passion destined to become both a profession and a calling.

Her discipline demands a relationship with water that is the opposite of a swimmer's. Swimmers move through it, conquering it one meter at a time. Divers look at it from above, trace a geometric figure through the air, and ask the water to receive them without disturbing the balance they achieved in flight. For Pellacani, that movement became a language.

After beginning her training at the Federal Center in Rome, her talent quickly became evident. She joined Italy's junior national team during the 2015–16 season and made her senior debut at only fourteen at the European Championships in Kyiv.

At the 2026 European Championships in Paris, Pellacani accomplished something unprecedented: five gold medals in five events. She won the mixed team event alongside Matteo Santoro, Sarah Jodoin Di Maria, and Raffaele Pelligra, then completed her five-medal sweep with victories in individual and synchronized events—something no European diver, male or female, had ever achieved at a single continental championship.

It was more than a collection of medals. It was a demonstration of remarkable versatility: Pellacani proved capable of winning in individual, synchronized, and team competitions.

For her, Paris also carried the taste of redemption.

In the city where she had experienced the disappointment of two fourth-place finishes at the 2024 Olympic Games, the Roman athlete enjoyed the brightest week of her European career.

Pellacani also chose the United States, although she followed a different path. After attending Louisiana State University, she continued her education at the University of Miami, where she studied psychology and graduated in 2025. She has lived in Miami since 2023, while continuing to train and compete at the highest level.

Her story represents another side of contemporary Italy: a Roman who grew up in the schools and swimming pools of the Italian capital, then crossed the Atlantic to build an adult life encompassing both academics and sports. It was not an abandonment of her origins, but an extension of them. Rome remains her starting point; Miami has become a place of growth.

Water unites them, but it does not make them indistinguishable. Sara Curtis is the flash that launches from the starting block and races toward the wall. Chiara Pellacani is the flight that begins on the springboard and seeks an almost invisible entry.

One comes from Piedmont and a family with both Italian and Nigerian roots; the other comes from Rome. Both chose the United States as a place to grow, and both returned to represent Italy and win.

They embody two ways of being Italian and two paths to excellence: the young woman who advances through speed and the athlete who transforms control into grace. In Paris, however, the conclusion was the same: the Italian national anthem, a gold medal around their necks, and a generation that no longer asks permission to make history.

> SARA CURTIS



> CHIARA PELLACANI



5 GOOD REASONS TO JOIN AMCHAM ITALY

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esperienza nei rapporti
ITALIA / USA

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autorevolezza
come door opener

TUTELA

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tuoi interessi

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Socio**





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ITALIAN WORLD RECORDS

Rome's fountains. More than a postcard, more than 3,000 water points

BY WE THE ITALIANS EDITORIAL STAFF

Rome has more than 3,000 fountains and drinking fountains. no other place in the world has more than the Eternal city. This is a pretty interesting distinction. The fountain system works at several levels at once: monumental displays use recirculated non-drinking water, while the city's familiar public drinking fountains – the nasoni – provide potable water around the clock. In the historic center alone, Rome counts more than 200 nasoni, alongside 90 artistic fountains and drinking fountains.

The name nasone means “big nose,” a reference to the curved metal spout. The standard model runs continuously, releasing fresh water into a street-level drain. It also has a small hole on top of the spout. Covering the main outlet with a finger

redirects the stream upward, making it easier to drink without placing your mouth on the metal.

In a 2024 announcement, Rome claimed more 2,800 nasoni and more than 3,000 drinking fountains across the city. The figures are not necessarily contradictory: one describes the iconic nasoni, while the other includes the wider network of public fountains. In 2024, the 150th anniversary of the first cast-iron nasoni, three more were installed near the Colosseum.

Water quality is the point of the system. The water flowing from nasoni is the same potable water supplied to Roman households. This makes the network a public alternative to single-use plastic bottles. Its Waidy Wow app maps water points. Newer designs can use timed taps to reduce unnecessary flow.

The monumental fountains operate differently. Their pools are supplied with non-potable water and use recirculation systems designed to protect



> ACQUA PAOLA



GIORGIO TETI
VIDEOGRAPHY



> BARCACCIA

the monuments and limit consumption. Trevi is the best example of how old infrastructure and modern control work together. It receives water from the Aqua Virgo, an aqueduct whose route extends about 20 kilometers to the fountain. The water is non-potable because of the age of the structure and infiltration along the way, but it remains in active use for Trevi and other urban purposes.

Behind Trevi's spectacle, two electric pumps recycle 126 liters of water per second. The rate is precise because the fountain's movement depends on it: too much or too little changes the intended flow around the sculpture. This is also where Rome has a formal global record. Guinness World Records lists Trevi as the world's largest Baroque sculpture, measuring 26.3 meters high and 49.15 meters wide. The distinction matters. Trevi's record is certified; Rome's wider fountain supremacy is a persuasive, widely repeated civic claim supported by exceptional local numbers.



> PANTHEON

Other fountains demonstrate the same water-first logic. The Acqua Paola fountain on the Janiculum (or "Er Fontanone" as the Romans call it) holds 150 cubic meters of water, runs entirely on recirculation, and has a flow of about 117 liters per second. Acea manages the reservoirs and treatment systems for nine of Rome's artistic and monumental fountains, while LED upgrades at Acqua Paola, the Fountain of Moses, and the Fountain of the Naiads have reduced the visual infrastructure's en-

ergy demands.

Rome's real water record is therefore not a single trophy. It is an urban system in which a 150-year-old drinking fountain, a 20-kilometer aqueduct route, a 126-liter-per-second recycling circuit, and more than 3,000 public water points all coexist. The city has made water visible, usable, and measurable. That may be the most remarkable record of all.



> NAIADI



> TARTARUGHE

NAVONA >



> FOUR RIVERS



> TRITONE





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ITALIAN LAND AND NATURE

Lake Trasimeno by bike, Umbria's green road becomes Italy's cycling champion

BY WE THE ITALIANS EDITORIAL STAFF

There are places in Italy that seem designed to be discovered slowly. Lake Trasimeno, surrounded by rolling hills, wetlands, olive groves and medieval towns in the heart of Umbria, is certainly one of them. Now one of the most evocative landscapes in central Italy has received national recognition for offering travelers a different way to experience nature.

The Ciclovía del Trasimeno, the cycling route that circles Lake Trasimeno, won the 2026 Green Road Award, widely known as Italy's cycling tourism Oscar. The Umbrian route finished first among 33

candidates submitted by Italian regions, confirming the growing importance of sustainable and experience-based tourism in one of Italy's greenest territories.

Approximately 58 kilometers long, the route forms a loop around Lake Trasimeno, Italy's fourth-largest lake. Rather than separating travelers from the landscape, the trail brings cyclists directly into it – along the water, through protected natural areas and countryside, and close to the historic communities that have developed around the lake over centuries.

The official itinerary is divided into 7 principal sections averaging about 8 kilometers each. Starting from Passignano sul Trasimeno and traveling clockwise, cyclists can pass through or near Torricella, San Feliciano, Sant'Arcangelo, Castiglione





del Lago, Borghetto and Tuoro sul Trasimeno before completing the circuit.

It is not a route designed only for serious athletes. Accessibility is one of its defining qualities. The itinerary is suitable for different levels of cycling experience and can be enjoyed in sections rather than completed in a single ride. Multiple access points, parking areas and services allow visitors to build their own experience around the lake.

That flexibility is particularly appropriate for Trasimeno.

This is a landscape that rewards stopping. Castiglione del Lago rises dramatically above the western shore, while Passignano looks directly onto the water from the northern side. Small harbors, fishing traditions and lakeside communities provide a human dimension to a natural environment that changes character throughout the day.

Lake Trasimeno also has 3 islands – Maggiore, Minore and Polvese – adding another layer to an ecosystem in which water, wetlands and cultivated landscapes coexist. For cyclists, the result is not simply a sports route but a continuous encounter with the natural and cultural identity of Umbria.

The 2026 Green Road Award was presented in Sanremo during the 11th edition of the national competition. Umbria's victory carries additional significance because the region had already won the inaugural edition in 2015 with the Assisi-Spoleto-Norcia cycle route. After 11 years, the national title has returned to the region.

The recognition also reflects a broader transformation in Italian tourism. Cycling allows visitors to cover more territory than walking while maintaining a close relationship with their surroundings. There is no windshield separating the traveler from the smell of vegetation, the changing tem-



perature near the water or the sounds of birds and rural life.

At Trasimeno, this form of travel is especially powerful because the lake is not an isolated attraction. It belongs to a wider landscape shaped by agriculture, history and biodiversity.

The award's 2026 theme focused on silence – an increasingly precious commodity in modern life. On a bicycle, silence does not mean complete absence of sound. It means hearing a place differently: tires moving across the trail, wind through vegetation, water along the shore and the natural rhythm of the countryside.

The Ciclovía del Trasimeno also represents a practical model for sustainable tourism. Cycling can help distribute visitors among smaller communities, encourage longer stays and create economic opportunities without requiring the intensive infrastructure associated with mass tourism.

That philosophy fits Umbria particularly well. In the second quarter of 2026, the region recorded more than 936,000 tourist arrivals and over 2.3 million overnight stays. Yet its greatest attraction may remain the possibility of experiencing Italy without rushing through it.

The Green Road Award recognizes more than 58 kilometers of cycling infrastructure. It celebrates a relationship between people and landscape.

Around Lake Trasimeno, the bicycle becomes the perfect speed for understanding Umbria – fast enough to explore, but slow enough to notice.





Italia

DIAMANTE AZZURRO, ORGOGGIO ITALIANO



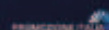
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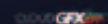
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ITALIAN INVENTIONS

How Genoa invented virtual money centuries before Bitcoin

BY WE THE ITALIANS EDITORIAL STAFF

Long before Bitcoin, blockchain and digital wallets, bankers from Liguria were experimenting with an idea that sounds strikingly familiar today: money that did not need to exist physically in order to have value.

Between the late 1500s and early 1600s, Genoese financiers developed and used the scudo di marco, also known as the scudo di fierà. It was not a cryptocurrency in the technological sense, of course. There were no computers, cryptography or decentralized servers. But the financial logic behind it presents remarkable parallels with the virtual currencies of the 21st century.

The scudo di marco was essentially a unit of account. No sovereign mint produced coins bearing that denomination. A merchant could not put a scudo di marco in his pocket. Instead, it existed in ledgers, transactions and agreements among bankers.

Its value was connected to respected gold currencies circulating in European financial centers, including those associated with Spain, Genoa, Florence, Venice and Naples. The system gave merchants a common financial language at a time when Europe was crowded with different coins, weights, metallic standards and exchange rates.

The Genoese made this system particularly powerful through the famous exchange fairs known collectively as the fairs of Bisenzone. Despite the



name's association with Besançon, the fairs moved between locations over time, and Piacenza became one of their most important centers. They were generally held 4 times a year.



What began as commercial fairs increasingly became financial markets. Eventually, enormous transactions could be completed with little or no physical money changing hands.

That transformation reflected something deeply Ligurian.

Genoa had built its power on trade, navigation and finance. Its geography offered little agricultural land compared with many Italian regions, but it opened directly onto the Mediterranean. Generations of Ligurians therefore learned to turn ships,

information, credit and capital into economic resources.

By the 16th century, Genoese bankers had become central players in European finance. During the period sometimes called the “Age of the Genoese,” roughly 1557–1627, they played an especially important role in financing the Spanish monarchy and moving capital across Europe.

The scudo di marco fitted perfectly into this culture of financial ingenuity.

A restricted group of qualified bankers, the mercanti di conto, established exchange rates and supervised operations at the fairs. Transactions were recorded in account books and debts could be offset against credits. Rather than transporting large quantities of gold and silver across dangerous roads, participants could settle enormous balances through accounting.

This is where the comparison with cryptocurrency becomes fascinating.

Bitcoin, introduced in 2008 through the famous paper published under the pseudonym Satoshi



Nakamoto, also separates monetary value from physical coins. Bitcoin transactions are recorded on a distributed ledger – the blockchain – and verification is performed by the network rather than by a conventional central bank.

The Genoese obviously had nothing comparable technologically. Their “network” consisted of merchants and bankers, their database was made of paper ledgers, and their system depended heavily on reputation and established rules.

Yet the conceptual similarity is difficult to ignore.

Both systems demonstrate that money ultimately depends on collective agreement. A scudo di marco had value because a sophisticated community of financial operators accepted it, recorded it and trusted the procedures governing it. Bitcoin has value because participants accept its protocol, its scarcity and its decentralized transaction system.

There is also an important difference. Cryptocurrency attempts to replace trusted intermediaries through mathematics and cryptography. Genoese finance did almost the opposite – it depended heavily on a small community whose reputation was itself the guarantee.

In one system, trust is encoded. In the other, trust was personal.

But both emerged from the same fundamental question: can people exchange value efficiently without constantly moving physical money and without depending entirely on a sovereign authority?

Four centuries before digital finance, Ligurian bankers had already found one remarkable answer.

That should not be surprising. From maritime insurance and international credit to bills of exchange and sophisticated banking networks, money has always occupied a special place in Genoese

history.

Today cryptocurrency travels through invisible global networks at digital speed. In 17th-century Europe, Genoese financiers achieved something conceptually similar with ledgers, quarterly meetings and extraordinary financial discipline.

The technology changed completely.

The Ligurian instinct for making money move without actually moving the money did not.





