

An ieiMedia/City of Urbino Discovery Publication

FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT

URBINO VIEW

INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION IN INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

City of Discovery

A Father's Gift to Raphael

Best Places to Visit, Stay, Eat, & Play

Guide to Urbino Treasures

Arts, Culture, Nightlife & People

Agritourism & Eco-Friendly Shopping





PHOTO BY Jessica German
The graffiti of Urbino is more than street art. It expresses the longings of the city.



Arielle Emmett

City of First Encounters

Urbino is a city as old as the Romans, the birthplace of Raffaello (Raphael) and a city of secrets. The best-kept secret is that Urbino and its environs are practically unknown to most international travelers. Roma, Firenze (Florence) and Tuscany, Venezia (Venice) command the lion-share of tourist dollars and mind space. Urbino, the Renaissance jewel hidden in the lush hills of Le Marche, in east-central Italy, maintains a happy independence. It is a city of families and scholars, journalists and policemen, late-night cafes, stone streets that bend and rise in turns. Urbino's college graduates celebrate their success with crowns of laurel leaves, gold masks and fountain dunkings. Art critics and government officials here would rather fight it out on a national stage over the ownership of a treasured painting than the ownership of villas or fast cars.

In all things, Urbino is a city of first encounters. Its overlay of past, present, and future seems alive to me in a way that suggests movie set, *roman a clef*. Old writings emerge from beneath the surface of newer Medieval and Renaissance manuscripts. Gorgeous artworks are discovered beneath drapes in attics and dungeons, then cleaned and re-discovered so that the underpainting shines through. Bookstores that revel in selling Raffaello and father Giovanni Santi by day become nightclubs after dark. Sommeliers, pasta-makers, university presidents, opera singers, chefs, cheese vendors, and artists draw their zest for life from traditions so rich that any other culture might find them weighty, even stifling. Instead, Urbino is ever-new. Just when you thought you understood the city, that you had encountered its incredible Palazzo Ducale (and yes, it does appear like Camelot when you see it for the first time), talked to its people, reveled in its frescoes and oratorios, botanical gardens, markets and restaurants, churches and shops, you suddenly realize you don't know the half of it. Every moment brings the opportunity for a first encounter. All of Le Marche will surprise you, even the fishing boats that head out at dawn for fresh catch in the Adriatic.

The parties here begin at sunset at 9 PM and last well into the wee hours. You *feel the delight* of people meeting and greeting in half a dozen languages. The rose of the sky settles over the hills that grow blue and then violet until the faint outlines of the hills disappear into stars. You encounter them: the stars and smiles. Hosts like world class-sommelier Otello Renzi may invite you to his hilltop restaurant in Fermignano for just a little bit of wine tasting – and suddenly you're feasting, drinking, and learning at the same time. Wine has never tasted this delicious. Urbino Mayor Franco Corbucci, Matteo Ricci, president of the province of Pesaro-Urbino, Giovanni Lani and Giacomo Guidi, co-founders of the Urbino Press Award, University of Urbino "Carlo Bo" E.R.S.U. director Massimo Fortini, banker Michele Ambrosini, fashion designer Piero Guidi, and more: You may meet each of them in Urbino's parties and piazzas, at the Saturday market, on the beaches in Pesaro, or at a reception you never expected. Five hours go by and suddenly you understand the *parola amicizia* –friendship – is part of any international language. As young Matteo Ricci described it at one of those first-encounter parties for

American journalists and scholars at the university: "Urbino is the place where you can go to find yourself -- to eat well, live well, but most of all, to find your happiness."

This magazine will help you explore the happiness, and, hopefully, at least some of the secret riches of Urbino and surrounding Le Marche. *UrbinoView* is produced cooperatively by the City of Urbino, a host of gracious local sponsors, ieiMedia and San Francisco State University. Founded in 2001 by Professor Andrew Ciofalo, dubbed "Magnifico" by Italian friends, ieiMedia is a private educational corporation that helps organize and train young American journalism students abroad. Each year, approximately 25-50 students from all parts of the United States come here to explore, find stories, and develop multimedia skills in photography, video, and web design. The students produce a website (www.inurbino.net), blogs, and now, this magazine – all of them about their discoveries of Urbino – its art, sciences, sports, food, sustainable ecology and farming, boutique economies, nightlife, and people. In 2009, a tough year for the world's economy, San Francisco State University's journalism department, under the direction of Professor Rachele Kanigel, co-sponsored the Urbino Project. The pages here directly reflect this wonderful collaboration of Italian and American journalists, translators, students and government officials working to improve cultural relations and knowledge at the frontiers of our digital age.

A special thanks to all of our professional staff in Urbino – teachers, journalists, intercultural communicators, and our hard working and talented student reporters, photographers, editors, and designers. Above all, our gratitude goes to Giovanni Lani and his wife, Solidea Vitali Rosati, the energetic journalists with *il Resto del Carlino* whose vision for this magazine and the Urbino Press Award has already drawn some of the finest writers and defenders of a free world press to this Renaissance city. For example, *New York Times* journalist and author Thomas Friedman was the 2009 recipient of the prestigious Urbino Press Award. Lani and his wife Solidea have worked tirelessly to help our students produce *UrbinoView*, as have Mayoral spokesman Gabriele Cavallera and our Italian director of culture and translation, Francesca Carducci. To all our friends, and to all of you, gracious readers, *benvenuti!*

We hope you will discover and love Urbino as much as we have.

Arrivederci!
Arielle Emmett

Editor-in-Chief, UrbinoView

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UrbinoView

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Cover photo by Scott Burry

Photo (back cover) by Michiko Theurer



Urbino Mayor Franco Corbucci (center) and Italian journalist Giovanni Lanì (right) speak to students near the Ducale Palace.
Photo by Scott Burry

A Mayor's Welcome

It's a great pleasure to see the first magazine produced in our city, about our city and our province, written entirely in English. The group of young journalists who followed the courses organized by ieiMedia in collaboration with San Francisco State University lived in Urbino for one month. They studied the local society, the culture, the events and the many elements which make us unique. The result of this work is seen in the interesting stories found on these pages, which give the reader a true sense of the vitality of our community.

UrbinoView is an example of how a segment of Italian society is perceived through the eyes of a foreigner. This magazine presents aspects of our province to the English-speaking public that the average tourist would not easily encounter. It is our hope that the stories presented here will inspire some of the many foreign travelers who are looking for the "real" Italy to visit the city of Raphael and the province of Pesaro and Urbino.

This magazine was created thanks to several public and private institutions combined with the help of some private sponsors. Once again the "Urbino Press Award" has proven itself to be a doorway to the United States. As a matter of fact, news about this award dedicated to the American press prompted ieiMedia to investigate the possibility of starting its courses in our city.

We wish to thank all the sponsors, students, and staff for this outstanding effort.

Pleasant reading!

Franco Corbucci
Mayor of Urbino

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City of Discovery

The Renaissance lives in Urbino, where the town embraces beauty and a reverence for art.



PHOTO (above)
By Natalie Flemming
History is alive. Urbino offers breathtaking views from below and above the city. Here the Palazzo Ducale and the Duomo stretch into the horizon.

PHOTO (right)
By Giovanna Borgna
The Duomo or Cathedral features rich art such as Federico Barocci's Last Supper and Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian. Located in The Crypt is the Pieta, sculptured in marble by Giovanni Bandini.

by Leah Bigelow



Welcome to Urbino. Here is a city-fortress of terra cotta roofs and tan-colored bricks, surrounded by a sea of rolling green fields. Its heart is composed of steep hills and Escher-like flights of stairs, each one worth the climb in order to catch a glimpse of a Travertine doorway, a ducal palace or a breathtaking countryside view.

This Renaissance town is nestled against twin hills in the lesser known region of central Italy known as Le Marche. Within these city walls lies a piece of Italian history, rich with art and poetry, science and intrigue. Urbino's well-preserved past is waiting to be explored.

The Romans first settled this land in the 4th Century B.C., although the Etruscans, Celts and Gauls have all at some point called Urbino home. The area was originally dubbed Urvinum Mataurense, from *urvusa*, a ploughshare, referring to the shape of the land, and *metauro*, the name of one of the rivers surrounding the town.

In 46 B.C., the Romans granted Urbino a statute of municipium, allowing the town to remain self-governing, with limited interference from the great power to the South. While the surrounding villages survived mainly on agriculture, Urbino evolved into an administrative center complete with a people's assembly, a senate with magistrates and its own high priest.

Although early Urbino was a prospering settlement, the city did not reach its full potential until the arrival of the Montefeltro family in the 13th century. Antonio da Montefeltro, who had settled a revolt against Barbarossa in Rome, earned the title of Count and Imperial Vicar of Urbino in 1155. With his rise to power came the rise of the town, and Urbino began its ascent out of the Middle Ages.

The Montefeltro dynasty became embedded in Urbino as centuries passed, acquiring political skill, great wealth and a taste for the arts. Guidantonio da Montefeltro's commission of a Gothic fresco created by the Salimbeni brothers in 1416 set the stage for a flowering of art, mathematics, and architecture, establishing Urbino as the center of "The Other Renaissance" and an artistic rival to Florence.

Urbino owes much of its notoriety, however, to Federico da Montefeltro, duke from 1444 until his death in 1482. Successful both on the battlefield and in the courtroom, the Duke was also an avid supporter of literature and the arts. Under Federico's rule, as well as that of his son Guidobaldo, Urbino became a perfect representation of the Renaissance.

