

# IL POSTINO

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## **Il Postino Goes to Riu Palace, Puerto Vallarta, Mexico 2009**

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Letters to the Editor



Larry O'Brien  
Mayor      Maire  
City of Ottawa      Ville d'Ottawa

January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2009

Angelo Filoso  
Executive Editor  
Il Postino  
101-865 Gladstone Ave.  
Ottawa, ON  
K1R 7T4

Dear Angelo,

On behalf of Members of City Council and the people of Ottawa, it is my distinct pleasure to extend my congratulations to you for being honoured with the United Way/Centraide Ottawa Community Builder Award in recognition of your outstanding contribution to our community.

For numerous years and still today, you have been instrumental in successfully advocating for the Italian Canadian Community and raising important funds for seniors, youth, the arts, several charities, as well as the Ottawa Firefighters Community Foundation.

Thanks to your dedication, compassion, tremendous efforts, and motivation, numerous persons now enjoy a remarkably improved quality of life in our city.

We as Ottawans are truly fortunate to count you among our distinguished community builders. I trust that your exemplary benevolent service will inspire others to endeavour to emulate your exceptional achievements on behalf of seniors, youth and the arts.

Sincerely,

Larry O'Brien  
Mayor



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to / *intestato a:* Preston Street Community Foundation Inc., Suite 101 Gladstone Avenue 865, Ottawa, Ontario K1R 7T4

Local Announcements

Villa Marconi Volunteer Builders 1989-1999



Lucio Apploni and Luigi Mion present award to Salvatore Giamberardino



Lucio Apploni and Luigi Mion present award to Gabriele Giamberardino



Lucio Apploni and Luigi Mion present award to Rocco Floccari



Lucio Apploni and Luigi Mion present award to Nicola G.



Lucio Apploni and Luigi Mion present award to Emidio D'Angelo



Lucio Apploni and Luigi Mion present award to Tadino Calvano



# General Interest

## Another typical day of tattoos, body piercings, and Italian parents

By Dosi Cotroneo

Another typical day of tattoos, body piercings, and Italian parents.

It had the makings of a bizarre dream, if not, a nightmare. The kind you would have as a kid, after eating too much chocolate cream pie, chased down by Coca-cola, and sour cream and onion chips.

Just what were three Italian senior citizens and yours truly doing in a downtown Ottawa tattoo/body piercing salon, not once but twice this past week?

No, my parents did not decide to join 21st century Goth culture and get tattoos and multiple body piercings. They did, however, offer to do “something special” for my close to 70-year old auntie visiting from Southern Italy. Who knew she wanted a belly-button piercing? This woman who calls herself the sister of my over-protective, overly-cautious, overly-fearful, 80 year-old Papa, drives a car, a motorcycle, flies herself halfway across the globe, all on top of the fact that she is completely deaf, does not speak a single word of English, and has a penchant for nose and belly piercings.

The jury is still out on how I was selected to arrange this bizarre outing to this downtown tattoo/piercing salon. Pop waited patiently outside of a tattoo room, while I proceeded to translate and sign, to the best of my ability, Italian explanations and instructions on “the care and maintenance of body piercing” to my non-English speaking, deaf aunt. All was said and done within minutes. Ma fainted, auntie didn’t bat an eyelash, and besides labor and filing income taxes, I was never so relieved to get anything over and done with in my entire life.

All we had to do now was locate my 81-year old Papa, who was last seen fast asleep in a chair outside one of the tattoo rooms. Could something have been lost in translation and Papa was now the proud owner of some large, navy-looking tattoos plastered across his back or chest, or even worse, both? Much to our relief, we located him chatting it up in the back alleyway, with a rather stout, tattooed, bearded man, who looked as though he could very well belong to one of those large gangs of motorcycle enthusiasts who are clad in black leather from head to toe and make it their business to break the law.

When I suggested we take photos for Auntie’s keepsake album, Ma was the first to shout a firm, “no.” Her and pop would only pose for a photo in front of the tattoo wall of fame, with my now belly-button pierced 66 year old Italian aunt.

I did, however, have no problem clicking photos of auntie with the staff of young piercers, including one young woman with 12 facial pierces, another with hot pink hair and both her arms covered in ink, and of course, the motorcycle gang-inspired tattoo artist.

I was barely backed out of their driveway when Ma was ringing up my cell phone. Apparently auntie decided I must take her back to the downtown Ottawa tattoo/piercing salon for a nose ring before she returns to Italy on Friday.

This has the makings of a reality t.v. show – Italian Ink.

## TICK TALK - The perils of a clogged drain and a seven digit telephone number

By Dosi Cotroneo

It started with a clogged drain. Next, a trying telephone call consisting of fractured English, two hearing aids that require fresh batteries, and a pair of misplaced bifocals. I had planned to make Saturday afternoon my official day of rest, but the Gods can be unkind at times. Too much melted cheese from too many holiday lasagna meals seem to have clogged up Mom and Pop’s downstairs kitchen sinks. What does a clogged sink in Nepean have to do with a much-needed and long overdue day off in Manotick? I’m still trying to figure that one out.

I could have sworn that one of the New Year’s resolutions I made was to stop running for the telephone. A man shouting in half English and half Italian was on the other end of the line. Note to self: replace dad’s hearing aid batteries before I suffer hearing loss due to his shouting. I sympathized with Pop over the clogged sinks, and thought that a few minutes of patience would put an end to this conversation and I could get on with the business of idleness. Apparently not.

Thanks to Cesare, Pop’s Italian neighbor, there just happens to be a plumber who lives out my way, and of course, my father assumes that I know the names and telephone numbers of every person residing in and around the village of Manotick. “You mean you don’t know who Tony the plumber is?” he scolded.

I know that trying to be more patient was also on my list of resolutions, so I gently put the phone down and allowed Pop to continue his harping while I made myself a cup of chamomile tea. Two steaming, soothing cups later, Pop was still trying to decipher Tony’s telephone number.

“In Canada, the phone numbers have seven digits Pop. That last one only makes six,” I politely stated. Ever wonder why the calmer you remain,

the angrier the other person becomes? This is where the trouble started. A woman sounding like my mother picked up one of the six extension phones these people have in their house and a full-blown argument over the whereabouts of Pop’s spectacles ensued. Luckily, she located the missing bifocals.

At long last, the seven digit phone number. Now all I had to do was figure out whether the first three digits were 822, 826, or 862. I tried all three. Afterall, what else did I have to do on my long awaited, highly anticipated, and much deserved day off?

The first two numbers were not in service. The third, a cell phone number. Tony was in Montreal watching the game. He asked me to call him back on Sunday evening. It’s an absolute miracle that I don’t have a drinking problem.