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ITALIAN FLAVORS

Sardinia's black gold, the ancient flavor of abbamele

BY WE THE ITALIANS EDITORIAL STAFF

Among the extraordinary foods of Sardegna, few are as mysterious and deeply rooted in the island's history as abbamele. Dark, dense and intensely aromatic, this ancient honey-based preparation is sometimes described as Sardinia's "black gold." It is not simply honey, nor is it exactly a syrup. Abbamele belongs to an older culinary world, one shaped by rural ingenuity, beekeeping and the determination to waste absolutely nothing.



Its origins are believed to reach back to the Nuragic age, making it one of the oldest products associated with Sardinian food culture. Long before modern beehives existed, honey was collected from wild colonies found in rocks and hollow trees. Later, traditional Sardinian beekeepers used cylindrical cork hives known as *su casiddu*, a method whose roots have been linked to practices already present on the island in ancient times.

Honey was precious, and leaving part of it trapped inside the comb would have been unthinkable. Abbamele developed from the need to recover what



remained after the main honey extraction. That practical solution eventually became a distinctive product in its own right.

The name itself explains the idea. In Sardinian, *abba* means water and *mele* means honey. Depending on the area of Sardegna, the product may also be called *abbattu*, *saba 'e mele* or by other local variations. In 2010, abbamele was officially included among Italy's *Prodotti Agroalimentari Tradizionali*, or PAT, recognizing its importance within the island's agricultural and culinary heritage.

Traditional production begins after honey has been removed from the combs. The remaining pieces of wax can still contain roughly 20% to 30%

honey, together with pollen and other components from the hive. These combs are immersed in water heated to about 50°C, or 122°F, allowing the residual honey to dissolve while the wax separates.



The resulting liquid is filtered and then cooked slowly for hours. As the water evaporates, the mixture becomes increasingly concentrated. Its sugars caramelize, developing the deep brown color that gives abbamele its striking appearance.

The flavor is even more distinctive than the color. Abbamele is sweet, but not simply sweet. It can have caramelized, toasted and almost smoky notes, balanced by a subtle bitterness and a complex aromatic character. Orange or lemon peel is frequently added toward the end of cooking, while some traditional preparations may include quince or other local flavorings. The result is a condiment with remarkable depth – simultaneously fruity, earthy, bitter, sweet and roasted.

That complexity makes abbamele surprisingly modern in the kitchen.



For generations, it was used primarily in Sardinian home cooking and pastry making. It can be spread on bread, mixed into traditional sweets or paired with fresh ricotta. It also works beautifully with one of Sardegna's most famous desserts, seadas – fried pastries filled with cheese and traditionally finished with honey.

Yet abbamele is equally compelling with savory foods. Its sweetness and slight bitterness create a natural contrast with Pecorino Sardo and other sheep's-milk cheeses, especially mature varieties with pronounced saltiness. A few drops can accompany cured meats, roasted pork or grilled meats, adding both sweetness and acidity-like balance without overwhelming the main ingredient.

Contemporary chefs have pushed it further. Abbamele can glaze roasted meats, finish sauces, complement sheep or pork, flavor yogurt and panna cotta, or add depth to gelato. Its caramel and citrus notes also make it particularly successful with nuts, fresh fruit and desserts based on ricotta.

In this sense, abbamele perfectly represents Sardegna itself. The island's cuisine is built on strong flavors, limited resources and centuries of adaptation to a rugged Mediterranean environment. Shepherds, farmers and beekeepers learned to transform simple ingredients into foods capable of lasting, nourishing and carrying flavor far beyond their apparent simplicity.

What once emerged from necessity now feels almost luxurious.

A spoonful of abbamele contains honey, pollen, citrus aromas, caramelized sugars and generations of Sardinian knowledge. Its story stretches across centuries, yet its taste fits naturally into contemporary cooking.

That may be abbamele's greatest peculiarity – one of Sardegna's most ancient flavors tastes remarkably ready for the future.



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ITALIAN INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS

Biella, the Alpine textile powerhouse behind the world's finest fabrics

BY WE THE ITALIANS EDITORIAL STAFF

In northern Piemonte, between the plains of the Po Valley and the foothills of the Alps, Biella has built an industrial identity recognized far beyond Italy. For centuries, this relatively small territory has specialized in transforming wool and other premium fibers into some of the world's most sophisticated fabrics.

The Biella textile district is not simply a concentration of factories. It is an integrated production system in which geography, water, technical specialization, industrial investment and generations of accumulated knowledge have created an extraordinary competitive advantage.

Textile activity in the area has very ancient origins. Evidence stretches back to pre-Roman times, while production became progressively more structured during the Middle Ages. Between 1275 and 1419, local regulations were already governing activities connected with weaving, tailoring and cloth production.





Geography played a decisive role.

The Biella district extends across approximately 915 square kilometers, with more than 80% of the territory characterized by hills and mountains. This environment encouraged sheep raising and wool processing, while streams descending from the Alps supplied an essential resource for textile production.

Water became one of Biella's hidden industrial assets.

Mountain water in the area is naturally soft and low in minerals, characteristics particularly valuable for washing, dyeing and finishing textiles. Historically, rivers and streams also provided mechanical energy. Factories therefore developed along waterways, gradually turning parts of the Alpine landscape into industrial corridors.

By the 16th and 17th centuries, individual valleys

were already developing different production specializations. Valle Elvo became associated with finer textiles, while the Strona and Sessera valleys concentrated on other categories of cloth. Networks of producers and merchants connected the different stages of manufacturing.

A decisive technological change arrived in 1816, when Pietro Sella brought mechanical textile machinery from England to the Mosso Valley.

Mechanization accelerated the transition from dispersed production to an industrial model. Larger mills appeared, productivity increased and Biella became one of the most advanced textile manufacturing areas in Italy.

What followed was the creation of a complete industrial ecosystem.

Within a relatively limited geographical area, companies developed expertise in preparing fi-

bers, spinning, weaving, dyeing, finishing and textile machinery. Suppliers, manufacturers and specialized technicians could operate within the same production network. This concentration of knowledge helped companies innovate rapidly while maintaining extremely demanding quality standards.

Over time, Biella increasingly moved away from competing on inexpensive mass production. Its strength became specialization at the highest end of the market.

The district processes premium raw materials sourced internationally, including Australian and New Zealand merino wool, cashmere, alpaca, mohair, camel hair and vicuña. These fibers are transformed into fabrics used by luxury fashion companies and high-end tailoring markets around the world.

Several historic Italian companies emerged from

this environment. Vitale Barberis Canonico traces its history to 1663, while Ermenegildo Zegna, Loro Piana, Piacenza, Reda and Cerruti are among the internationally recognized names associated with the broader Biella textile system.

But famous brands tell only part of the story. Behind them is a network of specialized companies performing highly specific stages of production. This division of industrial expertise is one of the fundamental characteristics of the district model.

The sector has undergone significant consolidation. Since 2000, the number of textile companies in the area has declined from approximately 1,500 to around 700. Rather than disappearing, however, much of the district has repositioned itself toward technologically advanced and higher-value production.

International markets remain essential. Textile exports from the territory reached approximately

BIELLA WOOL DISTRICT

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In the heart of the Italian Alps, Biella has been synonymous with textile excellence for centuries. The world's leading luxury brands choose Biella wool for its unmatched quality, innovation and sustainability.

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FROM BIELLA TO THE WORLD: A LEGACY OF QUALITY, INNOVATION AND ITALIAN STYLE

€2.34 billion in 2023, and exports increased by about 53% between 2008 and 2023. The textile industry represents roughly 60% of local manufacturing employment, while the broader wool and textile system provides more than 11,000 jobs.

In 2019, Biella entered the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, further recognizing the exceptional relationship between textile production and the identity of the territory.

Today the district is confronting a new industrial transformation. Sustainability, traceability, recycling, energy efficiency and advanced manufacturing technologies are becoming increasingly important. For an industry dependent on international raw materials and global luxury markets, innovation is no longer optional.

Yet Biella possesses an advantage that is difficult to reproduce elsewhere.

Its strength comes from the density of the entire system – companies, technicians, infrastructure, specialized suppliers, water resources and industrial knowledge concentrated in one Alpine territory.

For centuries, Biella has continuously changed the way it produces textiles while preserving its position at the top of the market.

That is the real story of this Piemonte district: not simply wool, but an industrial system that learned how to turn geography and specialization into global excellence.





ITALIAN GOOD NEWS

Italian students outperform the OECD average in reading, math and science

BY WE THE ITALIANS EDITORIAL STAFF

Italian students have delivered an encouraging performance in the latest international assessment of education, scoring above the OECD average in reading, mathematics and science at a time when student achievement is declining across much of the developed world.

The results come from PISA 2025, the OECD's international assessment of 15-year-olds. The study involved approximately 760,000 students representing about 33 million teenagers across 91 countries and economies. In Italy, 8,946 students from 285 schools participated, representing approximately 507,000 15-year-olds nationwide.

Italy's strongest relative performance came in reading. Italian students recorded an average score of 474 points, compared with the OECD average of 461. The 13-point advantage is particularly significant because Italy is now statistically above

the international average in reading for the first time. Italian students also scored higher than their counterparts in countries traditionally associated with strong educational systems, including Finland.

In mathematics, Italy recorded 468 points against an OECD average of 463. The Italian result also placed students ahead of their peers in France, Germany, the United States and Sweden.

Science, the principal focus of the 2025 PISA assessment, produced another positive result. Italian students scored 483 points, compared with an OECD average of 482. While the difference is small, Italy improved from the 477 points recorded in 2022.

The results become more striking when placed in the broader international context. Student performance across OECD countries has deteriorated considerably over the past decade. Between 2015 and 2025, average science scores declined by 7 points. Mathematics dropped by 22 points, while reading suffered an even steeper 28-point decline.



Italy has not escaped the long-term deterioration. Compared with 2015, its mathematics score has fallen by 24 points. And compared with 2022, Italian students improved in science, remained broadly stable in reading and declined in mathematics. The achievement is therefore less a story of uninterrupted Italian progress than one of relative resilience while many other education systems have weakened more sharply.




There are still important challenges. About 37% of Italian students reported that classmates were distracted by digital devices during most or all science lessons, compared with an OECD average of 28%. Italy ranked 12th among 83 participating systems on this measure of classroom digital distraction.

The country also continues to produce a smaller proportion of exceptionally high-performing students than the OECD average.

Still, the overall picture marks an important change in Italy's international educational standing. Italian schools are now above the OECD averages in all 3 core subjects measured by PISA – reading, mathematics and science.

For a school system often portrayed domestically as chronically underperforming, the 2025 results offer a more nuanced picture. Italy still has weaknesses to address, but its students are proving more resilient than many of their peers during one of the most difficult periods for educational performance across the developed world.



SICILY

A LAND OF SPIRITS



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ITALIAN SPIRITS

Sicily, an island distilled into herbs,
citrus and volcanic fire

BY WE THE ITALIANS EDITORIAL STAFF

Sicily does not have a single signature spirit. It has an entire landscape of them. Bitter herbal amari, delicate rosolios, grappa made from the remains of the island's vineyards, prickly pear distillates and intensely aromatic citrus liqueurs transform Sicily's extraordinary agricultural diversity into something that can be poured into a glass.



The island's best-known contribution is probably amaro, the bittersweet herbal liqueur traditionally served after a meal. Sicilian amari are particularly expressive because their recipes can draw on ingredients that grow naturally in a Mediterranean environment – citrus peel, roots, herbs, flowers, spices and aromatic plants.

The classic example is Averna, whose history begins in Caltanissetta, in the center of Sicily. During the first half of the 19th century, monks at the Abbey of Santo Spirito developed an herbal recipe. In 1868, the monk Frà Girolamo gave it to Salvatore Averna, a textile merchant who had supported the local community. Averna began preparing the

drink for guests at his family residence, Villa Xiboli, before turning it into a business.



His son Francesco expanded production and introduced Averna at exhibitions in Italy and abroad. In 1895, King Umberto I awarded Francesco Averna a gold medal, and in 1912 King Victor Emmanuel III authorized the company to display the royal coat of arms on its label. The drink eventually reached the United States and became one of the most internationally recognizable Sicilian amari.

Its personality remains unmistakably Mediterranean – dark, rich and bittersweet, with herbal, citrus and caramel-like sensations rather than the aggressive bitterness found in some northern Italian amari.

On the opposite side of the island's spirits story stands Mount Etna. Here, volcanic soil, vineyards, citrus orchards and wild vegetation have produced a distinct culture of distillation.

Amaro dell'Etna dates its original recipe to 1901. Its story is associated with Giuseppe Calì Tabuso, a distiller and shipowner in Macchia di Giarre, near the port of Riposto. His ships exported Etna wine and grape pomace and returned from European ports carrying spices and botanicals. These ingre-





dients were combined with plants from Etna and the Catania plain and alcohol derived from local grape material.

Today the recipe contains 26 herbs, fruits, roots and flowers. Bitter orange and Sicilian licorice are among its dominant flavors, and the liqueur has an alcohol content of 29%. Its profile combines citrus freshness, herbal bitterness, sweetness and earthy notes that suit both after-dinner drinking and modern cocktails.

Its history even connects Sicily with America. According to the producer's historical records, Amaro dell'Etna traveled to the United States with Italian emigrants. During Prohibition, from 1920 to 1933, quantities were reportedly concealed in barrels presented as olive oil.

A few miles away, Santa Venerina preserves another important chapter. Distillerie dell'Etna dei Fratelli Russo traces its origins to 1870 and today remains an active historic distillery in eastern



Sicily. In the early 20th century it processed wine lees and pomace, producing alcohol and cream of tartar, some of which was exported to the United States. After World War II, the family expanded into brandy and grappa.

