

UrbinoNow

THE MAGAZINE OF ITALY'S LE MARCHE REGION

2010-2011

**U.S. Journalist
Wins Urbino Prize**

**The Accordion Makers
of Castelfidardo**

Footloose in Fermo

**Foods of
Earth & Sea**

**Exploring Camerano's
Secret Caves**



GLOBAL DOMINATION VS. THE GOOD LIFE



A recent *New York Times* article scolded Italy for its insularity and its lack of growth, its penchant for keeping hiring in the family and business in the community. Words like “stagnant,” and “idiosyncratic” were sprinkled disdainfully about. Italian business culture seemed (to the visiting American writer) “almost quaint.”

People in Mediterranean countries have endured such Anglo slights for centuries: they're used to criticism about the wastefulness of their slow lunches, their inadequate quotient of master-of-the-universe drive.

“So thousands of companies here remain stubbornly small,” the writer, David Segal, concluded. “All of which means Italy is a haven for artisans but is in a lousy position to play the global domination game.”

Boo hoo.

When 11 U.S. university students and their professors arrived in Urbino in the summer of 2010 to create *Urbino Now*, they discovered a prosperous and hospitable region that, indeed, seemed to be doing a great job of taking care of its own.

Though unemployment for young people is nearly 30 percent, students congregated animatedly in the piazza. No one was living in the streets. Homes, ostentatious or modest, were nicely maintained. Burgeoning small and mid-sized manufacturing was driving an increasingly prosperous economy – a formula that's turned Marche into the second richest region in Italy. The Marchegiani also enjoy Italy's highest life expectancy: 78.8 years for men, 84.7 for women.

Herein, we delve into some features of Marche prosperity: **Hannah Nusser** visits designer shoe manufacturers in the new province of Fermo; **Helga Salinas** reports on how a woodcarver's shop grew into a global enterprise; **Renae Blum** and **Stephanie Todaro** chronicle how ancient craft industries, like paper and accordion-making have - yes - lovingly passed from grandparents to children to grandchildren.

We also unearth treks and adventures: to secret caves in Camerano; to the sour cherry wine-making town of Pergola and the languid beach town of Pesaro; and to hundreds of village festivals that celebrate local products: salami and *strozzapreti*; truffles and watermelon; frogs and straw hats.

We, too, reveled in life here, engaging in so much productive thinking over *prosecco* and *caffè* during each three-hour *pausa* that we wondered when the *Times* would be recommending this custom to overworked Americans. We conversed more face-to-face than on Facebook, and enjoyed the blue-green landscapes around elegant Urbino, a center of Renaissance culture and the birthplace of the painter Raphael.

If Italians, or Marchegiani, aren't masters of the universe, they're masters of their universe – and we felt privileged to have been their guests. – *Mary D'Ambrosio*

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Life of the Party

Traveling vendors survive financial crisis by taking pleasure in meeting people, & serving longtime customers

BY SARAH BROCE

The Mediterranean tradition of traveling outdoor markets is centuries old. Most Marche towns have a fixed weekly market day, which draws vendors from around the region. The mix of languages and goods makes for a fascinating experience for shoppers – but what's life like for the vendors?

First, it's competitive. Vendors cannot just roll up to any market; they must be licensed in each town, and follow many regional and national

regulations. The rules specify what can be sold and for how long, and how items must be displayed. About 100 articles on these subjects have been collected in a handbook for city officials.

Urbino's Saturday market is one of the most popular in the region, and variety is one of its best features, said Mario Pellegrini, an official with Urbino's administrative police.



"It's a very popular market, because all of the spots are filled," he said. "And there are different goods for everyone to see. My wife and colleagues go there all the time. I don't have time because I work on Saturdays, but it is a great place for the women to meet up. It is like a party, they eat there, they drink there, they get to have fun and be happy."

In Urbino, a police officer is posted in the market, to make sure the rules are followed.

Though licenses are free, it can be hard to find a space in the most popular markets. In Urbino, for example, not a single slot is available. Vendors often show up when nearby towns are having festivals, in case an established vendor is willing to rent out his usual space.

Vendors show up rain or shine, and so do the customers, even when snow covers the ground. Snow can make it hard to climb to Urbino's hilltop location, especially when the streets have not been cleared. This does not seem to be a problem in more temperate (and flatter) Pesaro and Fano.

Most begin setting up their wares as early as 5:30 a.m., and close shop by 1 p.m., when Italians leave for the traditional long lunch, or *pausa*. Each day they visit a different market.

SURVIVING THE CRISIS

Tuesday is market day in Pesaro, and customers flood in from all over Le Marche to shop at the 290-booth market. They buy clothes for their families and fresh fruit for the lunch they will enjoy on the beach that day.

AUTUMN... TRUFFLES AND POLENTA

Fall announces itself subtly in Le Marche: fog, splashes of yellow, crisp breeze. What isn't subtle is the celebration of local food. Festivals featuring truffles, mushrooms and cheese abound in September, October and November. Music lovers will be tempted by Cupra's violin festival, and by the accordion competitions in Urbania and Castelfidardo.

In Cupra Marittima, from the end of August through the first week of September, violin concerts echo off the walls at Castle St. Andrea, during the Cupra Music Festival, in a serenade of classical music www.cupramusicafestival.it.

You'll find kite-making workshops, and a kite race at the Festa of Aquilone, in the first week of September. The event honors a famous poem by Giovanni Pascoli, who studied at Urbino's Scolopi College www.festaquilone.it. There are several sagre della polenta in September, possibly to the horror of older Italians reared on daily diets of "milk and polenta," "polenta and milk." One Marche version pumps things up, with bacon and Parmesan cheese. Find these sagras in Fermo and Apiro early in the month.

Early fall is one of the loveliest times to visit Sibillini National Park, where, according to local legend, Pontius Pilate is buried, dragged here by a team of oxen after the Roman emperor Tiberius condemned him to death. The hike to Pilate Lake takes about three hours from the village of Foce. October is the height of white truffle season, with celebrating centered in Acqualagna. The first of Acqualagna's three main truffle fairs is held here in October and November.

A competition for accordion soloists takes place in October in Castelfidardo, a center of traditional handmade accordions <http://www.festivalcastelfidardo.it/>; the Fano Film Festival runs the same month www.fanofilmfestival.it. As Christmas approaches, theater, opera and ballet reach a crescendo; the winter season at Ancona's Teatro delle Muse kicks off in mid-December (and runs through March); Jesi's Teatro Pergolesi also offers special holiday fare. – Sara Broce



Photo By Scott Burry

Vendors talk about enjoying their interactions with people, and their love of selling their wares. Everyone we interviewed had been in the business for more than 10 years.

Marcello Roffo and his colleague Rina sell vintage clothing. Both started out selling clothes in Ibiza, Spain a decade ago. They now travel within a 100-mile radius of Pesaro, to towns such as Carpenio and Lugo. All of their goods are made in Italy.

Roffo, who lives in Pesaro, joked that his favorite place to go was anywhere that made money. But he also loves places that have beautiful scenery. Though he and Rina travel every day, they work only from 6 a.m. to 1 p.m., and so get to spend the rest of the day resting. Roffo said he most enjoyed either going to the beach or just relaxing with his family, which includes his wife, Rossana, a professional singer who also helps out at the market.

Roffo finds unpredictability of weather the worst part of the job: rain or snow depresses business. Money is especially important right now, he said, because of the economic crisis: his sales have dropped by nearly 40%.

"But we smile and laugh anyway, because we love the people, the sun and the sky," he said.

MAKING FRIENDS

Filippo Granolini, a congenial man in blue jeans and an apron, runs two cheese and sausage trucks. The fresh cheeses and salamis hanging from the top of the windows made

my mouth water.

While his trucks go each day to Cattolica or Pesaro or Urbania, Ganolini, who also owns a deli in Cattolica, does not always accompany them.

"When you work for more than 50 years, other people can help you out," he said. He began working in what was once his family's business at age 14, then inherited it in 1955.

Granolini compared selling to meeting a new friend every five minutes.

Unlike many other vendors, he said business had not suffered any recession-linked decline. He said he believes this is because he brings high-quality products to his customers, and that they appreciate that. He has wonderful cheese that has been aged for over three years. His products are also produced locally, in places such as Bologna and Modena -- and his customers want to support local products.

SHIRT SPECIALISTS

Every day, Massimo and Orietta Bedetti get up at 5 a.m., and prepare to display their selection of fine Italian cotton shirts for men. These sell for as little as 15 to 20 euros each. The couple also sell imported shirts for about 5 euro -- the price of breakfast, Massimo pointed out.

The Bedettis live in Rimini, and have worked as traveling vendors for decades. Massimo inherited the business from his family, after having worked in it since he was young. The

Bedettis travel over 50,000 kilometers a year in northern and central Italy, taking off only Sundays, and the rare special occasion.

Face to face contact with his customers is one of the greatest benefits of the job, Massimo Bedetti said.

"A man cannot live on bread alone," he quipped.

He's struggling with recession just like everyone else, but keeps a smile on his face, as he wants to keep his customers. He finds his hometown Rimini one of the best places to work, since his steady clients recognize him.

"It is difficult to make a living," he added, "because the government does not subsidize me at all."

That does not seem to matter too much to him, though, as he explains one more time just how much he likes interaction with customers.

"Mi piace, mi piace, mi piace," said Bedetti. "I like meeting people who smile a lot and who love to talk and who are not grumpy." ❖

WEEKLY MARKETS

Town	Day
Ascoli Piceno	Wednesday
Fano	Wednesday & Saturday
Pesaro	Tuesday
Rimini	Wednesday & Saturday
San Benedetto del Tronto	Tuesday
Urbino	Saturday

Internationalizing Urbino

New Student Dorm Meant for Globalization Strategy

BY HELGA SALINAS

Abundant light pours in, over polished wooden floors and beautiful bathrooms; the windows and terrace offer amazing views of the Italian hills. Rarely do students have the chance to live in such dorms. And it's true that Urbino's newly-renovated Casa dello Studente – inaugurated with great fanfare in the summer of 2010, and set to open in October – won't be open to everyone.

Rather, international students and short-term academic visitors will be offered lodging in this prized building in the historic center of town, as part of the University of Urbino's

strategy to showcase Italian culture abroad.

"Our intent is make Urbino an open city to anyone who wants to study, and most importantly, it is to have the support of the community of Urbino, as an instrument of its success," said one speaker at the inaugural ceremony.

The building was built under Mussolini. But it was returned to the university after Fascism fell.

Urbino, one of the most important centers of the Italian Renaissance, wants to

reassert its global contribution. Its strategy involves deepening ties with four regions in particular: China, the Balkans, fellow Mediterranean countries and the United States. The dorm will play a part in the city's internationalization strategy, said University of Urbino Prof. Giuseppe Giliberti, who recently returned from a cultural exchange in China's Nanking and Shanghai provinces. One priority is to establish cultural relations with China.

"We are focused on the development of business and academic relations," Giliberti said. ❖

ADVERTISEMENT

SAVORING THE NEW PROVINCE OF FERMO



Fermo is Marche's newest province. Established in 2009, it stretches from the stunning beaches of the Adriatic Sea, through the gentle green-hilled ridges topped by castles and hamlets, with their immense historical and cultural riches, to the Sibillini Mountains. It's a place where one can savor the tastes and flavors of gourmet products; wander streets full of outlets, to buy shoes, hats, leather goods or jewelry; and holiday at high-quality and hospitable bed and breakfasts, resorts, or agriturismo - farms where one stays to learn about, and taste, the local food, often prepared on the spot.

In short, it's a place where the quality of life is still valuable – and that is palpable on every corner. The Fermo Chamber of Commerce is investing here, convinced that it can help increase the growth of companies and workers, to the benefit of all sectors, the difficult international crisis notwithstanding.

"The growth and visibility of our land is a task that, as the Chamber leadership, we accept, and carry out with determination and passion," Chamber of Commerce President Graziano Di Battista says. "I am convinced that our province has much to offer, both to those who want to visit and also to local people who, with great passion, sacrifice and success, thanks to their abilities, make it so beautiful and hospitable.

"I think of the hundreds of artisans of footwear, hats and leather goods (many of them now entrepreneurs), who through their excellent products are known throughout the world. I think of the exceptional wine and food producers, such as the macaroni of Campofilone – products that induce so many aficionados of national and international cuisine to love our land.

This is why I feel I can invite as many people as possible to visit us. I am sure no one will be disappointed."

Print Rules

Columnist David Ignatius Wins 2010 Urbino Press Award

BY DAVID HARTMAN AND KATIE SUAREZ

A precession of drummers, cavaliers and flag bearers in full Renaissance garb led David Ignatius, renowned Washington Post columnist and novelist, into Urbino's Ducal Palace. As he walked arm in arm with his wife, Eve, he was saluted by the carabinieri, Italy's national police.

The royal welcome was a dividend of being named the 2010 recipient of the Urbino Press Award. The award is given to American journalists who "through their commitment and daily work, conscientiously inform millions of people," organizers say. The award is in its fifth year; past winners include Thomas Friedman, Diane Rehm and Michael Weisskopf.

As the costumed parade wound through the piazza and into the Palace, a full orchestra played in the courtyard, and the formally-attired crowd of businesspeople, dignitaries and other residents made its way inside for the ceremony.

The dramatic Sala del Trono, with soaring frescoed ceilings and Renaissance architecture, signaled an important diplomatic, and social event, as did the importance of the speakers. Urbino Mayor Franco Corbucci, Press Secretary Gabriele Cavallera, and Giovanni Lani, Urbino editor of *Il Resto del Carlino*, participated. Lani dreamed up the award with designers Piero and Giacomo Guidi, and is its president.

"This award is witnessing the friendship of our two peoples," Paula Thiede, press attaché for the U.S. Ambassador to Italy, said during the ceremony. "This is representative of the relationship between Italy and the U.S."

"We want to make bridges and pull down walls, and we'd like the Urbino Press award to do this," said Mayor Franco Corbucci.

Ignatius, also a Post associate editor, is the former executive editor of the *International Herald Tribune*, and worked for *The Wall Street Journal*. He's written about U.S. government affairs, and the Middle East. He's also written six novels: "Body of Lies," "The Sun King," "A Firing Offense," "SIRO," "The Bank of Fear," and "Age of Innocence."

Ignatius agreed with Corbucci about the

international role of journalism. Stressing that journalists around the world must operate by a common set of ethics, he said: "I think it's a mistake for us to be tied down country-by-country in different versions of journalism."

"Some of the most useful conversations I've had have been with foreign journalists; I've made a point of getting to know my colleagues outside of my bubble [in Washington]."

He said he maintains a dialogue with journalists abroad, and receives valuable criticism from them. "I want them to stand with me and say, 'David you got that wrong.'"

He expressed concern for the future of journalism. While the Internet provides an unprecedented ability for people to voice their opinion, he sees it as generating "a democracy of information to a fault."

Despite the breadth of information available on the Internet, he said, readers tend to look for information that reinforces their opinions. "The Internet should be this powerful institution of unity. Instead it speaks to and helps create niches rather than mass."

The Urbino Press Award is "not simply a promotional event," Cavallera, press secretary to the mayor, said, "but a way to make people understand what Italy is like for people who were never here before."

Receiving this award certainly opened Ignatius' eyes to Le Marche. "Le Marche is lovable because it is off the beaten path," the columnist said, noting that he had "seen a lot of really nice people and eaten a lot of good food."

"The fact that [Urbino] is a little removed means it has its own independence, its own place." ♦



Photo By Arima McLaughlin



Photo By Scott Burry

Renaissance of the Shotgun

Inside the factory of a world-class arms maker

BY DAVID HARTMAN

Enter the Benelli firearm factory and you're immediately immersed in gun and hunting culture. A stuffed lion guards the lobby. A bear carcass and dozens of guns decorate the wall. Part showroom, part museum, the modern building attempts to capture the ingenuity that has brought the Urbino-based company much acclaim in the international firearm community.