I know what you’re thinking. What did I do with the remains of my day? On pop’s loud and firm suggestion, I spent the entire afternoon driving him and Ma around every hardware and building centre within a 100 km radius, pricing a new set of double sinks and a new faucet. After our eighth stop, they decided not to make any hasty decisions, after all, they still didn’t know what Tony’s hourly rate would be. “We can always go back with you next week,” were the last words I heard them say to me as I tore out of their driveway.

I’ve decided to re-write my list of New Year’s resolutions. This time it will include: do not answer the telephone next week; subscribe to call display; and remember to turn the ringer off on my next day off.

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# International

## Shrimp and Couscous alla Rizzuti

By Maria Rizzuti

I was first introduced to couscous back in the eighties when I was scrutinizing the salad bar at work for my usual lunchtime meal of what Elaine from “Seinfeld” calls “the big salad.” I was assembling my conventional components of the all you can eat salad bar for my “big salad,” until one day I noticed something new. This new addition to the salad bar looked strange to me and my adventurous self told me to give it a try. That new ingredient to the buffet was couscous. On its own it tasted rather bland, but I found that when I mixed it with all of the other elements of my “big salad” along with the dressing, the couscous seemed to absorb all of the flavours and surprisingly enough, I thought it tasted really great.

Perhaps one of the reasons couscous is so well-liked around the world is that it is such a multi-purpose food. Its light fluffy consistency lends itself to being changed into savoury or sweet dishes. Although couscous looks like a grain, couscous is really more like pasta. Being Italian myself, it is no wonder why I gravitated to this pasta like food. It is made from crushed granules of semolina flour, salt and water, essentially the same ingredients for pasta.

Usually, couscous requires a long cooking time but now it is made to be ready in about 5 to 10 minutes. That is much more convenient for today’s busy lifestyles and if it is ready in less than 10 minutes, then I am all for that. I prefer the whole wheat couscous myself; it is exceptionally flavorful and wholesome. It is the perfect food for hectic but health conscious people. Couscous can be used instead of rice, pasta or potatoes as a substitute carbohydrate as part of a healthy balanced diet. Couscous is low in saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium and has B vitamins. I love it when I can chow down on food that is good for me and my family and that we can all benefit from health wise.

Couscous has now become a common food here and has shown up on dinner tables and restaurants globally. Couscous has origins in Africa, dating back hundreds of years. It is popular in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. Migration from North African communities has spread its use, especially in France where it is one of the most popular dishes. According to North African legends, couscous has mysterious properties and has by custom been a special dish eaten at festive times. Talk about peculiar and inexplicable behaviour, every time I make couscous my husband Renato bursts out into song. It is only a two line ballad that he repeats that goes like this “Don’t mess with my couscous! / Don’t mess with my couscous!” I have no idea why he breaks out into this couscous chant, perhaps his inner couscous consciousness is rearing its head but it is so funny and he makes me laugh therefore I do not mind it.

Couscous is extremely effortless to prepare. The directions on the box advise you to use hot water but I prefer to use low sodium chicken stock; I believe it adds more flavour. Couscous is versatile and can be served with meat, fish, vegetables and various spices. Couscous can be eaten hot or cold and in salads like how I first discovered it.

Shrimp is the co-starring ingredient in this recipe. Recipes using these crustaceans form part of the many cuisines of various cultures. Shrimp is most commonly used in Asian seafood dishes. It is a necessary ingredient in Spanish paella. Shrimp is even used in Italian cacciucco which is an Italian fish stew consisting of several different types of fish and shellfish cooked in wine, tomatoes, and chili pepper.

Today I present my recipe of Shrimp and Couscous alla Rizzuti to you. Now like my husband’s song goes, “Don’t mess with my couscous!” and follow the recipe and give it a go!

### Shrimp and Couscous alla Rizzuti

Serves 4 to 6

#### Ingredients for Shrimp

- 3 340 g packages (small 40 to 44) of uncooked black tiger shrimp shell off and deveined
- 2 lemons- zest the two lemons and juice of the two lemons
- 2 cloves of garlic-slivered
- ¼ cup chopped Italian flat leaf parsley
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- Salt pepper to taste
- ¼ tsp hot chili flakes (optional)

#### Preparation for the Shrimp

Rinse and drain shrimp.

In a skillet on medium high heat, add olive oil and slivered garlic. Cook garlic until golden brown and then remove.

Add the shrimp, the zest and juice of the two lemons, salt and pepper to taste and the chili flakes if you are using them and the chopped Italian flat leaf parsley. Cook shrimp until they turn pink for 3 to 4 minutes. Remove shrimp with a slotted spoon and keep warm and set aside while you prepare your couscous.

#### Ingredients for the Couscous

- 1 340 g box or 2 cups of couscous (regular or whole wheat)
- 2 cups of low sodium chicken stock
- 4 to 5 large cooking onions - diced
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- Salt pepper to taste
- ¼ tsp hot chili flakes (optional)
- ¼ cup chopped Italian flat leaf parsley

#### Preparation for the Couscous

In a skillet on high heat add olive oil, diced onions, salt, pepper to taste and chili flakes if you are using them. Sauté the onions for 2-3 minutes, then turn down heat to medium high and continue to cook the onions until they are thoroughly cooked through and caramelized. Remove with slotted spoon and set aside.

Meanwhile, add two cups of low sodium chicken stock in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Turn off heat and pour in the 2 cups of couscous and cover and let stand for 5 minutes.

Remove cover and fluff couscous gently with fork. Then add the cooked onions to the couscous and gently stir to incorporate and flavour the couscous. Spoon couscous mixture into a serving platter, add the shrimp on top and sprinkle with the chopped parsley and serve.

Buon appetito!



**Yasir Naqvi, MPP**  
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# General Interests

## The “We Keepa Go” Philosophy

By Renato Rizzuti

“We keepa go” is what my mother-in-law says when I ask her how she is doing. Her name is Felicetta Gallo and she is Calabrese and 72 years old. “We keepa go” may sound like a simple philosophy but it is actually a pretty good philosophy for getting through the complexities of day to day living.

While I was a student at Carleton University, I took a couple of philosophy courses. I studied the great philosophers like Plato, Aristotle and Rene Descartes. While it was great learning about logical thinking and building a philosophical argument, in terms of practical philosophy for every day living, it was somewhat lacking. Rene Descartes’ brilliant phrase that proves one’s existence, “I think, therefore I am” is very insightful when it comes to our “existence.” What about our daily existence in the real world? This is where a homespun philosophy like “We keepa go” comes into play.

The “We keep go” philosophy goes with the strong “Italian” character steeped in optimism. It denotes “forward movement” in one’s affairs. As long as you “keepa go,” you are doing alright. It is when you stop this forward movement that you run into problems. The whole philosophy is to endure and persevere whatever life has put in your path. The words “we stoppa” have no place in this philosophy. “We keepa go” means that you are enjoying the basic necessities of life and that you are basically successful in managing to cope with your daily life.

