

# ER

EMILIA  
ROMAGNA

N.3  
2006

## IL CLUB DELLA BELLEZZA

Sette paesi  
dell'Emilia-Romagna  
tra i borghi più belli d'Italia.

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della Grande Mela  
A Cooperative Venture  
in the Big Apple

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## THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

by Maurizio Ortobene

A new way of doing tourism is taking shape in Italy, a way that offers an alternative or a complement to traditional tourism visiting art cities or going to the beach or the mountains. This kind of vacation will have you off to small towns pregnant with history and beauty, steeped in an environment of natural poetry unexemplified anywhere in the world. These towns and villages appear as museums under the open sky, architectures without architects—the pace of life is nothing like what you would find on a beltway at rush hour, of course, and you can feel the flow of the seasons and breathe in the scents of the landscape.

Having come to appreciate the full extent of this appeal, the mayors of fifty of these towns got together in Parma in October of 2001 and gave birth to the Club of Italy's Most Charming Villages. This was a bottom-up initiative launched by the local governments on the model of the Association des Plus Beaux Villages de France, established in 1982 and now representing a group of villages second only to Paris and the Côte d'Azur in the amount of tourism they attract—with the difference that rural tourism in France was already quite developed, whereas in Italy it had to be literally invented. But the effort went forward, and the villages in the club have since grown to 128, so now everywhere in Italy—seaside, lakeside, countryside, hillside, and mountainside—you find villages “certified” for their beauty: they form a network and a system, launching initiatives and presenting themselves as worthy travel destinations. The regions most represented in this club of villages are Tuscany and Abruzzi (with thirteen villages each), followed by Liguria (ten), and Umbria and Lombardy (nine). Emilia-Romagna has seven: Castell'Arquato and Vigoleno, in Piacenza Province; Compiano, in Parma Province; Dozza, in the environs of Bologna; Brisighella, in Ravenna Province; and Montefiore Conca and Montegradolfo, inland in the environs of Rimini.

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There are two conditions a municipality must meet to join the club and make it as one of Italy's most beautiful villages: first, it must obtain from the Sovrintendenza alle Belle Arti a certification of quality in architecture and urban design; second, the historic center must have a population no greater than 2,000 (and no greater than 15,000 for the entire municipality). The municipalities that apply for membership in the club receive a visit from a technical committee that evaluates whether the conditions subsist for certification.

About a thousand municipalities apply every year, but some 60 percent of these fail the test. Illumination, pavements, materials, and the colors on the facades of buildings must be in keeping with historic construction. Which means no asphalt, rolling shutters, flashy signs, power lines left hanging like lianas, disorderly traffic-only cobblestone paving, wooden portals, urban accessories, friendly reception of visitors, old-time shops, the crafts, cityscapes that look like paintings: in a word, you need atmosphere. For the

poetry of a place consists in its ability to kindle the imagination, giving you the impression that you are living in a remote past, in the Middle Ages or in a magical arrangement of stones going into the depths of a lake. 🍷

## A COOPERATIVE VENTURE IN THE BIG APPLE

by *Simona Andronaco*

This is a Hollywood story set in New York City. Its cast are fifty former employees of Windows of the World, a restaurant that came down along with the Twin Towers during the September 11 attacks—and also in the cast is the world of cooperative ventures in Emilia-Romagna. It's the story of Colors, a recently inaugurated restaurant located at 417 Lafayette Street, in Lower Manhattan, offering an international, multiethnic cuisine reflected in the multiethnic provenance of the people who run and staff the place, who are also its owners.

When the Twin Towers came down on September 11, seventy-three Windows of the World employees were killed and fifty more were left jobless. But the surviving members of the group pulled their strengths together and gave birth to ROC-NY, Restaurant Opportunities Center of New York, which drew a membership of 500 people from forty-seven nationalities: the initial aim was to aid the Twin Towers workers and their families, but they have since broadened the scope of their activity to include protection of immigrant workers generally. The ROC-NY experience provided the inspiration to start a cooperative venture as a way to secure a livelihood in the future all the while offering an example that the thousands left jobless could look to.

But how to take it from there? The turning point came when ROC-NY crossed paths with Bruce Herman, who was then heading the Consortium for Worker Education, a organization based in New York devoted to providing job training, helping new companies get started, and seeking economic opportunities in the city. Herman had studied at the Bologna Center of the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies and became conversant with the cooperatives of Emilia-Romagna—an experience on which basis he would craft the worker-owned solution at Colors.