On the factory floor, a six-foot high robotic arm picks up a shotgun bolt the size of a crabapple and places it in a basket. Using a machine instead of a person is safer and cheaper, said Marco Vignaroli, Benelli's chief engineer. And: "the robot doesn't need to sleep or eat."

Benelli shotguns are considered some of the finest in the world. In 1996, the U.S. Marines Corps awarded Benelli a contract to supply shotguns. Benelli didn't just meet the Marines' benchmarks; it surpassed them. The guns fired more rounds before servicing, and were more accurate and less prone to failure, than the Marines had specified, Vignaroli said.

The weapon, the M4, is also used by U.S. SWAT units, by United Nations peacekeeping forces and by the militaries of Australia, the United Kingdom, Egypt and Germany.

The Benelli brothers, who come from nearby Pesaro, founded the company in 1968, as an offshoot of their motorcycle company.

"They searched the region for a place with a qualified workforce and room for a factory," said Benelli's director of marketing, Silvia Micheli. "We have a very good mechanical

school here, and the city was in favor of the idea, so it was a natural fit."

CRAFTSMANSHIP AND STYLE

Benelli products aren't only developed with technology and innovation in mind, but also style and design, Micheli said.

An Urbino base allows engineers and designers to be "exposed to the beautiful art, architecture and design and translate this into our guns," she added. There's a facility for an independent contractor to test every gun produced. Guns are fired at 30 percent greater pressure than they'll ever be subjected to when fired. The test is meant to expose any mechanical failures.

Vignaroli said firearms manufactured in China have been tested at the Benelli plant, and couldn't live up to the same standards. Fewer than 1 in 2,000 Benelli guns are found, in testing, to have any flaw.

Henry Ford would certainly marvel at the efficiency of production, and a Swiss watchmaker would envy the meticulous craftsmanship. But Benelli's ascendance as a prestigious firearm manufacturer is quite new. When it entered the market, the company had to compete with Beretta, Browning and Remington, all very established then (Benelli is now a subsidiary of Beretta Holding SpA).

"I have an invoice from 1987 in my office," said Benelli President Luigi Moretti. "We only sold one shotgun to the United States that year." Today the company sells roughly

200,000 guns per year, in 79 countries. Recently, Benelli surpassed Remington in shotgun sales in the United States.

The company credits its success to its focus on technology and innovation. The tradition of innovation can be traced to one of the very first firearms it produced. Using Bruno Civolani's unique firing system, Benelli's first automatic shotgun could fire five rounds in less than a second, making it, company officials said, the fastest shotgun in the world.

ITALY MEETS AMERICA

The U.S. market has presented some challenges, too. Americans prefer guns to be simply named with a letter and numeral, but Benelli prefers to give each firearm a name that reflects its personality. The newest shotgun, the Vinci, can be assembled in seconds, and consists of just three components: a barrel, receiver and butt-stock. It's named for Leonardo da Vinci, who said, "simplicity is the highest sophistication."

The Raffaello Lord is named for the great Urbino-born Renaissance painter Raphael. Holding it, I forget the brutal function of the weapon; I can only marvel at its craftsmanship.

On the factory floor, employees are inspecting each component. One worker pumps a shotgun 10 times with all his strength, then carefully examines the parts. Another worker uses calipers to measure the dimensions of a barrel, while his neighbor stares down the sights. Only if the guns pass muster can they be packaged and shipped to customers. ♦

“Don’t Swim Past the Buoys”

I saw myself in a scene from Jaws. I was trying to swim away, but the shark would catch me.

BY HEATHER DOYLE

The ocean at the beach in Pesaro was so inviting that I couldn’t resist jumping in. The water was calm and warm. I could see my feet kicking up clouds of sand as I waded to where the water was waist deep. It was more relaxing than the water at home in New York, where powerful rip tides pull unsuspecting swimmers out so far they can’t swim back.

My friends and I had the bright idea of swimming to the rocks a few hundred feet from the shore. It was the furthest I had ever swum into the ocean, since under my mother’s supervision I was never permitted to go past my elbows. But what could happen? How could this sapphire blue water, calm as an Italian Sunday lunch hour, possibly harm me? Other people were standing on the rocks, fishing and admiring the view.

I swam past the white buoys, but as I tried to hoist myself up on the rocks, I slipped, and splashed back into the water. Inspecting my foot, I saw a dark line slicing down my right big toe. I waited for a sting, a pang, a sign of a major injury. But I felt nothing.

I lifted my foot into my hand to see if it was serious. Ruby red blood spurted from my toe.

“Oh my God...Ohhhhh my God, I have to swim back. Now. Right now.”

I frantically swam to shore, in one-legged freestyle to avoid doing any more damage.

I saw myself in a scene from Jaws. I was trying to swim away, but the shark would

catch me. I tried to remember everything I had learned during “Shark Week” on The Discovery Channel about self-defense from sharks, while praying there were none around.

On shore, wrapped my towel around my toe and clenched.

A tanned beach attendance in a white collared shirt brought some disinfectant and new bandages. Lifting his bright yellow sunglasses, he made a face and said in a regretful voice, “Yes, you need a stitch.”

Damn.

At the hospital, I limped up to a woman at the reception desk, who sat me down and elevated my foot for further inspection.

“Ohhh...tsk tsk” she whispered, shaking her head. I don’t speak Italian, but I knew “tsk tsk” is the universal term for bad news.

She walked behind the desk and returned with a bottle of peroxide and gauze, removed my makeshift splint and re-dressed my wound.

Then she asked if I had an insurance card.

“No, not with me...it’s at home,” I said, halfway to tears. Great, I’m going to bleed to death in a foreign country because I didn’t bring my stupid card.

“Ahh...okay,” said the nurse. She disappeared

continued on page 43

Photo By Scott Barry



The Composer of Pesaro

Rossini is celebrated in his hometown

BY SAMANTHA BLEE

While the stories of most composers are only available in old texts, Gioachino Rossini's legacy is still accessible in the busy Adriatic beach town of Pesaro, where he was born. Whether you'd like to catch a performance of one of his famous operas, or simply to walk through the rooms of his childhood, here is a place to connect.

Imagine your favorite episode of "The Lone Ranger," or perhaps a hectic chase scene in a familiar movie. What melody floats into your head? A wordless, familiar composition that you can't quite name? Chances are, you're thinking of Rossini's "Guillaume (William) Tell Overture." "The Barber of Seville" has also worked its way into several familiar movies.

Though Rossini, born here in 1792, wrote most of his noteworthy pieces between 1810 and 1829, certain songs are still used in pop culture.

Pesaro has built several historical sites to commemorate its native son, such as Teatro Rossini (restored in 2002) and Casa Rossini, the house where the composer was born. There's also a two-week Rossini Opera Festival each August.

In Casa Rossini, you can learn the story of the composer's life, via a collection of over 100 prints given to the Pesaro town council. Donated by Parisian collector Alphonse Hubert at the end of the 19th century, the prints portray some of the most acclaimed singers of Rossini's time, including Adelina Patti wearing her costume for a performance of "The Barber of Seville." In the house you can find rare artifacts, such as the pianoforte Rossini practiced on as a child, and books of handwritten music.

Pesaro also celebrates Rossini with live performances of the composer's great works, during the Rossini Opera Festival. The festival - the only international event entirely devoted to Rossini - was established in 1980 by Pesaro's municipal government. In addition to classic Rossini titles, the program also revives many forgotten operas, such as "The Death of Dido" and "The Wedding of Thetis and Peleus."

"The most popular events are the stage shows," said Pesaro cultural representative Giulio Oliva. "But there are also concerts, exhibitions, speeches, and other events." The "Young Festival" is especially popular. This portion of the festival gives young musicians a chance to play Rossini pieces, and to show off their own compositions.

"There are probably more foreigners than Italians, and they usually book tickets one year in advance," Oliva said. The festival is especially popular among the Japanese. The Rossini Festival has developed into one of Pesaro's biggest events, and a valuable one for the city. ❖

The Rossini Opera Festival takes place for three weeks each August. Schedule: <http://www.rossinioperafestival.it/> Tickets: Biglietteria del Festival Via Rossini 24, I-61121 Pesaro. Tel: 0721.3800294/ Fax: 0721.3800220 e-mail: boxoffice@rossinioperafestival.it

ROSSINI

The Editor Who Drives Urbino Coverage

How Giovanni Lani covers the news

BY DAVID HARTMAN

The newsroom of the Pesaro office of *Il Resto del Carlino* is just like those old-school newsrooms you see on TV. People are clacking away on keyboards, phones are ringing, and every desk is full of documents, story layouts, phone books and personal items.

On the desk of Giovanni Lani, editor of the paper's Urbino section, is a New York souvenir license plate with his name on it, and a bust of John F. Kennedy. Lani's workspace is plastered with pictures of President Barack Obama and former President George W. Bush, shown shaking hands with Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi. Lani, who seems to be forever in a rush, wears designer eyeglasses and a button-down dress shirt (sometimes tucked in, sometimes not).

If the newsroom feels typical, its location is anything but. It's at street level, with a glass retail-style front door that constantly opens and shuts. There's no secretary or security guard; once you enter the front door, you are face to face with reporters and editors.

Residents frequently drop in with news tips, or requests that the paper cover this story or that.

Part of a larger newspaper group headquartered in Bologna, the Pesaro edition circulates in the region around this 90,000-resident city. *Il Resto del Carlino* is one of the oldest newspapers in Italy; in 2010 it celebrated its 125th year in business. Perhaps cleverness in business derives from the clever sense of humor that gave the paper its name: Many years ago, men buying cigars at the tabacchi would pay with a low-value coin called a *carlino*. Instead of receiving the change – *il resto*, in Italian – the customer would be invited to take a newspaper instead.

KILLER HOURS

Despite living in a society that puts a great emphasis on leisure time, Lani works the long hours journalists everywhere are notorious for keeping; he is frequently in the office until nine in the evening, including on weekends.



Photo by Solidea Vitali Rosati

He begins each day by mapping out the three pages he's allotted for the Urbino section. He plucks articles off of an online news wire, contacts the reporters and asks them to retake photographs or do follow-up reporting.

Our conversation is frequently interrupted, as yet another reporter stops by to clarify some information, or the phone rings. Lani sometimes seems to be several places at once: he'll assemble his section in Pesaro, but at the same time be working on his own stories in Urbino, 20 miles away. He's also produced a documentary about coal miners, and has co-produced another about Urbino's new student dormitory (see related story on p. 6).

Lani said that he is given a great deal of autonomy when designing his section, due to Urbino's isolation. "It's so far (away) and different that there's not much reason to discuss my section with others," he said.

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WINTER... LA BEFANA RIDES IN

To see La Befana parade through streets of Urbania is to experience the quintessential Marche Christmas season. Then come Carnevale revelries, before 40 solemn days of Lent fall upon quiet snow-dusted mountain villages, and the wind sweeps up the Adriatic coast. Curl up with a thick, creamy cup of hot chocolate, or a warm apple tart.

Near the Frasassi Caves, in the village of Genga, hundreds of villagers dress up for a Christmas pageant, and to play their parts in a human crèche, known as a presepe, from Dec. 26 to Jan. 4 <http://www.presepedigenga.it/> Look for the lively village Christmas markets, or mercatini, where handicrafts and other typical products are sold. Urbino, Fano, Jesi, Ostra Vetere, Senigallia, Macerata, Camerino, and San Benedetto del Tronto are among the best-known. In Candelara, key moments are celebrated without lights. There are ice sculptures, Santa Claus bands and street artists, and on the final night carolers singing in the streets. <http://www.candelara.com/english.php>

Enormous bonfires are lit in the Virgin Mary cult town of Lorreto on December 9 and 10, to mark the legend that angels carried her rustic cottage there from Nazareth on Dec. 10, 1292. The bonfires are lit in the open country, and on the beaches, to help guide the angels on their way.

Since Santa Claus lives in the North Pole and can't get to all the children, the witch La Befana parades down the streets of Urbania, where she's cheered all the way. She bears sweets for the good children, and coal (sometimes in the form of chocolates, to soften the blow) for the bad. Concurrent with the Epiphany, Urbania's is one of the biggest celebrations in all of Italy, running from Jan 2nd through Jan 6th.

Though you'll have heard of the famous revelries in Venice, Carnevale in Marche is most appreciated in Fano, Pesaro and Appechio. Falling 40 days before Easter, it's a last hurrah before the solemn days of Lent. Masked people –grotesque, funny, frightening–fill the streets. – Heather Doyle



Footloose in Fermo



Where have all the artisans gone? Was I naïve to expect to find old, Italian men slowly stitching together pieces of leather?

Photos By Ariana McLaughlin



When I first considered an internship in Italy, two words jumped to mind: shoe shopping.

BY HANNAH NUSSER

For years I read Vogue and Glamour with lustful eyes, fantasizing that one day I might be lucky enough to own the fabulously expensive shoes and bags I saw on those glossy pages.

In my hometown of Woodville, Ohio, population 2,000, the nearest movie theater, shopping center or fancy restaurant is a 40-minute drive – if you don't get stuck behind a tractor. Fashion can mean wearing your best jeans and Target flip-flops to dinner at Applebee's.

Surrounded by cornfields and combines, the fashion world was mysterious to me, sacred and untouchable.

When I first considered an internship in Italy, two words jumped to mind: shoe shopping. This was my chance to visit one of the fashion capitals of the world, a shoe lover's haven and arguably the most charming country in Europe. I imagined a faraway place where the women were beautiful and even the men had style.

I set out to learn lessons from the most fashionable, put-together women in the world, and to bring back a pair of shoes – or two or three – to prove I had.

Little did I know that, after my time in Marche, I would never look at a pair of shoes the same way.

NOT SO GLAM

At the Giovanni Fabiani manufacturing site in Fermo, I witnessed the craftsmanship behind

SPECIAL REPORT

the heels, and came to understand that the production of women's shoes is a tedious, time-consuming craft. After the initial stages of leather cutting, stitching and fitting the body of the shoe, the next steps vary according to the shoe style.

Each artisan is trained to specialize in one task. We see a middle-aged man swiftly stretching leather taut over the toe of every shoe. Another man delicately brushes special glue onto the bottom of the shoe structure, allowing it to dry completely before heating it up again and applying the sole by hand, lining it up exactly and using a special machine to press it tight. At the end of the assembly line, another man places each stiletto heel in just the right spot before securing it with a press machine, and sending it on for the finishing touches. Then the shoes are polished, buffed and boxed, ready to be shipped. It's an example of the care and handcrafting that give Italian shoes their reputation for durability and quality.

With over 54 components needed for every pair of women's shoes, I realized that shoemaking can be laborious.

MODERN CRAFTSMANSHIP

Arriving at Dino Bigioni in the nearby town of Montegranaro, my excitement stirs: I smell the pungent, unmistakable scent of leather. It's a men's shoe factory, but that doesn't lessen my enthusiasm. The manager, Giuseppe Sardini, spoke with great pride and hospitality as he led me into the noisy area where shoe production begins. Beyond stack upon stack of shoeboxes, that will envelope shoes bound for Russia and Germany, the elaborate assembly process begins.

This factory is modern, with automatic leather-cutters and machines equipped with software to copy intricate patterns on to the material. Where have all the artisans gone? Was I naïve to expect to find old, Italian men slowly stitching together pieces of leather?

Looking more closely, I see the workers, again intently focused on using their expertise to carrying out their craft.

Dino Bigioni manufactures 700 pairs of shoes a day. All employees come from shoemaking families that have educated their children in the craft. While the younger generation attends area trade schools to learn trade and design, family tradition is the preferred training method.

"They pass secrets from father to son. There's no other part of the world where you can find this," said Montegranaro Mayor Gastone Gismondi.

