

No. 16

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The way home

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The journey to your roots

Magazine



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In the context of the project, the Italea Card is envisaged: a digital card that will entitle holders to discounts, benefits, and services from Italea's partner companies.

2024, a year to remember

In the context of the project, the Italea Card is envisaged: a digital card that will entitle holders to discounts, benefits, and services from Italea's partner companies.

This is what "talea" means

The name Italea derives from "talea," a practice by which a plant is allowed to propagate. By cutting off a part of it and replanting it, a new life can be given to it.

Perspectives

More and more travelers seeking authentic experiences and memorable moments and the tendency is set to grow

Root Tourism an unstoppable trend

Who said that a perfect vacation is only about the sea, beaches, sunset parties, and nightclubs? More and more young people of Italian descent are choosing to visit our country not just to have fun, experience excitement, meet people, and try new things, but to reconnect with their roots. And it's not just the most famous destinations—Rome, Florence, Naples, or Milan—they choose: they seek the towns of their grandparents, great-grandparents, or ancestors.

In those small provincial villages, from which their forebears once departed, these special travelers experience unforgettable vacations, moments that will stay in their memories. They wander the narrow streets they've heard so much about, join the patron saint's procession with the town band, and savor local delicacies at village festivals. They visit municipal offices, churches, or cemeteries to trace their origins and reconstruct their family history. There, where time seems almost frozen—but where traditions, culture, rituals, and folklore remain vibrant—they meet relatives they never knew, sharing hugs, astonishment, and tears.

This is tourism of emotion. Or rather, it is root tourism, driven by the desire to rediscover or maintain a strong connection to one's geographic and cultural origins, with the children and grandchildren of emigrants at its heart.

But it's not just young people. The tourism sector is undergoing a profound transformation. By analyzing industry trends and observing changing traveler habits, there is a clear rise in demand

for authentic experiences, slow and sustainable travel, and journeys deeply connected to culture, traditions, gastronomy, and nature.

A true revolution—one that, as root tourism demonstrates, rewards destinations able to offer genuineness, beauty, distinctive identity, quality, authenticity, and a variety of experiences to combine, from fresh pasta workshops to tarantella dance classes.

«What makes root tourism unique,» recently noted Em-



bassy Counselor Giovanni Maria De Vita, head of the Italea project at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, «is the opportunity





to experience slow travel, shared time, authentic encounters, and life experiences. This is precisely what Italians abroad are seeking: to return to the places their ancestors left to rediscover the truest essence of Italy.»

«Italea offers a different kind of tourism,» he explained, «a tourism of emotions, reconciliation, and reconnection between those living around the world today and the towns their ancestors departed from.»

Can the past, memories, and family ties boost the economy and increase tourism? The answer is yes. Root tourism today is a phenomenon of significant numbers: even in the past, ENIT registered millions of arrivals under this category, generating over 4 billion euros in pre-COVID economic inflow. This represents an important signal for the six million Italians living abroad—a number that rises to 80 million when including descendants, and even 260 million if we also count relatives, those who speak Italian, or those who feel close to Italian culture. This vast community is eager to rediscover its origins, representing a surprising potential demand from a tourism perspective. The total potential economic value could reach 65 billion euros, exceeding 141 billion euros when applying the tourism economic multiplier.

For 2024, estimates of spending by root travelers indicate roughly 5 billion euros, a figure expected to rise beyond 5.5 billion euros by 2026.

What some may call nostalgic or sentimental is in fact a contemporary trend. Root tourism is much more than a travel experience: it stimulates the economy, strengthens ties with Italian communities abroad, promotes cultural exchange, and supports sustainable and responsible policies.

«More and more people around the world are tracing their genealogy, returning to their family's places of origin,» explains Counselor De Vita. «This trend becomes an opportunity because root tourism revitalizes struggling areas, counters depopulation, generates income, supports employment in key sectors like hospitality, transportation, and commerce, and promotes cultural and natural heritage. Today, it holds crucial importance for Italy.»

Root tourism is also a tool for enhancing hundreds of small Italian municipalities. In 2024—the year the Ministry of Foreign Affairs dedicated to Italian roots worldwide—over 800 municipalities mobilized to welcome these special guests eager to rediscover the places, traditions, and culture of their ancestors. These were the municipalities awarded grants by the Ministry for cultural activities aimed at Italian descendants.

«Root tourism seeks to promote areas untouched by mainstream tourism, focusing on inland regions with low growth and depopulation, from which 95% of our emigration originated,» says De Vita. «It is also a response to overtourism.»

What drives so many descendants is an irresistible «desire for Italy», propelling them on journeys to discover the places of their origins, often thousands of kilometers away. Take Andrea Grieco, an

Argentine woman from Lanús of Italian descent, who traveled over 11,000 kilometers thanks to Italea to reach Duronia, a small village in Molise, where she finally found and visited the “legendary” home of her grandfather and father before they emigrated. Or the musician Elizabeth Ridolfi, principal viola of the Argentine National Orchestra “Juan de Dios Filiberto,” who, through the Italea network—which included the Municipality of Fossa from the start—came to Abruzzo to explore the towns her grandparents left in the early 20th century in search of fortune overseas.

The Italea staff has collected many similar stories. The success of the initiative is reflected in the data on italea.com: over 1.5 million visits so far, primarily from Argentina, Brazil, and the United States. High traffic has also been recorded on the Italea Card section, offering benefits, discounts, and privileges for those visiting Italy to explore their roots.

Root tourism is therefore not just a sentimental return to the past, but a concrete opportunity for the future. It is a bridge connecting generations and continents, capable of transforming nostalgia into vital energy for local areas and memory into a resource for development—a phenomenon that shows how strong and alive the bond with Italy remains, even thousands of kilometers away.



On the right,
Elizabeth Ridolfi;
on the previous page,
Andrea Grieco



«Travelers are becoming what they once were»

For Counselor De Vita the sector is moving toward a trend of personalization: «Today, travelers seek to discover places, experience traditions, learn the language and explore the culture and gastronomy»



«More and more people around the world are tracing their genealogy, returning to the places where their families originated.» And not only that: travelers are no longer seeking standardized packages «but real, authentic experiences, designed for people, capable of moving them and leaving a mark.»

Embassy Counselor Giovanni Maria De Vita, head of the Root Tourism project at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation—speaking in Venice at the presentation of the book *Antonio segreto. La forza di un uomo* by Nicola Vegro, a historical novel about the life of Saint Anthony of Padua—reflects on root tourism, an increasingly widespread trend that has also emerged from a deep transformation within the tourism sector itself.

«Habits are changing, and there is a growing demand for authentic experiences, slow and sustainable travel, in contact with culture, gastronomy, nature, and the beauty of the territory, especially small towns. In this context,» says De Vita, «root tourism will continue to strengthen in the coming years, rewarding destinations capable of offering identity, quality, authenticity, experiences, as well as services and hospitality.»

Italy, with its many hidden treasures, cultural events, genuine cuisine, and traditions, is perfectly aligned with this new tourism demand: «Root trips in Italy today allow the children and grandchildren of emigrants to rediscover their origins. I believe this form of tourism will continue to grow in the coming years because tourism is moving toward a trend of travel personalization. The traveler is becoming what they once were: someone who comes to Italy to discover places, experience traditions, learn the language, and get to know the culture and gastronomy of the region. And this is exactly what our 80 million Italians and Italian descendants around the world desire.»

The Italea project, he concludes, «fits perfectly with other forms of experiential tourism: through the Roots Workshops, for example, where local traditions are passed on with cooking, dance, or dialect classes. We offer tools to approach the territory authentically. The goal is to provide a fully immersive experience, deeply connecting visitors to their places of origin,» and to attract even those who, although not of Italian descent, «come from far away and choose to engage with our cultural identity.»

