

WELCOME

August in Florence is usually a month when those of us left in town find great pleasure flying around the “viali” at (nearly) breakneck speed with no thoughts to the usual traffic or parking problems. The streets in Florence may not be as empty as usual this year, as economics have been changing the way folks take vacations. Without a doubt though, life in all of Italy slows significantly mid-month. The Assumption of the Madonna is celebrated on August 15th, creating a week that most of the country takes a breather (action at the seaside continues full force). Do expect that almost everything will be closed on the 15th (also because it is Sunday).

This month we cover the Palio, Puccini and the “new” Bardini Museum, plus Lo Steccheto restaurant in the Val di Chiana and more about the hidden gelaterie in Florence.

Hot but not too bothered... SUZANNE, CORSO, SANDRA, LORI, ANNA PIA, BEI, KIMBERLY and MARIO send summer kisses to all.

PITCHER & FLACCOMIO REPORT



A note from Suzanne about CORRI LA VITA – A SPORTING, CULTURAL AND FUND RAISING EVENT - Piazza della Signoria, Sunday Sept. 26, starting time 9:30 am.

Dear Friends,

Once again I have the pleasure of joining the committee organizing CORRI LA VITA, an event managed by volunteers to help the fight against breast cancer. CORRI LA VITA is not only a walk/run, but is an event for people to gather together for sport, culture and solidarity. All sorts of athletes and non-athletes participate. There are no limits in size, age or capability. Two routes have been designed that vary in length and difficulty: one is a competitive/or non-competitive race of approx. 12 km. The second is a walk of approx. 5.7 km specifically designed for families, friends and children. The walk winds through the historic center of Florence and crosses over the river to the “Oltrarno”,

stopping along the way to visit gardens, churches, palaces and museums opened especially for the occasion.

This year's itinerary has new and interesting visits to the church and crypt of Santo Stefano al Ponte, the Tribune of Galileo in the Specola Museum and the Museum of Natural History. We pass through the Boboli Gardens strolling along the amphitheatre, to the steps of the Meridiana, the Botanical Gardens and more.

CORRI LA VITA expects 20,000 participants this year which represents a phenomenal increase from the first edition seven years ago. The official T-shirt will yet again be generously offered by the Florence fashion house of SALVATORE FERRAGAMO and the color this year is purple, the color of the Florentine football team. We suggest you be quick to sign up as only the first 20,000 registered participants will receive a shirt. LA PERLA, a prestigious local lingerie/beachwear company has always been sensitive to women's health issues and is also an official sponsor this year. All funds raised will be donated by CORRI LA VITA to the following projects:

This year Corri la Vita will finalize the purchase of the digital mammography unit fitted with special software for digital breast tomosynthesis. This is a new method that promises brilliant clinical results, giving a very precise three-dimensional view of breast, thereby improving the speed of prognosis.

L.I.L.T. (Italian Cancer Society) together with Ce.Ri.On. (Oncological Rehabilitation Centre) offer psychological and physical help for women, especially breast cancer victims. VILLA DELLE ROSE is one of the most advanced oncology rehabilitation centers in Italy and CORRI LA VITA has been committed to support VILLA DELLE ROSE from its inauguration in 2005.

F.I.L.E Onlus (Palliative care) "Bridging" - "Bridging" means a continuity of care between the oncology day-hospital and palliative care for the Florentine community. This ensures constant and continued assistance for patients with a bad prognosis together with their families.

"The Vito Distante Project in Breast Cancer Clinical Research" - Dedicated to the memory of Professor Vito Distante, who believed in the importance of training and encouraging young doctors to assist and improve the care for women with breast cancer. A jury will select two young Italian doctors after presenting their curriculum and their specific publications. They will be sent abroad on a scholarship for six months to one of the world best oncology clinics for further studies. CORRI LA VITA will sponsor one doctor.

FROM SEPTEMBER 1ST YOU CAN SIGN UP FOR CORRI LA VITA. The cost is €10.00 per person (children under 10 years of age free). Sign up for the competitive run and walk at the following places:

L.I.L.T. - Viale Giannotti 23 - Florence, tel. 055 576939 (new location)

Florence Marathon - Viale Fanti, 2 Florence, tel. 055 5522957

The Islet Sports Argingrosso - Street, 69 A / B Florence

Universo Sports - Piazza Duomo 6 / r Florence

Please note: for the competitive run a medical certificated or a membership card for agonistic sport must be shown. You may run the race without being competitive.

Sign up for the walk ONLY:

F.I.L.E. - Via San Niccolo, 1 - Florence, tel. 055 2001212

Universo Sports - corner Via Sandro Pertini, 36/and Viale Guidoni, Florence

BOX OFFICE - any one of their offices, PLUS this year you can sign up for the walk on- line at the following address: <http://www.boxol.it> (this will cost an additional €1.00). On Saturday September 25 from 10 a.m. to 1.p.m. you can register for the COMPETITIVE RUN and WALK in Piazza della Signoria. On Sunday September 26 between 8 and 9 a.m. last minute registration for the WALK ONLY can be done in Piazza della Signoria. T-shirts will be given to all registered participants until supplies last.

We of Pitcher & Flaccomio have given you our friends and clients up-to-date information on what is going on in Florence and Tuscany for the past years with our monthly newsletter. I know a lot of you read it and appreciate our work, so I was thinking if you all have enjoyed visiting Italy and Florence in particular, maybe you would like to give a donation to her citizens by supporting Corri La Vita. All checks may be made out to CORRI LA VITA and sent to Pitcher & Flaccomio, or ask us for the bank coordinates for a wire transfer.

Corri La Vita is seeking all sorts of additional financial support for projects. Therefore I turn to all of you who read the newsletter, to ask yourselves or your companies or local associations if they would like to become sponsors. Undoubtedly this high visibility event in the historic city of Florence would provide excellent exposure as well as association with a very just cause. Should you need any further information as to where and how please don't hesitate to email s.pitcher@dada.it, or go to the official event website <http://www.corrilavita.it>.

I will be forever grateful for any donations and assistance my friends can offer.