Called "the light of Italy" by Baldassare Castiglione in *The Book of the Courtier*, the Duke used his scholarly upbringing to turn Urbino into one of the most prominent courts in Europe.

Though much of the medieval structure of the town remained, there was a wealth of change within those ancient walls.

Under Federico's guidance, the city's economy flourished and Urbino's residents were introduced to the work of many renowned poets, painters and musicians. Piero della Francesca, Leon Battista Alberti, Francesco di Giorgio Martini and Luciano Laurana are only a few of the many great artists who graced the city with their talents. Beloved artists Raffaello and Bramante, both Urbino natives, began the journey to become masters of their craft during this time.

After the death of Guidobaldo da Montefeltro in 1508, however, Urbino began a period of decline. The dukedom transferred to the della Rovere family, but the court was removed to the nearby town of Pesaro not long after they came into power. Many great works of art, along with the bulk of the palace's books and treasures, were taken during this time and sent to the larger cities of Florence and Rome.

Despite these losses as well as the many challenges it faced during ensuing centuries, the town of Urbino has managed to retain a strong sense of history.

Continued on Page 8

Palazzo Ducale

National Gallery of Marche

Piazza Duca Federico 107

61029 Urbino

tel. +39 0722 322625

Hours: 8:30-7:15 T-Sunday, Monday

closes at 2:00

Price: 4,00

"On April 26, 1478, during Ascension Sunday Mass, Lorenzo de' Medici and his brother, Giuliano, the young leaders of the Florentine city-state, were attacked in the Duomo. Giuliano suffered nineteen stab wounds and died instantly. Lorenzo, though injured, managed to escape. The Florentine mob, faithful to the Medici, reacted violently and slaughtered all the killers they could put their hands on." -- Marcello Simonetta, *The Montefeltro Conspiracy: a Renaissance Mystery Decoded* (Doubleday, 2008)

Family feuds are popular in any culture, but few rival the bloody conspiracies of the Italian Renaissance. In 1478 Lorenzo de' Medici was nearly murdered in Florence's great cathedral. He went on to live a short, productive life (1442-1492) as Michelangelo's – and Florence's – great patron of arts and culture. Historians placed the blame for the assassination plot on the Pazzi, a rival merchant family aiming to oust the Medici as rulers of Florence and bankers to the Pope. But in 2001, an Italian historian, Marcello Simonetta, discovered a coded letter written and stored in a private Urbino family archive. The letter revealed dimensions of the Pazzi conspiracy never before realized: "Federico da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino (1422-1482), portrayed for centuries as the 'light of Italy' and the humanist friend of Lorenzo de' Medici, was the hidden schemer behind the 1478 conspiracy to eliminate both him and his brother," Simonetta claimed. Not only did Federico conspire against Lorenzo, according to Simonetta, he may also have been involved in a wide-ranging plot against the Medici that involved Pope Sixtus IV. Sixtus had built the Sistine Chapel and obsessively decorated its walls with the family crest: an oak tree painted on a gold-green background. Lorenzo de' Medici, who would later earn the title "Magnifico," ordered Sixtus' portrait and coat of arms erased from the Sistine Chapel walls. His protegee Michelangelo was said to have painted over the Pope's commissioned works with the hellish figures from *The Last Judgment*, which now appear in restored glory on the Sistine Chapel's altar walls.

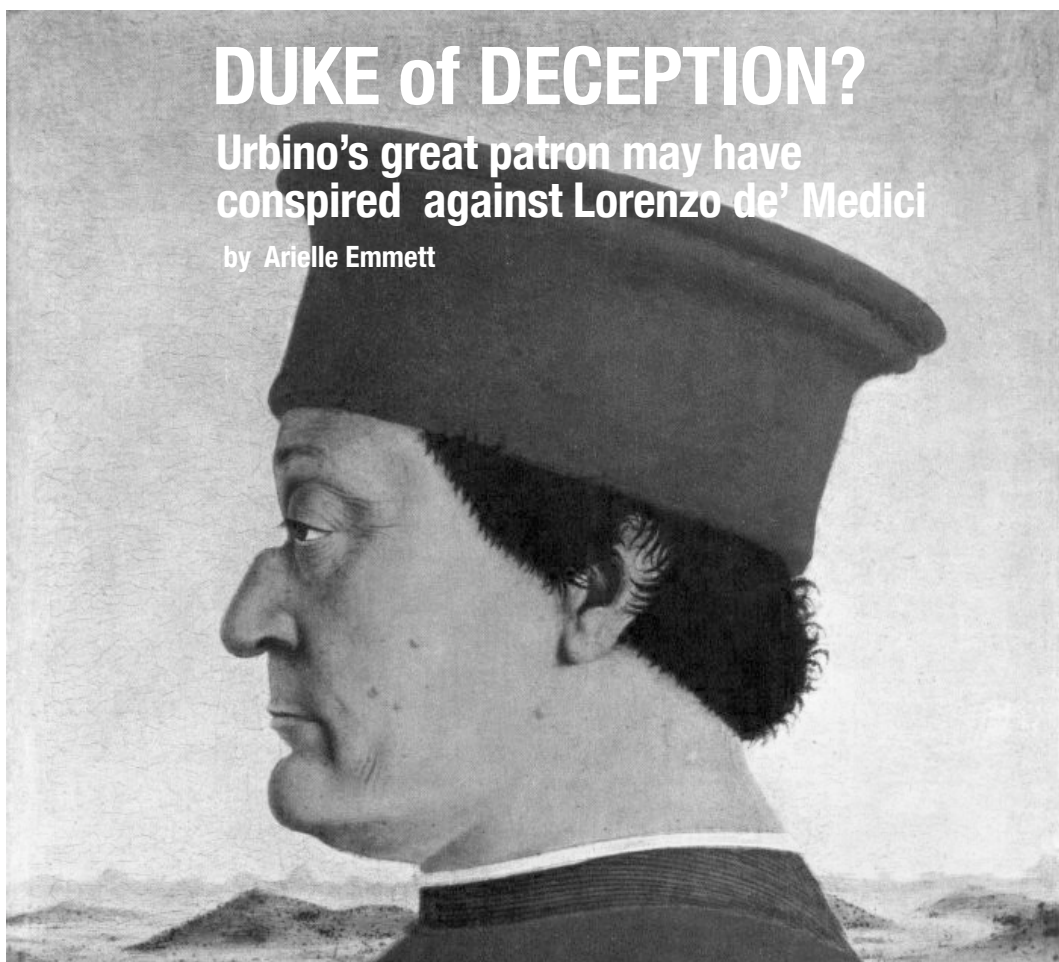
The Papal Connection

Why did Federico da Montefeltro conspire against the Medicis while pretending to be an ally? The answers are complex, intertwined with the petty conspiracies and magnificent art of the Renaissance, Simonetta asserts. Federico, a humanist who commissioned the largest private scriptorium (later a library) outside of the Vatican, supported Raffaello's father Giovanni Santi as his court painter, and was known to have courtiers and philosophers read Latin texts to him at dinnertime. But he was also in the employ of the powerful Sforza family of Milano. He waged war for them (as a young man he also spent six years waging war for Florence), and later assisted the youthful Galeazzo Sforza in his bid to rule Milan after the death of his father Francesco Sforza, a strong Montefeltro ally. In addition, Federico's daughter Giovanna married a nephew of Pope Sixtus IV, sealing an alliance with the Pope, who plotted to replace the Medicis with his own kin. In 1476, Galeazzo Sforza, a strong ally of the Medici, was assassinated, setting off a wave of political intrigue and counterplotting. Federico "was the engine behind the whole conspiracy, acting on behalf of Sixtus IV, the Pope," Simonetta claimed in an interview. Though his personal motives were never entirely clear, Federico penned his encrypted letter to envoys in Rome only 10 weeks before the assas-

DUKE of DECEPTION?

Urbino's great patron may have conspired against Lorenzo de' Medici

by Arielle Emmett



Federico da Montefeltro, by Piero Della Francesca

Murder by Codex: The Great Federico, Duke of Montefeltro, was a hired mercenary for Italy's feuding families and never lost a battle. A patron of Raffaello's father and builder of Urbino's brilliant Renaissance court, including a massive library, Federico may also have conspired to assassinate long-time friend Lorenzo de' Medici and half-brother Oddantonio da Montefeltro (see p. 37).

sination attempt. Simonetta, whose book was critically praised, managed to decipher the letter by using a code book developed by his own powerful ancestor, Cicco Simonetta (1410-1480), who had served as a secretary of the Milanese Sforza duchy. Cicco Simonetta was a close friend to the Duke of Urbino and apparently wrote many government letters in code.

By 2004, Marcello Simonetta, a respected scholar who had studied at Yale University, had already accumulated considerable evidence that Federico was involved in the Pazzi conspiracy. Publishing his findings in the well-respected *Archivio Storico Italiano*, Simonetta then won international recognition in 2005, when a documentary on the History Channel described Simonetta's story. By 2008, his popular history book *The Montefeltro Conspiracy* established the link between Cicco Simonetta, Federico da Montefeltro, Lorenzo de' Medici, the Sforza and Pazzi families, and the Papacy. His story of ducal intrigue was worthy of *The Da Vinci Code*, only Simonetta had released a work of non-fiction. He didn't anticipate the international ruckus his book would cause, especially among popular media and Renaissance cryptographers.