“We keepa go” can cover the subject of economic uncertainty. You have to ask yourself what are the basic material things required to maintain your existence? Some form of shelter is important. Whether you are renting or own a place of your own is not relevant to the discussion. What is relevant is the fact that you are able to pay the rent or the mortgage every month. This keeps you going until the mortgage is paid or until you save enough money to buy a place of your own and stop paying rent. Food is another basic necessity. It really irritates me when people refer to traditional Italian dishes like pasta e fagioli as “peasant food.” While monetary scarcity back in the old country during old times may have influenced some Italian dishes, there is no reason not to eat them because of the silly “peasant” label. These dishes are now known for their healthy and delicious properties and served in “finer” restaurants. So you can eat healthy and economically when it comes to Italian dishes, in other words, you can “keepa going.” Once the need for food and shelter are met then you can “keepa go” for other things.

The main economy of our country is in bad shape. There is no disputing that fact. However, during tough economic times your personal economy is more important. Consider yourself lucky if you have a good job or are getting income on a regular basis from your pension. You can survive the economic downturn as long as you keep your personal economy going. If you “keepa” your money going then you can “keepa” yourself and your family a “go.”

We can all age gracefully and healthfully. There is no need to surrender to the inevitable aches and pains that come with an aging body. You can lessen the severity of “aging painfully” if you simply eat healthy, get regular exercise and see your doctor for regular check ups. Sure, it takes a time and effort for shopping and preparing healthy food, but is worth it in the long term. Regular exercise can involve a full gym workout or a daily walk. Exercise is most effective when it is regular exercise. As you age, you should see your doctor on a more regular basis. It is advisable to follow directions for taking any medication you might need. There is no time for the worn out old sentiment of “I am a man and a man does not take pills.” That is just downright ridiculous! Your mental attitude is important as you age. You have the experience of youth on your side so you can have an experienced and mature outlook on life. The whole idea is to “keepa go” to a ripe old age!

If you are married, marital accord will make for a long and happy marriage. One way to avoid marital discord is to put all of your cards on the table before you get married. It is important for couples to compare notes to see where they stand when it comes to major marital issues like money and children. Once you get your lives in “accord” then you can move forward to marriage. As long as there is agreement when it comes to a philosophy of life then there should not be any marital problems. Minor disagreements like how much salt to put in the tomato sauce are not worth getting in an uproar about. There are more important things to consider in a marriage besides tomato sauce! A happy and easy going attitude will also allow your marriage to “keepa go!”

Neurotic people blow little things out of proportion until they become major life crises. A normal well adjusted individual does not “sweat the small stuff.” How in the world are you going to cope with a larger issue if you get yourself all worked up by something as trivial as running out of milk? There is no need to rip the refrigerator door off of its hinges if this happens! You have to develop an “it’s no big deal” type of attitude. In this way you will “keepa go” along your merry way. Life does not have to be difficult and hard. Life can be a wonderful thing when you have a positive attitude! It is easy to be happy when you just “keepa go!”

“We keepa go” is an optimistic and practical philosophical approach to life. Do not let life get you down. Do not let anything get you down. Rise up and live life! As long as you have forward movement in your life you can adamantly and confidently say, “We keepa go!”



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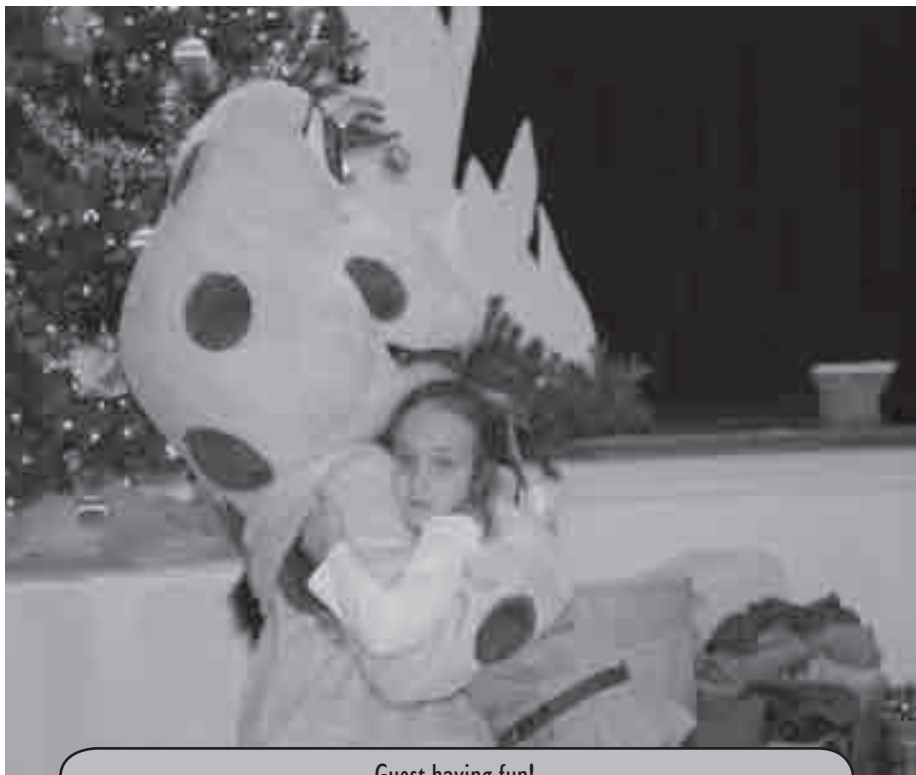
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## Order of Italo Canadians La Befana Celebration at Villa Marconi



Guest having fun!



