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Francesco Costa, The United States Recounted to Italian Readers

By [Ilaria Verunelli](#)



Francesco Costa.

Francesco Costa is a young journalist passionate about American culture, society, and politics. He spent most of his professional life trying to understand and recount the United States to his Italian readers.

Da Costa a Costa is a project on the American society that you created. It was very successful. What is the project about?

"It's a freelance project that was born in 2015 from the personal desire to follow the United States with more attention. In 2016, the electoral campaign was beginning. I thought the best way to talk about the United States was to create my own content. Every Saturday, I wrote a newsletter that was a summary of the main events that happened in the United States. The candidates were already running for the electoral campaign, and the process that led to the 2016 presidential elections had already started," Costa said. "The weekly newsletter reached an unexpected success due to word of mouth, rapidly passing from one thousand to ten thousand subscribers. In 2016, the newsletter also became a podcast that was telling American stories from the past and present. It was a great satisfaction. Despite many insiders saying there is no interest for foreign policy, the public for that topic was evidently there. My content was

distributed exclusively, free of charge. However, the project was financed with donations that reached 150 thousand euros. I used the funds raised to travel to the United States where I was working on reports, both in text and audio formats. I traveled from Iowa to Michigan and from Texas to California trying to recount what I was seeing on the field."

From what angle were you describing the United States?

"The starting focus was politics, but it was never only about politics. In fact, this newsletter was born around an electoral campaign that is a different perspective than ours," Costa said. "Since politics is not isolated from society at large, but mixed with culture and personal, collective feelings, the analysis becomes wider each time. For example, if the topic was Hillary Clinton, who was suffering in the electoral polls in Michigan, the analysis ended up being about what type of state Michigan is and why people think that. If you want to understand politics, you must be interested in cultural aspects and people's lives."

Tell us about *Il Post*, the newspaper you work for.

"In Italy, it was one of the very first online newspapers, without paper editions. It is a newspaper that was not very well financed in the beginning, with an editorial staff of five people. Today, we are a staff of forty," Costa said. "We found a niche for our readers in a market that is very complicated from an industrial and economic point of view. We did so by fact-checking and providing clear explanations. People have greatly appreciated this. Also, we never assume that our readers know context of the news. If we are speaking about the electoral law, we try to explain it from the very beginning. This approach allowed us to build a large

community of readers who value the standard of our work. Today, more than one half of our revenue comes from subscriptions."

In your opinion, what are the main differences between Italian and American journalism?

"The newspaper industry in the United States is huge, and the invested money is also very different. English-speaking readership can be reached all over the world," Costa said. "In the United States, journalistic standards are very high. From the New York Times to the Wall Street Journal, from the Washington Post to local newspapers, the quality is outstanding. However, even in the United States, the newspaper industry is undergoing a complicated transformation."

Where did your interest for the United States come from?

"A little by chance, like so many things in life. I wanted to do this job since I was a kid, but I didn't know where to start," Costa said. "During my apprenticeship, I found myself getting passionate about Obama's election story. I quickly realized that if I really wanted to know his story, I had to understand all the elements of it. For example, I had to understand how the American primaries work and how parties and elections are financed. I watched CNN and read books. That electoral campaign ended with Obama winning the elections and becoming the first U.S. Afro-American President."

Tell us about your books, *Questa è l'America* and *Una storia americana*.

"*Questa è l'America* is an attempt at taking a present picture of the United States. It is a book that recounts how the United States became the country it is today. It also tries to bridge the gap between what we think we

know about the United States and what we really know," Costa said. "Una storia americana is a book that was written during the electoral campaign. I told the life of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris by choosing some moments that tell not only about them but about the society around them, as well. It was a way of getting to know those who later became President and Vice President of the United States, because of the choices they made. They have great stories. They were two protagonists of collective and individual events."

Do you have any new projects about the United States?

"I created short documentaries about three cities where three very important American football games were played. Two more documentaries will be released soon. One is about the first Superbowl in history, and the other tells the connection between the city of Los Angeles and its history. It is called The American Way," Costa said. "I also

wrote an article about California for Passenger. This fall, my new book on California will be released, too. It is about a particular piece of the history of this state. The economy of California is doing very well; they have a low unemployment rate. Its industries are very influential, from Hollywood to Silicon Valley. It has a progressive government, yet many people are leaving California. Economic inequalities are so strong that part of its population decides to live elsewhere."

Back to Italy, you dealt with Milan in your Milan-Europe reportage. How would you describe it?

"The city has gone through a decade of impetuous development, economically and culturally. Milan remains a solid city, and it is a city that seems contemporary to me due to its identity," Costa said. "Americans are fascinated by the old and beautiful things they see in Rome, Florence and Venice. Milan is a city that offers

contemporary cultural, from fashion to design. There is no such place in Italy that has as much cultural aspiration as Milan. In Milan, you can find art, culture, beautiful churches, and modernity."

Having followed the American society for a long time, how would you describe its transformation?