Specifically, Nicolas John Pelling, the cryptographer and author of *The Curse of the Voynich: The Secret History of the World's Most Mysterious Manuscript* (Compelling Press 2006), produced a critique of Simonetta's book, arguing that the author was not entirely transparent in his methods. "His codeable cracks were based more on historical inferences than on cryptography," Pelling wrote. Simonetta responded on Pelling's own blog: "No doubt can be cast on the transparency of the process that led me to decode the infamous Montefeltro letter.... I did my job very scrupulously." Simonetta argued that Pelling had never checked the authentic Montefeltro cipher while attacking his book's alleged shortcomings.

The dispute between Pelling and Simonetta (see <http://www.cipher-mysteries.com/2008/08/07/review-of-the-montefeltro-conspiracy>) shows scholarly prowess on both sides. But the most salient point Simonetta makes in his narrative is that betrayals and "murder by distance" were so common in the Renaissance that they were carried out without question, as a matter of course. As for Federico, who may also have been involved in his half brother, Oddantonio's assassination (see "The Greatest Small Painting in the World," p. 37), conspiracy was part of the job.



Urbino Market

Hours
8:30 am- 1pm
Take
Via Raffaello
No Entrance Fee

Photo by Alyssa Coltrain

BARGAIN BOUNTY SATURDAY MARKET

By Alyssa Coltrain and Natalie Flemming

There is nothing like an Italian market to bring out the bargain hunter in all of us. Urbino's Saturday market combines miles of aisles with fresh local produce, fried calamari and fresh squid, silver and stainless steel spoons, ceramics, fine leather shoes, jewelry, discount T-shirts, and Italian belts you can let out a few notches after you've eaten all the stuff you buy.

The market welcomes shoppers for meats and fish, espresso coffees, and great casciotta. However, these traveling markets may be a vanishing tradition. As locals begin to shop at supermarkets such as Conad and A&O, fewer go to the market for fresh produce, fish, wine and other items. This, combined with the weakening economy, has reduced the market's income by anywhere from one-third to two-thirds.

Visitors seeking a more rustic, and authentic, experience may also be drawn to the market. Most of the voices are native Italian, and shopkeepers rarely speak much English. The food is local; most produce shopkeepers clearly mark the Italian origins of their products, and the fish are still whole, eyes—just a little disconcertingly—looking out of their glass cases.

Buy a bottle of red wine (only 1.5 euros from some vendors), peaches, bread, and local pecorino or caciotta cheese and have a picnic lunch at the nearby look-out point, which offers one of the most breathtaking views of Renaissance Urbino available.

Cannoli To Die For

By Aimee Alarcon

Just down the street from Raffaello's childhood home, visitors will find Urbino's most exquisite pastry and *gelateria* shop, *Dolci di Battista*. Over the past 15 years, brothers Leandro and Leonardo Faggi have been perfecting a variety of coffees, beverages, pastries, and gelatos.

Stop by in the morning and ask the barista, Francesco, for a cappuccino unlike any other you have ever had; the sweet, creamy foam never melts. If you are a chocolate fan, indulge in their bigné that puts chocolate éclairs to shame. A delicate, crisp pastry crust, topped with milk chocolate, is filled with cool chocolate custard that is at once creamy, smooth and tender. If you prefer vanilla custard, try the *cannoli*. The secret, say the brothers, is in the "touch" while whipping the fresh whole milk and free-range eggs with vanilla and just a hint of cinnamon. It is never too early to have a homemade *gelato*. If you have trouble deciding between the various flavors, you can ask for up to three flavors (even in a *piccolo*). The adventurous may want to try *pistacchio*, *café* and *frutti di bosco*. You won't be disappointed.



Photo by Jessica German

('City of Discovery,' continued from page 6)

The Palazzo Ducale today houses the Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, which displays works of art created in the 14th to the 17th century, including the *Flagellazione* by Piero della Francesca (see page 37), the *Profanazione dell'Ostia* by Paolo Uccello and the *Muta* by Raffaello as well as masterpieces by Luca Signorelli, Federico Barocci and Titian.

The palace itself is a well-preserved work of art, with its grand turrets, Corinthian columns and intricate woodwork. The Duke's studio, done in a *trompe l'oeil* style, boasts beautiful inlaid wood panels and is believed to have been designed by Francesco di Giorgio Martini and Donato Bramante.

The city's Duomo, built on top of a 6th century religious building, was completed in 1604. Destroyed by an earthquake in 1789, the church was rebuilt and now maintains a neo-classical appearance. Federico Barocci's *Last Supper* can be viewed, along with glass, ceramics and religious items in the Duomo's Museo Diocesano.

Several oratories are located inside the city center and have only recently been opened to the general public. The Oratorio di San Giuseppe, located on Via Barocci, houses a magnificent 16th century nativity scene done in stucco by Federico Brandani. Its neighbor, the Oratorio di San Giovanni Battista, preserves the fresco created by brothers Lorenzo and Jacopo Salimbeni.

A small fortress perched atop the city was created in the 14th century to provide a defensive point for the surrounding walls. Called the Albornz Fortress, the spot now holds a library and a public park, as well as provides a breathtaking view of the city and beyond.

The 500-year-old University of Urbino "Carlo Bo," which was founded in 1506, attracts students from all over the world who come to study in such areas as sociology, pharmacy, economy, law and languages. Students can also participate in various graduate and art programs, recalling Duke Federico's great attention to education and the arts.

With a remote location keeping it steeped in its rich Renaissance past, Urbino puts itself out on display with pride. The small town, with its maze of cobble-stoned streets, narrow alleyways and open piazzas, has been able to preserve the charm of a true Italian village full of culture and life. There is simply no place like it.



Photo by Kayla Smith



Photo by Giovanna Borgna

Drink the Water

by Shari Monique Gab

“Why is every Italian woman in here like so insanely beautiful?” he asks in awe with a side order of frustration.

It is in this journalist's nature to answer rhetorical questions.

I held up three fingers pulling each finger down one by one,

“Genetics, unprocessed food and money.”

“But, really, I have a theory,” I screamed. A conversation that would typically be held at an intellectual-friend-at-a-coffee-shop level ensued, registered fully in the red. The Rimini club “Prince” doesn't lend itself to intimacy unless you call dry-humping to house beats intimate.

I asked him if he had ever read *The Hidden Messages in Water*.

Water is a living, breathing thing, which seems like this far-fetched, I've had a bit too much artificially-induced magic for one lifetime thought. That is until one considers clams or sea anemones for that matter. Think Venus flytrap.

These seemingly inanimate objects



with instincts have reactions subject to stimuli and neglect.

In my home-city, the barista rolls her eyes to the point where I consider her possibly going into seizure when I ask for soy-milk in my café au lait.

Here and yesterday, my barista leaned in.

“Buon giorno,” he breathed.

I ordered a “Cappuccino, per favore.”

He rested his elbows on the counter and sunk his head forward beyond his shoulders. “Your eyes. They have fallen from the heavens and stained my life permanently.”

The cappuccino he made me, it tasted like a shooting star.

I got over my attention deficit at the age of six. But, if I were praised on a daily, on an hourly, basis like some Persian cat with simple, sexy answers to complex, serious things, my body would certainly transform – a physiological response to an emotional stimuli.

In short, our bodies are seventy percent water and water reacts to positive stimuli the same as anything else. Children need love the same way a cake does, the same way my '65 Mustang did.

I feel silly having to prove it.

I'm not telling you to talk to your plants.

I'm telling you to talk to your water. Tell it you love it and then drink it and then consider telling the one you love that you love them and see if they don't transform into a thing of beauty before your very eyes.

Curious American + Ethnic Divide = BFF

By Scott Burry

Here in Urbino I haven't seen a lot of racial/ethnic diversity. One day I ran into a buddy and asked him why there was such little diversity in Urbino. He told me that there is actually some ethnic diversity here. There's a small Greek population in Urbino, but they are very separated and keep to themselves. “Italians and the Greeks don't really get along. “Nothing new,” he said. Being a journalist, my ears instantly perked up. Why is it like this? Why are the groups so separate?

Later that night I went to Bosom Pub, much like I do every night. I bumped into my other friend and asked him about the situation between the Greeks and Italians. He said the same thing I had been told earlier in the day. He had seen three Greek girls outside the bar and asked if I wanted to go talk to them. I was curious about their perspective so, naturally, I said yes.

We went outside and started talking to the Greek girls. I quickly learned that my Italian friend had no Greek friends and that the Greek girls didn't have any Italian friends. After talking for awhile they all agreed that they didn't want to be separated like that. They wanted to be friends but because of the status quo, they could not socialize together.

That night, we broke that barrier. We spent the whole night getting to know each other on both cultural and personal levels. I was really surprised with myself. Because of my curiosity, I managed to bring two groups together that probably would have never combined. An American bringing two cultures together -- that's something we won't forget.



Michael Jackson is Alive and Living in Italy!

by Bianca Walker

A sharp, quick jerk to the left and then another three feet to the right characterize the basic movement of the sole ranger in the middle of the dance floor at ‘Il Piquero’ restaurant and bar in Urbino, Italy.