Thank you,

Suzanne

FLORENCE WELCOMES BACK THE BARDINI MUSEUM – by Ann Reavis

Just over a year ago, the Bardini Museum in Florence opened to the public again after long and accurate restoration work aimed at re-establishing the configuration that its founder, the antiquarian Stefano Bardini, had originally given the exhibition. Bardini trained as a painter and became famous as a restorer and art dealer. He created a collection of artwork with a deep passion for the Renaissance and skill at unearthing medieval Florence. All can now enjoy this distinctive museum, which was actually the antiques showroom where Bardini sold thousands of pieces that now grace the galleries of museums as well as private collections throughout the world.

Bardini's blue walls have been restored from the ochre preferred by some early 20th century conservator. On account of its uniqueness, many, including Jacquemart-Andrè in Paris and Isabella Stewart Gardner at Fenway Court in Boston, imitated the blue color employed by Bardini. In fact, Mrs. Gardner worked hard to get the exact color of blue to show off her marble sculptures in the same way Bardini knew it would highlight the creamy white of those pieces he had for sale.

In 1881, Bardini acquired the deconsecrated church and convent of San Gregorio facing piazza dei Mozzi in the Oltrarno and he set about transforming it into his opulent residence, restoration studio and showroom. Bardini donated the palazzo to the Municipal Administration of Florence in 1922 as a museum. The building is remarkable for its use of doors, windows and moldings of old fragments originally belonging to ruined churches and villas. The ceilings are magnificent examples of Venetian glass and Tuscan woodwork ranging from the 15th to the 17th centuries.

The collection comprises sculptures, paintings, furniture pieces, ceramic pieces, tapestries, as well as fragments of the old center of Florence, salvaged before its destruction in the 1860s to make way for the new national government buildings. These items are displayed on the ground and the first floors according to a layout that fully reflects the character of a typically private collection. In addition to Roman sarcophagi, capitals, Roman and Gothic relief work, there are also other remarkable examples like the work of the Della Robbia brothers (15th and 16th century), works attributed to Donatello and to Nino or Giovanni Pisano, in addition to the famous "Charity" by Tino di Camaino (1280 app.-1337).

The most outstanding painting of the collection is perhaps St. Michael Archangel by Antonio Del Pollaiuolo (1431-1498), although there are many other precious works among the collections of weapons, 15th century polychrome stuccoes and wooden sculpture. The original of the famed bronze of the wild boar, Il Porcellino, (Pietro Tacca, 1612) a copy of which draws crowds in the Mercato Nuovo, sits bored in a small alcove of its own.

The museum is the perfect place to visit on a hot summer day in Florence. It is only open three days a week - Saturday, Sunday and Monday from 11am to 5pm. Also, for English-speaking visitors, August (and the first two weeks in September) is the month to visit the Bardini -- The Con gli occhi di ... (Through the eyes of ...) initiative, has scheduled free English-language tours for the Bardini Museum (as well as the Horne Museum and the Stibbert Museum). The free tour starts at 11am on Mondays only. Address: Via dei Renai 37, Phone: 055.234.2427. Ticket Price: 5 euro.

Ann Reavis has two abiding interests in Florence. One is to write about whatever catches her fancy as Tuscan Traveler (<http://www.tuscantraveler.com>) and the other is to introduce people to her Florence and Tuscany as Friend in Florence (<http://www.friendinflorence.com>).

ST JAMES CHURCH LATEST NEWS

Our Sunday Eucharist at 9:00 AM and 11:00 AM will continue through August. The St. James Office will be closed for the month and the Food Bank distribution of food and clothing will be suspended until September. St James Church, via B. Rucellai 9, Phone/fax: 055 29 44 17 Email: info@stjames.it. <http://www.stjames.it>.

ACCADEMIA AND UFFIZI EVENING EXTRAVAGANZA

Given the success of last year's special summer hours, this month the Accademia Gallery and the Uffizi will extend Tuesday evening opening hours until 10:00 pm making for cool, crowd-free art enjoyment. Get there before 7:00 pm though, when entries will be cut off.

SALDI – SALES – SCONTI

Through August and until Sept. 7th, shops and stores in Florence and Tuscany are officially allowed to reduce prices on their spring/summer merchandise. Take advantage and see how far a few euros can go.

FOOTBAAAALLL!! by Simon Clark and Anne Brooks

Forza Viola!..... Still a month to go before the 2010-11 campaign formally kicks off but the new regime is taking shape and shaping up well. The carping and grizzling of June is silent as a fresh solidarity envelops the club. Mario Cognini (vice-President of the society) and CEO Menucci have been emphasising the key priorities – back into the Top Four with Champions League football and progress on a new stadium. The Della Valle brothers are not walking away; Fiorentina do not have to sell any of our “big” players to finance reinforcement; Mihajlovic is at work with the players. We'll see what the new house looks like when we line up for real – and check who's wearing viola!

Director of Football, Pantaleo Corvino, has been his usual busy self around the transfer market and on the coaching park. He's an intriguing mix of the brusque and the avuncular but his influence on the club's fortunes is probably greater than many realise. Speculation has run riot on players leaving, especially Vargas (Real Madrid), Gilardino (Lyons), Jovetic (apparently a 30 mn euro bid was rejected) and Frey (just about anywhere) but nearly everyone is still here. Patient, long-serving Gobbi, out of contract and finding it harder and harder to get a start in games, elected to leave; as is the Viola way, he left on the best of terms and in the best of spirits. We've also said “addio” to Keirison; the Brazilian never convinced that he could cut the Serie A mustard. Babacar, however, having broken into the first team last year, has extended his contract in a mutual vote of confidence. Even Adrian Mutu is still with us, forbidden to play even in friendlies until October and wondering how to pay that Chelsea bill; we know he is still a world-class player and we may turn out to be fortunate in that no-one else will be prepared to take the risk at a price Adrian can afford.

Last month we signed D'Agostino. This month Corvino has been seeking to deepen the defensive gene pool. A lot of effort is going into attracting Emiliano Insua from Liverpool for a fee reputed to be around 5mn euros. Negotiations on personal terms have become protracted and this one remains in the balance. We do have a deputy

and rival for Sebastien Frey in Artur Boric who has arrived from Glasgow Celtic. The Polish keeper is highly talented but has on occasion found Glasgow's hothouse football-sectarian divide hard to handle; he'll miss our bars and our bakers. A lot hangs on how he relates to Frey, Mihajlovic and the City of Florence.