Its Grappa dell'Etna eventually developed into a range of white, barrel-aged and aromatic grappas. Grappa is produced by distilling grape pomace – the skins, seeds and other material remaining after winemaking – making it a natural partner to Sicily's vast wine culture.

Even more Sicilian is acquavite di ficodindia, a spirit distilled from prickly pear fruit. Few products express the island more immediately. Prickly pears grow across Sicily, often along stone walls and dry hillsides, producing sweet, aromatic fruit under intense summer sun. Distillation turns that familiar landscape into a clear spirit with delicate

fruit notes.

Then there is rosolio, one of Sicily's oldest domestic liqueur traditions. It was historically produced in monasteries and private homes by macerating aromatic ingredients in alcohol with sugar and water. In Sicily, rosolio has been prepared since at least the 16th century and traditionally appeared at weddings, baptisms, family celebrations and visits from honored guests.

Despite its name, rosolio does not have to contain roses. Sicilian versions can use lemon, orange, mandarin, cinnamon, anise, mint, fennel, coffee, almonds, pistachios, mulberries, prickly pears or other local ingredients. That flexibility makes rosolio less a single beverage than a method for preserving the aromas of a place.

Citrus is particularly important. The Limone di





Siracusa PGI comes exclusively from the Femminello variety grown in designated areas of the province of Syracuse. The variety accounts for more than 30% of Italy's annual lemon production and is prized for its juice and oil-rich peel – precisely the qualities required for aromatic lemon liqueurs.

Elsewhere, blood oranges, mandarins and Etna lemons provide equally distinctive material for infusions and bitters.

Sicilian spirits therefore tell several stories simultaneously. They speak of monasteries and family kitchens, vineyards and volcanic slopes, ports and emigration, citrus groves and wild herbs. They can

taste bitter, sweet, resinous, floral, citrusy or intensely herbal.

What connects them is Sicily itself. On an island where agriculture, history and geography change dramatically within a few miles, the bottle becomes another form of map – one made from alcohol, fruit, herbs, roots, tradition and time.



A portrait of Ngela Alioto, a woman with voluminous, curly reddish-brown hair, smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing a dark blue blazer over a light blue top. A necklace with a heart-shaped pendant is visible. On her left lapel, there are two pins: a circular one and a star-shaped one. A white pocket square is tucked into her jacket. The background is a soft, out-of-focus outdoor scene.

INTERVIEW WITH NGELA ALIOTO

The sacred bond between Assisi and San Francisco: yet another Two Anniversaries, One Heart

BY UMBERTO MUCCI

Those who follow *We the Italians* know that we are celebrating two important anniversaries shared by Italy and the United States, represented by two numbers: 250, the age of the United States of America, and 80, the age of the Italian Republic. But the relationship between these two countries is so rich and compelling that another extraordinary pair of round-number anniversaries falls this year. Once again, the American anniversary is 250 years, while on the Italian side an extra zero is added: 80 becomes 800.

Angela Alioto tells us about the remarkable work she is doing to jointly celebrate the 250th anniversary of the founding of San Francisco and the 800th anniversary of the death of the Italian saint after whom the city was named, St. Francis. It is another powerful demonstration of the extraordinary bond between Italy and the United States, of the history that connects us, and of the impact that great Italian Americans such as Angela have on relations between the two countries. Once again this year, they tell the story of other *Two Anniversaries and One Heart*. Welcome to *We the Italians*, Angela Alioto, and thank you for all that you do.

Dear Angela, you come from one of San Francisco's best-known Italian American families. How have your Italian roots and your family's history shaped your personal journey and your commitment to the Italian and Italian American community?

When I was 15 years old, many, many years ago, I went to school in Florence. That was 1965. I will never forget it. I fell in love with Florence in Italy. And I have lived there every summer since then.



I have a beautiful home in Fregene, outside of Rome, that I bought in 1975, and then, more recently, 15 years ago, I bought a little ancient chapel in the Roman town of Trevi, Umbria.

I adore Italy, it will always be my second home. And where a lot of my heart is.

Saint Francis is a universal figure, but for those who live in San Francisco he holds an especially meaningful place. What does Saint Francis represent for the city that bears his name today, and why is his message still so relevant?

Okay, St. Francis' message is so relevant today. In so many ways, because he represents peace. He represents taking care of the environment. He represents taking care of the sick and the poor. And, of course, he represents the love of animals. So, San Franciscans are very Franciscan that way and so, as such, his message is so relevant.

I mean, you know, no war. Taking care of the environment. Pope Francis's *Laudato si'* is about taking care of the environment, taken from St. Francis's *Canticle of the Sun*. It's all so relevant in everybody's life, not just San Franciscans, but particularly San Franciscans, because we are St. Fran-



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> SAINT FRANCIS BASILICA IN ASSISI

cis's American city.

The year 2026 brings together two extraordinary anniversaries - the 800th anniversary of the death of Saint Francis and the 250th anniversary of the founding of the City of San Francisco, named in honor of the Saint of Assisi. How symbolic is this unique intersection of history, faith, and identity?

I think it's absolutely incredible that the 800 year anniversary of Francesco's death and the 250th anniversary of the founding of the mission, 1776, here in San Francisco, um, the 250th birthday, that's incredible. It's amazing that they're, that they are at the same time.

So as a consequence, we are creating this unbelievable, exhibition in October, October 14th, to November 28th. With relics from Umbria, from Assisi, from , Santa Maria de'Angeli. Well, it's sacred, very, very sacred relics, and very, very sacred art. So, it's incredible what is coming together to celebrate both the 250th birthday of our great city, and the 800 year anniversary of Francesco's death.



> ANGELA AND JOSEPH ALIOTO

One of the most significant aspects of this project is the strengthening of the bond between Assisi and San Francisco. How did this relationship develop, and what opportunities do you see for building an even stronger sister-city partnership?

I have been Franciscan since I was 15 years old, since that summer in Florence, when we went to

Assisi to visit, the tomb of Saint Francis, and from that day on, I have returned to his tomb at least once a year, if not twice a year. So obviously, for me, the connection between San Francisco and Assisi is extremely strong. It's just automatic in my life.

On June 29th of 1969, my father Joseph Alioto created the Assisi San Francisco sister city. At the time, we were helping Assisi rebuild, and after an earthquake, and we helped out with the first door coming into the city, Porta Francesco. So my father created that, then, when I was president of the border supervisors, I reinforced it and put the legislation forward to do all we could to trade back and forth between a Assisi and San Francisco. And then I was chair of the Sister City Committee, and we do as much as we can to keep that relationship going.

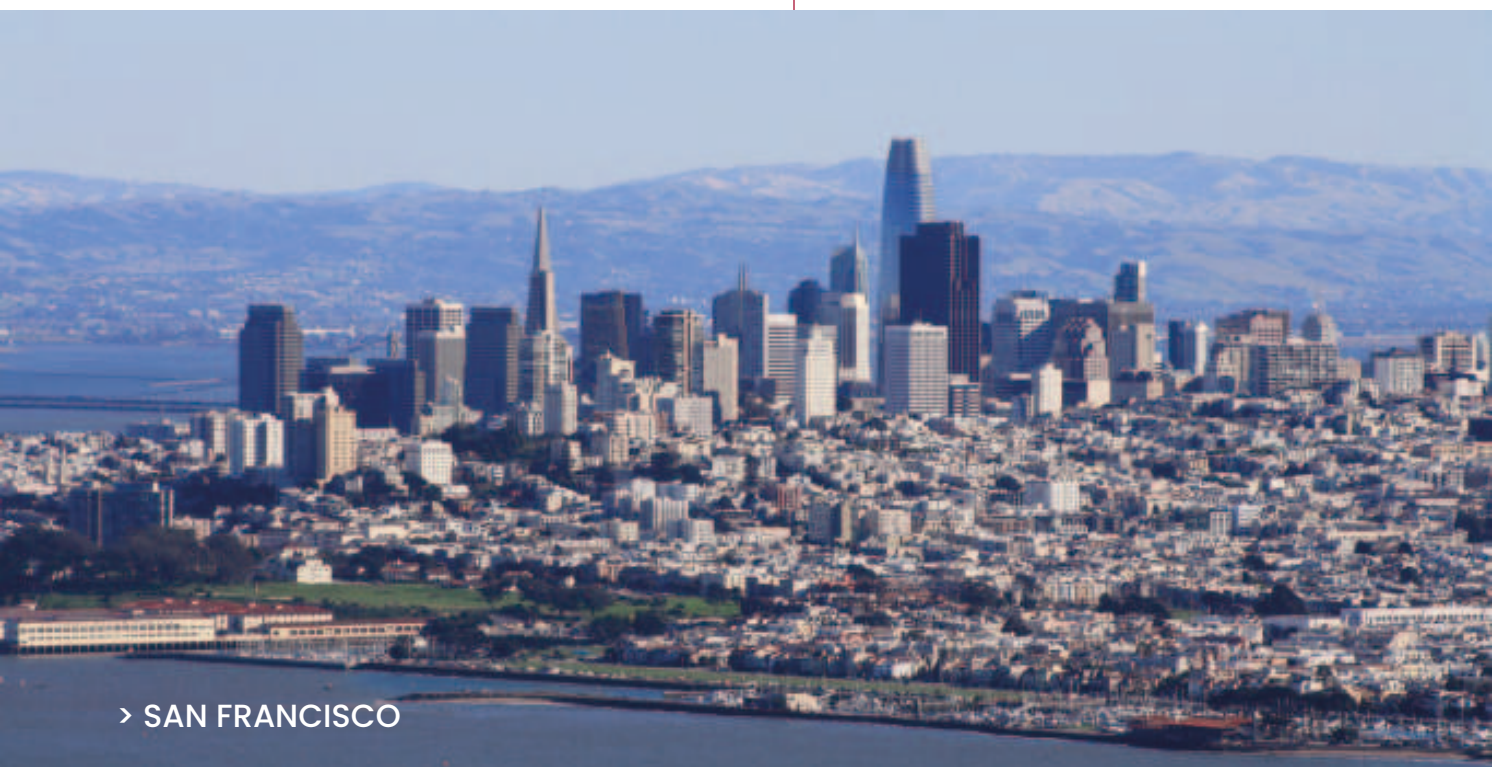
In 2019, we returned to Assisi for the 50 year anniversary, and what Mayor Stefania Proetti did for us was incredible. We had six amazing days. We had six amazing concerts and meals, and it was the way Assisi treated us was incredible. Of course, I go

back every summer, I'm there every year, especially for the Feast of the Pardon on August 2nd. But having said that, the sister city... reunion in 2019 was incredible. Now, Stefania is the president of Umbria. We're all very proud of her and very, very close to her as a person. She's amazing. Now, the new mayor, Valter, Stoppini is coming in October, so is Stefania, for our exhibition, and it'll be great to have the new Mayor of Assisi come to San Francisco. We're very, very excited about that.

You served as Chair of the Board of Directors for the National Shrine of St. Francis of Assisi which hosts the beautiful Porziuncola Nuova Chapel. Please tell our readers about this wonderful project

In 2005, I teamed up with Archbishop Levada, and I went and asked him, I'll never forget it, May 5th of 2005. I was worried about churches that were closing, and I went, and I said, Archbishop, Can we, can we build the little Porziuncola out here in San Francisco at the National Shrine?

To my surprise, he said, yes. So I went about the





› STEFANIA PROIETTI

business of spending 3 years, uh, rebuilding it, and identical. Little chapel called the Porziuncola Nuova. that has been accepted all over the world as its own sacred entity, which was made that by Benedict XVI on August 2nd of 2008, the day of the pardon. So, the Porziuncola is a jewel in the crown of San Francisco.

You serve as International Director of the Archconfraternity of the Knights of Saint Francis of Assisi. What is the mission of the organization, and how do you put Saint Francis' values of peace, fraternity, and service into practice in everyday life?

When we built it and opened it, we needed to get protection, so I created the Knights of St. Francis. Now, the Knights of St. Francis are here in San



› PORZIUNCOLA ASSISI

Francisco, protecting the Porziuncola, feeding the sick and the poor, taking care of the environment, to the best of their ability. We are also, we, the Knights of Saint Francis are also in Italy, where they have incredible. Ceremonies and concerts, the nights are getting very big, in number, in Assisi, and it's just fantastic. Our director there is Rosella Vasta. She's amazing. Working with Tiziana Borsellini, who has worked with many, many mayors throughout the years in this way. So the knights there in Assisi are incredible.



› PORZIUNCOLA SAN FRANCISCO

We also have Knights of Saint Francis in Honduras. Where we are led by, the Knights of Saint Francis Youth. The director of that is William, who just is starting college now. William has done a fantastic job, fantastic job, leading the Knights of Saint Francis in Honduras and feeding the poor and bringing gifts to them. So, now the nights are spreading all over the world, and that's an incredible feeling. You can check us out at www.knightsostaintfrancis.org.

knightsostaintfrancis.org. And any of you that are interested in joining. We have new knights join every January, the 2nd Wednesday of January, every year. It's a very exciting community of Franciscans who love Saint Francis, Saint Claire, Saint Anthony, Padre Pio, and all of the Franciscan Saints. And, of course, many non Franciscan, like Catherine of Siena. At any rate, we're doing very well all over the world.