The initial problem was to find the money for the new venture, get the know-how necessary to manage it properly, and find a location for the new establishment: these tasks seemed formidable at first, but then everything began to fall into place as the experience of Italian cooperatives became more and more familiar. The ROC-NY workers went to Reggio, where they met with CIR Food, the cooperative that manages the trademarks under the Pastarito group—pretty much all over the world, even in the United States—which makes the Mediterranean diet its forte. “On that occasion,” CIR Food president Ivan Lusetti explains, “we laid the groundwork for an agreement under which our company played a role as a tutor proper, responsible for teaching how to manage a restaurant and a cooperative venture.”

CIR Food worked in conjunction with

several other big businesses in Emilia-Romagna to get the cooperative project under way, and in July of 2004 the effort produced GIF (Good Italian Food), a consortium set up to provide financial support to the cooperative restaurant that would open in New York, as well as to transfer know-how and products to this restaurant. The consortium is financed by members Coopfond (a Legacoop mutual-benefit fund for the promotion of cooperatives) and CCFS (a financial cooperative development consortium), and the know-how and products come from companies active in the cooperative world of Emilia-Romagna: CIR Food is among these members, the others being Grandi Salumifici Italiani, Consorzio Granterre, and Mediterrabio. Then, finally, Colors opened for business in New York, a stylish brasserie with Art Deco motifs and a large decorative panel designed to convey the multicultural makeup of the place. In fact, its international cuisine draws inspiration from the twenty-two nationalities represented by its workers, so on the menu you will find a wide range of dishes, including risotto with mushrooms and parmesan, typically Italian; chicken salad with green papaya, based on a Thai recipe; and shellfish spring rolls with tamarind and basil sauce, a Philippine recipe. Lusetti points out that "this initiative rests on the conviction that restaurant management offers a great opportunity to spread the cooperative model beyond our national borders, as well as an opportunity to gain greater expertise in promoting cooperative products and services abroad." It was in this belief that GIF provided financial backing for the restaurant, contributing \$500,000 out of the 2 million necessary for its opening. "We adhered to Good Italian Food with great enthusiasm," says one of the initiative's backers, Eros Valenti, president of the Granterre Group, which contributed 25,000 and undertook to provide know-how and products. "We believe that initiatives like these express in full the cooperative spirit that has always guided us in our activity. So it's a great success for us to have played a part in this opening." The rest came from ROC-NY and from nonprofit organizations in the United States. The member workers bring no capital in the start-up

phase, only their work. But, more importantly, they will use a share of the profits made by the company to repurchase stock in the GIF Consortium. With the cooperative support of Emilia-Romagna, an American dream has become reality. ❧

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## TOURISTS SEEKING WATER

by *Giorgio Savona*

Wellness tourism is in good health. Baths, mud treatments, rehabilitation in the pool, vascular exercise, and inhalation therapy are all wholesome for the organism-but the benefits can be appreciated as well in the bottom line of spa resorts. Emilia-Romagna is home to twenty-four establishments in twenty cities from Rimini to Parma, with nearly 100 million euros in sales in 2005 and a client base that grew by 2.9 percent over the previous year, which means that the region claims about 30 percent of all business across the country.

The credit goes in part to region's hot springs, which are rich in salt or otherwise contain sulfur, in the form of hydrogen sulfide: both elements are indispensable for the organism to function properly; so, too, they are effective on the respiratory, motor, and peripheral circulatory systems, in providing care, prevention, and rehabilitation for these systems; and they can also be used to treat eustachian-tube dysfunctions, gastrointestinal and skin conditions, and certain gynecological dysfunctions. In 2005, nearly 324,000 clients checked in, receiving 6.5 million treatments, and profits approached 100 million euros, generating revenues of 726 million euros in business throughout the region.

"Spas are finding increasingly better placement within the region's tourism industry, growing in quality and number," says Guido Pasi, head of the region's tourism office. "People are turning to spas in increasing numbers, and young people are seeking wellness more so than health services. These clients use the spa resort as an opportunity to also tour the area, planning short wellness vacations during which to combine spa care and therapy with fine food and wine." In recent years, this quest for wellness has also made it to Italy, as people are spending more on quality foods and psychophysical care-which means slowing things

down and taking more time out for relaxation, an essential component of wellbeing, since the mind and body need to be cared for in a natural way, in an environment that gives comfort. In fact, a NAIAD survey conducted on behalf of the Italian Ministry of Health has found that spa therapy has reduced consumption of pharmaceuticals by as much as 50 percent.