All of this looks positive and with the potential to make last season look a blip on a continuing upward curve. Our world cup participants are returning, Bolatti having fared best as Argentina made the quarter finals. Riccardo Montolivo – one of a small handful in the Azzurri South African squad to enhance his reputation - will carry on wearing the captain's armband. The usual, relaxed friendlies are producing the usual relaxed and meaningless 6-0, 8-0, 9-0 victories (although Ljajic is said to be looking sharp as a razor). Things will step up a gear for some serious friendlies including a visit to London and the mighty Tottenham Hotspur, themselves Champions League participants this season.

The 2010-11 Serie A schedule is hot from the presses. We open up at home against Napoli, followed by a series of fixtures that mix stern challenges (like the match away at Genoa) with easy tickets (where we mustn't trip up – like newly-promoted-and-shortly-to-be-relegated-again Lecce). Our eleventh game will be away to Roma, by which time we should have a pretty good idea about how the season is going to pan out. We also know that we will enter the Coppa Italia on October 27 with a tie against either Empoli or the winner of the earlier Reggiana-Alzanocene game. But all eyes will be on the league.

August will tell us more about how high to raise our expectations of the season but, so far, Sinisa Mihajlovic will be probably be feeling very happy about joining Fiorentina.....Ale Viola!

BUYING TICKETS - Ticket information – seating plan, prices, ticket outlets – is on the “biglietteria” section of the club's website [<http://www.it.violachannel.tv>]. Tickets can be purchased at official box offices and holders of TicketOne lottery franchises. Sources include:

CHIOSCO DEGLI SPORTIVI, via degli Anselmi (between P.za Repubblica/Odeon cinema). Tel 055 292363.

BAR MARISA, viale Manfredo Fanti 41. Tel 055 572723.

BAR STADIO, viale Manfredo Fanti 3r. Tel 055 576169.

ACF OFFICIAL TICKET-OFFICE, via Dupre 28 (corner of via Settesanti).

NUOVO BOX OFFICE, via Luigi Alamanni 39 (close to SMN station). Tel 055 264321

FELTRINELLI FIRENZE, Via de' Cerretani 39/32R

THE FIORENTINA SCHEDULE: There is only the opening game in August so, to give readers advance notice, we have included the games for September:

Week 1:	29 Aug/home	Fiorentina-Napoli
Week 2:	12 Sept/away	Lecce-Fiorentina
Week 3:	19 Sept/home	Fiorentina-Lazio
Week 4:	22 Sept/away	Genoa-Fiorentina
Week 5:	26 Sept/home	Fiorentina-Parma

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

INSALATA DI FARRO

Insalata di Farro is a cool, summer dish made from an ancient form of wheat that fed Mediterranean populations for thousands of years. Farro is most often translated as spelt or emmer, grains which produce very similar results, but are not exactly the same as *Triticum dicoccum* (farro's Latin name). Farro eventually fell into disuse leaving the way for higher-yielding grains after the fall of the Roman Empire. Today farro has made a comeback, appearing in hearty bean and vegetable soups, or ground into flour to make pasta. Insalata di Farro like its cousin Insalata di Riso, is a recipe that lends itself to infinite variations. We have listed two of our favorites below in proportions that serve about 6.

Rinse 2 cups farro, checking for tiny pebbles or bad grains. Simmer on medium heat, in salted water for 35 to 45 minutes, or until tender. Drain and rinse under cold water to cool. The farro can then be dressed with 1 thinly sliced red onion, 2 stalks diced celery and 1 cup good olives plus a vinaigrette made with: 5 Tbsp. red wine vinegar, 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil, 1 tsp. salt, and pepper to taste.

or

1/2 cup pesto, 1 cup cherry tomatoes, 1 cup black olives, 1/2 cup toasted pine nuts, 1 cup diced, medium-aged pecorino cheese, salt, pepper and extra virgin olive oil to taste.

THUMBS UP – THUMBS DOWN “Our Readers Right”

Our “Thumbs up, Thumbs down” column is your chance to write us and share your own ideas and information, or to toot the horn of businesses, events and those Florentine situations that strike you as either wonderful or terrible. Please note: all opinions are (usually) those of our readers. Lend us your thoughts!

LO STECCHETO RESTAURANT in MARCIANO DI CHIANA – thanks to Mimi and Ed

Whether you are served in the garden or inside this 300-year-old Tuscan farmhouse typical of the Valdichiana, you will dine well and heartily in a unique environment at Lo Steccheto restaurant. Chef Giancarlo Fulgenzi offers an imaginative menu grounded on traditional Tuscan cookery as well as on his many years of hands-on experience in the kitchen. His ingredients could not be fresher!

Using herbs and vegetables from his garden and a daily supply of fresh fish, he prepares generous-sized dishes which are both delightfully familiar and happily distinctive. For example, "Insalata tiepida di pesce," (12.90 Euro) while neither chilled nor hot, is just the right temperature to bring out the best features of the shrimp, calamari, freshly chopped tomatoes, carrots, and other vegetables.

Far more than most cooks, he knows the exact moment to remove the fish or pasta or veal or steak from the fire in order to achieve the best texture when brought to your table. Some more dishes: "tagliolini Primavera" made with the very best gamberi (12.90 Euro), "misto griglia" of chicken, pork and veal (16.90 Euros), "pesce alla griglia misto" (15.90 Euro), "riso di mare" (11.90 Euro), and "bistecca" (17.90 Euro).

Giancarlo is also known for bringing gifts to the table -- dishes you didn't order and will not be asked to pay for. The wine cellar is extensive -- thousands of bottles of the most famous wines "sleep, or at least pretend to sleep," says Giancarlo. These range from a 1929 Brolio to young vini novelli. Wine prices are kept reasonable; the better to enjoy your dinner. In fact, you could eat for as little as 20 Euros, through the average person spends about 35 Euro, including wine.