Jennifer Filoso and Christian Bernal



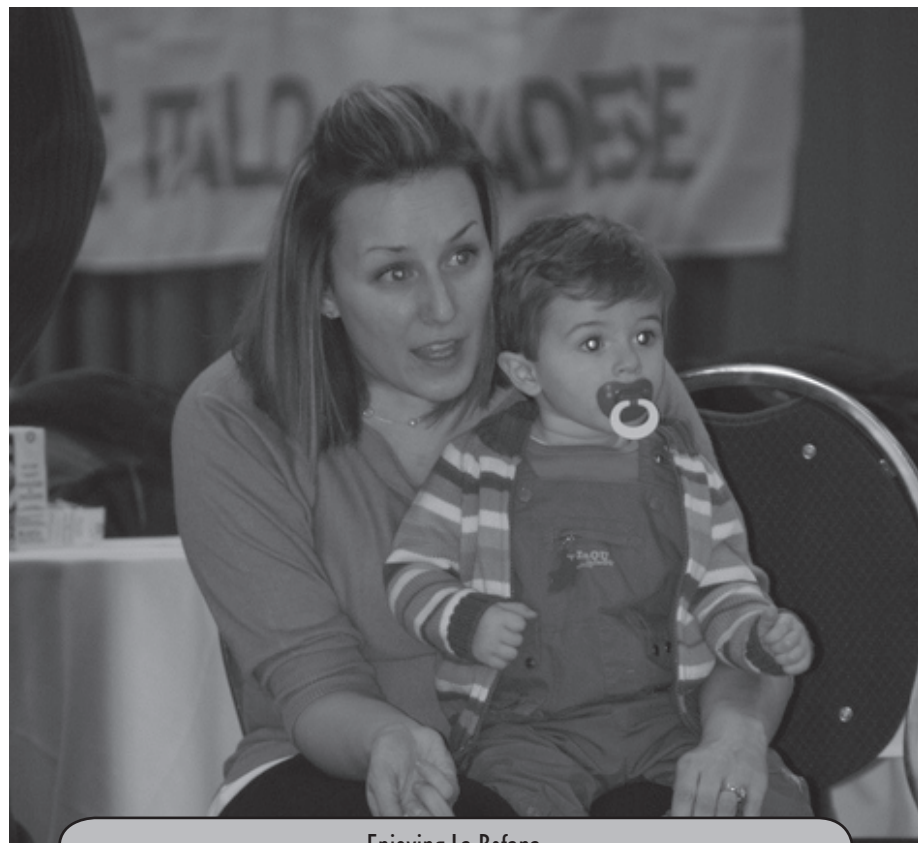
Ruscello Limpino Dancers



La Befana with Guest



Gabriel Bernal enjoying the moment



Enjoying La Befana



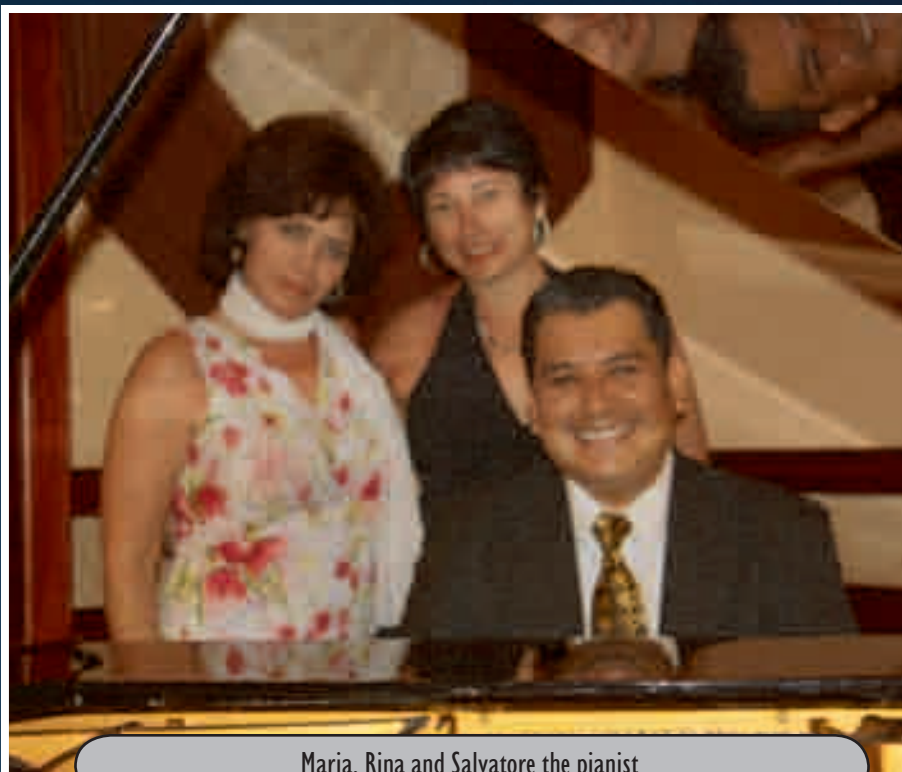


# Community SnapShots

## Il Postino Goes To Puerto Vallarta Mexico - 2009



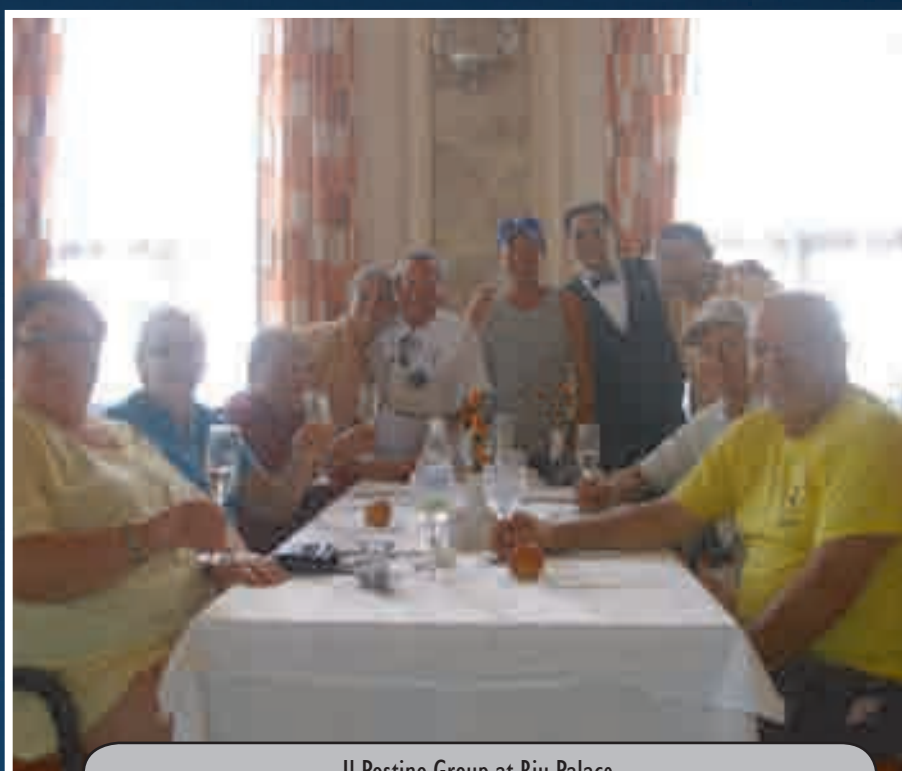
Italo Tiezzi



Maria, Rina and Salvatore the pianist



Il Postino Group enjoying Dinner



Il Postino Group at Riu Palace



Tony, Alvaro and Maurizio



Maria, Angelo, Bina and Maurizio



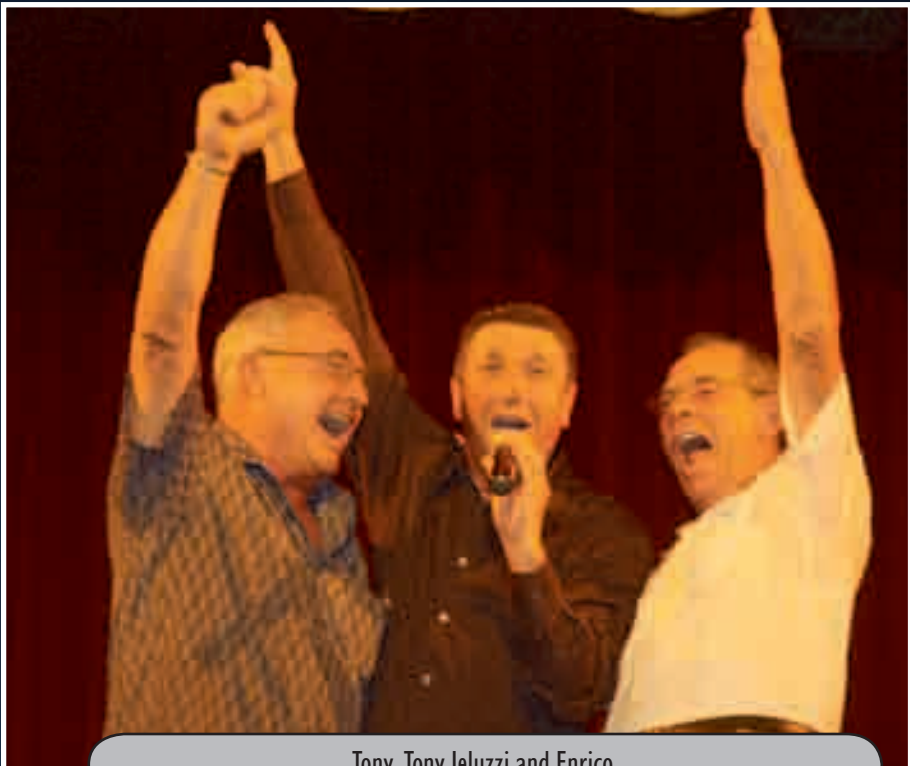
# Community SnapShots



## Il Postino Goes To Puerto Vallarta Mexico - 2009



Il Postino Group enjoying a Night out



Tony, Tony Ieluzzi and Enrico



Sara and Evaristo



The Ladies with Italo Tiezzi



Antonia, Enrico and Mr. and Mrs. Malitizia



Steve, Bina, Tony and Maria



# General Interests

## Gli Oscar puniscono il marketing italiano

di Dom Serafini

La stampa italiana ha dato molto risalto al fatto che “Gomorra”, il film che l'Italia ha sottoposto per la candidatura all'Oscar, non è stato scelto dall'Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, l'organizzazione di Los Angeles e New York che gestisce l'annuale premio.

Per “Gomorra”, il film tratto dall'omonimo libro di Roberto Saviano, vi sono stati tre problemi principali: uno riguarda l'Italia e due l'America.

Il primo problema ha a che fare con la mancanza del concetto di marketing che esiste nel settore dell'intrattenimento italiano. Se, invece che il cinema o la Tv al suo posto vi fossero stati l'industria italiana della moda o del vino, il “prodotto” avrebbe avuto tutti i riconoscimenti voluti. Questo modo di fare è una conseguenza del fatto che, in Italia, mentre la moda è finanziata a livello commerciale, i fondi per produrre film arrivano principalmente dallo stato. Per la maggior parte dei produttori italiani il “prodotto” è secondario. Una volta che riescono a mettersi in tasca una porzione dei fondi, si ritengono soddisfatti.

Il caso di “Gomorra” è un pó diverso nel senso che i contributi statali sono consistiti in un prestito di 2 milioni di euro e la Fandango -- forte del successo del libro che ha venduto 1,8 milioni di copie -- ha investito 2,55 milioni di euro per un costo totale di 4,55 milioni. Al botteghino il film ha incassato 10,2 milioni, sulla scia del successo al Festival di Cannes 2008, dove ha vinto il Gran Premio della Giuria.

Dell'incasso a Fandango sono andati 3,05 milioni (al netto del costo di distribuzione e quello degli esercenti) poi divisi con il coproduttore, Rai Cinema al quale, tramite la consociata 01, sono andati anche la commissione per la distribuzione nelle sale.

