

italea

The journey to your roots

Magazine

A dive into the origins

No. 15
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The journey to your roots

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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.

Cividale del Friuli FRIULI-VENEZIA GIULIA

The village in Udine province is the starting point of a UNESCO itinerary dedicated to the Lombards

The historic charm of Cividale

Cividale del Friuli, a charming town in Friuli-Venezia Giulia, is a destination that embodies the magic of history and art. With its rich cultural and artistic heritage, this city captivates anyone seeking a journey through time, among the vestiges of a past shaped by Celts, Romans, and Lombards. It is the latter who represent the beating heart of Cividale's story, which also serves as the starting point of the UNESCO itinerary dedicated to the Lombards in Italy. A visit to Cividale wouldn't be complete without stopping by the National Archaeological Museum. Housed in the majestic Palazzo dei Provveditori Veneti, designed by Andrea Palladio, the museum displays artifacts spanning a vast timeline: from Roman times to the Gothic period. On the ground floor, visitors can admire medieval sculptures and mosaics, while the entire first floor is devoted to the Lombard era. Among the most prized items are a collection of gold coins—some extremely rare—and precious artifacts that tell the story of the first Lombard settlement in Forum Iulii, the ancient name of Cividale. Each piece is a window into a vanished world, yet still vibrant through its tangible remains.

Among the city's wonders, the Christian Museum and Cathedral Treasury hold two emblematic masterpieces: the Altar of Ratchis and the Baptistery of Callisto. The Altar, commissioned by Duke Ratchis, is an extraordinary example of

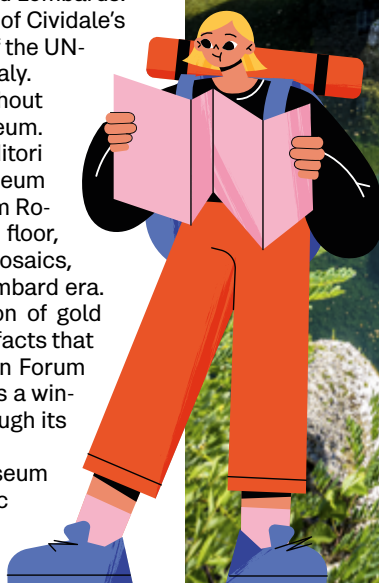


Photo Nicola Brollo



Photo Fabrice Gallina

Above, the gubana
On the previous page,
the Devil's Bridge



Photo Ulderica da Pozzo

Lombard art. Through a sophisticated multimedia display, visitors can relive the original vibrant colors that adorned the reliefs—an immersive experience revealing the artistic techniques of the time. The Baptistery of Callisto, with its octagonal shape and marble arches, stands as a symbol of religious and artistic continuity between the early Christian tradition and the Lombard period. The Cathedral Treasury, finally, showcases an eclectic collection of artworks, manuscripts, and sacred vestments, enriched by works from artists such as Pordenone and Veronese.

Another site that enchants visitors is the Celtic Hypogeum. This enigmatic underground structure, carved into the rock, seems to emerge from the earth's depths like a fragment of an impenetrable past. Its original purpose remains shrouded in mystery: was it a Celtic burial site? A Roman or Lombard prison? Its niches and the carved grotesque faces on the walls fuel many theories and fascinations. Every visit becomes a discovery, made even more intense by expert guides who lead visitors through the site.



OTHER PLACES TO VISIT

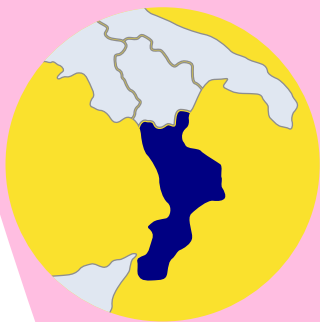
The surrounding area is rich with enchanting landscapes, charming towns, and cities full of character. Notably, Udine—a refined city with a strong cultural identity, famous for its castle and Renaissance squares—and Aquileia, a world-renowned archaeological site boasting Roman ruins and its magnificent basilica.



HOW TO GET THERE

From the A4 motorway Venice–Trieste, take the Udine Sud exit. From there, follow State Road 54 (Udine – Cividale). Alternatively, if coming from the Palmanova tollgate, follow the signs to Cividale. For those coming from the north via the A23 motorway (Tarvisio – Udine), take the Udine Nord exit and then continue on State Road 54 toward Cividale. By train, you can take the Udine–Cividale line from Udine station. The closest airport is Trieste's Ronchi dei Legionari.

But perhaps Cividale's most precious jewel is the Lombard Temple (Tempietto Longobardo), one of the most extraordinary examples of early medieval architecture in Italy. Built in the second half of the 8th century, likely as the chapel of the Benedictine monastery of Santa Maria in Valle, the Tempietto impresses with the harmony of its forms and the richness of its decorations. Byzantine frescoes and stuccoes—such as the archivolt with grapevine motifs and female figures—tell of the complex interaction between Lombard culture and Mediterranean artistic influences. It is a place that invites silence and contemplation, offering a window into a time when art and spirituality were inseparably intertwined. Cividale del Friuli is not just a place to visit but an experience to live. Every corner, museum, and archaeological site tells a story rooted in the distant past, yet still in dialogue with the present. It is a destination that seduces with the allure of mystery and the beauty of art—an invitation to lose oneself in time and rediscover the wonder of a heritage unique in the world.



