We the Italians

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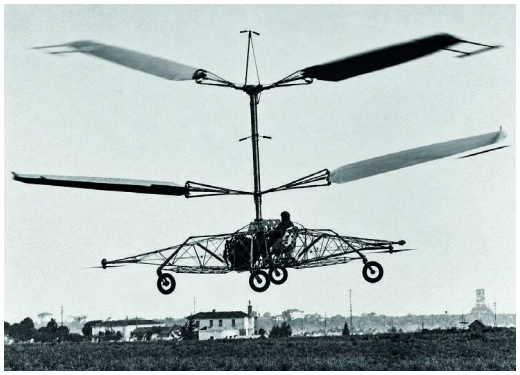
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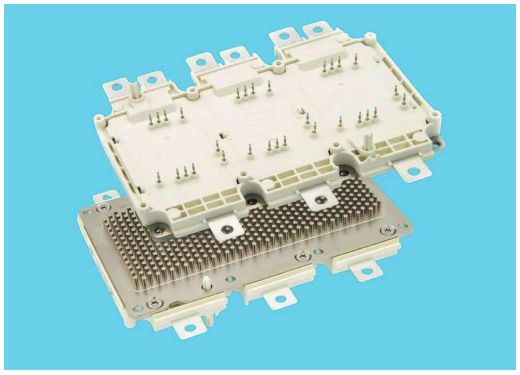
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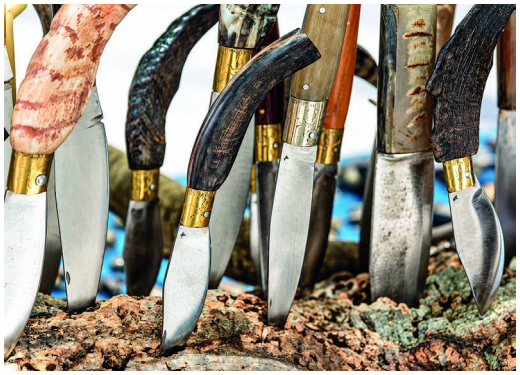
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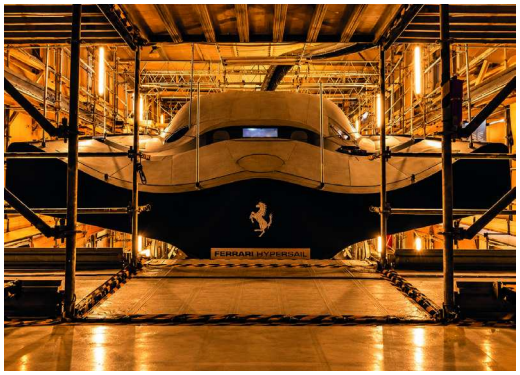
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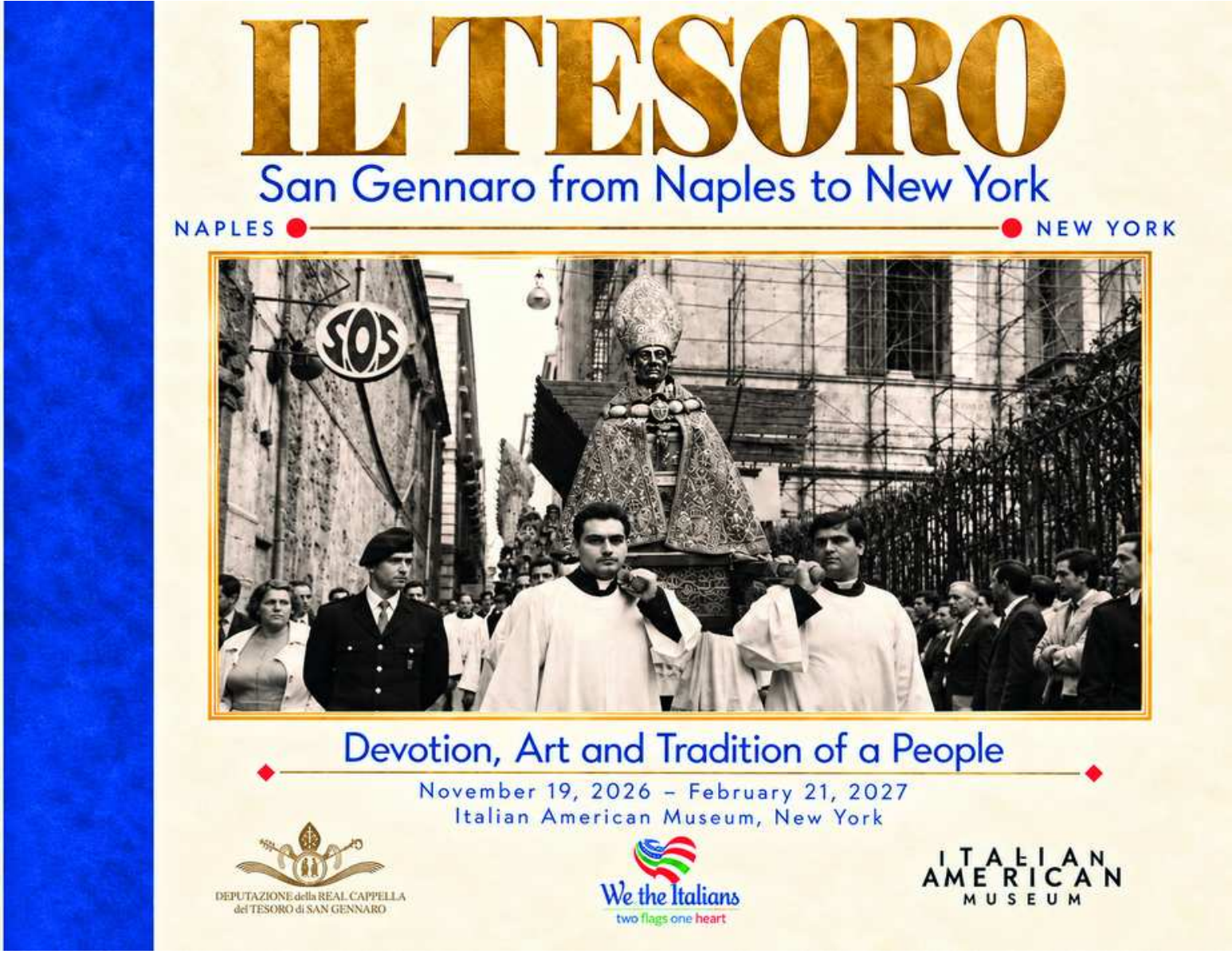
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Voglia di lavorar saltami addosso, lavora tu per me che io non posso

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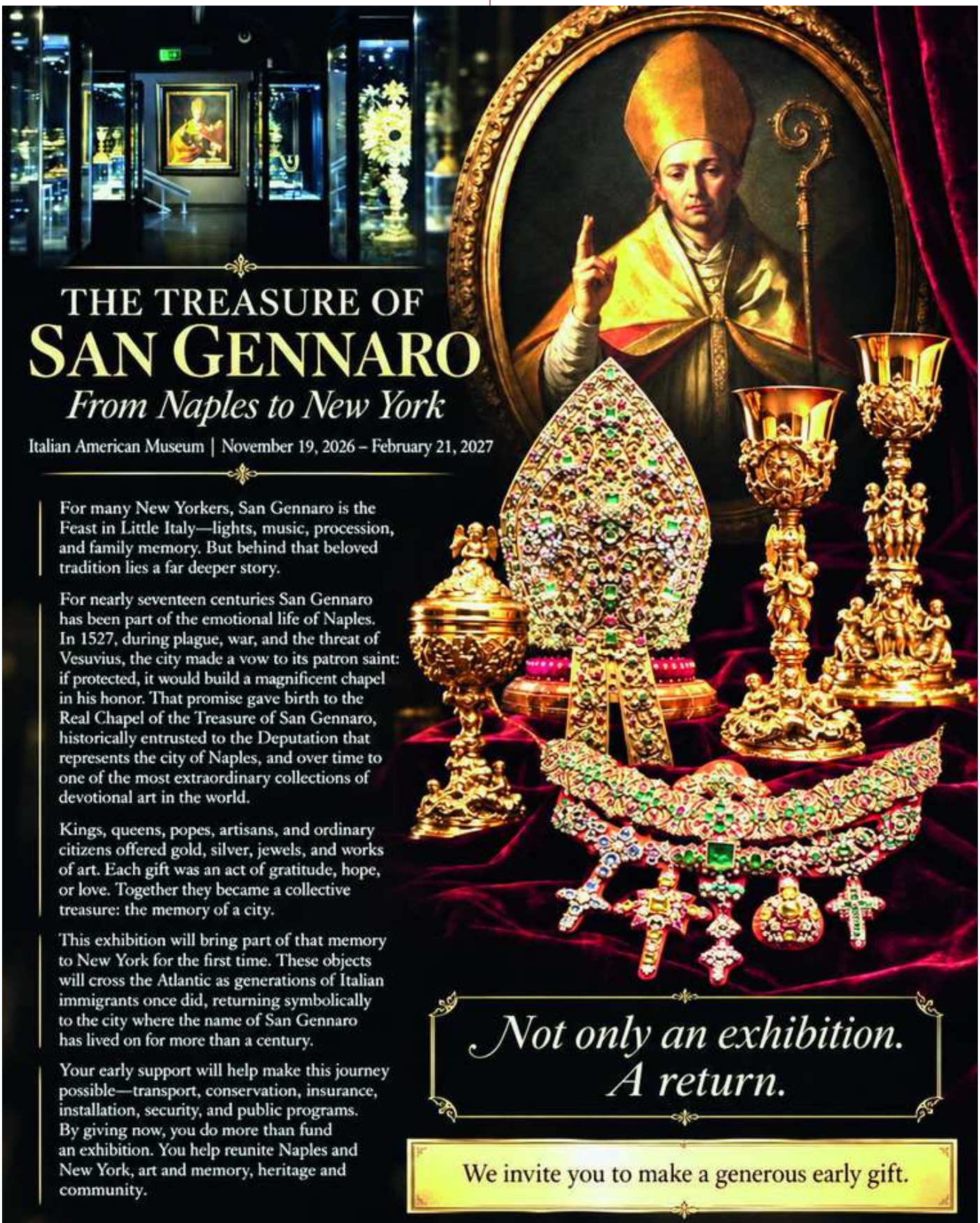
WHAT'S UP WITH WTI

Editorial # 204

BY UMBERTO MUCCI

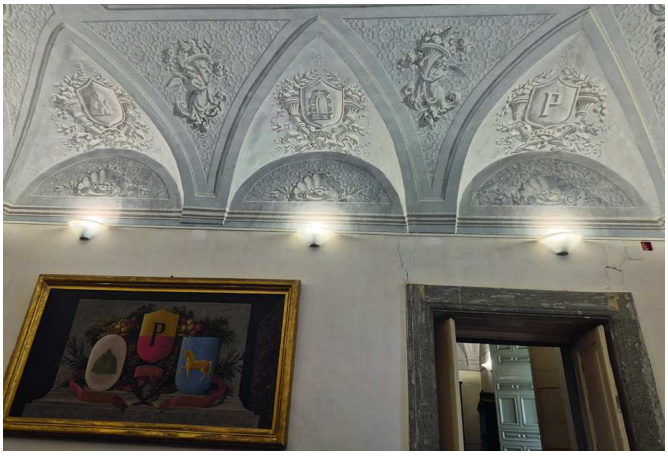
Dear friends,

We are making history in the relationship between Italy and the United States - and that is no exaggeration. For the first time ever, the extraordinary Treasure of San Gennaro is coming to the United States, and We the Italians is bringing it.



From November 21, 2026, through February 21, 2027, the Italian American Museum in Little Italy, New York, will host "Il Tesoro. San Gennaro from Naples to New York," an exhibition bringing 13 masterpieces from the Deputation of the Royal Chapel of the Treasure of San Gennaro in Naples to the United States for the first time. Created through centuries of faith, generosity, and artistic excellence, this collection is among Italy's most precious treasures. Its journey across the Atlantic celebrates the enduring bonds between Naples and America and the generations of Italian Americans who have preserved their traditions, devotion, and identity. I've just returned from Naples, where we signed the official agreement with the Deputation, the owner and custodian of the Treasure, and I must confess that I'm truly moved.

We invite everyone to become part of this once-in-a-lifetime occasion, both by visiting the exhibition and by supporting it as a Patron or Donor. Individuals, families, associations, and businesses can participate at different levels, with opportunities including recognition in the official Book of Patrons, commemorative gifts, special invitations, and unique experiences connected to San Gennaro. The Treasure itself was built through generations of generosity; today's supporters can add a new chapter to that remarkable story. Visit the museum between November 21 and February 21, become a Patron, and help make this historic encounter between Italy and America possible. Discover more and support the project here.





And there's more.

In 2026, We the Italians is also celebrating another story of transatlantic friendship with "Grazie, America – Thank You America. Firenze ricorda – Florence Remembers 1966–2026," a bilingual book marking the 60th anniversary of the devastating Florence flood. In November 1966, the Arno inundated the city and endangered priceless artworks, libraries, churches, and monuments. Americans were among the thousands of international volunteers, students, scholars, restorers, and benefactors who helped rescue Florence's cultural heritage. Their generosity became a lasting symbol of solidarity and earned them a special place in the city's memory.

Through historical accounts, photographs, institutional contributions, and personal reflections, our book honors those efforts and the friendship linking Florence, Tuscany, and the United States. Its publication has added meaning in the year of America's 250th anniversary of independence. A presentation is being planned in Florence, and a special

edition is being prepared for selected institutions, organizations, and distinguished representatives of the Italian American community in the United States. More than a commemorative volume, it is a heartfelt thank-you to those who helped preserve a heritage belonging to all humanity.

There's more: on September 24, 2026, We the Italians presented RELOCALS at the Centro Studi



Americani in Rome. Developed with NOMAG and ITS Italy, this research and community project looks at international residents who have chosen Italy as their home and examines the value they bring through skills, investments, businesses, relationships, and international networks. It goes well beyond traditional tourism or relocation by exploring their actual experiences and contributions to Italian communities.

The initial results are revealing. Fully 64.1% of respondents had not expected to stay in Italy for so



long, while 75.7% said that living there had changed how they describe the country to others. Yet 65% had never been contacted by an Italian public institution or organization, suggesting a missed opportunity. In 2027, RELOCALS will expand through further research, community engagement, and a nationwide tour connecting international residents with Italian territories, institutions, and businesses.

And we will return to the Centro Studi Americani. On November 16, 2026, during its Festival of American Culture, I will give a lecture to Italian high school students titled "Gli italiani che hanno fatto grande l'America" (The Italians Who Made America Great). To celebrate 250 years of the United States, I'll share stories of famous and lesser-known Italians and Italian Americans whose ideas, talents, courage, and hard work helped shape the nation, from its founding ideals to science, innovation, business, art, culture, and sports. I hope these stories will help a new generation understand how much our countries have built together.

ROMA 12 - 20 NOVEMBRE '26

Giovedì 12 novembre
18:00 - 20:00
"Dal 1776 a oggi: 250 anni dalla Dichiarazione d'Indipendenza americana. Tutto è iniziato a Boston - Sentro inaugurale"
Centro Studi Americani
Via Michelangelo Caetani, 32

Venerdì 13 novembre
11:00 - 13:00
"Universale per chi? 250 anni di usi e appropriazioni della Dichiarazione di Indipendenza"
Presso Università Chieti-Pescara - Aula 17

Lunedì 16 novembre
10:00 - 11:30
"Gli italiani che hanno fatto grande l'America"
INCONTRO DEDICATO ALLE SCUOLE

11:30- 13:00
Studiare negli USA con EducationUSA e con il Programma Fullbright
INCONTRO DEDICATO ALLE SCUOLE

10:00 - 13:00
"Tra studenti: parliamoci e parliamone" - Workshop "John Adams e Thomas Jefferson: destini incrociati" - UNINT, Aula 11, Via delle Sette Chiese, 139

16:00 - 17:30
"Dalla Rivoluzione Americana al costituzionalismo moderno: la Dichiarazione d'Indipendenza come modello storico e giuridico"
Centro Studi Americani, Via Michelangelo Caetani 32

17:30 - 19:30
"Scienziati, innovatori e patrioti: le menti della rivoluzione americana"
Centro Studi Americani, Via Michelangelo Caetani 32

Martedì 17 novembre
10:00 - 11:30
"Il mondo che non c'era: L'America prima di Cristoforo Colombo"
INCONTRO DEDICATO ALLE SCUOLE

11:30 - 13:00
"Dichiarare l'indipendenza, fondare la libertà: la dichiarazione del 1776 alle origini del costituzionalismo americano"
INCONTRO DEDICATO ALLE SCUOLE

10:00 - 12:00
"Self-evident truths: la costruzione del "reale""
Presso Sapienza Università di Roma, Aula 104, Edificio Marco Polo, Circonvallazione Tiburtina, 4

9:00 - 12:30
"Life, liberty and the persuit of happiness: l'origine di una nazione - Tavola Rotonda
Presso Università degli Studi di Tor Vergata - Aula Moscati, Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia, edificio B

14:00 - 15:30
"USA 250: Quando la comunicazione cambia la storia"
Presso Università degli studi RomaTre - Aula 1D, Via Giovanni Chiabrera, 199

Mercoledì 18 novembre
9:00 - 13:00
"Dichiarazioni di Indipendenza: revisioni, riscritture e reinvenzioni"
Presso Università degli Studi di Macerata - Aula Dante Alighieri, Polo Giuseppe Tucci

10:00 - 13:00
"Proiezione del film "L'ultimo dei Mohicani" (1992) di M. Mann."
INCONTRO DEDICATO ALLE SCUOLE

FESTIVAL della CULTURA AMERICANA 250

16:00 - 17:30
"L'America prima di Colombo e della Dichiarazione d'Indipendenza."
Centro Studi Americani, Via Michelangelo Caetani 32

17:00 - 19:00
"Libertà, giustizia e potere negli Stati Uniti nel 250° anniversario della Dichiarazione d'indipendenza" - Presso Università di Bologna, Dipartimento di Scienze Politiche e Sociali, Aula 2, Palazzo Hercolani, Strada Maggiore, 45

18:00 - 20:00
"Modelli, influenze, traduzioni costituzionali: la Dichiarazione di Indipendenza e l'esperienza costituente italiana"
Centro Studi Americani, Via Michelangelo Caetani, 32

12:00 - 14:00
"Il fantasma dell'utopia: eredità irrisolte della Dichiarazione d'Indipendenza"
Presso Sapienza Università di Roma, Aula T01, Edificio Marcopolo, Circonvallazione Tiburtina, 4

14:00 - 15:30
"Un sannò rivoluzionario: Rip Van Winkle e la Dichiarazione d'Indipendenza"
Presso Università degli Studi di Urbino - Aula C, Collegio Raffaello

15:00 - 20:00
"American Book Corner. Piccola fiera del libro e dell'editoria a stelle e strisce
Centro Studi Americani
Via Michelangelo Caetani, 32

15:30 - 17:00
"Indipendenza come tema poetico. Metamorfosi di un'idea nella letteratura americana"
Centro Studi Americani
Via Michelangelo Caetani, 32

17:30 - 19:00
"Tutto è iniziato a Boston: scienza, innovazione e indipendenza americana"
Centro Studi Americani
Via Michelangelo Caetani, 32

A seguire
"250 anni in musica" per raccontare e ripercorrere 250 anni di storia americana
Centro Studi Americani
Via Michelangelo Caetani, 32

17:30 - 19:30
"Reflections on Independence" - Tavola rotonda
Presso Loyola Rome, Via Massimi 114/A

Giovedì 19 novembre
10:00 - 11:30
"Cybersecurity: come proteggersi e (sopra)vivere online"
INCONTRO DEDICATO ALLE SCUOLE

11:30 - 13:00
Proiezione del docufilm "My Florita" e dibattito
INCONTRO DEDICATO ALLE SCUOLE

11:00 - 13:00
"I 250 anni della Dichiarazione d'Indipendenza degli Stati Uniti e il nuovo Disordine"
Presso Università Mercatorum

16:30 - 17:30
"Il baseball: un ponte di sport e cultura fra Italia e USA"
Centro Studi Americani, Via Michelangelo Caetani 32

18:00 - 20:00
"The Pink Frontier: cowgirls e altre eroine del western nel cinema muto"
Centro Studi Americani, Via Michelangelo Caetani, 32

Venerdì 20 novembre
16:00 - 17:30
"Interpretazioni e reinterpretazioni del mito della dichiarazione d'indipendenza tra filosofia, storia, economia e cinema"
Presso Università LUMSA - Sala Pia, Sede Giubileo, Via di Porta Castello, 44

17:00 - 18:30
"250 anni di leadership e innovazione: università e società negli Stati Uniti"
Centro Studi Americani, Via Michelangelo Caetani, 32

SCOPRI GLI SPEAKER

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But there's more: our "Italian American Connection Index 2026" survey remains open until October 31. We're only a few responses away from surpassing 1,000 participants! Conducted by We the Italians and the Italian America Reputation Lab, this research explores how Italian Americans relate to their heritage, cultural identity, traditions, and Italy today. Every answer helps us better understand and strengthen these connections. If you haven't participated, please take a few minutes to do so, and share the survey with family and friends.



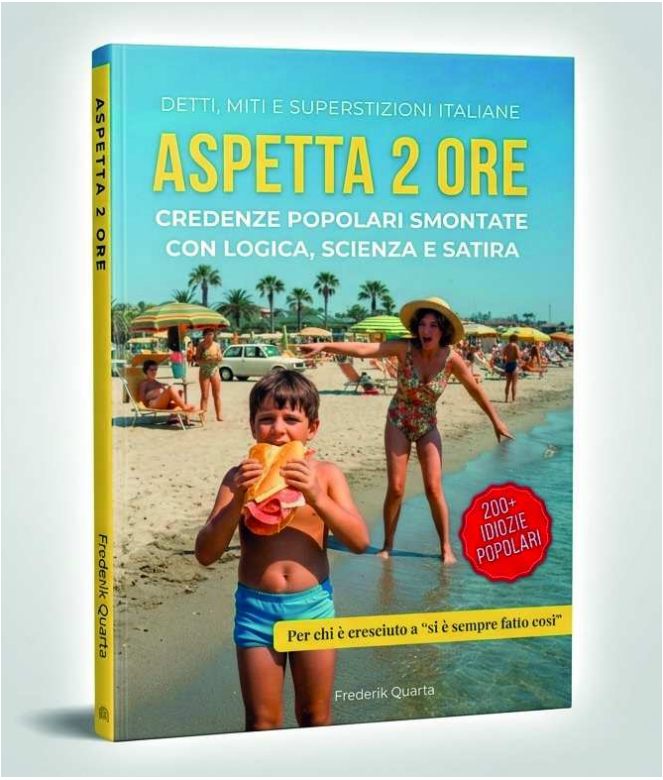
And there's still more to share. I recently had the pleasure of attending Friday's events at the Italian Embassy in Washington and Saturday's NIAF Gala. These occasions are always wonderful opportunities to reconnect with old friends, meet new people, build professional relationships, exchange ideas, and learn. Congratulations to our friends at NIAF





for another excellent event.