His fingers repel each other so that they are spread like a Spanish fan with his thumbs in the air and his baby fingers touching his palm. One arm salutes the ceiling and the other gestures at the ground. The sharp edges and corners of his body veer in many directions.

The juxtaposition of his arms, hands, legs, torso and feet is insanely complex and one may not be able to fathom a bodily contortion such as his when he dances. His hips move to the bass but his head moves to the melody.

My friends and I stand in awe—and amusement—as we observe the five feet tall, 38 year old man as he holds true to the motto ‘dance like no one is watching.’

“I am the best dancer in Italy,” he proudly assures me as he leans on the bar, getting frightfully close to me. “Everyone knows that I am the best.”

For the next five minutes I heard the flaccid skinned but energetic performer repeatedly praise himself. The monotonous words of strained English that dissipated from his lips were both incredible and terrifying. If he is the best dancer in Italy, I'm not sure I want to see anyone else dance. But his movements are hilarious and after five minutes of trying to comprehend whether he was dancing or having a muscular spasm, I realized the dance floor was packed.

He is a good man, though. He invited me to his birthday party on June 29. Who wouldn't want to go to a birthday party with Italy's best dancer?



Green Season for Agritourism



By Scott Burry

High on a hill in central Italy, Giulia Savini can hear a collective ‘moo’ rising in intensity as she approaches a corral holding dozens of cattle on her farm, Locanda della Valle Nuova. These cattle are happy because they know her visit means meal time.

For Savini, happy cows are important because Valle Nuova isn’t just about harvesting beef and produce, it’s also about harvesting dollars from happy tourists.

Valle Nuova is one of the growing number of Italy’s *agriturismi*, small farms that survive by attracting tourists willing to pay euros for a rural experience.

Once a thriving center of agriculture, the Le Marche region in central Italy has seen many of its farms disappear since the end of WWII. In the late 1980’s the trend began to change. Farmers found a simple solution that would bring agriculture and tourism together. The idea of incorporating restaurants and hotels onto farms created a new hybrid that would save many foundering businesses. The ambitious plan was a success, and the agriturismo business was born.

“The idea of *agriturismi* is giving the farmers a way to stay on the farms and get extra income,” Savini said. “You can’t really live on agriculture these days. You need to be very big or very specialized and produce something very interesting.”

The Italian government sets legal standards for farms considered *agriturismi*. Under the laws, the farm must produce at least 35 percent of ingredients used in the restaurant or hotel on the farm. Another 50 percent of ingredients used must be purchased locally.

Only 15 percent can be purchased at chain grocery stores. This 15 percent is usually used to buy things like coffee, tea, sugar and other commodities not generally produced in Italy.

Raising Tourist’s Expectations

Overlooking the corral is a small bed and breakfast style house. This working farm has accommodations for up to 16 guests who are trying to get away from busy city living, looking to enjoy the uniquely quiet rolling hills the Le Marche region has to offer.

In 1981 Giulia’s parents bought the farm and moved the family from Milan to Fermignano, a small but growing city just down the road from city of Urbino. Beef has always been the main focus of the farm.

Organic farming techniques were a part of daily farm practice from the beginning, and today at Valle Nuova that tradition continues. However, the farm survives because of the agriturismo model. Giulia explained in 1994 that the farm opened an organic beef shop in town, but had to close because of lack of business.

“The market is not big enough for just an organic butcher,” said Giulia. “Meat is a difficult product for organic producers. Lots of people eating organic are vegetarians, so we have a problem.”

Like many struggling farms in the area, Valle Nuova needed something to stimulate business. Finally in 1999 the family opened the bed and breakfast on the property - and a whole new line of challenges had to be met. The biggest has been marketing. Le Marche, a relatively unknown region in Italy, is tucked between the Adriatic Sea and three of Italy’s most popular regions - Tuscany, Umbria and Lazio. Many tourists bypass the region in favor of Florence or Rome. “[Le Marche] is very underused as a tourism source,” said Giulia. “It has wonderful things and wonderful landscape and nobody knows about it.”

Giulia is constantly writing to guidebook publishing companies to get the word out about *agriturismi* and the Le Marche region. Her persistence has paid off. Valle Nuova has been written about in several different books over the last few years. Because of this, Giulia’s farm has built a solid list of clients who return time and time again.

“I don’t get my guests because I’m an *agriturismo*, I get my guests because they know they can trust me,” said Giulia. “They know they can get nice food, a nice place, nice accommodations, and nice people.” In addition, they get the surprise of an untrammeled beauty. Le Marche and Fermignano are just that.

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Eco-friendly Urbino

By Rosemary Dorsett

Photo by Rosemary Dorsett

As the early morning sun warms the bricks of the Palazzo Ducale in Urbino, residents pull in laundry drying from clotheslines outside their windows. A *pasticceria* sets out warm, freshly made pastries accompanied by jams made from local ingredients. Artisan Donato Colombo is hammering away at the soles of leather sandals. By 9 a.m. the historic city center is bustling with tourists and students curiously investigating the inner workings of a town still deeply connected with traditions of the 15th century.

Urbino, the capital of Le Marche region and a UNESCO World Heritage site, is a place dedicated to the preservation of art, culture and traditions of the Renaissance. This attention to cultural heritage and past traditions also serves to protect the environmental heritage of the region.

"Urbino has a strong link with nature and the environment because of the region, Le Marche, which is very green," said Jacopo Cherchi, "Urbino has always been an agricultural city; it was a town founded by simple people."

The city is trying to reconnect to the foundations of a farming lifestyle while integrating new technologies to maintain a sustainable environment in a historic town. CAmBieReSti? - the acronym for *Consumi, Ambiente, Risparmio Energetico e Stili di vita* -- is a six-month initiative translated as "Would You Change?" It teaches 30 families how to integrate simple, eco-friendly choices into their daily lives, and was scheduled to end in late October 2009. However, Cherchi, coordinator of the project, hopes its impact will have a lasting effect on the community (see <http://www.cambieresti.it>).

"The most important thing is that the people begin to think all together in the same direction," Cherchi said. "It is not a particular point like water or electricity; it is the way you perceive the environment. Thinking all together in the same direction will help a lot in Urbino."

CAmBieReSti? focuses on enhancing cultural awareness about consumption, the environment, energy and lifestyles within Urbino. The families attend workshops and group meetings to learn about small changes like using energy-efficient light bulbs and kitchen tap aerators to make their households more environmentally friendly. As the program progresses, families learn how to make their own breads, yogurts and jams with fresh local produce.

Urbino is "definitely very attentive to good quality products that are locally produced," said Francesco Serafini, coordinator of the Bottega del Mondo, a fair-trade store in town. Currently, Urbino is the largest territory dedicated to organic farming in all of Italy and residents take great pride in the products found in the region.

Serafini has been involved with the green movement in Urbino for about 10 years. A physics teacher by profession, he has dedicated much of his time and energy to organizing environmentally and socially conscious groups in Urbino. His proudest contribution to the community is the foundation of G.A.S., an organic purchasing group. He describes the purchasing group as an ordinary group of people committed to receiving

'Urbino has a strong link with nature and the environment because of the region, Le Marche, which is very green. Urbino has always been an agricultural city; it was a town founded by simple people.'

high-caliber, natural products. The group buys at a communal market every month, helping local producers receive a fair price and limiting the mileage between their product and the consumer.

With more than 200 families on the group's mailing list and 30 to 50 families involved in each market day, Serafini recognized a need in the community for better access to land. His current project is the establishment of social allotments, or large-scale community gardens, where residents can grow their own produce. This summer residents asked the city for three fields that will be shared by 30 families, two social co-operatives working with the disabled in Urbino, and the elderly community of Urbino.

"Doing the allotment together creates a sense of community and also an exchange between people," Serafini said.

The groups Serafini has helped found have strengthened the community bond in Urbino. His band, Gimdai which translates as "Come on! Let's go!" from the Urbino dialect, plays almost every



Photo by Amy Popplewell

Homegrown tomatoes and cucumbers are set on the table among local oils, wine, and homemade liquor in time for lunch at the home of Millo Serafini and Nadia Stevenson on July, 25 2009. Serafini is the founder of Gruppo Di Acquisto Solidale and the coordinator for the Bottega Del Mondo.

Thursday at the local artisan's market in the Piazza del Erbe. After every communal market, the shoppers and producers stay for a potluck dinner to celebrate a successful month and enjoy one another's company. They also incorporate a clothes and personal good exchange every three months. Serafini hopes families involved in CAmBieReSti? and G.A.S. will strengthen the shared cultural bonds between Urbino citizens.

"The important thing is that the local community is aware there are projects like this to help to try to change lifestyle habits, which gets families thinking about the fact that it is possible to change," Serafini said.

Saving Energy with Wine and Cheese

In addition to the associations, there are several stores around the city committed to stocking solely Urbino or Le Marche products. On this day, Raffaello Degusteria is hosting a wine and cheese sampling for several students studying Italian culture. Co-owner Alberto Crinelli carefully slices fresh prosciutto from two loins behind the counter and lays out a large spread on the banquet table. American students pay careful attention to Crinelli as their teacher translates the explanation and importance of each product they are sampling.

Valentino Gostoli, the other owner, feels a strong connection with the products of his homeland. Gostoli, an Urbino native, opened the store three years ago with Crinelli to fill a void he saw in his community.

"We want to make local products more known here. In Urbino there wasn't a shop like this with these local products," Gostoli said.