This factory is just one of hundreds of small yet established family shoe businesses in this area. The families say they are friends rather than foes, and that they help one another in times of hardship. The American idea of money-hungry world domination has no place here; the Italians' best interest is in assuring that quality always prevails.

The Italian shoe industry is not just about footwear – it's about preserving a tradition, a culture, a family name.

"We are not eating each other; it's families helping families. That's the life of the shoe industry," Sardini said.

DESIGNER SHOE OUTLETS AROUND FERMO

GIOVANNI FABIANI

Via dell'Industria, 50, Fermo

PRADA OUTLET

Via Alpi (Zona Industriale), 97, Montegranaro

0734 - 897.82.72

Monday through Friday, 9.00 a.m.-12.30

p.m. and 3 p.m. -7.30 p.m., Saturday open

continuously, 10.00 a.m. -7.30 p.m.

All Prada goods, including jackets, bags and shoes, offered at a 40 percent discount;

sales in January and February.

TOD'S SHOE OUTLET

Corso Garibaldi, Casette d'Ete, 134

Sant'Elpidio a Mare

0734 - 87.16.71

Monday through Saturday, 10 a.m. - 7:30

p.m., open continuously. Shoes and leather

goods at 40 percent off.

ROBERTO CAVALLI

Via dell'Industria (Zona Industriale),

Gottazzolina

0734 - 63.20.64

Monday from 3.30 to 7:30 p.m.; Tuesday

though Saturday from 9.30 to 12.30 p.m.,

and 3:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Also sells Fiorucci shoes, Flex Junior, and

Disney Babies.

CALZATURIFICIO R.D.B.

(Dino Bigioni Uomo)

Montegranaro

310, v. Veregrense

0734-89.12.59

info@dinobigioni.it

Well-made men's shoes: rubber soled,

perforated uppers, English wingtips, boots.

Women will find classic models, leather

tennis shoes, ankle boots.

Each family specializes in one part of the shoe – one family may make only stiletto heels; others only the soles for men's loafers. With the exception of the leather (which comes from Tuscany and the Veneto), all shoe components are produced locally.

It was disappointing to learn that shoe exports to America have been almost non-existent since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11 -- yet it made me cherish this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to visit all the more. Sardini assured me, however, he expects the U.S. market to recover as the dollar gains strength against the euro. "I think it's the right time to go back," he said.

*"They pass secrets from father to son.
There's no other part of the world
where you can find this."*

- Montegranaro Mayor Gastone Gismondi.

The Fermano shoe district exports 75 percent of its shoes to Russia, Germany, Belgium and China. With over 4,000 manufacturers in the Montegranaro area, the industry employs 35,000 workers, and generates 1.5 billion euro a year. Although shoemaking is a centuries-old tradition, the industry began to take off in Le Marche region only in the 1850s.

SHOPPING!

Next came the outlets. While outlets in other countries typically yield larger discounts on designer goods, it's likely because they are a season or two behind, or are imposters. Here, incredible designer heels were such a steal that even I, a part-time cashier, could afford a pair of black Giovanni Fabiani lacy, platform sky-high pumps. They are less than half the retail price, and I swipe my card without cringing.

The "Made in Italy" label is so prized that I had to wonder about knockoffs. Fraudulent 'Italian shoemakers' are out there in full swing, but the industry is constantly working to combat the fakers, said Graziano Di Battista, president of the Fermo Chamber of Commerce.

"We responded by doing it better," Di Battista said. "Our strategy is making new models all the time. People who are copying us are always way behind."

Dino Bigioni designers create 600 new styles every season.

Di Battista shared this tip: high-fashion virgins like me can avoid being duped by fraudulent shoemakers by paying attention to detail. Look for hand-sewn stitches, durable laces, intricate patterns and methodical yet subtly exquisite detail. When in doubt, I learned, smell the leather -- the rich, pungent scent is impossible to duplicate. And who can mimic that soft, worn-in feel of the real thing? ♦

Photo by Arina McLaughlin



In Step with History

Don't miss these classic sites

BY HELGA SALINAS

THE ROMAN CISTERNS: The chill air surprised us. The lights were flicked on, and a stone tunnel opened in front of us. These Roman cisterns were built as emergency water reservoirs, in the first century A.D. Eventually they were filled with garbage, and forgotten. Rediscovered in 1960, they were cleaned up and opened to visitors. You can still see ancient detritus strewn around: pieces of ancient buildings, a yellow family crest.

THE EAGLE THEATER (TEATRO DELL'AQUILA): You might be walking through a Phantom of the Opera set. You'd never, in any case, expect to find such a glamorous theater here. The chandeliers highlight the design on the walls. Your eyes rise through five floors of theater boxes, each of the 25 furnished with red curtains and chairs. A powerful eagle, the Roman imperial symbol, guards the hall. Opened in 1792, this is still an active theater, offering as many as 10 operas each October through May season, and serving as a setting for local students recitals.

ROMAN AMPHITHEATRE (TEATRO ROMANO): Roman amphitheatres were built at the crossroads of towns, but this one, in the hamlet of Falerone, is now surrounded by grasses, and centuries-old trees. It was a magnificent marble theater once; now only the stage and seats remain. Its existence signifies the prosperity, and population, of the time. I was sure that my imagination could not fill the empty spaces of where the amphitheatre once was – but the stone you see today is the stone the Romans saw then.

CHURCH AND MUSEUM OF FERMO (CATTEDRALE E MUSEO DI FERMO): Bronze doors greet you as you enter. The bas-relief recounts the 1176 fire that destroyed the city and church, and also the renovation, symbolized by the flames of the Phoenix. In tradition of excavating buried history, a glass floor showcases church artwork from the 5th century. The crypt below has painted ceilings and walls, and an unknown sarcophagus from the 4th century. Next door is the museum that exhibits artifacts of Fermo's cardinals, and a cross with a piece from original crucifix. There's also a chasuble (a liturgical garment) threaded with gold, said to have belonged to St. Thomas Beckett.

TORRE DI PALME: This beautiful hamlet overlooks hills and sea, in one encompassing view. You must drive from Fermo, but once there, walking is the best way to experience this place. Bright pink flowers hang over the mud-colored balconies. I walk by an open kitchen, teased by the delicious smell, as the restaurants have not yet opened for dinner. Each table is positioned so as to take advantage of the view over the countryside to the coast. I keep walking. A woman in a housedress and apron is sweeping the floor. A family enjoys snack. I peek down alleyways that probably lead to homes. At the end, one is enveloped by the view, of blue water bleeding to umbrellas that trickle up the coast. The sand fades into green hills above, stretching so far that one might believe this is what the whole world looks like. ❖



The Accordion Makers of Castelfidardo

Tracking down my grandfather's legacy

STORY AND PHOTOS BY STEPHANIE TODARO

From a table covered by a red and white-checkered tablecloth in his tiny Chicago condo, my grandfather would sit for hours manipulating wires, rods, and buttons. I'd watch with intense interest, as he'd fit each part perfectly. Only as the final screws moved into place did we hear the harmonic melodies his music box could play.

"Bravo," my grandfather would exclaim, as the sound escaped the accordion we'd built.

For many years, I studied my grandfather, Umberto Carocci, as he delicately built each accordion and *orghenetti* for clients around the U.S. Midwest. He was a one-man company, painstakingly constructing these complex instruments with grace and ease. Sometimes I would help him fit and test the parts.

It was during our "work hours" that I learned about the culture, history and artisan tradition behind Italy's accordion industry, and came to better understand my Italian heritage.

After my grandfather passed away, on October 24, 2008, I began to think again about my ties to Italy through him. In the summer of 2010, I decided to delve deeper into his craft, and to revisit the tradition that he helped shape.

A TRIP TO CASTELFIDARDO

The story of the making of the first accordion follows an oral tradition that seems to change with each generation. The original tale tells of an Austrian pilgrim who lodged at the Soprani home in Castelfidardo, and introduced a bellowed box-like instrument as he and his hosts relaxed by the fire one night. Interested in the mechanisms that allowed this music box to work, young Paolo Soprani built his own version, which would lead to the establishment of the accordion, concertina, and *orghenetti* industry in Castelfidardo in 1864.

My grandfather, born in Castelfidardo, founded the accordion business Armoni in 1946, in the aftermath of World War II. In 1969, he

ARTISANSHIP

brought his craft to America, by purchasing Star Concertina, in Chicago.

As he distributed his concertinas throughout the Midwest, my grandfather's work soon became well known. Star also absorbed the Imperial brand of electronic accordions and organs/pianos. In 1986, he sold his company and retired. No other family member took up the trade, and the company eventually folded.

My grandfather's story is similar that of many Italian accordion manufacturers. As the industry began to boom in the late 1950s, many manufacturers appeared, only to shut down within an average of five years, due to increasing competition and shrinking demand.

"The boom years were pre-Beatles," said Fausto Fabo, the operations manager at Soprani/Scandalli in Castelfidardo, when I visited in the summer of 2010. "The accordion was not typical to rock and roll, and stayed outside of that musical circle for the most part."

Still, John Lennon used an accordion while composing most of his songs; only later, during recording, would he replace the melody with the guitar, drums and bass.

Today, a branch of my family continues the Soprani line of accordions in Castelfidardo -- along with the Scandalli brand -- and maintains the artisan craft of accordion and *orgnenetti* construction.

FEWER MADE BY HAND

In their factory on the outskirts of Castelfidardo, an average of 1,200 accordions are built each year, by a group of about 20 artisans. Each accordion has more than 15,000 parts, and an average of 14 pairs of hands help build each complex instrument. Each instrument takes about three months to build.

Only two major Italian accordion companies— Pignini and Soprani/Scandalli— are left here. Much of the mass production has been shifted to China, making it harder for the local producers to compete. A professional-grade accordion sells for more than \$20,000 today. The intensive artisan construction and the multitude of vendors contributing to its creation have driven up costs.

"More than a 100 different businesses go into the production of a single accordion," Fabi explained. "All [of these businesses] are locally based, and require specialists, thus making it more expensive."

In the past, the trade was passed down through the family, typically from grandfather to son to grandson. But in recent years, accordion-making has lost its strong family connection, as younger generations chose to go into different fields, and machinery replaces human handwork.

Yet the craft is still a staple of this Le Marche hill town region. And it will forever play a role in my family heritage. ♦





From Fibers to Faces:

Papermaking in Fabriano

BY RENAE BLUM

Claudia Crocetti stands in a darkened room, stamping her feet. Around her are empty-looking white boxes arranged on the walls, in display cases. “We can’t do anything without light,” she mutters.

After several more seconds, lights in the ceiling snap on and the room jumps to life. The ghostly boxes fill with warm yellow light, revealing hidden images in paper: the Virgin Mary, Mussolini, Botticelli’s Venus.

They are watermarks, some old and others new, the work of Italian *filigranisti* who create invisible designs on banknotes and official documents.

Fabriano is the home of the watermark, an elaborate hidden design created by pressing a special screen to the paper. Artisans here developed the technique in the 1200s, to protect their paper from imitators.

Fabriano artists also created the first waterproof paper, by developing and applying an animal gelatin. And they built the first hydraulic hammer mills to pulp paper, a relief to artists theretofore used to strenuous pulping with mortar and pestle.

Downstairs, visitors watch master papermaker Micella Luigi and several students create this same watermarked paper using the methods of 13th century *lavorente*, or laborers. It’s a day like any other at the Museum of Paper and Watermarks (the *Museo della Carta e Filigranisti*) in Fabriano, a city known worldwide for its innovations in papermaking.

The traditional steps Luigi and his students follow look simple, but take apprentices six to seven years to master. First, rags are placed in a series of hammer mills, noisy contraptions that pound the cloth into a finer and finer *pisto*. The ground-up fiber goes into a vat of water. A lavorente stands above the vat, lifting a wire frame out of the dun-colored water. If one is creating watermarked paper, the frame will have a design sewn into it, into which the paper will form.

Pinocchio Goes Global

BY HELGA SALINAS

As the fiber settles, the papermaker swishes the frame back and forth, controlling the size and shape of the new paper. When he is finished, an assistant lays the wet sheet out on wool. The paper is about 80 percent to 99 percent water at this point, so a screw press is used to squeeze out excess water.

Listening to Luigi detail the finer points of the process, one begins to think of paper making as gourmet cooking, or perhaps a bizarre science experiment. There are many ways to go wrong, many points in which timing, instinct and good judgment are crucial. You need the right temperature in the water. You need correct amounts of water, fiber and glue (and dye, if the paper is colored). You might smooth the paper incorrectly, or keep the hammer press going too long.

A true master, Luigi says, can create a set of paper in which every sheet is identical.

The watermarks Crocetti presents in her tour are among the best in the world. The images in room after room reflect not ridges of steel in a mesh frame, but human skin and hair, draped cloth, the sun gleaming on a metal helmet. Some sheets are elaborate calendars, all twelve months on a single page, with perfectly symmetrical vines, flowers and heraldic symbols wrapping around each month.

Reaching this level of expertise exacts a price that not everyone is willing to pay. Sometimes it's physical. The *filigranisti* who create these intricate designs often "have big glasses," Crocetti explained. Staring at the wire mesh and tiny holes they must sew steel thread through damaged the *filigranisti's* vision. Some paper makers have blackened fingertips from dipping paper into hot water all day. "They shed skin like a snake," she said.

The most common barriers to becoming a mastro of papermaking like Luigi are lack of time and money. During the years of learning, students work as apprentices for little to no money. A full-time papermaker can earn perhaps 1,000 euro a month.

"Young people don't want to learn, because work requires a sacrifice," Luigi said.

He picked up the trade himself "very gradually" from a couple elderly mastro years ago.

He hopes his own son, currently attending a technical institute for papermaking, will continue his work.

A six-foot Pinocchio greets visitors to the Bartolucci shop in Urbino. It's as if you've found Santa's workshop at last.

Toys here are made of wood, never plastic. The hands of wooden clocks move in unison. Rows of Pinocchios of all sizes fill the shelves. A wooden motorcycle is parked in the middle of things.

Like many shops in Le Marche, this is a family business.

Francesco Bartolucci, 57, founded the company in his father's woodworking shop in Belvedere Fogliense, 21 kilometers (13 miles) from Urbino. Its only identification from the outside is the Bartolucci name on the bell. We ring.

While waiting for someone to answer, we enter the old workshop, now a small museum. Wood shavings are everywhere; there are carving instruments from the 19th century; a radio and phone from the 1930s; even a cigarette case.

Wood carving is a family tradition. And each time Bartolucci carved a new character, he'd give the first one to his daughter Maria. Now Maria is 21 – but getting the next one still excites her.

Her father chose to specialize in Pinocchio because "people in wood carving start with Pinocchio," she said. "When you read the story of Pinocchio, you read about Italy." The tale was written in the 19th century, as Italy was becoming a nation. One of Bartolucci's marionettes was even featured in Robert Benigni's 2002 film, "Pinocchio."

Bartolucci enchants visiting children – and their parents – by carving his Pinocchios in front of them.

When Bartolucci began work in the 1980s, he worked alone. Then, after his figures enjoyed success in the stalls of Italy's traveling markets, the first shop was opened, in Urbino in 1990.

He slowly built up a work force. His figures continue to impress customers, and have since spurred some 80 stores throughout Italy and elsewhere in Europe, as well as in Russia and Australia. However, a store has yet to open in the United States.

The current factory is down the road from the old workshop, and has grown into a 90-employee operation.

"It is a factory of artisans, with machines used (only) for small parts," said Bartolucci's wife Maria. In 2007, the company was honored with a Eurispes award for artisanal excellence.

Each worker specializes: there's a varnisher, a silk screener and a woodcutter, each trained in his or her task. The design, be it Pinocchio, a cute angel, or a bee, is silk-screened on, one color at a time.

Bartolucci still works in the factory every day. He carves a propeller for each airplane, taking care to ensure that each is different. In each store, a DVD plays, showing him fashioning a Pinocchio. He wants everyone, not just visiting children, to see the magic of wood carving.