The plantings in the garden areas create a luxuriant green universe. The walls within the restaurant are covered with a diverse range of antiques collected over the years. These organized collections are artfully arranged in fascinating ways to entertain the eye. Lighting is soft, as is the music. Service is friendly and professional. A fire is lit on winter nights. All is right with the world.

Lo Steccheto restaurant. Via dell'Esse 6. Marciano della Chiana. Reservations: 0575 845222. <http://www.losteccheto.com>. Directions: the restaurant is near the exit "Monte San Savino" from either the Superstrada or the Autostrada del Sole.

GELATO: AN OCCASIONAL PROMENADE (continued..... thanks to Simon Clark and Anne Brooks.)

As anyone who took in the Gelato University's lecture at the inaugural Gelato Festival knows, “gelato” is different from “ice cream”. As August steams and bubbles, gelato is the frozen nectar that frosts your nerves as it delights your taste-buds. Depending on where you start, little effort is required to reach these oases. First up, a place where no-one disappears.....

TRIANGOLO DELLE BERMUDA (via Nazionale 61/R). We've blanked it for years, marching past to and from the station – then they turned up at the Festival with a magisterial Toblerone! We've been back to a friendly bar that rings the changes; if no Toblerone, then possibly a Mars Bar-flavour and certainly a (not too sharp) grapefruit that dissolved the heat, a fine lampone and a memorable pannacotta with caramel. Also good for an early evening prosecco!

.....Then it won't have escaped notice that Fiorentina is acquiring a tramvia. So far, we only have one bit – from the SMN station out to Scandicci – but that's enough. Fifth stop is Piazza Batoni..... left hand side from the tramvia but right on the piazza is GELATERIA I GELATI DEL RIGHI (18 Piazza Batoni). Open 15.30-20.30, closed Sundays and Mondays. Limited hours; no-nonsense facilities; focus on the goods. Eat the chocolate & pear, taste the dark choccy, savour the chocolate arancia! Don't eat too much. A stroll away is a second reason for the Tramvia - L'ARTE DEL GELATO (via Torcicoda 97R), established 1975 and they haven't been wasting time. Open 10.30-13.00/15.30-20.30; closed Wednesdays. White chocolate to rival the best; lampone and pinoli great; fascinating “grisbi” – effectively a lemon meringue!

.....Finally, and anticipating the time when the tramvia forces Terravision etc to switch to Piazza Leopoldo as a terminus, we will all need: BARONCINI (via Celso 3r). Slightly cramped, fewer flavours than some competitors but enough and more than good enough to make decisions hard, especially given Baroncini's imagination – honey-based Buontalenti, pear & chocolate, chocolate & bacio, ricotta & arancia all terrific! Not to mention the seductive-looking lemon or fresh chestnuts lurking in the cabinet! Lori from P&F enthused over their cioccolato fondente arancia with vin santo-biscottini di Prato – how ethnic would you like to be? [Also at Viale Mazzini 13R, 055 242365, near Campo di Marte station.]

FLORENCE NEWS

FESTIVAL OF SAN LORENZO

On Tuesday 10, join the neighborhood of San Lorenzo in a celebration of their patron, Saint Lawrence. During the morning, salute the parade that marches through town from the Palagio di Parte Guelfa on Via Pellicceria, to the Basilica di San Lorenzo, starting around 10:30. At 7:00 pm, head to Piazza San Lorenzo for an outdoor celebration. There will be free lasagna, music and watermelon for all. The event begins sometime after the market stalls that line the streets by day are rolled away. In addition, in honor of San Lorenzo, a concert is held each year in Piazza San Lorenzo by the G. ROSSINI PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA, at 9:00 pm. For info tel. 055603407 - <http://www.filarmonicarossini.it>.

LIBERATION OF FLORENCE

Wednesday 11 watch for some local fanfare. On August 11, 1944, with the help of the Allied troops, Florence rebelled against the Germans and the city was restored to the Florentines. To celebrate, a parade takes place each year at 9:00 am, beginning in Piazza dell'Unità near the central station and ending in Piazza della Signoria. This year we also celebrate the 66th Anniversary of Florence's Liberation with a concert by the G. ROSSINI PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA at 9:00 pm. in Piazza della Signoria.

STREETLIFE!

Throughout the month there will be events, jazz and folk concerts in five of Florence's piazzas. Piazza del Mercato Centrale will be the site of jazz and rock concerts including the DI MAGGIO CONNECTION on Tuesday 10 in "Pulp Fiction Party", and the SEXUAL CHOCOLATE BLUES BAND on Thursday 12. Largo Damiano Chiesa (in the Campo di Marte neighborhood) will have lots of danceable rock-and-roll with FREAK BANANA on Friday 6 for '70's and '80's fun. Or come on Wednesday 18 for APPLE JUICE & LE SBARELLINE to hear some first class doo-wop rock and Motown twist.

Keep an eye on the fun in Piazza Dalmazia and Piazza Beccaria, too. The events are free and most start at 9:30. See the full list of what is happening at: http://www.digispace.it/schedaevento.asp?id_evento=6352

EASY LIVING BEACH

All summer long check out the beach scene Arno-style just below Piazza Poggi. Get a snack at the bar kiosk, and wander down to catch some rays on a sandy, new beach equipped with umbrellas and showers. Entry is free. The beach is open from 9:00 am til late afternoon, and the action then continues on the Terrazza di Piazza Poggi overlooking the Arno, with sunset music events, plus contemporary dance, cinema and more. Lungarno Serrestori. Tel. 335 6630341. Check their site for activities and upcoming events. <http://www.piazzart.com>

EXHIBITS AROUND FLORENCE

VINUM NOSTRUM - Art, science and myths of wine in ancient Mediterranean civilizations

Until next May 14 the Museo degli Argenti hosts Vinum Nostrum. From Mesopotamia to our tables, from the rite of communion to avoidable drunkenness, from distasteful habit to the gate of spirituality, wines and vines are the protagonists of this exhibit. Original showpieces, sculptures, frescoes and mosaics, accompanied by multimedia and video installations tell the millenarian history of the grapevine and of wine, and the important influence they exerted on ancient cultures. Following a chronological development, the exhibition illustrates the origin of wine-growing in the Near East, its full affirmation along with its related symbolic, religious and cultural significance in the Hellenic world, up to the wine production and large-scale diffusion practiced by the Romans.