On Rai Radio 1
Giovanni Maria De Vita
and Marina Gabrieli
shared the story of Italea



Sowing the seeds of Roots Tourism

«The Italea project was born after we collected, across the entire country, numerous initiatives that had already been organizing to welcome people of Italian descent. We are talking about over 80 million Italo-descendants around the world, who today are not coming just for tourism, but to reconnect with the world they have always heard about through the stories of their grandparents and great-grandparents.» These are the words of Giovanni Maria De Vita, head of the Italea project at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, speaking on L'Italia in diretta, a program aired on Rai Radio 1. «In 2018, with a technical committee, we began gathering commitments from regions, municipalities, and local associations. After a series of meetings, exchanging ideas and shared visions, we gave all this shape under a single name: Italea. The name,» De Vita explained, «refers to "talea," a practice that allows one plant to grow



from another: a perfect metaphor to describe the living bond between Italian communities abroad and Italy.» «Every Italian family has a story of emigration to tell,» De Vita added. «Regions that historically recorded the highest numbers of departures include, among others, Abruzzo, Veneto, and Calabria. Today, with Italea, those stories can come home.» «We have organized a widespread network across the

country, the regional Italee, made up of professionals such as travel designers, genealogists, and cultural operators. These experts reconstruct the family histories of Italo-descendants and create personalized itineraries,» said Marina Gabrieli, national coordinator of the Italea project, also a guest on the program.

«Our website, italea.com, brings together the entire tourism offer dedicated to those who want to rediscover their Italian roots. Italo-descendants can get in touch directly with the regional

Italee, who design a tailor-made journey for them. Each itinerary includes a section devoted to family history and a range of activities to explore the culture of origin: workshops on local dialects, folk songs, traditional crafts, cooking classes, and much more,» Gabrieli concluded.

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The book

"Antonio segreto" by Nicola Vegro presented in Venice: a novel recounting the life of Saint Anthony of Padua

The emigrant who became a Saint

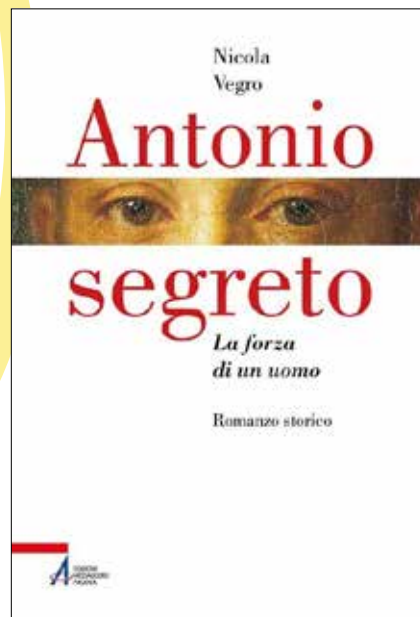
«Saint Anthony is one of the main saints of reference for Italian communities abroad. There is no place—neither in Canada, nor in Argentina or Australia—without a church capable of bringing the community together and serving as a strong point of identity.»

These words come from Embassy Counselor Giovanni Maria De Vita, head of the Root Tourism project at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. He spoke in Venice—at the prestigious Excelsior venue during the 82nd Venice International Film Festival, in the Veneto Region Space—at the presentation of the book "Antonio segreto. La forza di un uomo" by Nicola Vegro, a historical novel about the life of Saint Anthony of Padua, based on the saint's original texts and authentic documents.

The event was promoted and supported by Italea, the program for promoting root tourism launched by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs within the PNRR project and funded by NextGenerationEU, which aims to attract Italians abroad and Italian descendants interested in discovering the places and traditions of their origins.

«When we talk about roots, we also talk about faith, community, and traditions. Religious sentiment represents a fundamental element of the cultural identity of Italians abroad: despite the distance from their country of origin, many Italians continue to maintain religious practices that reinforce their sense of belonging and continuity with their origins. Devotion to Saint Anthony, for example, is a symbol of this continuity, expressed through celebrations, patron saint festivals, and processions,» emphasized De Vita.

«In Italy, meanwhile, we are witnessing an increasing demand for authentic experiences, slow and sustainable travel, in contact with culture, gastronomy, and local traditions. In this context, root tourism is becoming increasingly central. Many Italian descendants, for example, return to their places of origin during patron saint festivals. The religious dimension is certainly present, but the success of



these festivals today is not only tied to faith: it is a social and symbolic phenomenon.»

"Antonio segreto. La forza di un uomo" is the first historical novel to tell the life of Saint Anthony of Padua. Translated into Portuguese and adapted for Brazilian readers, the book was chosen to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the first Italian emigration to Brazil. By the end of the year, it will be translated into Spanish and distributed in six South American countries.





Here and on the previous page, some images from the book presentation

About the book and the story of Saint Anthony, De Vita adds: «He was Portuguese and moved to Italy, becoming effectively a migrant who built his home here.» A story of emigration, just like the 80 million Italians and Italian descendants around the world.

«With the Italea project,» De Vita continues, «which places root tourism at its center, we want to invite these people to return to Italy to rediscover not only their origins but also the advantages and opportunities our country offers.»

Root tourism can also interact with religious tourism: «Let us remember that many Italians» who left seeking fortune abroad «carried in their suitcase the image of a reference saint. Today, many Italians abroad have not only kept these patron saint festivals alive, celebrating them at the same time as in Italy, but have also built churches inspired by the original sanctuaries. Retracing the paths of religious tourism means experiencing something profound, speaking to the memory of emigrants and allowing them to discover authentic towns and territories: realities that are part of the Italian fabric, and that with Italea we aim to make known to everyone. Today, travelers are increasingly seeking authentic, sustainable experiences connected to local culture and traditions.»



Roots Tourism

The national and regional coordinators reveal how the MAECI initiative has transformed the sector highlighting traditions, towns, and Italian identity

The full value of the Italea project

The Italea project, promoted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, has been a valuable opportunity for its national and regional coordinators: to play a frontline role in promoting the growing phenomenon of root tourism. Their testimonies, almost like a stream of consciousness, describe how this initiative—made

possible by the support of the Farnesina—turned into an exciting challenge: from organizational complexities to the emotions experienced with Italian communities around the world, and toward the prospects of authentic tourism that weaves together memory, identity, and the future of Italy's small towns.

Marina Gabrieli

Marina Gabrieli, National Coordinator of the Italea Project

«I believe that each of us has a mission in life, and mine, ever since I met Italian communities abroad about fifteen years ago during a study period in Argentina, has always been to connect these communities with their homeland. My journey in root tourism started there, along with my experience as president of the Raiz Italiana Association.

After years of study and fieldwork, Italea brought this idea to life and fostered a new awareness within Italian institutions about the value of ties between Italy and communities worldwide. I am grateful for the opportunity offered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which believed in this project, allowing this vision to become reality.

The greatest professional satisfaction came with the official launch of the program in the early months of 2024. Seeing years of work transform into a network of stakeholders and a concrete platform ready to welcome root travelers was an extraordinary milestone. The most powerful emotions came from direct contact with Italian communities abroad, particularly through the events organized in 2024, the Year of Italian Roots in the World. The teamwork involving regions, institutions, and communities made the satisfaction even more intense.



Today, root tourism is at the center of the debate in Italy. With Italea, enthusiasm and new initiatives have emerged, even beyond the program itself. I am confident that this phenomenon will continue to grow, becoming a well-established niche. The future will require constant effort to improve offerings, train operators, and strengthen the network between Italian communities abroad and their places of origin.»

Attilio Ardito

*Regional Coordinator for Italea Puglia
with responsibility for coordinating the regions of Abruzzo, Marche, Molise, and Umbria*

«For me, the Italea project has been much more than a professional experience: it has been a profound, human, and rewarding journey. I have been involved in roots tourism since 2017, and seeing a national project of this scale come to life has been truly exciting, almost like a dream come true. I had the fortune to work alongside fifteen colleagues from all over Italy, with the national coordination, central offices, as well as municipalities, regions, and local groups. Together, we faced complex and stimulating challenges, but above all, we built genuine connections based on trust and collaboration, which went beyond professional relationships and became valuable human bonds.

From a professional perspective, the greatest satisfaction was seeing tangible collaborations emerge and grow: connecting different institutions, promoting and coordinating networks of professionals and economic



operators, guiding the step-by-step creation of the first tourism products, and then seeing them become reality. On a personal level, the most moving experiences were meeting the Italian communities abroad, particularly in São Paulo and Buenos Aires: there, I could directly feel the strength of the emotional and cultural ties that the project helps reignite. These were intense moments, full of emotion and humanity.

I believe roots tourism has a future full of potential. It is not just a tourism segment but an experience of belonging and reconnection that can generate cultural, social, and economic value. I think it will continue to grow, especially if we strengthen local networks,

enhance traditions, and build authentic welcoming paths. In this sense, roots tourism can become a driver of sustainable development and regeneration for our territories.»

