



January • February
2022



Italia

NEWSLETTER of the ITALIAN WORKMEN'S CLUB

914 Regent Street • Madison, Wisconsin 53715

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• • • President's Message • • •



The Newsletter

This issue of *Italia* includes new content. We cancelled the November/December issue

to allow time for contributors to develop articles that will inform and entertain. We've also added more photos to help bring the words to life. Sit back, relax, grab a glass of wine and enjoy the first issue of *Italia* for 2022.

The State Of The Club

Due to the persistent COVID-19 corona virus and its variants, 2021



was a challenging year. However, the commitment and effort of dedicated members helped us navigate obstacles, stabilize our financial resources and stay connected.

In short, our club is structurally and financially sound. Join me in turning the calendar page with the expectation of enjoying a brighter, friendlier and healthier 2022.

Activities

We were forced to cancel several popular social activities; including our Charity Golf Outing and



Annual Awards Banquet. However, we did manage to have our summer picnic at McKee Farms Park and to make wine. A special thanks to Jack Parrino and Butch Pullara for organizing the picnic, which featured sandwiches from Fraboni's Deli. Also, thanks to Joe Tripalin for purchasing the grapes, Todd

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Cambio for hosting the “crushing of the grapes” in his backyard, and to Travis Hunter for preparing the Italian Sausage sandwiches for the members who showed up to help. A special thanks to Tiny Urso for demonstrating the “head in the hole” guitar.

Although we did get together for in-person membership meetings in May and June, we were forced to return to virtual meetings in July. We made an exception in October as we made arrangements with our next door neighbor, *Sweet Home Wisconsin* to host our meeting on their backyard patio. We ordered food from them and they allowed us to bring our clubhouse red wine to drink. It was great to get together under the stars on a beautiful fall evening.

We closed out the year by gathering at the clubhouse on December 21st to celebrate Christmas. A delicious Italian-themed dinner featuring anti-pasti and entrees from Salvatore’s Tomato Pies, owned by club member Pat DePula, along with a variety of home-made holiday desserts were enjoyed by fifty IWC and IAWC members, spouses and guests. In the spirit of the season of giving, we collected non-perishable food items and donated them to the St. Vincent de Paul food pantry. I also presented awards to members who went “above and beyond” to help our club during the past year.

Finally, our Social Activities Committee, led by Frank Alfano and Fred Underhill have a robust schedule of events planned for 2022. Look for details in future newsletters.



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Italia

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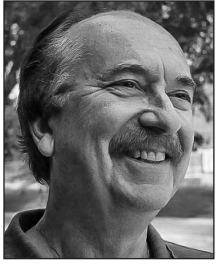
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We treat every family as our own ...

Vino, Vino, Vino



By Tom Smith

There are a lot of stereotypes about Italians, some true and

some false. But a stereotype does often depict something about a culture. Italians speak loud and often with their hands. First thing in the morning Italians have a cup of coffee...Italy invented the espresso machine. Italians have a rich heritage with food, from pasta and pizza to many amazing specialties. And yes, Italians do love wine. For some, it's a hobby, just as we make it at the Club. For others it's religious. It can be just a type of alcohol, or a lifestyle. Though there are those who can take it or leave it, others couldn't live without it.



In 2020 there were 6.8 billion gallons of wine produced in the world, half of which came from Italy, Spain, and France. First in world wine production is Italy, with a little more than 18% or 1.24 billion gallons a year. As far as consumption, while the United States is first as a country, on a per capita basis Portugal leads the world with Italy a close second.

The word "wine" comes from the Old English word "win," which is pronounced "wean." This descended from the Latin "vinum" which the

Romans wrote as "VINVM" (in Latin VINVM is related to the Latin word for vineyard – vinea -- but vinum can also mean vine in Latin as well).



People have enjoyed wine for thousands of years, and though its origins go beyond Italy no people have demonstrated more passion for it. The origin and history of wine goes back thousands of years. The origin of wine lies with ancient Mesopotamia, sometime between 3000 and 4000 B.C.. Ancient man was most certainly familiar with grapes, and historians generally agree that wine was probably discovered by accident when grapes first fermented with the help of wild yeasts present on the skins from grapes held in storage.

The Greeks brought the art of wine making to Southern Italy and Sicily. They believed that the gods actually lived in the grapes they harvested and the wines they drank. The drinking of wine allowed them to transcend their daily lives and commune with the gods. The Romans were obsessed with the Greek process and worked to refine and improve it. The Roman poet wrote "No poem was ever written by a drinker of water." The mild Italian climate was perfect for producing



Dionysius, god of vine harvesting and wine making

wines, so perfect that the Greeks called Italy Oenotria, or the land of trained vines.