By virtue of the abundant archaeological remains of the Vesuvian cities, the particular case of Pompeii's vineyards is illustrated, while the exhibition devotes another section to the contribution of the Phoenicians and the Etruscans, who played an essential role in spreading vitis vinifera throughout the Mediterranean. While inviting visitors to reflect on the evolution of cultivation techniques (reproduction and genetic improvement, plowing the land, tending the vineyard, theoretical principles and practical instructions for pruning and grafting), specially selected exhibits also illustrate the religious and cultural values of the grapevine, expressed through a series of depictions regarding the divinities, rituals and festivities of wine. Sculptures and painted vases illustrate the cult of Dionysus. Elegant table-services clarify how the consumption of wine represented one of the most important moments of conviviality among patricians. A cella vinaria where wine was stored, reconstructed based on finds uncovered at Pompeii and on the precise descriptions contained in Latin literature, enable the visitor to delve into the reality of the past, through tools for the vineyard, wine amphorae and wooden barrels, baskets for harvesting, carts and more.

The exhibition itinerary aims not only at scientifically documenting the entire cycle of wine, from harvest to consumption, but also by stimulating the visitor's senses of taste, smell and sight. Museo degli Argenti, Palazzo

Pitti. Hours: 8:15 am to 6:50 pm. Ticket: €10.00. Closed on the 1st and the last Monday of each month. Info: Tel. 055294883

“PARIS IS WELL WORTH A MASS!” - THE MEDICI TRIBUTE TO HENRY IV, KING OF FRANCE

Until November 2, the Museum of the Medici Chapels links the Medici with Henry IV. Four hundred years after his assassination on May 14, 1610 in Paris, Florence celebrates the King of France and Navarre with a major exhibition. The fulcrum of the exhibition consists of 19 monochrome canvases that Cosimo II de' Medici commissioned to Florentine academic painters to celebrate a funeral service for Henry IV with great pomp on September 16, 1610 in the Basilica of San Lorenzo.

Having recently succeeded his father Ferdinando I to the throne, the new Grand Duke had an important funeral held in effigy for the "most Christian King". This decision was part of the consolidated practice that, as of the sixteenth century, saw the Medici family, rulers of Florence, show their political influence in Europe with dramatic productions tied to the family events of the principal dynasties: births, weddings and deaths. The paintings were arranged along the walls of the church, entirely decked in mourning, with elements evoking the King's triumphs and virtues, so as to perpetuate his glory beyond death. Executed by an until-then little-known group of painters and artists, the paintings had subjects dictated by historians and men of letters, and dealt with episodes in which the Medici had played an important role.

A part of the exhibition is dedicated to the Medici and the family politics which saw Maria, granddaughter of Ferdinando I, marry Henry IV in 1600 and, following the assassination of the King, assume the regency of France for the dauphin. With the magnificence of the funeral ceremony celebrated in Florence, the Medici court emphasized the legitimacy of that regency and of the succession to the throne of Louis XIII. In addition to the paintings, the show will also present books, engravings and drawings for the celebration, the Medici family tree, medals of the principal figures tied to the episode, wedding documents, precious portraits of the King and Queen in painting and sculpture, and a magnificent drawing by Pieter Paul Rubens with Maria de' Medici Landing at Marseilles, executed as a model for the cycle in the Luxembourg Palace, which Maria commissioned the painter between 1622 and 1624.

Medici Chapel. Piazza di Madonna degli Aldobrandini 6. Tel. 055 2388602. Hours: 8:15 am – 1:50 pm. Closed on the second and fourth Sunday of the month; the first, third and fifth Monday of every month. Ticket: €6,00.

UNA GLORIA EUROPEA – PIETRO DA CORTONA

Until Oct. 11 the Casa Buonarroti museum hosts a show of works by Pietro da Cortona covering the decade 1637 to 1647. Pietro da Cortona was one of the foremost artists of the Baroque period in Rome but also in Florence. He worked in Florence for long periods on several occasions between 1637 and 1647, leaving his mark mainly as a fresco painter in the famous rooms of Palazzo Pitti. A key figure for Pietro da Cortona during his stays in Florence was Michelangelo the Younger, the owner of Casa Buonarroti, where the artist lived and where he left as a sign of gratitude to his generous friend and host, numerous examples of his art, the starting point for this exhibition.

The event is particularly important given its unusual, innovative layout, which helps to understand the artist's role in Florence. The exhibition displays a selection of paintings and drawings from Italian and foreign museums, illustrating the decade in which Florence embraced the Baroque and began to follow the new directions indicated by Rome and destined to spread throughout Europe. Casa Buonarroti, via Ghibellina 70. Tickets: €6,50. Hours: 9.30 a.m. - 4 p.m., closed on Tuesdays and on August 15th. Tel. 055 241752. <http://www.casabuonarroti.it>

THE VIRTUES OF LOVE - NUPTIAL PAINTING IN XV CENTURY FLORENCE

Until Nov. 1 the Accademia Gallery is hosting an unusual show of furnishings and paintings of subjects focusing on marriage in the 1400's. An entire array of objects, from wooden storage chests, to wall panels to headboards were often decorated with scenes meant to give advice to newlyweds on how to adopt an exemplary form of personal conduct. These "nuptial paintings" served the fundamental function of conveying messages of warning and encouragement to a couple, helping us today to better understand a mainstay of fifteenth-century Florentine culture: the role of the family and those of the husband and wife.

Drawing on classical mythology, the Bible, historical episodes and contemporary literature, many facets of love are depicted, along with the ensuing duties: from love triumphant over adverse circumstances (The Marriage of Thetis and Peleus), to the virtues of obedience and abnegation that a woman must pursue (The Legend of Griselda from Boccaccio's Decameron), to the courage of the heroines Lucretia and Virginia, who choose death as source of redemption.

An entire section illustrates the harmful consequences of love as sexual beguilement capable of totally subduing a man's will. We must not forget however, that marriage meant first and foremost to give life to new progeny and perpetuate the family. To this end, the last section of the exhibition is dedicated to family pride in stories that recount the foundation of famous families like those of Aeneas and David or that following the texts of Petrarch,

celebrate the Triumphs of Fame, Time and Eternity.