› KNIGHTS OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

International America. The church was closed. It was not a national shrine. And my father and Cardinal La Veda and Bishop Ignatius Wong opened it. In 1998, we sought the title of Shrine National Shrine, from the Cardinal in Saint Louis, and in that September of 1998, it became the National Shrine of St. Francis. So it was extremely exciting. And then in 2005, when there was a real threat, and closing churches again, that's when, I went to Cardinal Laveda and asked to build the Porziuncola.



> NIGHTS OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI

For the first time, San Francisco will welcome precious relics and works associated with Saint Francis and Saint Clare, thanks in part to the collaboration of the Franciscan friars in Italy. What does it mean to you to know that thousands of people will have the opportunity to experience something so unique?

It means the world, to me, that thousands of people will have the opportunity to experience something unique, here in San Francisco, Saint Francis' American City. I cannot thank enough. Frate Saul Tambini. If it weren't for Frate Saul, this would not be happening. And Frate Francesco Piloni. But Frate Saul is like a brother, and we have worked on this, and it's actually happening, something people always said could never happen.



> FRA SAUL TAMBINI

We are bringing the precious relics and the precious art. For example, Cimabue's Coppaccio. Oth-

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er than the art of the portrait of Saint Francis, it was also the cover of his tomb. So it is not only art from medieval times, by Cimabue, the master, it's also a relic, because it was on top of St. Francis's body, for, a couple of years, when the body itself was hidden. So, I could not be more excited than something like the Coppaccio's coming.

And then we spoke, we, when I say, we, I mean, frates all, uh, at the Porziuncola, Santa Maria D'Angeli. We talked to Frate David up at Laverna. And they are sending the sacred blood of Saint Francis from the stigmata in 1224. So it's phenomenal what's happening. It's historic. It's something the city will never ever forget. It's certainly something I will never forget. And the Archbishop could not be. Archbishop Salvador Cordileone could not be more excited about our exhibit.

The October 2026 program includes religious celebrations, a major exhibition of relics and medieval art, public events, the involvement of the Italian community, and the traditional Italian Heritage Parade. Could you tell us more about these events and what visitors can expect?

Well while I was getting the relics, I also invited everybody. So the mayor of Assisi is coming, Valter Stoppini. Stefania is coming, with her staff and the staff from Assisi. Tiziana Borsellini is coming. She's a knight of Saint Francis there, but other than being the right hand of the last 5 mares, she, she is the head of the famous, um, Assisi. It's called Ricamo, meaning the needle, the needle work done in a Assisi that's famous all over the world. So, she will be bringing some of her needleworks here, and we will be displaying them at the Porziuncola Nuova. for the entire time of the six weeks of the exhibit.

So, we are going to be doing a lot. They're here only 7 days, but they are going to be coming at the very middle of fleet week so that we'll see The Blue Angels, which is incredible over the Bay of San



› SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI BY CIMABUE



Francisco, and all of the other vessels that will be coming in and out for Fleet Week. Then we have the Italian parade, Columbus day Parade on, Sunday, October 11th. And we are all the Knights of Saint Francis will have a big float. We will have all the officials from a Assisi riding in the float with us, which will be really, really exciting.

And then, the officials will be having a private lunch with Archbishop Cordileone. Wednesday is our huge event, October 14th, where we will have Joe Mantegna, as the MC. We also hopefully will have Martin Sheen. It's going to be an incredible night.

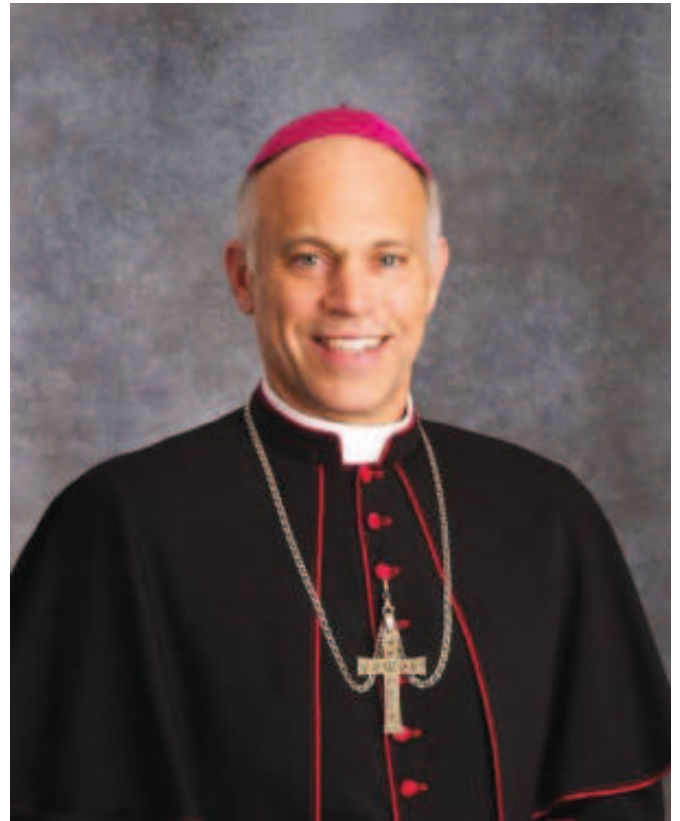
We will be opening the exhibit of the sacred art, and celebrating the 800 year anniversary, and Nancy and Fred Cline, from Jacuzzi Vineyards, the grandson of Jacuzzi, the original spa maker. Nancy, his wife, who is the most generous, the most compassionate, the most wonderful person I've ever met. She is a massive, reason why the Porziuncola exists, and she's also a reason why, We are going to be able to do this exhibit with her 21 missions that she bought at an auction for \$2,000,000, it's going to be an amazing exhibit of the 21 missions for the 250th birthday of San Francisco.

So, a lot will be going on that week. Then they will be going, home, after 7 or 8 days of absolutely packed activities, we're also going to have, visited Mayor Daniel Lurie's office. The mayor has been so supportive. There are certain people that have been unbelievably supported in this endeavor. Of course, the Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone, the mayor of the city, Daniel Lurie, who has been fantastic for our city, and for our exhibit, and the new Italian council general, Massimo Carnelos, he's incredible, has offered so much help in bringing the dignitaries to San Francisco. So, this is going to be an amazing week, I know there'll be 100s of 1000s of people here, and the excitement of that is they will also be able to go see the exhibit with the relics of Saint Francis of Assisi, at the cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption, where the Archdiocese of San Francisco.



› DANIEL LURIE

Looking beyond 2026, what do you hope will be the lasting legacy of these celebrations? What would you like future generations – both in Italy and in the United



› SALVATORE CORDILEONE

States – to learn from the example of Saint Francis and from the special bond between Assisi and San Francisco?

Well... first, the Porziuncola will always be here. And that is a bond. It's a tie. It's a connection between Santa Maria de L'Angeli, the Porziuncola, the original Porziuncola, and our Porziuncola Nuova at the National Shrine of Saint Francis. That tie will never be broken, that will always be a connection that no other city in the world has. And so, I don't think it gets much deeper than that connection.

But we also want to do trade. We want to bring students from Italy. We want to interact with our universities. I connected the University of Assisi in Perugia with the university San Francisco (USF) recently, and now they're going to be doing a program together, very excited about that. I think many, many new relationships will come from the, events that are occurring in this year, the 800 year anniversary of Francesco's death. It's amazing how

alive he is.

The one other thing that I haven't mentioned is that the Knights of Saint Francis also had a song composed. It's called Francesco Vive. Francis lives, and it's composed by Monsignor Frisina, at the Vatican, and sung by Luciano LaMonarca. Luciano is from southern Italy, beautiful tenor voice, and our song will have 5 different languages, videos in 5 different languages, and it will be all over the world. The opening of that song will be in Rome on October 2nd. And 3rd, then it will be in Assisi, and

then it will be here our opening night of October 14th.

So, as you can tell, a lot's going on, the Knights of Saint Francis, in the Porziuncola Nuova, and the National Shrine of Saint Francis, and the Archdiocese San Francisco. With our sister city, Assisi, and all Italians, all over the world, are celebrating an incredible year. here in San Francisco, and that is due to the friendships that we have in Italy and the amazing people that the Italian people are. Thank you so much for this interview.



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ITALIAN ECONOMY

Vice president at 32. Why America trusts young people more than we do

BY FABRIZIO FASANI

Some news stories strike us because of what they tell us. Others, almost unintentionally, open a window onto something larger. The tragic death of Erin Piacenti, 32, a vice president at Bank of America who was killed on August 31 in Times Square in a random attack, unfortunately belongs to the first category.

It is a story that, first and foremost, deserves to be approached with respect, without turning it into a pretext. But as I read her professional biography, one detail struck me: 32 years old, a degree from the University of Pennsylvania, a law degree from Fordham University, and already holding a posi-

tion of responsibility at one of the world's largest banks.

Of course, one point needs to be clarified immediately. At major American banks, the title of Vice President does not necessarily correspond to what we in Italy imagine when we hear the word "vice president." Corporate title structures are different, and Vice President often identifies a mid-level managerial position. But that actually makes the comparison even more interesting. This is not about the title printed on a business card. It is about the point in someone's professional life when an organization decides that person can be given responsibility, evaluated on results, and genuinely included in decision-making processes.

Seen from this perspective, the distance between Italy and the United States immediately becomes apparent – and it is much less anecdotal and far



> ERIN PIACENTI

more structural.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, approximately 20.9 million people in the United States worked in “management occupations” in 2025. Of these, 3.66 million were between the ages of 25 and 34 – more than 17% of the entire managerial workforce. If we broaden the picture to include managerial, professional, and financial occupations, the presence of young adults increases further. Even among chief executives, the BLS counts approximately 148,000 people between the ages of 25 and 34.

This does not mean, of course, that America is run by thirty-somethings. The median age of American managers is still above 46, while that of chief executives exceeds 51. What it does mean is that the door to responsibility opens earlier, and that the system considers it normal for a relatively young person to be tested against real objectives.

In Italy, the problem seems to be different.

We have young talent – although the numbers still leave room for improvement: the OECD notes that in 2023 only 30.6% of Italians between the ages of 25 and 34 had completed tertiary education, compared with an OECD average of 47.6%. Our young people are often highly skilled and increasingly international, but they encounter a workplace culture that still tends to correlate trust, position, and recognition with seniority. The system struggles to reward them quickly, while salaries, stability, and career advancement often remain more closely tied to time spent within an organization than to the ability to take on responsibility.

Perhaps that is precisely our problem: it is not that young Italians arrive late, but that we decide too late to regard them as professional adults.

As a manager, I have seen this mechanism at work many times.

Italian organizations talk a great deal about young

talent, succession, and future leadership, but the actual transfer of responsibility is often postponed. Experience is demanded before people have even been given the opportunity to acquire it. Career paths are long and sometimes extremely cautious, while elsewhere young people are exposed earlier to risk, mistakes, responsibility, and therefore also to the opportunity to demonstrate what they are capable of.

The result is that a significant share of our human capital looks elsewhere for the opportunities it cannot find at home. In its 2026 Economic Survey of Italy, the OECD notes that more than 400,000 Italians between the ages of 18 and 34



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left the country between 2012 and 2023. We often describe this as a “brain drain,” but perhaps we should interpret it differently: we are not merely exporting skills. We are exporting responsibility. We educate people whom other economic systems more rapidly turn into researchers, professionals, entrepreneurs, and managers.

For someone writing for *We the Italians*, this reflection becomes even more interesting when we look at the Italian American community. The history of Italians in the United States is an extraordinary demonstration of what can happen when Italian human capital encounters an ecosystem more open to social mobility. According to the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute, approximately 16 million people in the United States identify as having Italian ancestry. Data derived from the American Community Survey show that Italian

Americans have a median household income of approximately \$90,500 – more than 20% above the national average – while more than 42% of adults of Italian descent hold at least a bachelor’s degree.

It is a remarkable transformation when we consider where that story began. Italians who arrived in the United States in the 19th and 20th centuries were often poor, had little formal education, and were far removed from the country’s economic and cultural elites. Within a few generations, their descendants had fully entered the professions, universities, finance, business, public institutions, and the nation’s leadership class.

Of course, it would be naive to attribute all of this solely to the American model, just as it would be wrong to argue that talent is always recognized in the United States or that social mobility works perfectly. America has deep inequalities, a demanding

labor market, and an education system that can impose enormous costs on families. But one question remains worth asking: what happens to Italian talent when it is given the opportunity to run?

The answer also concerns the future of our companies.

In an Italy that ranks among Europe's oldest countries demographically, continuing to transfer responsibility slowly from one generation to the next is no longer merely a matter of corporate organization. It is a question of national competitiveness. The experience of senior professionals remains an invaluable asset – perhaps even more valuable today than in the past – but its value does not lie in retaining decision-making power for as long as possible. Its value lies in successfully transferring knowledge, judgment, and discernment to those who will come next, while supporting them as they assume real responsibility.

In my view, this is what we should learn from the United States without simply imitating it: not replacing experience with youth, but allowing the two to work together earlier.

The tragic story of Erin Piacenti unintentionally leaves us with this image as well. By 32, she had studied at two major universities, become an attorney, and reached a managerial position at Bank of America. We do not know what her professional future would have held. But we do know that, at 32, someone had already decided to entrust her with responsibility.

Perhaps the question we should bring back to Italy is not whether an Italian Erin could have become a vice president at a major bank at the same age.

The far more uncomfortable question is whether we would at least have given her the chance to try.