From 300B.C. to the beginning of the Christian era, the population exploded in Rome, increasing to more than one million people. Along with that population increase came increased demand for wine. Viticulture outside of Italy was prohibited under Roman law. The Romans drank wine with every meal, but the alcohol content was far stronger than modern day wines so they mixed it with water. During that time sweet white wine was preferred, produced in the Falernian region near Naples. They also added unusual flavors to their wine, herbs and spices, salt water, sometimes even chalk to reduce acidity. The Romans contributed much to the art of growing and producing wine, including using trellises, improved presses, and determining which grapes were suited to the best climates. They also decided to age wines and preferred those ten to twenty-five years old. They discovered wines aged best in tightly closed containers and were

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the first to use wooden barrels. But demand for wine declined with the fall of the Roman Empire. Production during the Dark Ages was continued by Roman Catholic monks until its popularity returned during the Renaissance. The monks actually kept records of their winemaking practices and grape cultivation, which helped the various regions match the best variety of grape for their soil.

The way people drank wine actually changed during the Renaissance. People believed that everything they consumed consisted of four properties...hot, cold, wet, and dry. Achieving the correct balance between these properties was thought to be essential to achieving good health. This became the basis for the idea of choosing the right wine to complement a meal. If one were to strike the balance between these four things in one's body, selecting the correct wine was a critical part of eating a balanced meal. Today we pair wine and food based on taste and texture, but it's important to note that the Renaissance gave birth to the idea that certain types of wine go with certain types of food.

During the Renaissance some of Italy's most popular wines came to prominence. In the late 1500s Prosecco received the name it is known by today. It had existed for many years before then, in fact celebrated centuries before. Gaius Plinius Secundus, called Pliny the Elder (a Roman author, naturalist, philosopher, and naval/army com-

mander of the early Roman Empire) spoke of Julia Augusta (the first Empress of Rome) who gave credit for her eighty-six years of life to wine. But it wasn't until much later that it earned its reputation as one of the best of Italy. Chianti was another wine that gained popularity, in part due to the Antinori family, a family that has been part of winemaking for six centuries beginning in 1385 and after 26 generations still owns one of the biggest wine companies in Italy today.



Vineyard near Mount Etna in Sicily

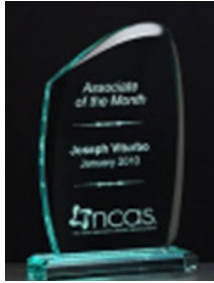
Through the Renaissance and beyond, wine cultivation continued to grow in Italy. Tuscany and Sicily were two major centers for wine production. Tuscany sold its first bottle of wine overseas in 1710, and became a major player in the international wine market. The constant sunshine and arid climate of Sicily made it another ideal place for growing grapes. Sicily quickly became a high producing wine region with exports to Europe, China, and India. In 1880, grape phylloxera (a tiny insect pest that lives and feeds on vine roots) caused an economic crisis in Sicily. Despite that Sicily became and remains a leader in making wine.



The geography of Italy includes characteristics that are important to the production of wine. The fact that Italy is a peninsula with a long shoreline contributes moderating climate effects to the coastal wine regions. Its latitudinal range permits wine growing from the Alps in the north to almost within sight of Africa. And the hilly and mountainous terrain offers a variety of altitudes, climate, and soil conditions perfect for growing grapes. Italy's Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MIPAAF) has documented over 350 different grapes and granted them "authorized" status. In addition, there are more than 500 other documented varieties in circulation. Italian wine is produced in every region of Italy, with 1,730,00 acres under vineyard cultivation. The twenty wine regions correspond to the twenty administrative regions of the country. The differences between these regions is key to the different types of Italian wine. Wine in Italy tends to reflect

ABCD Awards

A Social Club that isn't able to socialize is difficult to maintain. However, a number of our members took it upon themselves to



go above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that our club persevered. I want to recognize each of them for their efforts.

Al Falaschi & Ross DePaola – Technology Support

For continuous improvement of our audio/visual capabilities at the clubhouse, giving us a presence on social media, maintaining our website and producing a cooking demonstration video for the virtual International Festival.

Antonio Re & Travis Hunter – Culinary Crew

For being the mainstays of anything to do with food for our club. Whenever there's a need for meal preparation, they're the first to volunteer their talents for preparing Italian delicacies.

Butch Pullara & Jack Parrino – Clubhouse Caretakers

For repairing things when they're broken, making sure our stock of supplies is always full, ensuring that our building is structurally sound and our property is safe and leading the effort to clean and disinfect our clubhouse during the height of the pandemic.

Frank Alfano & Fred Underhill – Social Activities Revival

For persevering despite having to cancel several events, and making the Club Picnic and Christmas Party happen. Also, for proactively planning a full slate of events for 2022.

Joe Tripalin & Todd Cambio – Wine Making

For committing time and talent to continue our club's tradition of wine making. Joe found a new supplier, acquired the grapes and Todd hosted the process in his backyard using his own home-made press.

John Caliva – Courtesy Transport

For volunteering to provide rides for some of our homebound members so they could partake in club activities and enjoy the camaraderie with fellow members.

Steve Carrola – Investment Reset

For accepting the position of Financial Secretary, leading a five member finance committee, reinvesting our club assets for stable growth and organizing our revenue and expenses so we're able to establish a budget.

Steve Urso – Meals For Members

For coming up with the idea of preparing and delivering a home-cooked meal for members during COVID-19, refusing to accept, "It can't be done" for an answer, and for managing its implementation.