The store is divided into three large rooms, each stocked with different types of products, highlighting Urbino originals like: *Casciotta d'Urbino* (a local cheese), *crescia sfogliata* (a flaky bread), *Bi-anchello del Metauro* (a white wine), *Sangiovese dei Colli Pesaresi* (a red wine), and organic honey from *La Fattoria dei Cantori*.

Not only does the Degusteria commit itself to selling organic and local products, the store utilizes environmentally conscious techniques like recycling, using energy-saving appliances and lighting, and selling reusable bags to loyal patrons.

Continued on Page 13

Plugged into the Past



Photos by Michiko Theurer

Filippo Battistelli revives the ancient art of lute-making -- with modern sounds.

By Michiko Theurer

In the Italian Renaissance town of Urbino, where selling the past is a major industry, Filippo Battistelli seems to fit right in. He is a *luthier*, an artisan who uses ancient tools to craft and repair stringed instruments from blocks of wood.

But there is one glaring difference: Battistelli is making electric guitars.

"When I restore old instruments, I feel like a doctor: They come in sick, and I revive them," he says. But making electric basses is different: "I give them life."

Battistelli is a man who seems at home living in two worlds, much like the country that he calls home. Italy may be famous among tourists for its ancient cities and hilltop castles, but it's the cutting-edge technology, fashion and music that keeps its traditions alive in a changing world. So it's not surprising to find Battistelli in a workshop that was used as a horse stable for 16th-century nobility, using old-fashioned methods to fashion high-tech instruments. "I love restoring ancient instruments," says Battistelli. "But I learn even more about early instruments from experimenting with modern ones."

A quick look around his shop makes it clear that Battistelli is not just a Renaissance man. The arching brick interior of the building is covered in foam insulation to absorb the reverb from the large speakers and bright yellow drum set. A single upright bass chills in the corner, surrounded by rows of colorful and boldly shaped electric basses and guitars. The chisels, brushes and wood shavings that cover his work area would look at home in Stradivari's workshop, if it wasn't for the elaborate electronic equipment (and the motorcycle helmet) sitting beside the bench where Battistelli works.

Salt-and-pepper stubble covers an easy smile as Battistelli squints down the neck of a guitar he is adjusting. His muscular arms and calloused hands give testimony to the physical skill and work involved in his trade.

Never formally trained as an instrument maker, he attributes his knowledge to "stealing with his eyes" from the work of other luthiers—and to lots of experimentation. He began repairing his own instruments at an early age, taking them apart to see how they were made. "I think this is common among young people who play," says Battistelli, who plays trombone and saxophone as well as, "officially," the electric bass. Battistelli also admits to a youthful affair with heavy metal, during which he smashed a guitar. "But then I grew up," he says. "Now, besides jazz, I like...jazz."

But music was not his first love. While he was in a high school for visual art, he heard Pastorius—"my idol"—perform live and was inspired to paint

the watercolor that now hangs above his workbench. In bright colors and skewed lines that look like they've been passed through a distortion amp, the painting depicts a figure playing an electric bass. The musician and instrument are so closely intertwined that they meet at a single point: Just below the neck of the instrument (its shoulder), the body of the bass curves and stretches up to meet the player's head.

Battistelli used this distinctive design as a model for the first bass he made. Apprenticed to a furniture-maker in the very shop he now owns, Battistelli carved out the body using woodworking tools from the furniture shop. The spiral of the bass's shoulder recalls the silhouette of the bass player's head from the painting.

"This is my trademark," he explains. "It is a symbol of the union between musician and instrument."

Aging the Wood

Each guitar he makes is fashioned from a block of wood that has been aged and seasoned for between 10 and 40 years. Factory-made instruments, on the other hand, are generally made of wood chemically seasoned for a much shorter time. "They put them in the oven in the morning, take them out at night," says Battistelli. "This does not allow the sap to drain properly, so they aren't as sonorous." Battistelli puts the wood on an incline so that the wood drains and ages naturally over a long period of time.

Once he has selected the wood, he makes measurements for the instrument's shape and size, carefully orienting the grain of the wood and ensuring that the weight is properly balanced. He cuts and shapes the body using tools that have not changed for centuries. Then he tackles the neck, which is the mechanical heart of the instrument—and the most difficult to make. "It's the part in which everyone who wants to try to be a luthier stops," he laughs.

Inside the neck is a string that is used to counterbalance the



tension of the strings outside, each of which exerts 20 kg of tension on the instrument. The frets (the horizontal bars that cross the fingerboard of the guitar) are also difficult to make. "If you spend 2,000 euros on a bass, 1,000 was the neck," he says. The final step, and one of the most important for the personalization of the instrument's sound, is the setup of the microphones and other electronic components of the instrument.

Battistelli uses ash wood when he wants a bright and resonant sound, and mahogany for a more sensual and warm sound. By combining a bright microphone with a bright wood or vice versa, he can shape the sound of the instrument to fit the client's personal voice. "My instruments speak," he says. "A factory-made instrument can also have a beautiful sound, but if you play it for two hours—there's nothing left to discover. But with my instruments, there are infinite possibilities."

But there's a price to these possibilities. Battistelli's basses can cost between 2000 - 3000 euros (approximately 2,825 - 4,236 USD). "You can find factory-made instruments starting from 50-100 euros," says Battistelli. "This is the price of my strings."

His clients, "apart from the young boys who come to get the newest color guitar," include bassists Dario Deidda, Lino De Rosa (bassist for the Italian rapper Frankie Hi-NRG MC), and Patrick Djivas (bassist for the rock band Premiata Forneria Marconi (P.F.M)). Battistelli considers feedback from musicians to be invaluable, often consulting them about the shape, balance, and sound of the instruments he is building. "To a real musician, an instrument is like a child," he explains.

And there is one instrument that he will never sell, an elegantly shaped fretless bass that has become like a child to him. "This was made from my own cherry tree," he says, fingering the dark neck where it joins the body in his signature curl. "My father cut it down when I was two." Only three blocks of the wood were big enough to make an instrument. One of them is now being plugged into the jack of his speaker tower.

As the infectious groove of Battistelli's music fills the dim workshop interior, it is easy to see what he means when he says that his instruments speak. The sound that spills out from his shop and into the narrow alley is the voice of a new generation of instruments born from the tradition of Italian luthiery.

Eco-Friendly Urbino,' continued from page 11

The store's practices are unique in a community slow to embrace technological advancements. Matteo Ricci, provincial president of Pesaro and Urbino, says green technology in Urbino is one of the major economic opportunities. New incentives for the townspeople to invest in alternative energy are being implemented. Small business owners can receive a 36 percent tax refund for using energy-efficient lighting as well as a 20 percent refund for replacing freezers and refrigerators with energy class A+ appliances.

The town of Urbino is also encouraging private citizens outside of the town center to use alternative energy. In partnership with Megas.net Urbino is supporting an initiative to install 1,000 photovoltaic roofs in the province at no charge to the individual citizens. After 20 years, the city gains ownership of the electricity generated from the roofing. "[People] have to understand this matter is very important," Cherci said. "This project wants to change the minds of people about this matter."

Urbino with One Voice



Photo by Francisco Flores-Cordero

by Delaney Gover

On a warm evening in July only a few seats remain unoccupied in Urbino's San Francesco church. Audience members sit transfixed, straining their necks up toward a balcony high above the altar as seven young men crowd into a tiny space to perform *Bella Gerit*, a Renaissance song cycle dedicated to Lorenzo de' Medici, Duca di Urbino. The voices weave and exchange *leitmotifs* as though they are a single instrument. And that's exactly what they are – single voices retooled for Renaissance polyphony, an instrument reigniting modern audiences' passions for a music rarely heard.

The group has no formal name, but they are musical friends who continuously redefine their exciting careers as Urbino's most accomplished – and daring – vocal innovators. Unique in all of Italy, the performers switch musical styles and accompaniments without tunnel vision. Rather than being consumed with Italian Opera or Renaissance music alone, they jam on drums and guitar to Lady Madonna on one night and turn around and sing Baroque the next for five-hours non-stop.

Angelo Bonazzoli with his castrato soprano, Mauro Borginoni, a baritone with a voice that would melt the hardest heart, David Monacchi, an eco-acoustic composer and co-producer of *Bella Gerit*, and two brothers, Simone and Enea Sorini, tenor and baritone, respectively, form the singing core for *Bella Gerit*. Led by Simone Sorini, a vocalist trained in opera at the Rossini Conservatory (Pesaro), the group performs ancient and modern music with organist Wilem Peerik and David Yacus on base and tenor trombone. Only the trombone is an exact copy of an instrument 400 years old. As Yacus plays it, the trombone becomes integral with human voices, so at times they form one tapestry of sound. Simone Sorini, with his mop of salt-and-pepper hair and a hand and voice that 'shape' the phrases of music as he sings, collaborates with David Monacchi on *Bella Gerit* and many other compositions.