We the  Italians
two flags one heart

ITALIAN CURIOSITIES

The Naples aquarium, a Mediterranean time capsule

BY WE THE ITALIANS EDITORIAL STAFF

In Naples, one of the city's most surprising rooms is not a chapel, a palace, or an underground ruin. It is an aquarium. Hidden inside the Anton Dohrn Zoological Station beside Villa Comunale, the Aquarium of Naples opened on January 26, 1874. More than 150 years later, it remains in its original home, still connected to the sea by an underground channel. It is a living 19th-century idea, still looking out onto the Mediterranean it was built to study.



The place began with an ambitious German zoologist, Anton Dohrn, who saw Naples as an ideal laboratory. The Gulf of Naples offered extraordinary marine variety, while the city itself had about 500,000 residents and drew roughly 30,000 tourists a year. Dohrn persuaded the city to grant him a waterfront plot in the Villa Comunale. In return, he would finance the construction of a scientific station himself. His plan was unusual and wonderfully practical: put a public aquarium on the ground floor, charge admission, and use the income to help support scientific research upstairs.

The Zoological Station welcomed visiting researchers in 1873, before the aquarium opened to the public the following January. Dohrn wanted scientists to observe marine creatures alive, rather than relying only on preserved specimens. Visitors, meanwhile, could see a world that normally remained below the waves. The same building made research visible to the public and helped pay for it – a remarkably modern arrangement for 1874.

The engineering is one of its best curiosities. British engineer William Alford Lloyd, who had worked on public aquariums in London and Hamburg, supervised the installation. Seawater was





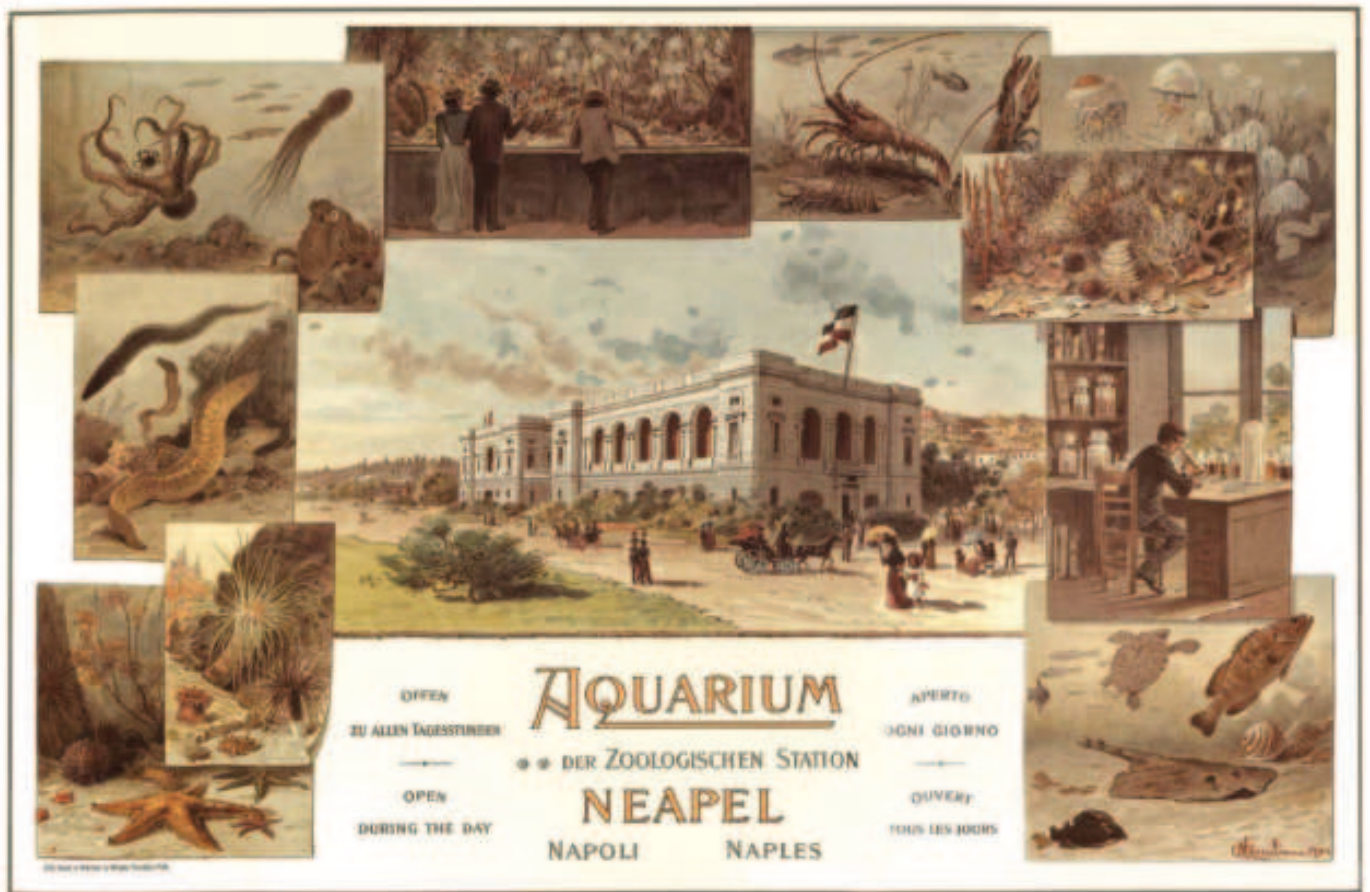
drawn from the Gulf of Naples, carried through underground channels and cisterns, then circulated through the tanks. The system turned the aquarium into something close to an indoor extension of the bay.

The historic public aquarium covers 527 square meters. Its architecture has changed remarkably little, and the original display tanks remain central. Daylight enters through side windows and skylights, while the subdued interior lets the illuminated water take over. The effect is less like walking through a contemporary attraction and more like entering a carefully preserved theater of marine life, where the Mediterranean is the main character.

Today, visitors encounter about 30 tanks and more than 200 marine animal and plant species,

most associated with the Gulf of Naples. The route moves through habitats rather than offering a random collection of fish: rocky coasts, caves and crevices, seagrass meadows, coralligenous environments, open water, and deeper zones. There are also displays that consider changing seas, including tropical formations and species that have entered Mediterranean waters.

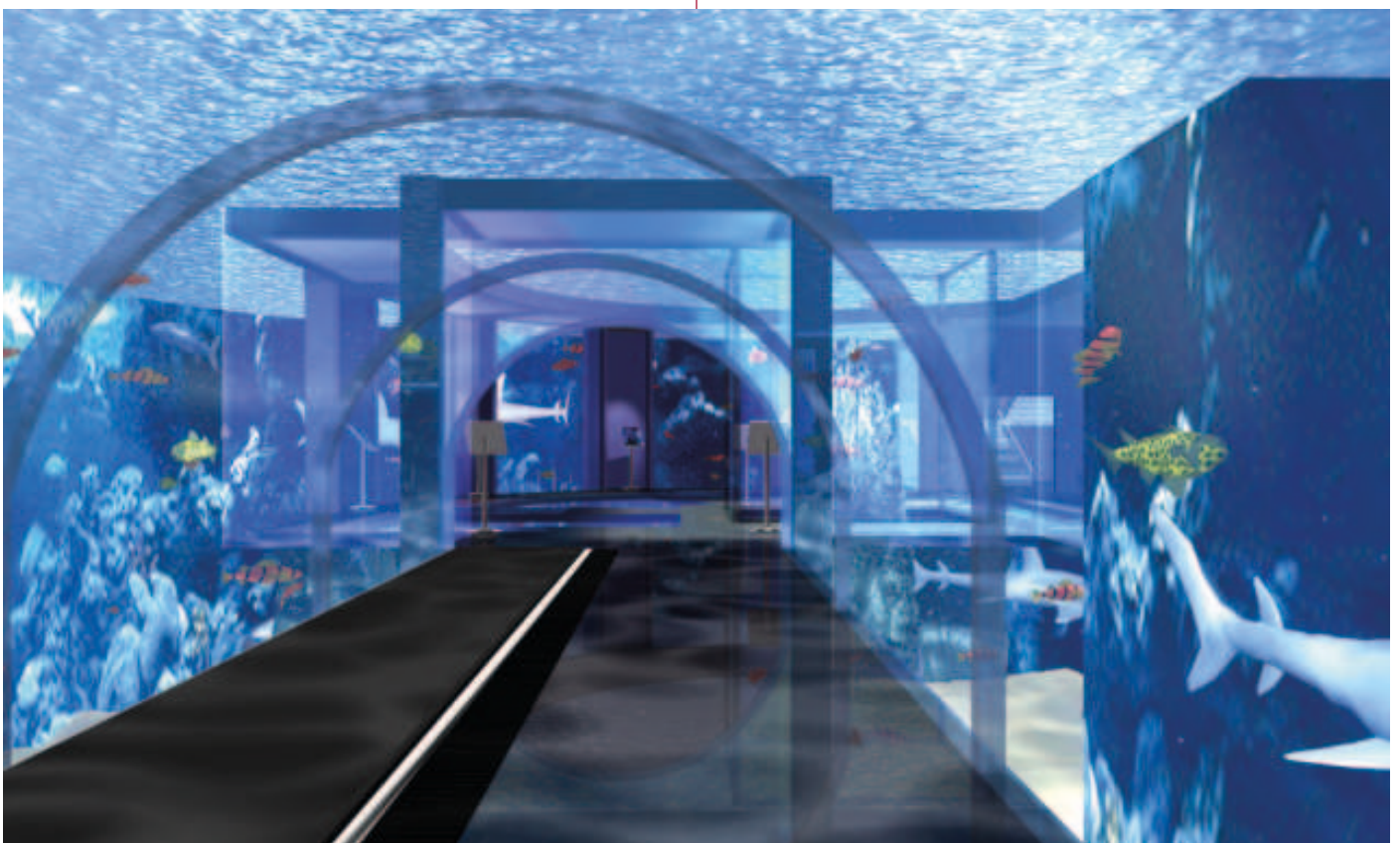
The creatures provide plenty of memorable details. Seahorses swim upright, and it is the male that carries the eggs in a brood pouch until they hatch. Octopuses are another local fascination: the station has long been a place where their intelligence and behavior could be observed closely. Moray eels point toward another Naples-area curiosity, the ancient Roman fish-breeding structures preserved in the marine archaeological area of Gaiola at Capo Posillipo. Even a small tank can open onto a much



larger history of the coast.

The Naples aquarium is therefore distinctive for more than its age. It is Italy's first public aquarium, a working window on Mediterranean biodiversity, and a rare survivor of the 19th century whose

original purpose still makes sense. Its deepest peculiarity may be this: beneath the calm galleries of Villa Comunale, Naples has kept a piece of the sea indoors – and has been learning from it since 1874.





MY LIFE IN ITALY

We have talked about Italy long enough. So we started counting

BY MATTEO CERRI

NOMAG**ITS**ITALY

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AT LEAST TEMPORARILY

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For more than a decade at We the Italians, and for more than six years working with people considering a move to Italy through ITS Italy, we have talked - a lot - about the same fascinating, irrational relationship.

Someone comes to Italy on holiday, falls in love with the place, returns to the United States and begins to wonder whether long lunches and photogenic village squares might become a permanent lifestyle. Then they discover Italian property websites and that somewhere in Sicily, Sardinia or an inland village, a house costs less than their kitchen appliances. At that point even rational people begin to believe that renovating a nineteenth-cen-

tury property from 5,000 miles away should be straightforward, presumably because they have watched enough HGTV.

We know these people rather well. ITS Italy has accompanied more than 160 international families through projects in over 20 Italian towns, while We the Italians has spent more than a decade listening to people who have built a relationship with Italy from the United States. We have seen the dream through renovation, bureaucracy and residency, until someone stops simply loving Italy and has to find a plumber on a Tuesday morning. Depending on the municipality, one may also require a geometra, a fixer, a priest or, in particularly difficult cases, an exorcist.

At some point it occurred to us that we had been talking long enough. So we started counting.

The result is **NOMAG Research Books**.

NOMAG is an independent editorial and research platform focused on digital nomads, international mobility, remote work, relocation and the relationship between people and place, with one foot outside Italy and one inside it.

My suspicion is that we have processed the Italian dream too much. We have taken genuine ingredients - beauty, quality of life, affordable property, human relationships, culture - and turned them into a packaged international product. It is sweet, comforting and, consumed in sufficient quantities, probably capable of causing editorial diabetes. The point is to go back to the raw, quality, ingredients.

The first research, **AT LAST, ITALY... AT LEAST TEMPORARILY**, started with 1,056 responses from NOMAG's international audience. It is not a census of every digital nomad, but several stereotypes wobble. Only 4.8% described themselves as early-career, while 69.2% were senior, managerial, executive, entrepreneurial or post-career.

They are also, somewhat inconveniently, not particularly nomadic. Almost half prefer one main base with occasional travel, while only 9.9% want to move frequently. A medium-sized city is considered seriously by 49.4%, against 19.6% for a small town or village. After years of imagining digital nomads naturally repopulating remote villages, our audience appears to want something less ro-





mantic: a functioning home, decent transport, healthcare and services. The landscape can come afterwards, preferably with a decent spritz nearby.

The American segment is especially interesting here. Among US-based respondents, 67% reported income above €60,000 and 28% above €100,000, yet 85% imagined staying no more than three months. Meanwhile, 21% would consider spending at least €2,000 per month on accommodation, and 87% prefer either an entire private home or a serviced apartment. The Italian Digital Nomad and Remote Worker Visa adds another signal: 35% said it could encourage them to remain beyond 90 days, while 29% were interested but found the rules unclear. Italy, after all, has a distinguished tradition of creating procedures whose existence

becomes fully apparent only after one has failed to comply with them.