IWC Birthdays

January

James Trameri	1/5
Steve Urso	1/8
Matthew Jarosz	1/9
Robert Murray	1/9
Dave Valenza	1/13
Garrett Gundersen	1/14
David Spadoni	1/15
Carlo J. Bonura	1/17
Bob Lavigna	1/17
Michael Luckey	1/17
Nick Baldarotta	1/23
Peter Cerniglia	1/24
Richard Trameri	1/29
Daniel Blasiole	1/31
Jason Mascitti	1/31

February

Russell Theel	2/2
Thomas Speranza	2/3
Michael Alioto	2/11
Joe Alfano	2/12
John Cusimano	2/13
Joseph M. Schiro	2/19
Vincent Ritacca	2/21
Joseph Scarpelli, Jr.	2/22
Robert Chiesa	2/24
Stephen Sasso	2/26
Frank Alfano	2/27
Rossario G. Parisi	2/28

Tom Smith & Tony Reitano – Newsletter Revitalization

For adding informative content and entertainment value to our bi-monthly newsletter through their Italian themed feature articles and crossword puzzles respectively.

Festa Italia – 2022

Our club's Mission Statement calls for us to engage with our community and preserve and promote Italian history, culture, language and traditions. Festa represents the perfect opportunity to make that Mission come alive.

Frank Alfano and Jim DiUlio have joined me as tri-chairpersons for Festa Italia 2022. Subcommittees are forming, planning has started and soon the call for volunteers will be at the forefront of our in-person meetings.

No one wants to cancel Festa for a third straight year. We all yearn for a return to normalcy and a celebratory event featuring Italian food, music, culture and fun, as only the IWC can deliver is sure to be welcomed and well-attended by people from all over Dane County.

We want Festa back and better than ever, but it will take the collective effort of all members to make it happen. We all have unique talents. Think about what you can do to help.

Master Plan

We owe it to our ancestors and to future generations to ensure that our

club endures. Despite having to meet virtually, our Council has established a strategic plan that addresses short term needs and long term goals. The foundation of the plan consists of four pillars:

- Festa & Leadership / Governance
- Membership
- The Clubhouse
- Tradition / Events / Culture / History

We've also managed to construct a framework of goals and milestones

that will enable us to quantify, measure and evaluate our progress. Details of the plan will be shared with membership in early Spring 2022.

Benefits Secretary

Dave Valenza has agreed to accept the duties of Benefits Secretary effective January, 2022. When this position was originally conceived, the primary function was to pay life

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Feel Good Stories

Katie's E-Card. Katie LeTourneau is a treasure. In her 104 years she's delivered more smiles than one can count. Recently, she wasn't feeling well, but with the help of technology, we delivered a "Thinking Of You" e-card filled with well wishes. Katie's son Jim said reading the messages to her was the perfect tonic.

Book Donations. Daniel Amato, long-time owner/curator of the nearby Christopher Columbus Museum donated several priceless books to add to our club's growing library. In addition, separate donations of books (some written in Italian) were made from the estates of local residents who wanted them to find a home for future generations to enjoy. Discussions are underway to expand our Piccola Biblioteca to accommodate our new inventory.

Helping Others. We've all felt isolated during this pandemic, but some more than most. I regularly check the voice mail box at our clubhouse, and recently there were two messages from ladies who spoke Italian, but very little English. They were just looking for someone to talk to, and perhaps answer a few questions. Our club was founded as a mutual aid society, and in that spirit, Past President Antonio Re and Maristella Cantini, who teaches Italian classes (both speak fluent Italian) reached out to these ladies and helped them in their time of need.

Fellow member, Jonathan Solari is the CEO of Madison Ballet. He took it upon himself to navigate the bureaucracy and arrange for four performances of a portion of "The Nutcracker" for the Afghan refugees in residence at Fort McCoy. Their lives have been difficult, but seeing this holiday classic brought light and hope that a brighter future awaits.

insurance benefits to a member's family when that member died. We no longer offer this program, so the function has shifted to informing members of the illness or death of a fellow member, and arranging for an honor guard at the funeral if the family requests it. The Council will consider an appropriate title change and will brainstorm ideas on how to improve our overall connectivity so news can be shared in a timely manner.

Club Finances

This past Spring, Steve Carrola, our Financial Secretary, and his team (Tom Smith, Joe Tripalin, Antonio Re and Anthony Gatti) developed an investment policy statement, which led to a plan to re-invest our resources for long term growth and to organize our revenue and expenses so as to allow for the establishment of an annual budget. The results of these efforts will be presented to membership in early 2022.

Club Membership

We currently have 150 members and membership is fundamental to our existence as a club. It's my sincere hope that we can return to our tradition of a Membership Meeting & Meal on the third Tuesday of every month. I look forward to seeing all of you at the clubhouse.