In an effort to promote spa tourism, the region's tourism promotion agency has set up a toll-free number for inquiries (800 88 88 50), and in combination with this number it has put out for professionals in the industry a regional guide (available at [www.emiliaromagnaterme.it](http://www.emiliaromagnaterme.it)) through which to find last-minute offers and packages. ❧

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## ONCE UPON A TIME

by *Monica Lugli*

A monkey cart, a magic box for the planets of fortune, and costumes for comedy performers recount a world of itinerant vendors who dealt in inks, buttons, and miracle-working ointments, a world of charlatan saints and preachers, of people who would make ends meet by exhibiting little trained animals.

From the eighteenth century until after World War I, the Taro and Ceno Valleys, set in the Apennines near Parma, witnessed a steady outflow of migration as an indigent population sought to secure a living in the enviroing areas, often having to settle for seasonal work, taking some of the humblest jobs to be found. An account of this migratory phenomenon is now being offered by the Museo degli Orsanti, located in Compiano.

The original collection documenting that bygone world is distributed over seventy other ethnographical museums in Emilia-Romagna, but now these items have all come together in a guide edited by Sonia Migani and published by Diabasis for APT Servizi (on sale for 15 euros).

The guide evokes the agrarian and maritime society that existed before the Industrial Revolution. And the museums that have made this possible-some of them big, others small, many set up with donations from citizens and associations-are all committed to preserving objects testifying to the ways of an earlier, traditional society.

Thus, for example, the Museum of Mountain Civilization in Sestola has set up a snow-and-ice display with different sorts of sleds for transporting fodder and hay. And set in the valleys of Comacchio is a museum where you will get a sense for the way life was in these valleys and the way that work was organized. Along the Adriatic seaboard you will instead find museums that recount the stories of life at sea among fishermen.

One of the most important of these museums is located in Santarcangelo, in the environs of Rimini: in fourteen sections, this museum traces out the uses, customs, activities, and trades that prevailed among the rural population in Emilia-Romagna from the late nineteenth century until after World War II. So, too, the Museum of Peasant Civilization in Bentivoglio (in the environs of Bologna) has sections dedicated to the cycles of activity revolving around beetroots, honey, and hemp. Last year, the Floating Museum of the Port of Cesenatico (in the Forlì and Cesena areas) inaugurated a section on dry land housed in a modern building opposite the canal port. And San Martino in Rio (in the environs of Reggio Emilia) is home to the Museum of Agriculture and the Rural World, whose display includes a 1909 wagon beautifully decorated in wrought iron representing traditional pagan symbols believed to ward off bad luck: the rooster, the snake, the pomegranate, iron ends, and the tree of life.

Page after page the voyage continues, on the lookout for museums devoted to rural, mountain, and maritime ethnography, or for thematic museums, such as the Museo del Maggio di Villa Minozzo (in the environs of Reggio Emilia), devoted to the exploration of folkways and tradition. ❧

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## THE "PERFECTION" OF PARAGUAY

by *Renato Bertacchini*

If in the eighteenth century (and indeed even before and after that time) you had asked which of the saints holds patronage for the protection of herds and animals, you would surely have been answered, "Saint Anthony the Abbot." Yet there was no foundation to that belief, if not in the "imaginings of a crude populace" that had gotten into the habit of misreading the paintings in which the Te-

baide cenobite was depicted. If these peasants and city dwellers had only conferred with the learned society, they would have come to appreciate that the torch the great sage was represented as holding signified the fire of charity, and that the pork lying at his feet represented the ability to overcome the temptations of the flesh. This misinterpretation of the worship of saints is found in a treatise titled *Of Correct Devotion* (1747), in which Ludovico Antonio Muratori (Vignola, 1672 - Modena, 1750) presents other arguments polemicizing against religion.

Muratori-a library chaplain to the Dukes of Este-insisted on the role of faithfuls attending mass: he believed that everyone, even those who are not learned, should have an opportunity to understand liturgy and make rational sense of it. He disliked the pomp and circumstance of church ritual and proposed to limit the number of feasts. A keen observer of customs, he was not so circuitous in denouncing the ill effects attending the "lavishness of feasts." Many sanctify feasts at the inn; they indulge in revelry, in illicit gaming, and in dishonesty. Women, craftspeople, and peasants will make their brief appearance in church and then go off wasting the remainder of the feast "in babble, confabulation, and vigils amid gagmen comedies-and then the good times start for lovers and taverns."