The second book, **DEBUNKING ITALY'S €1 HOUSE EFFECT**, moves into another territory Americans know particularly well. Few Italian stories have travelled as well through US media as the €1 house: symbolic prices, abandoned buildings, beautiful villages and, ideally, someone from California explaining that they bought an eighteenth-century property for less than dinner in LA.

Many municipalities achieved something genuinely impressive: they made previously invisible places visible to the world. The problem begins when visibility, transactions, renovation spending, tourism, foreign ownership and demographic regen-

eration are treated as interchangeable outcomes. They are not. In several famous cases, Americans and other international buyers feature prominently in the property story, while the foreigners who actually make up the resident population often come from different migration patterns. This does not mean the €1-house initiatives failed. It means they should be judged for what they actually changed.

RELOCALS begins where the other two stop. Its first exploratory phase includes 103 international residents, 25 originally from the United States. It begins to show what happens when Italy stops being a destination and becomes everyday life.

Only two respondents are pensioners, 66% are between 35 and 54, and 63.1% generate most of their

income outside Italy. More surprisingly, 64.1% say they had not expected to stay as long as they eventually did. **Some people arrive with a temporary plan and, despite discovering bureaucracy, transport, housing and the other pleasures that rarely feature in a relocation brochure, they stay.**

The contradiction becomes even more interesting when they describe Italy. Human relationships, nature and culture lead the positives. Yet housing and job opportunities are cited as major disadvantages by 78.6%, bureaucracy by 76.7% and transport by 74.8%. **And 84.5% say one of the great misunderstandings outside Italy is the idea that living here is a permanent holiday.** Apparently the washing machine still breaks 'Under the Tuscan Sun', and there are problems no glass

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DEBUNKING ITALY'S €1 HOUSE EFFECT

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35%
say the Italian Digital Nomad Visa could encourage them to stay beyond 90 days

29%
are interested but find the rules unclear

GREAT POTENTIAL. A FEW OBSTACLES.

NOMAG |  **We the Italians**
RESEARCH BOOKS

of wine can solve - although it may improve the meeting in which they are discussed.

This is why I find these people more interesting than traditional ambassadors of Italy: they are credible because they are not required to be positive. In fact, 75.7% say that living here has changed the way they talk about the country. **They can love Italy and complain about it without finding those positions contradictory, something Italians themselves have practised successfully for centuries.**

And perhaps this is where the research becomes most encouraging. We did not start collecting data to prove that the romantic storytelling was wrong. Some of it is wrong, some simplistic and some should probably carry a warning about excessive

carbs consumption. But after looking at the numbers, I am more interested in Italy's capacity to attract people, not less. The remarkable thing is that the appeal survives contact with reality.

People discover that Italy is not uniformly cheap, that a €1 house rarely costs €1 (and possibly more than €100k) by the time it becomes a home, and that services matter rather more when you live somewhere than when you visit. Yet tens of thousands continue to consider spending a meaningful part of their lives here, and many who arrive temporarily stay longer than expected. That is not evidence that Italy is perfect. It may be evidence of something more useful: an underlying demand that does not need to be manufactured, only understood better and converted more intelligently.

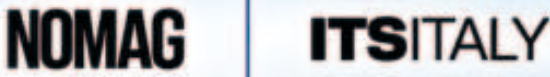
On September 24 in Rome we will present the first RELOCALS findings. After that, the research goes through at least 12 communities across Italy. The roadshow is part of the research, designed to challenge what the first 103 participants have told us.

After years of telling stories about people who dream of Italy, we would now like to understand who they are, what happens when they arrive and why a surprising number still decide that Italy is worth the trouble.

I am not sure whether that says more about Italy or about them. The next twelve stops may tell us.

-

We the Italians readers will be able to download the NOMAG Research publications and follow the next stages of the research free of charge. Those who are interested can email at info@wetheitalians.com



LOVE ITALY. AND DEAL WITH REALITY.

Percentage	Disadvantage
78.6%	cite housing as a major disadvantage
76.7%	cite bureaucracy as a major disadvantage
74.8%	cite transport as a major disadvantage

84.5% say one of the great misconceptions outside Italy is the idea that living here is a permanent holiday.

REAL PEOPLE. A MORE COMPLETE ITALY.





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ITALIAN HANDCRAFTS

Florentine marbled paper, the handmade art of capturing color on water

BY WE THE ITALIANS EDITORIAL STAFF

In a Florentine workshop, a sheet of paper can begin its life almost like a blank canvas and emerge minutes later as an object that can never be reproduced exactly. This is the essence of carta marmorizzata, Florence's celebrated marbled paper – a handcraft in which color, water and highly controlled gestures transform an everyday material into something unique.

The technique did not originate in Florence. Methods of floating colors on liquid developed centuries ago in Asia and became particularly sophisticated in the Ottoman world through the tradition known as ebru. Marbled papers later

reached Europe through commercial and cultural exchanges.

Florence, however, provided an exceptional environment in which the technique could flourish.

By the 17th century, decorated papers were increasingly used by European bookbinders. Florence already possessed a sophisticated network of printers, bookbinders, stationers and workshops producing decorative objects. Marbled paper therefore became connected to a wider Florentine culture in which specialized manual skills were applied not only to major works of art, but also to objects used in everyday life.

The process remains surprisingly physical.





The artisan prepares a shallow rectangular tray containing water that has been thickened so pigments can remain suspended on its surface. Colors are then dropped, sprinkled or carefully distributed across the liquid.

From that moment, the hands take control.

Using simple instruments such as sticks, brushes and combs, the maker draws through the floating pigments. A straight movement can create parallel veins. Repeated movements can produce waves, feathers, curls, fans and increasingly complex geometric patterns.

Pressure matters. Speed matters. Direction matters.

The artisan must understand how the pigments react to one another and how the surface changes with every move-

ment. There is no computer correcting the composition and no machine guaranteeing that the next sheet will look like the previous one.

When the pattern is ready, a single sheet of paper is gently lowered onto the floating design.

Timing is essential. The paper captures the pigments before being carefully lifted from the tray, drained and left to dry. A design that existed for only moments on the surface of the water has become permanent.

And it exists only once.

No 2 genuinely handmade sheets are completely identical. Even when the same artisan uses the same pigments, tools and sequence of movements, subtle variations produce a different result. That individuality is one of the clearest

distinctions between traditional marbling and industrially printed paper that merely reproduces its appearance.

The craft also requires considerable preparation that the finished product does not reveal. Pigments must have the correct consistency. The liquid surface must behave properly. Paper must absorb the design without allowing colors to lose their definition.

Experience teaches the maker when something is wrong before an inexperienced eye would notice it.

Historically, Florentine marbled paper became particularly important in bookbinding. It could be used for covers and endpapers, turning the opening of a book into a visual experience. Over time, workshops extended these decorated papers to boxes, folders, albums, frames, desk accessories and other objects.

This adaptability has helped preserve the handcraft.



Today, Florence's historic center still contains specialized workshops and stores where decorative paper is part of the city's living identity. Some designs reflect patterns handed down through



generations, while others introduce contemporary combinations of colors and forms.

The distinction between handmade and mass-produced objects has become increasingly important. Modern printing can reproduce the visual appearance of marbling thousands of times at very low cost. What it cannot reproduce is the process itself – the slight unpredictability of floating pigment, the decisions made by the maker and the individuality of every sheet.

That is why Florentine marbled paper belongs so naturally to the story of Italian handcrafts.



Its tools are simple. Its raw materials are modest. Its value comes from knowledge.

Florence is famous around the world for monumental masterpieces created in marble, bronze and paint. But its creative history also survives on a much smaller scale – inside workshops where hands continue to make beautiful objects one at a time.

With carta marmorizzata, the maker has only a few seconds to capture a pattern floating on water.

The result can survive for centuries.



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ITALIAN SOUNDS

Dialect on the beat. Italy's urban music finds its local sound

BY WE THE ITALIANS EDITORIAL STAFF

Italian rap is becoming more local precisely as its production becomes more global. Across Italy, artists are placing Neapolitan, Genoese, Sardinian, Roman, and other regional voices over trap hi-hats, drill patterns, deep sub-bass, and polished electronic arrangements. The result is not folklore added to modern music. The language itself becomes part of the sound design.

Every regional language carries its own percussion. Standard Italian favors open vowels, clearly articulated syllables, and words that often end in vowels. That natural musicality works beautifully in pop, but rap demands compression, collision, and surprise. Dialect can offer sharper consonants, shortened endings, swallowed vowels, doubled

sounds, and accents that fall in unexpected places. A final syllable can disappear before the snare. A hard consonant can land like a drum hit. A stretched vowel can float across Auto-Tune like a synthesizer.

This is why listeners can feel a verse before fully understanding it. Flow communicates geography through texture. American audiences already know the principle: Atlanta trap, New York drill, Southern drawl, and West Coast phrasing do not merely deliver lyrics. They shape rhythm, attitude, and identity. Italy's regional languages perform a similar function, but within short distances.

Naples is the powerful example. Neapolitan can sound clipped and fluid, intimate and confrontational, sometimes within the same bar. Its apostrophes and elisions create pockets where producers can place kicks, pauses, and ad-libs. Its vowels remain singable, helping rappers move from aggressive verses into melodic hooks without changing



> GEOLIER

> BRESH



linguistic register.

Geolier turned that sound into national pop. His 2023 release *Il coraggio dei bambini* finished number one on Italy's annual album chart and earned multiple platinum certifications. At Sanremo in 2024, *I p' me, tu p' te* finished second, while Geolier received 44.8% of the broad televote during the final phase. The figures matter because they show that audiences did not require dialect to be translated or softened.

His technique builds on a longer Neapolitan continuum. 99 Posse brought dialect into politically charged rap and electronic music. Co'Sang developed darker, tightly interlocked street flows. Clementino emphasized speed, breath control, and freestyle energy. Luchè refined a colder trap vocabulary, while Liberato placed Neapolitan

melody inside atmospheric electronics. Different productions reveal different properties of the same language.

Genoa produces another sound. The city's leading urban artists, including Tedua, Bresh, Izi, Vaz Tè, Disme, and Sayf, rap in Italian, yet their delivery carries Ligurian cadence, local slang, and maritime imagery. The flow often feels leaner and more restrained than Naples' dramatic musicality. Mike fC goes further, using Genoese directly and demonstrating how its compact words and unusual consonant clusters can cut cleanly through a beat.

Sardinian rap has a heavier, earthier phonetic character. Strong consonants and compact vowels give verses physical weight, while repeated sounds create insistent internal rhymes. Sa Razza, active since 1991, helped establish this approach. Dr.

Drer & CRC Posse, Menhir, Balentia, Quilo, Ruido, Randagiu Sardu, and Lord J connect island languages with boom bap, reggae, trap, and traditional instruments. Lord J's *Su Sennori* is performed entirely in Sardinian.

This musical revival arrives while everyday dialect use is declining. In 2024, only 9.6% of Italians spoke predominantly or exclusively in dialect at home, down from 32% in 1988. Urban music reverses that retreat inside the recording studio. It samples endangered sounds, amplifies them, and sends them through headphones nationwide.

For Italian Americans, these records offer a new way to hear Italy. The country is not one voice laid over imported beats, but a collection of rhythmic systems. Dialect supplies more than local color – it changes where the rhyme lands, how the bass breathes, and how identity sounds.



> SA RAZZA





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ITALIAN DESIGN

Gianfranco Frattini, the patience of adjustment

BY ALBERTO IMPRODA

In 2026, we celebrate the centennial of the birth of Gianfranco Frattini, a figure of extraordinary interest whose work remains remarkably relevant within the landscape of Italian design.

Frattini, born in Padua on May 15, 1926, was one of the most significant Italian architects and designers of the 20th century.

Born in the Veneto region but Milanese by adoption, he began working with Cesare Cassina, whom he had met at Giò Ponti's studio, in 1954, before he was even 30 years old.

His list of collaborations soon expanded to include many other prestigious companies: Kartell, Bernini, Bonacina, Arteluce, Ricci, Progetti, Artemide, and Knoll; then, in the 1980s and 1990s, Acerbis, Bottega Ghianda, and Poliform; and, in the 2000s, Fontana Arte and Porada.

To mention just a few examples of his work, in 1955 the Padua-born architect designed the "Model 836" armchair and modular sofa for Cassina; in 1967, the round, stackable "Model 780" tables; and in 1969, the square "Dalles Model 78" tables with steel frames.

"Albero" was an innovative bookcase that could rotate 360 degrees, combining the typical floor-to-ceiling support post with the concept of a single totem-like modular structure. The piece remains a highlight of the Poltrona Frau catalog to this day.