"American society has changed a lot in the last twenty or thirty years for many reasons that go beyond politics," Costa said. "The attractiveness of cities has become increasingly strong, and today, cities are gaining population while rural areas are losing it. People are also losing prosperity and becoming increasingly arid on an economic and cultural level. The manufacturing sector has been still since the 1990s. This imbalance has created many inequalities. Today, America is truly two different countries, with divergent sensitivities,

ICCC Dine Around 2022



ITALIAN CULTURAL & COMMUNITY CENTER

DINE AROUND

AT AMALFI RISTORANTE & BAR
6100 WESTHEIMER RD. #140, HOUSTON, TX 77057

 **Prix fixe menu**
\$60 PER PERSON

Tuesday, April 19, 2022
at 7:00 PM

Price includes tap water and soft drinks.
It does not include wine, beer, spirits,
Pellegrino, Panna, espresso nor cappucino.
These can be added and paid extra at the
restaurant.

For more information and the dinner menu,
visit www.iccchouston.com.



New ICCC Members

Benvenuti!

The ICCC wishes to welcome the following new members and invites them to stay fully engaged with all of the wonderful programs and events that the ICCC has to offer.

For more information about becoming a member and joining the ICCC family, click [here](#) or contact Alessandra Pistone at accounting@iccchouston.com.

New members

- Mr. Jorge Ayala
- Ms. Gina Baiamonte
- Ms. Lisa Beckman
- Ms. Beth Bolyard
- Ms. Irraina Blackmon Corbin
- Ms. Donna Fasullo
- Ms. Fiorella Fernandez
- Ms. Francesca Fitzgerald
- Mr. Joseph Heinrich
- Ms. Donna Hoblit
- Ms. Flavia Horth
- Mr. Sven Hossfeld
- Ms. Mariana Maher
- Ms. Rita F. McGee
- Ms. Luz Mejia
- Mr. Mark Miller
- Mr. Eduardo Pacini
- Ms. Donna Patterson
- Ms. Maria Penalzoza
- Ms. Nathania Reid
- Ms. Ana Rivera
- Ms. Monica Roberson
- Ms. Cynthia Salvaggio Ontko
- Ms. Michelle Segura
- Ms. Priscilla Graffeo Shadburne
- Mr. Chuck Stern
- Mr. Martins Uche & Family

All'ICCC (At the ICCC)

Dear Friends,

It's always my pleasure to write a message to all the wonderful and generous people who support the ICCC. Therefore, I must begin with a profound *grazie!* We had a very busy start to 2022. Since the beginning of the year, many events have been hosted at the Milford House, and we are planning more soon!

We began the year by celebrating *La Messa Italiana* with the Auxiliary Bishop Italo Dell'Oro on January 9. The mass was well attended! Bishop Dell'Oro spent his time bestowing blessings and smiles upon each of us.

We opened the 2022 Italian Contemporary Film Series with an interesting movie, *Il Materiale Emotivo*, a mix of comedy and drama which attracted our movie aficionados.

On January 27, in collaboration with the Consulate General of Italy, we honored *Il Giorno della Memoria*. Consul General Federico Ciattaglia opened the evening highlighting the meaning and importance of remembrance and why we should never forget this historic date. Professor Sandra Celli Harris further explained context about the time and the atrocious events of that period.

On February 8, the Milford House was packed with supporters for *Aperitivo Italiano - Love for Italy*. Philip Cusimano gave us a rich description of red and white wines from North and Central Italy. Attendees enjoyed the wine and the friendly atmosphere, which is one of the most attractive components of the ICCC.

The Italian language school, *La Scuola d'Italiano*, is performing splendidly, as usual. Our classes are open to all levels of kids to adults.

Our incredible staff is working overtime to plan more events and activities for everybody interested in immersing themselves in Italian culture: literature, food, movies, etc. Check our [website](#) to be up to date on what events are coming up next!

I would like to ask our current members to renew their membership, if they haven't done so already. Your support is crucial, and we appreciate all types of contributions. I hope to see you soon at one of our events! It would be lovely to thank you personally. *Grazie mille.*

Con affetto,
Monica Ercolani



ICCC President Monica Ercolani.

2022 ICCC Board of Directors

Officers

Monica Ercolani	President
Claudia Sims	Vice President
Julie Mastroianni	Treasurer
Flavio Zannin	Secretary
Laura Ferro	Assistant Secretary

Board of Directors

- Jerry Baiamonte
- Thann Rae Dauterive
- Sheila Echols-Smesny
- Tracy Lasasz
- Mary Milloy
- Sandra Celli Harris

“ *la voce italiana* ”

Published six times a year (January, March, May, July, September and November) by the Italian Cultural & Community Center (ICCC) of Houston.

1101 Milford Street
Houston, Texas 77006

La Voce Italiana is a benefit to ICCC members and followers. La Voce Italiana can be found at www.iccchouston.com

For more information, please call 713-524-4222 ext. 4 or email info@iccchouston.com. ”

Grazie Mille for Supporting the Milford House Fund Campaign

By the ICCC Team



The Milford House Fund Campaign 2021.