The Clubhouse

In Summer 2021, we installed a new,

high-efficiency (and quieter) air-conditioner and have plans to install a second unit in Spring 2022. This will ensure long-awaited, cool comfort for all as we gather on those hot July and August nights. We're also making arrangements to have two of our heating units flushed and cleaned to ensure much needed warmth for those bitterly cold winter months. Finally, we're helping to facilitate an upgrade for the Greenbush Bar's pizza oven vent system.

Overall

The Council continued to conduct virtual meetings. We paid our bills for insurance, taxes and utilities in full and on time and regularly monitored the temperature of our clubhouse and performed necessary checks to ensure the safety and security of our building.

Moving Forward

As we begin 2022, we should focus our collective energy on these three areas:

Honor The Past

Commemorate the efforts of those members who built the club.

Acknowledge the accomplishments of current members who have lived our mission over a long period of time.

Preserve the photos, videos, audio interviews and recordings that tell the story of the Greenbush neighborhood and keep the music of the past alive for future generations.



Celebrate The Present

Continue the traditions of Festa Italia, Wine Making, Sauce Tasting, etc. that honor our rich cultural history.

Establish new events / activities to better engage all members and positively impact the community.

Embrace the specialness of our monthly business dinners.

Envision The Future

Implement our Master Plan.

Strengthen our ties with the Milwaukee, Racine and Kenosha clubs.

Ensure membership stability and pursue growth initiatives.

President's Mail Box

Send me an e-mail (davidrizzo@me.com). If there's something you like or don't like about our club, or if you simply want to ask a question, or make a suggestion, I really want to hear from you. I can't promise that I'll address every need, or implement every idea, but I can promise you the courtesy of a response.

Alla prossima volta, statevi bene e Dio vi benedica. ■■

THE 'OTHER' FLORENCE

By Diane Lund

Florence is, arguably, one of the most culturally fascinating cities in the world. I was there for two days in 2016 and during that time visited the Uffizi and Accademie Galleries, and the Duomo and Baptistery. All were *bellissimi*, but I left knowing that I had rushed through or totally missed many exhibits on that first too-short visit.

In the summer of 2021 I had the *buona fortuna* to again visit Italy. I spent the majority of my 7-week trip in Prosecco country, north of Venice and south of the Dolomites, but then found myself blessed with 2 days in Florence. My first thought was to go back to the Uffizi and Accademie and try to spend enough time to not feel cheated again.

However, as everyone knows, due to Covid-19 the summer of 2021 wasn't the same as 2016. Because of Italy's mask mandate for all indoor places and the country's vaccine requirement for all restaurants and museums, I felt much safer than in the U.S. However, I still found myself not wanting to take unnecessary chances with large crowds. So instead of returning to the tried and true sites I decided to visit some venues that were not on traditional "must see" lists. And I have to say, that was one of the most fortuitous decisions of my life. Not only did I avoid large crowds, but I also got to experience some new and incredibly interesting places.

To further avoid large crowds, I

rented a condo through Airbnb in the less-crowded San Niccolo section of the Oltrarno neighborhood, located on the south side of the Arno River. I found it to be *vivace* - a vibrant area with artisanal boutiques, trendy bars and excellent restaurants. On my first day in Florence I visited only outdoor sides located in Oltrarno - both the Bardini and Boboli Gardens, along with Piazzale Michelangelo at sunset. All were highlights of my time in Florence, yet I would have missed them entirely if hadn't ventured south of the Arno.

On my second day in Florence I walked the short distance to the more crowded north side of the river. The first of the smaller museums I visited was the National Museum of the Bargello. You would think that a museum with '*Nazionale*' in the name would not be overlooked. But during my first visit I focused only on the 2 above-mentioned art galleries whose names were, in my mind, synonymous with Florence. I found the Bargello to be *stupendo* with its collection of sculptures (including an entire section devoted to the works of Donatello) along with many bronze, textile and enamel pieces, and an exhibit of Islamic art. Because of its smaller size the Bargello was not overwhelming and I was able to spend time actually appreciating the art. The building itself, the ancient Palazzo del Podesta, has an interesting past as it is the city's oldest civic building and even housed a prison for 350



years prior to it becoming a museum dedicated to the arts. It has a lovely courtyard and an imposing open staircase to the upper floors.

From there I went to the Galileo Museum. This museum is located on the bank of the Arno River, next to the Uffizi Gallery. For me the most impressive single piece in the museum was the huge armillary sphere made by Antonio Santucci in the late 1500's. However, there are interesting displays everywhere you turn - from collections of medical and scientific tools from all eras to detailed models of numerous breech birth presentations. My favorite room was one containing a number of instruments illustrating various theories of physics, dating from the 1700's or earlier, along with videos explaining the theories in terms a non-scientist like myself could understand. It was interesting to see first-hand that humanity's thirst for knowledge has always existed and to realize how much we owe to these early scientists.