Maurizio Giambalvo

*Regional Coordinator for Italea Sicily
with responsibility for the regions of Sardinia, Liguria, Piedmont, and Aosta Valley*

«Italea has represented not only a significant professional challenge but also a deeply human opportunity. Coordinating the regional networks meant creating or strengthening connections between local territories and Italian communities around the world through the unifying role of the Directorate General for Italians Abroad. Thanks to the support of the PNRR, we were able to build a cultural and tourism infrastructure that speaks of history, identity, and hospitality – with events, itineraries, genealogists, and the Italea Card system.

Among the international events, the trip to Toronto for the “Taste of Little Italy” festival was undoubtedly the most striking for me, due to its ability to bring together a large community of Italian descendants around promoting and sharing an



Italy that is aware of its traditions and capable not only of preserving them but also of presenting them in innovative ways.

The future of roots tourism in Italy depends on the ability to build a cohesive network among territories, institutions, and Italian communities abroad. In this sense, Italea has acted as an enabling platform: coordinating, connecting, and enhancing the various local realities to transform them into a structured and accessible tourism offer. It is not just about attracting travelers, but about guiding them through an identity-driven and emotional journey, offering a fresh

perspective on Italy. Thanks to this shared infrastructure, roots tourism can become a key driver of cultural, economic, and social development for the country.»



Cristina Lambiase

Regional Coordinator for Italea Friuli-Venezia Giulia with responsibility for coordinating the regions of Veneto, Trentino-Alto Adige, Emilia-Romagna, and Lombardia

«For me, Italea has been a true roots journey, both personal and professional. As an AIRE registrant and co-founder of the Fogolâr Furlan in Beijing, I have always considered it essential for institutions to stay close to Italian communities abroad—not only for administrative purposes but to strengthen identity and a sense of belonging. Italea is like a great tree: it welcomes, protects, and weaves together the initiatives of communities and Italian descendants around the world into a single rich and shared canopy.

The project has left me with a precious legacy: encounters with associations in Italy and abroad, guardians of unique intangible heritage, and the many stories of those who lived far away or of young people proudly declaring, «We are Italian.» Added to this is the pride of having worked with a group of skilled and motivated professionals, guided by a central coordination capable of turning a vision into reality. Among the most intense experiences, I remember the mission to Melbourne—the farthest stop on the world tour—carefully organized through a collective effort that enabled institutional meetings, cultural moments, and a



flawless gala evening. Unforgettable were also the words of the elderly emigrants, whose stories revealed a heart that remained connected to Italy. Italea is the story of our stories: a homecoming for Italian descendants and an opportunity for the revival of small towns. The future of roots tourism lies in the ability to make every return an authentic experience of memory, listening, and community.»



Elvira Stephanie Di Giacomo

Regional Coordinator for Italea Basilicata with responsibility for coordinating the regions of Calabria, Campania, Lazio, and Toscana

«For me, Italea has been an intense experience, a whirlwind of emotions. Born in Canada to Italian parents, I grew up with a mix of cultures, nostalgia, and a strong bond with my distant family. I remembered the communities in Toronto and the longing for Italy—childhood memories reignited by Italea, which helped me understand the experience of Italian descendants. Guiding them to rediscover their roots in Basilicata brought me great joy, but it was during the Italea on Tour events that I felt an even stronger connection with the communities abroad. I believe Italea is a lifeline for towns facing depopulation. It is a key to revival: residents rediscover their identity and traditions, welcoming returning visitors with enthusiasm, while old memories and photos resurface. For me, Italea is this: an authentic connection that brings towns back to life and nurtures hope.

Among the many events, the most moving was the first gathering of the «Pescopaganesi nel mondo»: around 500 Italian descendants from Switzerland, Venezuela, Argentina, Canada, and the United States came together for 14 days in the Lucanian village, enjoying local festivals, fairs, and workshops. It was incredible: over 160 volunteers and the entire community mobilized, alongside institutions, authorities, law enforcement, associations,



bands, and artists. Seeing residents and the diaspora united in a single embrace confirmed that the project has a real and heartfelt impact.

The future of Roots Tourism in Italy is promising: the Ministry's program has sparked a strong global desire to rediscover one's origins.»

Historical research

A new cultural project brings together scholars and enthusiasts to highlight the history of local families

Verona launches its first association dedicated to genealogy

Verona Genealogica APS has been officially established as the city's first association entirely devoted to genealogy and the preservation of family roots. The initiative emerged from the coming together of around thirty people – local history enthusiasts, archivists, researchers, and genealogists – who had long collaborated informally, united by a shared passion for historical memory and the stories of origins. The association aims to promote and spread genealogical culture, raising awareness among citizens about the importance of historical and archival research while fostering so-called "roots tourism." Verona Genealogica intends to guide people in discovering the places of their origins, enhancing the local territory through the creation of genealogical itineraries. Collaboration with public and private archives, historical institutes, ecclesiastical bodies, and local administrations will be central to the project.

These synergies will allow greater access to documentary sources, as well as the development of joint projects, with the goal of making historical information about families and local communities increasingly accessible.

One of the projects already underway involves creating genealogical databases dedicated to the various municipalities of the province of Verona, which will be collected on an online portal updated continuously. This extensive "archive of memory" will become a reference point for scholars, residents, and tourists interested in learning more about the history of local families and communities. Verona Genealogica also aims to act as a driver of cultural and social engagement, promoting courses, workshops, educational activities, and conferences for all age groups, strengthening the bond between citizens and the territory in which they live.



Members of Verona Genealogica APS



Varallo PIEDMONT

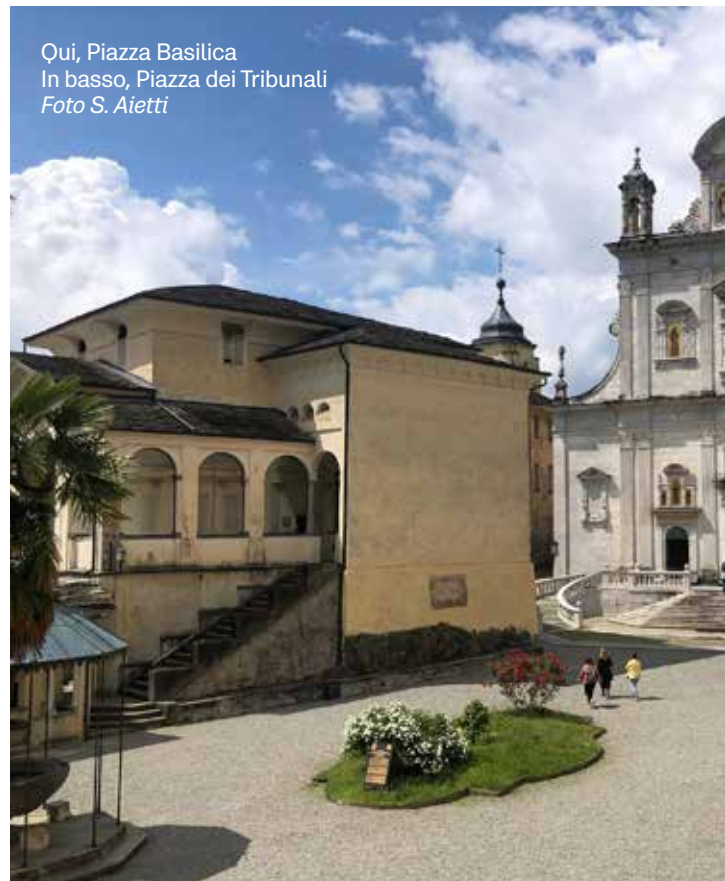
In the green, mountainous heart of Valsesia, Varallo rises like an exquisite treasure chest of history, art, and spirituality

The stage of Renaissance wonder

In the lush mountain landscape of Valsesia, Varallo rises like an exquisite treasure chest of history, art, and spirituality, a favourite destination for visitors from all over the world. Often referred to as the capital of cultural tourism in Valsesia, this Piedmontese town blends natural beauty with a remarkably rich artistic heritage, preserved since the sixteenth century.