It was necessary to rejuvenate the worship and make it rational, this in preparation for the Second Vatican Council, with an energetic drive toward a faith conceived as charitable work. And that was precisely Muratori's *Christian Charity* (from a 1923 work so titled), an outlook he developed as a provost in one of the poorest parish churches of eighteenth-century Modena, Santa Maria della Pomposa, in which position he served from 1716 to 1733. Here the intellectual priest committed himself to providing for the poor, the outcasts, the defenseless, in whose behalf he established the Charity Company, funded in large part with his own earnings as a parish priest, the first chunk of which came from selling a gold necklace he had received from Emperor Charles VI.

So this view that Muratori put forth was really a humanitarian religion coherent with a courageous endeavor to effect political reform: it was a view expressed in *La pubblica felicità*, of 1749, an essay compellingly shown by Fabio Marri to be at the same time an innovative piece of his-

toriographical scholarship. Marri-a professor of Italian historical-comparative linguistics at the University of Bologna, and president of the Center for Muratorian Studies-has put out several books by Muratori: among them, a vocabulary of the dialect of Modena (published in 1984) and two volumes making up the national edition of Muratori's correspondence (published from 1999 to 2003). Underpinning this editorial work on the part of Marri is a series of comparative studies that bring out the connection which Muratori maintained with some of the most advanced cultural centers of eighteenth-century Europe.

The scholars Falco, Forti, Stella, Bertelli, Raimondi, and Marri have all conducted research that shows how the varied interests Muratori pursued-in ethics, religion, history, language, esthetics, and law-were all driven by a constant concern to expose error and stamp out superstition, this by launching cultural initiatives aimed at working toward the common good and the welfare of the public.

In a sincere and self-ironic letter written to a friend, Giovanni Porcia, Muratori owns to certain misconceptions he had had during his intellectual youth, when the only thing that mattered to him was Greek and Roman antiquities. "By contrast," he wrote, "I reckoned as an eyesore everything that filled the centuries which followed-their history, writers, rites, customs, and imbroglions-finding everywhere what I accounted to be things wretched and barbarous." But he would later embrace a radically different outlook, this upon viewing two collections: the *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* (containing documents, epigraphs, chronicles, and other historical sources relating to Italy from 500 to 1500) and the *Antiquitates Italicae Medii Aevi* (containing critical dissertations on a variety of topics including legislation, currencies, taxation, the court system, demography, the role of women, marketplaces, the crafts and trades, dueling, games, and sports). The letter to Porcia ends with these strong words of self-criticism: "I look back now in self-mockery [...]. Even those horrid, barbarous Middle Ages-as I would only later appreciate-had a beauty and pleasantness in them."

Just as the perceived "darkness" of that middle period had to be set to rights, so the "savage dwellers" across the ocean were to be consid-

ered novices in Christianity. Humanitarian principles led Muratori to embrace a view of Christianity devoted to missionary work (1743), and in Paraguay, evangelized by the Company of Jesus, he saw the reincarnation of the perfect society achieved by the early Christians. A forerunner of anthropology, the reformist thinker Muratori set out the vision of a happy Christianity that called for an experiment in religious communism based on brotherly love, equanimity, and harmony of feeling. The temporal happiness of the Paraguayans corresponded to the conditions of civil life expounded by Muratori: "Well-regulated freedom; adequate provision made for food, clothing, and shelter; public peace; and peace of mind are, as I see it, the ingredients that make a people's happiness."

So the persistent hate the Spanish and Portuguese conquistadores and slavers drew from the indigenes could now be met with an alternative that would counter with equal force what had gone on before, and it was under this extreme rationale that Muratori called for Christian remedy. ❧

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## A PRIEST IN ARMS

by Paolo Cortese

In Hitler's day, a young Danish man who had converted to Catholicism reached Italy, turned priest, became a partisan commander, and took part in the liberation of Parma, and when the war was over he worked as an undercover agent for different secret services on the hunt for former Nazi officers. So goes the most peculiar story of Arndt Paul Lauritzen, narrated by the Danish-Italian writer Thomas Harder in his book *Paul the Dane*, published under this title in Denmark.