Back in Rome, we're introducing two brand-new monthly columns in We the Italians magazine. The first, "Italian Myths," is written by Frederik Quarta and inspired by his book "Aspetta 2 ore – Credenze popolari smontate con logica, scienza e satira." In the book, Quarta explores more than 200 deeply rooted Italian beliefs using logic, science, and satire. Our column will take readers through regional superstitions, everyday traditions, and advice handed down within families, teasing apart cultural memory and scientific reality without losing the humor that makes these stories so Italian. It's also a way to rediscover customs that traveled across the Atlantic with generations of emigrants.



Our second new column, "Italian Sweets," will celebrate the remarkable desserts and pastries of Italy's regions, specialties that deserve more recognition abroad. Each month, we'll explore one traditional specialty, its ingredients, history, and place in local culture. We begin in Liguria with "The delicate art of Liguria's flower-shaped butter cookies," dedicated to canestrelli, the buttery, flower-shaped cookies

that embody the craftsmanship and distinctive traditions of Italian pastry-making.

Last but not least, our family continues to grow with a new Thematic Ambassador. My friend Giampaolo Girardi is our new We the Italians Ambassador to Law. Giampaolo is a Rome Bar attorney with more than 30 years of experience in civil, commercial, family, and international law. He advises Italian and international clients, specializing in cross-border legal and real estate matters involving U.S. citizens. A bridge between Italy and the U.S., he has served since 2025 as Treasurer of the National Italian American Bar Association (NIABA).

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

It's all for now (I think we did enough in just one month...). 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.

GIAMPAOLO GIRARDI



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.



We the Italians
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ITALIAN CULTURE AND HISTORY

Ostia Antica, discovering the everyday lives of ancient Romans

BY WE THE ITALIANS EDITORIAL STAFF

When we think about ancient Rome, the first images that come to mind are usually emperors, monumental temples, military triumphs, and the Colosseum. Yet the extraordinary civilization that shaped much of the Western world was also built by merchants, craftsmen, sailors, shopkeepers, and families whose daily activities rarely appear in traditional historical narratives. Just outside modern Rome, Ostia Antica offers one of the most fascinating opportunities to discover their world.

Located approximately 25 kilometers (16 miles) southwest of central Rome, Ostia developed near the mouth of the Tiber River. According to Roman tradition, it was founded by King Ancus Marcius in the seventh century BC, although the earliest archaeological evidence of a permanent Roman settlement dates mainly to the fourth century BC.



Its geographical position made Ostia essential to the growth of Rome. As the capital expanded, enormous quantities of grain, olive oil, wine, building materials, and other commodities arrived by sea. Ostia became a major commercial center, connecting the Mediterranean economy with the political and administrative heart of the Roman Empire.

Unlike Pompeii, whose destruction in AD 79 preserved a dramatic snapshot of life, Ostia developed





and changed over many centuries. Its archaeological remains reveal how an urban community adapted to commerce, population growth, and the changing needs of Roman society.

Walking along the Decumanus Maximus, the principal east-west street, visitors encounter a city that feels surprisingly familiar. Apartment buildings, shops, warehouses, public baths, restaurants, and communal spaces demonstrate how Romans organized everyday urban life.

One particularly revealing feature is the insula, a multistory residential building that accommodated people who could not afford the spacious private houses associated with wealthy Roman families. Some buildings in Ostia originally rose several stories high, with shops occupying the ground floor and apartments above.

These structures remind us that apartment living, mixed-use buildings, and densely populated neighborhoods were already important characteristics of urban life nearly 2,000 years ago.

Food was another essential part of Ostia's social identity. The city's thermopolia, establishments where prepared food and drinks could be purchased, illustrate a culture in which eating outside the home was common. One famous example preserves a masonry counter, storage installations, and painted decorations associated with food and commerce.

Public baths provided more than opportunities for personal hygiene. They were places for conversation, exercise, relaxation, and social interaction. The Baths of Neptune, with their remarkable black-and-white mosaics depicting marine creatures and mythological figures, demonstrate the artistic sophistication of spaces used by the broader urban population.

Commerce shaped the city's international character. At the Piazzale delle Corporazioni, behind the theater, mosaic inscriptions and symbols identify commercial operators associated with different Mediterranean ports and regions.

The representations of ships, dolphins, and other maritime imagery evoke the extensive networks





that connected Roman Italy with North Africa, Spain, and other territories.

Ostia was also a religiously diverse city. Archaeologists have identified temples dedicated to traditional Roman gods, sanctuaries associated with eastern cults, a synagogue, and evidence of early Christian communities. The city's inhabitants brought different languages, customs, and beliefs into daily contact.

This cultural complexity challenges the idea of ancient Rome as a socially uniform civilization. Its prosperity depended on movement, exchange, and the coexistence of people from many backgrounds.

For modern Italians, Ostia Antica represents an especially valuable part of the national archaeological heritage. Its streets and buildings preserve the experiences of people whose names have largely disappeared but whose contributions helped sustain one of history's most influential civilizations.

The archaeological park also demonstrates the importance of Italy's continuing work in conservation, research, and cultural education. Excavations and restoration projects allow new generations to understand ancient society beyond the achievements of emperors and military leaders.

Ostia Antica ultimately reveals something fundamental about Roman civilization: its greatness was not confined to monuments and political power. It also emerged from the ordinary routines of working, trading, eating, worshipping, and living together.

In those everyday experiences, separated from us by almost two millennia, we discover a remarkably recognizable human world.





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ITALIAN CUISINE

Fried Perch from Lake Idro, an Italian lakeside tradition

BY ALICE GREGORI

Growing up near Lake Idro, in Northern Italy, freshwater fish was naturally part of our local cooking, and fried perch remains one of the dishes I most closely associate with the lake.

It is an incredibly simple preparation: fresh perch is filleted, dipped in beaten egg, coated in breadcrumbs, and fried until beautifully golden and crisp. There are no elaborate seasonings or sauces—the delicate flavor of the fish is meant to remain at the center of the dish.

This is the kind of recipe that reminds me that some of the most memorable regional Italian foods are often the simplest. Around Lake Idro, fried perch is more than just fried fish; it is one of the flavors that belongs to the place, its waters, and the generations who have lived around them.

Serves 4

Ingredients

1½ lb (650–700 g) fresh freshwater perch fillets, skin removed and carefully deboned 2 large eggs 1½ cups (about 150 g) fine, plain breadcrumbs Fine sea salt Neutral oil for frying, such as sunflower or peanut oil Lemon wedges, for serving, optional Method

Pat the perch fillets thoroughly dry with paper towels. If the fillets are particularly large, cut them into smaller pieces, keeping their natural shape as much as possible.

Crack the eggs into a shallow bowl and beat them lightly with a fork. Place the breadcrumbs in a second shallow dish.

Dip each perch fillet first into the beaten egg, allowing any excess to drip off, then gently coat it in the breadcrumbs on both sides. Press very lightly so the



breadcrumbs adhere without creating a heavy crust.

Heat about 1 inch (2–3 cm) of oil in a wide, heavy pan to approximately 350°F / 175°C.

Fry the fillets in small batches, without overcrowding the pan, until crisp and golden on both sides. Depending on their thickness, small perch fillets will need only about 2–3 minutes per side. Thin perch is particularly well suited to quick frying and should not be overcooked, or its delicate flesh can become dry.

Alice's Note

The secret to this dish is not adding more—it is starting with excellent fish and keeping everything else simple. The breadcrumb coating should be thin and crisp, protecting the delicate perch rather than overwhelming it.

For me, this is one of those recipes where the ingredient, the landscape, and the memory are inseparable. Every time I eat fried perch, I think of Lake Idro.

If You Can't Find Lake Idro Perch

Outside Northern Italy, look first for freshwater perch rather than fish simply marketed as "perch," since that name can refer to several quite different species.

In North America, yellow perch is an excellent choice: it has similarly delicate, mild flesh and is particularly well suited to frying. Walleye is another very good freshwater alternative, although its fillets are generally larger and can be cut into smaller pieces before breading.





We the Italians
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ITALIAN ENTERTAINMENT

When Italy sang through television themes

BY WE THE ITALIANS EDITORIAL STAFF

In the Italy that grew up with the revolution brought by the television, its theme songs ("sigle") were never merely background music attached to opening credits. They announced that everyone should come into the room, turn toward the television, and prepare to enter a shared world. Children, parents, and grandparents heard the same melody. Soon, everyone was singing it.

This phenomenon grew especially powerful when national television still gathered enormous audiences. *Canzonissima*, which began on radio in 1956 and adopted its famous name in 1958, became a Saturday-night ritual. In 1970, Corrado joked about presenting the show before 22 million viewers. Its opening number, *Ma che musica maestro*, introduced a young Raffaella Carrà and instantly joined choreography, fashion, personality, and melody. The song was not disposable packaging – it was polished popular music, written and arranged by accomplished professionals, recorded for television, and released commercially.

Carrà's career demonstrates how naturally television and records reinforced each other. *Chissà se va* accompanied *Canzonissima* in 1971, *Din don dan* opened *Milleluci* in 1974, and *Tanti auguri* became inseparable from *Ma che sera* in 1978. Mina's *Non gioco più*, the closing theme of *Milleluci,* offered another standard altogether: sophisticated orchestration, an unforgettable harmonica part, and the authority of Italy's greatest pop voice.

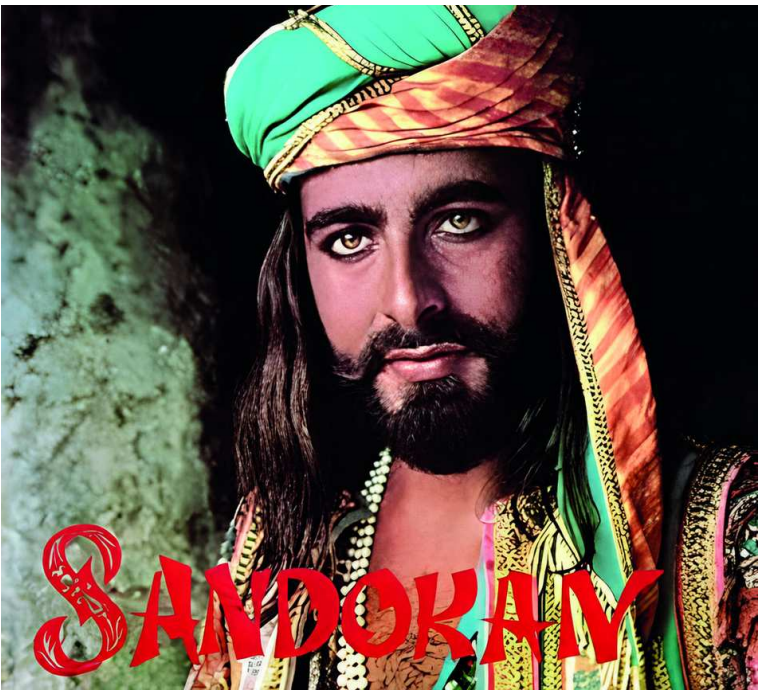
The sigla could also turn drama into national my-



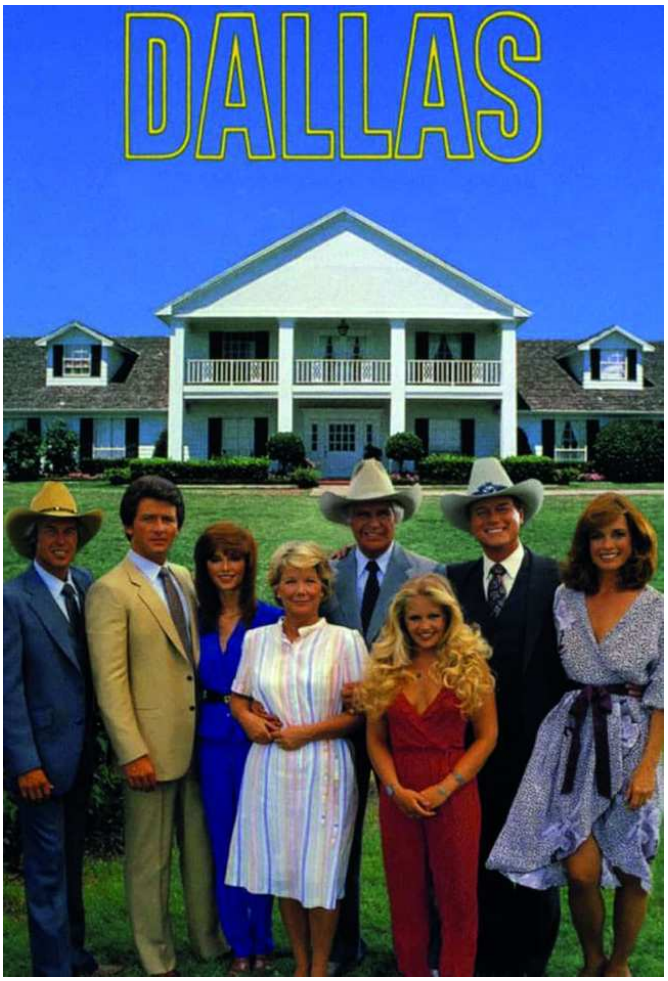
RAFFAELLA CARRÀ



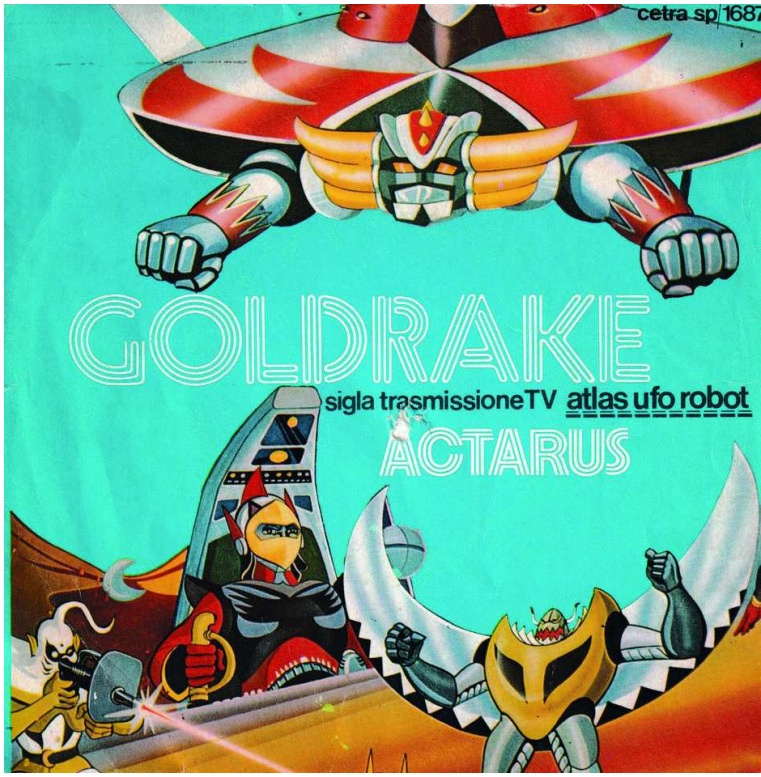
MINA



thology. *Sandokan*, the six-part 1976 miniseries directed by Sergio Sollima, arrived with the Oliver Onions' pounding title song. Written by Guido and Maurizio De Angelis with collaborators, it reached number two on the Italian hit parade. Its opening cry remains instantly recognizable because the composition did more than identify a program – it created adventure before the story had even begun.



The funny thing is that, for those of us who loved America, some American television series effectively had two theme songs. Alongside the original American theme, which many of our American readers of a certain age will remember, there was an Italian one. These were not simply rewritten versions of the originals, but entirely new songs. *Dallas* was one example: when I heard the original theme from the first time I couldn't believe my ears, I had been listening to another theme song for years!



Then cartoons transformed the tradition into a cultural industry. When Japanese animation entered Italian homes, local composers often created entirely new songs rather than simply translating Japanese openings. *Ufo Robot*, written by Luigi Albertelli, Vince Tempera, and Ares Tavolazzi and performed by Actarus, sold more than 1 million copies in 1978, reached number four on the singles chart, and became that year's eighteenth-best-selling single. Those figures belong to mainstream pop,



not a musical footnote for children.

The 1980s expanded the soundtrack. Italian American Heather Parisi's *Disco bambina* and *Cicale* gave *Fantastico* the pulse of contemporary dance music. Lorella Cuccarini's *La notte vola*, created for *Odiens* in 1988, outlived the variety show and became a permanent party anthem. These recordings used major arrangers, studio musicians, orchestras, emerging electronic sounds, memorable bass lines, and precisely engineered choruses. Their quality



LORELLA CUCCARINI LA NOTTE VOLA

explains their survival.

For younger viewers, Cristina D'Avena became the defining voice. From *La canzone dei Puffi* to *Kiss Me Licia*, *Occhi di gatto*, *Mila e Shiro*, and *Piccoli problemi di cuore*, she built a repertoire spanning generations. Published career figures credit her with roughly 750 recorded songs and about 7 million records sold. Adults still sing those refrains at concerts because they are hearing both music and childhood.

Italian sigle mattered because broadcasting once created synchronized memory. A song heard weekly by millions moved from television to 45 rpm singles, cassettes, schoolyards, summer vacations, and family cars. We did not passively recognize these themes – we learned every word and sang them together.

Streaming has multiplied choices and weakened that collective rhythm, but the songs remain. They offer a vivid route into everyday Italian life: not museum culture, but evenings on the sofa, voices from the kitchen, and melodies shared across regions



CRISTINA D'AVENA

and classes. These were real songs, made by serious musicians. Television introduced them, but Italians carried them into history. Their choruses still turn nostalgia into a living, communal Italian language.





We the Italians
two flags one heart

ITALIAN SPORT

When talent runs in the Italian families

BY FEDERICO PASQUALI

In Italian sports, some families have turned talent into a tradition: surnames that span generations, brothers divided by crosstown rivalries or united in an Olympic competition, fathers and daughters connected by the same dive into the water. From soccer dynasties to Olympic triumphs in rowing and diving, these stories reveal an Italy built on heritage, discipline, and passions passed down at home, in the gym, and on the playing field.

Few names embody this tradition as powerfully as Maldini, a true soccer dynasty. Cesare Maldini, a defender and captain of AC Milan, won the European Cup in 1963 and later coached the Italian national team. His son Paolo became one of the most celebrated defenders in world soccer history, an icon of the Rossoneri and winner of five Champions League titles. With Daniel Maldini, Cesare's grandson and Paolo's son, the family wrote another extraordinary chapter. His debut for the Italian national team in 2024 marked the first time three generations of the same family had worn the Azzurri jersey. Daniel had already made history in 2021, when his first Serie A start for Milan was celebrated as the first time three generations of the same family had started matches in Italy's top division.

Soccer also has the two Buffons: Gianluigi, a World Cup champion with Italy in 2006 and a Juventus legend who won 10 domestic league titles, and his son Louis Thomas, who plays for Pisa in Serie B.

Then there are the stories of countless soccer-playing brothers. Perhaps the most famous is that of Giuseppe and Franco Baresi, two brothers raised in Travagliato, near Brescia, who became symbols of opposing sides of Milan. Giuseppe spent much of his career with Inter, while Franco became AC Milan's captain and defining figure, widely regarded as one of the greatest defenders in soccer history. Their sporting rivalry never weakened their family bond: two brothers, two captains, the same stadium, and two opposing colors. Both were called up



MALDINI



BARESI

to the Italian national team for the 1980 European Championship, although they never played together for the senior Azzurri.

Other famous brothers include Simone and Filippo Inzaghi, both of whom represented Italy; Gianluigi and Antonio Donnarumma; Cristiano and Alessandro Lucarelli; Fabio and Paolo Cannavaro; twins Cristian and Damiano Zenoni; and, more recently, Pio and Sebastiano Esposito, who have played together for the Azzurri.



INZAGHI

could witness every Sunday on stadium fields.



D'INZEO

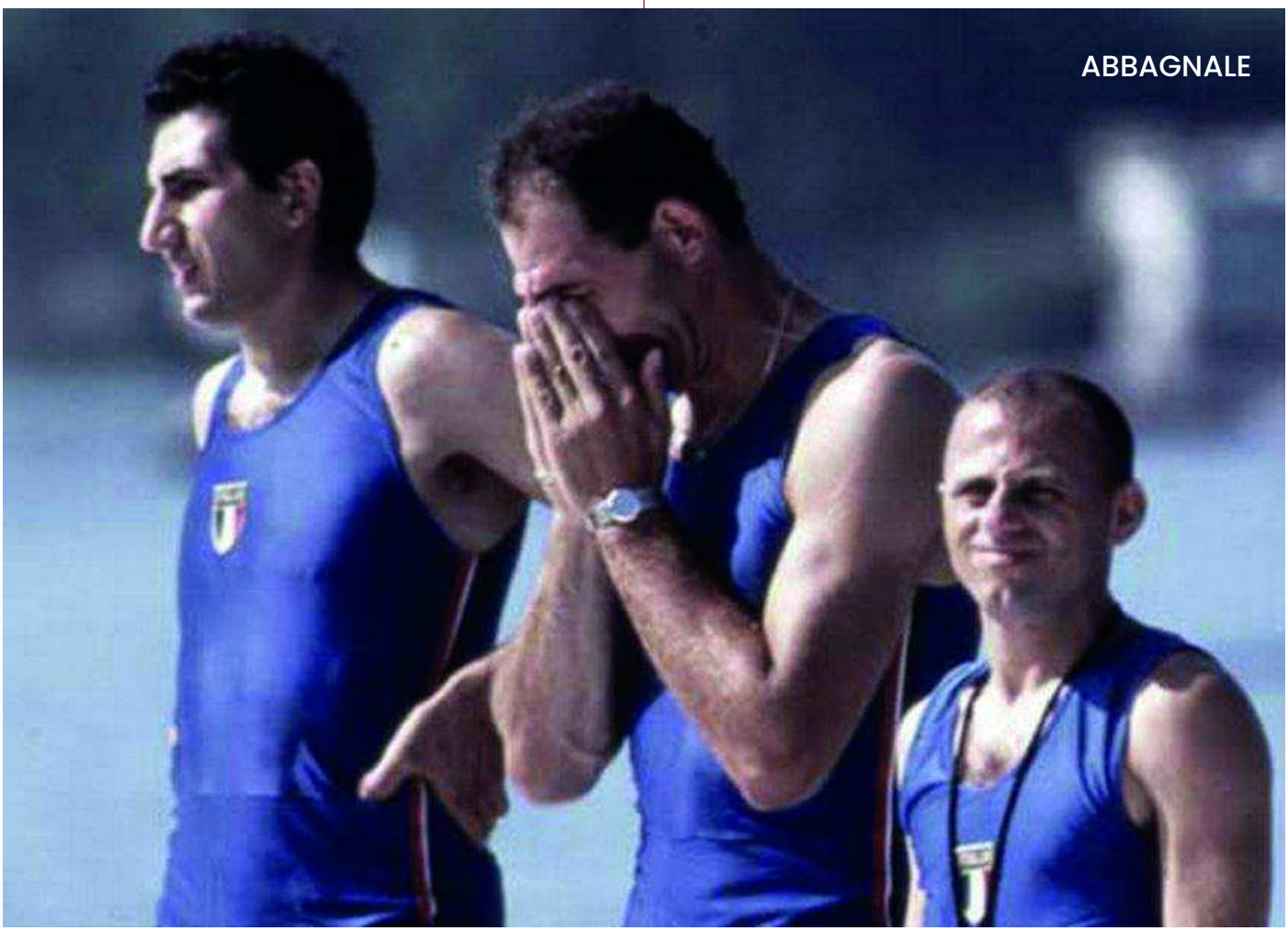
Beyond soccer, Italian sports history is filled with champion brothers and relatives. From the 1960s through the 1980s, the country's most famous sporting brothers were Piero and Raimondo D'Inzeo, two military officers who dominated Italian equestrian

sports for nearly three decades. Officers and accomplished riders, they competed in eight consecutive Olympic Games, from London 1948 to Montreal 1976, a record that made them two of the most recognizable figures in Italian sports. Their greatest moment came at the 1960 Rome Olympics, when Raimondo won gold and Piero silver in individual show jumping. It was an all-Italian triumph, with two brothers nicknamed "the Invincibles" sharing the podium.