Varallo's most celebrated jewel is its Sacro Monte, the oldest of the nine Sacri Monti in northern Italy, declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2003. Conceived in 1491 by the Franciscan friar Bernardino Caimi as a symbolic reproduction of the Holy Land, the Sacro Monte stands on a wooded rocky spur. Along its scenic route, 44 frescoed chapels and a majestic Basilica depict Gospel scenes through over 4,000 painted figures and 800 life-size sculptures by masters such as Gaudenzio Ferrari, Giovanni and Antonio d'Enrico (known as Tanzio da Varallo), and Morazzone. It is truly a "Great Mountain Theatre" where art and nature come together in an experience like no other.

History is felt in every corner of Varallo's historic centre: a maze of cobbled lanes, courtyards, and arcades that preserve the medieval layout of the old town. Here, artisan workshops keep alive centuries-old traditions such as puncetto, the intricate Valsesian lace, and the craft of working soapstone and wood. Local craftsmanship is not only a cultural treasure but also a sensory experience, with tastings of alpine cheeses, rice from the lower Vercelli plain, and fine Gattinara wines—just a few examples of the region's authentic flavours and traditions.



Qui, Piazza Basilica
In basso, Piazza dei Tribunali
Foto S. Aietti





OTHER PLACES TO VISIT

Nearby Borgosesia is another historic village rich in architecture and local traditions. Nature lovers should not miss the Balmuccia and Quaroni nature reserves, perfect for peaceful walks along the Sesia River.



HOW TO GET THERE

Varallo is easily accessible by car via State Road 299, which connects it to the motorway network. From Milan, take the A4 motorway to Biandrate, then follow the SS229 towards Varallo; from Turin, take the A5 to Quincinetto and continue along the SS299. By train, Varallo Sesia is linked by regional services from Novara and Vercelli, both reachable from Milan or Turin with convenient connections. The nearest airport is Milan Malpensa, about 80 km away.



Varallo also embraces contemporary creativity. The WARAL Art Urban Project has adorned the historic centre with murals by international artists, creating a fascinating dialogue between past and present. Along Corso Roma, elegant 19th-century villas such as Villa Virginia, Villa Barbara, and Villa Durio recall the town's refined and vibrant past.

Another must-see is the Collegiate Church of San Gaudenzio, perched on a rocky promontory and reached via an impressive staircase, with a panoramic loggia overlooking the town. Museum lovers will find a trove of treasures at the Palazzo dei Musei: the Pinacoteca houses masterpieces by Gaudenzio Ferrari and other local masters, while the Pietro Calderini Museum of Natural History showcases rich naturalistic and archaeological collections, including a fine Egyptology section.

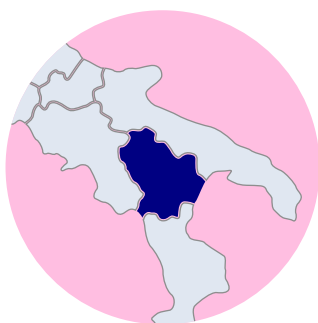
The Sacro Monte can be reached either by the steepest cable car in Europe—which whisks you to the top in just 90 seconds—or via a scenic 20-minute walk through the surrounding woodland. Life in Varallo flows with cultural

events, festivals, and convivial gatherings celebrating local food and wine. The area also offers a wealth of outdoor activities: trekking, mountain biking, river sports, and climbing are just some of the ways to enjoy its stunning natural setting.

Crossing the picturesque Antonini Bridge over the Mastallone River takes you to Varallo Vecchio, the original settlement, where you can visit the Scarognini d'Adda Palace—now the Fishing Museum—and the Church of San Giacomo.

Here, the "El Raffa" riverside walk offers a peaceful retreat right in the heart of town.





Maratea BASILICATA

Overlooking the Gulf of Policastro and steeped in lush greenery, Maratea's roots reach back 40,000 years

Tyrrhenian treasure in Basilicata

Maratea is Basilicata's only outlet to the Tyrrhenian Sea. Overlooking the Gulf of Policastro, it boasts a Mediterranean coastal landscape of rugged headlands draped in lush vegetation. Its waters shelter vast meadows of *posidonia oceanica*, teeming with marine life.

The town's name has inspired many theories: from *thēa maris* ("goddess of the sea"), possibly corrupted into *dea maris*, to *Mar-ar-Ethea* ("City of the Great Etei"), a people who journeyed west from the Black Sea; or *Marath-ia*, "land of fennel" (*Marathus*), in reference to the abundant wild fennel that still grows here.

What is certain is that Maratea's history stretches back over 40,000 years. Roman-era remains have been uncovered on the small island of Santo Janni, including vats once used to prepare and preserve *garum*, the prized fish sauce of antiquity.

In the late Middle Ages, the focus of settlement shifted uphill to Monte San Biagio. Around the 7th–8th centuries AD, Basilian monks founded the fortified village of Maratea Superiore—today known as the *Castello*. The mountain is home to the Basilica of the town's patron saint and the striking 22-metre-tall statue of Christ the Redeemer, one of the ten tallest in the world and twinned since 2021 with its counterpart in Rio de Janeiro. Visitors can admire the statue, then explore the area's caves, including the *Grotta delle Meraviglie* and the small *Blue Grotto*, best reached by boat. Maratea's past mirrors the complex history of Lucania, shaped by Byzantine, Lombard, Arab, Norman, Angevin, Aragonese, and Spanish rule. Many traces remain: six 16th-century coastal watchtowers, the 44 churches that have earned it the title "city of 44 churches," the hilltop Basilica of San Biagio (traditionally built on the site of a pagan temple to Minerva), the route of the Historic Centre's churches, *Castrocuoco Castle*, *Villa Nitti* (once the residence of statesman Francesco Saverio Nitti), and *Palazzo De Lieto*, now housing the *Angelo Brando Art Gallery*. Religious festivals are central to Maratea's cultural life. The most important is the *May feast of San Biagio*, when the saint's statue is carried in procession to the historic cen-



tre. In June, the *Madonna di Porto Salvo* festival features a spectacular maritime procession with dozens of boats and hundreds of participants.

Local tradition is also alive in the kitchen, where the flavours of both sea and mountains meet: *lagane e ciciri* (pasta ribbons with chickpeas), *alici a' scapici* (marinated anchovies), ravioli filled with ricotta, sugar, and cinnamon in a rich meat sauce, and onion frittatas. Specialties include mozzarella from Massa, ribbed tomatoes, ricotta, *caciocavallo* cheese, Lucanian sausage, red eggplant, wild fennel, and sea fennel—a plant that grows on coastal rocks, once used in salads and today distilled into a liqueur.

Photo APT Basilicata



OTHER PLACES TO VISIT

Heading south along the coast, you'll find the Torre di Fiuzzi and the sea caves of Dino Island. Inland, mountain lovers can explore the Parco delle Stelle.



HOW TO GET THERE

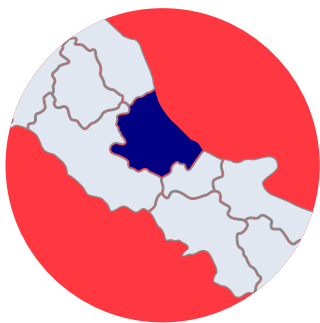
The nearest airport is Naples Capodichino (200 km). Maratea train station is on the Rome–Reggio Calabria line. By car from the north: take the A3 Salerno–Reggio Calabria, exit at Lagonegro Nord–Maratea, follow SS 585, and take the Maratea Nord, Centro, or Sud exits. From the south: exit the A3 at Lauria Sud, join SP 3, then SS 585; or follow SS 18 northbound.



Photo APT Basilicata

The journey to discover our roots continues

Here is the sixteen issue of the magazine dedicated to Roots Tourism. The journey continues through all the Italian regions, discovering the wonders in over 800 municipalities that are part of the Italea project.



Caramanico Terme ABRUZZO

Where nature becomes therapy

The village has preserved its authentic spirit intact: a shelter for those seeking peace and a true connection with nature

Just steps from the Majella National Park, Caramanico Terme is a small village that has preserved its authentic soul—perfect for those seeking peace and a direct connection with unspoilt nature. Nestled in one of Abruzzo's most striking valleys, it is not only a place of wellness, thanks to its thermal waters, but also a gateway to the enduring traditions of mountain culture.

Its natural beauty, stone houses, and trails climbing the slopes of the Majella make Caramanico Terme an ideal escape from the pace of modern life, offering an immersion in history, tradition, and untouched landscapes. The village's defining feature is its location, where wild nature meets the charm of a mountain settlement. Perched on the Majella massif—one of the most dramatic and untamed in the Apennines—it enjoys sweeping views shaped by the mountain's rugged presence.