We'd like to say a sincere thank you to all our members and supporters who supported Giving Tuesday in December 2021. The Italian Cultural & Community Center (ICCC) could not continue its mission "to advance, celebrate and preserve Italian culture and heritage" if it wasn't for all the continued support of the great ICCC family. Your contributions to the Milford House Fund will allow us to do necessary maintenance and improvement to our most important capital asset, the Milford House.

We would like to take this opportunity to not only say thank you, but also to say how amazed we are by all the support we received for campaign this year. Thanks to you, we were able to raise a total of \$11,863.39 through 51 donations. This includes \$325 donated through Instagram and

Facebook. Way to go! We are looking forward to continuing to expand our programs and activities, and we cannot wait until we can once again host thousands of visitors at the Milford House, home to the ICCC.

The ICCC initiated an Annual Fund campaign in 2014, and we have received a total of 288 donations, totaling \$83,000 for the years 2014 through January 2022.

Thank you to all who have responded to those campaigns and made other donations throughout the year.

The following donors have contributed to the Milford House Fund Annual Campaign 2021 as of February 10, 2022.

Mr. James A. Amodeo
Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Aspromonte
Mr. and Mrs. James Avioli
Mr. and Mrs. Nick A. Bacile
Mr. Jerry Baiamonte
Mr. and Mrs. Brad Baker
Mr. David Balister
Mr. and Mrs. John Bannon in memory of Ross and Annette Greco
Mr. Tom Brandino
Dr. Anna B. Cafilisch
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Cenatiempo
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Ciancone in memory of Gaetano and Tina Ruggiero
Dr. and Mrs. Phil Cimo
Mr. Carlo Cotrone
Mr. and Mrs. Larry Cucciniello

Ms. Gloria Secontino Dulworth
Mr. and Mrs. Alfred J. Fatica
Dr. Lara Longo Gaines in memory of Bob Longo and Vic Longo
Mr. and Mrs. Stacy Gallagher
Mrs. Pam! Graham in honor of Ilaria & Luciano Topi
Mr. John Knapp
Ms. Tracy Lalasz
Mr. Joseph C. LoCicero, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. Mario Lucchesi
Mr. and Mrs. Lee Mabrito
Mr. Raymond T. Marino
Mr. and Mrs. Vincent Marino
Mr. and Mrs. John Mastroianni
Dr. Samuel Mendicino
Ms. Julie Merritt
Mrs. Diane Nizza and Mr. Federico Zegarra-Ballon in memory of Zag Ferro
Ms. Carolyn Panebianco
Mr. and Mrs. Patronella
Mr. Mark Polimeno
Mr. Paul Pustizzi
Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Ramundo
Ms. Luisana Rios Socorro
Ms. Mary Ann Samaniego in memory of Louis and Katherine Carrabba
Mrs. Robin Cimino Shriftman
Mrs. Deborah Aspromonte Simon
Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Sims
Mrs. Sheila Echols and Mr. Jerome Smesny
Ms. Theresa Stewart
Ms. Cappie Tavary
Ms. Leslie Teitelbaum
Mr. Len Trombetta
Ms. Arlene Veach
Mrs. Randa Weiner
Anonymous Donors

Many Thanks for Your Support

By the ICCC Team

The Italian Cultural & Community Center (ICCC) has been awarded a grant from Houston Arts Alliance/City of Houston Support for Organizations Grant Program. The amount of the grant is \$46,411.60, and it is payable in four unequal payments (May 2022, August 2022, November 2022, and February 2023). This grant program is funded by a portion of the Hotel Occupancy Tax. We'd like to give a special thanks to Mayor Turner, City

Council, and the Houston Arts Alliance.

The ICCC has also been awarded a grant from Humanities Texas/National Endowment for the Humanities under the 2021 Relief Grant Program. The amount of the grant is \$9,600, and it is expected to be paid in full sometime during the first quarter of 2022. We want to thank everyone at Humanities Texas and National Endowment for the Humanities.

The ICCC has been awarded a grant from Humanities Texas for a documentary film screening and panel discussion/Q&A that was held at the Center on February 22, 2022, regarding Italian American Baseball Family. The amount of the grant is \$550, and it is expected to be paid in full sometime during the first quarter of 2022. We want to thank everyone at Humanities Texas.

Opportunities for Students at the ICCC

Scholarship Deadline is Right Around the Corner

By the ICCC Team

The ICCC awards annual \$1,000 renewable scholarships to graduating high school seniors who are of Italian descent to any degree on either side of parentage and who submit complete applications by the specified deadline. This year, the deadline is April 8, 2022, at 5 p.m. Since 2000, the ICCC has granted over \$250,000 in scholarships.

The ICCC has the following scholarships available: [ICCC Merit Only](#)

[Scholarship](#) (for ICCC members Only) and [ICCC Merit/Financial Based Scholarship](#).

Recipients are chosen by the Scholarship Committee based on scholarship, leadership, and financial need. The recipient may apply for a renewal of the scholarship every spring for a period totaling four years. To qualify for a scholarship renewal, the student must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 and a minimum

semester total of 12 hours.