Harder relates how he learned of this man during a visit to Parma on the occasion marking the celebration of war veterans who took part in the liberation of Italy. Some of the veterans spoke of Paul the Dane, the brave partisan fighter who commanded the Julia Brigade and found himself having to make tough choices, torn between the religious calling and the need to take up arms against a brutal enemy. And a street had been named for him in the city. So the author, intrigued by the peculiarity of this fellow Dane, decided to delve into the story, undertaking a research that would take him to the coun-

tries in which Lauritzen had lived-Italy, Luxembourg, Germany, Sweden, Great Britain, the United States, and of course Denmark-where he managed to track down and interview the partisan priest's surviving brothers in arms.

The religious career of Arndt Paul Lauritzen began in 1933, at age eighteen, when he decided to join the Benedictine convent of Clairvaux, in Luxembourg, all the while giving aid to the German refugees who were fleeing the then-nascent Nazi movement. He would later become an officer in the Danish army, join his country's resistance movement, and then move to Rome, where he studied theology and was ordained a priest. In this role, he served as a partisan in northern Italy, deciding shortly thereafter to abandon priesthood and marry a partisan dispatch rider named Rosita. When the war ended, he traveled to and lived in different countries, including Italy and Germany, leading what appeared to be a workaday existence as a businessman, but an existence blotted here by incidents that bespoke his role in the secret services of Britain, Italy, and Denmark. There emerges from this story the portrait of a man of deep religious insight, imbued with mysticism, this in combination with a physical and moral strength that make him a controversial figure, yet steadfast in his resolve to fight Nazism. ❧

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## AMERICAN DREAM

by Stefano Vezzani

Alex was pitching the ball faster than anyone else on the field. And he was dreaming of America-or rather, of the United States-like so many kids here who take up baseball with a commitment to the sport. For many, the dream never comes true, but not so in the case of Alex: since April of this year, the twenty-one-year-old Alessandro Maestri of Cesena has been living in Mesa, Arizona, about fifteen minutes from Phoenix, and he plays in the minor league with the Chicago Cubs.

Dimes Gamberini, the man who coached Alex for the Torre Pedrera Falcons in Rimini, remembers the time when Alex was offered to play in the United States: "It was last November, and Bill Homborg, a famous talent scout for the Chicago Cubs, went up to him and simply asked, 'Alex, what if I signed you up with the Chicago Cubs?' Alex was left speechless. He immediately asked his family what they

thought of the proposal—he is a very good kid and wouldn't do anything that would put his mother in a difficult position. So they talked it out and decided to take up the offer. Alex was overtaken with joy."

It had taken a lot hard of work to get to America, and Alex deserved every bit of it. His passion for baseball began early on, at age six, when he started following in his brother's footsteps. Alex immediately made it into the team with the Torre Pedrera Falcons, where he played until last year, before moving on to San Marino. At eleven, he played for the national youth team, taking part in the 1996 European championship. That same year, Torre Pedrera, a small club, placed second in the Italian championship and won it the following year in the youth division. As Gamberini points out, "We couldn't have made it without Alex, with his strength and talent and his absolute drive to always bring the game to the next level."

Last year Alex enrolled in the Tirrenia Academy of Pisa, a CONI sports center where players are coached by Italian and American instructors, and started training for the world baseball championship. As Alex's coach says, "It is quite rare for a player this young to make the national team in this championship, because a pitcher cannot be said to be too experienced at twenty."

The academy was a springboard for Alex: it was here that the Chicago Cubs spotted him, and it was here that his American adventure began. In Mesa, Alex spends most of his time training on the field: he starts out at five in the morning because the afternoon swelter gives no respite. From Romagna to Arizona is certainly a big change, but Alex is taking this relocation with great ease of mind. "It's a fantastic experience," he says. "I'm on the field every day, and I can live baseball all the way. I like it here in the United States, even if Mesa is not exactly the most exciting of all places. Still, it has not been a problem adjusting to this lifestyle—in fact it's been great fun."

Alex shares a room with his teammates—from South America and the United States—with whom he also trains and spends his free time. "I thought it might have been difficult to make friends, but I was really wrong on that point. All my teammates are good players, and I get along quite well with them—it gets better and better with every passing day. I'm now speaking both English and Spanish with them, and the funny thing is that they can't really understand one another, so I'm of-

ten in between as an interpreter."