Monacchi and Simone Sorini have been friends for more than twenty years. But over the past three and half, the two have assembled a production team to execute their most ambitious project yet – a multimedia opera known as *De Divina Proportione* (*The Divine Proportion*). The multimedia

opera uses unique compositional techniques that incorporate electro-acoustic sounds and computer-based music mixed with baroque instruments, 3-D projections, and two gorgeous operatic voices who sing verses from a 16th century chorale. The collective sounds race around the performance space from a system of eight speakers circling the patrons. Each of the speakers is placed strategically throughout the theatre, so that when the sound moves from speaker to speaker, it produces a "surround sound" enveloping the audience. First performed in the Teatro Sanzio in Urbino in June 2009, *De Divina Proportione* was an immediate sensation. The musicians are planning to re-do the production for Italy and the international circuit,

'The Sorini Brothers jam to Lady Madonna one night and sing Baroque the next.'

although they are staying mum about a schedule while production details are worked out.

The July performance of *Bella Gerit*, part of Urbino's Annual Festival of Early Music, was clearly a highlight for both musicians and the audiences. Although the men were dressed starkly in modern black, their sounds, so ethereal, seemed to reawaken all the angels of musical performance from Urbino past.

"The Sorini brothers provide information about the pieces (and instruments) that people are about to listen to," said Alessandro Lodi, a University of Urbino economics student and music admirer. "That's why it's so important the way Simone performs. [He and his brother] are the most representative of this place. They are born in this place. They don't come from outside, and because they are born in the culture of Urbino, they are very important to this community," Lodi said.

Vino Paradiso

Otello Renzi, Italy's Top Sommelier, Invites Us to Savor the Nectars of Le Marche

By Giovanna Borgna



Photo by Giovanna Borgna

On a Tuesday evening in early July, Serra Alta restaurant is vacant, the cooking staff busily preparing several courses for a large party. Even in this mountaintop retreat high above Fermignano, the heat outside is sweltering and the chefs plug away at their sauces and soups before the evening's guests – a group of journalists -- arrive. Despite the heat, restaurant owner, Otello Renzi, inspects every glass, plate and flower arrangement to ensure its perfection.

A table stretched out under an outdoor canopy is like a flowered landscape filled with glistening wine glasses and silverware waiting for the guests to sit and enjoy the multiple treats that Renzi has prepared for the evening.

Renzi is one of the most influential sommeliers in Italy if not Europe. He teaches others how to evaluate, critique, decant, serve and store wine. He certifies vintages for sommelier associations, restaurants and vintners. But Renzi is not solely a wine expert; he is a gastronome — a person who studies the relationship of food, wine and culture. He does not just critique; he shares with others the rich culture and tradition of wine.

“Wine is not meant to be drunk; wine is meant to be consumed,” meaning tasted and delighted in like a savory meal, he says. In fact, Renzi pairs Italian cuisine and wine together as if it's a marriage – a happily married couple. One without the other would not taste right.

Casual wine drinkers around the world have been drinking wine in ignorance and denying their palates the true experience of wine consumption. The way that a person holds the stem of a glass or how one chews on the liquid in their mouth can affect the way a wine tastes. Renzi instructs novice drinkers on how to consume wine the correct way, the only way to drink wine.

Born in the coastal town of Pesaro in the region of Le Marche in 1952, Renzi followed in his mother's footsteps. Teresa Lani was a professional chef who owned a restaurant in Pesaro named Ristorante Teresa, which earned a coveted Michelin Star for “offering the finest cooking.” Renzi notes that his mother was named one of the top 10 chefs in Italy by Italian gastronome Luigi Veronelli. “I am not a cook but I helped my mother develop her restaurant,” Renzi said.

His special love and study of oenology (the science and art of wine making) was borne of his family background and the region in which he lived. Le Marche, he says, is influenced by the land and sea. Traditionally fishermen earned their living at sea but commuted inland to their homes. The seafood they brought home would be combined in dishes mixed with vegetables from their personal gardens.

Renzi mixes classic cooking with innovative twists, but he reminisces about his grandmother's simple recipes. He describes a soup called *zuppa di pane*, traditionally served during Easter. It is a broth made with bread slices,

sausage, eggs and garlic and cooked in the oven.

While he appreciated the region's simple recipes, Renzi's curiosity about complex foods and wine led him to travel throughout Europe in search of different vintages and styles of cooking. If a recipe does not meet Renzi's expectation of authenticity, “I take the plate and throw it against the wall,” he says jokingly.

Rich History of Wine Making and Tasting

Renzi has been a professional sommelier since 1980 and since 2002 he has been the president of the Associazione Italiana Sommelier for the Marche region. Italy has an organization of professional sommeliers for each region in the country. To gain certification, Renzi completed a three-year-long course of study. Graduates have to pass a test and are then certified as sommeliers by the ministry of agriculture.

The region of Marche and the province of Urbino asked Renzi to be an adviser for local restaurants. In Urbino he oversees 10 different cooking competitions; each one has a specific theme based on seasonal ingredients. There are two categories: overall most creative recipe and most creative recipe combined with the best wine. Truffles are incorporated as an ingredient for each event.

The next competition, held in November, will use a cheese called *Formaggio di Fossa*. This cheese is aged for three months underground and by November the cheese is unearthed and used for the competition.

A few years ago Renzi added the management of Serra Alta restaurant and hotel to his already full plate of responsibilities.

Guests arrive by driving a scenic route to the top of a winding dirt road that has no name. Serra Alta, nestled in the green hills that overlook the town of Fermignano, faces west toward the sunset. A fountain and a two-story cobblestone building greet visitors. The letters S and A are entwined and etched in the front door that opens into the restaurant.

Elegant ambience and precision are what define Renzi's restaurant. Each dish is expertly prepared, each wine is carefully chosen. In spite of the heat, Renzi and his assistants put on their navy blue blazers; Renzi proudly wears the distinctive emblem of the “AIS” over his left coat pocket.

The sun sets behind the hills of Fermignano; the guests are soon to arrive. Renzi stands at the door to greet all 45 of them. The last rays of the day add a warm glow to his face. He is ready to share the rich culture of food and wine of Urbino.

The Fashion Angel

Piero Guidi runs a global fashion empire from his studios just outside Urbino. He'll never leave home.

by Patrick Armstrong

Walking into the Urbino headquarters of fashion designer Piero Guidi is like walking into heaven: You're surrounded by angels.

Everywhere you look – the colorful mosaic on the side of the building, sculptures that rise above the landscape, a giant bronze statue that seems to the front entrance – you see angels.

"In Italy the angels are all over," said Guidi, the designer of the popular handbag and luggage lines, Magic Circus and LineaBold. "The world's artistic patrimony is in Italy. It could only be born in an area where these things have been seen for hundreds of years."

Guidi obviously has a deep love for angels. His company's tag line *Angeli Del Nostro Tempo – Angels of Our Time* – is deeply integrated into every product he makes, from belt buckles to bomber jackets to briefcases.

Finding the right symbol for his internationally recognized company took two years. One day, while sketching, Guidi came up with an image of two angels embracing each other. The date was Jan. 11, 1991, or 01-11-1991. "It's a magical date," Guidi said, noting the date has many "1s," not simply a coincidence in Guidi's playful mind.

For 18 years, Piero Guidi has used *Angeli Del Nostro Tempo* to advertise his products. His ad campaigns have included a constellation of the world's great celebrities, including Muhammad Ali and his wife Lonnie; Yolanda and Bernice King, daughters of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; and Margherita Hack, Italian astrophysicist.

All of these figures exemplify heroism and creativity, says Guidi, a sculptor who began studying fashion in Rome in the 1970s. For him, fashion models aren't just mannequins, but role models. They speak to social contribution, civil rights, sports and scientific achievement, and an innate desire to make a difference.

His current campaign, photographed by son Giacomo Guidi, a creative director for the company, can be viewed in the July/August *L'uomo Vogue*. The advertisement features German filmmaker Wim Wenders and his wife, Donata. Wim Wenders is director of the classic film "Wings of Desire," which is about angels watching over the world.



Photo by Shari Gab
Piero Guidi stands in his factory retail shop outside of Urbino at the foot of his sculptured mascots.

His Inspiration is Home

Born and raised in Urbino, Guidi draws his inspiration from Renaissance artists and thinkers. His creative design offices and workshop in Urbino are run like a *bottega*, or studio, in which a select number of talented assistant designers execute new prototypes and creative lines. "A product is like a lover," he says. "If you don't take care of it, she will run away."

Guidi also thinks of himself to a "metropolitan farmer." Unlike most internationally recognized designers who jet from Milan to Paris to New York for fashion weeks, he prefers to stay close to home, traveling "seven or eight days a month, that's all."

"If I want to see a fashion show I can watch it on the Internet. I live with my eyes," he says, sitting in a conference room surrounded by his products. Colorful handbags from his Magic Circus line, created in 1986 and now considered classic, fill low shelves on one side of the room. Sleek black leather briefcases from his Bold line are displayed on another, with the company's silver logo shimmering in the fluorescent light.

Even on a business day, Guidi doesn't look the part of a famous fashion designer. Dressed casually in jeans, a navy polo and a dark khaki blazer, he is laid back and hospitable, serving espresso to a group of visiting student journalists.

Guidi is passionate about his work but said he doesn't get caught up in the high lifestyle of many designers. He keeps his focus on design.

"This company is like a racer doing the Tour de France with other racers," he said. "We are not watching TV. We are in the race."

As Guidi guides the group around his factory, he stops at two framed pictures of his meeting with Pope John Paul II. "He held my hand for ten minutes," the designer remembered. "He told me his whole life story. I gave him a white jacket, naturally."

Guidi is very much a family man. "I love working. I am happy to work with my father," Giacomo said.