In pratica “Gomorra” ha rispettato la regola commerciale vigente nell'industria dell'intrattenimento americana dove si va in pareggio con il mercato nazionale, mentre i profitti provengono da quello internazionale.

A livello internazionale, i diritti del film per i soli Usa sono stati venduti all'IFC Entertainment di New York, che lo farà uscire il 12 febbraio in tre cinema: due a New York City ed uno a Los Angeles. E questo è uno dei “problemi americani”.

Per promuovere agli Oscar “La vita è bella”, il film di Roberto Benigni che poi vinse l'Oscar nel 1999, Miramax, la casa di distribuzione americana, investì 15 milioni di dollari, cioè il doppio di quanto Cecchi Gori aveva speso per produrlo. Investire quelle somme per le campagne degli Oscar è una cosa normale per molte società americane. Si includono la pubblicità (che spesso rappresenta il 37% dei costi); invio di Dvd agli oltre 5.800 soci dell'Academy che dovranno

votare (25%); visionamenti speciali per i votanti da svolgersi a New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco e Londra (12%), ed altri costi.

Per promuovere “Gomorra”, un film particolarmente difficile, la IFC non ha speso un granché e per questo è stata anche criticata. Controllando le principali riviste specializzate-- a partire dalla metà di ottobre 2008, cioè da quando l'Academy doveva ricevere i 65 film stranieri da selezionare per l'Oscar, al 10 gennaio 2009, l'annuncio dei candidati -- non è stato pubblicato nessun annuncio pubblicitario per “Gomorra”. Al contrario, film dall'India (come “Taare zameen par”) e dalla Giordania (“Captain Abu Raed”) hanno investito in modeste campagne promozionali, anche se, alla fine, non sono stati scelti.

Che qualcosa di “strano” si stesse muovendo all'Academy lo si poteva capire dal fatto che la prima commissione aveva aggiunto altri tre film ai sei che originalmente doveva selezionare. È stato scritto che questo è avvenuto per agevolare “Gomorra”, ma si pensa anche che sia stata una manovra per scansare critiche. Ed ecco che si intravede il secondo “problema americano”, o meglio, italo-americano.

Per gli italo-americani tutto ciò che ha a che fare con la criminalità organizzata italiana è tabù. Le associazioni italo-americane non perdono tempo a condannare e boicottare programmi Tv come “I Soprano”. Un giornale italo-americano per il quale curavo una rubrica in inglese si è rifiutato di pubblicare un articolo sui guadagni delle varie mafie italiane. Lo stesso articolo è uscito su di un sito italo-americano solo dopo che l'editore si è pubblicamente dissociato.

Che la vasta ed influente comunità italo-americana non avrebbe gradito un film “difficile” come “Gomorra” -- specialmente ad un evento così importante quale gli Oscar -- era prevedibile.