The valley surrounding Caramanico is a paradise for nature lovers: rivers, centuries-old beech and oak forests, and vistas stretching to the Adriatic Sea create a rare and immersive beauty. Its thermal springs are among the main draws, famed since Roman times for their healing properties.

The spa facilities, set amid greenery, are a haven for complete relaxation, where body and mind can be restored through natural treatments. Here, wellness is not just leisure—it is part of a tradition passed down through generations, rooted in the pure mountain air and the sounds of the surrounding wilderness.

Beyond its waters and landscapes, Caramanico Terme is a living expression of local heritage. The village is a fine example of rural architecture, with narrow stone alleys, houses of rough-hewn rock, and centuries-old churches. Traditional crafts such as woodworking and ceramics still thrive, offering visitors the chance to find unique, handmade pieces.

Gastronomy is another key part of Caramanico's identity. The local cuisine is simple, genuine, and deeply tied to the land, featuring meats, mushrooms, cheeses, and honey.



Photo Majambiente



Foto Comune Caramanico

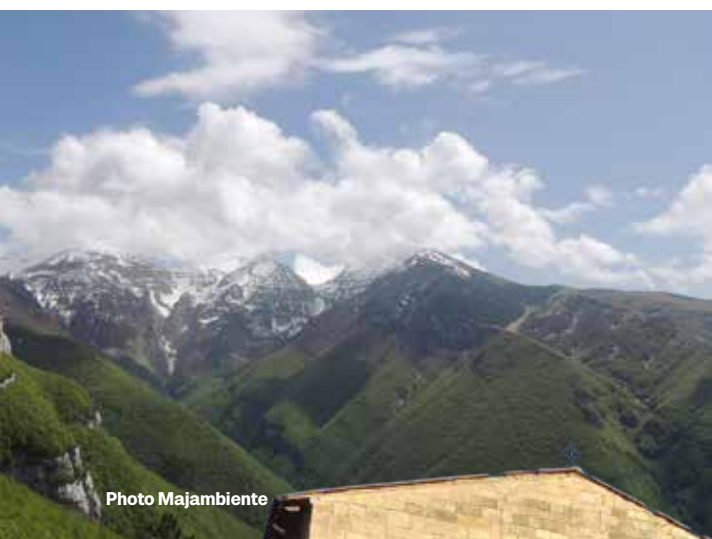


Photo Majambiente



italea

The journey to your roots



OTHER PLACES TO VISIT

In the enchanting Orfento Valley, the nearby Hermitage of San Bartolomeo in Legio is a sanctuary of peace and spirituality carved into the rock, where history and nature merge in an atmosphere both timeless and serene.



HOW TO GET THERE

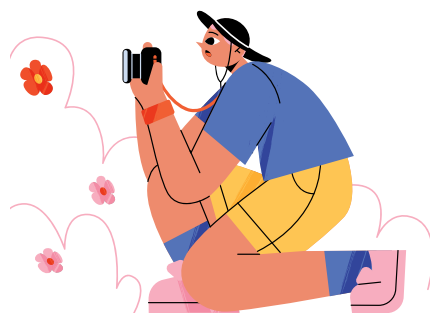
From Pescara, take the A25 to the Scafa-Alanno exit, then follow the SS487 to Caramanico Terme. The nearest train station is Scafa-San Valentino-Caramanico Terme, with bus connections to the village centre. Pescara Airport is about 50 km away.

Signature dishes include virtù, a rustic soup of legumes and vegetables, and scrippelle, delicate crepes filled and rolled in keeping with ancient Abruzzese traditions.

Folk traditions come alive through annual festivals and events. The Feast of the Madonna delle Grazie in July honours the village's patron saint with processions, music, and Abruzzese dances. At Christmastime, the "Song of the Bagpipes" fills the streets with the melodies of zampognari—shepherd musicians playing traditional tunes that evoke the area's pastoral past. In summer, the much-loved "Sagra della Virtù" celebrates local food with tastings, folk shows, and concerts, uniting residents and visitors in a lively blend of past and present.

Guardia Sanframondi

The event provided an opportunity to review the results of the Italea project



«Welcome Home in Sannio» Root Tourism revitalizes the inland areas of Benevento

Within the ancient walls of the medieval Castle of Guardia Sanframondi, in the province of Benevento, the National Day of Sacrifice of Italian Labor Abroad was celebrated on August 8 with "Welcome Home in Sannio", an event that placed root tourism at the center of the discussion as a tool to revive Italy's inland territories.

Held alongside the 34th edition of Vinalia, the initiative brought together institutions, scholars, and local administrators to review the outcomes of the Italea project, a program promoting root tourism launched by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI) as part of the PNRR plan and funded by NextGenerationEU.

The conference, organized on the 69th anniversary of the Marcinelle tragedy—where 136 Italian workers lost their lives on August 8, 1956, at the Bois du Cazier mine in Belgium—was a moment to reflect on the potential of root tourism to reverse depopulation in inland areas.

Eleven municipalities in the province of Benevento took part in Italea: alongside Guardia Sanframondi, the lead town of the initiative, were Amorosi, Ceppaloni, Morcone, Pannarano, Paolisi, Pesco Sannita, Ponte, Pontelandolfo, San Bartolomeo in Galdo, and Santa Croce del Sannio.

«Our territories need to acquire the know-how necessary to create dedicated tourist itineraries that enhance both the tangible and intangible heritage of our inland areas at risk of depopulation,» emphasized Raffaele Di Lonardo, mayor of Guardia Sanframondi. He also highlighted the importance of «supporting our roots» and maintaining a «filial relationship with the Madonna dell'Assunta, a faith that embodies tradition and respect,» announcing the creation of «a documentation center on local popular traditions, a reference point on these themes.» The aim is to consolidate strategies offered by the MAECI project through structured collaboration among local administrations.

The day was further enriched by the inauguration of the photographic exhibition «I Riti Settennali: One Year Later», organized in collaboration with the Sanctuary of the Assunta and the Circolo Fotografico Sannita. The exhibition explores the devotional and anthropological heritage of the famous Seven-Year Penitential Rites in Honor of the Assunta, held every seven years and involving the entire community in a unique penitential procession. The last edi-



tion took place in August 2024, with the next scheduled for 2031.

«The example of the Riti shows how cultural heritage linked to devotion can inspire new generations of Guardia Sanframondi descendants abroad to visit the birthplace of their ancestors,» stated Giovanni Maria De Vita, head of the Italea project. He also noted that «the promotion of Italian traditions continues in Sannio, which is at the heart of the Italea project.»

Italea has involved over 800 small Italian municipalities with the aim of attracting the 80 million Italians abroad. «Root tourism was created to reveal culture, rituals, and traditions and to showcase places untouched by mass tourism,» explained De Vita, adding that «today, root journeys in Italy allow children and grandchildren of emigrants to rediscover their origins. Each region, through local Italeas, offers a variety of services—tours, workshops, events,



Qui e nella pagina precedente alcune immagini di "Welcome Home in Sannio". In alto a destra, Sara Roversi e Giovanni Maria De Vita

ported.» In his closing remarks, Giovanni Maria De Vita described the program as «an innovative network. The project has succeeded thanks to the shared commitment of all actors involved. Rural areas and small towns are the true protagonists of this project and of migration history; returning today means reconnecting with the places our ancestors left behind.» He also acknowledged Campania's pioneering role, noting that «the region had already laid the groundwork for root tourism even before the national project, serving as a model for others.»

De Vita concluded by emphasizing that «root travelers come to Italy not just to 'see' but to 'experience,' to feel part of a community. Everyone has their own story, and our project provides opportunities to organize their journey. The territories have offered great collaboration, opening archives and participating in the hospitality.»

The event ended with the announcement that the Castle of Gesualdo will host an Italea office to promote root tourism and provide welcoming services in Irpinia, as announced by Josephine Carrabs of Irpinia Escapes, an Australian originally from Gesualdo who has decided to invest in her hometown. This announcement consolidates the role of the Irpinia-Sannio area as a laboratory of best practices for revitalizing inland areas through the enhancement of cultural and identity roots.

activities—to welcome and assist root travelers, making their experience in Italy unique.» The Italea Card was also presented, offering «discounts, benefits, and services.» Sara Roversi, president of Radici ETS – Italea Campania, described the region as «an incredible untapped resource» where «root tourism has always existed. We joined forces and worked with heart and care to ensure these are not just trips, but returns, discoveries.» She added that «in today's context, projects like this can provide a meaningful solution, reminding us of the humanity we need.»