Calabria's Tyrrhenian treasure

Nestled at the base of the Monte Poro plateau and nestled between the Gulf of Sant'Eufemia and the Gulf of Gioia Tauro, Ricadi stretches all the way to the shores of the famous Capo Vaticano beach. Today part of the province of Vibo Valentia, Ricadi is rich in archaeological finds that testify to its historical importance, deeply connected to the sea. Its territory has been inhabited since ancient times, starting from the prehistoric and pre-Christian eras, followed by Greeks, Carthaginians, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, and Normans. Each of these peoples left their mark, including some coastal towers that once kept watch over the open sea. Ricadi was dependent on Tropea until 1799, when it gained independence thanks to the intervention of the French General Championnet. It remained a fishing village until the summer tourism boom centered around Capo Vaticano, the granite seabeds of Formicoli popular with divers, and the white sandy beaches of Tono, Riace, and Grotticelle. Beyond Capo Vaticano, Ricadi's jagged and irregular coastline features numerous characteristic beaches, each unique in its beauty—such as Riace Bay with its "Scoglio Grande" (Big Rock), or Giardinello, famous for the rock called "Ardito" because of its mushroom-like shape. Other noteworthy beaches include Massara, Scalea, Passu du Gabbaturcu, Torre Marino, Praia i Focu (named after the fires that fishermen once lit as beacons), Ficara, and Santa Maria, named in honor of the Madonna, to whom a small church on the seafront is dedicated. The exploration of the village continues with the Torre Marana in the hamlet of Brivadi, dating back to the 14th century. This tower received signals from the nearby Torre Ruffa and relayed them to other towers positioned along the coast. Equally interesting is the Civic Museum of Ricadi, a "Museo Diffuso" spread across the streets and surrounding territory through a series of installations connected by conceptual routes. In addition to the municipal library, the museum is divided into four sections: the Archaeological and Paleontological Museum (located in Palazzo Fazzari), the Anthropological Museum of Rural Life and Intangible Culture (housed in the former Marcello Sculco oil mill), the Sea Museum and Observatory (in the former lookout at Capo Vaticano), and the Tower Museum (located at the archaeological site of Torre Marrana). Also worth visiting is the ancient mill still in

Ricadi
CALABRIA



Ricadi is the gateway to one of the most enchanting stretches of coastline in the region



OTHER PLACES TO VISIT

Be sure to visit the village of Tropea. For those interested in "dark tourism," the abandoned town of Papaglionti is a must-see.



HOW TO GET THERE

The nearest airport is Lamezia Terme, about 46 km away. Ricadi has its own train station served by regional trains. By car from Rome: take the A24, then follow A1/E45, A30, and A2 toward SP 5 in Sant'Onofrio. Exit at Sant'Onofrio-Vibo Valentia, then take SS 606, SS 18 Tirrena Inferiore, SP 17, and SP 22 to reach Piazza Marconi in Ricadi.



operation in the hamlet of Lampazzone, dating back to the 18th century and still able to grind wheat, corn, and barley with its millstones.

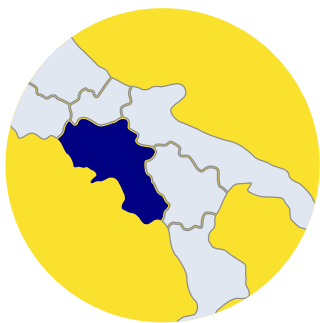
Ricadi is also an unmissable destination for tasting traditional Calabrian dishes, which preserve the local cultural roots. First and foremost is the famous 'nduja, Calabria's signature spicy spreadable sausage, a perfect seasoning for pasta dishes, followed by the DOP-certified red onion from nearby Tropea. The best time to enjoy these flavors is during the Festa Madonna delle Grazie, Ricadi's patron saint festival, held in early July.

In short, Ricadi will leave you with unforgettable memories of romantic yet relaxing scenery, perfect for long sunset walks.



The journey to discover our roots continues

Here is the fifteen 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.



Bobbio EMILIA-ROMAGNA

Medieval echoes woven into the folds of the Trebbia Valley

**In the Piacenza Apennines,
Bobbio welcomes visitors
with a spectacle of history
and breathtaking natural beauty**

Nestled in the mountains of the Piacenza Apennines, the town of Bobbio overlooks the Trebbia Valley, offering visitors a stunning blend of history and natural beauty. This charming village in Emilia-Romagna has been inhabited since the Neolithic era and has seen the passage of Celtic-Ligurian tribes and the Romans. But its identity is deeply rooted in the presence of the Abbey of San Colombano, founded in 614 by the Irish monk Columbanus. The abbey transformed Bobbio into a thriving center of culture during the Middle Ages, with schools, a scriptorium, and one of the most important libraries of the time.