Guidi's other son Gionata works as marketing director for the company, managing the international operations.

Although Guidi works mainly in Urbino, he has manufacturing facilities in Hong Kong, China and Osaka, Japan. In Italy, he has 500 outlets but currently there are none in the U.S. He had a store in New York City years ago, but closed it because he found it difficult to cope with the sudden changes in the American market. Guidi hopes to find an American partner soon to help him reopen the New York store and expand his sales in the U.S.

Guidi is not just a fashion designer and entrepreneur. In 2006 he became involved with establishing the Urbino Press Award, which recognizes outstanding American journalists.

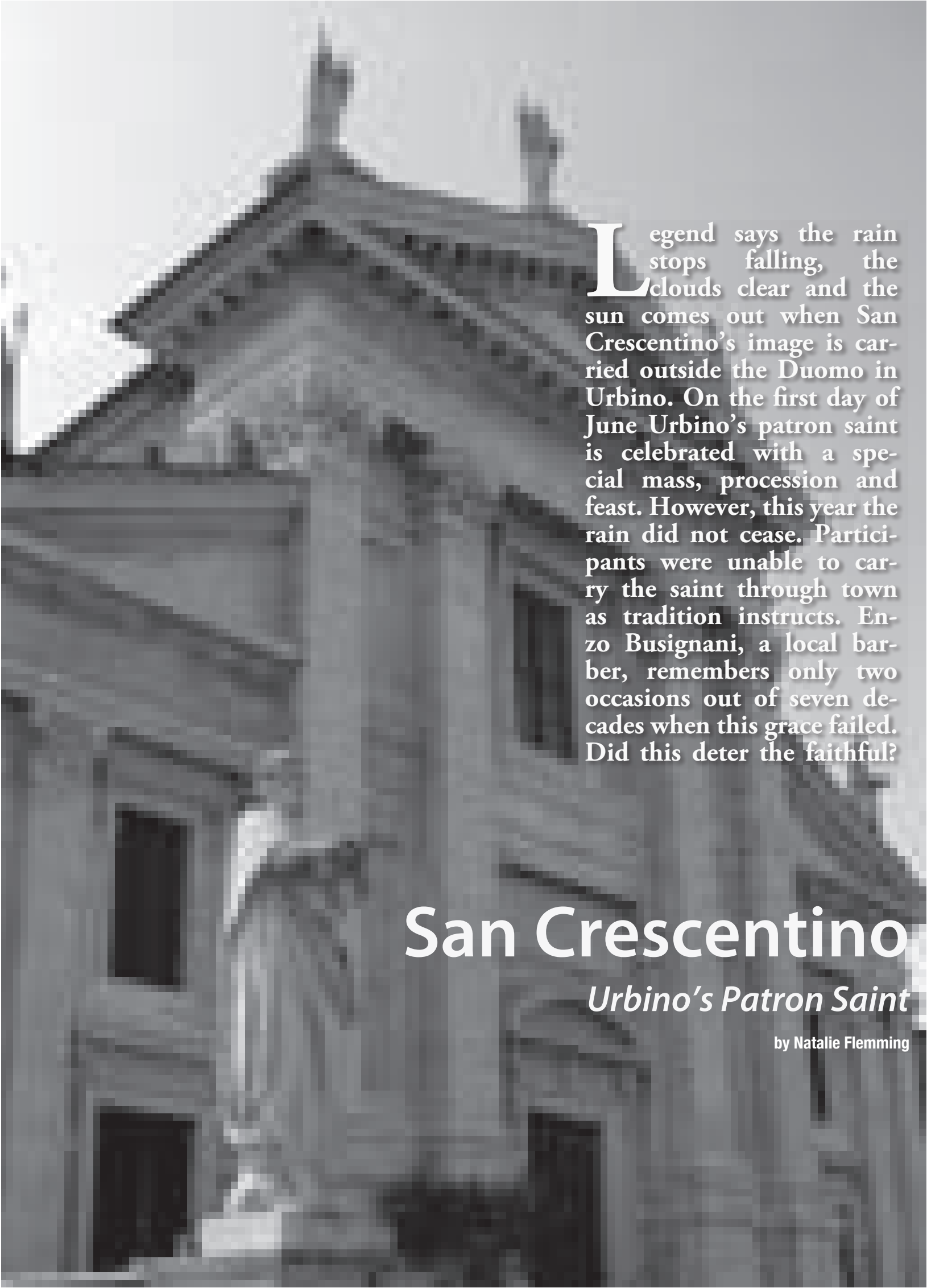
"If you decide to do this prize for recognition in journalism, you have to shoot for the stars," Guidi said.

Previous winners include Diane Rehm of National Public Radio 2006, *Times* senior correspondent Michael Weisskopf in 2007, Chief White House correspondent and ABC News reporter Martha Raddatz in 2008 and this year's winner Thomas L. Friedman of *The New York Times*.

"If you become a writer, **the writing** becomes your lover," he said. "It is your spiritual lover. You take it to bed and put it under your pillow; otherwise there is no spirituality."

Guidi is not like Giorgio Armani who goes to fashion shows. His designs are not based on something he has already seen; Guidi starts fresh. "It took 30 years of activity to come up with this. Security comes 40 years later," he added, pointing to one of his hand-drawn designs.

Who can say this is not beautiful?"



Legend says the rain stops falling, the clouds clear and the sun comes out when San Crescentino's image is carried outside the Duomo in Urbino. On the first day of June Urbino's patron saint is celebrated with a special mass, procession and feast. However, this year the rain did not cease. Participants were unable to carry the saint through town as tradition instructs. Enzo Busignani, a local barber, remembers only two occasions out of seven decades when this grace failed. Did this deter the faithful?

San Crescentino

Urbino's Patron Saint

by Natalie Flemming

Each Italian city has a patron saint. San Crescentino belongs to Urbino. Immortalized for renouncing the Diocletian ruling powers and spreading Christianity, the Roman soldier turned minister was beheaded in 303 A.D. His brief ministry resulted in many converts. San Crescentino's figure appears not only in Urbino but also in Rome. From the top of St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City, he stands along with Jesus and St Paul.

Processions are performed to honor a saint's anniversary of death or another defining event. Carrying the statue in the early summer is a demanding job. Balancing the statue takes precision. It requires six volunteers to support the life-size figure at one time with about 20 men alternating throughout the procession. About 1,000 people join the event each year. Food and wine are an important part of the day. A few people have specific roles in the festival.

Busignani, or "Pippi" as friends know him, has carried the statue for 20 years. The oldest barber in town, he learned the business as a child from his father. Working for 65 years has not slowed him down.

He stops cutting a client's hair to share the prayer he prays to San Crescentino every year, "If you want me to carry you again next year, give me health." Hair falls in every direction as he excitedly waves his scissors. He explains his favorite is not San Crescentino, but Santa Rita. He wears her image around his neck and often jokes with her, "If you don't do me this grace, I'll go to Crescentino." The grace is health. With health, he explains, you can have anything and without it, nothing.

Next to Busignani's barbershop, beyond his birdcage replica of the Palazzo Ducale, is the former home of the statue's creator. Francesco Antonio Rondelli constructed the image in the 19th century. Made of paper-mâché, the statue is kept out of the elements and the public eye except for during the procession. To preserve the work, it is stored behind a painting in the Duomo. With a push of a button, the painting dramatically slides down to reveal San Crescentino. The statue holds a relic, a bone from Crescentino. The remaining relics are stored under the cathedral's main altar.

The Dragon Slayer

San Crescentino's image is easily found around town. This year church officials placed a replica of a bronze statue capturing the saint slaying a dragon. Beside the steps leading up to the Duomo, San Crescentino stands on the left with the dragon at his feet, and opposite is Bishop Mainardo. This bishop brought Crescentino's relics to Urbino in 1068, some 765 years after he was beheaded.

The current bishop of Urbino, Francesco Marinelli, explained the symbolism behind the dragon slaying. The dragon depicts the triumph over evil and temptation. "Everyone knows him but none try to imitate," the bishop says through an interpreter.

Knowing is not necessarily believing. In order to draw in young crowds, especially the estimated 17,000 students that attend the University of Urbino "Carlo Bo" (or *Università degli Studi di Urbino Carlo Bo*), Bishop Marinelli writes and edits books each year to distribute free of charge. One such booklet includes stories of modern-day martyrs. Photos of famous art and of the procession are also featured in the book. The bishop hopes this effort will encourage the faith of younger generations.

Each year the book highlights a personal attribute of San Crescentino, with youth as the current theme. He was a very young man who became famous for his martyrdom. In his twenties, Crescentino was targeted by the



Photo by Aimee Alarcon

Processionals keep the faith alive and flourishing throughout Le Marche

same military he once served.

One Urbino citizen believes in playing a part in the recreation of this celebration. Giuseppe Cucco, who manages all sites for the University of Urbino, also coordinates the logistics for the procession, from the timing of prayers to the organization of the band. Cucco enjoys conveying the significance of the protection a saint offers. "My faith is not only when in church, but it's a part of normal life in other places." With a big smile, he explains why the procession is important. Cucco says he always feels close to God but the procession is a way to express his devotion. "I love my son every day. When he has a birthday, I throw a party."

And a party it is! Cucco recalls a strong impression imposed during childhood. People would hang out their nicest hand-sewn blankets to decorate the homes providing festive colors for the march. The citizens also threw out flower petals from windows to make a lovely street for the march.