The scholarship applications are available to ICCC members as well as the public on the [ICCC website](#). For all scholarship instructions and applications please refer to our website.

Study Abroad Scholarship

By the ICCC Team



THE ITALIAN CULTURAL &
COMMUNITY CENTER

STUDY ABROAD SCHOLARSHIP



\$2,500

to Houston area college students
participating in study abroad
programs to Italy.*

03.15.2022

The deadline is strictly observed.
Deadline for Summer & Fall 2022
semesters is March 15, 2022.

*Study abroad program should be greater than two weeks and up to a full semester.

For more information, visit our website www.iccchouston.com.

The ICCC awards \$2,500 scholarships to Houston area college students participating in study abroad programs in Italy. Study abroad programs should be greater than four weeks and up to a full semester.

It is a great honor to receive a scholarship which is applied to the cost and associated expenses of the student's selected study abroad program. Recipients will also receive a one year complimentary membership to the ICCC.

Students enrolled full-time at any four-year college or university with a physical campus location inside the greater Houston area (including Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Liberty, Montgomery and Waller counties) are eligible to apply.

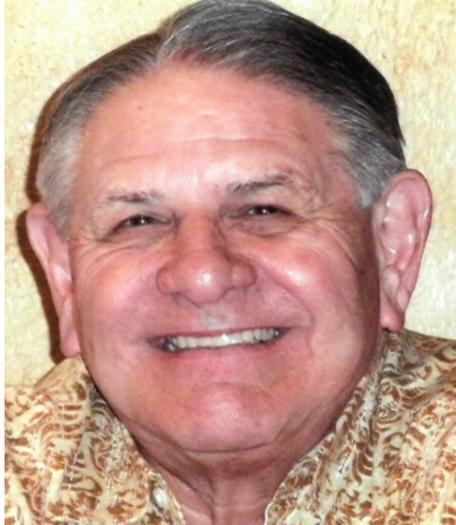
Completed applications are due in the ICCC office on the date stated on the application. The deadline is strictly observed. The deadline for Summer and Fall 2022 semesters is March 15, 2022.

At a meeting of the Scholarship Committee, the committee selects applicants who have demonstrated success in college, as determined from their GPA and letter of recommendation. The Committee may invite the finalists for an interview before making the final selection.

For more information, visit the [ICCC Scholarships website](http://www.icccscholarships.com) to [download the application](#) and read more about the application process.

Vincent Frank DiPuma (1940-2021) - May He Rest in Peace

By Ray Miller



Vincent Frank DiPuma (1940-2021).

Vincent passed away peacefully on Monday, December 27, 2021, in Pearland, Texas. He was born on August 12, 1942, in Houston, Texas to Luke and Rose DiPuma (both deceased). He married his friend and love, Margie Cunzalo DiPuma on November 26, 1961. He was preceded in death by his loving and devoted wife, Margie, who passed away in March of 2021. He was Dad to Paul DiPuma and

his wife Susan, Stephen DiPuma and his wife Krista, David DiPuma and his wife Katy; Grandpa to Jason DiPuma (son of Paul and Susan), David Paul Griffin and his wife Haley, Kamille McRay and her husband Jonathan (children of Stephen and Krista); and Nonno to Vincenzo, Ronan, and Fiona DiPuma (children of David and Katy). Three great-grand-children, Ryler Griffin, Jona, and Demi McRay. He is also survived by his two loving brothers, Frank DiPuma and his wife Diane, and Luke DiPuma and his wife Debi. He had four nieces and four nephews along with their spouses, many great nieces, and nephews.

Vincent, along with his youngest brother Luke, started Stop and Print in 1974, which later became DiPuma Printing and Promotional Products, now in its 47th year of business. He believed in a strong work ethic, which he stressed as the key to his success. You could find him working at the printing shop six days a week. He remained involved with the business up until a year ago. His two oldest sons Paul and Stephen are owners of the company today.

Vincent had very few hobbies, but the one thing he enjoyed most was taking the family on vacations, preferably to

a nice, sunny beach. It was something he looked forward to and always wanted to start planning the next trip the moment we returned home. The family traveled to many destinations from Hawaii to Mexico, Aruba to Grand Cayman, the Bahamas and many other memorable trips. He treasured these trips, being with his family, and made lots of wonderful memories the family will always hold dear to their hearts and cherish.

Vincent was proud of his Italian heritage. He enjoyed working the entrance gates at the Houston Italian Festival every October, with a megaphone in his hand welcoming attendants, or collecting donations at the ICCC's Sunday Mass/Pasta Lunch.

I was the new person at the Italian Culture Center in 2012, and it was suggested if I wanted to learn how the Mass or Festival Gates really worked, I needed to learn from Vincent. That learning experience really showed the dedication and volunteer spirit that Vincent and his entire family had for the ICCC. I made many trips over the years to DiPuma printing and Vincent always had time to spend with me. Those lessons and visits easily led to a bonding and friendship that I will cherish forever.