The medieval town grew around the monastery, and today visitors can still admire remnants of that rich past, including the crypt of the original basilica built by Abbot Agilulf, featuring 15th-century frescoes and the tomb slabs of Columbanus's successors. The current basilica, constructed between 1456 and 1522, is adorned with frescoes by Bernardino Lanzani and houses a precious wooden choir and the saint's sarcophagus. Among its treasures is the original mosaic floor commissioned by Agilulf, which illustrates the cycle of the months and agricultural activities — a visual "prayer carpet" for the faithful. Wandering through the streets of Bobbio, you'll come upon Piazza Duomo, a quaint square surrounded by historic buildings. Here stands the cathedral, flanked by twin bell towers. Inside, the Chapel of St. John hides a beautiful 15th-century Annunciation, and next door, the Bishop's Palace still retains its original 11th-century layout, though it was later restored in the 15th century by master builders from Como.

Farther along the narrow lanes of the town, you'll discover the so-called "Palace of Queen Theodolinda," a 15th-century building on one of Bobbio's most picturesque streets. In the background, the Malaspina-Dal Verme Castle rises from the hilltop,





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OTHER PLACES TO VISIT

Just a few kilometers from Bobbio lie the Perino Waterfalls, a series of cascades formed by the stream of the same name. Nestled in the valley that shares their name, these waterfalls are located between the towns of Bettola and Farini, in the province of Piacenza.



HOW TO GET THERE

By car, take the A1 motorway and exit at Piacenza Sud. After the toll booth, follow the signs for Bobbio, continuing along the Piacenza ring road until you reach State Road 45 (SS45), which leads to Bobbio and the Trebbia Valley. By train, get off at Piacenza station and take the local bus to Bobbio. The nearest airports are Milan Malpensa and Milan Linate.

Bobbio's Cathedral
Above, the
Gobbo Bridge



its tall central keep looking out over the town and the valley below. Built as a defensive fortress, the castle is now one of Bobbio's most iconic landmarks — along with the famed Ponte Gobbo, also known as the Devil's Bridge.

Dating back to 1196, the ancient Romanesque bridge is steeped in local legend. Its uneven arches and undulating shape are said to be the result of a pact with the devil. Though floods have damaged it over the centuries, the bridge has always been rebuilt and remains one of Bobbio's most striking features.

But Bobbio isn't just history and art — it's also a gateway to nature. Its location in the Trebbia Valley makes it a favorite for outdoor enthusiasts. Mount Penice, with its ski slopes, attracts winter sports lovers, while in the summer, the river's beaches draw visitors looking to cool off in crystal-clear waters. Hikers and trekkers can explore scenic trails that wind through the Apennines, discovering hidden corners and breathtaking views.

One of the most fascinating routes is the Via degli Abati, an ancient pilgrimage path once taken by the monks of Bobbio on their way to Rome. Today, it offers a unique chance to walk through history, immersed in the landscapes and stories of the valley.

Bobbio also boasts a rich cultural heritage preserved in the Abbey Museum. Here you'll find Roman artifacts, such as the sarcophagus of the Cocceia family and a striking alabaster hydria, along with treasures linked to the monastery and the town's past. The museum houses the silver bust of Saint Columbanus and a small but impressive art gallery, featuring works by renowned artists like Bernardino Luini. His polyptych of the Assumption of Mary is one of the museum's highlights. With its historic heart, ancient buildings, frescoed churches, and winding cobbled streets, Bobbio offers visitors a timeless atmosphere - a perfect blend of heritage, spirituality, and natural wonder in one of Italy's most evocative hidden gems.

Reggio Calabria

On stage in the City two works
by Radici in Viaggio — the installation
"S'amujamu" and the docufilm "Verbo andare"

Memory and future: Italea's journey becomes shared art

On July 13, the evocative setting of Piazza Paolo Orsi, with-
in the National Archaeological Museum of Reggio Calabria,
hosted the national premiere of two remarkable artistic
works created by Radici in Viaggio, part of the Italea program
promoted by Italy's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Interna-
tional Cooperation.

The evening opened with the immersive installation «S'amu-
Jamu (If we must go, let's go!)), a powerful, multisensory
piece crafted by a collective of Calabrian artists from the
worlds of theater and visual arts: Elvira Scorza, Dario Natale,
Lorenzo Praticò, Maria Chiara Falcomatà, Larissa Mollace,
Ozge Sahin, Luca Granato, and Davide Ambrogio. The instal-
lation conveyed, through symbols and sensations, the deep-
ly emotional experience of leaving and returning, shaped by
memory and identity.

Following the installation, guests were treated to the preview
screening of «Verbo andare», a documentary film directed by
Salvatore Insana. With a raw, minimalist style—one hand-
held camera, direct sound recording—the film presents an
intimate and honest portrayal of Italian migration stories. Es-
chewing romanticism and promotional tropes, Verbo andare
captures the slow, contemplative rhythm of life in Calabria's
inland villages during the winter months. It weaves together
voices, emotions, silences, and landscapes into a poignant
mosaic of those who have stayed, returned, or
chosen to plant new roots.

«We didn't want to dramatize migration,»
said Insana. «We wanted to listen—to
real, personal and collective stories
bound to memory, landscape, and
the creation of shared identity. It's
a narrative suspended between
sorrow and hope, nostalgia and
resilience, always navigating
between past and future.»