Anna Maria Buondonno Maturi, councilor of COMITES Montreal, called on younger generations: «We need to speak to young people because today it is not just a matter of leaving with a cardboard suitcase; it's the 'brains' that leave the country. We must address this issue, also through associations, which serve as vehicles of relationships and resources, and this is why they must be sup-

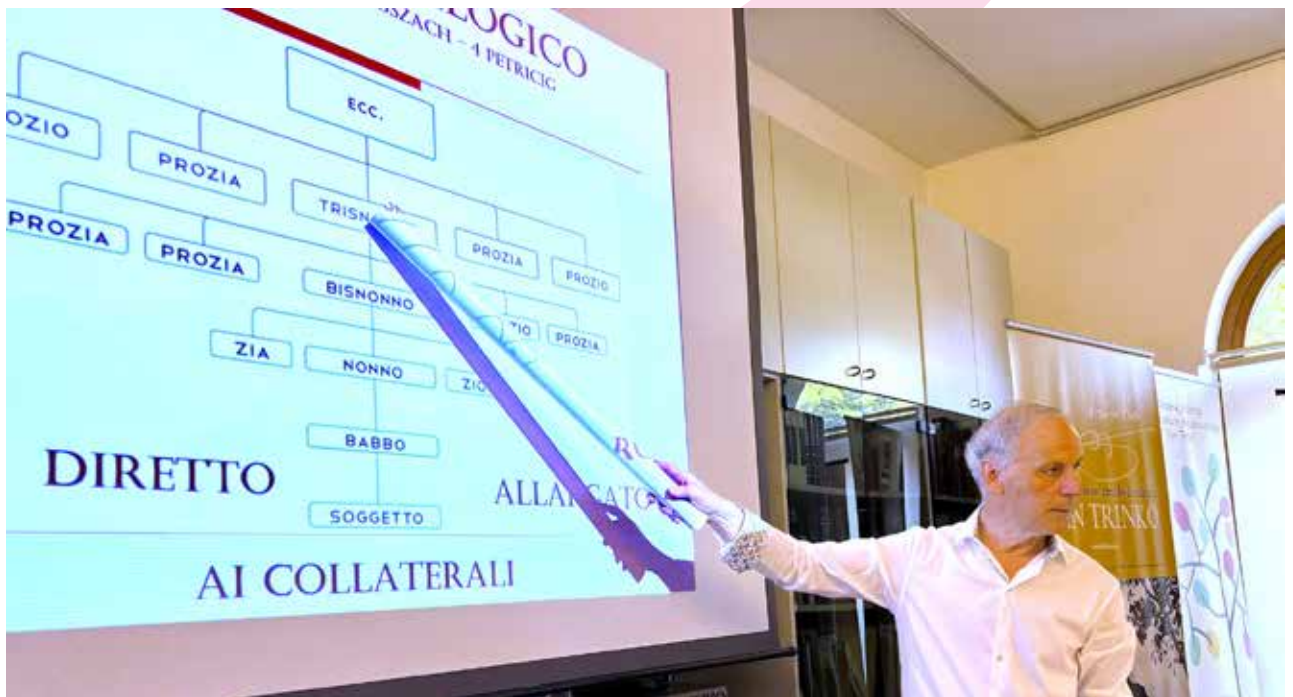


Interview

For over fifty years Claudio Diacoli has been reconstructing family trees and personal histories



«This is how I help Italian descendants return to the heart»



«At school, they teach us the history of great figures. But who tells us our own?» It was this question that more than fifty years ago set Claudio Diacoli on his journey into the world of genealogy. Today, he is an experienced genealogist, founder of the Genealogical Association of Friuli-Venezia Giulia, and for the past two years has been actively involved in Italea Friuli Venezia Giulia, the regional branch of Italea, a program promoting roots tourism launched by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the PNRR project and funded by NextGenerationEU.

Through conferences, workshops, individual consultations, and trips to Argentina and Brazil, Diacoli has helped hundreds of Italian descendants reconnect with their roots. «Knowing your origins,» he explains, «is like returning to the heart. That's where our story truly begins.»

One of the most intensive projects in recent months was a genealogical workshop organized as part of the reception in Friuli Venezia Giulia of five young people from Argentina,

Australia, and Canada, descendants of families originally from the Valli del Natisone. The initiative, born from the collaboration between Italea FVG and the Union of Slovenian Emigrants of Friuli Venezia Giulia, saw Diacoli reconstruct four family trees, two of which traced back ten generations. «In some cases, I worked along the patrilineal line to follow the surname and identify any relatives still in Friuli,» the genealogist explains. «In others, I used the fan-shaped tree, much more complex, which includes all branches of descent from both parents: grandparents, great-grandparents, and great-great-grandparents. Every story is a world, and each world must be treated with respect and empathy.»

Genealogy is not just archival work. To reconstruct these family trees, Diacoli traveled personally to the places of origin, consulted parish registers and civil records, spoke with municipal employees, parish priests, and the last residents of mountain villages. He collected photos, documents, and personal testimonies. He then presented the young partici-



pants with illustrated parchments, complete with maps, images of ancestral homes, and forgotten family details. One of the most moving moments was the surprise meeting between Daniel Faccone, a young Canadian, and a maternal relative living in Altana, in the municipality of San Leonardo,



Udine. «They embraced. It was an intimate, real moment. A return to the heart.»

Doing genealogy in Friuli-Venezia Giulia is not easy. The region has endured centuries of administrative instability, border changes, wars, floods, and earthquakes, which have damaged or scattered many archives. «Here, history hasn't just passed by: it has scratched the surface,» Diacoli explains. «Caporetto, the Yugoslav border, priests fleeing with registers in hand... all left marks and gaps that are hard to fill.»

Yet, despite these challenges, genealogy is increasingly necessary. Because it is not just research—it is a dialogue. «Those who contact me must trust me. I ask them to share memories, even intimate ones. Genealogy touches deep chords: identity, origins, affection. It's a family conversation, not a form to fill out.»

In all of this, Italea FVG plays a key role. It is the platform, the point of contact, the thread that reconnects lost stories and relatives. «Thanks to Italea,» Diacoli says, «I connect with dozens of families every month. I always prefer a video call over a simple email exchange: voice, face, and empathy are needed. Only this way do these investigations become "human" and shared. Because it's not just data; it's emotion.» For Claudio Diacoli, genealogy is not just a technique. It is an ethical and cultural act. «To remember,» he concludes, «means to return to the heart. To forget is to lose. But to remember, as the word itself implies, is to reconnect with emotions, dreams, and the history of one's family. And that is exactly what we do every day with Italea: we help people return to their roots.»



Here and on the previous page, Claudio Diacoli



The pact

Agreement signed between two UNESCO Creative Cities strengthening Italy-Argentina ties

Bologna and Buenos Aires join forces to unite culture, memory and future

In the historic Red Hall of Palazzo d'Accursio, on August 1, Bologna hosted the signing of a new Friendship and Collaboration Pact with the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires. This is not just an institutional agreement, but the beginning of a shared journey between two urban realities that have long observed and recognized each other, and now choose to walk side by side.

The pact was signed by Bologna's mayor, Matteo Lepore, and Buenos Aires' Minister of Culture, Gabriela Bárbara Ricardes. Their signatures not only formalize the agreement but also testify to the desire to maintain a dialogue already alive, built on common cultural roots and a shared vision of urban development: sustainable, creative, and inclusive.

The text of the Pact captures its spirit well: "The future of cities lies in their ability to innovate, facing social, environmental, and cultural challenges together, while respecting their own identities."

The agreement outlines concrete cooperation on key issues such as cultural promotion, protection of artistic heritage, sustainable tourism, and active citizenship. Two cities separated by thousands of kilometers, yet united by the same creative energy and recognition as UNESCO Creative Cities, choose to build a bridge between Europe and South America, starting from culture and memory.