During the 1980s and 1990s, the most famous brothers were Giuseppe, Carmine, and Agostino Abbagnale, three rowing champions who wrote one of the most glorious chapters in Italian sports history. Giuseppe and Carmine formed a legendary crew in the coxed pair, winning two Olympic gold medals and seven world titles between 1981 and 1993. Their younger brother Agostino surpassed even his older brothers' Olympic medal count, winning three gold medals in the quadruple sculls and double sculls. At the 1988 Seoul Olympics, all three Abbagnale brothers reached the Olympic podium on the same day, just minutes apart: Giuseppe and Carmine won the coxed pair, while Agostino triumphed in the quadruple sculls.

The world of diving has produced two famous Italian families. The first and best known is the Cagnotto family. Giorgio was one of the world's leading divers during the 1970s, winning two Olympic silver medals and two bronze medals. His daughter Tania transformed that legacy into an extraordinary career, becoming the first Italian female diver to win an Olympic medal. For years, Giorgio also served as her coach, creating a father-daughter relationship that became both the technical and emotional foundation of one of the longest and most successful careers in Italian diving history.

In the new millennium, another diving dynasty





CAGNOTTO



MARCONI

emerged: the Marconi siblings. Nicola became a leading individual competitor for the Italian national team, while his brother Tommaso joined him to form one of the most important men's synchronized diving partnerships in Italian history. Their sister Maria also enjoyed a successful career representing Italy. At the 2008 Beijing Olympics, all three competed, becoming the only three siblings in the discipline to participate simultaneously in the same Olympic Games.

From the swimming pool to the pavement, the most famous brothers in Italian track and field are Giorgio and Maurizio Damilano, two legends of racewalking. Maurizio became Olympic champion at the 1980 Moscow Games, won two world championships, and set a world record, while Giorgio competed for the Italian national team for nearly 20 years.

Then there are the fencing dynasties. The first was the Mangiarotti family, with three brothers introduced to the fencing strip by their father Giuseppe, who had himself represented Italy at the 1908 London Olympics. Edoardo, the most decorated fencer of all time with 13 Olympic medals and 26 World Championship medals, and his brothers Dario and Mario won a combined total of 55 medals between the Olympics and World Championships.

The second great fencing dynasty was the Montano family. It began with Aldo, who won two Olympic


Safilo
51
DAMILANO



silver medals in team saber during the 1930s and 1940s, along with several gold and silver medals at the World Championships and Italian national titles. The tradition continued with his son Mario Aldo, who won an Olympic gold medal in team saber and two silver medals during the 1970s and 1980s. The next generation brought another Aldo Montano, who won individual saber gold at the 2004 Athens Olympics, along with several Olympic and World Championship silver and bronze medals, including team silver at Tokyo 2020.

Finally, volleyball has the Bovolenta family. The father, Igor, a talented player whose life was tragically cut short at the age of 38, won an Olympic silver medal at Atlanta 1996. His son Alessandro became a professional player in Italy's SuperLega and won a silver medal at the 2023 European Championships.

These dynasties are much more than a collection of medals and records. They tell stories of fathers who become coaches and role models for their children, of brothers who push one another beyond their limits, and of family names that become synonymous with an entire sport. And while talent is not automatically inherited, passion can certainly be passed down. More than any collection of trophies and medals, that passion is the true legacy of the families that have helped make Italian sports great.

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We the Italians
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ITALIAN WORLD RECORDS

Teatro di San Carlo, the world's oldest continuously active opera house

BY WE THE ITALIANS EDITORIAL STAFF

In the heart of Naples, just steps from Piazza del Plebiscito and the Royal Palace, stands a magnificent institution that has witnessed nearly three centuries of musical history. The Teatro di San Carlo is recognized as the oldest opera house in the world still in operation, a remarkable distinction that places the Campanian capital at the very origins of modern theatrical culture.

Its story began on November 4, 1737, when King Charles of Bourbon inaugurated an extraordinary new theater intended to celebrate the prestige and cultural ambitions of his kingdom. Naples was already one of Europe's great musical capitals, and the sovereign wanted a venue capable of matching its international reputation.

Designed by architect Giovanni Antonio Medrano, with Angelo Carasale overseeing its realization, the theater was completed in approximately eight months. The original auditorium featured 184 boxes arranged across six levels, a spectacular royal box, and an architectural configuration that would influence generations of European opera houses.

The inaugural performance was Achille in Sciro, composed by Domenico Sarro with a libretto by Pietro Metastasio. The occasion established the San Carlo as an essential destination for composers, singers, aristocrats, and music enthusiasts from across Europe.

Its extraordinary historical record becomes even clearer through comparison. The San Carlo opened 41 years before Milan's Teatro alla Scala, inaugurated in 1778, and 55 years before Venice's Teatro La Fenice, which opened in 1792.

But the distinction is not simply about age. Other opera venues existed earlier, particularly in Ven-







ice, where public opera performances began in the 17th century. The San Carlo's record rests on its exceptional longevity as a functioning opera house, preserving its artistic identity through political upheavals, architectural transformations, and changes in musical taste.

During the 19th century, Naples became a central destination for the greatest figures of Italian opera. Gioachino Rossini maintained a particularly important relationship with the theater, producing major works for its stage during the years when impresario Domenico Barbaja transformed the institution into an international artistic powerhouse.

Gaetano Donizetti also contributed significantly to its reputation. His masterpiece Lucia di Lammermoor premiered at the San Carlo in 1835, adding another milestone to the theater's extraordinary history.

The building itself survived a dramatic catastrophe. On February 13, 1816, a devastating fire destroyed much of the auditorium. Rather than allowing the disaster to end its story, the Bourbon monarchy ordered an immediate reconstruction.

Architect Antonio Niccolini directed the rebuilding, and the theater reopened on January 12, 1817, less than a year after the fire. The reconstruction preserved its distinctive horseshoe-shaped auditorium while introducing architectural and decorative improvements.

The result was so impressive that the French writer Stendhal, visiting Naples in 1817, expressed extraordinary admiration for its magnificence.

Today, entering the San Carlo remains a memorable experience. Its red velvet seating, gilded decorations, elegant balconies, monumental royal box, and richly decorated ceiling create an atmosphere that connects contemporary audiences with centuries of European cultural history.

Yet this is not simply a beautiful historic monument. The San Carlo remains an active artistic in-



stitution, presenting opera, ballet, and symphonic concerts while supporting performers, musicians, dancers, and specialized theatrical professionals.

Its orchestra, ballet company, artistic workshops, and educational activities demonstrate how a historic institution can remain relevant without abandoning its identity.

For Naples, the San Carlo represents much more than an architectural masterpiece. It is evidence of the city's extraordinary contribution to the development of European music and of the cultural leadership that southern Italy exercised long before the emergence of the modern Italian state.

The most remarkable aspect of this world record is perhaps its continuity: generations of audiences have changed, kingdoms have disappeared, and musical styles have evolved, but the San Carlo remains a place where history is not simply remembered.

It is still performed.



We the Italians
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ITALIAN LAND AND NATURE

Lessinia and the extraordinary natural heritage of Verona's highlands

BY WE THE ITALIANS EDITORIAL STAFF

Just north of Verona, where the vineyards and cultivated plains of the Veneto gradually give way to mountains, lies a landscape that tells a story stretching back millions of years. Lessinia is a world of limestone plateaus, deep valleys, ancient forests, fossil deposits, and high-altitude pastures, where geology and human history have developed an extraordinary relationship.

Although less internationally famous than the Dolomites or Lake Garda, Lessinia represents one of northern Italy's most fascinating natural environments. Its distinctive character emerges from the interaction between geological forces, biodiversity, and centuries of mountain traditions.

The Lessinia Regional Natural Park, established in 1990, protects approximately 10,000 hectares of territory in the northern part of the province of Verona. The protected area includes upland landscapes, forests, valleys, and remarkable geological formations.

Much of the region consists of sedimentary rocks formed when this part of Italy was covered by ancient seas. Over millions of years, marine organisms accumulated on the seabed, contributing to the formation of the limestone layers that characterize the landscape today.

Subsequent geological movements lifted these deposits, while water, erosion, and changing climatic conditions gradually sculpted the terrain.





The result is an exceptional example of a karst environment, where water dissolves limestone and creates caves, sinkholes, underground channels, and unusual rock formations.

One of the most spectacular examples is the Ponte di Veja, a monumental natural stone bridge created by the collapse and erosion of an ancient cave system. Its impressive limestone arch demonstrates the extraordinary architectural forms that nature can produce without human intervention.

Another remarkable destination is the Valle delle Sfingi, where large limestone blocks have been shaped by erosion into formations resembling mysterious sculptures.

These geological features make Lessinia an open-air classroom for understanding the processes that have shaped the Italian peninsula.

The area's paleontological heritage is equally extraordinary.

The famous fossil deposits of Bolca, on the eastern edge of the Lessinia region, preserve exceptionally detailed remains of marine organisms dating to the Eocene epoch, approximately 50 million years ago.

The fossils include fish, crustaceans, plants, and other organisms that once inhabited a warm tropical marine environment.

Many specimens are so well preserved that their anatomical details remain clearly recognizable, providing scientists with valuable information about ancient ecosystems and the evolution of marine life.

The fossil collections associated with Bolca have attracted scientific interest for centuries and remain internationally important for paleontological research.



Lessinia's natural diversity extends far beyond its geological heritage.

Its forests contain beech trees, maples, and other mountain species, while open grasslands and rocky environments provide habitats for a variety of birds, mammals, and plants.

The region's changing elevations and environmental conditions create a mosaic of ecosystems, each supporting different forms of life.

Large mammals, including wolves, have returned to parts of the wider Lessinia landscape in recent decades, highlighting both the ecological significance of the area and the challenges of coexistence between wildlife and traditional livestock farming.

Human activity has also shaped the region for centuries.

The highland pastures, known locally as malghe, reflect a long history of seasonal grazing and dairy production. During warmer months, cattle traditionally move to mountain pastures, where their milk contributes to the production of distinctive local cheeses.

Among the area's best-known products is Monte Veronese, a Protected Designation of Origin cheese

closely associated with the agricultural traditions of the Verona mountains.

The cultural identity of Lessinia also reflects the historical presence of Cimbrian-speaking communities, whose Germanic linguistic heritage influenced local place names, architecture, and traditions.

This combination of natural and cultural elements gives the territory an identity that cannot be understood through scenery alone.

For visitors, Lessinia offers opportunities to explore walking trails, discover traditional mountain settlements, observe wildlife, and experience landscapes that change dramatically with the seasons.

Spring brings flowering meadows, summer opens the high pastures, autumn transforms the forests, and winter can cover the plateau with snow.

Yet the value of Lessinia goes beyond outdoor recreation.

Its fossils, karst formations, biodiversity, and pastoral landscapes demonstrate the importance of protecting environments where geological history and human activity remain deeply interconnected.

In a country celebrated for its artistic monuments and historic cities, Lessinia reminds us that Italy's natural heritage is equally extraordinary.

Here, the landscape itself is a monument, created over millions of years and continuously enriched by the relationship between nature and the communities that inhabit it.



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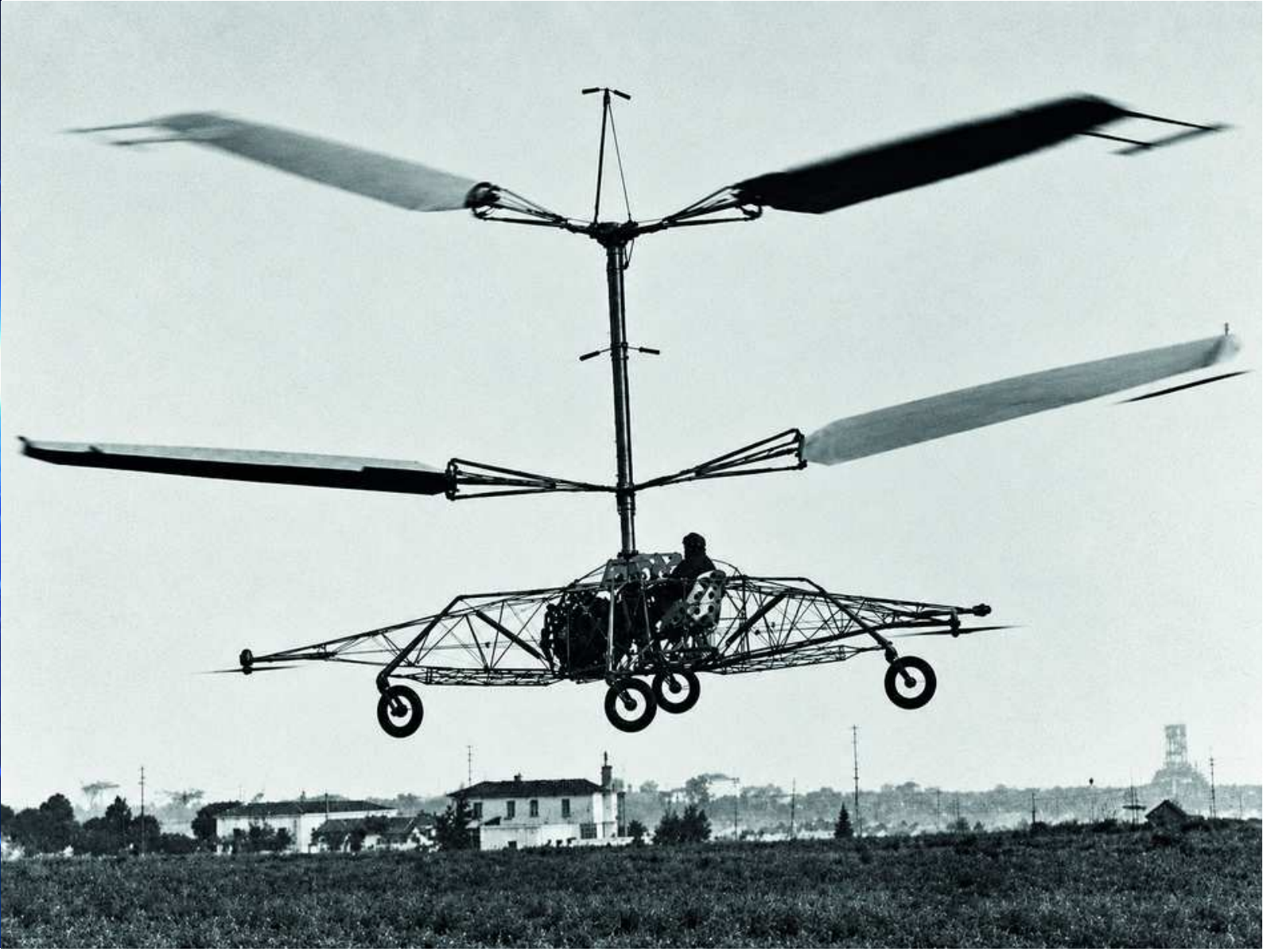
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We the Italians
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ITALIAN INVENTIONS

Corradino D'Ascanio and the invention of the modern helicopter prototype

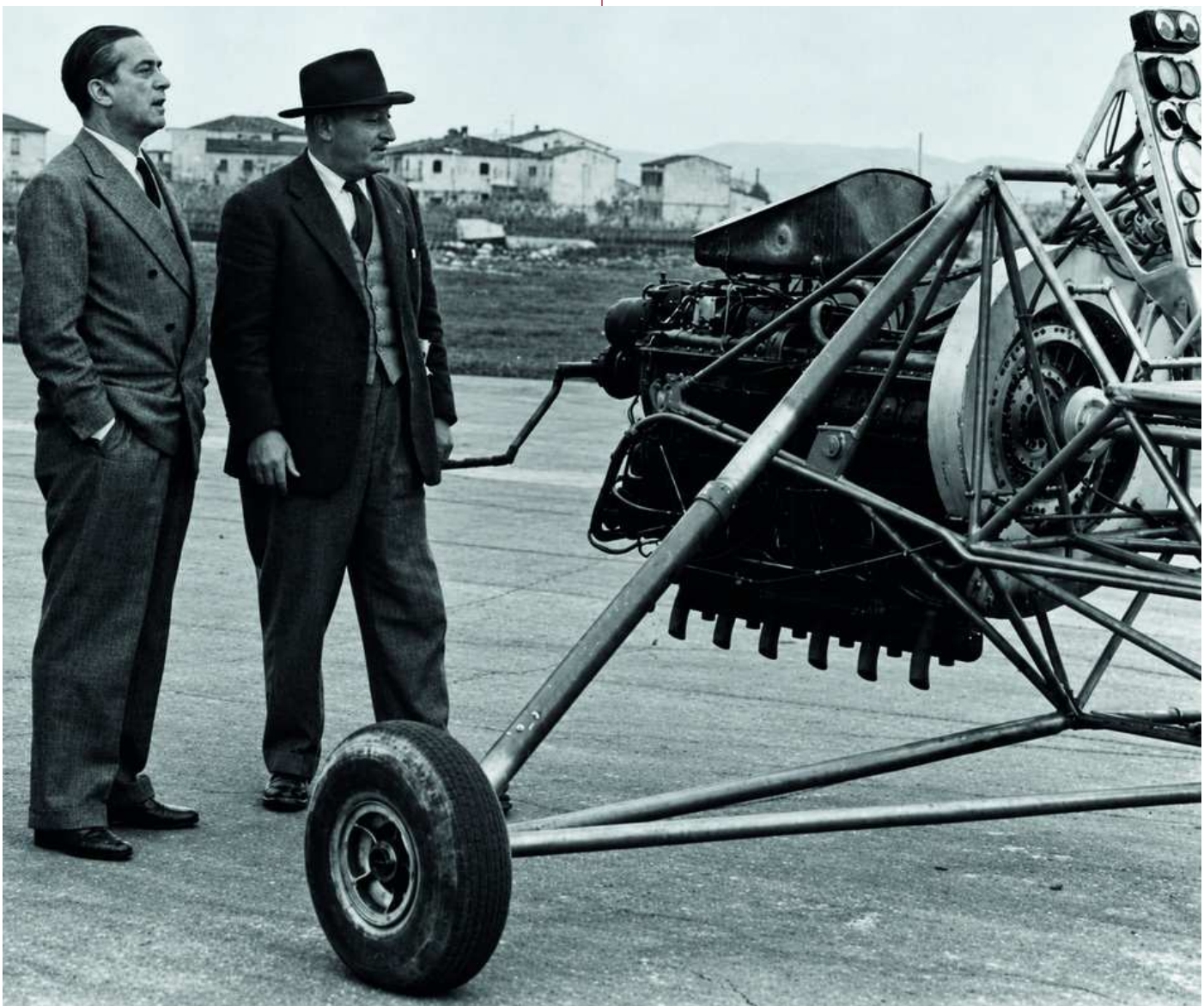
BY WE THE ITALIANS EDITORIAL STAFF

Before helicopters became indispensable to emergency medicine, military operations, transportation, and rescue missions, they represented one of aviation's greatest engineering challenges. How could a machine rise vertically, remain suspended in the air, and move safely in any direction? Among the pioneers who helped answer that question was Corradino D'Ascanio, a brilliant Italian engineer born in Popoli, Abruzzo, on February 1, 1891.



D'Ascanio grew up fascinated by flight. In 1906, when he was only 15, he reportedly built an experimental glider using simple materials, including bedsheets. The Wright brothers had made their historic powered flight just three years earlier, and aviation was still an emerging frontier. For the young inventor, however, flying was already a lifelong obsession.

After studying mechanical engineering, D'Ascanio pursued opportunities in aeronautics. Between



1918 and 1919, he also spent time in the United States, where he worked on aircraft projects and explored the possibilities of a rapidly developing industry. His American experience was relatively brief, but it reflected an ambition that extended well beyond Italy.

Back in his homeland, D'Ascanio concentrated on a particularly difficult problem: vertical flight. Conventional airplanes needed forward motion to generate lift. A helicopter, by contrast, had to achieve lift and stability while hovering, requiring extraordinarily sophisticated mechanical solutions.

Working with Baron Pietro Trojani, D'Ascanio developed several experimental aircraft. His most significant achievement was the D'AT3, a helicopter prototype equipped with two coaxial, counter-rotating rotors. This configuration helped counteract the torque produced by the spinning blades, while innovative control mechanisms improved the pilot's ability to manage the aircraft.







The decisive breakthrough came in October 1930 at Rome's Ciampino Airport.

Between October 8 and 13, test pilot Marinello Nelli established three internationally recognized helicopter records aboard the D'AT3. The machine remained airborne for 8 minutes and 45 seconds, covered a straight-line distance of 1,078 meters – approximately 3,537 feet – and reached an altitude of 18 meters, or about 59 feet.

These figures may appear modest compared with modern helicopters, but in 1930 they represented an extraordinary achievement. D'Ascanio had demonstrated that a helicopter could accomplish controlled, sustained flight rather than merely make brief experimental hops.

He was not the first person to investigate rotary-wing flight, and several international pioneers contributed to helicopter development. Nevertheless, his engineering solutions and record-breaking prototype earned him an important place in the history of modern aviation.

Unfortunately, technological success did not immediately translate into commercial production. The Italian aviation authorities eventually withdrew financial support, preventing the D'AT3 from evolving into a mass-produced aircraft. D'Ascanio's ambition to revolutionize flying remained only partially fulfilled.

Yet his engineering career took another remarkable turn.

In 1932, he began collaborating with Piaggio, then an important aircraft manufacturer. After World War II, Enrico Piaggio asked him to design an affordable vehicle suitable for a country struggling to rebuild its economy.

The result was the Vespa, introduced in 1946. D'Ascanio applied principles from aeronautical engi-

neering to create a scooter that was comfortable, practical, mechanically accessible, and easy to ride. Its cantilevered wheel mounting reflected solutions familiar from aircraft landing gear.

The inventor who had helped helicopters rise into the sky had also transformed mobility on the ground.

Today, D'Ascanio's legacy belongs both to the history of aviation and to the extraordinary tradition of Italian industrial design. His story also reminds us that technological revolutions do not always begin in famous laboratories or major industrial capitals. Sometimes they begin with a curious teenager in a small Abruzzo town, looking upward and imagining that human beings could fly differently.