Cultural planner Angelo Car-
chidi, who leads Italea Cal-
abria, emphasized the trans-
formative impact of the ten
artistic residencies held
across the region: «We're
no longer just preserving
traditions or celebrating the
resilience of these towns.





These communities are fully aware of their vulnerabilities—but also of their value. They offer advanced models of solidarity, welcome innovation, and represent new forms of social and economic sustainability. It's in these places that the journey of S'amujamu becomes truly possible.»

The evening closed with remarks from Marina Gabrieli, national coordinator of Italea, who underscored the cultural and social depth of the project: «Tonight reminds us that Italea is far more than a tourism initiative. It's about honoring the stories of Italians abroad, whose migration journeys have profoundly shaped our history. Strengthening ties with Italian communities around the world, while supporting those who work passionately to preserve and reinterpret this heritage, is what gives real meaning to this project.»



2025 Edition

The MAECI project took part in the Accademia Marchigiani dell'Anno in Italia e nel Mondo awards ceremony

Italea in Macerata to celebrate Italian excellence

Giovanni Maria De Vita, Coordinator of the Italea Project at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, took part in the 2025 edition of the Accademia Marchigiani dell'Anno in Italia e nel Mondo awards ceremony, held on Friday, July 4th in Macerata. During the event, De Vita presented the award to Ranieri Sabatucci, European Union Ambassador to Myanmar, in recognition of his commitment to international cooperation. Sharing the stage at the Teatro Lauro Rossi were also the Rector of the University of Macerata, John McCourt.

«We are very pleased to be in Macerata with the Italea Project,» De Vita said on the sidelines of the ceremony. «Our presence here is a meaningful gesture of recognition for what Italians around the world continue to accomplish. It is important to highlight that our communities abroad represent one of Italy's greatest resources—made up of individuals who have risen to the highest levels in the societies they've become part of. These individuals can give back to Italy by sharing their experience and global perspective. In return, we can offer them access to the opportunities that come with being part of the G7 and the EU's single market.» Throughout the evening, several stories of successful Italian expatriates were shared and listened to attentively by De Vita, who was seated in the audience alongside Mario Civerchia, President of the Accademia Marchigiani dell'Anno in Italia e nel Mondo, and Katuscia Cassetta, Macerata's Councillor for Culture. The award—previously given to notable figures such as Bologna footballer Riccardo Orsolini, nuclear engineer Luciano Giorgi, Merano Wine Festival President Helmut Koecher, and Lega Serie A President Ezio Maria Simonelli—was also marked by a final message from Italy's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Antonio Tajani, who was visiting the Marche region for a series of official meetings.



«The Italea Project, which promotes Roots Tourism, aims to foster greater understanding of Italian communities abroad and strengthen the ties between Italy and its global diaspora,» De Vita concluded. «Our goal is to launch a renewed vision of bilateral relations—one based on reciprocity and on the shared value of what Italy and its communities around the world can contribute for the mutual benefit of both sides.»



Al centro, Giovanni Maria De Vita durante la cerimonia del Premio Accademia Marchigiani dell'Anno in Italia e nel Mondo

"Radici di Eleganza"

Atina, in Frosinone province, hosted a tribute to Italian style and "roots"

Fashion as a link between identity and territory

A moving and well-attended event, «Radici di Eleganza» took place on Saturday, July 12, in the historic Palazzo Ducale "Cantelmo" in Atina, nestled in the heart of the Comino Valley in Frosinone province. The initiative, born from the collaboration between Italea Lazio, the Municipality of Atina, and the local Pro Loco association, offered a moment of deep connection between family memory, cultural identity, and the timeless charm of Italian style.

Part of the national Italea program, the event is one of many designed to strengthen the bonds between descendants of Italians living abroad and their ancestral towns, transforming roots tourism into a driver of local development.

Sonia Fiorini, regional coordinator for Italea Lazio, highlighted the spirit behind the project: «This isn't just a regular journey — it's an emotional one. Sometimes, it's even a healing journey». Backed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a professional network that includes genealogists, travel designers, and communication experts, Italea Lazio helps municipalities create tailored itineraries, organize workshops, launch educational initiatives, and promote their tangible and intangible heritage. The goal is to build a tourism experience that's authentic, sustainable, and grounded in identity. Events like the one in Atina showcase Italea's ability to create synergy across institutions, local associations, diaspora networks, DMO bodies, and cultural organizations. «We firmly believe that roots tourism can be a powerful tool for enhancing the value of our heritage», Fiorini said, «while strengthening identity and a sense of belonging, especially among younger generations».

The evening's special guest was internationally renowned master tailor Marco De Luca, a recipient of the Légion d'Honneur, whose family roots trace back to Atina. Warmly welcomed by the community, De Luca was presented with the Keys to the City and a commemorative plaque in honor of his family's legacy. With great emotion, he shared stories

of his parents — his father Mario founded the prestigious Camp's De Luca atelier — and spoke of how Italian culture and style have shaped both his personal life and professional journey, from family lunches at noon sharp to the refined craftsmanship that defines his work.