After stopping for *un panino* at an outdoor café I walked to the Museum of the Ancient Florentine House or, as it is more simply referred to, *Palazzo Davanzati*. This is a 14th century residence, originally owned by the Davizzi family and purchased in 1578 by the Davanzati family. Descendants of the Davanzati family lived there until 1838 and the family coat of arms still embellishes the façade. The furnishings in the house clearly reflect the noble standing of the Davanzati family. Each floor, other than the third floor which housed the kitchen, had an identical layout which included a main hall, day room, study and bedroom. Surprisingly, each bedroom had an attached space in which to use a chamber pot.....basically, an ensuite bathroom, something I thought was a modern-day luxury. Additionally, there was a crude, but effective, chute that functioned as plumbing to bring rainwater into the home, a building detail I would not have expected in a medieval home.

The last stop of my day in the *centro storico di Firenze* was the Institute of the Innocents. I had saved it for last because I didn't know what to expect and found that intriguing. The structure itself, originally titled *Ospedale degli Innocenti* (Hospital of the Innocents) was built in the 1420's and its inclusion of a courtyard and other details normally reserved for a palazzo made it a unique hospital and very interesting from an architectural standpoint. But equally, if not more, important was its purpose – to provide a humanistic solution to the problem of babies being abandoned in unsafe locations or conditions. At the beginning, babies, mostly illegitimate or born to poor families, could be safely left at the hospital anonymously. In 1875 the anonymous “wheel of the innocents” was abolished, but orphans continued to be taken in until the mid-twentieth century. Over a period of more than 500 years, the hospital cared for over 375,000 children.

Today the building houses the Museum of the Innocents. In addition to many exhibits illustrating the history of the hospital there are stories of daily life of the children, including recollections written by wet-nurses and displays of tokens, also referred to as “marks of recognition”. Oftentimes a child was abandoned not out of choice, but because the parents were too poor to provide care. Many of these babies arrived with charms or coins which had been broken in half. The parent kept the other half in the hope that someday they would become one again. To see these “marks of

recognition” and learn the story behind them was very sobering.

The Museum also houses a collection of Renaissance art of which a majority are depictions of mothers and children (most often the Blessed Mother and Jesus).

In addition to its status as a museum, the building currently serves as the base of operations for the UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti. Among the Office's areas of concern and research are child trafficking, child labor, children and the internet, provision of family and parenting support, and issues of migration and gender. It is truly fitting that this Office which has worldwide impact be located in a place where the core value of respect for children began.

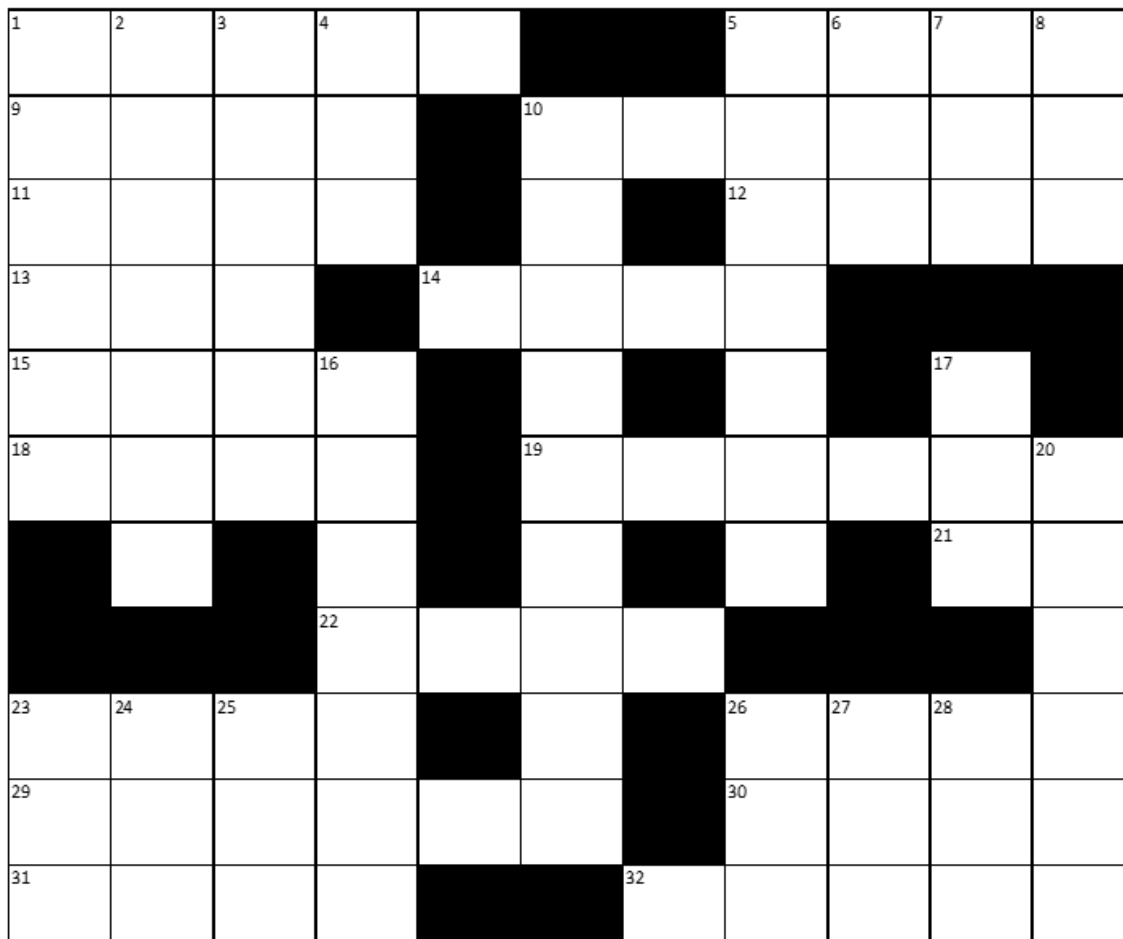
I'd like to end by saying again just how much I enjoyed my glimpse into the 'other' Florence. Although there are very good reasons why the more well-known tourist sites deserve their 5-star status, seeking out hidden treasures can be a very worthwhile and fun way to spend your time, no matter what city you find yourself in. *Ciao e buon viaggio!* ■