We the Italians
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ITALIAN FLAVORS

Aceto Balsamico Tradizionale di Modena, when time becomes an ingredient

BY WE THE ITALIANS EDITORIAL STAFF

In a world where food production increasingly emphasizes speed, efficiency, and standardization, one Italian specialty continues to follow a radically different philosophy. Aceto Balsamico Tradizionale di Modena is produced through a process that cannot be rushed, accelerated, or easily replicated. Its most important ingredient is not simply grapes, but time itself.

This extraordinary product comes from the province of Modena, in Emilia-Romagna, where generations of families have transformed cooked grape must into a complex, aromatic condiment through natural fermentation, slow oxidation, and prolonged aging in wooden barrels.

Unlike many products commonly sold as balsamic vinegar, the traditional version is governed by strict production rules and protected by the European Union's Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) certification. Its identity is inseparable from its geographical origins, production methods, and centuries-old cultural heritage.

The basic ingredient is surprisingly simple: grape must obtained from varieties traditionally cultivated in the Modena area, including Lambrusco, Trebbiano, Ancellotta, and other authorized grapes.

After harvesting, the grapes are pressed, and the must is slowly cooked in open vessels. This process concentrates the natural sugars and initiates the transformation that will eventually produce balsamic vinegar.

The cooked must is then placed in a series of wooden barrels known as a batteria. These barrels, traditionally arranged from larger to smaller capacities, are often made from different woods, including oak, chestnut, cherry, mulberry, and juniper.

Each wood can contribute particular aromatic characteristics, creating a distinctive relationship between the liquid and its container.

The barrels are usually kept in attics, where seasonal temperature variations play an important role.



Hot summers encourage evaporation and concentration, while colder winters influence the slow biological and chemical processes responsible for the condiment's evolution.

Every year, producers carefully transfer small quantities of liquid between barrels in a practice known as travasi e rincalzi. The smallest barrel is replenished from the next larger one, continuing through the series, while the largest receives additional cooked must.

This system means that traditional balsamic vinegar is not simply left undisturbed for a fixed number of years. Instead, it develops through a dynamic process involving different stages of maturation and the accumulated knowledge of the producer.

Under PDO regulations, Aceto Balsamico Tradizionale di Modena must undergo a minimum aging period of 12 years. The Extravecchio designation is reserved for products aged for at least 25 years.

These periods reflect the extraordinary patience required to achieve the characteristic balance of sweetness, acidity, density, and aromatic complexity.



The finished product is evaluated through a formal certification process that includes analytical and sensory examinations. Only vinegar meeting the required standards can be bottled in the distinctive 100-milliliter glass container designed by Italian automotive designer Giorgetto Giugiaro.

This connection between gastronomy and indus-



trial design is another expression of Modena's remarkable creative identity, a territory internationally celebrated for both exceptional food and high-performance automobiles.

The condiment itself is used differently from ordinary vinegar. Rather than serving primarily as an ingredient in salad dressings, it is often applied in small quantities to enhance particular dishes.

A few drops can enrich Parmigiano Reggiano, risotto, roasted meats, or fresh fruit. Its complexity also makes it suitable for tasting on its own, allowing the different aromatic notes to emerge gradually.

But the cultural importance of traditional balsamic vinegar extends beyond gastronomy.

Historically, families in Modena maintained their own batteries of barrels, sometimes passing them from one generation to another. A new battery could be established to celebrate a child's birth, becoming a living family possession that matured alongside its owner.

Knowledge was transmitted through observation, experience, and personal relationships rather than industrial formulas.

Today, traditional balsamic vinegar represents a valuable part of Italy's agricultural and artisanal heritage. Its production supports specialized skills, local grape cultivation, and a distinctive economy rooted in territorial identity.

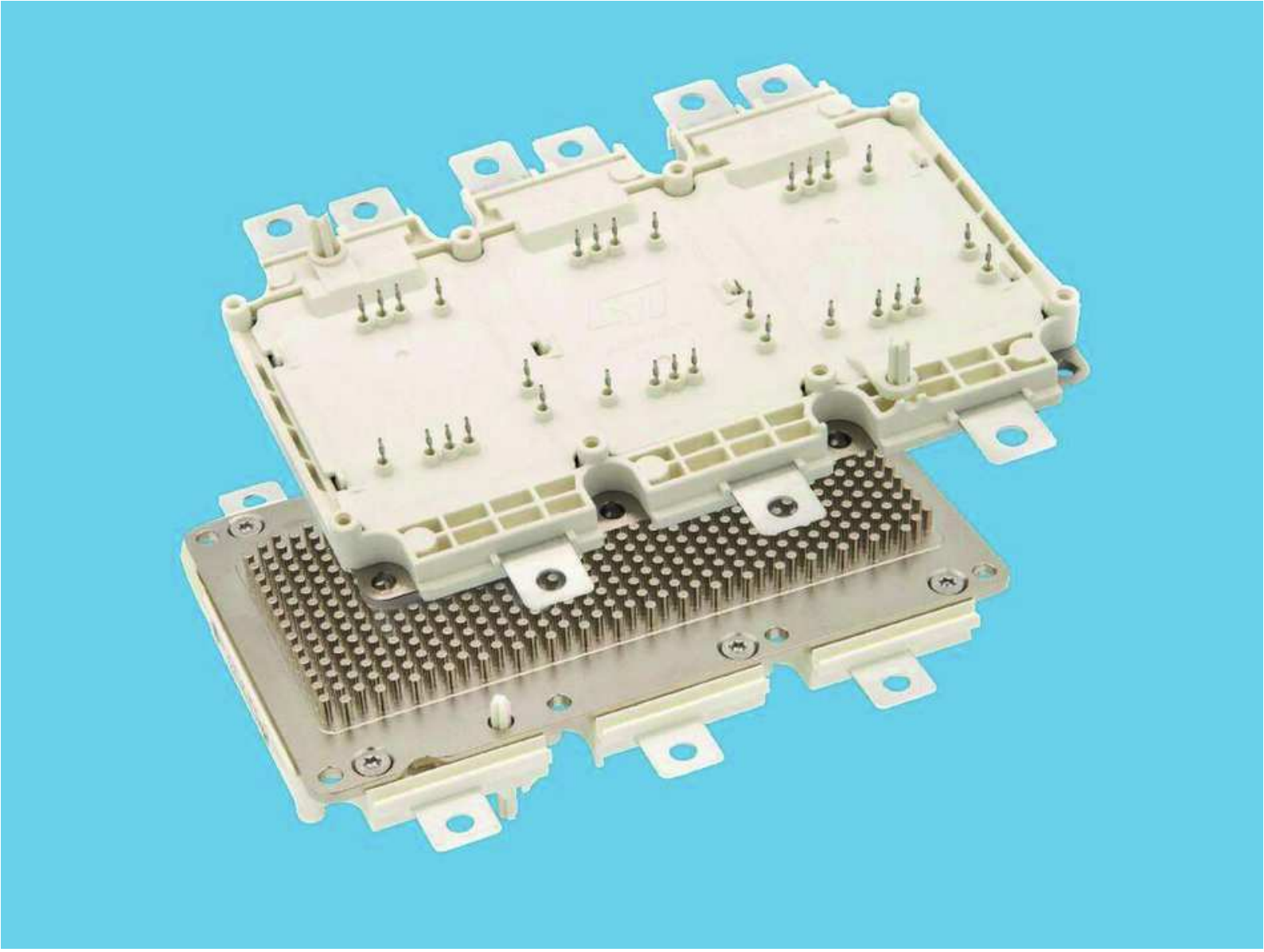
It also offers an important lesson about the meaning of quality in Italian food culture. Excellence does not always depend on elaborate ingredients or complicated recipes. Sometimes it emerges from the careful transformation of something remarkably simple.

In Modena, grapes, wood, climate, and human expertise combine to create a product that embodies the continuity between past and present.

Every drop contains years of work, generations of knowledge, and the unmistakable character of its homeland.

Aceto Balsamico Tradizionale di Modena is therefore more than a condiment. It is one of Italy's most eloquent demonstrations that time, when guided by tradition and craftsmanship, can become an extraordinary ingredient.





We the Italians
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ITALIAN INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS

Etna Valley and Sicily's rise as a European semiconductor powerhouse

BY WE THE ITALIANS EDITORIAL STAFF

Sicily is internationally celebrated for its archaeological heritage, extraordinary landscapes, and centuries of cultural exchange. Yet on the eastern side of the island, in the shadow of Mount Etna, another distinctive Italian achievement has taken shape: one of Europe's most important centers for microelectronics and semiconductor technology.

Known as Etna Valley, the industrial and technological ecosystem surrounding Catania demonstrates how scientific expertise, manufacturing investment, and cooperation between universities and businesses can transform a regional economy.

Its development also challenges a familiar stereotype about southern Italy, showing that the Mezzogiorno can play a significant role in some of the world's most advanced industrial sectors.

The origins of Etna Valley date primarily to the second half of the 20th century, when electronics manufacturing began establishing a presence in the Catania area. A decisive contribution came from the operations that eventually became part of STMicroelectronics, the multinational semiconductor company created in 1987 through the merger of Italy's SGS Microelettronica and France's Thomson Semiconducteurs.

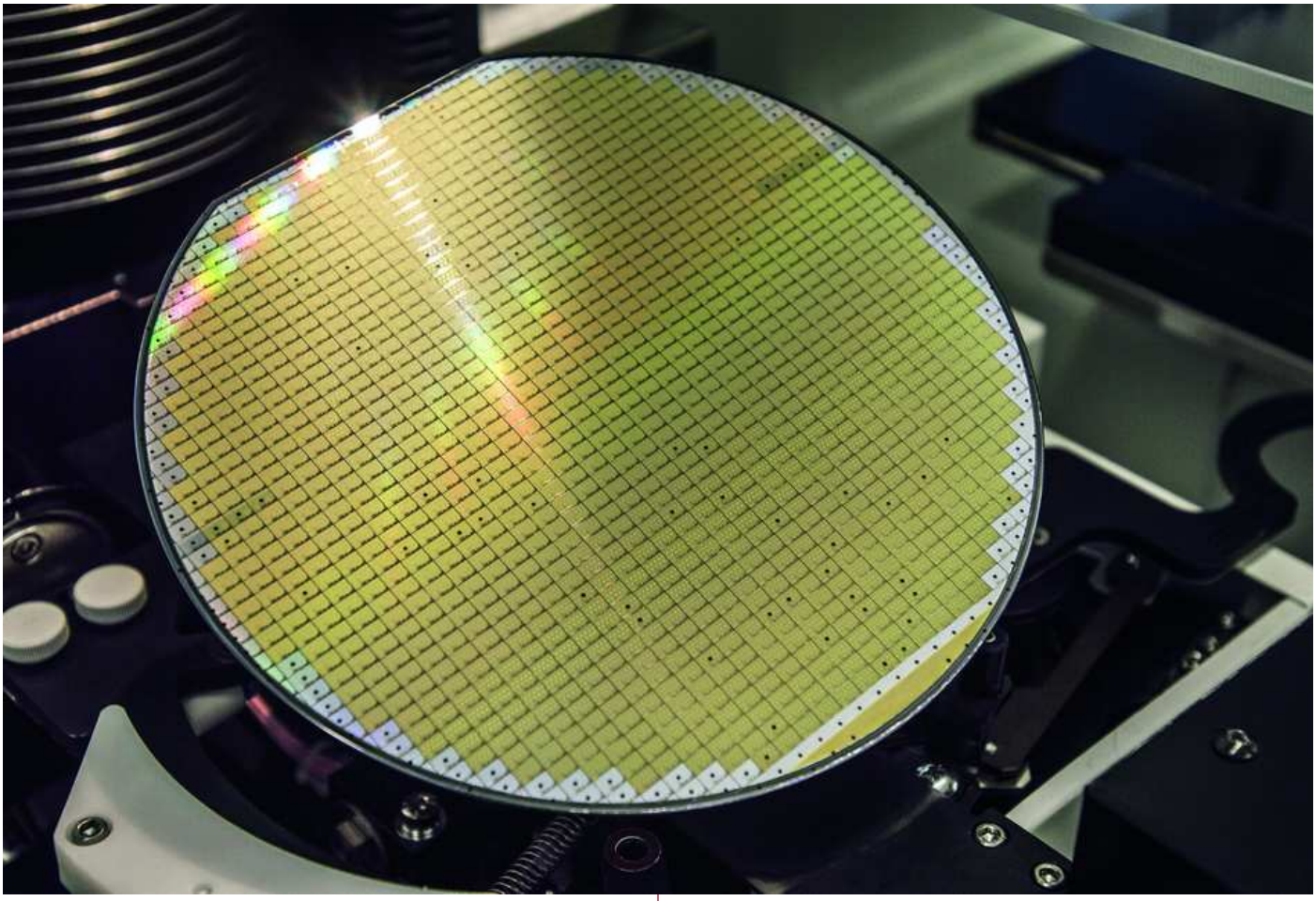
STMicroelectronics developed Catania into a major center for semiconductor research, development, and manufacturing, attracting engineers, technicians, suppliers, and specialized service companies.

Over time, the concentration of technological activities encouraged the emergence of a broader industrial district, with connections to telecommunications, information technology, electronics, and advanced materials.

The term Etna Valley, inspired by California's Silicon Valley, reflects this ambition to establish an internationally competitive technology ecosystem in Sicily.

Semiconductors are essential components of modern life. They control electrical signals in devices





ranging from smartphones and computers to automobiles, medical equipment, industrial machinery, and renewable energy systems.

Their strategic importance has increased dramatically as governments and manufacturers seek to strengthen technological independence and make global supply chains more resilient.

One of Catania's particular strengths is the development of silicon carbide technology.

Silicon carbide, commonly abbreviated as SiC, is a semiconductor material with properties that make it especially valuable for power electronics. Compared with conventional silicon in suitable applications, it can support higher operating voltages, greater thermal performance, and improved energy efficiency.

These characteristics are particularly important for electric vehicles, charging infrastructure, industrial power systems, and renewable energy installations.

STMicroelectronics has made Catania a central location in its silicon carbide strategy. In 2024, the company announced plans for a new integrated silicon carbide manufacturing facility in the city, representing an investment of approximately €5 billion, including public support provided within the European regulatory framework.

The project is designed to develop an integrated production ecosystem covering different stages of silicon carbide manufacturing, from substrate development to semiconductor devices.

Its significance extends beyond the investment itself. Semiconductor manufacturing requires highly specialized infrastructure, substantial research capabilities, and a skilled workforce.

A major production facility can therefore generate opportunities for suppliers, universities, research laboratories, engineering companies, and technical training institutions.

The University of Catania plays an important role in this ecosystem, providing education and research in engineering, physics, materials science, and related disciplines.

Collaboration between academic institutions and industrial companies helps prepare the professionals required by an increasingly sophisticated technological sector.

Other companies and research organizations contribute to the area's broader electronics and digital economy, reinforcing connections between manufacturing, software development, automation, and innovation.

The district also illustrates an important characteristic of Italian industrial development. While many internationally recognized Italian industries are organized around traditional manufacturing specializations, Etna Valley represents a technologically intensive model in which scientific knowledge and industrial production are closely integrated.

Its success depends not only on individual companies but also on the relationships connecting businesses, researchers, educational institutions, and public authorities.

Challenges remain. Semiconductor manufacturing is capital-intensive, global competition is strong, and technological development requires continuous investment. Energy costs, infrastructure, and the availability of qualified professionals also influence the district's long-term competitiveness.

Nevertheless, Etna Valley has established Catania as an important participant in Europe's semiconductor landscape.

For Italy, this achievement carries a broader economic and cultural meaning. It demonstrates that the country's industrial identity extends far beyond the traditional excellence of fashion, food, furniture, and automotive design.





Italian expertise also contributes to the invisible technologies that make contemporary society function.

At the foot of Europe's most famous active volcano, engineers and researchers are helping develop the electronic components that will shape future transportation, energy systems, and industrial production.

Etna Valley is therefore more than a geographical concentration of technology companies. It is evidence of Sicily's capacity to combine education, scientific research, and manufacturing excellence, connecting a territory renowned for its ancient history with some of the most advanced technologies of the 21st century.



We the Italians
two flags one heart

ITALIAN GOOD NEWS

Italian neurostimulation breakthrough helps four people with complete spinal cord injuries walk again

BY WE THE ITALIANS EDITORIAL STAFF

Italian researchers have achieved a promising advance in neurotechnology, enabling four people with severe spinal cord injuries to stand and walk with a walker by using small voluntary movements of their upper body to control electrical stimulation of the spinal cord.

The experimental approach was developed by the MINE Lab, a collaboration involving IRCCS San Raffaele Hospital and Vita-Salute San Raffaele University in Milan and the Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies in Pisa. The research brings together neurosurgery, rehabilitation and bioengineering to develop practical technologies for people living with paralysis.

The study involved 4 Italian participants – 3 men and 1 woman, all under age 35 – with chronic traumatic spinal cord injuries between the T4 and T7 vertebral levels. Their injuries were classified AIS A or B and were functionally complete from a motor perspective. Before treatment, none could voluntarily contract the muscles of the lower limbs.

Researchers implanted a commercially available epidural spinal cord stimulator. Unlike some highly experimental neuroprosthetic systems, the Italian approach does not require a brain implant, external movement sensors or algorithms that decode brain activity.

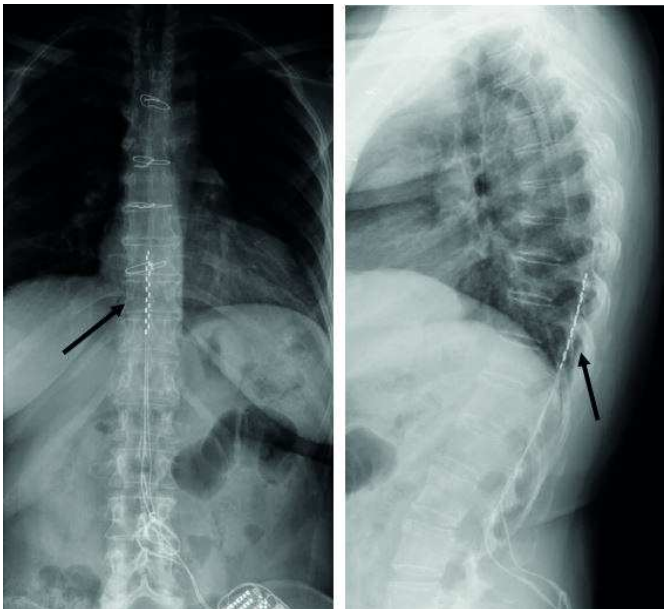
Instead, it takes advantage of something the participants can still control – their trunks.

The researchers discovered that subtle voluntary movements of the torso could alter the effects of spinal stimulation. This makes it possible to switch between the leg extension needed to support body weight and the coordinated flexion of the hip, knee and ankle required to take a step.



The researchers call the approach trunk-mediated control.

After implantation, the participants underwent 4 months of intensive and individualized rehabilitation. Training progressed from controlling the trunk and stimulation-assisted movements to standing, shifting body weight and eventually walking.



All 4 participants ultimately achieved a score of 9 on the Walking Index for Spinal Cord Injury II, compared with zero before the intervention. They could stand and walk using a walker without manual assistance from another person and without a body-weight support system.

One participant walked continuously for 132 meters – about 433 feet – over 42 minutes. The participants were also able to negotiate turns, slopes and irregular outdoor surfaces. Three became capable of standing while supporting themselves with only 1 hand, leaving the other free to perform simple activities.

The results are particularly significant because the technology transforms the person's own body into part of the control system. The participants decide when to initiate the movements through voluntary actions of the trunk, while electrical stimulation generates the corresponding movement in the legs.

The researchers emphasize that the spinal injuries themselves were not reversed. None of the participants regained voluntary contraction of the leg

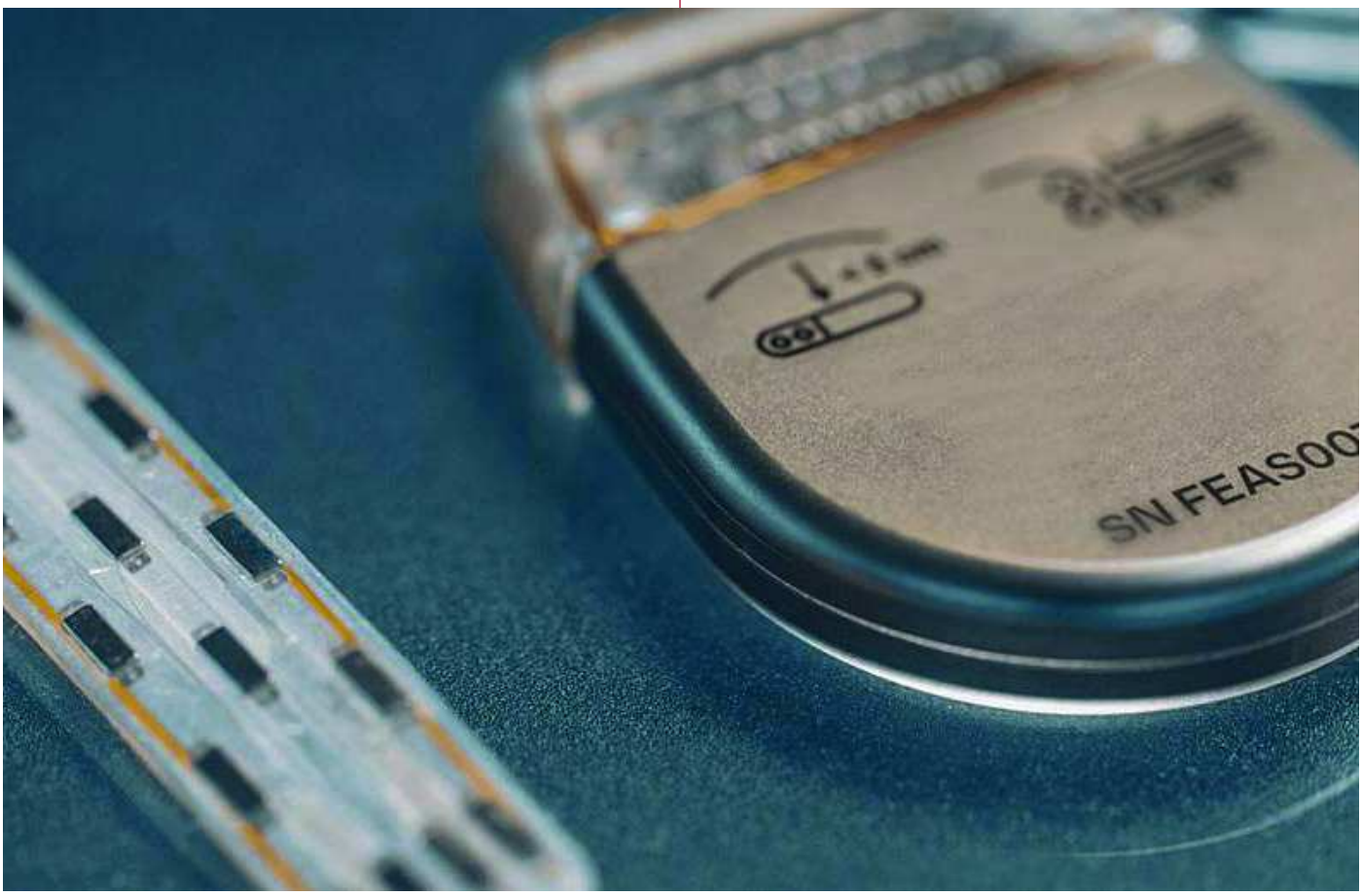


muscles during the study.