The exhibit features works by Botticelli (Story of Virginia Romana, Bergamo, Accademia Carrara), Filippino Lippi (Story of Lucretia, Florence, Galleria Palatina), and Pesellino (Stories of Susanna, Avignon, Musée du Petit Palais), opening an extraordinary view onto the Florentine workshops that made the objects, and that enjoyed their greatest fortune precisely in the fifteenth century. The exhibition has been organized in collaboration with the Museo Horne of Florence. Galleria dell'Accademia, Via Ricasoli 58. Hours: Tues. to Sun – 8:15 to 6:50 pm. Until Sept. 30, free entry on Thursday evenings from 7:00 to 10:00 pm. And up to Sept. 28 the exhibit will be open Tuesday evenings from 7:00 to 9:00 pm (entry ticket required).

CARAVAGGIO AND CARAVAGGESQUES IN FLORENCE

Until October 10, three of Florence's most important museums (the Pitti Palatine Gallery, the Uffizi and Villa Bardini) unite forces to offer a fascinating overview of the works and influence of one of Italy's greatest masters Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio.

Born in 1573 in the town of Caravaggio, this artist's life is as turbulent as his personality. We know he had numerous run-ins with the law and was arrested on several occasions. For example, in 1606 a bet over a game of tennis led to an argument, at which point Caravaggio drew his sword and killed his opponent. We also know that Caravaggio's artistic influence was widespread: outside Italy he inspired painters as diverse as Georges de La Tour and members of the Utrecht School, e.g. Gerrit van Honthorst – artists who in turn later influenced Rembrandt. Caravaggio was particularly celebrated for his use of chiaroscuro, a technique using light and dark to achieve a 3-D effect.

While many aspects of this artist's life remain a mystery, what we do know is that splendid paintings by Caravaggio - the Bacchus and the Medusa - reached the Uffizi towards the end of the XVI century. Others (two or three) were purchased by the Grand Dukes who proved to be early and staunch admirers - especially Cosimo II - of the controversial painter and of his followers. The presence of important artists in Florence such as Artemisia Gentileschi, Battistello Caracciolo and Theodoor Rombouts, and direct dealings with artists like Gerrit Honthorst, Bartolomeo Manfredi and Jusepe Ribera gave rise to an intense Caravaggesque "season" which left an extraordinary number of paintings in Florence itself.

Gerrit Honthorst (who painted the Adoration of the Shepherds, today in the Uffizi Gallery, though heavily damaged by the Via dei Georgofili bombing of 1993) was the protagonist of one of the most important episodes of the fortune of Caravaggesque painting outside of Rome; the unfinished decoration of the Guicciardini Chapel in the church of Santa Felicita. Honthorst was commissioned to execute the work with Cecco del Caravaggio and Spadarino. This exhibition presents a landmark virtual reconstruction of the work. In addition, on this the IV centennial of Caravaggio's death, the show will include more than one hundred paintings, both famous and less famous, in the light of research, with new attributions that have modified our view of this outstanding master. Galleria Palatina at the Pitti Palace, the Uffizi, Villa Bardini. Hours: the usual hours of each venue. Ticket: a cumulative ticket for the three venues will cost euro 25.00. For info and reservations: tel. 055 294883. <http://www.unannoadarte.it>.

ONSTAGE SELECTION

Theatre info: Teatro Comunale, Via Solferino 15. Tel. 055 27791. Teatro della Pergola, Via della Pergola 12/32, Tel. 055 2479651. Teatro Verdi, Via Ghibellina 99, tel. 055 212320. Teatro Saschall, Lungarno Moro 3, tel. 055 6504112. Teatro Goldoni, Via Santa Maria 15. Tel. 055 229651. Teatro Romano, Fiesole, Tel. 055/59187. Mandela Forum, Viale Paoli 3, tel. 055 678841. Stazione Leopolda. Viale Fratelli Rosselli 5. St. Mark's Church. Via Maggio 16. Tel. 055 294764. Church of Orsanmichele, Via dei Calzaiuoli. Tel. 055-210305. Teatro Puccini, via delle Cascine 41, tel 055 362067. Chiesa S. Stefano al Ponte Vecchio, piazza S. Stefano 5. Viper Theatre, Via Lombardia 1.055/318056, <http://www.viperclub.eu>. Auditorium FLOG, Via M. Mercati, 24/b, 055/210804, <http://www.flog.it> Sala Vanni, Piazza del Carmine 14. Teatro Everest, Via Volterrana 4/b, tel. 055. 23 21 754. info@teatroeverest.it, <http://www.teatroeverest.it>. Teatro Politeama Pratese, Via G. Garibaldi, 33 – Prato. Tel: 0574/603758, <http://www.politeamapratese.com>. Purchase tickets for theatre, concerts and other events at the following ticket agencies: BOX OFFICE: Via Alamanni, 39 (alongside the train station). Open Monday 3:30-7:30 pm, from Tuesday to Saturday 10:00-7:30 pm. Tel. 055/210804. ARGONAUTA VIAGGI, Lungarno Torrigiani 33/B, Tel.055/2342777. Many tickets can be pre-purchased via <http://www.ticketone.it>, <http://www.boxol.it>.

Saturday 7

MARIO BIONDI – The soul voice on the Italian scene. Piazza Duomo di San Gimignano. 9:30 pm.

Monday 9

PAOLO CONTE – Italy’s best-known crooner. Gran Teatro all’Aperto di Torre del Lago Puccini. 9:15 pm. Tel. 0584.359322

Wednesday 11

GIOVANNI ALLEVI – Piano solo in the beautiful Piazza Duomo di San Gimignano. 9:30 pm. Tel. 0577.940008

Friday 13

ORCHESTRA DELLA TOSCANA, conducted by Francesco Pasqualetti, Boris Belkin (violin), music of Beethoven, Haydn. Piazza delle Erbe, San Gimignano SI. 9:15 pm. Tel. 0577.22091

Thursday 26

MODERN JAZZ - stretching from New York to Naples with the fabulous Trio di Fabio Morgera. Mercato di Sant’Ambrogio, Florence. 9:45 pm. Tel. 333.4338838

TUSCANY NEWS

56th PUCCINI FESTIVAL AT TORRE DEL LAGO

Torre del Lago, home of the Puccini Festival, lies between Lake Massaciuccoli and the Tyrrhenian Sea, four kilometers from the beaches of Viareggio on the Tuscan Riviera. The Festival welcomes about 40,000 spectators every year to its open-air theatre, set next to the Villa Mausoleum where Giacomo Puccini lived and worked. His mortal remains are now in a small chapel inside the Villa.