Crossword

IWC Crossword #6

by Tony Reitano



Across:

- 1 Pesto ingredient
- 5 Apple variety or Japanese Mountain
- 9 ___ Brute!
- 10 Countryman
- 11 North in Italy
- 12 Famous wine region
- 13 My take, when texting
- 14 Clothing brand
- 15 Prepares leather
- 18 Today, in Italian
- 19 Mr. Borgnine
- 21 Ma's mate
- 22 The Met has one every year
- 23 What a deserter is
- 26 You throw this when you're upset
- 29 Movie: Austin _____
- 30 Pepper in Italian
- 31 They're slippery
- 32 Shaving need

Down:

- 1 Sr. Mussolini
- 2 Bikini Atoll started it
- 3 What grappa is
- 4 Birth control device
- 5 _____ Nemo
- 6 Born in the _____
- 7 WWII slur
- 8 _____ Garten, cookbook author
- 10 Italian cookie favorites
- 16 The unmarried
- 17 It killed Cleopatra
- 20 He made sure the king wasn't poisoned
- 23 Gorilla
- 24 Oh _____ is me
- 25 Wise one
- 26 Psychiatrist's group
- 27 Red hat with a tassel
- 28 A new company may have one

Meet Your Council Members & Appointed Representatives

As we start the new year, I'd like to present the officers, appointed secretaries, elected councilmen at large and members who have volunteered to fill key roles for our club.

Council Members

David Rizzo – President

Tom Smith – Vice President

_____ – Membership Secretary

Anthony Gatti – Treasury Secretary

Butch Pullara – Building Secretary

Dave Valenza – Benefits Secretary

Fred Underhill – Social Activities Secretary

Antonio Re – Past President

Steve Carrola – Financial Secretary

Steve Urso – Corresponding Secretary

John Caliva – Councilman At Large

Travis Hunter – Councilman At Large

Don Mash – Councilman At Large

Bob Lavigna – Councilman At Large

John Cusimano – Councilman At Large

Jonathan Solari – Councilman At Large

Members Filling Key Roles

Tim Gatti – Club Historian

Steve Loniello – Rental Agent

Ross DePaola – Website & Membership Data Manager

Tim Gatti – Asst. To Ross

Jack Parrino – Houseman

Phil Clementi, Jr. – Asst. To Jack

Joe Shubat – Asst. To Butch

Solution

IWC Crossword #6

by Tony Reitano

B	A	S	I	L			F	U	J	I
E	T	T	U		P	A	I	S	A	N
N	O	R	D		I		N	A	P	A
I	M	O		I	Z	O	D			
T	A	N	S		Z		I		A	
O	G	G	I		E	R	N	E	S	T
	E		N		L		G		P	A
			G	A	L	A				S
A	W	O	L		E		A	F	I	T
P	O	W	E	R	S		P	E	P	E
E	E	L	S			R	A	Z	O	R

SUPPORT

Italia

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Restaurant Review: Bar Corallini

By Joe Tripalin

In November, David Rizzo gave me a call to see if I would consider writing a restaurant review. It took me less than a second to say yes and say I would write about my favorite restaurant, Bar Corallini.

Bar Corallini is an amazing Italian restaurant on the east side of Madison at 2004 Atwood Avenue. Before discussing more about the restaurant and why I like it so much, let me tell you a little about its amazing executive chef and proprietor Giovanni Novella. His story is the story of our Italian ancestors who came to America and through hard work made our country a better place.

Gio was born and raised in Torre del Greco near Naples Italy. He knew from a young age that cooking was his passion. He attended culinary school in Sorrento and cooked at many restaurants in the Sorrento area. After he graduated, he went to other parts of Italy and Europe and cooked at many high-end restaurants and he shared he even worked on a cruise ship that went from Italy to Albania, *mamma mia* what an experience! He had the opportunity to learn from many very well-known chefs and those chefs pushed him to challenge himself in the art of cooking.

Gio came to San Diego California in 2011 to continue his growth as a chef and to fulfill a lifelong desire to come to America. While in California, he met his future wife

Maryanne and lucky for us, she grew up in Madison. Eventually, Gio came to Madison, got married in Sorrento, and cooked at Cento and Fresca. He was offered the opportunity to open and run Bar Corallini and now we have this wonderful Italian restaurant to experience.