"Francesco wants to transmit the emotion he has when making the toys for the people," Maria said.

Bartolucci also makes girls' hair decorations, earrings, key chains, and magnets shaped as ballerina shoes and zodiac signs. He even carves the mascots of Italy's soccer teams.

"The moment of entering the store is like how an actor receives applause," he said. "People like what you create." ❖

BARTOLUCCI

Via Vittorio Veneto, 23
Urbino, Italy
Tel: 0722-327476
www.bartolucci.com

Photo By Ariana McLaughlin



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Photo By Arah Bahn

PRIEST-CHOKING PASTA

When the church was a big Marche landowner, farmers' wives would make thick pasta twists to bribe the local clergymen who came to collect the rent. It was said that the farmers, wild with jealousy (eating a wife's pasta was considered tantamount to bedding her), wished the priests would choke on it.

Another version had it that poor peasants and restaurateurs hoped the freeloading priests would choke on the cheaper first course, the pasta, before reaching the more expensive second, or meat course. So they developed this heavy hand-rolled pasta shape, which seemed likeliest to do the job. No word on the results, but evidently strozzapreti has its uses, even today. Advised one foodie blog: "The perfect cut to serve your gluttonous relatives!"

Straight from the Earth and Sea

Marche is all about cucina povera – a few simple ingredients, recently picked, caught or killed

BY HEATHER ANDERSON

Marche has called "the other Tuscany," but its rustic *cucina povera* reflects a farm-to-fork, elemental and seasonal approach that prides itself on, above all, stunning freshness.

Stretching from mountains to sea, and touching both the Italian north and south, Le Marche spans a range of Italian climates and cultures – and its cuisine reflects the same astonishing range. The beauty of the food lies in its traditional, hearty flavors. It's less well-known than other Italian cuisines, but small farmhouses and the expanding agriturismo industry are helping to raise its profile.

Dishes depend on local produce and meats for their rich, full-bodied flavors.

"Le Marche is a very long region, therefore we have different styles of cuisine," said Maria Anrichetta "Keki" Pompili, owner of the food purveyor and café Alimentare in Cagli.

Fish and fish products dominate on the coast, while in the mountains you'll find truffles and pig, wild boar and rabbit.

Two popular cheeses are *pecorino Romano* and *formaggio di fossa*. Made with a blend of sheep's and cow's milk, fossa – the word means "buried," as the cheese is matured underground -- has a firm consistency and cylindrical shape, and a pungent, almost bitter flavor; it is considered a delicacy. Similar to Parmesan in its hard, flaky texture, pecorino Romano boasts a salty, sharp flavor, and is used in many pasta dishes. *Casciotta d'Urbino*, a delightfully sweet, lightly acidic cheese, has a crumbly texture with small holes throughout. It is a beautiful white color.

In snacks, *olive all'ascolana*, fried olives stuffed with pork, are typically found in the southern city of Ascoli Piceno. The olives are often served as an antipasto, but also look for them at small stands along the winding roads. They are definitely worth a stop. *Crescia sfogliata*, a much-loved local

flatbread often stuffed with spinach, prosciutto or cheese, features at many a café, and is also served as an appetizer. Special cheese versions are baked at Christmas and Easter.

Le Marche is known for its homemade pastas, especially the comfort food *passatelli*. Made with eggs, breadcrumbs and Parmesan, *passatelli* is typically cooked and served in chicken broth. The hand-rolled pasta twists strozzapreti – "choke the priest" -- are often served with a wild boar ragu.

Brodetto, a delectable fish stew, comes from the coast. Made with the fish of the Adriatic Sea, it is traditionally served over toasted bread.

The inland meat dishes tend to focus on game, such rabbit and pigeon, or on pork and veal. A traditional dish is *porchetta*, a whole pig, stuffed and roasted on a spit over a fire.

You'll read more about the foods of Le Marche, and meet the people who grow, make and serve them, in the following pages. Enjoy! ❖

A Marche Table

An American couple founds a cooking school, and finds a new home

BY HANNAH NUSSER AND STEPHANIE TODARO

In some ways, Jason and Ashley Bartner are opposites: he loves to cook; she doesn't go near the stove. She enjoys blogging about life on their *agriturismo*; he won't go near a computer. But it's the duo's desire to embrace Italian life and culture that makes their business, Tavola Marche Agriturismo and Cooking School, an asset to the region.

They began to consider moving to Italy after splurging on a honeymoon there in 2006.

"We decided to have a tiny wedding with just a few people and then have a rockin' honeymoon," Ashley said. That, she said, "is where it all started happening."

Deciding to move abroad proved to be the easiest part. The couple quickly learned about the trials of purchasing land in Italy, with broken deals and red tape for weeks to follow. Eventually, they found the 300 year-old farmhouse named Ca'Camone in the town of Piobbico, and signed a six-year lease on the spot.

"We met this guy [at La Tavola Marche] and walked around the house for 20 minutes. We just got this feeling," Jason said. "We signed at the kitchen table, had a glass of grappa, clinked glasses, shook hands and that was it."

They moved in in 2007, on Christmas Day, and soon realized how hard it would be to maintain a centuries-old building.

"We were supposed to move in on the 20th," Jason recalled. "But when we arrived, the pipes were frozen. The first phrase we learned in Italian was *tubi gelati*, which means frozen pipes."

The Bartners have since learned to embrace their property's idiosyncrasies, and to work with the local community of farmers and agriturismo owners.

"With the locals, you need a key. When you get that key, you open the door to a whole new world," Ashley emphasized.

Although held out as the "American couple" at first, the Bartners were "adopted" by a local couple, the Gaggis, and quickly embraced the Marchegiano lifestyle. From traditional holiday celebrations to the regional foods, they've reveled in the change of pace. They've also enjoyed quick fame: *Budget Travel* magazine featured Tavola Marche as one of eight top cooking schools worldwide "worth their salt," and a correspondent from the *Telegraph* of London visited.

THE BIG SHIFT

The couple met at university in 1998, and bonded over food, culture and a hunger for life. After marrying in April 2006, they settled in New York City, where Jason attended the French Culinary Institute, and Ashley pursued acting.

Jason's love for food developed when he was a child, during Sundays of watching football and cooking with his father. After working in several high-end restaurants in New York and San Francisco, he wanted to explore a more authentic approach to cooking.

"Cooking in New York was all about how

many crazy things you can put on a plate... here [at La Tavola Marche] it's about the freshest possible ingredients you can find, and doing the least you can to them."

They grow zucchini, alfalfa, garlic and peaches, and plan to start raising livestock. Jason's cooking classes are thriving; the couple hopes to inspire more tourists to bring the regional cuisine and sustainable lifestyle back home.

While Jason maintains the kitchen, Ashley tests her acting chops with the guests. Hosting comes naturally to the former theater major.

"You are still telling a story being with guests; you're still putting on a show each night," she said. "I tell Jason all the time to 'work the room.'"

A HOME IN THE COUNTRY

Lush vegetation, colorful blooms and rustic stone facades spread over a scenic 500 acres. The five private apartments, all named

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A COOKING CLASS AT TAVOLA MARCHE

Cooking classes at La Tavola Marche are meant to be an intimate experience, dictated by the desires of the guest.

"What is it that you would like to walk away with?" Jason will ask. "A once-in-a-lifetime experience, or something you recreate once you have returned home?"

"I have learned from Jason the things I can be creative with and the recipes that I should be following closely, said former culinary student Tanja Maduzia. "When I went home, I took the techniques I learned from Jason with me." The apple cake and lentil salad recipes she learned are now staples in her kitchen.

The goal is to illustrate the simplicity of Italian cooking, using the highest quality ingredients to create dishes that reflect

cucina povera -- the rural, peasant style Le Marche is known for.

Classes are typically kept to six guests. They generally begin with a visit to local farms and markets, and if a neighbor drops by with a leg of veal, that is what is on the menu that evening. Then they move into the kitchen or the outdoor woodburning oven for the cooking lessons.

The most rewarding moment of the day comes at the end of class, as students and guests join in fellowship over a delicious, authentic meal.

"We do it all from antipasto to dolce, three hours and it's so simple," Jason said. It doesn't have to be complicated to be great."
- Heather Anderson

Fungus Fever

Truffles evoke exoticism, luxury and la dolce vita. The reality is a little different.

BY KATIE SUAREZ



Although there is not much a chef can do with a truffle besides shave it over pasta, or cook it in a frittata, something about that elusive fungus can transform a dish. Foodies ache for its potent scent and taste, and restaurateurs are ready to pay whatever they can for the best.

In Le Marche, one can jump from the role of truffle-lover to truffle-hunter in a single day. Several agriturismo offer truffle-hunting as an activity for their guests. Le Marche Holiday is one of these: owner Moreno Moretti, a farmer, makes his living from truffle-hunting when he isn't taking out clients.

Moretti, 23, is a Marche native who has hunted for truffles since going out with his father and grandfather as a young boy. On a typical day trip, a visitor would first stop by his farm in Comunanza to pick up fresh asparagus and eggs for that evening's cooking lesson. Then they'll travel to his friend Paolo Cicciole's agriturismo in neighboring Force, where the hunt for truffles begins.

HOW TO FIND TRUFFLES

Up to eight clients at a time venture out with Moreno, Paolo and Moreno's truffle-hunting dog, through the woodlands surrounding Paolo's property. The dog runs around desperately, hunting for the truffle scent. Once he finds a truffle, the dog barks and prances above his new treat. Moreno helps dig out the hidden treasure.

The truffles Moreno finds generally weigh

200-250 grams, or about half a pound. White truffles tend to be larger than the black summer truffle. "It's very easy to find a white truffle that is 400-450 grams [about a pound]," said Moreno.

Usually clients will be out hunting for truffles for about 25 to 40 minutes before finding some to bring back to the cooking lesson.

"We teach the client an easy recipe for when the client goes back home," said Moreno, his green eyes widening with excitement.

One of Moreno's favorite recipes is a truffle frittata. It's simple to master - but one must place egg and truffle together for six days

before cooking, so the egg will soak up the flavor and aroma of the truffle.

Not many other agriturismo offer truffle hunting near Comunanza.

"I was the first to organize this activity," stated Moreno. "Many agriturismo in this area don't understand the power of tourism."

La Tavola Marche in Piobbico, about 40 kilometers (25 miles) away, also offers truffle hunting [see related article on page 21]. American owners Jason and Ashley Bartner will take a maximum of two clients out on a truffle hunt with their neighbor on La Tavola Marche's property. This neighbor is a genuine truffle hunter, who speaks neither English nor classical Italian --- he speaks only in the Marche dialect. When they return, Jason, a former New York City chef, will give them a cooking lesson using the truffles they've found.

Despite most foodies' love for truffles, it's not Jason's preferred ingredient.

"Jason will cook with truffle on request, but it's not his favorite product to cook with," said Ashley a cheerful, lanky brunette. "There isn't much you can do with a truffle other than shaving off a little bit on top of pasta, and he likes doing things that people can do at home."

THE ACQUALAGNA LINK

The value of truffles makes truffle-hunting less of a tourist activity and more a way of life. Acqualagna, population 4,400, is the truffle's home base. Most residents make their living from the truffle trade - whether

in hunting or packaging, or creating and commercializing truffle products.

Some 700 to 800 residents are truffle hunters, according to Bruno Capanna, who served as Acqualagna's mayor from 1999 to 2009.

Acqualagna has three major fairs, where tourists, truffle-sellers and aficionados can meet.

There's the National Fair of the White Truffle, in October and November. The white truffle is the most precious of the three types of truffles, as it can only be found in Italy and on the peninsula of Istria, shared by Croatia, Slovenia and Italy, Capanna said.

The second most valuable is the black truffle, found in winter. The fair for this truffle is the penultimate Sunday in February.

The least valuable truffle is the black summer

The sudden death of a successful truffle-hunting dog is not unheard of. "People are very jealous, and will kill the dogs," truffle hunter Moreno Moretti said.



Photo By Katie Suarez

truffle, because it is the most common, and the easiest to find. The regional fair for the black summer truffle takes place in mid-August. The black summer truffle also known as the scorzone; it is in season from May 1 through December 31.

Hunters set their truffle prices based on availability, the weather and the size of the truffle.

The prized white truffle can sell for 2,500 to 7,000 euros a kilo (about \$1,420 to \$4,000 per pound), Capanna explained. The precious black truffle ranges from 1,000 to 2,000 euro per kilo (\$570 to \$1,140 per pound) and the black summer truffle from 200 to 800 euro per kilo (about \$114 to \$450 per pound), he said.

With such revenues, envy among truffle hunters runs high.

"People envy each other's land and people's dogs," explained Moreno. "People are very jealous, and will kill the dogs."

"It's a horrible thing, but it is common," Capanna acknowledged, his excitement over the topic of truffles ebbing for a moment. "It is more common in new places where they are just beginning to find truffles."

Killing a truffle-hunter's dog may seem strange, but the dog plays an integral part in the truffle hunt. Any type of dog can be used, but Moreno prefers to work with mutts. Though pure breeds are smarter, in his opinion, he thinks mutts are more apt to learn, and thus easier to train.

Dogs are taught as puppies to search for the truffle, and to distinguish the scents of the various truffles.

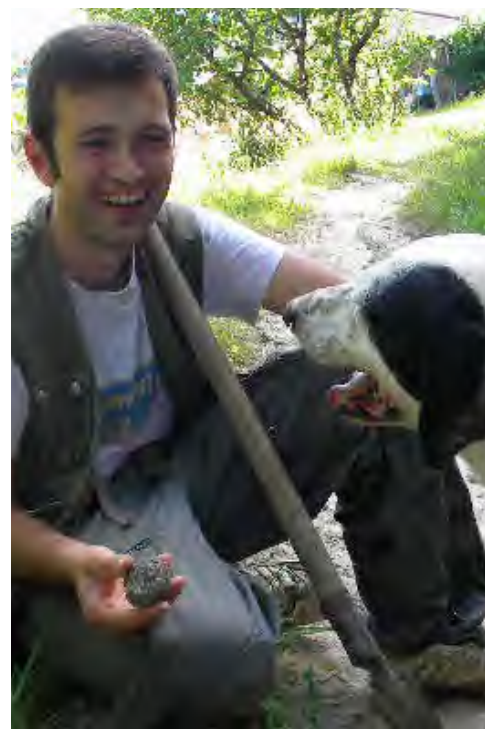
"I taught my dog when he was a puppy, just one or two months old," Moreno said.

"The price depends on the season, it depends on the weather," he said. "If it rains for a week, the price will go up."

When it rains, it's difficult for the dogs to smell the truffles. Yet the more rain and snow the soil receives during the year, the better: the water enriches the soil and helps develop better-tasting truffles.

Hunters set their own prices. Some hunters work with individual truffle-sellers. Truffles are sold in a variety of places, including the fairs in Acqualagna, and at the Salone del Gusto, an annual fair in the north of Italy where farmers and workers in the Slow Food movement show off their products, and owners of enotecas, restaurants, and other shops come to buy them. Some truffle

Moreno Moretti



hunters, like Moreno, export their products on their own.

Moreno and Paolo sell their truffles to establishments in London, mainly supplying the restaurants of Jamie Oliver.

The main consumers of truffles come from Germany, Holland, Belgium, France, Canada and the United States. Products are also sold locally, and in *enotecas* and in restaurants around the country.

Casa del Formaggio di Bussu, an enoteca near Urbino owned by Luciano Bussu, sells a variety of truffle products, including white truffle oil, black summer truffle cream, butter with truffle, cream of porcini mushrooms with truffle, truffle sauce, and the whole summer truffle.

Bussu buys products from a sales representative, called a "presenter," about twice a week. The presenter comes from Acqualagna, and buys his products from a man who works directly with the truffle hunters.