The Mayor of Atina opened the event by emphasizing the power of collaboration: «This initiative shows how vital it is to bring together institutions, communities, and cultural networks to celebrate stories like this — stories of identity, belonging, and excellence. Atina is proud to welcome someone like Marco De Luca, who brings the elegance of our roots to the world».

Luigi Maria Vignali, Director General for Italians Abroad at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, also addressed the audience: «Today is a tribute to all Italians who once set off with a suitcase and a wealth of talent. Promoting Italian excellence and enhancing our territories are priorities I've placed at the heart of a diplomacy of growth — one that includes roots tourism as a key instrument».

The evening also featured the presentation of a genealogical study on De Luca's ancestry, conducted by Italea Lazio, along with the screening of a short documentary recounting his family's story. The event concluded with a festive tasting of local products, blending memory and tradition with present-day connections.

With initiatives like this, Italea Lazio confirms its role as a strategic partner for municipalities across the region - capable of linking territory, heritage, international ties, and a new model of cultural tourism.

The closing of the event in Atina



"Welcome Home in Sannio"

August 6 to 8 will see the village hosting a series of events, alongside the Vinalia wine and food festival, with support from Italea

Guardia Sanframondi embraces roots tourism

2024 was declared the Year of Italian Roots World-wide, and many events have taken place this year to celebrate it. The municipality of Guardia Sanframondi, in the province of Benevento, is now taking stock — reflecting on the opportunities offered by roots tourism. At the same time, it aims to relive and share the powerful emotions of the Riti Settennali (Seven-Year Rites) through a photographic exhibition that captures their atmosphere, sacredness, and ritual dimension.

«We've welcomed many descendants of Italian emigrants here in Guardia Sanframondi this year,» says Mayor Raffaele Di Lonardo. «Some came in search of their family roots and ended up buying the houses once owned by their grandparents before they emigrated. Others chose to get married here, in the very place where their parents had tied the knot. We've invested a great deal in roots tourism, and we intend to continue down this path.»

From August 6 to 8, coinciding with the 34th edition of Vinalia — the food and wine festival that has been promoting the Sannio region and its excellence since 1993 — the town will host a special program titled "Welcome Home in Sannio." The initiative is supported by Italea, a project promoted by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation as part of the PNRR and funded by NextGenerationEU. It invites Italians abroad and their descendants to rediscover their heritage in Italy, offering them dedicated services to facilitate their journey.

As part of the program, a photographic exhibition titled "Riti Settennali: One Year Later" will be on display. It will feature images not only from the most recent edition of the Rites, held in August 2024, but also from earlier years. These traditional penitential rituals take place every seven years, beginning the Monday after August 15 and continuing through the following Sunday. The Riti Settennali honor the Assumption of the Virgin Mary and attract faithful, onlookers, and tourists from all over. «During those days,» Di Lonardo explains, «the town is infused with a powerful sense of spirituality. In the medieval heart of Guardia Sanframondi, it truly feels



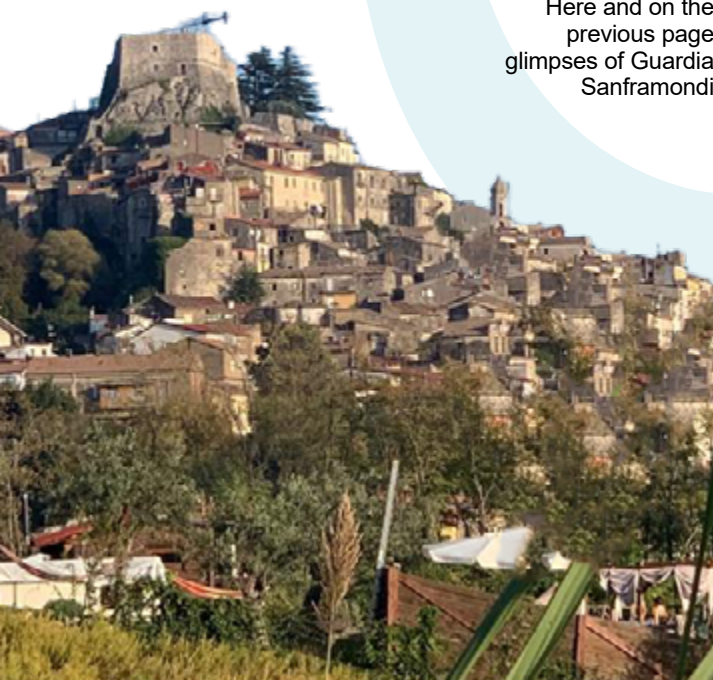
as if time stands still. The exhibition will trace how the Rites have evolved over the years.» On August 8, the program also includes a public forum: a moment of dialogue, reflection, and collaboration involving mayors from other "roots towns" in Campania, representatives from the regional Chamber of Commerce and Italea Campania, and members of the national Italea project team. «It will be a chance to share ideas and begin shaping a long-term strategy,» the mayor says, «because we believe this path — this opportunity created by roots tourism — can help generate new visitor flows, counter depopulation, and foster new professional roles and job opportunities for young people.»