This year’s festival features TURANDOT (6, 12 and 20 August), TOSCA (8, 13 and 21 August), LA FANCIULLA DEL WEST (7 August), MADAMA BUTTERFLY (14 and 22 August), and the ballet ROMEO & GIULIETTA on August 11th.

The Puccini Festival was born in 1930 following Puccini’s wishes. “... I always come out here, take a boat and shoot snipes ... but once I would like to come here and listen to one of my operas in the open air...” wrote Puccini in a letter to Giovacchino Forzano in November 1924, before he left for the Brussels clinic where he died shortly after. The author of *La Bohème* and *Madama Butterfly*, “the last great poet of the Italian opera, the best composer of operas Italy and the whole world had in our century” (Roman Vlad), expressed his wish to see his creatures come to life in the extraordinary natural stage offered by the Massaciuccoli Lake. In 1930, together with Pietro Mascagni, who had been a fellow-student and roommate to Puccini, Giovacchino Forzano carried out the first performances of Puccini’s operas on the lakeshore in front of the Maestro’s house, and one of the world’s most famous and beloved opera festivals was born.

In 1966 the Festival moved to near the small lake harbor where the present theatre was built, a large structure enjoying the charming background of Massaciuccoli Lake. During the over seventy years of the Festival, the stage of Torre del Lago has hosted the most famous and acclaimed names of world opera. Among them the great Mario del Monaco, who chose Torre del Lago to leave the stage with an unforgettable performance in *Il Tabarro*; Giuseppe Di Stefano, Luciano Pavarotti, Plácido Domingo, José Carreras (who received the Puccini Award in 1997) and Andrea Bocelli. As for the roles of Puccini’s heroines, the performances of Giovanna Casolla, Antonia Cifrone, Daniela Dessì, Ghena Dimitrova, Maria Dragoni, Norma Fantini, Eva Marton, Francesca Patané, Katia Ricciarelli, Renata Scotto, Olivia Stapp, Maria Pia Jonata, Raina Kabaivanska, are unforgettable.

Since 2000 the Puccini Festival has seen world-famous artists who have chosen Pietrasanta as their homeland, in the role of opera set designers. After *Madama Butterfly* by Kan Yasuda, in 2002 a new production of *Manon Lescaut* with scenes and costumes by Polish sculptor Igor Mitoraj opened the 48th Puccini Festival. A new production of *La Bohème* with sets and costumes designed by Belgian painter, sculptor and illustrator Jean-Michel Folon was a huge success in the Summers of 2003 and 2009.

Performances start at 9:15 pm. Ticket prices range from 33 to 160 euro. For information: info@puccinifestival.it. Tel. 0584 359322. <http://www.puccinifestival.it>

CALICI DI STELLE - WINE UNDER THE STARS

On Tuesday 10, Italians celebrate San Lorenzo by turning their eyes to the evening sky to watch for shooting stars. In Tuscany and beyond, this day is made even more special with “Calici di Stelle”, an event that will enliven wineries and piazzas with art, music, folklore and wine. Expert enologists and producers will guide tastings. Again this year, a common thread will link Italian wine lovers under the banner of Great Wine and Responsible Drinking. In many venues you will have the chance to take a “breathalyzer” test. The thirteenth edition of “Calici di Stelle” will be particularly rich in talks on the subject of eco-sustainability as well as astronomical meetings with experts, glad to show to the public the secret beauty of the night sky.

Find special events in the following towns, generally starting in the afternoon/evening (around 7:30/8:00 pm): ABBADIA SAN SALVATORE (Siena), CARMIGNANO (Prato), CASTAGNETO CARDUCCI (Livorno), CASTELLINA IN CHIANTI (Siena), CASTELNUOVO BERARDENGA (Siena), CHIUSI (Siena), COLLE DI VAL D'ELSA (Siena), CINIGIANO (Grosseto), GAVORRANO (Grosseto), GREVE IN CHIANTI (Firenze), MASSA MARITTIMA (Grosseto), MONTECARLO (Lucca), MONTEPULCIANO (Siena), MONTESCUDAIO (Pisa), MONTESPERTOLI (Firenze), PITIGLIANO (Grosseto), POGGIBONSI (Siena), RUFINA (Firenze), SAN CASCIANO DEI BAGNI (Siena), SAN GIMIGNANO (Siena), SCANSANO (Grosseto), SIENA, SUVERETO (Livorno), TAVARNELLE VAL DI PESA (Firenze), TERRICCIOLA (Pisa) and VINCI (Firenze). For details see: <http://www.movimentoturismovino.it>, <http://www.cittadelvino.it>.

FESTA DEL PATRONO SAN CASCIANO

On Friday 13, the Tuscan town of San Casciano Val di Pesa celebrates its patron saint with an all-day fair and evening fireworks.

VOLTERRA A.D. 1398

For the past 13 years, on two August Sundays (15 and 22) the town of Volterra becomes a medieval village, returning to the year 1398 in every way imaginable. With the help of local merchants, musicians, jugglers, commoners and noblemen, the streets and shops come to new (old) life. From dawn to dusk you'll find that your euros must be changed into "grossi" (the currency of the 14th century) to carry any weight. Admission 9 euro. Under 18/over 60: 5 euro. Children under 10 free. Admission includes: reduced entry to the (very interesting) Etruscan Museum Guarnacci and the Art Gallery (from 9.00 am to 7.00 pm). Tel. 0588 87257. Email: info@volterra1398.it. <http://www.volterra1398.it>

THE PALIO

On Monday 16, Siena's Piazza del Campo hosts one of Italy's most historic events, the Palio. Lasting less than 2 minutes, with 10 horses (representing 10 of the towns 17 neighborhoods) careening 3 turns around the shell-shaped piazza at break-neck speed, it's something one should see at least once in a lifetime (future editions can be viewed comfortably from home, in front of the TV).