BECOMING A TRUFFLE HUNTER

Anyone can become a truffle hunter. One is required only to take ten lessons, to learn the history of truffles and to observe some safety regulations. Then a license is issued.

"The hunters aren't professionals," explained Capanna. "This isn't a professional field."

Even so, as in many other Italian fields, the practice of truffle-hunting has been passed down from generation to generation.

Said Moreno with a shrug, "It's a tradition." ❖

A Restaurant Worth Crowing About

The menu never changes at Ciacci – and that’s just the way people like it

BY HEATHER ANDERSON

Find Ristorante da Ciacci on the road from Urbino to Pesaro, in the sleepy hamlet of Gallo.

Everyone knows it: the restaurant has been a Gallo fixture for over a hundred years, and in the Ciacci family for three generations. It is now run by Antonella Ciacci, and her sisters Carmen and Emanuela. Antonella learned the recipes in the kitchens of her grandmother and mother, and that authenticity is apparent in the restaurant’s delicious dishes and home-style service.

Famously, the menu never changes.

For antipasto, guests sit down to plates piled high with prosciutto and salami Bresato, knots of fresh mozzarella and soft ricotta. *Pecorino con tartufo*, a hard cheese studded with delicate nodes of the exquisite truffles of the region, shares a plate with *casciotta di Urbino*, a soft cheese made of sheep and cow’s milk, and the balanced, earthy cheese *bianco sardo*.

Carafes of local vino rosso and vino bianco are brought immediately to the table, and once empty are quickly replaced with full ones.

The *primo piatto*, or first course, consists of rice and homemade pastas. There’s a flavorful *tortellini in brodo*, the ultimate Italian comfort food. Risotto with vegetables, the local breadcrumb pasta *passatelli* and incredible lasagna make it hard to save room for *secondo*, the second course. But the *carne a la brace* – grilled beef -- is more than worth the wait. This tender dish is a house specialty.

Choosing a desert is close to impossible, so order an array for your group.

No bill comes to your table. You go to the cash register, where the attendant tots up your per-person tab based on some mysterious kitchen calculus. On the two occasions IeiMedia groups visited, our tabs came to 18 euros and 25 euros, the second time after we’d indulged in secondo.

Ciacci dinners can last for hours. Lunch service tends to be much faster, to accommodate local professionals. For the full Ciacci experience, visit for Saturday or Sunday lunch. This is when the locals come to celebrate birthdays and communions, and to spend time with family and friends.

When the Ciaccis moved the restaurant into a refurbished, larger space nine years ago, the first guests, in a kind of wry joke, brought hospitality gifts of ceramic plates painted with roosters (*gallo* means rooster in Italian). Over the years, the gifts kept coming, and now the restaurant is bursting with rooster kitsch: figurines, paintings, plates. These tokens of appreciation from Ciacci’s doting clientele give the restaurant an intimate, comfortable feel.

There’s also an attached inn, the three-star Locanda da Ciacci -- so if you were feeling sleepy after such a sumptuous meal, you could stay the night. ❖

RISTORANTE LOCANDA DA CIACCI

Via Roma 152, Gallo di Petriano
(12 kilometers/7.5 miles) from Urbino.
Tel: 0722-355.030
www.locandaciacci.it
info@locandaciacci.it
Reservationsforrestaurantorhotel: e-mail:
book@locandaciacci.it

From Functionary to Foodie

Cagli office worker dumps documents for love affair with coffee and cheese

BY HEATHER ANDERSON

After 20 years of working in the office of a Cagli notary, Maria Anrichetta “Keki” Pompili opened the food shop and café Alimentare, fulfilling a long-held dream.

She embarked on her new adventure at age 40, “for my own good health,” she said, changing her focus from wills and contracts to the health and enjoyment of her new customers. Her lifelong interest in nutrition and healthy eating prompts her to choose the foods and products she sells carefully, giving her clients natural, fresh options.

Her level of commitment to excellence is unusual. She enrolled in classes to master the products she sold: three months of study on the complexities of wine. Another three devoted to cheese. She visited experts in nearby Fano to better understand oils, and traveled to Trieste, to renowned coffee

purveyor Illy’s Università de Caffè, to earn a master’s degree in coffee.

“It’s not necessary to take the courses to sell the products, but I choose to know, to master the products I sell, so I can educate my clients,” she said.

Sharing her knowledge with her customers is one of her greatest passions. She’s made the list of stops recommended by Classic Cycling, a company in nearby Fano that organizes biking trips around Le Marche. The cyclists come to her shop for lunch and coffee, and Pompili talks to them about the foods and wine of the region, and about seasonal eating.

“When I say, ‘you eat peaches in the summer, and not in the winter,’ and ‘tomatoes in the summer, and not in December,’ [people] are surprised,” she said. “Americans have a

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Photo By Heather Anderson

How WalkScore Flubbed Urbino

Not “car-dependent,” but supremely walkable

BY DAVID HARTMAN

WalkScore, a jazzy pro-smart growth tool to gauge a city’s “walkability,” is wildly inaccurate in its read on Urbino, the small Renaissance city where we stayed while studying journalism and producing this magazine.

According to WalkScore (<http://www.walkscore.com>), the nearest supermarket is 24 km (15 miles) away, and the closest bookstore more than 30 km (18.6 miles) away. Nor should we easily have been able to pick up urgent medication, according to this rating tool, which claims that the closest pharmacy is nearly 29 km (18 miles) down the highway.

Yet this city of 15,000 in fact has half a dozen groceries within walking distance of the center of town; two American-style supermarkets; several well-equipped pharmacies and at least three centrally located bookstores.

These inaccuracies leave Urbino with an unjust rating of 46 out of 100, or “car dependent” – which WalkScore defines as “a few amenities within walking distance.”

What gives?

Evidently the problem is

that WalkScore draws its amenity listings from Google Maps, which tends to skip places that lack websites, and discourages non-owners of those businesses from entering location data (info tends to mainly be in English, as well). In highly wired and linked in United States, most business are listed – and therefore, these scores are more accurate.

Simply put, few of Urbino’s everyday businesses are accounted for.

Rather, Google Earth suggests that the city is filled only with hotels and restaurants.

The movie theater makes the list, and so does Il Cortegiano, the pretty restaurant where we had our goodbye dinner. The Ducal Palace is there, and so is city hall. But our local supermarket isn’t. And where are all the gelaterias?

To remedy this injustice, I set out to give Urbino my own WalkScore. I’ve dubbed mine “TourTally.”

Any visitor to Urbino will quickly notice that college students, the elderly and families all

cruise around town on foot. Visitors arriving by bus will be dropped off at the Borgo Mercatale, a large square at the foot of the city center (WalkScore also fails to take note of Urbino’s direct bus lines to other towns, and to the train station).

A quick 300-yard walk up Via Giuseppe Mazzini brings you to the Piazza Della Repubblica, a large square with a few hundred seats for the plentiful outdoor cafes.

Head north on Via Raffaello and you’ll pass a small supermarket, the Casa Natale di Raffaello (the birthplace of the painter Raphael, complete with museum and gift shop) and eventually reach Monumento a Raffaello, a gorgeous statue inside of a park with views of the countryside. Another hundred yards up a modest incline is the Fortezza Alborno, a public park that overlooks the city and provides for some great photo-ops or a nice opportunity for a picnic (Helllooooo, Walkscore, with your claim that the nearest public park is 2 km -- 1.25 miles -- away!)

A warning: since the city is perched in the mountains of central east Italy, there are many steep hills that

those with knee or back problems may have a hard time navigating. (Topography doesn’t seem to be factored into WalkScore’s calculations, either.) On a recent hike up one hill, I saw a mother trying to coax her two young sons off of a stoop; they clearly did not appreciate the concept of building a city to conform to such a rugged landscape. Some of the steeper hills include Via Raffaello and Via Mazzini; Via Vittorio Veneto also rises but much slower than the first two.

So quality walking shoes are recommended. The local women have mastered traversing the cobblestoned streets in six-inch heels, but this must have taken years of practice.

Travelers of any age should be able to reach all of Urbino’s points of interest on foot.

Readers thinking that a 21-year-old writer in good shape might not have the best idea of walkability need not worry: I’ve also seen a spry woman 86 years young cruise around the city with ease.

My conclusion? On a scale of one to 100,

Urbino deserves a TourTally rating of 85.

Virtually everything can be found inside the majestic city walls within 15 minutes walk from the center of town -- but after a long day of walking, the soreness in your calves and quadriceps will certainly remind you of the steepness of the ground you’ve covered. ❖

SPRING.. CRESCIA TIME

After 40 long days of prayer, solemnity and misty fog, Marche revives on Easter Sunday, with feasts, festivals, and *crescia di pasqua*, a characteristic regional bread traditionally produced around Easter. Families gather for celebratory dinners throughout Holy Week. One unusual celebration is the *Palio della Rana*, a large wheelbarrow race involving frogs in Fermignano, on the Sunday after Easter. The town began the palio as a celebration of its independence from the Duke of Montefeltro in 1607, and it features lords and ladies in medieval costume reenacting the original celebration.

In the countryside, you’ll see people wandering across the fields, picking the wild herbs that still play a part in the local diet. Dandelions and poppies may be eaten raw in salads, or boiled and then sautéed in olive oil and garlic, then dressed with lemon.

In a region where vineyards stretch across rolling hills, wine tours run nearly year round. But they should be easier to book now, before the busy mid-spring through summer season. By touring vineyards in early spring, you’ll beat the crowds. The *visciolino* is a special cherry wine produced in Pergola, a favorite of residents and visitors alike.

Late April brings the wonderful Slow Food-supported *Distinti Salumi* festival in Cagli, where purveyors from around Italy are invited to show off their salumeria. Pigs are traditionally killed and cured in January; by now the products are ready to eat <http://www.distintisalumi.com/>

In the elegant seaside community of Fano, there’s always a festival devoted to yachting <http://www.fanoyachtfestival.it/>

Biking season is beginning, too; Marche’s undulating terrain and quiet roads make this a hospitable region for riding. Though bike rentals can be hard to come by, the region means to encourage bike tourism, and cycling holiday groups and clubs are springing up <http://www.turismo.marche.it/>

The *Giro d’Italia*, in May, usually rides through Marche. Expect *Giro* 2011 to be especially elaborate, since it will commemorate Italy’s 150th year as a country. Oddly, there’s been talk of a kickoff in the United States. –Heather Doyle



Photo By Dario Bigongiari

Party's Over

With nearly 30 percent of Italy's young people unemployed, the future looks frightening for Urbino's college grads

BY HEATHER DOYLE

It's June, and all around Urbino, gaggles of new college graduates are celebrating. Heads are crowned with laurel wreaths; hands clasp bouquets. Cameras click and corks pop. But many are also bracing for a letdown. Statistically, only two thirds of these new grads are likely to find jobs soon.

The global economic crisis has hit young Italians especially hard: people age 15-24 face an unemployment rate of nearly 30%, the highest level in six years.

Some send resume after resume to companies already full of workers. But many choose to stay home with their parents, since that's easier than finding the self-supporting work that would allow them to move out.

"Who wouldn't want that? You don't have to pay to live at home, and you are cleaned up after and cooked for. It's perfect -- until you get stuck," said Elena Garbugli, a recent foreign language and literature graduate of the University of Urbino.

"There are two kinds of people, I think,"

said Garbugli, who at this writing had been searching for a job for several months. "The people who can leave home but don't want to because it is comfortable, and the people who want to go but they can't."

The result: many jobless young people stay home with their parents for years.

Garbugli also finds potential employers unrealistically demanding.

"Some could (leave home), but stay because it is easier, while others really wish to leave but can't because they can't support themselves."

—Recent University of Urbino graduate Elena Garbugli

"They are too picky!" said Garbugli, who speaks English, Spanish and French.

"I sent [resumes] to 10 enterprises and I heard nothing. I studied to be an interpreter, to use the languages that I learned ... but they don't want me. It is very difficult. They want experts who have worked before."

It's a familiar Catch-22, the world over: recent grads are told they lack the experience for the jobs they're applying for. But they can't get that experience, because no one will hire them.

"Young unemployed people are the problem now," agreed Stefano Raia, head of the Urbino office of the employment service Job – Centro. Almost half of the nearly 3,400 Job – Centro users in 2008-2009 were between the ages of 20 and 34. It's an issue around the Mediterranean, Raia noted, especially in countries like Spain and Greece, where young people also face record unemployment rates.

"The biggest problem for us here is to get jobs for people who have never worked before. They stay at home waiting for the job, not a job."

Establishments like Job – Centro have been trying to bridge the gap between experienced and inexperienced workers. The center focuses on searching for and maintaining employment. But the center doesn't actually place people in jobs, to the dismay of those who walk through its doors. Rather, it offers the unemployed help in learning to find and keep jobs.

"We find them [the unemployed] the jobs," Raia said. "However, it is up to them to [seal the deal], which is not what they were expecting when they walked in here."

The first level offers basic job-matching

services, market information and training, and forwards potential offers to work in other European countries. Next, job seekers are given vocational counseling and job training. The center also offers placement for those who are physically or mentally disabled.

Offices in Urbino, Fano and Pesaro have created an experimental "video curriculum," which Raia called the first of its kind in Italy. Job-seekers were taught to make a two to five-minute video resume, stating their names, credentials, hobbies, and contact information on camera.

The video program ran from January to June in 2010, but now is on hiatus, while the effectiveness of the program is evaluated. Raia has high hopes for it, though, as it offers employers a kind of information about a candidate they wouldn't get by just reading a resume.

"In Italy, it is all about the person, not just the credentials," Raia specified, stressing the importance of an interview.

The emphasis on face-to-face contact also appears to work against women. The pattern in Italy is that if a man and woman with equal credentials apply for the same job, the man tends to be hired, those interviewed suggested. Women who use the center tend to have better credentials than men: 65% of men surveyed had achieved only a middle school education, compared to 52% of women. Women were twice as likely to have a university degree. And although 202 women clients were first time job seekers, compared to 69 men, 1,668 women had previous work experience, while only 714 men did.

*"They stay at home waiting for the job, not a job."
— Urbino employment center chief Stefano Raia*

Garbugli said a reform of university education several years ago also seemed to be confusing potential employers.

Students used to study for five years for their degree. Then the five-year degree was condensed into three years, and if a student chose, he or she could obtain a higher, more specialized degree by studying for another two years.

"The new three year degree is exactly like the old five year degree -- exactly the same!" Garbugli said. "But when you try to tell [employers] that, they say 'no, no, you need a five year degree.' It is exhausting."

Garbugli came to believe that the language studies department didn't structure her program advantageously, to help its students get jobs upon graduation, as the education program does, by offering student teaching, and the law program does, with legal internships.

She'd expected to easily find a job near Urbino, or abroad.

"I could have studied something I didn't like, like economics, and get a job, but be miserable," she said. "A lot of people I know did that and they talked about how much they hated it. But I don't want to do that! I wanted to do something I loved." She hoped a career in languages would lead her to a job in which she could travel.

"I want to get out of Urbino," she said of her hometown. "It's so small, and I have been here my whole life." Though it's a hotspot for art and Renaissance history, for its residents, it is still a small Italian hill town.

"You can study at a university and learn all about a field, but if there is no practical education, it does not help," she said. "You need more than just theory in the classroom." ♦





Flower Fest

Castelraimondo's Infiorata celebrates Christ and spring

STORY BY KATIE SUAREZ / PHOTOS BY RENAE BLUM

A sea of cherry red, lipstick fuchsia, deep green and turquoise blue flower petals peppered the road, swirling into shapes of doves, roses, angels, crosses and other religious images.

It was an unusually lively Sunday, as locals and visitors strolled down the Corso Italia to reach Castelraimondo's 18th Corpus Domini Infiorata, an annual celebration of the Christian belief of Jesus Christ's ascension into heaven after his resurrection.

The festival falls 60 days after Easter, and Castelraimondo, a village of 4,500, puts on one of the region's most elaborate celebrations.