Among the initiatives already planned are exchanges in the theatrical sector—with particular attention to opera and the Italian lyrical tradition, also due to the presence of Teatro Coliseo in Buenos Aires, the only Italian state-owned theater abroad—and collaborations in cinema, including projects on restoration, accessibility, and promotion of historic venues like Bologna's Cinema Modernissimo.

The publishing world will also play a central role, with joint graphic projects and collaborations between the cities' international book fairs. Educational programs and joint events dedicated to historical memory are also planned, connecting Buenos Aires' Parque de la Memoria with Bologna's emerging Polo della Memoria.

Memory is one of the pact's core pillars. Bologna, which has long worked on building democratic memory around events such as the August 2, 1980 massacre and the Ustica tragedy, aims to promote a network of cities affected by political violence. Buenos Aires is a key reference point in this regard: during an institutional mission last March, Mayor Lepore met the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo and visited symbolic sites such as the Parque de la Memoria and the former ESMA detention center, sharing with Argentine authorities a profound reflection on memory as a tool for truth and justice. "Memory," Lepore said, "is





Buenos Aires' Minister of Culture
Gabriela Bárbara Ricardes and
Bologna's Mayor Matteo Lepore



a safeguard against revisionism and disinformation. Argentina has faced its past with courage: for us, it is an example to follow."

Another central aspect of the Pact is the development of innovative cultural tourism, combining sustainability with territorial promotion. In this context, special attention is given to Roots Tourism, aimed at the over 20 million Argentines of Italian descent wishing to rediscover the places, stories, and identities of their ancestral families.

The idea is to transform travel into an opportunity for deep reconnection, supporting local economies, enhancing local cultures, and creating lasting bonds between communities.

The Pact also looks to the future, with projects to promote talent and the cultural and creative industries, which will be involved in events, exchanges, and artistic residencies. Joint educational programs are planned, particularly in schools teaching Italian, along with civic engagement initiatives targeting youth, the elderly, and vulnerable groups.

The agreement, effective immediately, is valid

for five years and will automatically renew for another five unless the parties decide otherwise. The activities will be coordinated by the departments of both administrations, in collaboration with local organizations such as the Bologna Welcome Foundation and cultural and civic associations.





In Lombardy

Among the many descendants is Péricles Gasparini, who returned to the Mantuan village to celebrate the 35th anniversary of the Monument to the Emigrant

From Magnacavallo to Brazil and back: the story of the Pozzetti

Between the late 19th century and the early 20th century, millions of Italians set out in search of a better life, carrying Italy beyond its borders. One place that preserves this collective memory is the Emigrant Museum of Magnacavallo, in the province of Mantua. Among documents, photographs, letters, and period articles, the museum tells stories of hope, struggle, and renewal.

Among them is the story of the Pozzetti family, who departed for Brazil at the end of the 19th century in search of a brighter future. In 1891, Fioravante Pozzetti, 27, from Magnacavallo, and his wife Itala Reggiani, 20, from Quistello, sailed from the port of Genoa. After weeks at sea, they landed in

Santos, Brazil, where a new life awaited them on the coffee plantations of the São Bento farm in the state of São Paulo. Fioravante and Itala's story echoes that of thousands of Italian emigrants: leaving with little, working tirelessly, and building a family.

In Brazil, the Pozzetti family had ten children, through whom Italian roots were planted in the heart of South America: values, traditions, cuisine, and a spirit of initiative. Despite the challenges of maintaining contact with relatives back in Italy, the family managed to integrate while never forgetting their origins. Among their many descendants is Péricles Gasparini, whose personal path over the years has also be-





On the left, the Monument to the Emigrant in Magnacavallo. On this and the previous page, some images of the Pozzetti family



come a journey back to his roots. A professional who spent over 35 years working with United Nations missions, Péricles, born in 1959, has worked around the world without ever losing sight of the plains of Lombardy and Emilia where his ancestors came from. In 2015, he returned to Magnacavallo for the 25th anniversary of the Monument to the Emigrant to present his book «Al di là dell'Oceano: la Ricerca di un'Identità», a work that weaves together family stories, historical memory, and personal identity. Today, ten years later, Péricles returns once again to the Mantuan village to celebrate the 35th anniversary of the Monument to the Emigrant, on September 13–14, 2025. The occasion will be an opportunity

to reconnect with his origins, as well as to present two new books to the public. Beyond the cultural aspect, the event will also serve as a family reunion and a meeting with the local communities: Péricles has reconstructed a genealogical map linking 21 Italian families, related from 1556 to the present, forming the branch that eventually led him to Brazil. Péricles' journeys to Magnacavallo are a tangible reminder of how Italian roots continue to shape the present. His story – like that of many descendants of emigrants – shows that roots tourism is not only a physical return but also a way to rediscover oneself and reconnect with the culture that shaped entire generations.



In Irpinia

The project transforms returning to one's roots into a cultural and sustainable experience

Festival delle Radici: small villages, big stories of return

There is an Italy that cannot be seen from the grand avenues of its cities, nor told through traditional tourist circuits—a living Italy that thrives in the narrow streets of forgotten villages, among the folds of family memories still alive. It is this Italy that the Festival of Roots seeks to bring back to the spotlight, turning the return to one's places of origin into a profound, participatory, and sustainable cultural experience.

Conceived by Glocal Think under the artistic and communications direction of Emanuela Sica, the Festival was born to promote Roots Tourism, but it goes far beyond a single event. It is a territorial project connecting stories, people, and places, and in 2025 it continues its path with an increasingly complex and ambitious vision. This year, alongside Glocal Think, Italea again supports the Festival at several stops, helping strengthen local networks and amplify the message through integrated communication.

«The Festival was born from the desire to valorize small villages, often forgotten but rich in stories and potential,» explains Sica. «It is an initiative of integrated communication and eco-sustainable development, designed by Glocal Think thanks to the vision of President Vincenzo Castaldo.»

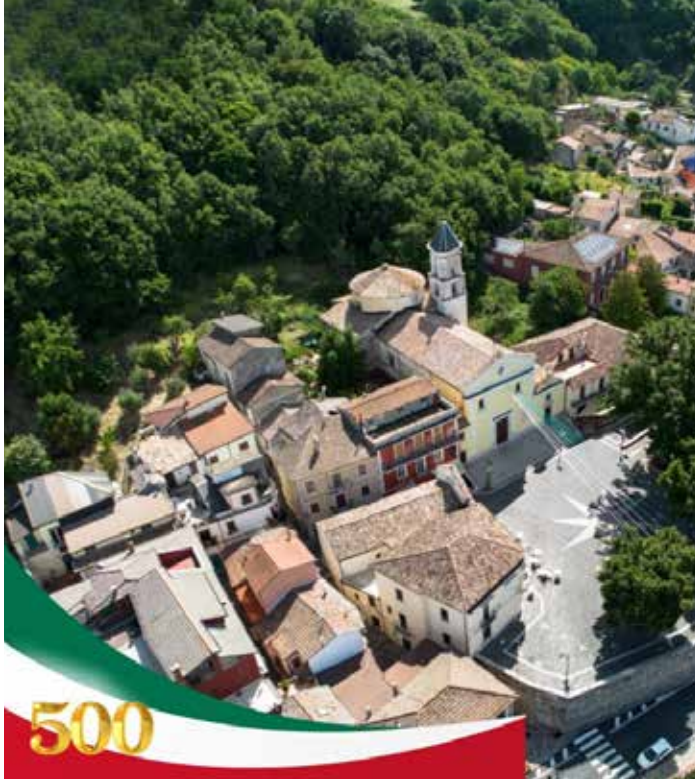
Following the 2024 edition, which focused on Biological Roots, Festival 2025 unfolds along two complementary paths: Migratory Roots, dedicated to memory, traditions, genealogy, and emigration stories; and Being & Innovating, focused on well-being, sustain-

ability, digitalization, and social innovation. Two different approaches sharing a common goal: to place communities at the center and build a sustainable future rooted in local identities.