Cultural and culinary activities will also be part of the three-day event, including food tastings, live cooking demonstrations by chefs, book presentations, musical performances, and a focus on local musical traditions. «We'll also mark the National Day of Sacrifice of Italian Labor in the World on





Here and on the previous page glimpses of Guardia Sanframondi



August 8,» Di Lonardo adds, «paying tribute to the 136 Italian workers who died in the Marcinelle mining disaster in 1956, and to all emigrants who lost their lives in workplace accidents abroad.»



«Prepared to welcome the descendants of our emigrants»

«What we want to do with this event,» explains Mayor Di Lonardo, «is to close a meaningful circle, highlighting the strong presence of Italian descendants who, especially during the Rites, have returned to Guardia not only to experience the emotions of a unique religious tradition, but to walk once again through the narrow alleys once trodden by their ancestors. This is the true essence of roots tourism: to reconnect the threads, to rebuild a bond, to weave together the stories of those who left Guardia long ago — and perhaps, why not, to bring some of them back. The call of one's homeland is hard to explain, and yet it exists — and it's powerful. Guardia is ready to welcome the children of its emigrants with warmth, enthusiasm, culture, and deep affection.»



Il sindaco Raffaele Di Lonardo



Simona Salis

In her new album, the singer-songwriter blends Campidanese Sardinian with English, French, and Spanish, creating a celebration of identity and personal journey



«Staying true to the roots while opening up to the world»

Since late May, *S'anima*, the new album by Sardinian singer-songwriter Simona Salis, has been available on digital platforms. With powerful lyricism and a voice that transcends borders and time, Salis explores the many facets of the soul through the intense and expressive Campidanese Sardinian language.

Born in Cagliari, Salis has built a deeply rooted artistic journey that blends Sardinian heritage with a broad, international outlook. After studying Music and Performing Arts History at the University of Siena and living in London and Milan, she now resides in Varese, where she co-founded the "Bips School" music academy with her husband, drummer Ivan Ciccarelli. Her work has always stood at the crossroads between tradition and innovation, telling ancient stories in a contemporary voice.

Her latest album is a natural evolution of this artistic path. «I'm really excited about this release,» she says. «Musically, it picks up themes from my earlier work, but with a broader, more international feel. I wanted to include several languages—ones I became familiar with while living abroad and that really resonated with me. For example, in *Your Voice*, I blended Campidanese with English over a Celtic, Irish-inspired sound; *Mon Amour* is sung in French, the language of love; and *Mañana* has Spanish lyrics, with an up-beat, optimistic vibe that encourages a lighter way of living.»

This linguistic fusion is more than just a stylistic choice—it's a way of keeping cultural identity alive. «As islanders, we always feel a pull to discover what lies beyond the sea,» she explains, «but our roots remain firmly planted. Traveling and engaging with different cultures is essential, but never at the expense of our connection to home. Music becomes a bridge that allows us to constantly renew our roots while embracing the world.»

The Campidanese Sardinian language holds a special place in Simona's heart and music: «It's the language I was raised with. I remember my grandmother speaking in Campidanese—it has this poetry, this magic that I didn't even realize I had inside me until it came out, almost like opening Pandora's box. From that moment, I never stopped singing in Campidanese—it's a current that runs through me.» Her music is also a powerful way

Simona Salis





to preserve and celebrate the language and culture it embodies.

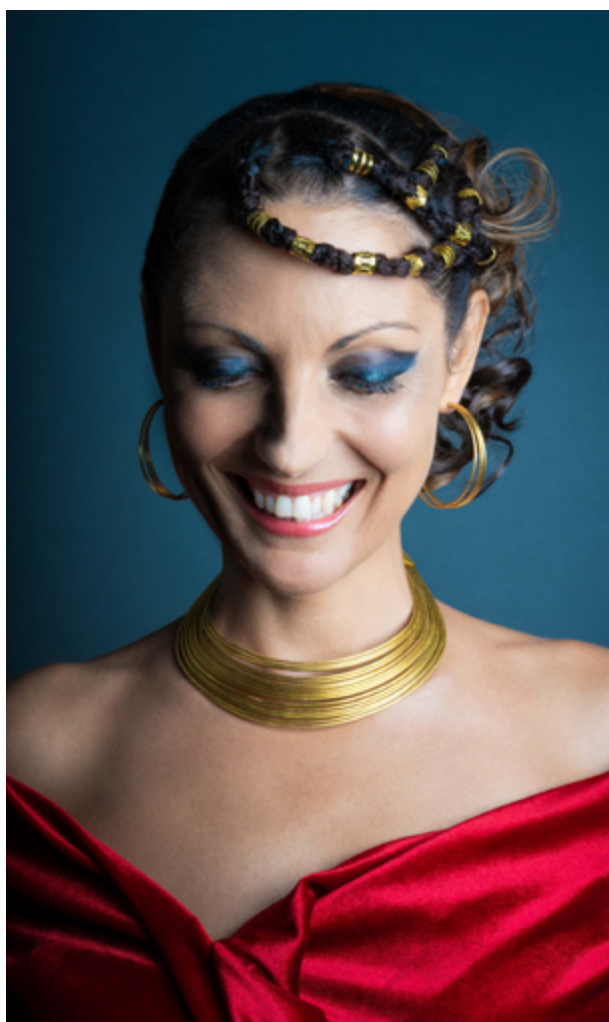
«People have often called me a modern storyteller,» she continues, «especially when I released the album dedicated to Sardinian myths and legends. I created songs for each legend, after a deep research process, to help keep those rich traditions alive. I feel it's a duty to carry that legacy forward—adapting it to the present—because traditional archetypes still reflect how our society behaves, even if in a different way than centuries ago.»