Each rectangular frame of flower petals is meant to cover the host representing the body of Christ. In 2010, 21 groups of Castelraimondo residents composed works of flower art.

"It's a religious festival, so there is really no rivalry between the groups," said Giovanni Pediconi, a jovial middle-aged Castelraimondo native who has volunteered at the Infiorata every year since the town began hosting it. People begin assembling the displays at about 9 p.m. the Saturday night before, he said, and the groups help one another.

Pediconi was hard at work in the heat of the midday Mediterranean sun as he briskly walked along the road, freshening the flowers with spritzer.

"We began at 9:30 pm and didn't finish until 4:30 in the morning," said resident Alberto Boldrini, crouching beside a display he helped design with other residents, called "The Passion of Christ." His piece depicted Jesus Christ encircled by rays of light.

Pediconi was still perfecting the display at

noon. He was tired but cheerful as his young daughter bounced around him, sprinkling petals over the work. She filled in the pale peach petals making up the body of Jesus, and deep red petals on the rose.

Not everyone was working. Visitors snapped photos, ate the town's famous gelato or simply enjoyed time with family and friends. Children ran around with balloons, and played on the bumper car game.

The main event is a mass, which that year was celebrated at the nearby Church of the Sacred Family. The local clergy parades down the Corso Italia, stepping atop the flower art while holding the host that represents the body of Christ. Once midnight strikes, the solemn procession ends, as fireworks pop above Piazza della Repubblica.

All kinds of flowers are used, including some wildflowers picked along the road. The entire festival, Boldrini said, cost about \$31,000. Half of the funds are procured by the town government, and the rest from local merchants and other residents.

More tourists were seen in town this year, including a group of a hundred tourists from San Marino, said a woman manning the information booth.

"It's marvelous," whispered Giovanna Moci, a shy middle-aged woman who's lived in Castelraimondo all her life. "The patience, the details, and the technical advances that have been made over the year." ❖

Castelraimondo's Infiorata takes place 60 days after Easter Sunday. For more info: http://www.infiorata.info/infiorata_castelraimondo.htm and <http://www.comune.castelraimondo.mc.it/?p=1208>

Jazzing it Up in Fano

A seaside festival in a pretty port town comes into its own

BY DAVID HARTMAN

Some of the world's top jazz talent converges on the busy Adriatic port town of Fano each July, a manifestation of this region's growing interest in jazz.

Musicians play on a stage erected by the sea, and in a 16th century open-air theater.

The festival, Fano Jazz by the Sea, was established in 1993, a riff on the successful Umbria Jazz Festival, said Adrianno Pedini, art director of the organizing group, the Fano Jazz Network. In July 2010, additional performances were to be held at a villa in nearby Pesaro, and at the majestic Furlo Gorge State Nature Reserve.

The festival has expanded over the years, with the rising support of Fano's municipal government.

Marcus Miller, a renowned U.S. bassist, was scheduled to perform in 2010, along with musicians from Panama, Argentina, Italy, the Ivory Coast and Turkey.

"Even though they don't speak the same language, it doesn't mean they can't understand one another when they play jazz," Pedini said.

"Even with a language barrier, they all know the album 'My Favorite Things' by John Coltrane," Pedini continued. "It's important to promote [other] musicians, not just [those] from the U.S."

Small groups of German and Dutch fans have joined the mainly Italian audiences in recent years.

"It naturally promotes tourism and the visibility of Fano, and brings nice publicity to the city and region," Pedini said. But he

emphasized that there was something more important at stake.

"The bigger aim of Fano Jazz is to attract young people and let them know about jazz. They listen to commercial music; we want to let them know about music with a lot of values."

Pedini rifled through meticulously-organized cartons filled with copies of Downbeat, the main magazine of the jazz industry, searching for a profile written about the festival some years ago. Dozens of post-it notes peeked out from the pages. But he soon gave up.

The jazz network also supports concerts throughout Le Marche, and organizes

"Even though they don't speak the same language, it doesn't mean they can't understand one another when they play jazz." -- Adrianno Pedini

"Adriatic Jazz Bridge," which brings Croatian musicians to Italy, and sends Italians to Croatia.

Pedini dreams of creating a university of modern music, like the Berklee College of Music in Boston.

"Creating the university of music will help people understand jazz," he said. He lamented that all of the festivals and concerts make young people enthusiastic about learning to play -- but that there's no university program nearby to help them develop their talents.

IN URBINO TOO

Urbino has a tiny jazz scene, too. The Associazione Culturale Liceo, a regional music school, ran a small workshop in

the spring and summer of 2010. No jazz aficionado would mistake their concert for a night at the Village Vanguard, but it was certainly a refreshing opportunity to see how an American art form is practiced in this very Italian city.

A seven-man, one-woman band gave a recital as a capstone to a three-month workshop. A bassist, three pianists, three guitarists and a drummer played classic jazz tunes for an audience the size of the band.

School director Augusta Sammarini called the program "an experiment with jazz," and added that, although jazz instructor Lorenzo Ugolini did an admirable job, the course could improve.

Next year it will split into beginner and advanced levels. Semmerini said she was working with the University of Urbino to make jazz courses available to university students there next year.

The parts clearly hadn't completely coalesced -- each song was interspersed with a two-minute discussion about which song to play next, as members fiddled with their instruments, giving the evening a classroom-like vibe.

But the band was astonishingly polished, after just three months of practice. Despite the makeshift studio and haphazard assortment of audio equipment -- the members had evidently scrounged whatever amps or instruments they owned or could borrow -- their passion for jazz was audible in their songs and visible on their faces. ♦

New Wave Folkies Star at Urbino Student Fest

Nidi D'Arac, a new wave folk band from Puglia, starred at the University of Urbino's three-night student music festival, the *Festa dello Studente*, in June 2010. The festival is staged each June, to introduce Italians to emerging musicians.

Photos by Scott Burry



Pergola: A Small Town's Big-Time Glories

See a family of jealously-guarded bronze statues, and sample a famous sweet cherry wine

BY HANNAH NUSSER

In 1946, Giuseppe and Pietro Puzzini were digging in their garden in the Pergola hamlet of Cartoceto when they unearthed what is now considered the most significant bronze discovery of the 20th century. They'd found the Bronzi Dorati, four statues believed to represent a Roman family, with Emperor Marcus Aurelius at its head.

Historians debate whether the statues were made during the first century B.C. or in A.D., said historian Rita Fratini, who is also a guide at Pergola's Museo dei Bronzi Dorati, which houses the famous figures.

"It's a significant discovery because it's a *group* of bronzes – usually Marcus Aurelius was [depicted] by himself," explained Fratini. "I believe Marcus Aurelius was the father, because of the way the head of the woman is turned."

The statues were restored in nearby Ancona, and have since been exhibited in museums throughout Italy. Pergola and Ancona wrangled for years over ownership rights. Pergola finally triumphed in 1987, and today the larger-than-life statues are visited by up to 1,500 people per month, and closely guarded by museum staff. The figures preside over their own quiet corner of the museum, behind closed wooden doors in a temperature-controlled environment, to protect them from discoloration and other imperfections.

"Pergola is famous for other things, but this is the main attraction, because it's the biggest discovery of the Roman period during the 20th century," Fratini said. "This is an important discovery for art worldwide."

Underscoring the city's dedication to promoting local treasures, the museum also features the work of Pergola and Marche regional artists. Visitors can see ancient paintings and coins, and tour a

contemporary art section.

Pergola is in the mountains, but the town is flat, so bicycles are a popular form of transportation.

VISNER AND TRUFFLES

Pergola is also home to several famous food traditions, such as production of the cherry wine *visner*, and the creation of truffle dishes that attract tourists from around the world.

The people of Pergola have been making *visner* since 1234, according to enoteca owner Secondo Balducci Lazzari. Traditionally served with dessert because of its sweetness, *visner* is made by mixing red wine with sugar and visciole cherries. The smaller, sweeter visciole packs an extra punch.

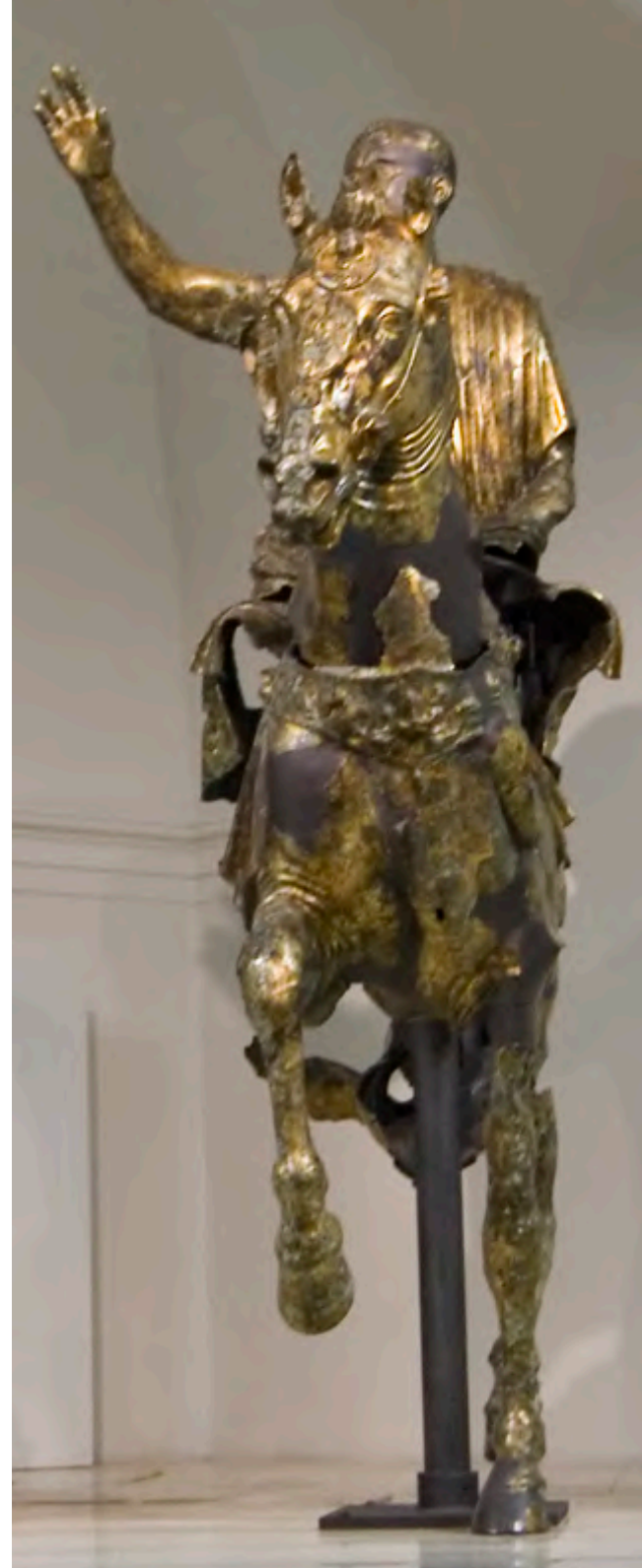
Its method of production leaves it with a low alcohol content, so *visner* is technically considered a cherry drink rather than a wine, Lazzari said. It is fermented for only 40 days. Made exclusively by a small number of Pergola wine producers, the recipes vary.

Angeli del Borgo Bed and Breakfast regularly hosts tourists, especially from Germany, Holland and Italy, who ask to try Pergola wines and dishes, said Ticchi Stefano, owner of the B&B.

"I like wines of Pergola, and I am very proud of them," Ticchi said. "More importantly, the tourists really like this wine, and if they like it, it must mean it's really good."

Pergola menus often feature truffles. Tagliatelle with truffles is a typical, and wildly-popular, Pergola dish.

"It's good to see the tourists communicating with the people of Pergola," Ticchi said. "They really want to submerge themselves in Pergola culture." ❖



MUSEO DEI BRONZI DORATI

For a glimpse at the four famous statues, restored to reveal their brilliant bronze, visit this museum, on Largo San Giacomo, Pergola.

Hours: July and August: Open daily, 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., and 3:30 pm – 6:00 pm

All other months: 10:00 am – 12:30 pm; 3:30 pm – 6:30 pm (closed Monday)

Admission: 6 euro; child, senior citizen and group discounts available.

HOTELS & RESTAURANTS

Il Giardino Bed & Breakfast is 200 meters from Pergola's center, on Viale Marconi 21.

www.ilgiardinobb.it

Angeli del Borgo Bed & Breakfast, Piazza Garibaldi, 12, serves both locals and visitors. A pizzeria and restaurant are located downstairs. www.angelidelborgo.it

DIRECTIONS TO PERGOLA

From major cities, take a train to Pesaro, then the Adriabus to Pergola. From Urbino, take the Adriabus, and change buses in Fossombrone for Pergola.



The Simple Life in Pesaro

STORY BY GIACOMO

MANISCALCO / PHOTOS BY

SCOTT BURRY

Drive along Italy's speedy highways or hop a cheap and generally efficient train for a three-hour detour to a simple town called Pesaro, place of my birth, and my childhood home.

I call Pesaro "simple" -- though fun, perfect, cheap, pretty and, at times, exciting, surely apply as well.

It is summer vacation, free time in hot weather. This brings us to the heart and soul of Pesaro life, the beach. Though lacking coral reefs and crystal clear water, the inhabitants just love relaxing by the comfortable warm waters of their petite sea. In fact, during the summer, the beach is a way of life and there are multiple ways to experience it. Pick a section and rent a big umbrella (at a manageable price) for a day, a week, a month, as long as you wish.

Now the fun can begin. No snorkeling, no surfing, no cliff diving -- that is not what we are about at Pesaro beach. Sure, if you so wish, you can rent jet skis or kite surf, but in truth, you ought to be here to soak up the sun, to step into the water, to swim a little, and to enjoy all the comforts at hand.

As lunchtime approaches, there is no reason to worry, as the coast is enclosed by friendly little locales that will gladly supply you with any sort of sandwich. But what you really want to try is a serving of *piadina*. Though

not even the most exquisite of word choices will do this wondrous entity its due justice, *piadina* could best be described as a flat but wholesome bread with which you can envelop slices of *prosciutto*, *mozzarella*, tomatoes, sausages, salame or countless other succulent items generally covered a by *stracchino*, a white cheese typical of this area.

After your meal you are nearly obligated to grab a real Italian espresso before making your way back to the hot sand. And the time to rest your palate has not come just yet. Sit back under your beach umbrella and patiently wait, soon enough Maria is bound to come around. You can hear

*No snorkeling, no surfing, no cliff diving
-- that is not what we are about at Pesaro beach.*

her coming from far away, accompanied by her son, Roberto. They make their way up and down the Pesaro coast all summer long selling bombolone. This is the perfect desert: saccharine dough wrapped around soft custard. Maria is the third grandmother to every little kid on Pesaro beach, they all love her, and she loves all of them, even the 50-year-old ones. In fact after your purchase, regardless of your age, size, background and, most importantly, appearance, she will reply: "*grazie, cocco*" which, in English, though desperately losing its poetic power, comes across as something like "Thanks, honey."

CASTLES IN THE SAND

Now the time has come to build an intricate sand castle (though be aware that the all-time

Pesaro beach sand castle record was set by yours truly as part of a seven-man team one summer, with a monstrous construction over 10 feet wide and roughly five feet high), and to defy the Pesaro myth of having to wait three full hours after lunch before reentering the water. But if you get sick, you have no one to blame, they warned you.

In the afternoon the hip young Pesaro boys can prove who's who on the beach volleyball court. Attempt to play if you dare, but be advised that these guys have waited all day for this, and there is no messing around. The "no mercy" rule with the turisti is always in effect. Enjoy the sweetest hours as the sun sets, playing some *biliardino* (foosball), but unless you have extensive foosball experience, do not challenge a local, or head back into the water for a friendly exchange of *battilarde*, a game involving a tennis ball and thick wooden rackets -- "thick" and "wood" being the key words. (Do not be fooled into buying the flimsy plastic ones from the street vendors; they are overpriced and no fun).