ICCC Clubs and Organizations

Daughters of Italian Heritage

By Donna Patterson | Deborah Graustein, President

Happy 2022! The Daughters of Italian Heritage are starting their new year with a leap in membership! Welcome new members, Dominique Varner, Catherine D'Eramo and Lyndol Descant.

Our Community Outreach Committee is researching charitable organizations for new service projects and donations. However, The Society of St. Vincent de Paul will continue to be on our list to continue to support.

Italian masses are continuing at the

ICCC. Mark your calendars for [Sunday, March 13 at 10:30 a.m.](#) Lunch is not being served, but coffee and cookies will be available following the mass. Online reservations are required to attend the mass. Please contact the ICCC for more information.

In lieu of hosting a St. Joseph Table for 2022, the Daughters are planning to assist and participate at the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish, St. Joseph Altar celebration in March. We are looking forward to an exciting year, full of fun activities for our

members and prospective members.

REMINDER: New meeting date and time on the third Saturday of each month at 9 a.m. continuing at the ICCC Hall. There may be times where the meetings will be off site at another location.

If you are interested in attending any of our meetings or becoming a member, we would love to have you! Contact [Anna Messer](#) or visit our [website](#) to receive information on upcoming meetings. Blessings to all.

Italy in America Association (IIAA)

By Len Trombetta | Len Trombetta, President

The Italy in America Association met in January at the Milford House to elect board members. The board met later in the month to select officers with the following results. Len Trombetta remains IIAA president, with Gail Gant as executive vice president, Jerry Reimondo as treasurer, and Franco Posa as secretary. In addition, they assigned duties to the remaining board members: Betty Donellan, past president, is Director Social, and will coordinate social events and refreshments served at meetings. Janet Beck is Membership

Coordinator, and Bianca Cunningham is Sunshine Chair, greeting and recruiting new members and providing gentle reminders to those who have not yet paid dues.

The February meeting was held online, with a presentation by President Len Trombetta's daughter, Anna, an opera singer living in Amsterdam. She gave a history of Italian opera, starting with the initial concept established by the Florentine Camarata in late 16th Century Italy, moving through Baroque, Classical,

Verismo periods, and ending with modern opera by composers such as John Adams and Gian Carlo Menotti. We heard several selections by the likes of Joyce DiDonato, Cecilia Bartolli, and Maria Callas, and ended with Tu Fosti Tradito from La Clemenza di Tito in a recording by Anna herself.

We look forward to our next meeting on the second Thursday in March, at the Milford House.

Italian Language Classes - Full Schedule



ONLINE CLASS | Italian Conversation

Come practice your Italian conversational skills with us and master Italy's lyrical language in a small group class!

Tuesdays | March 1 to March 22, 2022 | 10 AM to 12 PM

\$120 for ICCC Members | \$130 for Non-members

Click [HERE](#) to register



ONLINE CLASS | Italian for Beginners - AISI

Join our online or in-person beginners class and learn the basics of the beautiful Italian language.

Mondays | March 21 to May 2, 2022 | 3:30 to 5:30 PM

\$202.50 for ICCC Members | \$225 for Non-members

Click [HERE](#) to register



IN-PERSON CLASS | Italian for Travelers

Are you planning to travel to Italy soon or in the future? Join our Italian for Travelers class to help you learn essential Italian words and phrases that will help you get around!

Thursdays | March 31 to May 5, 2022 | 6:30 to 8:30 PM

\$247.50 for ICCC Members | \$275 for Non-members

Click [HERE](#) to register



IN-PERSON | A Puccini Celebration

This four-week course on the major operas of Giacomo Puccini will explore Turandot, Gianni Schicchi, Tosca, and La Bohème. No special musical training is necessary, only a love of music!

Thursdays | April 21 to May 12, 2022 | 7 to 8:30 PM

\$100 for ICCC Members | \$125 for Non-members

Click [HERE](#) to register

MARZO 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Ambrosia of Puglia 7 - 8 PM Italian Conversation - Intermediate (Online) 10 AM - 12 PM	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13 Catholic Mass 10:30 AM	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21 Italian for Beginners - AISI (Online) 3:30 - 5:30 PM	22	23 Italian Contemporary Film Series: You Came Back 7 PM	24	25	26
27	28	29 Aperitivo Italiano - Wine Down in Piemonte 7 - 8 PM	30	31 Italian for Travelers 6:30 - 8:30 PM		

The health and safety of our members, visitors, and staff are our top priority. We will continue to monitor the situation closely and follow the guidelines issued by CDC, the Houston Health Department, as well as local, state and federal authorities. Note that the in-person events listed below might be canceled if an executive order issued by the City of Houston prohibits gatherings. If the event proceeds, we will make sure to welcome you safely.

Ambrosia of Puglia

Come discover the gorgeous region of Puglia through this olive oil tasting presented by Maria Cristina Giliberti. This will be an opportunity to learn how to distinguish its quality and to appreciate its beneficial properties, as well as an occasion to enjoy it raw and simple as the land of Puglia creates it.