If you haven't booked one of the few and expensive bleacher or window seats, it's best to get there by 3 pm to find a place to stand in the center of Piazza del Campo. A colorful and heartfelt parade starts around 5:00 pm. The race generally begins around 7:00. Though the event itself is short, a day at the Palio presents a live opportunity to understand the history of Siena. Remember though, Italy's RAI channel broadcasts the Palio with a very informative running commentary, which make watching from the comfort of your own living room pretty tempting.

In addition to the race itself, a series of test runs take place in the preceding week on August 13, 14 and 15. The winning contrada holds a victory parade on the 17th. Check for info and seating availability by phoning 0577/280551.

STELLE E MERCANTI

On Thurs. 19 spend the evening in Greve. At 6:00 pm, as the day cools to evening temperatures, Greve's main piazza will come to life with a handicraft market and street performers. Filled with great places to eat, the small town shows its best side at night. Greve-in-Chianti. From 6:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. Tel. 055.85.45.271

EXHIBITS AROUND TUSCANY

GALILEO CHINI AND TUSCANY

Until December 5 Viareggio is hosting a show celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Liberty (Art Nouveau) movement in Italy. One of the main figures of the period was Galileo Chini (born Florence 1873 – 1956). Painter, ceramicist and graphic designer, he combined art and artisanship, renewing a Tuscan tradition of the artisan workshop for the 20th century. Paintings, ceramics, drawings and furnishings all have a place in the show. His luminescent Tuscan landscapes, that reflect serene moments spent in Versilia, reflect against the darker works done during WW2. Chini is equally well known for his ceramic production and the exhibit is rich with vases, plates, tiles and more. He worked principally out of two spaces; L'Arte della Ceramica, founded in Florence in 1896 and the Fornaci San Lorenzo, founded in 1906 in Borgo San Lorenzo, where he created the incredible decorative tiles that we see throughout Tuscany today on a fantastic, few, Liberty-style homes and buildings.

Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea Lorenzo Viani, Palazzo delle Muse, Piazza Mazzini 22, Viareggio. Hours: July and August – Tues. to Sun. from 6:00 pm to 11:00 pm. Tel. 0584966343. gamc@comune.viareggio.lu.it. <http://www.gamc.it>

GENIUS & PASSION, THE RESTORATION OF LIPPI'S FRESCOES IN PRATO.

Over five centuries ago, Filippo Lippi ascended three stories of scaffolding in the dark recesses of Prato's cathedral. Today, the three-tiered frescoes, which cover the walls and vaults of the main chapel with stories of St. John the Baptist and St. Stephen, are visible in renewed splendor after seven years of restoration. Small, guided tours of the fresco cycle now allow the public to come face to face with Lippi. The restoration began in the upper reaches of the chapel ceiling. Four monumental images of the evangelists are incised within the arches of the groin vault. Below them flow the scenes from the lives of two saints: Stephen, Prato's patron saint on the left, and John the Baptist, protector of nearby Florence on the right. From his birth in the top register to his death on the lower register, each saint's life is a theatrical spectacle played out with vivid imagery.

Fra Filippo Lippi was quite an intriguing character; his behavior wasn't exactly exemplary of the Carmelite order, (Fra indicates his religious title). The Carmelites ordained him and trained him as an artist, and by the time he reached Prato in 1452 he was among the most highly regarded and frequently commissioned painters of the early Renaissance. His trysts with various women had already gained him a somewhat sensational reputation, but it is the long-running romance with nun Lucrezia Buti, 25 years his junior, that has been most noted by history. Lucrezia modeled for many of the Lippi's Madonnas, and is said to have been the inspiration for the enchanting Salomé, who dances through the final scene of John the Baptist's fresco cycle, The Feast of Herod. The three-part banquet scene contains larger-than-life figures that feast and make merry around the dancing girl, whom many compare to the female figures in the later works of Lippi's young apprentice Botticelli.

Prato Cathedral. Open Mon. to Sat. 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. Admission: 4 euro with audio guide. Small, guided tours available by calling 0574/24112. <http://www.restaurofilippolippi.it>

All our best,
The Staff of Pitcher and Flaccomio

Newsletter compiled by Kim Wicks

Pitcher & Flaccomio Newsletter: Direttore responsabile Mario Spezi - Pubblicazione con iscrizione n. 5697 del 23/01/09 presso il Tribunale di Firenze.

CLASSIFIED SALES



SALE– Historical Center – Ponte Vecchio

Refurbished attic apartment with elevator, 120 Sq. meters, two bedroom, studio, kitchen, living-dining room, two bathrooms. Superb views of the Ponte Vecchio and the Arno river

Asking Price 1.200.000 Euro



SALE – Florence Center — Santa Croce

Refurbished apartment third floor, 90 Sq. meters, living-dining, kitchen studio, large double bedroom, laundry and bathroom. Autonomous heating, custom made furnishings.

Asking price 450,000 Euro.



SALE – Farm Complex – Settignano – 3 Km from Florence

Hill top refurbished complex, 440 Sq. mt, plus 9 hectares (27 acres) of land. 3 independent buildings, plus other 400 Sq. meters to be refurbished.

Asking price 3,800,000 Euro



SALE – Fiesole – 10 Km from Florence

Portion of refurbished stone house, 250 Sq. meters plus 1.5 hectares of land, 3 bed 3 bath. Hill top position, sunny, views and quiet. Great privacy.

Asking Price 1,250,000 Euro



SALE – Londa — 40 Km East of Florence

Hill top free standing farm house, 480 Sq. Mt. plus one hectare or more of land. Structural work done (walls, roof, basement etc.) just needs to be completed with the interior decorations (tiles, plaster, bathrooms etc.)

Asking price 700,000 Euro.



SALE– Historical Center – P.zza Azeglio

Refurbished apartment first floor, 190 Sq. meters, two bedroom, studio, kitchen, living room, dining room, two bathrooms. South facing terrace.

Asking Price 1.100.000 Euro