Bar Corallini is a welcoming space; kind of hip but also homey. It has a pizza oven from Naples. Gio wants the Italian food to be as authentic as possible and 70% of the ingredients are from Italy. Much of the rest he makes himself. He makes his own mozzarella, pasta, and gnocchi. The food on the menu is Italian cuisine



just as you would experience it in Italy.

There are so many good things to try on the menu. The eggplant fritters and the *insalata tricolore* are wonderful appetizers. His pizzas are great and I especially like the *salsiccia & olives* and the *barata & pomodorini* both are great choices. For pastas, I really like the *rigatoni alla*

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The Lions who Roared in Sicily

Review By Giovanna Miceli Jeffries

Since 2019, a publishing phenomenon rivaling Elena Ferrante's has captivated the Italians and directed their attention and literary interests toward Sicily. The two books responsible for such phenomenon have sold more than 1 million copies just in Italy, with the first one already translated in several languages, including English. It does help that the author, Stefania Auci, a special aid teacher from Trapani and transplanted in her adored Palermo, has honed her literary craft in historical narrative and romance novels. The two volumes that compose what is fittingly called, *The Saga of the Florios*, come to a total of past 1000 pages of enthralling, can't-put-down, thoroughly documented and passionately written historical novel. Stefania Auci is one of a growing number of successful and talented Sicilian women writers, a mixed generation of female voices that pride themselves with breaking the paradigm of the mafia driven-and -imagined narrative that so much has occupied and continues to inspire major and minor writers, following the stellar model of the world renown and prolific Andrea Camilleri. We are witnessing a flourishing of women writers who draw and elaborate in their different styles and genres, from the rich cultural, artistic and geographical humus of their island's history, traditions, modernization, past and present social conditions and aspirations.

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The first book, *The Florio of Sicily*, now available in English translation, chronicles the Florio family's modest beginnings in the old neighborhood of Palermo's harbor, the work and family daily unfolding of dreams, disappointments, humiliations, and perseverance. The Florio are outsiders, foreigners and competitors to the local, vigilant small business society, shun by the wealthy bourgeoisie and the noble class. Enterprising, astute and self-sacrificing, by the third generations they began to gradually marry into the decadent Sicilian nobility, moving up into the privileged stratosphere of the superrich, super ambitious, commercially and industrially omni reaching, super extravagant and leading the super luxurious lifestyle accorded to their class amid European and International circles. Their social and financial economic success is an homage to the entrepreneurial, risk-taking and astuteness of the older generation that finds in the Palermo of the early 1800s, pre and post-unification years, the propitious historical and economic conditions to work and thrive.

By the beginning of the 1900s, their holding portfolio could be the envy of a present day edge fund whiz: within two generations, they diversify their holdings and, while keeping the original apothecary shop still operating for a measure of good luck, they enter in every lucrative and innovative businesses they can put their hands and money

the local cuisine, and regional cuisines influence the wine.

Today, wine making in Italy is done under a regulatory framework administered by the Italian Ministry of Agriculture. The first official system of classification was established in 1963, modified in 1992, and further revised in 2010 to establish four basic categories of wine consistent with the latest European Union Wine regulations. The system provides strict regulations regarding the naming and classifying of wines that include: (1) Vini – wines that are called “generic wines;” (2) Vini Varietala – wines produced from one kind of authorized international grape varieties; (3) Vini IGP – wines with Protected Geographical Indication, meaning produced from a specific territory and following specific practices; and (4) Vini DOP – wines with Protected Designation of Origin, coming from smaller regions and passing stricter analyses



and tasting by an appointed committee. All of this contributes to some of the finest wines in the world.

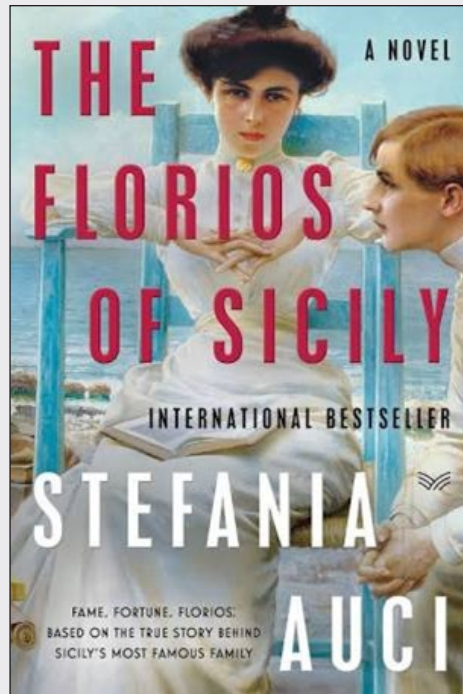
Of course, a love for wine and wine making exists closer to home at our own Club. The IWC has been making its own wine for years. From the first step in the process, the crushing of the grapes using the Club's classic wooden wine press – a press as old as the Club's building itself – to the natural fermentation, racking and re-racking, and the final bottling, it is a labor of love. Members enjoy producing the wine that complements meals prepared by members and served at our monthly membership meetings. Our “wine cellar” is growing as we have held so many virtual meetings in the course of the pandemic, and a virtual meeting offers no opportunity to share a glass of wine. But we continue to hope the day will soon come when we can raise a glass together in celebration of a return to the clubhouse! ■