Time: Tuesday, March 1 from 7 to 8 PM

Price: \$20 for ICCC Members and \$25 for Non-Members

Place: ICCC Houston*

Italian Conversation - Intermediate (Online)

Come practice your Italian conversational skills with us and master Italy's lyrical language in a small group class. Knowledge of Italian to a complete A2 level is required. If you are not sure about your level, please contact us at (713)524-4222 ext. 7.

Time: Tuesdays, March 1 to March 22 from 10 AM to 12 PM

Price: \$120 for ICCC Members and \$130 for Non-Members

Place: Online

Catholic Mass

Experience mass in a personal setting with family and friends! Join us for a Roman Catholic bilingual Italian and English mass. Celebrant is Rev. Leon Strieder, Associate Professor of Liturgy and Science at the University of St. Thomas. After mass, we are serving cake and coffee. No pasta meal at this time.

Time: Sunday, March 13 at 10:30 AM

Place: ICCC Houston*

Italian for Beginners - AISI (Online)

Join our online Italian for Beginners class and learn the basics of the beautiful Italian language.

Time: Mondays, March 21 to May 2 from 3:30 to 5:30 PM

Price: \$202.50 for ICCC Members and \$225 for Non-Members

Place: Online

Italian Contemporary Film Series: You Came Back

Marco and Anita discover they are expecting a child. Finally a ray of light in Marco's life after his heartbreak following the loss of Leo, his first born with his former wife Clara. Suddenly, however Perla, the new owner where the couple lived until the tragic accident, bursts into Marco's and his ex-wife's lives. The mysterious woman claims she keeps feeling a strange presence and hearing the voice of a child that is tormenting her and her son. Marco therefore finds himself torn between the ties of the past and an unwritten future.

Time: Wednesday, March 23 at 7 PM

Price: \$10 for ICCC Members and \$15 for Non-Members

Place: ICCC Houston*

Aperitivo Italiano - Wine Down in Piemonte

Bring a friend and Wine Down in Piemonte with us during happy hour. We will taste four Italian wines from Piemonte accompanied by Italian-style small bites. The event will be presented by Ross Tefteller of Dionysus Imports.

Time: Tuesday, March 29 from 7 to 8 PM

Price: \$30 for Members and \$35 for Non-Members

Place: ICCC Houston*

APRILE 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5 If You Kept a Record of Sins – a conversation with Andrea Bajani 7 - 8 PM	6	7	8	9
10	11 Italian for Beginners - AISI (Online) 3:30 - 5:30 PM	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19 ICCC Dine Around 2022 at Amalfi Ristorante and Bar 7 PM	20 Italian Contemporary Film Series: Blackout Love 7 PM	21 A Puccini Celebration 7 - 8:30 PM	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

The health and safety of our members, visitors, and staff are our top priority. We will continue to monitor the situation closely and follow the guidelines issued by CDC, the Houston Health Department, as well as local, state and federal authorities. Note that the in-person events listed below might be canceled if an executive order issued by the City of Houston prohibits gatherings. If the event proceeds, we will make sure to welcome you safely.

Italian for Travelers

Register to learn essential Italian words and phrases that will help you get around!

Time: Thursdays, March 31 to May 5 from 6:30 to 8:30 PM

Price: \$10 for ICCC Members and \$15 for Non-Members

Place: **ICCC Houston***

If You Kept a Record of Sins with Andrea Bajani

Join us as we analyze and discuss *If You Kept a Record of Sins* by Andrea Bajani. This will be a conversation with the author and a presentation of his latest book. Books will be available for sale.

Time: Tuesday, April 5 from 7 to 8 PM

Price: \$10 for ICCC Members and \$15 for Non-Members

Place: **ICCC Houston***

Italian for Beginners - AISI (Online)

Join our online Italian for Beginners class and learn the basics of the beautiful Italian language.

Time: Mondays, April 11 to May 23 from 6:30 to 8:30 PM

Price: \$202.50 for ICCC Members and \$225 for Non-Members

Place: **Online**

ICCC Dine Around 2022

Want to meet new friends while enjoying Italian cuisine? Then join us for a 'Dine Around' at Amalfi Ristorante Italiano! Guests will have the opportunity to enjoy a nice evening surrounded by ICCC members and friends. This event will offer a prix fixe menu (\$60 per person). You must previously register and pay in order to

attend this event.

Time: Tuesday, April 19 at 7 PM

Price: \$60 per person

Place: **Amalfi Ristorante and Bar | 6100 Westheimer Rd. #140, Houston, TX 77057**

Italian Contemporary Film Series: Blackout Love

Valeria is a woman who never looks back, passing from one man to another. But one day everything changes: an ex who made her feel bad in the past reappears in her life.