Alla fine, comunque, la responsabilità per la mancata “nomination” all'Oscar resta tutta in Italia: per aver ceduto i diritti ad una società americana non adatta alla campagna per gli Oscar (la IFC è più conosciuta come canale Tv che distributore di film). Per non aver preso in mano la campagna promozionale appena visto lo scarso interesse della IFC. Per aver prodotto un video promozionale poco attraente per il pubblico americano. Per non aver “posizionato” il film con la leadership italo-americana. Per non aver curato la stampa internazionale. L'ignorare la stampa internazionale è endemico tra le società italiane di cinema e Tv, specialmente quando vengono in “missione” in America. Ad esempio, durante le presentazioni organizzate da Rai Fiction a New York, testate americane vengono sistematicamente ignorate. #



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# International

## Chinese Cheap Labor are “Slaves of Luxury” of Italy’s Fashion Industry

Chicago Tribune By Christine Spolar

The transformation of Prato, just outside Florence, heralds a remarkable chapter in European Immigration. This city has become the latest gateway for Chinese ambitions.

Prato has an estimated 30,000 Chinese legal immigrants in this city of 180,000. Another 30,000 illegal immigrants are also suspected to live here.

But this is not like being in Chinatown in Chicago or New York or anywhere else. This is like China. White people are the foreigners here.

The Italian Fashion Industry, escapes responsibility for slave like work conditions by dealing with Chinese Sub contractors, and ignore the increasing unemployment of Italians.

### Chinese Immigrants Transform Italy’s Fashion Industry

PRATO, Italy—In the heart of “Made in Italy” fashion country, China has carved out a home.

Signs in Chinese script hang from wrought-iron balconies in this Tuscan city. Hot dumplings and fried fish—flown in from China—are served in cafes. Chinese men and women, tourist visas in pocket, hang out on street corners in the center of town angling for jobs. Not one speaks Italian.

Dozens of Chinese jam up to a wall filled with taped notes, all written in Chinese. Job offers are plentiful if grueling by Italian standards. Seamstresses can earn 90 euro cents a dress — about \$1.50—if they work all night in small workshops. A man can earn up to 500 euros a month—\$700—if he works all his waking hours.

The transformation of Prato, just outside Florence, heralds a remarkable chapter in European Immigration. This city has become the latest gateway for Chinese ambitions.

Like some city neighborhoods, suburbs and small towns across the United States where Mexicans and other immigrants gather in search of jobs, Prato is a place where two cultures can live side by side and never really know each other.

“In all my travels, I had never seen anything like it,” said Roberto Ye, a son of Chinese immigrants and an Italian citizen who opened a Western Union office in the heart of Prato. “I said to myself: This is not like being in Chinatown in Chicago or New York or anywhere else. This is like China. White people are the foreigners here.”

To understand the impact, follow the money. This year, Chinese immigrants in Italy sent home a whopping 1.68 billion euros, about \$2.4 billion, an impressive share of all 6 billion euros in remittances recorded by Italy’s government.

“You have to forget anything you have ever learned about Immigration when you come to Prato. Forget typical patterns. Europe has turned itself into a global marketplace, and the Chinese who come are trying to take advantage of that,” said Andrea Frattani, Prato’s multicultural councilor.

Frattani has overseen immigrant outreach since 2002 and, since then, Italy has realized a dramatic rise in Chinese labor, he said. Prato has seen a particular surge.

An estimated 30,000 Chinese are legal immigrants in this city of 180,000. Another 30,000 illegal immigrants are also suspected to live here. Many among the Chinese work in small hidden factories for as long as 14 hours a day. They keep to themselves, they buy everything with cash and they see work as a mission, Frattani said.

Prato is the core of pronto moda fashion - a manufacturing sector of cheap clothes sustained by Chinese workers and entrepreneurs. Government officials estimate that 5,500 textile workshops and factories in the region that has long been the backbone of small businesses in Italy are Chinese-owned.

Large warehouses line the motorway leading to Prato’s historic center. One warehouse - shown to a Tribune correspondent on condition that its name not be revealed- opened a door to another

continent.

Inside a vast storeroom of cotton sweat pants, skirts and blouses, a Chinese seamstress operated a high-speed, Japanese-made Juki sewing machine. Nearby, a Chinese man lorded over thick layers of jersey cloth with massive electric shears. With every buzz he created sleeves, pant legs and bodices for Chinese men waiting with open arms.

They ran the pieces over to a red Fiat, trunk open and motor running. A Chinese driver soon revved the packed car away. She’d return in hours with clothes sewn by women closeted in nearby houses.

That visit was a snapshot of hard work and efficiency. There are grimmer images.

Police have raided hundreds of crowded workshops in the past few years where Chinese live, work and sleep. They earn far below standard wage yet produce wares reportedly sold even in designer shops.

Some Chinese offer excuses for breaking labor laws. Workers still find conditions in Italy better than in China, they claim.

But authorities say Italians subcontract with Chinese businessmen to cover dodgy business practices; that Chinese owners rule over workers desperate for jobs; and that criminal networks - a scourge in Italy-can prey on outsiders who don’t speak the native language.

Social integration is almost non-existent; schools are the few places where young Italians and Chinese mingle.

“Chinese businesses exist in Italy, but they aren’t part of Italy. There has been Immigration but not integration,” said Daniele Cologna, a sociologist at the Codici research group in Milan.

Tensions can erupt. In Milan, home to generations of Chinese, riots broke out last year after police ticketed some Chinese traders who tried to turn Via Sarpi, a street known for shoe shops, into a wholesale district with near non-stop deliveries. The city eventually restricted deliveries to two hours a day.

Dongke Mo, who heads the Italian Chinese Association in Prato, said his storefront office is a haven for Chinese workers. They struggle, he said, with harsh work demands and document raids by Italy’s finance police.

“In America, you absorb immigrants. In Italy, the Chinese are looked on as labor,” Mo said.

Frattani, the multicultural councilor, said the speed and scale of this Immigration has transformed Italian markets. Chinese who landed in Tuscany are now moving into the nearby leather-trade region of Le Marche, he said.

“We believe that the migration of Chinese is done with the will of the China government,” Frattani said. “How else can you explain what is happening here? Look at the license plates of the buyers at those warehouses: Germany, Turkey, Sweden.”

“The Chinese know: Distribution is key. “ This is the way to distribute all over Europe,” he said.

In December 2007, a national TV channel broadcast a documentary, “Slaves of Luxury,” that linked several luxury brands in Italy to low-paid and often illegal Chinese labor. Prada and Ferragamo were quoted in the documentary as stopping such subcontract work when alerted to the issue.

In Prato, in Milan and in Le Marche, such revelations triggered shrugs and smiles. The program told many what they already knew. Chinese workers keep “Made in Italy” fashion afloat.

“In official factories, everyone has to have a certain amount of space and work a certain amount of hours. Well, if you follow those rules, costs will keep you out of the market,” said Luigi Sun, owner of Uniontrade, a Milan-based importer of Japanese and Chinese food and a respected figure in the older Chinese community.