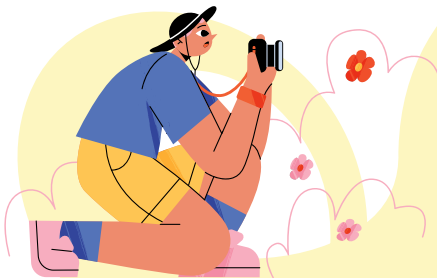
Among the first stops in 2025 are Volturara Irpina (July 25), Senerchia (August 3), and Santo Stefano del Sole (August 10), three villages in the Campanian hinterland, in the province of Avellino. These locations share a strong migratory tradition and a socially active and welcoming community. Volturara highlighted culinary traditions, local dialect, and stories of return, in collaboration with the Destination Management Organization Montagna d'Amare and the exhibition "The Faces of Roots." Senerchia hosted activities focused on storytelling, training, and genealogy, with participation from the Catholic University. In Santo Stefano del Sole, on the occasion of its 500th anniversary of autonomy, the Festival will unite history, celebration, and culture, naming the first Ambassador of Roots.

«The goal is not only to create high-quality events





but to trigger lasting processes,» Sica concludes. «We want villages to become permanent points of reference for Roots Tourism, valorizing skills, regenerating spaces, and offering new opportunities. Ultimately, we aim to restore identity pride to communities and provide concrete tools to new generations, both in Italy and abroad. But achieving this requires working in synergy—through training, services, hospitality, and vision. It is a medium- to long-term effort, and it is precisely this that drives Glocal Think's mission.»



Calabria

Gagliato (CZ) hosted the initiative "Borghi e Appartenenze," promoted by Italea and the local municipality

Small villages: where Italian descendants find authenticity

«Roots Tourism is a project promoted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to introduce the over 80 million people of Italian descent around the world to the places their ancestors once left.» These special travelers are searching «not only for the birthplaces of their ancestors, but also, for example, for civil registry archives» to reconstruct their family history. «But above all, these tourists seek contact with the local people: they want to experience traditions and discover the way of life they have always heard about» from their grandparents or great-grandparents. These are the words of Giovanni Maria De Vita, Embassy Counselor and Head of the Roots Tourism Project at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, who on August 23 was among the speakers at the initiative "Borghi e Appartenenze – The Journey Back to One's Origins," held on the steps of Via Roma in Gagliato, in the province of Catanzaro. The event was promoted by the Municipality of Gagliato with the patronage of Italea, the program for promoting roots tourism launched by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as part of the PNRR project and funded by NextGenerationEU, in collaboration with the tour operator "Sognare Insieme Viaggi."

«Gagliato – explained De Vita – is one of the many villages from which 95% of Italian emigration originated, and it therefore has great potential to attract these visitors, who can also contribute positively to local development.» «It is precisely the roots tourists who can discover in places like Gagliato that authentic Italian identity they have always



On the left, Counselor De Vita with the main participants of the event



heard about, which is harder to find in major tourist destinations.» «Here, instead – added Counselor De Vita – one can breathe the authenticity of true Italy, which Italians abroad are eager to discover.» Roots tourism, therefore, represents both a resource and an opportunity. «Gagliato, like many other Italian towns, seems ready to embark on this journey,» he highlighted.

«Italea is pleased to have participated in the Gagliato event, together with the mayor and Andrea Donato's "Sognare Insieme Viaggi": it was an awareness-raising initiative about the importance of welcoming roots travelers,» emphasized De Vita, reflecting on the evening. «Gagliato, like many other Italian municipalities, carries a significant history of emigration and can offer those with origins in this area a wide range of activities to rediscover traditions, culture, cuisine, and landscapes of extraordinary beauty, no less captivating than the major tourist destinations. What makes this offering unique is the opportunity to experience slow tourism, based on shared time, authentic encounters, and life experiences. This is exactly what Italians abroad seek: returning to the places their ancestors left to reconnect with the truest essence of Italy.»

«Gagliato – said the town's mayor, Salvatore Sinopoli – is a symbolic place, small but rich in history and family ties reaching across the ocean. Talking about roots tourism means talking about identity, belonging, and future opportunities for our youth. This event is an opportunity to build networks and to promote a sustainable development model that unites memory and innovation.»

During the evening, a particularly evocative film was screened, showcasing Gagliato's rich traditions, connected to a way of life with different rhythms but deeply rooted in the territory. «Italea's goal – concluded Counselor De Vita – is to enhance this heritage, to offer it to those wishing to undertake the journey of roots tourism, while at the same time drawing attention to the areas of Italy that were the starting points of Italian emigration.»

Experiences

From Tuscany to Sicily: Italy offers immersive activities with the aim of evoking memories and emotions

Reggio Emilia



Rolo and the art of marquetry: Italian wooden excellence

In Rolo, in the province of Reggio Emilia, the Museum of Marquetry celebrates the wood inlay tradition that made the town renowned across Europe between the 18th and 20th centuries. It offers a unique journey through inlaid furniture known as rolini, original tools, teaching models, and a wood collection featuring different species. Visitors can explore each stage of the craft, from the choice of materials to the finished work. Marquetry in Rolo flourished during the Renaissance and reached its peak in the 19th century, with 200 artisans producing up to 7,000 tables a year. Today the museum also serves as a documentation center, with a library, archives, guided tours, and educational programs.

Lecce



Traditional music and dance: exploring Apulian roots

Perhaps you remember a tarantella tune hummed by grandparents, a faded photo of old instruments, or a rusty tambourine hanging at home. In Puglia, roots also pass through traditional music and dance: pizzica pizzica, tarantella, and other folk repertoires, each telling stories, gestures, and community life. The region hosts numerous "Roots Workshops," led by custodians of tradition, where visitors can learn the steps and rhythms that once enlivened family celebrations and summer dances around the village fire. Reconnecting with roots means reviving the memory of bodies that danced—join the circle and dance as it was once done.

Frosinone



Discovering the "Co'ne" heritage of faith and culture

In the province of Frosinone, in the village of Pescosolido—whose name means "rocky and solid land"—a 5 km religious itinerary winds through chapels, churches, and votive shrines. These small gems, known as Co'ne, date back to the 17th century and combine popular devotion with rural life. Restored thanks in part to contributions from emigrants, they tell stories of faith and tradition. Among the most evocative are the Madonna della Misericordia, offering panoramic views of the valley, and the Madonna del Prato, linked to the protection of crops. This route is an open-air museum, where the past blends with nature and communal memory.

Giarre



From a school project to the Ethnic Museum of Migrations

The Ethnic Museum of Migrations in Giarre, in the province of Catania, was born from research by students at the “Leonardo” Scientific High School and has been hosted since 2008 in the Palazzo delle Culture. It tells the story of emigration in the Ionian-Etna area, tracing the late 19th-century viticulture crisis caused by phylloxera, the causes of migration, destinations, and personal testimonies. Private and institutional documents recount emigrants' experiences, while a final section explores contemporary immigration in the area. Part of the Sicilian Network of Emigration, the museum continuously enriches its collection with new materials.

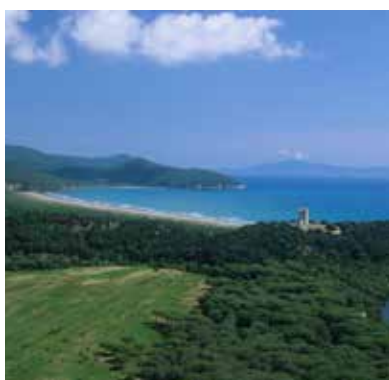
Isernia



Secrets of the ancient art of zampogna makers

Discover the art of the zampogna (Italian bagpipe) inside a master craftsman's workshop, where the secrets of this ancient instrument—tied to pastoral life and tradition beyond Christmas festivities—are revealed. In a workshop in Scapoli, in the province of Isernia, visitors can admire the craftsmanship up close and listen to a live performance by a skilled zampognaro. The journey concludes at the International Zampogna Museum in the village, housing a rich collection of bagpipes from around the world, a testament to a unique and precious musical tradition.

Grosseto



A journey into the heart of the Maremma

This is Tuscany of the butteri (cowboys) and grazing herds, of porcupines and shy roe deer, of foxes, the sea, and the fragrant Mediterranean scrub. It is the Maremma Regional Park, 9,000 hectares of protected nature in southern Tuscany. Between the Uccellina hills, dotted with watchtowers and an ancient abbey, and the Tyrrhenian Sea with its beaches and rocky coasts, lies a mosaic of marshes, pine forests, pastures, and cultivated fields. Here, amidst the scents of aromatic herbs and the calls of wildlife, visitors can walk, cycle, ride, or explore by canoe, following trails that reveal the pleasures of a rediscovered paradise.



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The journey to your roots



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