That distinction makes the achievement no less promising. By combining an already commercially available spinal stimulator with innovative rehabilitation and a surprisingly simple biological control mechanism, the Italian team has demonstrated a potentially more accessible path for future neuroprosthetic treatments.

The study is still based on only 4 participants, so larger clinical investigations will be necessary. But the results provide another encouraging example of how Italian neuroscience, medicine and engineering are converging to turn sophisticated research into technologies capable of improving independence and quality of life.







We the Italians
two flags one heart

ITALIAN SPIRITS

The bittersweet soul of Calabria's herbal liqueurs

BY WE THE ITALIANS EDITORIAL STAFF

In southern Italy, where the mountains descend toward two seas and the Mediterranean climate nurtures an extraordinary variety of aromatic plants, a distinctive tradition has developed around one of the country's most characteristic beverages: amaro. In Calabria, this herbal liqueur is much more than a drink enjoyed after dinner. It represents a fascinating connection between nature, traditional knowledge, local entrepreneurship, and the Italian art of transforming simple ingredients into something unmistakably regional.



The word amaro means bitter, but the beverage itself is considerably more complex. Its character emerges from the combination of herbs, roots, citrus peels, spices, and other botanical ingredients, carefully balanced to produce a distinctive relationship between bitterness, sweetness, and aromatic intensity.

Although herbal preparations have existed for centuries, the modern Italian amaro tradition developed particularly during the 19th century, when pharmacies, monasteries, and family businesses began transforming botanical recipes into commercially produced liqueurs.



Calabria offered an especially favorable environment for this evolution.

The region extends between the Tyrrhenian and Ionian seas, with mountainous territories including the Sila, Aspromonte, and Pollino. Its varied geography supports numerous aromatic plants, while its agricultural traditions provide ingredients that have become closely associated with the identity of southern Italian liqueurs.

Among them, licorice occupies a particularly important place.

Calabrian licorice has been appreciated for centuries, and Liquirizia di Calabria enjoys Protected Designation of Origin status under European Union regulations. Its distinctive flavor makes it a natural ingredient for liqueurs and other regional specialties.

Citrus fruits also contribute to Calabria's aromatic heritage. Bergamot, cultivated particularly along the Ionian coast around Reggio Calabria, is internationally recognized for its essential oils and distinctive fragrance. Bitter oranges, lemons, and other



Mediterranean fruits provide additional possibilities for botanical preparations.

One of the most famous expressions of Calabria's amaro tradition is Vecchio Amaro del Capo, produced by the Caffo family.

The company's roots date to 1915, when Giuseppe Caffo acquired a distillery in Santa Venerina, Sicily. The family's business subsequently expanded, establishing an important production presence in Calabria.

Vecchio Amaro del Capo is associated with a recipe containing 29 herbs, flowers, fruits, and roots, selected to create its recognizable aromatic character.

The liqueur takes its name from Capo Vaticano, the spectacular coastal promontory overlooking the Tyrrhenian Sea. Its identity connects the product with Calabria's landscapes, traditions, and Mediterranean atmosphere.

Another interesting example is Amaro Jefferson, produced by Vecchio Magazzino Doganale, a Ca-



labrian company that has developed a contemporary interpretation of traditional herbal liqueurs.

Its botanical character reflects the use of citrus fruits, herbs, and roots, demonstrating how regional ingredients can support innovative products without abandoning their territorial identity.

The success of these producers illustrates a broader development within Italian spirits. Traditional recipes are increasingly being rediscovered by consumers interested in craftsmanship, botanical complexity, and authentic regional origins.

Yet the appeal of amaro is not limited to its ingredients.

In Italian culture, it is closely associated with the conclusion of a meal. The digestivo is often served after coffee, creating a moment when conversation continues and the rhythm of dining gradually slows.

Although herbal liqueurs have historically been associated with digestion, their cultural role should not be confused with scientifically established medical benefits. Their significance lies primarily in flavor, hospitality, and conviviality.

Amaro also demonstrates the importance of sensory balance.

A well-crafted example does not simply overwhelm the palate with bitterness. Instead, its ingredients produce successive impressions: citrus freshness, herbal aromas, warm spices, sweetness, and a lingering bitter finish.

This complexity has encouraged bartenders to incorporate Italian amari into contemporary cocktails, introducing traditional products to international audiences.

For Calabria, the sector represents an opportunity to communicate its identity beyond familiar images of beaches and mountain villages.

Its herbal liqueurs tell stories of agricultural knowledge, family entrepreneurship, botanical diversity,





and the relationship between local ingredients and industrial expertise.

They also belong to the wider Italian tradition of creating products that are simultaneously regional and internationally recognizable.

From small artisanal producers to established companies exporting around the world, Calabria's amaro tradition continues to evolve while preserving its essential connection to the territory.

Each recipe offers a different interpretation of the same idea: that bitterness, when balanced with patience, craftsmanship, and Mediterranean ingredients, can become a remarkable expression of pleasure.

In Calabria, the character of the landscape is not only something to admire. It is also something that can be discovered, one aromatic sip at a time.



We the Italians
two flags one heart

INTERVIEW WITH JOE GERMANOTTA

"Family first" – the Italian American story behind Lady Gaga

BY UMBERTO MUCCI

I am a lucky father, proud of my daughter, just as Joe Germanotta, the subject of this interview, is of his. The difference is not so much that his New York restaurant, Joanne, is celebrating its 15th anniversary these days. The real difference is that his daughter is Stefani – and the whole world knows and loves her as Lady Gaga.

So this interview is certainly about the story of a restaurant that has become an institution in Italian American cuisine – a place where food, tradition, and entertainment come together. But it could hardly tell Joe's story without also portraying him as the father of the brightest star, at least in this writer's eyes, in today's Italian American and American firmament. I thank him for giving me this interview – and for being part of the family that brought Lady Gaga into the world. I also send my warmest congratulations to her, as she recently became a mother herself.

Your family's Italian roots are central to the story of Joanne. Where in Italy does your family come from, and what stories, traditions, or memories of those origins were passed down to you as you were growing up?

The Germanotta side of my family traces its roots to Naso, Sicily, in the province of Messina. My mother, Angeline Calderone, was from Santa Lucia, Sicily. Growing up, our Italian heritage was part of everyday life. It was reflected in the importance of family, the food we ate, and the way everyone gathered around the table.

We always had olive oil and grated cheese on the table, and Christmas Eve meant the traditional Feast of the Seven Fishes. What was passed down most strongly was the importance of working hard, taking care of your family, respecting where you came from, and remembering the sacrifices earlier generations made.

You grew up Italian American in New York. What did "being Italian" mean in your family when you were young, and what does being Italian American in New York mean



FEAST OF THE SEVEN FISHES


JOANNE
TRATTORIA
JOANNE

to you today?

When I was young, being Italian meant family first. It meant Sunday dinners, a lot of food, people talking over one another and knowing that if somebody needed something, the family was there. There was also a strong work ethic. You were expected to work, contribute, and appreciate what you had. Hospitality was important too. If someone came into the house, you fed them.

Today, Italian-American identity may be less connected to a particular neighborhood than it was for earlier generations, but the values of family, food, generosity, hard work, and tradition remain very strong.

Joanne is one way our family keeps that connection alive.

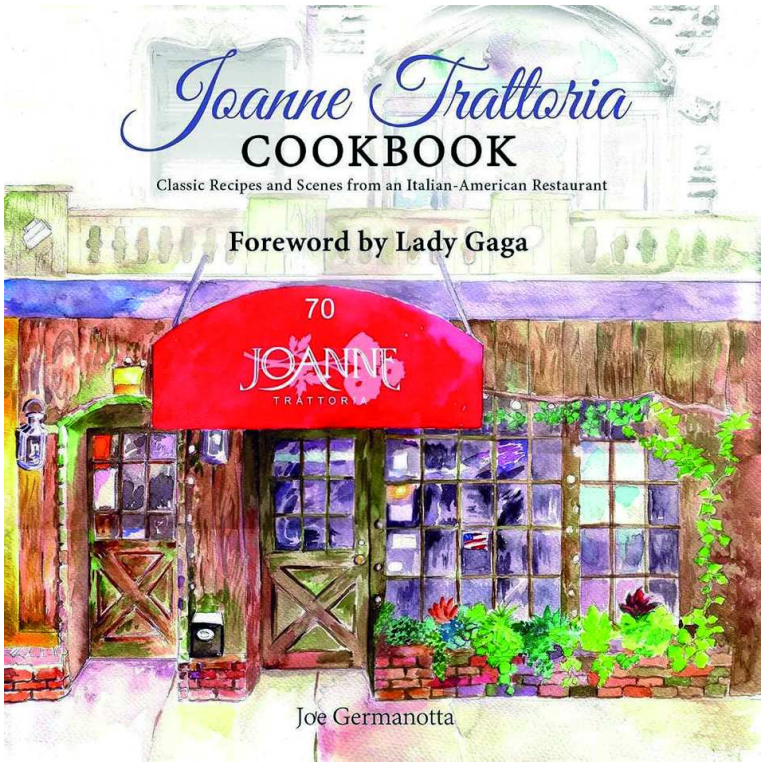
Joanne has now been part of the Upper West Side for 15 years. What is the story behind the restaurant - including its name - and what makes its history different from that of other Italian family restaurants in New York?

Joanne is named for my late sister, Joanne Germanotta. Her memory has always been an important part of our family, so the name gave the restaurant a meaning that went far beyond simply choosing a name for a business. From the beginning, we wanted Joanne to feel like a family restaurant, with family photographs, family history, and food rooted in the way we grew up.

Today, our goal is also for Joanne to be an Upper West Side entertainment destination. A major part of that is giving emerging artists a stage where they can perform, develop, and hone their skills.

The name Joanne has also connected several generations of our family. Joanne is Stefani's middle name, and later became the title of her album Joanne.

Italian American cuisine has developed its own identity over generations in the United States. How would you describe the food at Joanne? How much comes directly from Italian and Sicilian traditions, and how much reflects the distinct Italian-American culinary experience?





JOANNE GERMANOTTA

I would describe Joanne's food as Italian-American comfort food with strong Southern Italian and Sicilian influences.

Italian-American cuisine is its own tradition. Italian immigrants brought their recipes and techniques to America, but over generations those dishes evolved based on ingredients, circumstances, and life in this country. That is very much the spirit of Joanne. We serve the kinds of dishes that generations of Italian-American families recognize and grew up eating.

We have also recently introduced illy coffee service at La Fortuna Café & Bar. It reminds us of the original Café La Fortuna on West 71st Street, which was a family favorite for many years. That connection to an old Upper West Side institution is very meaningful to us.

Are there particular dishes, recipes, or food traditions at Joanne that have a real family story behind them – something that was cooked at home long before there was ever a restaurant?

Absolutely. The foundation of Joanne is the home-cooked Italian meals that were served at the Germanotta family table long before there was a restaurant.

Our meatballs, Sunday gravy, Lemon Artichoke Chicken, and many of the other dishes reflect the kind of food we grew up eating as a family.

Those dishes are meaningful because they were not originally created for a restaurant or to impress a critic. They were created to feed a family. That is the tradition we try to preserve.

Joanne has evolved beyond being simply a restaurant, with live entertainment seven nights a week and an Emerging Artist Program. Why was it important for your family to create a space for performers, and what do you hope young New York artists can find at Joanne that they may struggle to find elsewhere?



Our family understands how important it is for a young artist to have somewhere to perform.

Before anyone knows your name, somebody has to give you a stage.

New York has always attracted extraordinary performers, but it has become increasingly difficult for young artists to find intimate places where they can perform regularly, develop their material, and build an audience.

Joanne has live entertainment seven nights a week, and we are one of only a few venues that curate our own shows and entertainment programming.

Our Emerging Artist Program is especially important to us. We want to give young performers a place where they can develop their craft, take chances, and perform in front of a live audience.

Your daughter Stefani, Lady Gaga, has spoken many times about her Italian-American family and identity. From your perspective as her father, which parts of her Italian heritage have remained strongest

in her personality, values, work ethic, or way of seeing the world?

The strongest thing I see is family.

Both Stefani and Natali demonstrate many of the values we associate with our Italian-American upbringing: family loyalty, hard work, passion, creativity, and respect for where they came from.

They have very different careers, but both have always worked extremely hard at what they do.

In our family, you work for what you want. Success does not mean you stop working. Usually, it means you work harder.

I also think both of them understand the importance of the people and generations who came before them.

Before the world knew Lady Gaga, Stefani Germanotta was a young New Yorker performing in small venues and trying to build an audience. Is there a particular story or memory from those early years that captures the determination she had before fame arrived?

One of the memories that stays with me most actually came after she had become successful, because it brought me back to everything that came before.





I remember watching Stefani perform The Edge of Glory at the piano on the second stage during the Born This Way Ball. She had written that song while my father was dying in hospice, so hearing her perform it was incredibly emotional for me.

What struck me was how she had taken something deeply personal and painful from our family and transformed it into music that connected with millions of people.

That determination was there long before the fame. Even when she was performing in small New York venues, she treated every performance seriously. She kept writing, rehearsing, and performing regardless of the size of the audience.

She always believed the stage mattered, no matter how large or small it was.

Fame inevitably changes the circumstances surrounding a family. What traditions, rituals, foods, celebrations, or simply family habits have helped the Germanotta fam-

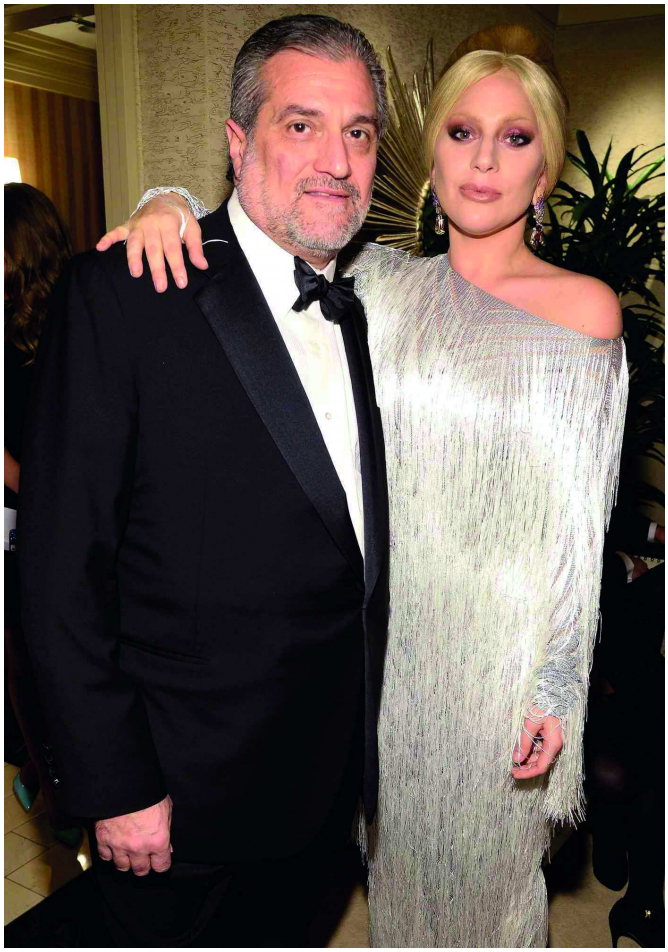


ily preserve its Italian-American identity despite everything that has happened over the years?

For us, it always comes back to family and the table.

One of our most important holiday traditions has always been the Feast of the Seven Fishes on Christmas Eve.





There were also much simpler traditions. Olive oil and grated cheese were always on the table. You did not really think of that as a tradition growing up. It was simply the way the table was set.

Those small things become more meaningful as you get older.

Careers change and life becomes more complicated, but sitting around a table together has a way of bringing everybody back to where they started.

Joanne is celebrating 15 years at a time when New York itself – and Italian New York in particular – has changed enormously. Looking back at those 15 years, what has changed about the Italian-American community around you, what has remained surprisingly constant, and what would you like Joanne to represent for the next generation?

New York and the restaurant business have changed enormously, and the traditional Italian-American neighborhoods are different from those of our parents and grandparents.





What has not changed is people's desire to gather around a table, share food, celebrate something, and feel welcomed.

I do not want Joanne to become a museum, but I do want it to tell our family's story. We display family photographs, information about our origins, memorabilia, and some Lady Gaga artwork that has been donated by fans.

At the same time, Joanne needs to continue evolving as a restaurant and entertainment destination.

Looking ahead, we would like to expand the Joanne concept to other major visitor destinations in the United States, including Las Vegas, and eventually internationally.

The idea would be to bring together the same combination of Italian-American food, family history, hospitality, and live entertainment while continuing to give emerging artists an opportunity to perform.

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We the Italians
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ITALIAN ECONOMY

Are Italy and the United States building a shared economic space?

BY FABRIZIO FASANI

For years, the metaphor of a bridge has described relations between Italy and the United States. Before this relationship was economic, it was human, familial, and cultural, built by generations of Italians who crossed the Atlantic carrying traditions, skills, ambitions, and a distinctive sense of belonging. That connection endured. It evolved into an Italian American community that maintained deep ties with its ancestral homeland while becoming part of American society. Their identity, rooted in two countries, has always been both a memory of migration and a resource for the future.

Goods, capital, businesses, technologies, and expertise have also traveled across that bridge. For decades, we understood the relationship mainly as movement between two shores: Italian exports to the American market, US investment in Italy, and the opportunities America offered Italian companies seeking international growth.

Today, I am beginning to believe that this powerful image is no longer enough.

The two shores are becoming less distinct. Economic ties increasingly extend beyond trade and investment toward genuine integration between production systems. Italian companies are establishing a physical presence in America, American businesses are deepening their roots in Italy, and situations are multiplying in which it is difficult to say where one industrial system ends and the other begins.

Recent months have brought intense discussion



GENOA


BOSTON

of tariffs. The return of more aggressive US trade policies has naturally raised concerns in Italy, an export-oriented country whose leading industries depend heavily on the American market.

Yet while the debate centered on the danger of closing markets, the numbers were growing. In 2025, Italian exports to the United States rose 7.2%, reaching approximately €70 billion. During the opening months of 2026, American demand for Italian products also remained strong. This resilience points to foundations deeper than tariff decisions: the quality of Italian products, the appeal of Made in Italy, and the increasing direct participation of Italian businesses in the US economy.

That last development deserves particular attention. If we measure the relationship only through exports, we risk using old categories to describe a transformation already underway.

More Italian companies are doing much more than selling to American customers. They invest, acquire businesses, manufacture products, hire workers, and establish permanent commercial and industrial networks. America is becoming not merely a destination market but an integral part of their growth strategies.

We have already discussed Prysmian and Bending Spoons, whose transactions demonstrate how Italian companies can lead global consolidation. Many less familiar businesses are pursuing similar paths, opening factories, acquiring competitors, creating American subsidiaries, or building supply chains

on US soil. This is more than a new export model: it changes the geography of production and the meaning of an Italian business abroad.

The strategic implications are substantial. Tomorrow's Made in Italy may not simply mean products manufactured in Italy and sold in America. It may mean products designed in Italy, made in the United States, financed by international investors, and distributed through value chains permanently connecting both countries.

The same process works in reverse. American investment in Italy has increased significantly in recent years, raising a question that Italians often approach with ambivalence, as though every foreign acquisition necessarily represented a loss of industrial sovereignty.

I believe the central issue is not whether a company is formally Italian or American, but how much value it creates within the economy where it operates.

If a US group invests in an Italian company, preserves and develops its expertise, finances research, opens markets, strengthens employment, and connects it with a larger international network, perhaps the transaction should be viewed not as a loss but as another form of growth.

Italy-America Chamber of Commerce

Likewise, an Italian company acquiring an American business is not merely capturing market share. It may be creating a complex industrial organization capable of combining expertise, talent, and knowledge from both systems.

In recent days, we learned that the American





Chamber of Commerce in Italy and the Italy-America Chamber of Commerce in New York have begun discussing closer integration, potentially leading to a truly transatlantic chamber structure.

At first glance, this might sound like an issue for specialists. I see it as a much broader signal: when the way companies operate changes, the institutions supporting them must eventually change as well.

An Italian business expanding into America no longer needs only an export strategy or a distributor. It needs to decide where to locate, how to organize its taxes and corporate structure, how to recruit managers, navigate banking and finance, comply with federal and state regulations, and build relationships with customers, suppliers, and institutions. Above all, it needs to understand a business culture with different rhythms, priorities, and assumptions.

Conversely, American investors entering Italy must learn to recognize industrial value that conventional metrics often miss. The strength of Italian companies may lie not only in their balance sheets but in accumulated expertise, local relationships, entrepreneurial families, manufacturing districts, and the ability to perform highly specialized work that financial models cannot easily capture.

This is precisely what we have worked to do for years at We the Italians. Seeing this vision gain ground reinforces our approach. The most valuable resource in international economic relations is not simply information, which is widely accessible. It is the ability to interpret information: to understand what lies behind a number, why decisions are made, and how risk, growth, capital, ownership, and failure are understood differently across cultures. Most importantly, it is the ability to translate one business culture into another without oversim-

plifying either.

Here, the Italian American community can play an essential role as an infrastructure of interpretation. Its members can explain to Italian entrepreneurs why decisions in the United States often have to be made faster, why capital is deployed with a greater tolerance for risk, and why failure is considered less final. At the same time, they can help American investors understand why personal relationships, family histories, and ties to a particular place can carry far more economic weight in Italy than a standard financial analysis suggests.

The Made in Italy of the future may be a technology developed in Italy and manufactured in Texas; an American company owned by an Italian group; a US research center working with an Italian small or medium-sized business; a Boston investment fund backing a company in Veneto; or an Italian American executive leading the US expansion of a business from Emilia.

At that point, speaking merely of exports and foreign investment will seem inadequate. What will be taking shape is a shared economic system in which capital, businesses, people, and knowledge move in both directions, and national identities survive within an increasingly dense network of interdependence.

I strongly believe that the bridge metaphor now needs a companion image: not simply two shores linked together, but a shared space where Italy and the United States build a deeper, more stable economic relationship precisely when much of the world is rediscovering borders, protectionism, and confrontation.

That may sound paradoxical. Perhaps it is exactly the opposite. At a time when everyone is defending their own shores, the real strength of the Italy-US relationship may lie not in retreating to opposite banks, but in bringing those banks ever closer together.





We the Italians
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ITALIAN CURIOSITIES

Larderello and the Devil's Valley, where Tuscany pioneered geothermal energy

BY WE THE ITALIANS EDITORIAL STAFF

In the hills of Tuscany, between Pisa, Siena, and Grosseto, there is a landscape that once seemed to belong more to the underworld than to the Italian countryside. Steam rises from the ground, hot gases escape through rocky openings, and the Earth reveals an energy normally concealed beneath its surface. For centuries, local inhabitants associated these extraordinary phenomena with supernatural forces, giving the area a name that survives today: the Devil's Valley.