Alex will return to Italy in September and will be back to the United States next year if the team keeps him in the lineup. "I do miss Rimini, where I grew up and have always lived," he confesses. "But I'm happy to be here." 🍷

## AN UMBRELLA FOR MENELIK

by *Claudio Bacilieri*

“A Remarkable Life” headlined the

Corriere Padano issue of 28 June 1932—in the heat of the Fascist era—running an article about Luigi Capucci, an Italian pioneer in Africa. Before that time, the same story ran in *L’Africa Italiana*, in the January/February issue of 1920, just after the man's death. And finally, in 1935, during the second war of Ethiopia, the Fascist university group based in Lugo, Capucci's hometown, in the province of Ravenna, put out a detailed account of the expedition he made in Abyssinia with Luigi Cicognani, a friend who was also from Lugo.

Capucci set out on his adventure before Italy's occupation of Ethiopia, which began in 1882, when the government proclaimed sovereignty over Assab and subsequently over the whole of Eritrea. It was in December of 1884 that Capucci first set foot in Africa, reaching Assab lured by the promise of great new opportunities for commerce and exploration. He was an engineer of twenty-seven, exactly as his friend Cicognani, who had put up the money for the expedition. “What are people saying about me in Lugo?” asks Capucci in a letter to his father written on a ship that was coasting Eritrea. “They say I'm crazy, right? [...] It's ten thirty on December 1, and you're probably roasting beef in the fireplace, with a white mist suffusing the landscape outside, while I'm here within view of the African coast, and the heat is such that I should want to take my jacket off.”

In September of 1885 the caravan abandoned the coast, moving inland toward the Shoa region, along a route that had been opened a short time earlier by another Italian, the count Pietro Antonelli. But here began the difficulties: the local sultan, Mohamed Anfari, requested an exorbitant amount of money to let the caravan through; and the situation was further complicated by the Italian conquest of Massawa. The caravan

turned around and headed back to the coast, under the sultan's threat to confine it along the riverbanks of an area rife with mosquitoes and malaria fevers. Finally, having struck an agreement with the sultan, the Italian expedition reached Shoa, where it received a cheering welcome from the resident Italian colony as well as from King Menelik, to whom Capucci donated a richly decorated umbrella offered by the African Society of Italy. Everything seemed to turn out for the best: Cicognani set himself up in the fertile Gherfa region, rich in salt and renowned for its textiles, where he figured on getting some returns on his investment, while Capucci maintained friendly relations with Menelik. But then domestic fighting broke out again among the Ethiopians, wreaking hell, and Cicognani's caravan was sacked as one village came under pillaging at the hands of the Negus's troops: in the aftermath of this unfortunate event in Abyssinia, Capucci was left with only one mule's worth of supplies. In a positive twist, Capucci, in his capacity as an engineer, was sent for by Menelik and entrusted with building a powder storehouse. He fell to work immediately, despite the boycotting on the part of the local hands. On 5 June 1886 Capucci sent this letter to his friend: “Dear Cico: It really seems that our endeavors here are doomed to failure. No sooner had I finished preparing the sulfur than the gunpowder deposit caught fire. It must have been a spark blown by the wind, and in five minutes' time everything was ablaze.” A spark blown by the wind or one brought by design? Whatever the cause, the episode did not upset Menelik, who in fact asked Capucci to build another gunpowder repository and a water mill on the banks of the Acachi torrent, at a walking distance of a few hours from Entotto. The enthusiasm picked up again. For two years Capucci lived in a hovel working on the mill and overcoming the obstacles his laborers kept putting up in order to cast him in a bad light in the court's eyes. The inauguration came in January of 1888, scoring a success so big that Capucci refused the money offered to him by his sister, Clelia, so he could go back home. Indeed, Capucci was hoping the Negus would commission him to build other mills. In August of 1889 he returned to Italy with Antonelli to accompany the Ethiopian mission for the ratification of the Ucciali Treaty, whereby

Italy would establish a sort of protectorate over Ethiopia. On that occasion he was received by the king of Italy and a number of ministers, and fellow townspeople from Lugo staged a procession led by Cicognani, who in the meantime had returned home and was being celebrated like a glorious son. And this was the last time the two friends would meet, because Cicognani, fatigued from enduring his long African exertion, would die in 1892 at only thirty-five.