Time: Wednesday, April 20 at 7 PM

Price: \$10 for ICCC Members and \$15 for Non-Members

Place: **ICCC Houston***

A Puccini Celebration

This four-week course on the major operas of Giacomo Puccini begins with an exploration of Puccini's 1926 opera *Turandot*, coinciding with its production by the Houston Grand Opera (April 22 to May 6, 2022). The course starts on Thursday, April 21st and continues through the following three Thursdays, April 28, May 5, and May 12, 2022. Besides *Turandot*, the course will explore three other Puccini masterworks: *Gianni Schicchi*, *Tosca*, and *La Bohème*. No special musical training is necessary, only a love of music!

Time: Thursdays, April 21 to May 12 from 7 to 8:30 PM

Price: \$100 for Members and \$125 for Non-Members

Place: **ICCC Houston***

***If you are fully vaccinated, masks are optional.**

Eight Italian Destinations to See in 2022

By Tiffany Eastham | [Italics Magazine](#)

Discover these wondrous Italian destinations you didn't even know were on your travel bucket list.



A quaint restaurant closes for an afternoon siesta in Orvieto, Italy. Photo: Tiffany Eastham.

Italy is a cultural powerhouse for many reasons. It goes without saying that the world leader in UNESCO-designated sites has been a long-standing influencer of all things food, wine, art, history, and invention. As the world continues to slowly welcome back international travel and tourism, we've highlighted eight Italian destinations that deserve recognition in 2022.

Civita di Bagnoregio: touch the sky

On foggy mornings, this timeworn town appears to hang in mid-air, jutting up towards the sky while it still can. Nicknamed 'La Città che Muore', or 'The Dying City', it clings to life as erosion continues to wear away at its unstable base. Documented earthquakes and landslides have contributed to Civita's devastation for centuries, and the urgency to preserve what is left of this medieval gem has warranted extensive restoration efforts. In fact, Civita is the only city in Italy to charge an entrance fee, but the five or so euros you'll pay continues to help fund preservation and maintenance work to save what is left of the crumbling plateau.

In recent years, 'The City in the Sky' has seen a resurgence in tourism by those eager to catch a glimpse of one of most spectacular Italian destinations still standing.

Orvieto: a multitude of historical riches

An hour and a half outside of Rome, you'll find the quiet town of Orvieto poised on a plateau of tufo volcanic stone. Its striking façade dates back to the time of the Etruscans — Italy's ancient people — and its perfectly preserved old town is rich with secrets from the past.

Concealed beneath the charming streets runs a massive network of

centuries-old caves and tunnels that once hosted a complex of pottery kilns and wells, allowing locals to thrive in this haunting grid while under siege by the Romans. The Etruscans' presence is showcased even in death. Descend the staggering cliffs to find the ancient necropolis of Crocifisso del Tufo, home to over 200 Etruscan tombs and deemed as one of the best-preserved testaments to this ancient civilization. Locals still refer to Orvieto as 'the rock' due to its imposing presence and aptitude to stand the weathering test of time.

Siena: seven centuries and counting

Many may know of Siena for being a central Tuscan town, stretched across a hilltop, and still reveling in its medieval history. Pedestrians rule here, but so do horses.

The Palio of Siena is a fierce and thrilling medieval-style horse race that dates back at least seven centuries. For local Sienese, the Palio is much more than a race, though — it's a passion. The event is complex and ritualistic, but the remaining 17 contrade, or districts, of Siena vie for a spot in the top 10 to compete in this bi-annual extravaganza. The iconic Piazza del Campo is completely transformed into the famous race track, laden with barriers and tuff clay to mimic the races of ancient times. If you find yourself in Tuscany this summer, consider joining the thousands of others who flock to witness this once in a lifetime experience. Il Palio takes place every year on July 2nd and August 16th.

Pienza: old and beloved

Pienza's perfectly salty, distinctly original pecorino cheese has been produced the same way for thousands of years.

You've likely heard of this famous cheese, but the town? Maybe not so much. Pecorino di Pienza is a sheep's cheese with historic origins — like many other culinary delicacies of Tuscany. It is supposedly one of the oldest types of cheese in the world, documented by the Romans, and even before them, the Etruscans. The production of pecorino is believed to have been created by farmers who had small herds of sheep. The storage and aging process of pecorino is exceptionally important, and in fact, if you meander through Pienza, you will undoubtedly notice the different colorings and coatings of pecorino as they age while displayed in store windows. The town itself is idyllic too. It was once considered the Renaissance utopia of an 'ideal city' due to its architecture, city squares, and perspective open spaces — and it absolutely deserves a visit.

Spiazz: a clinging, cliff side vantage

Spiazz is home to the Santuario Madonna della Corona (Sanctuary of the Lady of the Crown) that clings to a vertical cliff face, suspended somewhere between the reaches of heaven and earth.

The church is an architectural feat. It was originally built around 1530, and due to its relative inaccessibility, it has remained mostly intact with the help of some restructuring in the 1970s. It initially served as a hermitage where holy men could come for silent reflection, and with it only being reachable by a treacherous mountain path, it truly was a test of faith. Today, the path up to the sanctuary has been modernized, and it welcomes visitors who are eager for a challenging pilgrimage to the top. The views are worth the climb, and I personally think this is one of the most astounding Italian destinations in northern Italy.