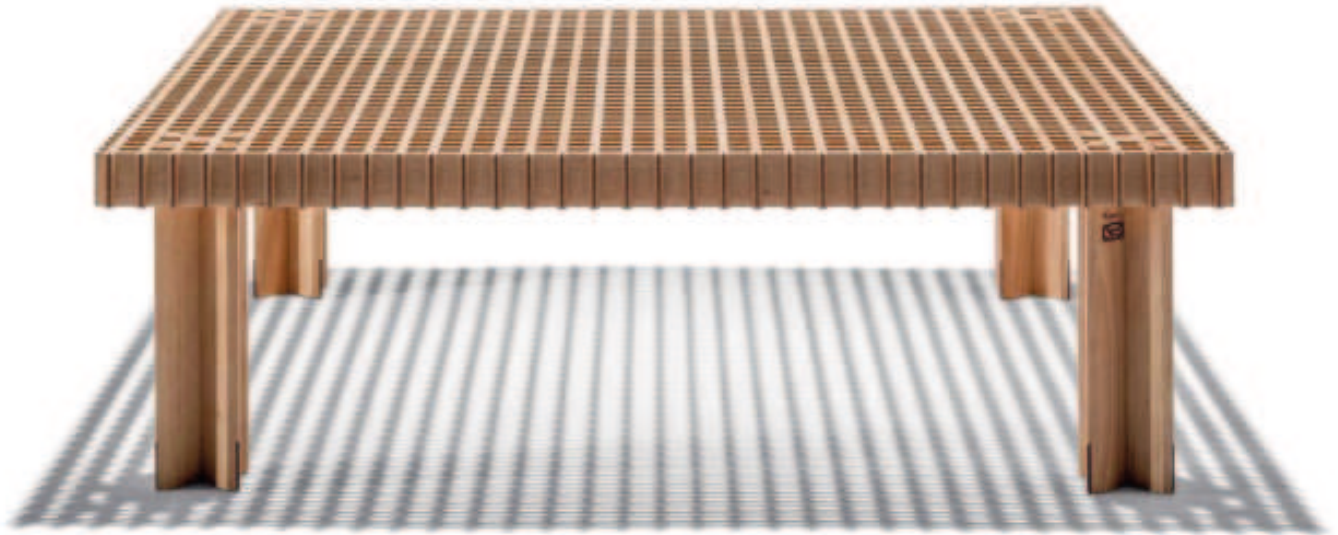
Particularly important and absolutely distinctive was Frattini's relationship with wood.

In 1978, after leaving his historic Milan studio on Via Lanzone, the Veneto-born designer moved to a new space on Via Sant'Agnese.

There, he began an extraordinary partnership with master cabinetmaker Pierluigi Ghianda. Through their collaboration, Frattini explored the many possibilities offered by wood, the material at the



› TABLE KYOTO



heart of his work.

After making a crucial trip to Japan, Frattini and Ghianda also turned their attention to the Amazon in the 1980s, where they identified new types of wood to introduce into original artisanal and architectural solutions.

In 1974, inspired by Frattini's experience in Japan and conceived as a tribute to the country's refined woodworking tradition, the "Kyoto" coffee table was created. Made of beechwood with an orthogonal lattice structure, its more than 10,000 joints, organized according to a modular system, have helped make it a signature piece in the Poltrona Frau collection.

Equally fundamental to Frattini's work was his relationship with light, which he considered part of the architectural framework – a kind of instrument for defining space.

In 1970, together with Livio Castiglioni, he designed the "Boalum" lamp, an extraordinary proj-

ect positioned at an imaginary intersection between a lighting fixture, a piece of furniture, and a work of art.

Last May, the ADI Design Museum in Milan hosted the presentation of the catalogue raisonné of Frattini's design works from 1953 to 2003. The book is part of a series that Silvana Editoriale has dedicated to the great masters of Italian design for approximately a decade.

Edited by Silvana Annicchiarico in collaboration with Studio/Archivio Gianfranco Frattini, the volume opens with an extensive introduction by the curator outlining the various stages of Frattini's professional life.

The essay recounts how Frattini began his professional career with an assignment from Giò Ponti in 1953, the same year he graduated from the Polytechnic University of Milan: overseeing the construction site of the Royal Hotel in Naples.

It was an old Neapolitan hotel that required a

complete reconstruction.

As the young architect approached the hotel construction site, he reportedly said: “First, I have to understand it.”

Frattini is also said to have remarked on other occasions: “Every material has its own language, and it must be respected.”

This respect for existing reality and his desire to reach the essence of things consistently characterized his way of working. He would begin with the detail – which he considered the starting point of any project – and from there arrive at the final overall vision.

The episode involving the Royal Hotel in Naples is particularly illuminating. It also provides a valuable key to understanding a fundamental passage in “Gianfranco Frattini. Design 1953–2003.”

It is a passage that seems especially significant and, in a broader sense, emblematic of the continuing relevance of the designer and architect.

In her essay, Silvana Annicchiarico perceptively observes that Frattini’s work embodied “not the heroism of rupture, but the patience of adjustment.”

In an Italy that had only recently emerged from the devastation of World War II, there was a sense of civic responsibility in picking up the thread of history without tearing it apart, avoiding traumatic leaps into the unknown and connecting memories of the past with hopes for the future.

Today, amid profound changes affecting the economy and society as a whole, Italy stands out as a country extraordinarily rich in innovation.

Yet this is a very particular and distinctive kind of innovation. It does not necessarily produce disruptive breakthroughs. Instead, it advances through continuous and gradual improvements – incre-

mental and layered changes produced by the constant, determined refinement of everyday work.

Perhaps, upon closer examination, the spirit of contemporary Italy contains more traces of Frattini’s thinking and work than we usually imagine.

Ultimately, in many respects, even today we remain instinctively and culturally more inclined, across virtually every sphere of life, toward the patient work of adjustment and modernization than toward heroic gestures of rupture.

> BOALUM



> POLENTA



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ITALIAN STREET FOOD

Lombardy, where polenta, sciatt and panzerotti tell a different story

BY WE THE ITALIANS EDITORIAL STAFF

Lombardia is rarely the first Italian region that comes to mind when people think about street food. Its culinary reputation is built around risotto alla milanese, ossobuco, cotoletta, pizzoccheri and elaborate dishes served at the table. Yet from the streets of Milan to Alpine festivals and small-town markets, Lombardia has a rich tradition of food designed to be eaten quickly, informally and often with your hands.



> PANZEROTTO

Milan provides the most cosmopolitan version of this tradition. One of its modern street-food symbols is the panzerotto – a folded pocket of dough, usually filled with tomato and mozzarella and fried until golden. The dish has southern Italian origins, particularly in Puglia, but decades of migration transformed it into part of Milan’s everyday food culture. Today, grabbing a hot panzerotto in the city center is as authentically Milanese an experi-

ence as ordering a risotto.

Another Milanese classic is the michetta. This small, hollow, star-shaped bread roll became one of the city’s most recognizable breads during the 20th century. Its light interior makes it ideal for sandwiches filled with salumi, cheese, vegetables or other ingredients. Before international fast food conquered European cities, a stuffed michetta was already Lombardia’s answer to an inexpensive lunch on the move.

Travel north, however, and Lombard street food becomes unmistakably Alpine.

In Valtellina, one of the great local specialties is sciatt. The name means “toads” in the local dialect, a humorous reference to their irregular appearance. These small fritters are made with buckwheat flour and contain a heart of melted local cheese, traditionally Valtellina Casera. Served piping hot, they combine a crisp exterior with an intensely creamy center. Although sciatt can appear as an appetizer in restaurants, they are perfectly suited to festivals, fairs and outdoor events.



> MICHETTA

Polenta provides another thread connecting Lombardia’s provinces. For centuries it was a fundamental food for rural and mountain communities.

Today, portions of grilled or fried polenta can become simple street food, accompanied by cheese, mushrooms, sausage or local cured meats. In Bergamo and Brescia, polenta is much more than a side dish – it is part of regional identity.

Bergamo also offers an unexpected sweet contribution. Polenta e osei, despite its name, is not the traditional savory dish of polenta and birds. The modern pastry version is a small dome-shaped cake whose yellow marzipan exterior resembles polenta. Inside are layers of sponge cake, chocolate, butter cream and hazelnut flavors. Small versions make an unmistakably Bergamasque treat to enjoy while walking through the historic streets of Città Alta.



> POLENTA E OSEI

into the street-food landscape. Local salami, formaggi and breads turn market stalls into miniature showcases of Lombard agriculture. Around Mantova, meanwhile, the region's culinary personality changes again. Here the influence of the Po Valley produces richer flavors, with pumpkin, pork, fried dough and the famous sbrisolona – the crumbly almond cake that is deliberately broken into pieces rather than neatly sliced.

Cremona contributes another portable icon: torrone. The city's association with nougat dates back centuries, and the combination of honey, sugar, egg whites and nuts has become inseparable from Cremona's identity. Torrone is perhaps the ultimate historic travel food – compact, durable and easy to share.

What makes Lombardia's street food particularly interesting is its diversity. This is Italy's most populous region, with roughly 10 million residents,



> SCIATT

Further east, Brescia and the Lake Garda area bring cured meats, cheeses and bakery traditions



> SBRISOLONA

stretching from the Alps to the Po River and encompassing huge differences in landscape, history and economy. There is no single Lombard street-food tradition because there has never been a single Lombard kitchen.

Instead, there are mountain fritters, city sandwiches, fried dough, cheeses, salumi, pastries and sweets. Some recipes were born from poverty, others from migration, farming or urban life. Together they reveal a Lombardia that is warmer and more informal than its international image might suggest.

And perhaps that is the best way to discover the region: not only seated before a plate of risotto in an elegant Milan restaurant, but standing in a piazza with a hot sciatt, a stuffed michetta or a piece of torrone in your hand.

> TORRONE





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ITALIAN SUSTAINABILITY

Italy expands renewable energy requirements for home renovations

BY WE THE ITALIANS EDITORIAL STAFF

Italy expands renewable energy requirements for home renovations

Italy has introduced a new set of renewable energy requirements that could significantly change the way major home renovations are planned and carried out. Since August 3, 2026, certain renovation projects involving existing buildings must incorporate renewable energy systems and meet minimum clean-energy thresholds.

The rules stem from Legislative Decree No. 5 of January 9, 2026, which implements the European Union's RED III renewable energy directive and updates Italy's previous framework established under Legislative Decree 199/2021.

The impact depends largely on the scale of the renovation.

For new buildings, renewable sources must cover at least 60% of projected energy consumption for domestic hot water and 60% of the combined demand for hot water, winter heating and summer cooling.

For existing buildings undergoing a major first-level renovation, the threshold falls to 40%. These are extensive projects that generally involve more than 50% of the building envelope together with a substantial renovation of the heating and cooling system.

A second-level major renovation carries a lower requirement. In this category, renewable energy must cover at least 15% of the projected combined demand for winter heating and summer cooling. Such projects typically involve work affecting more than 25% of the building envelope without meeting all the conditions required for a first-level renovation.



tion.

The 15% requirement also applies when an existing building undergoes a qualifying renovation of its thermal system.

That distinction is important for homeowners. The legislation does not mean that every kitchen renovation, bathroom upgrade or minor internal remodeling project now requires solar panels. The requirements are connected to specific categories of substantial energy-related work and to the building permit or authorization associated with the project.

Photovoltaic systems are expected to become one of the most common ways of complying, but solar electricity is not the only possible solution. Other renewable technologies can contribute, depending on the building and the type of energy demand.





The legislation also sets a minimum renewable electricity capacity linked to the footprint of the building. For existing buildings, the calculation uses a coefficient of 0.025 kW per square meter of ground-level building footprint, while new buildings use 0.05 kW per square meter.

Public buildings face stricter standards. Their renewable energy coverage requirements are increased by 5 percentage points, meaning that the respective thresholds become 65%, 45% and 20%. Required renewable electricity capacity is also increased by 10%.

There are exceptions. Buildings connected to qualifying efficient district heating or cooling networks may be exempt when those networks fully cover the relevant thermal demand. A designer can also document cases where compliance is technically impossible or economically unjustified, but the reasons must be formally demonstrated.

The changes fit into a broader European effort to decarbonize buildings. Buildings account for about

40% of EU energy consumption, while roughly 75% of the European building stock has poor energy performance. The EU ultimately aims for a zero-emission building stock by 2050.



For Italy, the August 2026 rules therefore represent more than another construction requirement – they make renewable energy an increasingly integral part of major renovations to the country's existing homes.



> DALÍ'S SAN GIORGIO E IL DRAGO

We the  Italians
two flags one heart

ITALIAN ART

Cosenza, where the street becomes a sculpture gallery

BY WE THE ITALIANS EDITORIAL STAFF

Most museums ask visitors to slow down, lower their voices, and cross a threshold. Cosenza's Museo all'Aperto Bilotti, known as the MAB, does the opposite. It places modern and contemporary sculpture directly in the flow of Corso Mazzini, the city's pedestrian main street, where shoppers, students, families, and café-goers encounter art without buying a ticket or stepping through a door.

The MAB turns the ordinary act of walking into an exercise in looking. A bronze horse and dragon can appear between storefronts. A faceless couple can stop a passerby in a busy square. A green marble wolf can hold its ground amid pavement, benches, and the moving life of the city. The museum is not

a decorative afterthought to the street. The street is the gallery.

The project grew from works donated to Cosenza by the local-born patrons Carlo and Enzo Bilotti, following the pedestrianization of Corso Mazzini in 2002. Its most interesting quality is not simply the caliber of its names. Salvador Dalí, Giorgio de Chirico, Mimmo Rotella, Giacomo Manzù, Pietro Consagra, and Emilio Greco all appear in this urban constellation. Its real achievement is changing the relationship between sculpture and everyday life.

Dalí's San Giorgio e il Drago is among the route's most theatrical encounters. The bronze sculpture, dated 1977–1984, represents the legendary saint on horseback confronting the dragon. It brings fantasy and motion into a commercial street, yet its setting prevents it from becoming a remote monument. Instead, Dalí's myth lives beside daily errands, conversations, and window displays. The



> ROTELLA'S LUPO DELLA SILA



➤ DE CHIRICO'S ETTORE E ANDROMACA

piece is an example of how public placement can make a familiar subject feel newly unstable.