Yet this unusual corner of Tuscany became the birthplace of one of Italy's most remarkable technological achievements. At Larderello, human ingenuity transformed underground heat into electricity, establishing a pioneering role for Italy in the history of renewable energy.

The story begins long before electricity was invented. The geothermal manifestations of Tuscany were known in antiquity, when the Etruscans and Romans recognized the presence of hot springs and mineral-rich waters. Over time, local communities discovered that the same underground activity produced valuable chemical substances, particularly boric acid.

In the early 19th century, French-born entrepreneur François Jacques de Larderel developed innovative techniques for extracting boric acid from geothermal waters. Beginning in 1818, he helped establish an industrial activity that would eventually give Larderello its name.

Previously, the extraction process required substantial quantities of firewood to heat the mineral waters. De Larderel introduced methods that used natural geothermal steam instead, reducing dependence on conventional fuel and demonstrating the





practical advantages of harnessing the Earth's internal heat.

But the most extraordinary development was still to come.

On July 4, 1904, Prince Piero Ginori Conti conducted an experiment at Larderello that would become a milestone in energy history. Using geothermal steam to power a small generator, he produced enough electricity to illuminate five light bulbs.

It was the first successful demonstration of electricity generation from geothermal energy.

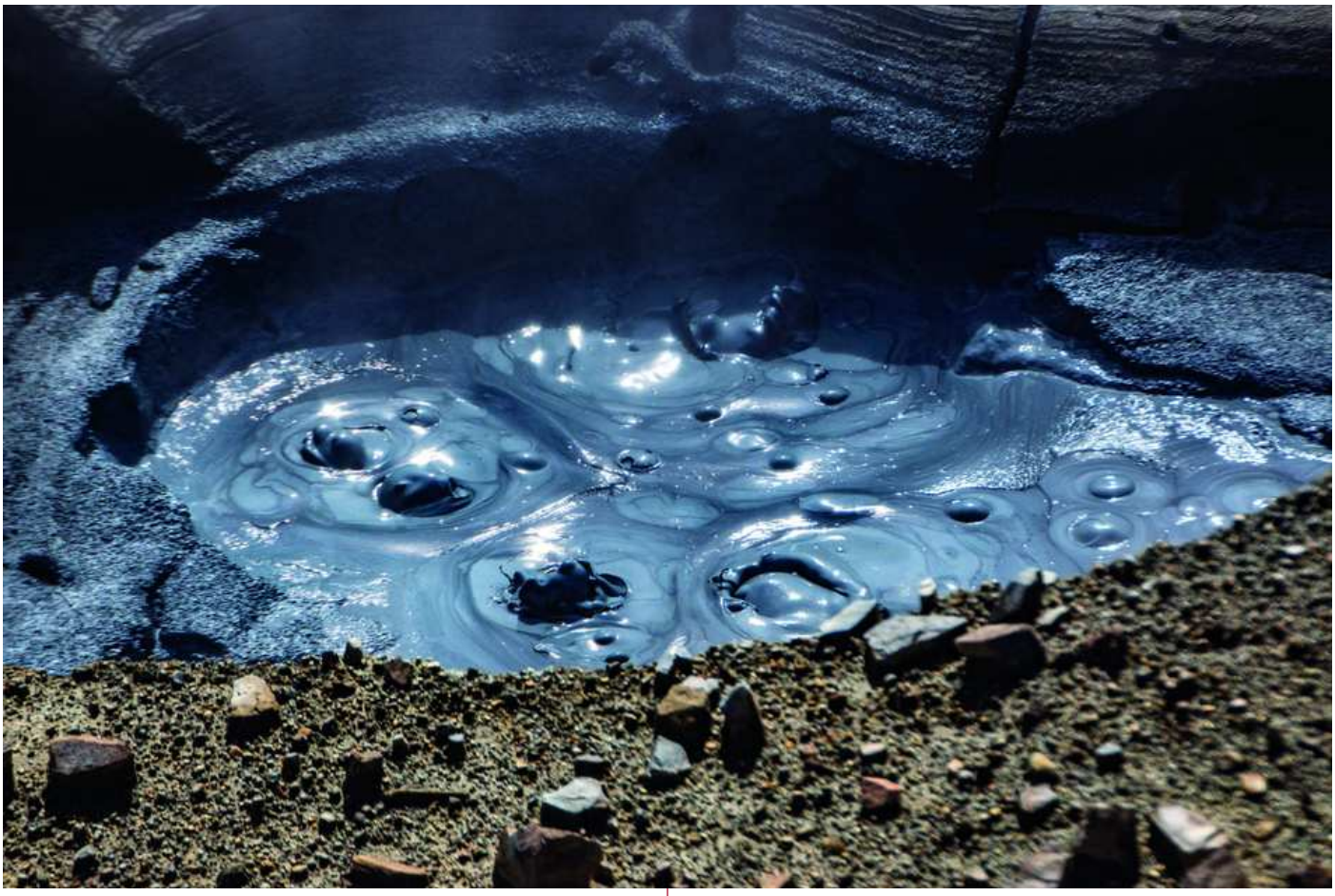
What began with five bulbs soon developed into an industrial revolution. In 1913, the world's first commercial geothermal power plant began operating at Larderello, supplying electricity to the surrounding area.

This achievement placed Italy at the forefront of a technology that would later spread to countries including Iceland, New Zealand, Japan, and the United States.

The scientific explanation behind the Devil's Valley is equally fascinating. Deep underground, geological processes heat water trapped within permeable rocks. Under suitable conditions, this water produces high-temperature steam that can be brought to the surface through wells and used to drive turbines connected to electrical generators.

Unlike solar and wind power, geothermal electricity can provide continuous generation, regardless of daylight or weather conditions. Its environmental performance depends on the characteristics of the geothermal field and the technologies used to manage emissions and underground resources.

The Tuscan geothermal district remains one of Europe's most important centers of geothermal



electricity production. Facilities operated by Enel Green Power have a combined installed capacity of approximately 900 megawatts across Tuscany, producing around 6 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity annually, although output varies from year to year.

Geothermal energy also supports local communities through district heating, industrial applications, and agricultural activities, including greenhouse cultivation.

Visitors to Larderello can discover this unusual relationship between geology and technology at the Geothermal Museum, which documents the history of the area's natural phenomena, scientific discoveries, and industrial development.

Nearby, the natural geothermal manifestations around Sasso Pisano and Monterotondo Marittimo offer another perspective on the forces that made this technological achievement possible. Steam vents, mineral deposits, and altered rock formations create landscapes unlike the rolling vineyards and olive groves usually associated with Tuscany.

The story of Larderello is particularly significant because it challenges familiar perceptions of Italian innovation. Italy's technological heritage is often celebrated through automobiles, design, fashion, and mechanical engineering. Yet the country also played a foundational role in developing a renewable energy technology more than a century before sustainability became a global priority.

From a mysterious valley associated with the Devil to an international reference point for clean-energy innovation, Larderello demonstrates how curiosity, scientific observation, and entrepreneurial vision can transform an apparent natural oddity into a lasting contribution to human progress.

And it all began with five electric light bulbs in the Tuscan countryside.



We the Italians
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MY LIFE IN ITALY

The unexpected is our only hope

BY MATTEO CERRI



There is something wonderfully revealing about the way Americans sometimes imagine moving to Italy. They see a stone house, a few olive trees, a charming square and a price that might barely secure a parking space back home. A television presenter assures them that the property needs only “a little updating”, and suddenly an entirely new life seems not only possible but surprisingly affordable.

Then come the expectations: American convenience at Italian prices, efficient contractors who arrive precisely when promised, shops open whenever required and a medieval village equipped with the customer service of a luxury resort.

If that is your ambition, I have a suggestion: take a holiday. Rent a beautiful villa, enjoy the wine, photograph the sunsets and allow somebody else to worry about the leaking roof. There is no shame in loving Italy as a visitor.

But if you suspect there might be more to life than recreating your existing routine against a prettier backdrop, Italy deserves a very different proposition. Don't ask it to become a discounted, romantic version of the United States. Allow for the possibility that it operates in another dimension altogether - and that the complications, detours and encounters you cannot plan may end up changing what you consider a good life.

What happens after the holiday ends?

Our RELOCALS research, developed through NOMAG Research Books, ITS Italy and We the Italians, offers an intriguing starting point. Amongst respondents, 64.1% had not expected to remain in Italy for as long as they did, while 75.7% said that living here changed the way they spoke about the Country.

These numbers do not prove that everyone is happier, or that Italy has some magical power to make problems disappear. They tell us something subtler: the experience of living here can depart considerably from the experience people imagined, and for many it lasts longer than anticipated.

I suspect part of the answer lies in what happens outside the original plan. You arrive looking for a house and discover a community. You take a temporary break and stumble into a new professional opportunity. You ask somebody for help with an apparently insignificant problem and begin a relationship that becomes central to your life.

The plan will change. Bring a plan anyway.

I deal with properties and projects in smaller Italian towns, so I would be the last person to romanticise the surprises that come with them. Old buildings conceal expensive secrets. Renovations involve permissions, professionals and occasionally neighbours whose interpretation of shared boundaries is supported by three generations of family history. A cheap house may become a decidedly expensive house once you add the work, taxes, fees and time required to make it usable.

Please, therefore, commission proper surveys, es-





tablish the legal position, budget for contingencies and put commercial commitments in writing.

And yet, once you begin dealing with the reality of a place rather than simply admiring its appearance, something unexpected can happen. The neighbour who knows a reliable tradesperson introduces you to the person running the local association. A routine visit becomes a conversation about an empty shop, a community project or a business that could benefit from your experience. What started as a practical errand opens a door that was nowhere on your itinerary.

The point is not to excuse incompetence, but to recognise that a life is more than a schedule.

Don't buy the scenery and forget the country

A pretty village is not a film set populated by charming extras who exist to enhance your retirement. The people living there have jobs, bills, disagreements, ambitions and their own ideas about how things ought to work. They may welcome you warmly; they are under no obligation to reorganise the community around your preferences.

One useful test, before deciding to move permanently, is to spend time somewhere when nobody is trying to sell you the place. Go in winter. Stay long enough to experience an ordinary working week. If the attraction survives an unremarkable Tuesday in February, you may be onto something.

Then do more than consume the scenery. Join an association, support a local initiative, offer a skill or introduce somebody to an opportunity. Partici-

pation, rather than passive admiration, can turn an attractive address into somewhere you belong.

That matters beyond the individual experience. Another finding from RELOCALS is that 65% of respondents had never been involved or approached by an Italian institution or organisation. For a country struggling with depopulation in many smaller communities, it suggests a substantial missed opportunity. International residents can bring spending, expertise and connections, but buying a house does not automatically revive a town, and occasional holidaymakers are not the same as permanent neighbours. Local institutions should do more to engage people who arrive; newcomers, meanwhile, need not wait indefinitely for a formal invitation.

Perhaps the real bargain isn't the property

Americans are often skilled at measuring success: income, property value, career progression, speed, convenience. Those measures remain useful in Italy. You still need to pay the bills, understand residence and tax rules, arrange healthcare where eligible and ensure that your income supports your plans.

What Italy may offer, however, is a chance to reconsider what belongs on the list in the first place. A conversation that lasts an hour without producing a measurable outcome might still improve your day. A small town may offer fewer services but more familiar faces. An unplanned afternoon can turn out to matter more than the impeccably organised morning you had intended to have.

This is not because Italians are universally relaxed, or because life here is a perpetual lunch in the sun-





shine. Millions work hard, struggle financially and become just as exasperated with their institutions as any newcomer.

What is worth abandoning is the assumption that the American way of organising a successful life must also be the only sensible one. You can demand competence without expecting a medieval hill town to function like an American suburb.

And yes, let's not pretend money doesn't matter. For Americans earning or holding savings in dol-

lars, Italy can offer a considerably more affordable lifestyle, particularly outside the major cities and tourist hotspots. The dollar's recent strength against the euro makes the proposition even more attractive, although exchange rates are hardly something on which to build a thirty-year retirement plan. A comfortable home, excellent food and a rewarding everyday life may cost substantially less than their American equivalents. That's a perfectly good reason to consider moving. It just shouldn't be the only one, or even necessarily the best.

So, what are you waiting for?

Perhaps the people who get the most out of Italy are not those who arrive with the fewest expectations, but those who remain willing to revise them. They prepare carefully, protect themselves against avoidable risks, and then leave enough room for a country - and the people in it - to surprise them.

Our RELOCALS figures cannot tell us exactly why so many respondents stayed longer than expected. They do, however, remind us that the reasons people remain may not be the reasons they arrived.

So if all you want is a cheaper American lifestyle with terracotta roofs and olive trees, perhaps keep watching HGTV and book yourself another splendid holiday. But if you are open to discovering a way of living that you could not entirely design in advance, don't let the possibility of complications put you off. Take them seriously, budget for them, and remember that some of the people, places and possibilities that ultimately make the move worthwhile may first appear as interruptions to your perfect plan.

Come and discover your own Italy. Just bring a good surveyor - and leave the remote control at home.

“The unexpected is our only hope.” Eugenio Montale

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We the Italians
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ITALIAN HANDCRAFTS

The timeless craftsmanship of Sardinia's traditional folding knives

BY WE THE ITALIANS EDITORIAL STAFF

In the mountains of northern Sardinia, a small town has become synonymous with one of Italy's most distinctive expressions of traditional craftsmanship. Pattada, located in the province of Sassari, is internationally recognized for its handmade folding knives, objects that combine practical functionality, elegant design, and generations of artisanal knowledge.

The most celebrated of these knives is the resolza pattadese, a folding blade whose unmistakable silhouette reflects the relationship between Sardinia's pastoral traditions and the skills of its metalworkers.

More than a cutting instrument, the resolza is a symbol of regional identity, representing a culture in which everyday objects were expected to be durable, useful, and beautifully made.

Pattada lies approximately 800 meters (2,625 feet) above sea level, in a landscape historically characterized by livestock farming, agriculture, and mountain communities. For generations, shepherds relied on compact folding knives for practical tasks, from preparing food to working with ropes, leather, and other materials.

The knife became an essential companion in rural life, and local craftsmen developed increasingly sophisticated techniques for producing blades that were both reliable and visually distinctive.

The traditional resolza features a slender, pointed blade, often described as leaf-shaped, that folds into a carefully shaped handle. Its proportions are balanced, with smooth lines that give the instrument an elegance rarely associated with ordinary





working tools.

One of its most recognizable characteristics is the handle, traditionally fashioned from ram's horn, although other natural materials may also be used. The horn is selected, shaped, polished, and fitted to the metal components through a process requiring considerable precision.

Because natural horn varies in color, texture, and pattern, each handmade knife possesses its own visual personality.

The blade is generally produced from steel chosen for its ability to retain a sharp cutting edge while remaining suitable for repeated use. Modern artisans may employ different steel compositions, but the essential principles of shaping, grinding, sharpening, and finishing remain central to the craft.

Producing a high-quality resolza involves numerous stages. The artisan first prepares the blade and its tang, carefully establishing the profile and geometry. The handle components are then shaped to accommodate the folded blade, while metal fittings provide structural strength and stability.

Traditional examples commonly use a simple friction-folding mechanism rather than a complex locking system. The quality of the finished knife depends on precise alignment, controlled movement, and the relationship between the blade and handle.

These details may appear minor, but they distinguish a carefully handmade instrument from a mass-produced imitation.

In Pattada, craftsmanship has historically been transmitted within families and small workshops. Young apprentices learned by observing experienced knife makers, gradually mastering techniques that could not be fully explained through written instructions.

The sound of metal being worked, the judgment required to select a suitable piece of horn, and the final polishing of a blade all formed part of an education based on practical experience.

This continuity is particularly important in an era when many traditional crafts face competition from industrial manufacturing and inexpensive imported products.

The reputation of Pattada's knives has extended well beyond Sardinia. Collectors and enthusiasts appreciate them for their technical qualities, while visitors discover an artisanal tradition that remains closely connected to the territory.

However, the resolza should not be understood simply as a decorative souvenir. Its original identity belongs to the working culture of Sardinia, where practical tools developed into recognizable expressions of local creativity.

The knife also illustrates the broader importance of Italian craftsmanship. Across the country, specialized communities have transformed ordinary materials into products distinguished by technical refinement and cultural significance.

Just as Murano is associated with glass, Deruta with ceramics, and Cremona with violin making, Pattada has established an identity rooted in a particular form of manual expertise.

Preserving this tradition requires more than celebrating its history. It depends on supporting working artisans, encouraging younger generations to



acquire specialized skills, and recognizing the value of objects made through patient, individual craftsmanship.

Every authentic handmade resolza reflects decisions made by its creator: the curve of the blade, the character of the horn, the precision of the fittings, and the final balance of the instrument.

These qualities cannot be reduced to a production formula.

In a world increasingly dominated by standardized objects, the knives of Pattada remind us that Italian excellence often begins in small workshops, where knowledge passes from one pair of hands to another.

The resolza remains a practical instrument, but it is also a lasting expression of Sardinia's history, landscape, and artisanal imagination.



Its beauty lies not in unnecessary decoration, but in the perfect relationship between form, function, and tradition.





We the Italians
two flags one heart

ITALIAN SOUNDS

When wood sings. The acoustic secrets of Cremona's violins

BY WE THE ITALIANS EDITORIAL STAFF

A violin can sound astonishingly like a human voice. It can whisper, cry, rise into a brilliant high note, or turn a single sustained tone into something almost spoken. In Cremona, the Italian city synonymous with Antonio Stradivari and Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù, that expressive power begins long before a bow touches the strings. It begins with a tree.

The bow sets the strings in motion, but the wooden body gives those vibrations their character. Without that resonating shell, even beautiful playing would sound thin.

For the violin's top plate, makers traditionally choose resonant spruce, prized for being light yet stiff enough to transmit vibrations efficiently. Maple, often used for the back, ribs, and neck, contributes strength and a different pattern of vibrations. The wood must be carefully selected and seasoned. Its grain, density, and elasticity matter, but no two pieces behave identically. A master violin maker, or *liutaio*, must listen to the material as carefully as a musician listens to a note.

The next secret is geometry. The curved top and back are carved to precise, varying thicknesses. A small wooden post, fitted between the plates beneath the treble side of the bridge, transfers vibrations and influences the instrument's response. Inside, a bass bar reinforces the top while helping distribute vibration. The bridge itself is more than a support for strings: it channels their motion into the resonating body.

Even the two elegant f-shaped openings are acous-





tic machinery. Research at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology found that their elongated shape helps violins radiate sound efficiently, especially at lower resonances. Across generations of Cremonese makers, relatively small changes in design helped produce an instrument capable of filling a concert hall without electricity.

Then comes the most famous mystery: varnish. The glowing amber finish on a Stradivari has inspired stories about lost formulas and miraculous ingredients. But science has not established a single secret coating responsible for the legendary sound. Varnish protects the wood and can affect its vibration; treating it as the one explanation overlooks the interaction of wood, shape, construction, and the player.

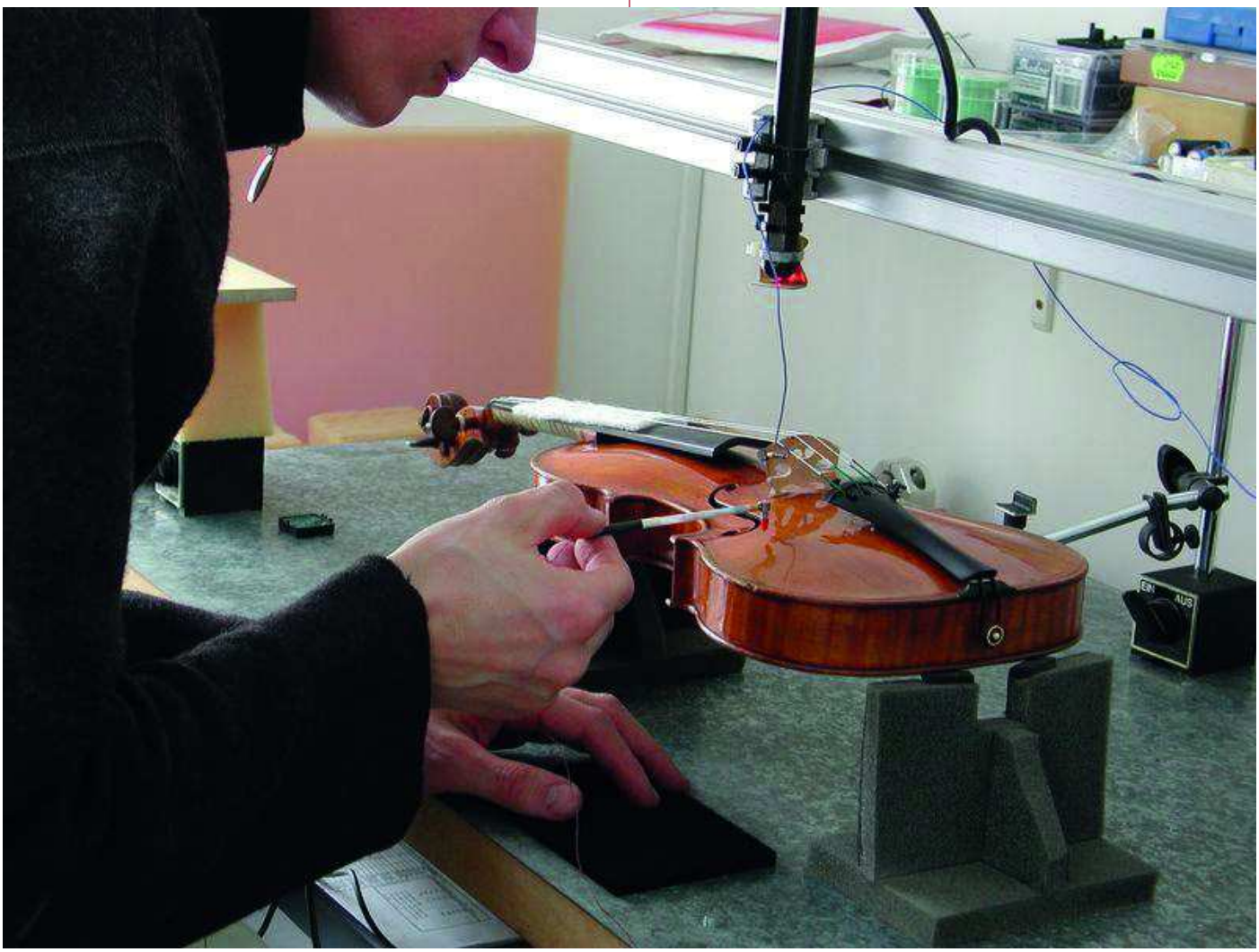
Why, then, does a great violin seem to sing? When a string vibrates, it generates a fundamental pitch and many higher frequencies, called harmonics. The instrument's body amplifies some frequencies more than others, creating a distinctive tone color. Researchers studying historical Italian violins have identified resonances resembling the formants of human singing – the frequency patterns that help us recognize vowels. A violin does not reproduce a human throat, but it can evoke one with extraordinary conviction.