Alba: into the harvest

Alba is home to perhaps one of the most flavorful and coveted culinary treasures — the white truffle. In fact, truffle hunting and extraction in Italy just gained UNESCO status in December of 2021.

This process is extremely particular down to the identification of the appropriate area to hunt, incorporating a trained dog, and extracting the truffle using a special spade. The knowledge and practice of this now-protected trade has been passed down for centuries. Alba is a charming town that plays host to the annual International Alba White Truffle Fair and is also home to the National Center for Truffle Studies. If you're keen for an all-encompassing truffle experience, consider a stop in Alba.

Montalcino: bleeding Brunello

Any wine lover should pay a visit to Montalcino, a territory truly made for one of Italy's most famous wines, Brunello di Montalcino. Curated from the Sangiovese grape, Brunello in this area must follow a strict and singular process in order to keep its name. Such regulations ensure the wine is aged two years at minimum in oak barrels, followed by a minimum of four months once bottled. Everything else from minimum alcohol content to total acidity and net dry extract is done to an exact degree. It really is a complex art and science.

Those who initially come for the wine tastings often stay for the stunning views atop the town of Montalcino...

[Click here to continue reading.](#)

In Cucina con gli Italiani

Calamari Con Salsa Tonnata

Recipe by [Paola Bacchia](#)

Ingredients (Serves 4 people as an entrée)

500g (17.6 oz) calamari (weight cleaned, about 1kg before cleaning)

95g (3.4 oz) tin tuna, drained

1 tablespoon capers in vinegar, drained

3 tablespoons mayonnaise (see below)

Fresh parsley, leaves chopped as a garnish

Lemon wedges, to serve

Mayonnaise:

1 large egg, yolk only

1 teaspoon lemon juice

200ml light olive oil

Salt to taste



Preparation

To make the mayonnaise, place the yolk and lemon juice in a bowl and whisk lightly. Add the oil in the slow steady stream, whisking the whole time until you have added all the oil and it thickens. Salt to taste and add a bit of lemon juice, if needed.

To prepare the calamari (if the fishmonger has not already prepared it for you), pull on the head firmly until it (and the innards) separate from the body. Wash thoroughly. Carefully remove the quill and then split the body along the line of where the quill was and open it out flat. Remove any skin and wash again. Remove the wings (they are very good to eat) and score both the wings and the body in a criss-cross pattern. Place in a bowl of

clean water. Cut the legs just below the eyes and leave them whole, if small, or else cut in two. Repeat for remaining calamari.

To make the tuna mayonnaise, place the drained tuna and capers in a small food processor and pulse until smooth. Place in a small bowl with the mayonnaise and mix. Set aside.

Heat a griddle pan to high. Drain the calamari pieces and pat dry with paper towels. Once the griddle is hot, place the calamari pieces in a single layer and cook until the flesh turns white and the edges start browning. Do this a couple of times, if needed. Do not overcrowd the griddle.

Turn the calamari pieces over and cook until browned. Make sure they do

not cook for more than a few minutes on each side or they will become chewy.

Place on individual serving plates. Drizzle the tuna mayonnaise. Garnish with parsley and lemon wedges.

Pair it with: Ferrari Perlé

By [TheSpruceEats](#) and [FerrariTrento](#)



While you might think of Italy as being synonymous with Prosecco (which isn't wrong), there's much more of the country's sparkling wine scene just waiting to be discovered.

Miguel Martinez, a sommelier at Vino Veritas Wine Bar and Bottle Shop in Portland, Oregon, is partial to this lovely bottle of bubbles from Trentino, a mountainous winemaking region in northern Italy that uses the Traditional Method to make its namesake wines. Iconic Trentodoc producer Ferrari and its beloved vintage Blanc de Blancs, Perlé, is Martinez's go-to, thanks to its golden-yellow color, elegant richness (though make no mistake, this is a dry wine), and notes of almonds, apple skin, and subtle spice.

Perlé is a Chardonnay. Its pale golden highlights adorn its straw yellow colour. The perlage is extremely fine and persistent.

On the nose, it has an aromatic richness of extraordinary expressiveness: the scene is dominated by hints of Reinette apples and citrus fruits, accompanied by tones of white peach, almond blossom and toast-like notes.

In the mouth, it is elegant and harmonious, with the unmistakable fruity, aromatic sensations that are typical of Chardonnay. These are followed by a slightly almondy finish of great persistence, the result of long ageing on the yeasts.

Wall Street Journal said, "This must surely be the benchmark for all Italian sparkling wine. Made from 100% Chardonnay, it has a toasty, biscuity nose but once sipped there is a refreshing, crisp acidity. Bright and clean, this is seriously good."



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We mark with pride, achievements and promise to continue improving the Italian Cultural & Community Center as we fulfill our mission to advance, celebrate, and preserve Italian culture for all Houstonians, and continue to place the ICCC on the city's culture map. We thank you for your continued support.

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