In response to an invitation from his friends not to leave his home country again, Capucci wrote: “Africa appeals to me—I wouldn't be able to live in Italy any more.” So he was back in Shoa, where he saw the Italian colony form, but he also saw the political situation fester. Disagreements that emerged between Italy and Ethiopia over the Ucciali Treaty led to friction and strife. Capucci, an Italian national and at the same time the most prominent figure in Menelik court, found himself caught in a maddening double bind. When in 1893 the Negus rejected the treaty, refusing to recognize the Italian protectorate, Capucci realized that things were taking a turn for the worse. He therefore left the court to devote himself to trading coffee and fabrics, using caravans that would travel from Shoa to Harrar and the cities in the southern part of the country. Meanwhile, the situation resolved itself rapidly into war. The Negus Menelik observed with increasing apprehension about the maneuvers the Italians were making along the borders of his country and prepared a military response. Capucci sensed the danger, wound up his business in late 1894, and informed the Italian governor in Eritrea of his decision to leave Shoa. All other fellow countrymen had already left, yet the Italian government urged him to stay and preside over the Let Marefà station, passing on information about the Ethiopians' movements. Menelik, suspecting that Capucci was playing both sides of the fence, managed to intercept a coded letter Capucci handed to his leprosy assistant instructing him to send it to the Italian officials. Capucci's home was searched, and the code was found with which to decipher the letter, which revealed to the Italian army what plans the Ethiopians were making and what methods they were going to use for attack and defense. Brought before the Negus, Capucci owned his faults and was sentenced to death. The Fascist media insisted on

portraying Capucci as accepting the sentence with peace of mind: "Never had he felt so proud to be Italian" commented the *Corriere Padano* in the previously mentioned article of 28 June 1932. Still, Menelik pardoned him and commuted the sentence to life in prison in Uorrailù, a remote place in the Ethiopian plateau. After four months of imprisonment, Capucci attempted to escape but was wounded, recaptured, and chained at a hand and a foot. He remained in this condition for another eighteen long months, before being freed in 1897, though not on account of the Italians claiming victory, as he had hoped they would, but through the inglorious peace accord struck in the wake of the disastrous defeat suffered at Adua on 1 March 1896.

From liberation until the rest of his life, Capucci remained consigned to oblivion. Back home he was soon forgotten because the defeat in Adua prompted the public mind to collectively blot out any recollection of the African colonies. All that we know of him is that he returned to Eritrea, alone and destitute, spending the last years of his life in Asmara. Only the Italian Colonial Society remembered the African veteran and made him an agent in Gibuti. Here, the *Corriere Padano* reports, Capucci died "heart-broken" on 12 January 1920. 🍷

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## FRUIT THE OLD FASHIONED WAY

by Anna Maria Martina

It used to be that fruits would get picked directly from the plant, in the orchard in the back of your house or in the woods. And from these fruits, of spontaneous growth or grown in an outlying area, grandma would know how to extract savory dishes and preserves, bringing out flavors that hark back to distant childhood days. Even the names these fruits bear have an ancient quality about them reminiscent of a fairy tale, names such as medlar, rowan berry, quince, cornel, and pomegranate. No longer will you find these forgotten varieties at the fruit grocer's, for they have long been replaced by more profitable produce, and yet they have managed to stave off extinction, this thanks to a renewed interest in tradition and the local territory. One place that will afford these scents and flavors is the Corso Pass, which cuts

across the Senio and Santerno mountains, and another thing you can do is visit, every year in October, the Farmer's Market of Casola Valsenio, up on the hills of Romagna, in the province of Ravenna, where the fruit stalls come alive with an unusual variety of shapes and colors.

"They have never been star players in history, these forgotten fruits," says Massimo Montanari, professor of medieval history at the University of Bologna, and an internationally recognized food historian. "Quince, sorb, and cornel, too, could be made into marmalade or jam, but this was certainly not the way to bite your teeth into anything that would satisfy your hunger. Still, it was precisely in this characteristic that their importance lay: for it has always been an essential element of the good life to be able to introduce something different or unusual that will break the monotony of the everyday."

Many fruit recipes have gone missing in history: among them, blackberry and mulberry sauce, the cornel and quince compound, the jujube delight, and wild apple pie, as well as desserts made with common pears, or with chestnuts, wine, or cheese. Migliaccio, or black pudding, is an ancient recipe that calls for quince, common pears, yellow pears, chocolate, breadcrumbs, candied fruits, and rice, plus an addition of pig's blood. These forgotten fruits, which have their home in Casola, find an abundance of support at the local Herbs Market, whose 400 botanical varieties make it possible to concoct extraordinary dishes, such as salads composed of a sweet-and-sour mixture of celery, white currant, and wine, or made by tossing wild fennel together with dandelion, chervil, pomegranate sauce, and extra-virgin olive oil from Brisighella. On the menus you will see pear risottos, pork-chine roast with chestnuts and raspberries, rolls of veal with pomegranate, autumnal sweets with forgotten fruits, sorb-jam tarts, wild plums and sloes stuffed with walnuts and zabaglione, and cornel sorbets. All of them ancient flavors which have been forgotten but which, thankfully, have not yet been lost. 🍷