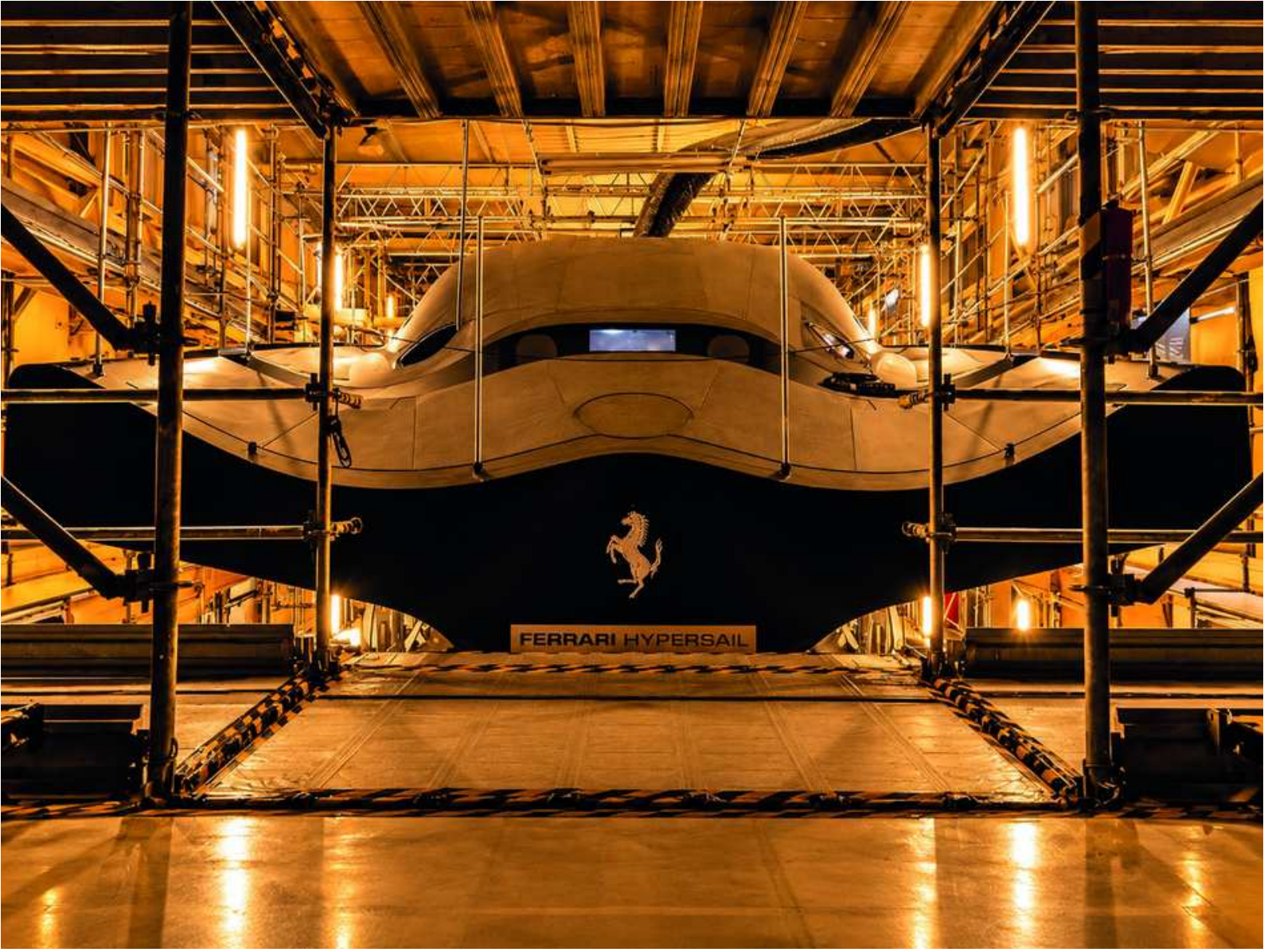
Cremona's achievement is therefore not a frozen recipe. UNESCO recognized its traditional violin craftsmanship as intangible cultural heritage in 2012, honoring an art transmitted through teaching, apprenticeship, and repeated experimentation. Today, makers still adjust arches, tap plates, and compare responses, combining inherited experi-



ence with acoustic measurement.

Perhaps the perfect violin sound is not a fixed frequency or a miraculous varnish. It is the moment when physics becomes expression – when carefully shaped wood gives a musician another voice.





We the Italians
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ITALIAN DESIGN

The Prancing Horse takes to the water

BY ALBERTO IMPRODA

Design is steadily expanding its scope of activity.

For several decades now, in addition to its traditional role in the field of style, design has taken on innovative functions in technology (thus moving into territory adjacent to that of invention patents) and communication (positioning itself alongside branding).

As I have previously written in one of my essays, "contemporary design is characterized by its ability to influence three distinct aspects of the objects being designed: Form, Function, and Meaning" (*Il Design Crisalide*, Edizioni Mincione, 2019, p. 163).

I would like to shine a spotlight on an exciting business initiative that brings these concepts together in an almost tangible way: the launch of Ferrari Hypersail, the first sailing vessel developed by the iconic company of the Prancing Horse.

In today's ocean racing landscape, competitive sailboats are undergoing a rapid and profound transformation.

Speed is becoming just one of several variables. The new and complex challenge involves multiple dimensions: materials innovation, hydrodynamic efficiency, energy sustainability, and adaptability.

These vessels are evolving into genuine experimental platforms, where composite materials, moving geometries, and predictive control systems interact to overcome the limitations of traditional monohulls.

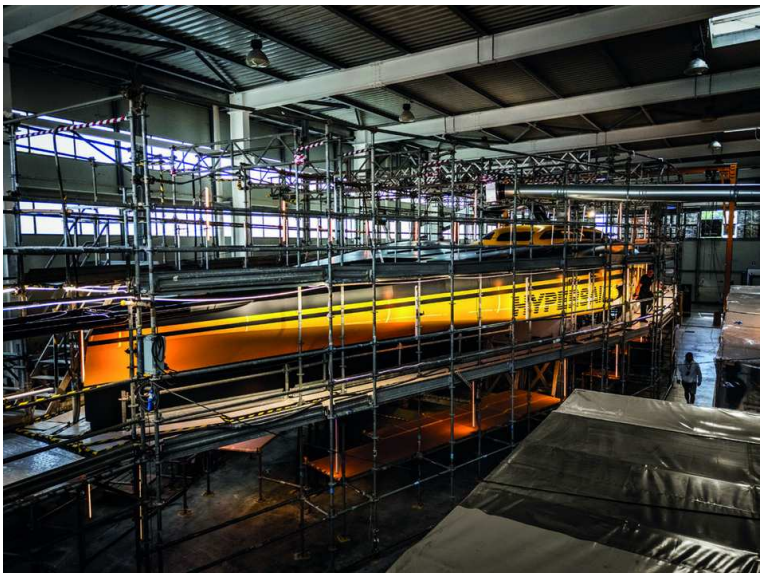
Against this stimulating backdrop, the Maranello-based company has decided to embark on a new challenge, launching the Hypersail project, a futuristic prototype designed to pursue the Jules Verne Trophy, the historic sailing challenge that rewards the fastest nonstop, unassisted circumnavigation of the globe by a crew.

Hypersail represents much more than a vessel: it is



a brand manifesto, a statement of intent in which Formula 1 expertise is reinterpreted for the nautical world, creating a foiling monohull capable of flying above the water with stability, precision, and control.

The project incorporates a series of extreme engineering solutions: three points of lift, with a central foil paired with a canting keel, a second foil inte-





grated into the rudder, and two lateral foils operating alternately.

This configuration allows the hull to rise above the water and travel long distances while minimizing hydrodynamic drag. The entire system is designed to operate with energy autonomy, thanks to an integrated onboard energy generation and management system.

The design of Hypersail has been entrusted to Guillaume Verdier, one of the world's leading specialists in the development of next-generation racing yachts.

Technical direction is provided by Giovanni Soldini, whose ocean crossings and record-breaking achievements have made him one of the most prominent and respected figures in offshore sailing.

The project's ambition is to introduce a genuinely new paradigm in the nautical industry, creating an innovative synthesis of structural strength, lightness, aerodynamics, and mechanical intelligence.

With Hypersail, Ferrari is taking its culture of extreme performance beyond automobile racing circuits and into an environment where every element and variable – wind, sea, and structure – demands complex engineering solutions.

John Elkann explains:

“Hypersail is a new challenge that pushes us beyond our boundaries and expands our technological horizons. At the same time, it follows in the Ferrari tradition, drawing inspiration from our Hypercar, a three-time winner of the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

Designing a boat for offshore sailing is perhaps the ultimate expression of endurance.

Giovanni Soldini is a fundamental pillar of this project, both because of his achievements as a sailor and his unparalleled experience in developing and building boats. The extraordinary teamwork involving Ferrari and Guillaume Verdier is bringing to life a unique vessel that will fly across the oceans and also represents an opportunity for innovation in both the nautical and automotive industries.”

The decisions concerning the location and construction of the facility where the project is physically taking shape are equally rich in significance.



Ferrari has chosen Livorno as the home of Hypersail, establishing its operational hub within the facilities of Azimut Yachts, another outstanding representative of Italian nautical excellence and design.

The headquarters are part of a broader agreement between Ferrari and Azimut. As Technical Partner of the project, Azimut will develop a 72-foot towboat designed to pull the prototype during its initial flight tests, when the vessel will not yet be equipped with a mast, rigging, or sails.

The relative proximity to Maranello, the beating heart and symbolic capital of Emilia-Romagna's Motor Valley, is both strategic and emblematic, providing an ideal location for maintaining continuous interaction with Ferrari's headquarters.

The facility will accommodate offices for engineers and the shore team, gyms and athletic training areas, as well as laboratories dedicated to hydraulic, electrical, and mechanical components and 3D printing.

The building has been designed by the Ferrari Design Studio, led by Flavio Manzoni. Its Hypersail Gray and Fly Yellow colors will echo those of the vessel, while the technical silhouette of the monohull will be reproduced at the entrance and on the roof.

“This facility was created to be the true home of the Ferrari Hypersail project, a place designed for the team's daily work and to welcome everyone involved in the initiative,” explains Enrico Voltolini, emphasizing that its location provides “the ideal conditions to further accelerate the innovation process.”

The perfect conclusion to these reflections can be found in the words of Flavio Manzoni:

“Design is not merely a formal expression, but a tool capable of generating innovation through a virtuous process of cross-pollination among different disciplines.”



We the Italians
two flags one heart

ITALIAN SWEETS

The delicate art of Liguria's flower-shaped butter cookies

BY WE THE ITALIANS EDITORIAL STAFF

Among the many treasures of Italian pastry-making, some of the most memorable are also the simplest. In Liguria, a region internationally celebrated for its pesto, olive oil, seafood, and extraordinary coastal landscapes, one traditional sweet demonstrates how a handful of ingredients can become an enduring symbol of local craftsmanship.

Canestrelli are delicate, buttery cookies distinguished by their characteristic flower shape, central opening, and generous dusting of powdered sugar. Their appearance is immediately recognizable, but their cultural significance extends beyond their elegant simplicity.

These traditional cookies are particularly associated with the inland valleys of the province of Genoa, especially the Val Trebbia and the village of Torriglia, where their production has become an important expression of local gastronomic identity.

Unlike desserts reserved for particular religious celebrations or holidays, canestrelli can be enjoyed throughout the year. They accompany coffee, afternoon tea, family gatherings, and the everyday pleasure of something sweet prepared according to a familiar recipe.

Their history reflects the broader development of Ligurian baking traditions, which combined local agricultural resources with ingredients circulating through Genoa's extensive commercial networks.

The name canestrello has a long history in Italian gastronomy and has been associated with different baked preparations in various regions. Historical references to canestrelli do not always describe the same cookies known today, making it difficult to establish a single precise date for the origins of the modern Ligurian version.

Nevertheless, the flower-shaped butter cookie became firmly established in the culinary traditions of the Genoese hinterland, where artisan bakeries helped preserve its distinctive characteristics.

The ingredients are remarkably straightforward: flour, butter, sugar, and egg yolks, sometimes ac-



companied by vanilla or lemon zest.

Some traditional recipes use hard-boiled egg yolks rather than raw ones, a technique that contributes to the particularly delicate and crumbly consistency of the finished pastry.

The secret lies in the balance between ingredients and preparation.

The butter must be incorporated carefully into the dough, producing a texture that is rich without becoming heavy. Excessive handling can compromise the desired consistency, while proper resting helps maintain the shape during baking.

The dough is rolled out and cut into small flowers, usually with six rounded petals and a circular opening in the center.

This recognizable silhouette is more than a decorative choice. It has become an identifying feature of the specialty, distinguishing canestrelli from countless other Italian butter cookies.

Baking requires particular attention. Traditional canestrelli should remain relatively pale, with only a delicate golden color. Excessive browning would alter their flavor and compromise the tender texture that makes them distinctive.

Once cooled, the cookies are covered with powdered sugar, creating the elegant white appearance that completes their presentation.





The first bite reveals their defining characteristic: a fragile, almost melting consistency that gives way to the richness of butter and the subtle sweetness of the dough.

There are no elaborate fillings, complex decorations, or contrasting layers. The quality of the result depends almost entirely on the ingredients and the skill of the baker.

This simplicity connects canestrelli with an important aspect of Italian culinary culture: the belief that excellent raw materials and careful preparation can be more valuable than unnecessary complexity.

In Torriglia, canestrelli have become closely associated with the town's identity. Local pastry shops and bakeries maintain their own recipes, and the cookies represent a recognizable specialty of the surrounding territory.

Their reputation also reflects the importance of Italy's smaller communities in preserving traditional food production.



While Genoa's maritime history and coastal scenery attract international attention, the region's inland valleys possess a culinary heritage shaped by rural life, family businesses, and generations of artisanal knowledge.

These territories are home to numerous distinctive products that rarely receive the same international recognition as Italy's most famous foods.

Canestrelli offer an opportunity to discover this lesser-known dimension of Ligurian gastronomy.

They also demonstrate how regional specialties can develop strong identities without requiring industrial-scale production. The relationship between a particular recipe, a local community, and the reputation of its artisans remains essential.

Today, canestrelli are produced by both small bakeries and larger food companies, making them available well beyond Liguria.

Their popularity has introduced the traditional flower-shaped cookie to consumers throughout Italy and abroad, while artisan producers continue emphasizing the quality and authenticity of their preparations.

For Italian Americans interested in rediscovering regional family traditions, canestrelli represent an accessible connection with Ligurian food culture.

They require no elaborate ceremony and belong to no single season. Their appeal comes from the everyday pleasure of sharing something carefully made.

In a country famous for spectacular desserts, canestrelli remind us that Italian pastry excellence can also be expressed through restraint.

A little butter, flour, sugar, and patient craftsmanship are enough to create a specialty that has become part of Liguria's culinary identity.

Sometimes the most enduring traditions are the ones that make ordinary moments extraordinary.



We the Italians
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ITALIAN SUSTAINABILITY

Italy emerges as a major European hub for the booming battery storage industry

BY WE THE ITALIANS EDITORIAL STAFF

Italy is becoming one of Europe's most promising markets for large-scale energy storage, attracting investors, technology companies, and infrastructure developers eager to participate in the transformation of the electricity system. With renewable energy expanding rapidly, the country is positioning itself at the center of an emerging industry worth billions of euros.

The driving force is the growing need to store electricity generated by solar panels and wind turbines. Unlike conventional power plants, renewable installations produce energy according to weather conditions rather than consumer demand. Large battery energy storage systems (BESS) can capture electricity when production exceeds consumption and release it when demand increases.

The opportunity is particularly significant in Italy. By the end of 2025, requests to connect large-scale storage projects to the national electricity grid had reached approximately 300 gigawatts (GW), according to Terna, the country's transmission system operator.

Of these proposed projects, around 56 GW had received connection approval, while approximately 6.8 GW were ready to begin construction. Although many applications will never become operational facilities, the figures demonstrate extraordinary investor interest.

Italy already had approximately 7.4 GW of installed storage power and 17.9 gigawatt-hours (GWh) of storage capacity at the end of 2025. Terna estimates that the country will require approximately 72 GWh by 2030 to support its increasingly renewable electricity system.

A major turning point came in September 2025, when Italy held its first auction under MACSE, a mechanism designed to encourage investment in new electricity storage facilities.

The auction awarded 10 GWh of lithium-ion battery





capacity, with developers submitting offers exceeding the available volume by more than four times.

Competition delivered an important economic benefit. The weighted average annual award price reached €12,959 per megawatt-hour, approximately 65% below the €37,000 reserve premium.





These contracts provide long-term revenue visibility, making it easier for developers to secure financing and move forward with construction. The first facilities awarded through the mechanism are expected to enter operation in 2028.

The investment opportunity extends beyond batteries themselves. Engineering firms, construction companies, financial institutions, software developers, and specialized service providers are participating in a rapidly developing ecosystem.

Across Europe, Modo Energy recorded 82 battery storage transactions in 2025, compared with 25 the previous year. Disclosed transaction values reached €8.6 billion, while reported debt financing increased from €1.4 billion to €6.1 billion.

Italy is already seeing concrete investments. In September 2026, BW ESS began constructing a 107 MW battery storage facility with 515 MWh of capacity in Chignolo Po, Lombardy, near Pavia.

The country's energy transition also benefits from its expanding renewable infrastructure. By the end of 2025, installed solar capacity had reached 43.7 GW, an 18.1% increase over the previous year.

Challenges remain, including permitting procedures, grid connections, and the need to distinguish financially viable developments from speculative applications. Nevertheless, Italy's competitive auction framework and growing renewable sector are creating favorable conditions for long-term investment.

As electricity storage becomes increasingly essential to Europe's energy security, Italy has an opportunity to strengthen its industrial competitiveness, attract international capital, and establish itself as a leading center for next-generation energy infrastructure.



We the Italians
two flags one heart

ITALIAN MYTHS

The bull of the Galleria. When superstition leaves its mark

BY FREDERIK QUARTA

Folk beliefs usually leave their mark on our memories. In Milan, one has managed to wear a hole in the floor.

It happens beneath the glass dome of the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II, where a mosaic depicting the coat of arms of Turin features a bull that has grown accustomed to some rather undignified treatment: visitors plant their right heel on its private parts and spin around three times. In return, tradition promises good luck and, according to one of the most popular versions, a return trip to Milan.

The obvious question would be: Does it work?

The more interesting one is: Why do we keep doing it?

Superstitions have a remarkable talent for outliving the explanations that gave rise to them. They may begin with fear, a precaution, a game, or simply the desire to make the things we cannot control feel a little less unpredictable. Eventually, the explanation fades, but the ritual survives. Good luck is uncertain. Three spins, on the other hand, are a perfectly clear set of instructions.

It is the same mechanism that allows certain family sayings to travel from one generation to the next. They do not always come with supporting evidence. They survive because someone we trust passes them along. And as traditions travel, they can change along the way.

A 1993 report in l'Unità already described tourists gathering around the bull, with short lines forming on especially busy days. It even noted an amusing reversal: Milanese residents had begun imitating a ritual made popular by visitors.

It is a miniature laboratory of cultural transmission. Someone inherits a ritual, someone else dis-





covers it, takes a picture, tells the story, and sends it back into circulation. Before long, remembering exactly where it all started becomes almost beside the point.

And that is precisely why we should be wary of stories that sound a little too perfect.

One frequently repeated explanation claims that the ritual began as a playful Milanese jab at rival Turin or the House of Savoy. It is plausible, and the bull really does represent Turin on its coat of arms. But the available historical evidence is not enough to establish that version as the definitive origin of the tradition.

In other words, repeat an explanation of a superstition often enough, and it may become a superstition about the superstition itself.

Then comes the part that requires no faith whatsoever.

In May 2026, the City of Milan restored the mosaic once again. Countless spinning heels had worn down the tiles, creating what city officials described as a "small crater." The restoration required removing damaged material to a depth of at least 2.5 centimeters, or nearly an inch. The previous restoration specifically addressing this problem had taken place in 2017.

The superstition thus pulls off a neat logical trick: it promises an invisible result while producing one that can be measured with remarkable precision.

But the absence of evidence that three spins can change your luck does not mean the ritual is meaningless.

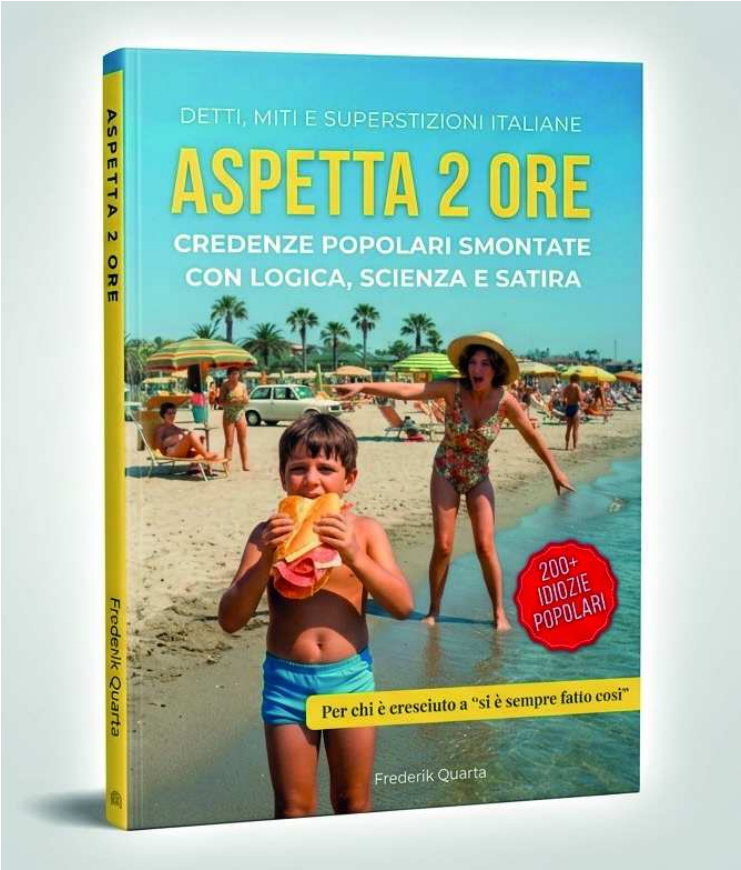
A tradition can represent memory, belonging, playfulness, or nostalgia. It can be something you do because someone before you did it, or simply because, for three seconds, it is fun to imagine that fate might actually take directions.

That is exactly what critical thinking helps us do: distinguish what a tradition means from what it claims to accomplish.

So the bull can keep bringing good luck to anyone willing to give it the benefit of the doubt.

Whether the luck is real remains to be seen. The wear and tear, however, has already come with a very real price tag.

Aspetta 2 ore (*Credenze popolari smontate con logica, scienza e satira*), by Frederik Quarta, explores more than 200 popular beliefs, misconceptions, and superstitions from everyday Italian culture, putting them to the test through logic, science, cultural observation, and satire. Published by Viastante Edizioni in 2026.







We the Italians
two flags one heart

ITALIAN ART

Gaudenzio Ferrari and the painted world of Sacro Monte di Varallo

BY WE THE ITALIANS EDITORIAL STAFF

In the mountains of northern Piedmont, above the small town of Varallo in Valsesia, one of the most extraordinary artistic achievements of the Italian Renaissance brings painting, sculpture, architecture, and storytelling together. The Sacro Monte di Varallo is a place where art does not simply represent a story – it invites visitors to enter it. Much of this remarkable experience is the work of Gaudenzio Ferrari, one of the most original artists of 16th-century Italy.