“If you are in the garment businesses here “and I don’t care who you are”sooner or later you will have to work with the Chinese,” he said. “Prato is just an extraordinary example.”



# International

## Obama is ‘Handsome,’ says Italian PM’s Wife

By AFP

ROME (AFP) — Barack Obama is good looking, Silvio Berlusconi’s wife was quoted Friday as saying, three months after the outspoken Italian premier sparked controversy by describing the US president as “tanned.”

“He is a handsome man, he is young and healthy with a splendid family,” Veronica Lario told La Stampa newspaper.

“He is perfect for giving Americans their confidence back,” she gushed.

Berlusconi had provoked criticism for describing Obama as “young, handsome, and tanned,” during a visit to Moscow. Many in Italy and the United States saw the comment as racist or in bad taste.

Italy’s ANSA news agency said Berlusconi later defended the remark as “a great compliment.”

Lario also said her 72-year-old husband would be at the helm for a decade.

“Today there is no opposition in Italy. A strong opposition forces the majority to improve itself to face a stronger political challenge. My husband will rule for another 10 years,” she said.

Berlusconi was prime minister in 1994 and then held power between 2001 and 2006. He returned to office in May last year.

Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini meanwhile said he would meet with the new US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton “in two or three weeks.”

## 12 ITALIANS IN FIRST 12 PLACES

By AFP

Since WWII American, British, and French Music trends were well represented in Italian Music Taste.

For the moment at least, Italians are Dominating the CD Sales Charts in Italy.

There are 12 Italian artists in the first 12 places of the Italian sales ranking, and dominating the Fimi-Nielsen weekly list of the top CDs sold was Laura Pausini (“Primavera in anticipo”), followed by Irene Grandi (“Canzoni per Natale”) and “Safari” by Jovanotti.

Then came Battiato (“Fleurs 2”), Giusy Ferreri (“Gaetana”) and Tiziano Ferro (“Alla mia eta”). Seventh place was Negramaro (“San Siro live 2008), then Giorgia (“Spirito libero”), “Incanto” (Bocelli) and “L’animale” (Celentano).

The first foreign album on the rankings was (in 13th place) “Chinese Democracy” by Guns ‘n’ Roses . As concerns the songs most downloaded from the internet, first place went to “Novembre” by Giusy Ferreri, followed by “Wow” by Luca Butera.

## Berlusconi Shows How Capitalism Works in Alitalia Deal

By the Guardian

I had always thought that Capitalism was: Those who Take Risks Earns the Rewards and Suffers the Losses.

How Wrong I was!!!! When you have Friends High in the Government, A Capitalist can Give themselves Obscene Profits, and then after running the Enterprise into a Desperate Condition, You can Get the Taxpayer to Bail You Out, the same taxpayers that you were exploiting, by charging onerous fees, participation, salaries, bonuses, severance payments, golden parachutes, and commissions, and fraudulently inflating profits.

It’s amazing how loud the Capitalist scream when ANY Government Regulation is suggested, YET that same Capitalist will run to the Government for a Bailout, thus converting the definition of CAPITALISM to: Capitalism takes the Profits, the Taxpayer takes the Losses !!!!

Bush did it for the US Banking and Investment Interests, and Berlusconi did it for the Creditors of Alitalia, as you will read below.

### Italians Lose, French Win Big in Alitalia Sale

ROME, Italy’s government has claimed Alitalia’s rescue as a patriotic victory, but analysts say rival Air France-KLM has emerged as the real winner, while Italians are left footing the bill.

Alitalia took to the skies on Tuesday as a revamped carrier owned by private investors after a troubled sale process that included a failed takeover last year by Air France-KLM when the Italian national airline was riddled with debts and losses.

Silvio Berlusconi, then campaigning to become premier, called the deal humiliating and a French colonisation attempt.

The French carrier came back less than a year later with an even better deal, paying less than a fifth of its earlier offer for a 25 percent stake in a cleaned-up Alitalia stripped of its debt, labour problems and troubled units.

Italian taxpayers, meanwhile, will end up paying about 4 billion euros for Alitalia’s liabilities assumed by the state as part of its August bankruptcy, as well as welfare benefits for laid-off workers, says Bocconi University economist Tito Boeri.

That is 0.3 percent of annual gross domestic product diverted to rescuing

Alitalia or about the same the government spent on shoring up Italy’s economy from the financial crisis, he said.

“Air France-KLM are the clear winners in all of this,” Boeri said. “They’ve got the good company with a monopoly position on the key Milan-Rome route and without paying for its debts while the Italian taxpayers are paying for Alitalia’s ‘bad company’.”

Italians also face the prospect of higher fares on the busy Rome-Milan route where Alitalia dominates because of its merger with smaller rival Air One as part of its restructuring.

Indeed, Air France-KLM has gained a coveted foothold in the Italian market by shelling out 323 million euros instead of the roughly 1.75 billion euros it previously offered, all without having to take on militant Alitalia unions and other debts.

The earlier deal included a 1 billion euro capital hike, 608 million euros for convertible bonds and 10 euro cents per share, or 138 million euros, when the deal was announced. It would also have assumed other debt of about 1.37 billion euros.

The market seems to agree on the deal. Air France-KLM shares have bounced off a 52-week low in November to rise 3.7 percent this month, when speculation on the Alitalia deal intensified.

In contrast, the shares fell 20 percent between December 2007, when Air France-KLM was picked as preferred buyer, and April 2008 when that deal fell apart, sparking a month-long rally.

While analysts fretted about Alitalia’s old structure bringing down all of Air France-KLM under the previous deal, many were upbeat this time, noting expected synergies of 720 million euros over three years for both from the new alliance.

“The new Alitalia faces fewer business risks than the former state-owned carrier,” Exane analysts told clients in a note.

“This could turn out to be a very good investment for Air France-KLM both in itself and because of the continued and expanded access it brings to the large Italian market.”



# General Interest

## Struggling consumers turn to pasta to stretch their food dollars

The Associated Press By David Twiddy

Struggling consumers turn to pasta to stretch their food dollars, in very dire times, after many years of pasta being overshadowed by the low-carbohydrate fad, that showed to not be that effective in the long run.

“It’s simple and cheap and I have kids and that’s something they like,” and “It is still an incredibly great value, For about \$5, you can feed a family of four.” said two consumers interviewed.

### Pasta’s Value Rediscovered

As struggling consumers turn to casseroles, soup, pasta salad and good old macaroni and cheese to stretch their food dollars, the nation’s pasta makers are returning to a rolling boil after many years overshadowed by the low-carbohydrate fad.

Sales of pasta products in the United States — including frozen and refrigerated pasta, canned pasta, soup mixes and prepared dinners — rose 5 percent last year to \$6.4 billion, according to Kansas City, Mo.-based American Italian Pasta, the nation’s largest manufacturer of dry pasta.

Most of that increase came as manufacturers passed along a stiff jump in the price of wheat and other costs.