In the track *Sono stata*, a duet with the renowned Antonella Ruggiero, Simona explores identity as a fluid and evolving process: «The song was inspired by a poem by Mariangela Gualtieri, "Sono stata una ragazza nel roseto (I was once a girl in the rose garden)", which talks about all the lives we've lived and how our experiences shape who we are. I spent a lot of time reflecting on the idea that our DNA carries the cultural legacy of our ancestors, which interacts with our inner soul. I sing about strong women, violent or abandoned lives, stories of resilience that I feel deeply connected to.»

The emotional bond Simona creates through her music reaches far beyond language. «I have listeners in Australia and Tasmania with Sardinian roots who tell me: "I don't understand the words, but the sound takes me back to something I know—something that makes me feel safe." Communication doesn't always need words; the sound and cadence of Sardinian carry a deep, ancestral resonance that connects people to a distant land they still feel part of.»

Looking ahead, Simona is already working on her next project—an exploration of womanhood in all its strength and vulnerability.

«I'm developing a concept album focused on the female universe, with all its complexities. Like always, it will be a deep and focused journey.»



The project

It will honor Esteban Fortunati
one of the founders of River Plate

Sestri Levante hosts the first "Talking" plaque of the Civico delle Radici

Sestri Levante will be the first town to host a plaque from Il Civico delle Radici, an innovative project launched by the National Museum of Italian Emigration (MEI). The initiative turns the homes of Italian emigrants into "storytellers of memory" through interactive plaques featuring QR codes and audio content—emigration stories that can be listened to on site.

The project will debut with the story of Stefano Fortunato—later known in Argentina as Esteban Fortunati—a native of Sestri Levante and one of the founding members of the historic Argentine football club River Plate. His journey will be shared through

an audio clip titled "Member No. 4: Esteban Fortunati, A Life for River", produced by MEI in collaboration with Italea Liguria. The narration is voiced by actor Massimo Wertmüller, with a script by Maria Grazia Lancellotti.

The plaque will be installed in the entrance hall of MuSel, the Archaeological and City Museum of Sestri Levante, and its unveiling will be preceded by a special presentation coinciding with River Plate's anniversary celebrations in late May.

«We're grateful to the Municipality of Sestri Levante for being the first administration to support this initiative,» said Paolo Masini, president of MEI. «Our goal





On the left,
the Esteban
Fortunati
family



is to make the buildings of Italian cities 'speak', allowing them to tell stories of emigration. Esteban's will be the first in a long series of tales about Italians who left our shores in search of a better future.» For Francesco Solinas, Mayor of Sestri Levante, it also marks a symbolic homecoming: «I like to think of this initiative as Esteban Fortunati's return to Sestri Levante. He left from Genoa in 1884 aboard the same steamer that carried writer Edmondo De Amicis. Fortunati's story is one of successful emigration—exactly the kind of story this project aims to highlight. I hope this plaque will not only honor a distinguished fellow citizen but also serve as a tribute to all migrants, many of whom faced great hardship.»

The initiative is part of a broader cultural and tourist itinerary that connects the themes of migration and sports. «This project has been made possible by in-depth historical and genealogical research conducted by Italea Liguria in close collaboration with MEI,» explained Andrea Pedemonte, regional coordinator for Italea Liguria. The research was supported by Fortunati's descendants—starting with Florencia Gilardon—and by the River Plate Museum.



Books

The Premio Italia Radici nel Mondo debuts at the John Fante Festival

"Sconfinamenti": tales of identity and belonging

The accordion of maestro Vincenzo De Ritis plays traditional Abruzzese melodies. Without the need for words, the meaning of "roots" begins to resonate more and more clearly. This was the emotional opening to the presentation of the book "Sconfinamenti. A Collection of Stories from the Italia Radici nel Mondo – Toto Holding Prize" (Ianieri Edizioni), held on Wednesday, June 25 at the Fondazione Pescaraabruzzo in Pescara. The event is part of the wide array of initiatives organized under the project 2024 – Year of Italian Roots Around the World, promoted by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, in partnership with Toto Holding and in collaboration with Fondazione Pescaraabruzzo and the Piccolo Festival delle Spartenze.

The literary prize has found its home within the John

Fante Festival in Torricella Peligna, and the second edition will be launched during this year's festival, taking place from August 21 to 24 (with preview events on July 9 and 13).

Presenting the book were Giovanna Di Lello, co-founder of the prize and director of the John Fante Festival; Giuseppe Sommaro, co-founder of the prize and director of the Piccolo Festival delle Spartenze; Vanesa Cristina Di Stefano, one of the authors featured in the volume; Dario Cortese of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and Carmine Ficca, Mayor of Torricella Peligna.