While there is nothing quite like taking a soak in the even warmer waters reflecting the moonlight late at night, there are other aspects of Pesaro, and it would be wrong to overlook them.

MUSSELS ON THE BEACH

The second most important time of the day

WEEKEND

Night at the Museum

BY RENAE BLUM

Alexander-Ferruccio Marcucci Pinoli di Valfesina pushes open a door on the first floor of his hotel, which he calls the Hotel Alexander Museum Palace. The only similarity this door has to any ordinary hotel room door is its room number. The rest looks more like a piece of art.

Brass cordons representing a tree branch twist up and down the door, which was decorated by Luisa Valentini. Inside the room, the pattern explodes. Strips of brass arch across the walls, forming an elaborate canopy over the bed. Brass even slithers up the back of a dainty chair, rising toward the ceiling like smoke. Of course this room has a title: "Vento." Wind.

This is the miracle of the Hotel Alexander: 63 rooms designed and installed by 75 different artists, including Enzo Cucci, Simon Benetton and Gio Pomodoro. There's no single theme. Some rooms look festive, incorporating bright colors and loud patterns. Others instill a sense of foreboding, like the door where a man at a computer glares out at the prospective occupant. Domenico Borrelli's "White Room" is an abstract, 3-D exploration of the human form. This is not art that fades politely into the background. It screams its presence, forcing you to reconsider its message even as you're unpacking your suitcase.

Guests in this four-star establishment have included famous singers, artists, politicians and athletes, including Italian motorcycle racer Valentino Rossi.

Though one might also expect one-of-a-kind prices in such a place, a look through the booking engines puts them within ordinary range: a standard room is going for \$213; a "business suite" \$378. You do get to choose your room.

Pinoli modestly tells us during an elegant three-course lunch that Pesaro is the world's most beautiful town, and the Italian people the world's finest artists. Member of a family of art patrons, his attention to detail shows in his selection of a sleek polka-dotted red tie, and in the way he carefully straightens his knife and fork.

Out on the patio, a brooding collection of white-eyed red sculptures that Alexander, himself an artist, has designed, await transport to an exhibition in Rome.

Giovanni Lani, Urbino editor of the local newspaper *Il Resto del Carlino*, tells the group: "He (Pinoli) is an artist, but his art is the vision of a world." ♦

HOTEL ALEXANDER MUSEUM PALACE

Viale Trieste, 20
Pesaro
Tel. 0721-34.441
<http://www.alexandermuseum.it/>
info: alexander@viphotels.it



*A statue designed by Alexander-Ferruccio
Marcucci Pinoli di Valfesina, owner of the
Alexander Museum Palace Hotel.*

(after lunchtime) is quickly approaching: dinnertime.

You can remain in the city and thrive in the languid nightlife. Head back to the shore and stop in any of several restaurants such as Il Moloco, La Botte or any other cozy place you will undoubtedly chance upon, for a fish dinner. Order anything involving the famous Pesaro cozze (mussels) and wash them down with some local white wine -- all this of course while gazing over Pesaro bay.

To a self estimated 80% of the Pesaro community, the idea of getting "too much beach" in one summer day is utterly inconceivable. Yet for an outsider, that possibility might arise.

Once again, there's no reason to fret.

Pass through the historical center of this ancient town, originally called Pisaurum by the Romans, in 184 BC. Stroll through the main square, the Piazza del Popolo, down to the Cathedral, a late Roman construction featuring beautiful mosaics. On your way you will pass the very house where one of the most famous Pesaro inhabitants was born, Gioacchino Rossini, one of the greatest classical composers of the nineteenth century. In Gioacchino's honor, the city of Pesaro has created a characteristic pizza, consisting of a margherita pie topped with hard boiled eggs and mayonnaise. Weird? Definitely. Classy? Not quite, but nonetheless a must-eat during your stay. Any pizzeria will serve you a thin but large and round pie that you are expected to eat unaided.

On your way, you will likely come across several osterie or small taverns where full meals, preferably consisting of a first course of pasta followed by grilled meat, await you. An innovative and inexpensive (\$15 to \$20 should cover two courses, with wine -- red, of course) break offering a small-town feel to a meal hard to find in many of Italy's larger metropolises. A personal favorite is

WEEKEND

the **Osteria dell'Artista**, where Simone, the owner, will be glad to display his miniscule knowledge of the English language with visitors from any part of the world, while serving the food he cooks, with his wife and mother, in the back. Another valid option is **Osteria Pasqualon**, named after a locally-proclaimed poet.

Luckily, whether in the central square or on the coast (just 10 minutes' walk apart) you will have the chance to follow your meal with a cone from one of Germano's gelato parlors, proclaimed by many as *il dolce nettare dei Dei* -- the sweet nectar of the Gods.

But I've saved the ultimate dining option for last.

INTO THE HILLS

You'll want to explore the second beauty of Pesaro, the surrounding hills. If you are feeling frisky, rent a motor scooter

from any of several places along the coast and fly through the cool breeze of the winding roads taking you up to the highest peak in Pesaro. While decisively not mountains, the Pesaro hills will land you in some of the most amazing ancient little hamlets. **Novilara** is perhaps the most famous of these. Watch the sun set over Pesaro as you feast on a rural meat-based dinner (*piadina* is once again strongly suggested) on top of the walls of this Medieval village -- very romantic. The best of these is **Il Giogo**, where again \$15-\$20 should do the trick.

Slightly to the northwest, the hills that surround Pesaro, le colline Marchigiane progressively grow in size and vegetation. **Carpegna** is a small hilltop village 50 miles away, perfect for a camping trip. The scenic drive will take no more than half an hour, but for the athletically inclined, the stretch is perfect for a strenuous yet manageable bike

ride. And the prosciutto production there is not to be neglected -- it's among best in Italy.

History buffs should visit the captivating medieval village of **Gradara**. A tour guide will take you through a real 14th century castle, extremely well kept, representing an important piece of history for Pesaro and the surrounding towns, as three of the most powerful families of Renaissance Italy, the Malatesta, the Sforza and the Della Rovere, made their home there. The Castle of Gradara will also pique the interest of literary types, as it's the setting for the story of Paolo and Francesca, the lovers killed with the same sword stroke by Francesca's jealous husband, and Paolo's older brother, Gioacchino Malatesta. Dante poetically tells their story in "The Divine Comedy."

Heading north straight up the coast (20 minutes by car, 30 minutes by train) you will reach the notorious city of **Rimini**. Rimini's beach does not compare to

Pesaro's. But the main objective is to find suitable night clubs in which to dance away the night to a mix of Italian and foreign dance music. I assure you this will not be an issue. Home to some of the most famous discotheques in Italy, such as Il Bounty, Ecu, Altavista and Paradiso, Rimini has been clubbing central for Italy since the 1970s, and is blossoming to this day.

So there you have it: Pesaro, the little town that quietly stands out: for its famous beach, hills, uncharacteristic devotion to basketball over soccer, superb *piadina* and the longest pizza ever baked (240 meters, or 787 feet). But it's mostly famous for the perfection it represents -- as a quiet break from a hectic vacation. ♦

Pesaro native Giacomo Maniscalco is a journalist in New York City.

HOTEL MAJESTIC

Viale Trieste, 80
Pesaro
Tel: 0721-371900
info@hotelmajesticpesaro.com
http://www.hotelmajesticpesaro.com/

HOTEL SAVOY

Viale della Repubblica, 22
Pesaro
Tel: 0721-33133
http://www.viphotels.it/ita/hotel-pesaro_savoy.asp

ALEXANDER MUSEUM PALACE HOTEL

Viale Trieste 20
http://www.alexandermuseum.it/
Pesaro
Tel: 0721-34441

MOLOCO RISTORANTE PIZZERIA PUB

Calata Caio Duilio - Molo di Levante
Pesaro
Tel: 0721 400395
On the beach. Lunch of two cold antipasti, and first and second courses, for 30 euros.

LA BOTTE S.R.L.

Viale Trieste, 40, Pesaro
Tel: 0721 672111

OSTERIA PASQUALON DI FILIPPUCCI CRISTINA

Via Giordano Bruno, 37
Pesaro
Tel: 0721 371108
Known for delectable beef, the buffet featuring a range of vegetables, and affordable prices. Apx. 20 euro for lunch or dinner.

PASTICCERIA GELATERIA GERMANO

12, via Collenuccio Pandolfo
Pesaro
Tel: 0721 64415



Photo By Scott Burry

Arrivederci, Azzurri!

We loved you anyway

BY HELGA SALINAS

Some mornings, I woke to the sound of the crowd, with their whistles and horns. I remembered my father yelling at the television, hoping that somehow the sound of his voice would push the ball toward the net.

“GOOOOOOOOOOOOOL,” I heard the announcer in my memory say. My father was clapping with contentment.

As a child, it seemed to me that only one man was enjoying this game. But *futbol* is a unifying world sport, and in Urbino during the 2010 World Cup, we saw that power in action.

It was exciting to be in Italy then. I could finally enjoy the full effect of the game —the crowds, the jerseys, the prayers. When people sang their anthem, I only wished I knew it, so I could add to their enthusiasm. Spectators crossed themselves; fell to their knees; clasped their hands together, cheering for their favorite player, booing the opposing team (and the referee!)

Disappointments are hard -- but when the Azzurri scored a goal, it was as if the world was made whole again. The spectators would rise to their feet, and cross themselves again.

How humiliating for Italy, the defending champs, to be knocked out in the first round – and by lowly Slovakia, too!

“SHAME AND TEARS,” the Rome daily *La Repubblica* admonished in its headline the next day. The papers ran long essays comparing the failure of the Azzurri, four-time winners after all, to the financial weakness of the nation. And even though the big screens stayed up, as the games went on for two more excruciating weeks, people didn’t gather, cheer or chant very much. They pretended to be interested in other things. ❖



Photo By Samantha Blee

Bike Race to the Top

BY SAMANTHA BLEE

Urbino's steep streets made a challenging 7th stage finish line for the June 2010 Giro Bio, a bicycle race time trial for riders aged 20 through 27. The race climbed 30 kilometers (18.6 miles) up and down the Le Marche hills, ending near Urbino's iconic Ducal Palace.

It was the GiroBio's first visit to Urbino, and the riders provided an afternoon of entertainment for cheering onlookers lining the barricades. The racers passed at measured intervals, a safety precaution against accidents.

"I could have been better," admitted Marco Pascucci, 23, from nearly Urbana. He'd trained for three months.

The racers competed in nine stages, covering 1,500 kilometers (932 miles) around Italy. The race included 20 Italian teams, and eight from other countries, among them Spain, Brazil and Colombia.

GiroBio Vice President Aldo Pacini hopes the race will bring more attention Le Marche.

"We want to create cycling tourism here," he said.

Marche's hilly terrain is an important asset for bike racing, Pacini suggested. Luckily for spectators, the stunning hills are exciting to look at, too. ❖

More info: <http://www.girobio.com/>

SUMMER

SURF AND SAGRE

June, July and August are the hottest months for Le Marche tourism, and with so many activities to tempt the palate and please the ear, that's a good thing.

You'll find opera, classical music and jazz; celebrations of sculpture, theater, and the summer solstice; and dozens of sagre to honor a staggering range of foods: mussels, trout, pasta, olives, chickpeas, watermelon. If you happen to visit during a World Cup year, join the locals around the big outdoor screens, as they show their national pride in their creation of homemade scarves, hats and dresses. A word to the wise: never block the TV.

Flower festivals blossom around Corpus Christi in the first weekend of June, especially at Castelraimondo www.castelraimondo.sinp.net, Cupramontana www.comune.cupramontana.an.it, Cupra Marittima and Servigliano. The summer solstice is celebrated lavishly at Fabriano, on or around June 21, with nine days of ancient music, food, crafts, and markets celebrating the sun.

Urbino's Festival di Music Antica in July brings a month of concerts, drama and poetry showcasing classical arts. Musicians compete on woodwinds and harpsichords; there are readings of Baroque poetry. www.fima-online.org.

The Rossini Opera Festival in Pesaro

each August celebrates the music of native son Giacchino Rossini www.rossinioperafestival.it. A pair of jazz fests, The Ancona Jazz Festival in mid-July <http://www.anconajazz.com/it/index.php> and The Fano Jazz Festival in late July <http://www.fanojazznetwork.it/> offer fans two weeks of jazz. There's also a weekend Sant'Elpidio Jazz Festival in June, in Porto San Giorgio Sant'Elpidio a Mare www.jazzdimarca.it.

Macerata has a spectacular open-air opera festival in July and August <http://www.sferisterio.it/>, and I Teatri del Mondo Festival in Porto Sant'Elpidio in mid-July features children's theater workshops, with acting classes with titles like "Romeo and Juliet in Eight Minutes," and dramatic readings under the big tree in the piazza. www.iteatridelmondo.it.

Among all the sagre, or food festivals, few are quite so fetching as those devoted to pasta. The village of Campofilone, celebrated for some of Italy's finest egg pasta, puts on the Sagra Nazionale dei Maccheroncini during the first weekend of August. At Sant'Angelo in Pontano in early July, there's the Sagra del Tortellino. The Sagra delle Fregnacce (a pasta with a peppery dressing) is put on at Ascoli Piceno.

Other standout food festivals include odes to mussels (in Pedaso in mid-August), to pizza (Sefro, near Camerino, in early July) and to Verdicchio, the standout regional wine (Staffolo, in August).

There's a wild boar hunt in Mondavio in mid-August <http://www.mondavioproloco.it/>

The Festa del Cocomero, or watermelon festival, is celebrated in Montemurlo in the second half of July, with cocktails, a piano bar and watermelon a dozen ways.

Urbino's Festa del Duca honors Duke Federico Montefeltro, on the third Sunday in August.

Sculpture in Piazza in Sant'Ippolito celebrates the beauty of the stone sculptures seen all around Le Marche, with lectures, meetings with artists and workshops. The hat-making town of Montappone puts on a straw hat festival in mid-July.

It's beach season up and down the Adriatic coast, where you'll want to take advantage of the terrific and scenic train service that will take you to many of the nicest towns. The following beaches (listed from north to south) were in awarded the prestigious Blue Flag by the Foundation for Environmental Education in 2010 (meaning they met criteria for water quality, environmental management and safety): Gabicce Mare, Pesaro, Fano, Marotta di Mondolfo, Senigallia, Ancona Portonovo, Sirolo, Numana, Porto Recanati, Porto Potenza Picena, Civitanova Marche, Porto Sant'Elpidio, Porto San Giorgio, Cupra Marittima, Grottammare, and San Benedetto del Tronto. – Sara Broce

The Secret Caves of Camerano

Stretching for miles, they've been used for protection and pleasure

STORY BY SAMANTHA BLEE / PHOTOS BY HEATHER DOYLE

Walking the streets of Camerano initially seems like taking a stroll through any low-key Italian city: you'll see stunning views of the surrounding countryside, welcoming restaurants with their doors propped open, and the traditional tourist agency situated near a popular piazza.

But there's something odd about Camerano's tourism agency. Step inside, and you'll be invited to explore an unusual secret -- one that someone strolling through town above ground is unlikely to discover.

A set of eerie stone stairs, dimly lit by candles, descends into darkness. They lead to the mysterious Grotte di Camerano, massive man-made caves. No one knows when the caves were built, but they may date back to the Middle Ages. They form a hidden underground network that stretches some 20 kilometers (12.4 miles).

The caves, not all of which are open to the public, often correspond to the functions of buildings once directly above them. An underground area for prayer is located directly beneath Camerano's oldest church, Chiesa di Sant'Apollinare, built in the ninth century. The underground prison was built beneath the part of town where most

executions were carried out.