But Peter Smith, chief executive of Harrisburg, Penn.-based New World Pasta, which makes such brands as Ronzoni, American Beauty and Creamette, said he was amazed commodity-price increases last year didn’t dampen pasta sales the way they did sales of other consumer goods.

“I think what happened this past year is with all the inflation running rampant through the stores,” he said, “it’s like a certain number of people rediscovered pasta.”...

The volume increase is particularly welcome because pasta consumption had been falling 1 or 2 percent annually for years because of high-protein diet fads, said Carol Freysinger, spokeswoman for the National Pasta Association.

“There’s this renewed vigor, this renewed energy in the pasta companies,” Freysinger said. “They really got beat up by the low-carb diets, which showed to not be that effective in the long run.

“Pasta has been vindicated,” she said. “And (now) the economy is driving consumers to more cost-effective options.”

Judy Donnellan, 45, was shopping for macaroni at a grocery store in Kansas City on Tuesday and said her family eats pasta about three or four times a week. “It’s simple and cheap and I have kids and that’s something they like,” Donnellan said.

She said she couldn’t tell if she was buying pasta more than before but said the staple’s price and flexibility “is basically why I use it...

The U.S. division of Italy-based Barilla Group, the world’s largest pasta manufacturer, saw a 15 percent boost in pasta volume and a 22 percent increase in sales, said the division’s president, Kirk Trofholz...

In 2008, consumption of dry pasta hit its highest level since 2003, according to American Italian Pasta, which makes consumer brands such as Ronco, Mueller’s and Pennsylvania Dutch and supplies pasta for in-house grocery store brands and for manufacturers who use pasta in prepared dishes.

Annual sales at American Italian Pasta soared 42 percent to \$569 million in 2008, and its net profits more than tripled to \$19.1 million

“It is still an incredibly great value,” Kelly said of pasta. “For about \$5, you can feed a family of four.”

## Italy bans kebabs and foreign food from cities

By The Times

The tomato comes from Peru and spaghetti was probably a gift from China.

It is, though, the “foreign” kebab that is being kicked out of Italian cities as it becomes the target of a campaign against ethnic food, backed by the centre-right Government of Silvio Berlusconi.

The drive to make Italians eat Italian, which was described by the Left and leading chefs as gastronomic racism, began in the town of Lucca this week, where the council banned any new ethnic food outlets from opening within the ancient city walls.

Yesterday it spread to Lombardy and its regional capital, Milan, which is also run by the centre Right. The antiimmigrant Northern League party brought in the restrictions “to protect local specialities from the growing popularity of ethnic cuisines”.

Luca Zaia, the Minister of Agriculture and a member of the Northern League from the Veneto region, applauded the authorities in Lucca and Milan for cracking down on nonItalian food. “We stand for tradition and the safeguarding of our culture,” he said.

Mr Zaia said that those ethnic restaurants allowed to operate “whether they serve kebabs, sushi or Chinese food” should “stop importing container loads of meat and fish from who knows where” and use only Italian ingredients.

Asked if he had ever eaten a kebab, Mr Zaia said: “No – and I defy anyone to prove the contrary. I prefer the dishes of my native Veneto. I even refuse to eat pineapple.”

Mehmet Karatut, who owns one of four kebab shops in Lucca, said that he used Italian meat only.

Davide Boni, a councillor in Milan for the Northern League, which also opposes the building of mosques in Italian cities, said that kebab shop owners were prepared to work long hours, which was unfair competition.

“This is a new Lombard Crusade against the Saracens,” La Stampa,

the daily newspaper, said. The centre-left opposition in Lucca said that the campaign was discrimination and amounted to “culinary ethnic cleansing”.

Vittorio Castellani, a celebrity chef, said: “There is no dish on Earth that does not come from mixing techniques, products and tastes from cultures that have met and mingled over time.”

He said that many dishes thought of as Italian were, in fact, imported. The San Marzano tomato, a staple ingredient of Italian pasta sauces, was a gift from Peru to the Kingdom of Naples in the 18th century. Even spaghetti, it is thought, was brought back from China by Marco Polo, and oranges and lemons came from the Arab world.

Mr Castellani said that the ban reflected growing intolerance and xenophobia in Italy. It was also a blow to immigrants who make a living by selling ethnic food, which is popular because of its low cost. There are 668 ethnic restaurants in Milan, a rise of nearly 30 per cent in one year.

The centre Right won national elections in April last year partly because of alarm about crime and immigration. This week there was a series of attacks on immigrants in bars and shops after the arrest of six Romanians accused of gang-raping an Italian girl in the Rome suburb of Guidonia.

Filippo Candelise, a Lucca councillor, said: “To accuse us of racism is outrageous. All we are doing is protecting the culinary patrimony of the town.”

Massimo Di Grazia, the city spokesman, said that the ban was intended to improve the image of the city and to protect Tuscan products. “It targets McDonald’s as much as kebab restaurants,” he added.

There is confusion, however, over what is meant by ethnic. Mr Di Grazia said that French restaurants would be allowed. He was unsure, though, about Sicilian cuisine. It is influenced by Arab cooking.



# Local SnapShots

## Assunta DiFederico 100 Years Young



Assunta and Mayor Larry O'Brien



Mayor Larry O'Brien with Luigi Filoso and Friends



Assunta DiFederico with Family



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Luigi, Marcus and Tony Filoso



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Chin Radio, Il Postino, L'Ora di Ottawa and the Italian Canadian Associations present the "Reconstruction of Piazza Dante Fund Raising Dinner" on Saturday April 18, 2009. Beginning with cocktails at 6:00 p.m. and dinner at 7:00 p.m., St. Anthony's Italia Soccer Club 523 Arlington Avenue Ottawa Ontario.

The purpose of this Celebration is to raise funds for the reconstruction of Piazza Dante at the corner of Booth Street and Gladstone Avenue. The Piazza was constructed in 1967 under the Leadership of the Canadian Italian Professional Business Association whose President was Mr. Italo Tiezzi in 1967. Since nineteen sixty seven no major work to the Piazza has been undertaken. It is the purpose of the Italian Canadian Community to reconstruct the Piazza with a new face and dedicate the Piazza to the Italian Canadian Community of Ottawa. A plaque for major donors shall be installed in the Piazza recognizing their commitment to the project.

Tickets are fifty dollars each including a five course sit down dinner at 7:00 p.m. Entertainment will be provided by the renowned Singer Mr. Tony Ieluzzi directly from Toronto.

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As Member of Parliament for  
Ottawa Centre, I wish all  
members of our community

Safe and Happy Holidays  
and New Year 2009!

*Paul Dewar*



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## Riu Palace Staff Puerto Vallarta Mexico 2009



Staff at Riu Vallarta



Tony with Jose and Staff at Riu Palace



Maurizio and Friends



Alvaro, Marco, Tony, and Stephanie



Sara with Entertainment Team



Rosie, Maria with co-workers