on. The name Florio reconnects us to at least one great product of Sicily, the Marsala wine they invented and branded, but equally if not more innovative was the industry of Tuna canning in oil that revolutionized the preservation of that fish, previously cured in salt; then to tomatoes canning industry, to a trading empire, ship building and shipping, foundry, national postal service, and more and more. The Florio's ascent in their monopolistic model is the Sicilian version of the American ascension of the capitalist industry's Barons of the late 1800s and early 1900s.

And of course with money and influence, comes the refinement of the spirit and the mind, as modern Medici, the Florios patronize the Arts, finance the building of the famous Palermo's Teatro Massimo, surround themselves with the most fabled artists, opera stars of the time, open their palaces and villas for legendary parties and balls, host European traveling nobility and royals, establish the first international car race around the island, the renowned and competitive Targa Florio.

Stefania Auci's thick books are far from being mere lists of accomplishments and successes and decline, they are history-based narratives of real people, living, thriving, suffering, loving, the strong family and parental ties and struggles, the pride and sacrifices to protect, maintain and build a name, gaining and losing in the arch of a century and a half, moving from ancestral humble dwellings to palaces and sumptuous villas. Both the Florio men and



women compose an encompassing and time-rolling tapestry of characters whose will, passions, ambitions, talents and shortcomings weave indelible and all too human stories of lives that at times yield to family's demands, expectations, class conventions and greed, at others rebel and let themselves be carried by passions they can't control or tame.

As readers, in addition to appreciate and reflect on the compelling dramas of the main characters' lives, a most savored experience is the opportunity of visiting Palermo's neighborhoods through the past two centuries. We see the bustling Arenella, winding streets around the harbor, squares, bursting with people, we smell scents and taste flavors of what wafts out of the packed houses, the mix of craft and artisans, fishermen, store keepers, the beautification and modernization of the city through the decades, and especially the natural

splendor of the island of Favignana off the Trapani's seaboard, where the Florios establish their tuna processing industry, overseeing from the ancient practice of catching of the fish to its canning and shipping. And so goes for the origin and development of the Marsala wine, few kilometers south of Trapani in the vineyards of Marsala. We learn how the Florios arrived to learn and exploit the "port" quality of this wine through their relationship with the British commercial presence in Palermo, and so on.

The Florios chose for their family coat of arms the image of a lion, thus the original Italian title of the first of the two books, "I leoni di Sicilia," The Lions of Sicily. This reminds us of another coat of arms also imprinted in the title of a masterpiece of Italian literature, *Il Gattopardo*, The Leopard, by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, the saga of the Sicilian house of the princes of Salina. The noble Salina family was heading for decline in the second half of the 19th century, following the Italian national unification, coincidentally and ironically when the Florio were solidifying and expanding their commercial empire; from the 1800s to the 1930s, the Florios are the «uncrowned kings of Sicily», claims a reviewer. In the so-called "roaring" years, the Florios' fortunes began to spiral down in a combination of squandering and excesses as well as the sum of political, technological and market competitive rivalries.

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Bolognese and the cacio e pepe. The menu has seared Atlantic salmon and chicken piccata and both are very good. Don't forget the desserts they are wonderful especially the cannolo, just like they serve in Sicily. Everyday, Gio puts together a special that gives him the opportunity to be creative. They are well worth consideration. There is a full bar, wonderful wine selections, and a red wine called Gazerra on draft that is very good.

Bar Corallini is a special place with a wonderful menu and a chef that really cares about Italian cuisine and the enjoyment of his guests. Give it a try, you won't be disappointed (it is a popular place so be sure to make a reservation). ■■



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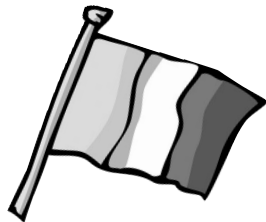
"We were the Leopards, the Lions; those who'll take our place will be little jackals, hyenas; and the whole lot of us, Leopards, jackals, and sheep, we'll all go on thinking ourselves the salt of the earth," prophesizes the prince of Salina in *The Leopard*.

The Leopards and Lions of Sicily roared indeed.

I Leoni di Sicilia, by Stefania Auci, (2019); available in English *The Florio of Sicily*, 430 pp.

L'inverno dei Leoni, by Stefania Auci, (2021), *The Winter of the Lions*, 679 pp. (not yet in English Translation). ■■





Meeting Dates

IWC Council Meetings – 2nd Tuesday of
Each Month 7:00 pm

IWC Membership Meetings – 3rd Tuesday
of Each Month 6:30 pm

Please clip and post this calendar.



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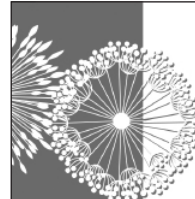
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