One room is thought to be a meeting place for the Massoneri society - a group that formed to stand against Napoleon's laws.

Mystery envelopes each room, though experts now believe they at least have a solid understanding of the purpose of the caves. The original inhabitants hid in them. They are built mostly of sandstone, and at their deepest point plunge about 20 meters (21.8 yards) into the earth, making them a reliable fortress.

That reliability was put to the test in 1944, the last year people hid in the caves. During World War II, during 17 days when the front was located in Camerano, the inhabitants of the city hid there from bombs, and to protect their women from rape. The town was occupied by German troops, and suffered great damage, since it was the target of several air raids. Camerano was liberated by the Allies in July 1944.

After the war, the Grotte were used for much more pleasant purposes. They became a storage cellar for barrels of wine, since the temperature of the underground labyrinth stays at a consistent 14 degrees C. (57

degrees F). Indents in the walls mark the places where these giant barrels were kept.

At some point, the entrance room was used as a disco. A cranny in the wall, which once sheltered an entire family, was a coatroom.

In 2008, it was decided that the caves were badly ventilated. The walls dividing the caves (which were not part of the original design) were knocked down, reopening passageways.

Today, the caves in this town of 6,500 allow visitors to consider Camerano's fascinating past. You may feel astonished that human beings could create something this large, and this expertly, with such limited tools.

Who walked in these damp caves hundreds of years ago? An altar invites you to consider the religious experiences of those hiding in fear during times of conflict and war. Scratches on the wall tally days spent below ground. Small rooms extending from main hallways still show indents from the "chairs" families would sit in, to pass the time.

Each tunnel in this underground masterpiece allows you to experience living history - which alone makes Camerano worth visiting. ❖



VISITING THE GROTTA DI CAMERANO

Hours: You must join one of several scheduled tours. M-Th, 4:30 p.m. and 6 p.m., Friday, 4:30 p.m., 5:30 p.m., 6 p.m., Saturday, every half hour between 4:30 and 6 p.m. Closed on Sundays.
Telephone: +39 071 730301 - +39 071 7303058

Visits and tours: 6-8 euro, half price for seniors and children under 12.

Directions: By public transport, public buses run from Ancona and Pesaro to Camerano.
Info: <http://www.turismocamerano.it/>



Hiking the Forests Near Pesaro Beach

Views and butterflies, with a splash at the end

STORY AND PHOTOS BY

SARAH BROCE

Rural Le Marche is full of excellent hiking. You'll find streams and lakes, and seemingly bottomless gorges. There are expansive parks with winding trails, some overlooking the Adriatic Sea, others rolling through the countryside.

You can enter a miles-long network of these trails in the 4,000-acre Monte San Bartolo National Park near Pesaro. On one June hike, I trekked to the entrance nearest to the Adriatic Sea, about half a mile northwest of Pesaro's public beach. There is a campground directly to the right of the entrance, and a map of San Bartolo at the trailhead. This is a great area for a short hike, as you can return to the beach and cool off in the water afterward.

My one-mile trail twisted up a low hill, and then followed the coast. It took about 45 minutes to do, round trip, including a stop for a brief photo op at the top. Though there were a few inclines, none were unmanageable.

The trail wound through San Bartolo park, passing private gardens with wooden gates of a kind that made me think of storybooks. It ended on a small road, where you'll glimpse

bike riders passing on the coast road (I saw them whenever I crested a hill). You can also enjoy panoramic views of the Adriatic, and the beach.

And you'll be surrounded by the greenery of a wonderful forest. Birds chirp in the trees; leaves rustle as wildlife runs from the sound of footsteps. You might see butterflies alighting on the wild roses. It's a picturesque experience, and a nice break from the buzz of the beach.

Another route in Pesaro, on the western edge of town, leads to a trail system that curves along the Italian coast. In this part of the park, which begins on the western side of Pesaro, you'll find a tourism office, guided tours and group camping opportunities – and, since this is Italy, restaurants to stop at along each trail.

From the paths, you can walk to some agriturismo, including **Colle San Bartolo** and **Il Guardacielo**, located along the trails. You can also visit a few buildings, such as the **Chiesa di Santa Maria**, a small church with beautiful paintings credited to Rondolino and Giacomo Pandolfi. There are also regular events nearby, such as sunset concerts each Thursday from mid-June to early August. ❖

Hiking Trails in Le Marche Monte San Bartolo National Park

Pick up a park map at the tourist office in Pesaro. Info on events and camping trips or guided hikes can be found at the park's information office, at Via Montegrappa, 61011 Gabicce Mare. There's also an entrance to the park there. Another trailhead is about a half a mile from Pesaro's public beach. <http://www.parcosanbartolo.it>.

Sibillini Mountains and National Park

This park is draped in myths and secrets, and is said to have been home to the illustrious prophetess Sibilla. Hiking here, you might pass by castles, and see Golden eagles. The park comprises approximately 173,000 acres, and offers miles of hiking trails, some accessible by bus and train. <http://www.sibillini.net>

Sasso Simone e Simoncello Park

Peaks in this 977-acre national park reach as high as 1,415 meters, and valleys merge into watersheds. You'll also find a wildlife park, and botanic gardens. Entrances are located in Miratoio, Cantoniera and other cities. Itineraries can be found on the park's website: <http://www.parcosimone.it>

Riserva Naturale Statale Gola de Furlo

This park near Acqualunga is less suitable for hiking than for taking pictures of eagles as they fly across the gorge. You'll pass historical and geological sights, including the remains of a fortress owned by Malatesta and Montefeltro families. The town of Fossombrome is located within park boundaries. <http://www.parks.it/riserva.statale.gola.furlo/Epun.php>

Thank Urbino!

University students from around the United States came together in Urbino in the summer of 2010 to intern at this magazine. They extend their thanks to their teachers and their hosts!



HEATHER ANDERSON is a freelance writer who lives in Raleigh, North Carolina. She graduated from the University of North Carolina - Wilmington with concentrations in marketing and creative writing. She loved her time in Urbino and Le Marche and looks forward visiting again.



SAMANTHA BLEE graduated from Loyola University Maryland, where she majored in communication, with a specialization in journalism and a minor in studio art. She is earning her master's in journalism and public affairs at American University in Washington, DC. Samantha has fallen in love with Italy, and is determined to return to her favorite country as often as possible.



RENAE BLUM majors in English at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She has written for *The Daily Nebraskan* and *Nebraska Wedding Day* magazine, and interned at *Prairie Schooner*. She loves photography, finding random book sales, and watching the sun set over the hills of Urbino.



SARAH BROCE studies at Colorado State University.



HEATHER DOYLE, of Malverne, New York, recently graduated from Loyola University Maryland, where she studied communication with a focus in journalism. After studying and working in Europe, she caught the travel bug, and aspires to become a professional travel journalist.



DAVID HARTMAN is a senior at Quinnipiac University, where he majors in journalism and minors in political science. He is a staff writer for *Quadnews.net* and works with Save the Children's web and social media team. He is interested in development and poverty in the Third World, international law and string theory. Dave had a fabulous time working with the interns and staff of *Urbino View*, and getting to know the people of Urbino.



HANNAH NUSSER, a senior at Bowling Green State University, is a small town girl, an animal lover, a sister, a student journalist and aspiring author. If ever she has spare time, you'll find her reading, writing, or watching reruns of *The Office*. She loves playing with her dogs, Louie and Luke, and enjoys sharing good food and lots of laughs with her tight-knit friends and family.



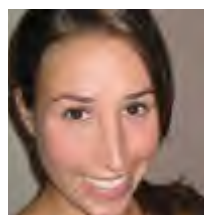
ARIANA MCLAUGHLIN is a photojournalist who studies at Western Kentucky University. She blogs at www.arianamclaughlin.com



HELGA SALINAS is a history major at the University of California, Los Angeles. She works for the student magazine *La Gente* and belongs to the campus dance group Folklorico. She hopes to find a line of work that will allow her to travel, and explore different cultures and languages.



KATHARINE SUAREZ is a senior at New York University, where she majors in journalism and cultural aesthetics, and minors in Italian. A lover of fashion, fine arts, and travel, she aims to be a freelance writer and stylist. A diehard Manhattanite who has interned at *Surface*, *VOGUE*, *Details*, and *Self*, she was happy to take a break and relax in the beautiful surroundings of the Marche countryside.



STEPHANIE TODARO, though born in Chicago and raised in Los Angeles, feels lucky to have lived all over the United States. She hopes to one day also live in Italy, a country of which she recently became a citizen. She earned a master's degree in journalism from New York University in 2008, and now lives in L.A., where she works at an entertainment representation firm.

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because food is fresher and tastes better, is more nutritious and more economical.”

RENOVATING

Alimentare opened in 1999, in a former tax office. It took work to turn it into the elegant, intimate shop you see today. The products on offer in the front room of the long, narrow store and cafe have been meticulously chosen by Pompili herself. There are wines, oils and vinegars; beautiful pastries; fresh cheeses and prosciutto.

Guests gather over coffee or wine at small comfortable tables, or at the bar. Local art is on display, new beside old: a tremendous piece of metalwork by a young Cagli artist hangs from the ceiling, next to an antique glass chandelier; vintage Coca-Cola and Budweiser signs hang near photographs taken by a local photographer.

You can also learn a little about the methods of Illy, which sells Italy's most respected coffee beans. Surprise visits from representatives encourage shops to meet company expectations. Pompili possesses samples of the coveted Illy limited edition coffee sets. Each year, Illy commissions an artist to create a series of coffee cups for purveyors and customers. In 2005, it featured Joep van Lieshout's interpretation of the four systems of the human body involved in drinking coffee. Spanish filmmaker Pedro Almodovar was commissioned to create a six-cup 2009 set inspired by his films. One year, a young artist designed crystal *caffè freddo* glasses, decorated with undulating waves inspired by the sea of Trieste. ♦

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after produce grown on the premises, have expansive views of the hilly landscape.

Their motto: “Be ready to muddy your feet.”

There is no menu, and guests enjoy seasonal dishes, typically made with five ingredients or less. Despite having worked at renowned restaurants such as Dean & DeLuca, and serving celebrity clientele, he gets more satisfaction from creating simple dishes with homegrown ingredients.

The owners try to arrange regional activities for their guests. From a truffle hunt on the neighbor's property to a market trip into the city, they encourage visitors to be prepared for spontaneous days.

This come-as-it-may attitude has helped them succeed. “You have to take the good and the bad; it's not all peaches and cream,” Jason said. “But it is a good life,” Ashley added.

They now feel at home, having made the transition from “the American couple” to just one of the neighbors.

“We just wanted to do something different,” Ashley said. “You can't make a move like this and say, ‘Well, back home’ ... because now this is home. You have to be ready for all of it – the good, the bad, the oh-my-God.” ♦

Agriturismi in Le Marche

Locanda della Valle Nuova

La Cappella, 14 - 61033
Sagrata di Fermignano
Pesaro e Urbino - Le Marche
+ 0722 330303
<http://www.vallenuova.it/en/locanda/casa.htm>

Valle Del Candigliano

Loc. Candigliano, 8 - 61049
Urbania, Pesaro e Urbino
+072.2317663
<http://www.valledelcandigliano.it/>

Valguerriera

Valle del Candigliano
61042 - Apecchio, Pesaro e Urbino
+0722.986489
<http://www.valguerriera.it/>

Agriturismo Ca'Licozzo

61406 Piobbico, Pesaro e Urbino
+39.333.4648720
<http://www.valguerriera.it/>

La Tavola Marche Agriturismo & Cooking School

Via Candigliano Localita' Ca'Camone
61046 Piobbico, Pesaro e Urbino
+331.525.2753
<http://www.latavolamarche.com/>

Photo By Heather Anderson





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"Ahh...okay," said the nurse. She disappeared behind the desk again, and returned with a sheet of paper and a pen.

"Could you write your name? *Si*. And your, *come si dice?* Your address and birth date?"

I sat in the waiting room trying to figure out how to get someone to my room back in Urbino to hunt through my belongings to find my card. They couldn't possibly do anything without the card, I imagined, especially since I was a foreigner.

It was a beautiful Sunday afternoon, and the emergency room was quiet and nearly empty.

I heard a man's voice behind me utter a word that sounded like "Doyle." But I didn't think he'd meant me, since I'd been there for just 10 minutes.

"Doyle? Heather Doyle?" I heard again.

I followed the man in blue scrubs. The blue of his outfit matched the blue of the ocean, where I'd sliced up my foot.

He led me to a medical office and told me to sit on the gurney. Still in my wet bathing suit, I was reluctant; I'd just thrown on my pants and shirt and limped off the beach, without changing.

"Si, sit," said the man.

I sat, feeling seawater from my suit absorbing into the paper.

Nice. Now they'll think I'm a soggy, dirty American who's too dumb to pay attention to buoys.

The man spoke English and translated my story to the doctor, as three doctors gently cleaned my cut.

"It was a shell – a mussel shell," the intern said knowingly. "The *cozze*. Sharp. But delicious with spaghetti."

The intern told me that, instead of stitches, they'd use a kind of bio-glue. Within five

minutes, they were saying good day, telling me to stay behind the buoys and to say hello to Obama when I got home.

At home, I would have waited for an hour, sat on a gurney for another hour, and stood on one foot for a further hour, waiting to pay. Here, I walked out of the hospital less than an hour after I had arrived, and without paying a cent. ❖

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He belongs to the National Order of Journalists, as all Italian journalists must. Anyone who works as a reporter, editor or publisher in Italy must be accepted in order to be legally allowed to work in those capacities. Though Lani considers the Order unnecessary -- he believes it conflicts with constitutional freedom of speech provisions -- a referendum aimed at abolishing it recently failed.

"There's this Machiavellian attitude inside all of us," Lani joked.

Like its counterparts in the United States, *Il Resto del Carlino* is looking for ways to stay financially viable, in world increasingly dominated by the web. The paper is testing out a new business model to keep earning money for its content.

"The paper's web page and the print version are two separate entities," Lani said. Longer, in-depth stories are reserved for the print edition.

And the electronic version is behind a pay wall. Interestingly, so far Italians have been willing to pay for it, he said.

During a lunch with some colleagues, Lani discretely checks his phone, and takes short calls. After about an hour he apologizes and says he must run -- a story is breaking and he must get back to the office to coordinate coverage. ❖

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from an elderly mastro years ago.

He hopes his own son, currently attending a technical institute for papermaking, will continue his work.

Papermaking is traditionally a very secretive art, one its devotees are fiercely proud of. Luigi is no different. "He likes to teach to his son, but doesn't like to teach to all," Crocetti said, laughing. "They (the papermakers) are very jealous. It's difficult for them to show tourists all the secrets."

Indeed: if you lived within 50 miles of Fabriano in the 1430s, you faced a fine of 50 ducats – roughly the price of a very desirable slave – for making paper or teaching the skills to someone else. Local mastro Piero di Stefano faced a 100 ducat fine if he failed to pass on his craft to a son or apprentice, or taught it to anyone else.

Today, the vast bulk of paper is produced mechanically. Watermarks embedded in paper money are created by computers, not filigranisti meticulously sewing the pattern on a wire mesh by hand.

Luigi doesn't mind the technological advances. It's quicker, but can't touch the quality of handmade paper. "Here, there is a niche for people who want personalized paper," he says. He regularly fills orders for wedding invitations, personal stationary, even watermarked paper with designs the customer created. For good friends, he'll knock down the price.

The rewards of such work – physically taxing and unglamorous as it is – are small, but special. "I like my work very much because after I pull the material out of the water, it feels like woven cloth," Luigi said. "It feels like touching cotton." ❖

WHERE TO GET FABRIANO PAPER

Fabriano's famous watercolor paper is available at many art stores, and online, for \$13 to \$130.

The Museum of Paper and Watermarks sells watermarked paper for as little as 1.5 euro, and drawing pads for 1.6 to 13 euro. <http://www.museodellacarta.com>



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