Born around 1475 in Valduggia, near Varallo, Ferrari developed an artistic language that combined the emotional intensity of Lombard painting with the innovations of the High Renaissance. Although less internationally celebrated than Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, or Raphael, he demonstrated an exceptional ability to integrate different artistic techniques into a single, compelling visual experience.

The Sacro Monte was founded in 1486 by the Franciscan friar Bernardino Caimi, who had spent time in Jerusalem and wanted to recreate the sacred places of the Holy Land for pilgrims unable to undertake the difficult journey. His vision gradually developed into a monumental religious complex overlooking the Sesia Valley.

Today, the sanctuary includes 45 chapels and a basilica, with hundreds of life-size sculptures and







thousands of painted figures. In 2003, it became part of the UNESCO World Heritage listing of the nine Sacred Mountains of Piedmont and Lombardy.

Ferrari played a decisive role in transforming this devotional project into an artistic masterpiece. Working at Varallo during the early decades of the 1500s, he developed a revolutionary relationship between painting and sculpture. His figures appear to step out of the walls, while painted landscapes and crowds extend the physical space around the sculptures.

The most impressive example is Chapel 38, dedicated to the Crucifixion. Created and transformed during the 1520s, the chapel presents an astonishingly crowded scene of grief, fear, curiosity, and compassion. Its 87 polychrome terracotta statues, together with wooden figures and surrounding frescoes, transform a biblical episode into a dramatic encounter. Roman soldiers, mourners, horsemen, and ordinary people occupy the same space, with their expressions conveying individual reactions to the unfolding tragedy.

Ferrari did not treat the sculpted figures and frescoes as separate works. Painted spectators continue the crowd beyond the statues, while carefully coordinated proportions blur the boundary between actual and imagined space. The result feels surprisingly modern – an immersive environment created centuries before the invention of cinema.

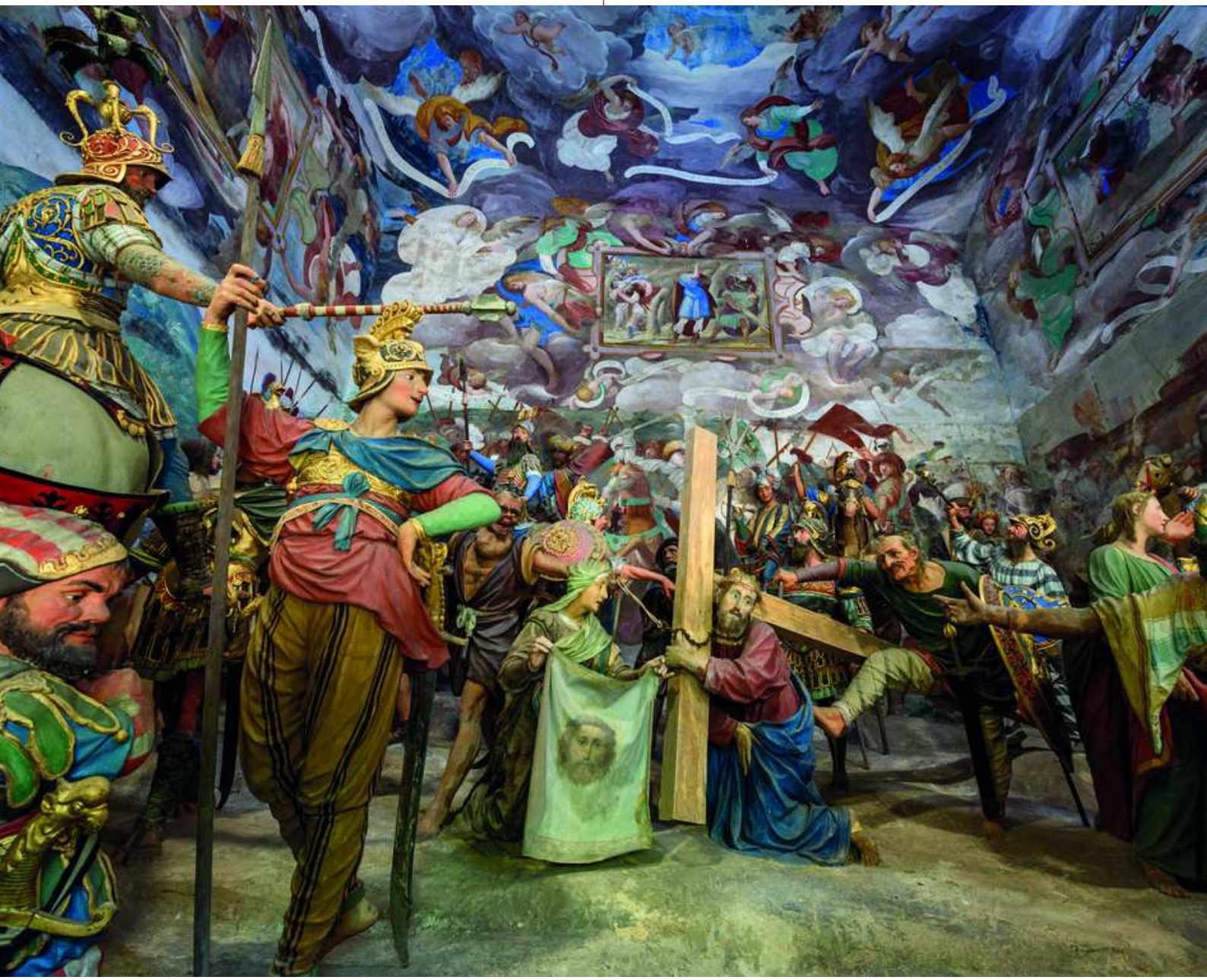
The artistic achievement lies equally in the details. Gestures, clothing, faces, and postures make each character recognizable, drawing on the world Ferrari knew rather than relying exclusively on ideal-

ized Renaissance beauty. His work gave religious storytelling an immediacy accessible to visitors regardless of their education or familiarity with art.

Unlike a conventional fresco, which directs attention to a single painted surface, this kind of art asks viewers to discover the story from several angles. The chapels are arranged along paths and small squares, giving the entire hill the rhythm of a pilgrimage. A visitor moves from one episode to the next, encountering the narrative as a sequence of places rather than isolated images. For 16th-century pilgrims, many of whom would never see Jerusalem, the experience offered an extraordinary way to imagine distant sacred events in familiar human terms.

The hill itself becomes a stage for the entire story.

Ferrari's approach profoundly influenced the artists who completed other chapels over the following centuries. At Varallo, his legacy is not confined to a painting hanging on a museum wall. It surrounds visitors as they move through an extraordinary landscape of architecture and art, where the Renaissance remains vivid, physical, and deeply human.





We the Italians
two flags one heart

ITALIAN CITIZENSHIP ASSISTANCE

The Venice court chooses to acknowledge citizenship of minors added to case after reform

BY ITALIAN CITIZENSHIP ASSISTANCE

A recent ruling by the Court of Venice regarding the addition of minors to a citizenship case filed before the Tajani Decree provides another promising avenue to those still seeking citizenship *jure sanguinis*. Below, we first discuss what has changed with the regular registration of minors now, and then dive in to what happened in Venice and how this might affect similar situations.



Supplemento ordinario alla GAZZETTA UFFICIALE n. 239 del 12 ottobre 1939-XVII 11

Mod. C

COMUNE DI . . . . . (PROVINCIA DI . . . . .

UFFICIO DI STATO CIVILE

ANNO 19 . . .

REGISTRO
DEGLI
ATTI DI NASCITA
PARTE I - SERIE A

Il presente registro, contenente fogli (*) . . . . . prima di essere posto in uso, è stato vidimato in ciascun foglio dal sottoscritto, Pretore di . . . . . addì . . . . . millenovecento . . . . . E. F.

IL PRETORE

(*) Se i fogli sono distintamente numerati per ciascuna delle due parti, il Pretore indicherà di quanti fogli è composta la prima parte e di quanti la seconda.

SPIEGAZIONE DEI RICHIAMI NUMERICI RIPORTATI NEI MODULI DEI SINGOLI ATTI

(1) Indicare se nella casa comunale od altrove; in quest'ultimo caso aggiungere la strada e il numero civico. . . .
(2) Quando l'atto non è ricevuto dal Podestà, indicare se lo si riceve per delegazione di lui, ovvero per sostituzione avuta (art. 45 ord. 6. civ.).
(3) Indicare la professione o mestiere.
(4) Scegliere la formola che si addice al caso tra quelle del formulario dal numero 1 al numero 32.
(5) Scegliere la formola che si addice al caso tra quelle del formulario dal numero 36 al numero 41.
(6) Quando vi sono presentatori, indicarne le quali labbra, se vivono con esse personalmente e non a mezzo di procuratore speciale, e quale grado di parentela hanno con l'accertando o altre circostanze apporte la richiesta; e non dalla cui morte si fa non avvenuta. . . . . (art. 45 ord. 6. civ.).
(7) Ripetere le stesse frasi ove le parole « del dichiarante » ricorrono e le sottoscrivere quando ricorrono i casi di cui agli artt. 71 e 72 ord. 6. civ.
(8) Trattandosi di figli di genitori non conosciuti, aggiungere anche il cognome che l'Ufficiale dello stato civile ha imposto al bambino (art. 71 ord. 6. civ.) con le parole di cognome di . . . .
(9) Trattandosi di parto plurimo, inserire in questo spazio la formola che si addice al caso contemplato tra quelle del formulario dal numero 33 al numero 36. — Trattandosi di bambino che non è vivo al momento della dichiarazione, scegliere la formola del caso tra quelle dal numero 42 al numero 44. — Trattandosi di bambino che è vivo al momento della dichiarazione, ma che si teme non possa sopravvivere, scegliere la formola di cui ai n. 32 del formulario (art. 69 ord. 6. civ.). — Trattandosi di bambino nascondito o esposto alla ruota della madre. — Trattandosi di parto di gemelli non riconosciuti, che si presentino al dichiarante « che si trovano nel suo pubblico ospizio, ospedale — rispettivamente — la formola 43 ovvero la formola 44 del formulario (art. 73 e 74 ord. 6. civ.).
Nel caso in cui l'atto contenga ricognizione di prole naturale, di questo atto — quello dell'Ufficiale dello stato civile fara constare al margine dell'atto nella sua dichiarazione precedente, ai sensi dell'art. 82 ord. 6. civ. — indicando i documenti adibiti (art. 83 ord. 6. civ.).
(10) Se vi sono quindi ricevere la formola di chiusura dell'atto, scegliendola — secondo i casi — tra quelle del formulario dal numero 44 al numero 46.
(11) Firmato ciascun atto dai comparenti, scegliendo la formola che si addice al caso tra quelle contenute nel formulario sotto i numeri da 1 a 32, articoli 219 e 221.

How to register minors for Italian citizenship following the Tajani Decree

The procedure for registering minor children of at least one Italian parent are as follows:

If the child was born *before* May 24, 2025 and is still a minor, parents have until May 31, 2029 to register the child's Italian citizenship. This is an extension of the previous deadline, May 31, 2026.

If the child was born *after* May 24, 2025, then parents have three years after birth or adoption to register the child's citizenship.

Much has changed with the introduction of the Tajani Decree, and as seen above, it has also created a ripple effect in other areas of *jure sanguinis* citizenship acquisition. However, as discussed below, there are protections in place for certain situations including, now, the addition of minors to cases filed before the reform.

What cases are protected since the Tajani Decree

It has been made clear that applications filed before March 28, 2025 will be considered under the old rules for Italian citizenship *jure sanguinis*. This means that those with an Italian ancestor in the fourth generation or beyond can now, in theory, only acquire citizenship if an application was filed before the Tajani Decree went into effect.

It should also be noted, however, that there have been many successful cases in which applicants were allowed to be considered under the old rules by demonstrating good faith attempts to make a citizenship appointment before the Tajani Decree, but were unsuccessful, due to consular delays or other administrative barriers beyond their control. One such case occurred last year with a group of Italo-Argentinians at the Court of Palermo.

The Venice Court's ruling

On September 14, 2026, the Court of Venice issued a ruling recognizing the citizenship of five minors who had been added to a case filed in 2023, before the Tajani Decree. The applicants were petitioning to have their Italian citizenship recognized based on an ancestor born in 1862. Significantly, although the minors were added to the case after the reform,



they were allowed to be considered under the previous *jure sanguinis* framework because, according to the judge, the case was ongoing and had not yet been closed. The legal basis for this decision comes from Article 105 of the Italian Code of Civil Procedure, which allows third parties to be added to a lawsuit. This is known as *intervento*.

Such a decision is promising for those who might have a similar situation. Applicants who filed a citizenship case before the Tajani Decree and have since had a child are encouraged to add the child to their case before a final decision has been made. This can likewise apply in the instance that a minor was unintentionally omitted from the original application.


IN NOME
S.M. VITTORIO EMANUELE II
RE D'ITALIA

Recent challenges to the Tajani Decree

In the past year, both the Supreme Court and the Constitutional Court have been called upon to re-

view aspects of the Tajani Decree and if they fit into Italy's legal framework or if they violate inherent rights of citizens. While the Supreme Court recently upheld the decree, for the time being, in May 2026, they did explicitly acknowledge the group of people who tried in good faith to make appointments before the decree, but were unsuccessful. Essentially, there is hope that such people might have a path forward to citizenship, as demonstrated with the Italo-Argentinians mentioned above, and even more recently in June 2026 in Florence with a Brazilian family who had had bureaucratic issues in submitting their application. The Constitutional Court has also held a hearing over the Tajani Decree, and as of July 2026, they have sent the decree to be reviewed by the Court of Justice of the European Union.

Italian Citizenship Assistance can help

Do you have a minor who needs to be added to a case filed before the Tajani Decree? Would you like further clarification or assistance with the new citizenship laws and what pathways to life in Italy lay open now? Italian Citizenship Assistance is here to answer all your questions. Contact an expert now at info@italiancitizenshipassistance.com.







We the Italians
two flags one heart

ITALIAN TERRITORIES

Lomellina. The land of water, rice fields and medieval castles

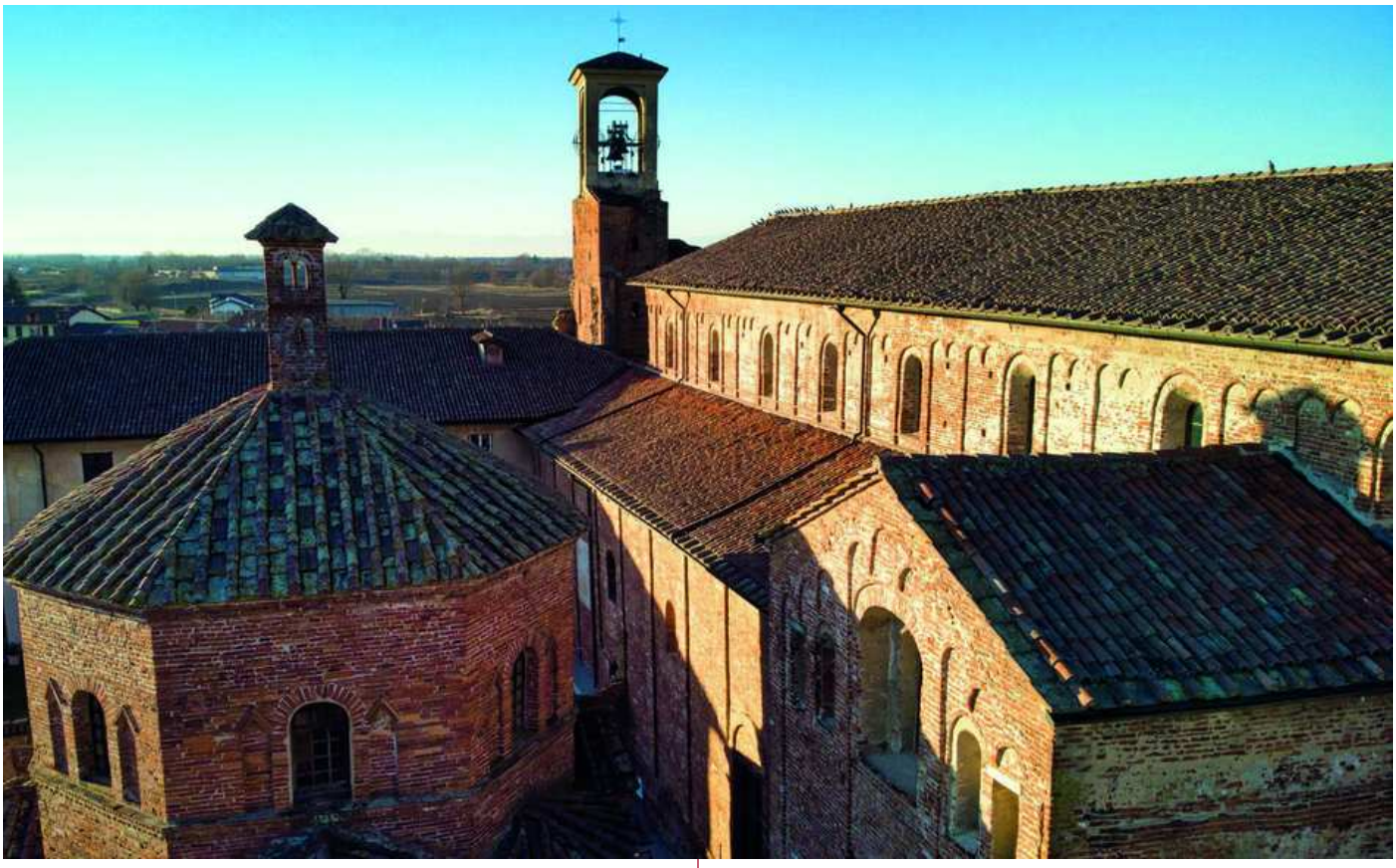
BY WE THE ITALIANS EDITORIAL STAFF

Every spring, a corner of Lombardy appears to dissolve into the sky. Fields become shallow mirrors, clouds float beneath rows of poplars, and the silhouettes of old farmhouses seem to rise from the water. This is Lomellina, a largely overlooked territory in the western part of Pavia province, where the landscape is not simply scenery. It is the result of centuries of human ingenuity.

Bounded by the Sesia, Ticino, and Po rivers, Lomellina covers approximately 1,240 square kilometers and includes 57 municipalities. Unlike the mountainous Lombardy of postcards, it is almost entirely flat. Its defining feature is a vast network of rice paddies, crossed by canals, embankments, and country roads. Local tourism sources describe around 60,000 hectares of rice fields, making water the central element of the region's identity.

Yet this seemingly natural landscape was carefully constructed. Generations of farmers, monks, and landowners drained marshes, leveled ground, and organized irrigation systems. Rice cultivation expanded during the Renaissance, when the Sforza rulers encouraged agricultural development.





The great *cascine*, traditional farm complexes with enclosed courtyards, became centers of work and rural life. For much of the 20th century, this economy also depended on the *mondine*, women who worked long hours weeding and transplanting rice by hand. Their songs became part of northern Italy's collective memory and inspired literature and cinema, including the 1949 film *Bitter Rice*. Mechanization transformed their work, but the stories remain deeply rooted in local identity.

Lomellina changes color with the seasons. In April and May, flooded fields create an extraordinary checkerboard of reflections. By summer, young rice plants turn the plain bright green. Around harvest




SCALDASOLE

time, in September and early October, the countryside takes on golden tones. The rhythm of agriculture is visible everywhere, offering a different experience on every visit.

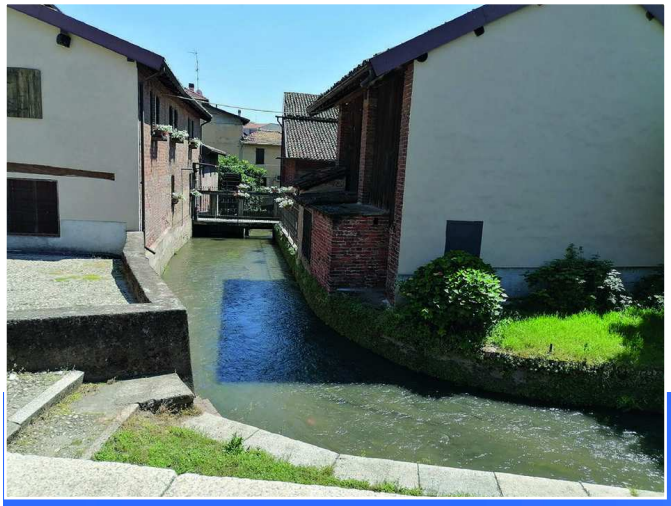
Water also supports wildlife. Herons, egrets, and other waterbirds frequent the paddies and protected nesting areas known as *garzaie*. Near Sartirana, an old bend of the Sesia forms a wetland rich in birdlife. Along the Ticino, woodlands and river habitats provide another perspective on this intensely cultivated territory.

The region's other defining feature is its remarkable concentration of castles. Sometimes called the "Little Loire" of Lombardy, Lomellina is dotted with medieval fortresses and noble residences. Sartirana's imposing castle, surrounded by a moat, dates to the 14th century. Scaldasole preserves one of the area's most impressive fortified complexes, while smaller villages reveal brick towers, ancient walls, and quiet squares.

Vigevano offers a particularly magnificent introduction. Its Renaissance Piazza Ducale, associated with the court of Ludovico Sforza, is among Italy's most elegant urban spaces. Nearby, the vast Sforza Castle recalls the power of the Duchy of Milan. A short drive away, Lomello preserves the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore and the early Christian Baptistery of San Giovanni ad Fontes, whose origins reach back to the fifth to seventh centuries.

There is also a more intimate history. Sections of the Via Francigena, the ancient pilgrimage route toward Rome, cross the plain. In Breme, the Abbey





of San Pietro recalls the role of Benedictine communities in shaping the countryside. In Mortara, centuries of local food traditions survive in goose salami, while Breme is celebrated for its sweet red onion. Rice, naturally, appears in countless versions of risotto.

For travelers accustomed to Italy's famous lakes, mountains, and art cities, Lomellina offers something less theatrical but equally distinctive: a living landscape where agriculture, architecture, and nature remain inseparable. The pleasure is in taking an unhurried road, stopping in a village, watching a heron lift off from a flooded field, and discovering how much history can hide in an apparently endless plain.





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ITALIAN PROVERBS

WE THE ITALIANS EDITORIAL STAFF

Voglia di lavorar saltami addosso, lavora tu per me che io non posso

The Italian saying “Voglia di lavorar saltami addosso, lavora tu per me che io non posso” literally means “Desire to work, jump on me! You do the work for me, because I can't.” but in the US something similar could be ““I love work. I could watch other people do it all day.”

This traditional Italian proverb belongs to Italy’s oral tradition of humorous sayings, where rhyme and rhythm helped preserve everyday wisdom across generations. Its exact origins are unknown, but regional variations can be found in Lombardy, Liguria, and Trentino. Rather than celebrating laziness, the saying playfully pokes fun at those hoping to escape hard work. It offers a lighthearted counterpoint to Italy’s strong work ethic and remains familiar in everyday family conversations today.



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