Giorgio de Chirico's *Ettore e Andromaca*, installed near Piazza Kennedy, offers a quieter kind of drama. The 2005 bronze stands 230 centimeters high and shows the Trojan hero and his wife in an embrace. De Chirico's figures are stylized and faceless, which removes them from a single historical moment. They feel less like illustrated characters than architectural presences – tall, enclosed, intimate, and oddly still. On a street built for circulation, the sculpture creates a pause. It makes the viewer notice the emotional weight of bodies that cannot quite touch in a conventional way.

Mimmo Rotella's *Lupo della Sila* gives the museum its most direct Calabrian note. Rotella is best known internationally for his torn-poster *décollages*, a medium based on urban visual noise, layers, rupture, and surprise. Here, however, his 2005 wolf is carved in green marble from a wooden prototype. Its material matters: marble slows the eye down, while its animal form gives the route a local pulse. The work does not illustrate Calabria. It distills an image associated with the region into a sharp, sculptural sign.





That shift between international art and local space is the MAB's central idea. The museum does not require Cosenza to imitate a capital city with a sealed white-cube institution. It lets global artists share the visual rhythms of a Calabrian avenue. Consagra's abstract forms, Manzù's human figures, and Sosno's interventions expand the conversation beyond recognizable subjects. Their presence invites repeat viewing, because a sculpture seen in morning light can read differently in rain, during a

market, or on an evening walk.

For Italian Art, the MAB is compelling because it makes access part of the artwork's meaning. These sculptures are not protected from the city; they are exposed to it. They become landmarks, meeting points, and occasional surprises. Cosenza's lesson is simple but radical: art does not become less serious when it leaves the museum building. Sometimes it becomes more alive.





ITALIAN CITIZENSHIP ASSISTANCE

What Italy's new guidance means for citizenship by descent applicants now that the Minor Age Rule is over

BY ITALIAN CITIZENSHIP ASSISTANCE

Since 2024, the Minor Age Rule, often referred to as the “minor issue”, has created significant obstacles for people seeking Italian citizenship by descent. A strict interpretation of Italy’s former citizenship law caused many applicants to be denied recognition because an Italian parent had naturalized in another country while their child was still a minor.



Many applicants affected by this strict interpretation now have a new opportunity to pursue recognition of their Italian citizenship because of a major ruling by Italy’s Supreme Court and new guidance from the Ministry of the Interior.

What Was the Minor Age Rule?

The decades-old interpretation of Article 7 from former Citizenship Law No. 555 of 1912 stated that a child born outside Italy to an Italian parent could receive Italian citizenship at birth through *jure sanguinis* (by right of blood). Even if the child also acquired another citizenship at birth through *jure soli* (by right of the soil). For example, a child born in the United States to an Italian citizen could be both Italian and American from birth. So the understanding was that if the Italian parent later

naturalized in another country while the child was still a minor, then naturalization did not cause the child to lose Italian citizenship as that child had already acquired it at birth. Article 12 stated that a minor child could lose Italian citizenship if their parent lost theirs while that child was living in parental care.

The interpretations of these articles changed dramatically in 2024 following a series of restrictive Supreme Court decisions. Considering how Article 7 interacted with Article 12, they started asking whether a child could lose Italian citizenship even when that child was already a foreign citizen from birth based on these Articles. Under the new position, the court said that when an Italian parent naturalized in another country while their child was still a minor, that child’s Italian citizenship is considered to be disrupted. And because that child is usually the next person in the applicant’s citizenship line, this interpretation could break the entire line of citizenship by descent. The Ministry of the Interior followed the Supreme Court’s new interpretation and instructed Italian consulates and municipalities to apply this interpretation through Circular No. 43347, issued on October 3, 2024. As a result, applications that previously would have been recognized and implemented were being denied or prevented from moving forward.

The Supreme Court Shifts Course

On July 26, 2026, the Supreme Court issued Judgment No. 24045/2026, reversing its strict interpretation of the Minor Age Rule. The court drew an important distinction between Articles 7 and 12. Article 7 concerns children who were already Italian citizens from birth and also held another citizenship. For instance, in the example from earlier, a child born in the United States to an Italian citizen they are both Italian and American at birth. Article 12 addressed a different situation involving individuals who initially held only Italian citizenship and subsequently acquired another citizen-



ship. For example, a child who is born in Italy and later moves to the United States and naturalizes as a child. In the new judgment, they decided Article 12 could not be used to deprive a child who was a dual citizen from birth of their Italian citizenship simply because their Italian parent later naturalized in another country. This new ruling is a major shift back toward the interpretation that had governed these cases for decades as a parent's naturalization does not automatically disrupt a child's Italian citizenship or break the citizenship line.

The Ministry of Interior's New Guidance

The Ministry of the Interior issued Circular No. 65050/2026 pm August 10, 2026 instructing Italian consulates and municipalities to put into effect the Supreme Court's interpretation and replace its previous guidance concerning the Minor Age Rule. This incredibly important change means that qualifying applicants do not have to start the citizen-

ship process over again.

Instead, people whose applications had already been formally denied because of the prior interpretation may ask the same consulate or municipality that issued the original decision to reconsider and reexamine the case under the new legal interpretation. The exact procedures for a reexamination may vary between administrative offices, and applicants should follow the instructions provided by the consulate or municipality handling their case.

What If You Withdrew Your Application or Canceled Your Appointment?

The new administrative review procedure applies to applications that were formally submitted and denied based on the prior Minor Age interpretation. Meaning those who withdrew an application, canceled an appointment, or never completed the process may not qualify for a review. These

applicants may still have options, including possibly pursuing recognition judicially and arguing that the prior interpretation prevented them from completing their application. Likewise, individuals who were unable to obtain a consular appointment or remained on a waiting list may need to explore judicial options, with the specific facts and documentation of their circumstances potentially playing an important role.

Why Consider Legal Representation?

If your case has hit obstacles with the “minor issue” or your case falls under one of the other circumstances, having a qualified Italian citizenship attorney by your side during the process can be significant. An attorney will review the original denial and assess whether it falls under the new qualifications to be reviewed. They will identify potential issues with the citizenship history or documentation, assist with formal communications with Italian authorities, and create a tailored legal argument for you if litigation ends up being the direction you need to go.

The end of the Minor Age Rule marks a significant change for applicants affected by the former restrictive interpretation, but each case must still be evaluated individually as recognition is not automatic. For those previously denied on this basis, the interpretation may provide an opportunity to have their citizenship claims reconsidered through an administrative review or, where appropriate, judicial

proceedings.

If you have any questions regarding your case, need assistance in figuring out if your case is still eligible for recognition, or are seeking legal rep-

FORM 1

APPLICATION FOR ITALIAN CITIZENSHIP BY DESCENT - JURE SANGUINIS



**CONSOLATO GENERALE D'ITALIA
SAN FRANCISCO**

*This space for official use only:
PER UFFICIO ART. ONE RICONOSCIMENTO
CITTADINANZA JURE SANGUINIS*

- 1) THE APPLICANT: _____

Last Name AT BIRTH
First Name
Middle name(s)
- 2) DATE OF BIRTH: _____

DAY
MONTH
YEAR
- 3) PLACE OF BIRTH: _____

City
State
Country
- 4) CURRENT ADDRESS: _____

Address
Apt. #

City
State
Zip Code
- 5) TELEPHONE NUMBER(S): _____

Cell
Home
Business
- 6) EMAIL ADDRESS: _____
- 7) MARITAL STATUS:

☐ single – NEVER MARRIED
☐ married – NO PREVIOUS MARRIAGES
☐ married – previously married

☐ single – DIVORCED
☐ separated – still married
☐ widowed

• If you are SINGLE and NEVER MARRIED, skip to point n. 10 on PAGE 3,
 • If you are SINGLE and/or DIVORCED or WIDOWED skip to point 9 on PAGE 3
 • If you are MARRIED or SEPARATED AND STILL MARRIED, continue to point 8 below

- 8) CURRENT MARRIAGE INFORMATION:
 - Date of Marriage (Day / Month / Year): _____
 - City, State, Country of Marriage: _____
 - Spouse's Last name AT BIRTH: _____
 - Spouse's Current Last name (if different): _____
 - Spouse's First name and any middle name(s): _____
 - Spouse's Sex (Male or Female): _____
 - Spouse's Date of Birth (Day / Month / Year): _____
 - Spouse's City, State, and Country of Birth: _____

If you do NOT have any previous marriages, skip to point n. 10 on PAGE 3, OTHERWISE CONTINUE TO POINT 9 ON PAGE 2

resentation, Italian Citizenship Assistance is here to guide you! Visit them online at www.italiancitizenshipassistance.com or contact them today at info@italiancitizenshipassistance.com.



> LECCE

We the  Italians
two flags one heart

ITALIAN TERRITORIES

Salento, a peninsula with a soul of its own

BY WE THE ITALIANS EDITORIAL STAFF

At the southeastern edge of Italy, Salento stretches between two seas, the Adriatic to the east and the Ionian to the west. It is the final portion of Puglia, the heel of the Italian boot, but geography alone does not fully explain it. Salento has developed such a distinctive combination of landscape, language, history, architecture, music and traditions that its name carries an identity of its own.

The Salentine peninsula covers about 5,800 square kilometers, including the entire province of Lecce and parts of the provinces of Brindisi and Taranto. Its northern limits are less obvious than its maritime borders, traditionally associated with the Soglia Messapica. From there, the land gradually narrows toward Santa Maria di Leuca, while two very different coastlines accompany it southward.

The Adriatic side is often rocky and dramatic, with cliffs, caves and coves around places such as

Otranto, Castro and Santa Cesarea Terme. The Ionian side includes long stretches of sand and extraordinarily clear water around Gallipoli, Porto Cesareo and farther north. Between them lies an overwhelmingly Mediterranean countryside of limestone, dry-stone walls, vineyards, masserie and fields shaped by generations of agricultural life.

Salento's individuality has very ancient roots. Before the Roman conquest, much of the area was inhabited by the Messapi, and archaeological traces of prehistoric and ancient civilizations remain scattered across the peninsula. Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Normans, Angevins, Aragonese and Spaniards subsequently contributed layers to its history. For centuries, the area formed the heart of Terra d'Otranto, a historical province that included Lecce, Taranto, Brindisi and Gallipoli.

Greek influence remains particularly fascinating. In the Grecia Salentina, south of Lecce, communities have preserved Griko, a language of Greek origin whose survival reflects Salento's centuries-old relationship with the eastern Mediterranean. Sal-



> OTRANTO



> GALLIPOLI

entino itself is not simply a variation of standard Italian. Its dialects belong to Italy's extreme southern linguistic group and distinguish the area from much of northern and central Puglia.

Lecce provides the territory with its great urban expression. The city's famous Baroque architecture developed through the extraordinary possibilities offered by pietra leccese, the soft local limestone that craftsmen transformed into elaborate façades, balconies, columns, flowers, animals and religious figures. The Basilica of Santa Croce is perhaps its most spectacular expression.

Yet Salento is equally defined by smaller places: Otranto and its cathedral, Gallipoli facing the Ionian Sea, the whitewashed streets of Specchia, the fortified architecture of Acaya, the villages of Grecìa Salentina and Santa Maria di Leuca at the peninsula's southern extremity. Menhirs, dolmens, underground olive presses, coastal watchtowers, pajare and dry-stone walls create another architec-

tural language, one belonging to the countryside.

Music provides one of Salento's strongest cultural signatures. Pizzica, traditionally connected with the much more complex phenomenon of tarantism, has evolved into a symbol of Salentine identity. Tambourines, dancing and traditional songs have moved from villages and family celebrations to major cultural events, most famously the Notte della Taranta in Melpignano.

Food tells the same story of a civilization deeply connected to agriculture. Friselle, puccia, pittule, ciceri e tria, rustico leccese and pasticciotto are among its most recognizable specialties. Olive oil, wheat, legumes, vegetables and wines made from grapes including Negroamaro and Primitivo reflect a cuisine historically based on simple ingredients transformed through ingenuity.

Religious celebrations remain central to community life. Patron saints are honored with processions, marching bands and extraordinary luminarie –

> SANTA MARIA DI LEUCA



elaborate structures illuminated by thousands of lights that turn streets and squares into temporary architecture. Customs can change noticeably from one town to another, even across very short distances.

This strong local dimension may be Salento's most remarkable characteristic. Its people are Puglian, but being Salentino carries another geographical and emotional meaning. Two seas, a distinctive dialect, Greek linguistic heritage, ancient peoples, Baroque stone, rural architecture, music, food and deeply rooted celebrations have produced something unmistakable: a Mediterranean land whose identity has been shaped over centuries and remains immediately recognizable today.



> PASTICCIOTTO SALENTINO



> PIZZICA DANCE



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ITALIAN PROVERBS

Uomo avvisato, mezzo salvato

WE THE ITALIANS EDITORIAL STAFF

The Italian saying “Uomo avvisato, mezzo salvato” literally means “A forewarned man is half saved” but in English is translated “Forewarned is forearmed”.

This traditional Italian proverb means that someone warned about a danger or difficulty is already halfway toward avoiding it. Deeply established in Italian popular wisdom, the saying reflects the practical value Italians traditionally placed on prudence, preparation and advice passed between generations. Its precise historical origin is difficult to identify, and similar concepts exist in other European traditions. In Italy, however, its concise rhyme and memorable rhythm helped make it a familiar expression, used when advance knowledge can prevent trouble.



We the Italians is a media company to promote Italy in the US and represent the Italian Americans in Italy. We have a website, a video and audio podcast, a newsletter, daily news, an Italian American websites archive and accounts in the main social media. This is our magazine.

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