«This award, funded through a contribution from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, embodies the spirit and goals of roots tourism,» explained Mayor Ficca. «It's about reconnecting Italian descendants around the



world with Italy, rekindling their interest in their ancestors' homeland, and encouraging them to explore the traditions of their family's place of origin. Often, these origins lie in small towns and beautiful villages that fall outside the classic tourist circuits. Promoting these areas and making them known internationally is another crucial aim of roots tourism. And stories are often the key to achieving both objectives.» The first edition of the prize attracted more than seventy submissions from countries with large Italian communities abroad. «With this volume,» said Di Lello, «we wanted to give a voice to writers from the many Italian communities around the world. The proposed theme was that of 'multiple roots'.»

In Vanesa Cristina Di Stefano's story, these multiple roots are explored through traditional culinary recipes—an intimate and evocative path to identity. According to estimates from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there are approximately 80 million people of Italian descent living abroad. The Italea network, implemented by the Ministry, serves as a tool to support the needs of this form of tourism. Acting as a bridge with local territories, Italea helps person-

alize the journey of discovering one's roots. Since its launch in March, the Italea website has already received more than 1.6 million visits. And according to Confcommercio, the potential economic value of roots tourism in Italy is estimated at around 8 billion euros.



Giovanna Di Lello



Giuseppe Sommario



Experiences

From Apulia to Trentino: Italy offers immersive activities with the aim of evoking memories and emotions

Vibo Valentia



The Pecorino tradition in the heart of Monte Poro

In the unspoiled landscapes of Monte Poro, in the province of Vibo Valentia, travelers can experience a taste of authentic Calabria. Here, among pastures and rolling hills, the ancient art of pecorino cheese-making still thrives. Visitors are invited to join local shepherds and participate in the entire process—from milking the sheep to shaping the cheese wheels. Every step is a journey through tradition, hard work, and ancestral know-how. The experience ends with a tasting, where each bite carries the flavors of the land and the memory of a people. A delicious way to rediscover your heritage.

Campobasso



Wheat as a symbol of unity and devotion

In Jelsi, a village near Campobasso, the Feast of Wheat in honor of Saint Anne has been celebrated since 1805 with floats and decorations made entirely of wheat. Today, the tradition lives on year-round at the MuFeG—Museum of the Wheat Festival—where visitors can take part in a unique hands-on workshop. After a guided tour, participants learn the intricate art of wheat weaving: patterns, ornaments, and time-honored techniques come to life in their hands. It's a chance to rediscover Molise's rural heritage, meet local artisans, and create traditional wheat artworks that tell stories of devotion and identity. A meaningful way to reconnect with your roots.

Genoa



Between alleys and ships: the journey to the New World

Genoa, a symbol of Italian emigration, offers a unique journey into the past for those seeking their roots. With an expert guide, visitors explore the very places where migrants once waited to embark for the Americas: the Old Port, historic “sciamadde” (street food stalls), and the Maritime Station. Stories of hope and departure echo through the narrow alleyways that once hosted thousands of Italians ready to cross the ocean. From ticket sales in Piazza De Ferrari to the grueling voyages documented at the Galata Sea Museum, each stop evokes powerful emotions and deep connections. A time-travel experience that turns memory into discovery.

Aosta



The history of plants a window into the past

The Maison des anciens remèdes, nestled in the Aosta Valley, is a center devoted to medicinal plants and traditional healing knowledge. Established in 2011, it's a place where ancestral wisdom is rediscovered through all the senses. Leaves, roots, and seeds are touched, smelled, and transformed into games and riddles for all ages. A two-hour workshop caps the visit, where participants create natural remedies: herbal teas, aromatic salts, and plant-based soaps. It's a deeply engaging experience that reconnects families with their heritage—through the silent, ancestral language of plants.

Bari



Shaping stories in stone: crafting Apulia's heritage

From trulli to coastal towers, from "pagghiare" to the UNESCO-listed dry-stone walls, stone is a defining element of Puglia's landscape and history. At the Perle di Memoria Museum in Locorotondo, in the province of Bari, visitors can take part in a hands-on workshop shaping local stone, guided by a master craftsman. Learn to carve tuff and Lecce stone into traditional objects—a mortar for local dishes or a "pinnacolo," the symbolic top of a trullo. The museum offers an immersive experience into the material and intangible culture of the Itria Valley, featuring traditional tools and archival audiovisual recordings collected by Alan Lomax in 1954.

Trento



Unveiling the many faces of Trentino-Alto Adige

"Trentino-Alto Adige: a borderland in the heart of Europe" offers a journey through the cultural and geographic richness of this region. It begins in Trento, where guided tours of monuments and stories invite reflection on local roots. The itinerary continues into the upper Val di Non, where a mountain trek through alpine landscapes and diverse communities traces the footsteps of anthropologists who have long studied this unique cultural crossroads. A similar experience awaits in Bolzano, with guided tours and opportunities for deeper exploration. This journey blends learning and adventure in a land where multiple identities converge in the heart of Europe.

italea

The journey to your roots



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