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## GLOBETROTTING COOKS

by Claudio Bacilieri

Stuffed eel from the Comacchio valley, zucchini stuffed with veal, cappellacci with truffled butter, strozzapreti with sausage: where might you

go to taste these delights? The place to go is the Senso restaurant at the Hyatt Hotel of Santiago in Chile. At this hotel, which sports a unique design, the cuisine of Emilia-Romagna finds its temple. And its high priest, acclaimed by the press and by gourmets alike, is Roberto Illari, a chef from Fiorenzuola d'Arda, in the province of Piacenza, who got to Latin America picking up experience wandering about the world. The daily newspaper *La Nación* describes Illari as "congenial and forthcoming, his humor peculiar and his look reminiscent of a Fellini movie. He wears a strange black hat with a visor that makes him look like a police officer or a crewmember on a Russian fleet." That last mention of Russia was made in reference to one of the chef's earlier experiences, at the Grand Hotel Europe in Saint Petersburg, where he got to in 1997 from Hong Kong, the third stop in his foreign career, which started off in Switzerland and then moved on to Greece. The sharp fall of the ruble in July of 1998 prompted him to travel again, this time to Goa, in India, and to Amman, in Jordan. But it was only in Chile that he achieved his lifelong dream of a restaurant that would carry only his beloved voices of grandma's table and the specialties of Emilia-Romagna. As soon as he made it to Santiago, in April of 2005, he asked for the Central Market, where all the foods, and the produce in particular, find an almost geometrical arrangement, such as he had never seen before anywhere else.

Strozzapreti are a dish that no patron of the restaurant can forgo. But equally delightful are all the other specialties for which Emilia-Romagna has built a worldwide reputation: these include stuffed pastas (lasagna, tortellini, ravioli), barbecued eel, calamari salad, and meat and polenta. It is all accompanied with generous wines, which the Senso restaurant offers from a cellar where you will find the widest selection of Italian wines in Chile. Another regional place that tourists and globetrotters should be aware of is the *Piccolo Caffè* in Bogotá, the capital of Colombia. Its owner is Maurizio Quadrio Balestrieri, who was born in Liguria, but whose actual hometown is Parma. In fact he grew up in Salsomaggiore until 1975, when he was seized by a

spirit of adventure that got him to reach his uncles, who had emigrated to Bogotá in the 1950s. Quadrio proudly claims it was he that first brought carpaccio to the Colombians, "a very receptive people," he says, "and open to influences from the outside. The country is like a sponge, quite keen to absorb our culture." For this reason, the people in Colombia are not slow to appreciate Italian cuisine, and in particular the dishes typical of Emilia-Romagna offered at the *Piccolo Caffè*. You will find artfully cooked tortellini, ravioli, cappelletti, and lasagna, though Quadrio has to admit, "We don't always find the prime ingredients as we would like to." The restaurant "offers a small bit of Parma in the middle of Colombia," and if it meets the approval of the Italian travelers who pass through here, that's an indication that the place has some good in it. New York is home to a restaurant run by Mauro and Gigi Lusardi, two brothers from Borgotaro (not far from Parma): the place is called Lusardi's and is described in dining guides and Web sites as one of the city's best Italian restaurants. It is located in the Upper East Side, at 1494 Second Avenue, offering a northern cuisine, especially from Emilia-Romagna, in a refined ambiance in mahogany and gold. Mauro and Gigi left for New York in the 1970s, joining a third brother who had already moved there, and in twenty-two years of experience they have come to the point of near perfection.

The menu is abundantly filled with specialties from Emilia-Romagna, from the appetizers (culatello with burrata and artichoke, cotechino with mostarda) to the entrees (tagliolini with truffles, ravioli with mushroom ragù, tortelli in truffled sauce) to the meats (veal encased in a parmesan crust with a sauce prepared with white wine and lemon) to the fish (roasted sea bass with balsamic vinegar) to the desserts.

There is an impressive array of wines and liquors, ranging from grappa to dessert wines, a list that has earned Wine Spectator awards for seven years in a row.

The excellence so achieved shows as well in the fact that the Lusardi brothers are running seven other restaurants and wine bars in the New York area. And one of these wine bars has recently been celebrated as the best in Manhattan. 🍷