Traditions do not stop at the Italian border. People in countries such as Mexico, Spain and the United States celebrate saints as well. Rosanne Romanello of Long Island, New York participated in processions as a child by signing with the choir in both English and the Italian dialect, Calabrese. Romanello's parents remember 3,000 people squeezing into church, women and children inside, men standing outside, to hear mass. Today as Italian-Americans have assimilated and moved away, probably no more than 500 come to *La Festa di Santa Marina* celebrated every July. The procession for Santa Marina is celebrated in Filandari, Italy as well as Long Island.

"For the Calabrese who came over to New York 100 years ago, religion was the one thing they could bring over with ease...a metaphorical 'invisible and weightless suitcase,'" Romanello wrote in an email interview. Every city is looking for a protector, according to Cucco. In moments of danger, a city asks for protection. In 1741, Urbino requested a co-saint, Emidio, protector of earthquakes. Emidio earned this reputation because in 1703, an earthquake hit the Le Marche region, but Ascoli Piceno, where the saint once worked miracles hundreds of years earlier, was spared.

Saints are used as intercessors to God. The procession is a physical representation of belief that has withstood ages and a faith that continues today. When Busignani was asked why it is important for future generations to carry on the procession, he answered, "We're done if you don't carry the tradition."

Mary is on the Move

by Aimee Alarcon

Mary is ready to go.

If the Catholic faith in the Virgin Mary is a heavy burden, it is because her weight requires the strength of four strapping men to carry her. That is, if she is a Renaissance painting being carried from one church to another...on a gravel road...uphill.

The Bishop of Urbino, Francesco Marinelli, invited my team and interpreter to attend a procession in celebration of the *Madonna Del Giro*. The painting was moved from one church to another in the diocese, he explained, and this Saturday afternoon they were going to carry the painting from the local church in Orsaiola to *Chiesa di San Nicola*. I wasn't sure I wanted to spend my free weekend watching a painting being hauled over four miles from one church to another. However, it turned out to be a unique experience because I became, so to speak, a participant in the process.

We arrived in Orsaiola, a town about half an hour outside Urbino, just in time to see the local priest preside over Mass. Men and women were moving the painting onto the back of a decorated pick-up truck. It was no small task, but I confess that I was a little disappointed they were going to "cheat" and not carry the art piece on foot. Because the painting was framed in an ornate and heavy wooden frame, I couldn't really blame them. However, I was very happy to learn that they were only halfway cheating. They were going to transport the painting by truck to a restaurant about 1.5 miles up the road and then walk to the next church.

Continued on page 18

A Monk's Story

by Pauline Joy Talens



Photo by Jessica German

Claudio Pantaleo, above, leads a guided tour with a fellow monk in Assisi, Italy. "A lot of people tell me I don't look like a Franciscan monk," he says.



Photo by Pauline Joy Talens

The young man pushing through the double doors looks like a personal trainer or one of Urbino's most eligible bachelors. He sports a deep tan over a lean, fit physique covered by a blue form-fitting shirt, dark grey cargo shorts that stop just above the knees and a tattoo spread across the back of his perfectly toned left calf.

But the building he's entering isn't a gym. It's a convent. And he isn't heading for a day on the town, but rushing to celebrate a mass at a local hospital.

Claudio Pantaleo, 33, is an ordained Catholic Franciscan monk, but people often don't believe it. Part of the reason, he says, is because he's usually wearing jeans or workout clothes rather than the black robes of his order. But his age and less traditional, more open-minded views of religious life also play a part, he admits.

"A lot of people tell me I don't look like a Franciscan monk and neither a priest, but nobody has ever told me I should change my lifestyle," he adds.

People who know Pantaleo aren't surprised. No one expected him to be wearing a monk's robe. He grew up in a Roman family that was not especially religious, and at 20 was a college student in Urbino who seldom visited church. He expected to eventually have a wife and children. But during a battle with anorexia, he had a spiritual experience he described as a "shock."

"This experience was very fast for me; I decided to become a priest in a week," he recalled. "It was immediate, but after that quick decision it took nine years to become a priest."

He took the vows of obedience, chastity and poverty in 2005 and was assigned to Urbino, where he now shares living quarters with two other Franciscans, one 52, the other 83. Franciscans devote themselves to a life modeled after St. Francis of Assisi, one of the best-loved saints in Catholic history. Most are called to lead lives of preaching, foreign missions, teaching and parish work.

His assignment to the college town of Urbino was a perfect fit for his youthful outlook

on his ministry. Although he spends a good deal of time with the elderly, serving as chaplain at the local hospital, he also feels a special calling to the young.

During a Sunday morning mass at San Francesco church near his convent, Pantaleo notices some children sitting in the front pews. He invites them to walk up to the altar and says that people are called by God even as children. Shortly after, his phone rings. He decides to pick up the call because it's a staff member from the hospital. After the brief conversation he jokingly says, "You're called even during mass," and the congregation starts to laugh.

Parishioners seem to appreciate his methods. "He's crazy, but a sweet person," says Pantaleo's friend, Fabio Barone, 27. "He's crazy because I see him every day on his bike on Urbino's streets that go up and down. He seems like a normal person, not like a priest."

Pantaleo's decision to blend into the local community can lead to his appearance at events not normally associated with monks. One Friday night, he attended a party with a DJ playing dance music on one end and a bartender pouring alcoholic drinks on the other. It was a house party with many attractive young women, and Pantaleo settled on the grass to talk to three beautiful women.

Pantaleo says one of the hardest parts of his vocation is dealing with the times he is attracted to someone, or more seriously, falls in love. Despite those occasions, he still feels strongly about what God wants for him.

He admits that worrying about what his superior monk thought about his lifestyle was a burden. He was once scolded for going to a night club during his first years in the priesthood.

"I felt this burden also inside the seminary during the long years of the training," he said. "Now I feel much more free because I feel that my community and other people trust in me, probably because I've never given rise to scandal in spite of my very 'normal' and 'human' lifestyle."

The monk says he has no clear vision for

('Mary on the Move,' Cont. from p. 17)

About 300 townspeople, a full marching band, altar boys and girls, and children dressed up as angels were waiting anxiously for the painting and priests to arrive. After carefully unstrapped the painting from the truck, they tied it to two thick planks of wood that were hoisted over the shoulders of four broad-shouldered men. Once the band started, the crowd followed the leader with the incense up the hill. The "angels" lead the band, priests and painting.

The road quickly turned into a hill and the music ebbed intermittently so that the priest could lead the townspeople in a prayer to the Virgin Mary:

*Ave Maria piena di grazia
il signore è con te.
Tu sei benedetta fra le donne
e benedetto è il frutto del
tuo seno Gesù
Santa Maria, madre di Dio
prega per noi peccatori
adesso e nell'ora della nostra morte.
Amen*

I was struck by the variety of people. Old, young, single, and couples with children wound their way up to *Chiesa di San Nicola*, united in this melodic recitation honoring the Virgin Mary.

Once at our destination, the painting was hung behind a temporary altar that had been built outside the church to allow for the large crowd. In contrast to the strict Catholicism that I always expect in Italian Catholic ceremonies, this was a casual and familial event.

The Bishop conducted a Mass that involved humor and heartfelt sentiments about the importance of this procession while friends got up to greet one another and parents let their children run around. It was a very big celebration in this little town tucked away into the rolling hills of *Le Marche*. After Mass ended, sandwiches and, of course, wine was served.

I usually feel a little intrusive when I take photos of these types of Italian events, but they seemed to enjoy the anomaly of having American visitors. "Free press!" commented one man when he saw me take photos. Yes, here is your free press!



Photo by Nicole Ely

himself in the future, but is open to whatever God presents. He takes his vocation one day at a time. And while he once was closed to the thought of pursuing a woman he loved, he now says if the opportunity comes along, he would be more open-hearted to the idea.

"I'm not obliged or forced into my choice. I have no regrets," he says about his vocation. "My choice has been renewed every day."

Points of Interest

A Guide to the Sights and Sounds of Urbino



Photo By Giovanna Borgna

Galleria Nazionale delle Marche

Housed in the Palazzo Ducale, the city's most important museum preserves works of art ranging from the 14th to 17th century. Masterpieces exhibited include Piero della Francesca's *Flagellazione* (*The Flagellation*) and *Città Ideale* (*The Ideal City*), and Paolo Uccello's *Profanazione dell'Ostia* (*Profanation of the Host*). Raffaello's "*La Muta*" (*Portrait of Young Woman*), is also featured, along with works of Titian, Luca Signorelli, and Federico Barroci. The palazzo's decorations and architectural ornaments are also of great interest, particularly the portals, fireplaces, and the inlaid deco-

rations on the doors. A large collection of Italian ceramics and ancient Roman urns and memorial stones are also on display. --Leah Bigelow

Chiese & Monumenti

Urbino's civil and religious buildings are a living imprint of Renaissance history. The Church of San Bernardino (just outside the city) houses the tombs of the Dukes of Urbino. Palazzetto Odasi and Palazzo Passionei exemplify Renaissance architecture. The churches of San Francesco and San Domenico witnessed renovations in the 18th century. An aristocratic residence can be found in the 18th century Palazzo Albani.



Photo by Scott Burry

La Casa di Raffaello

World-renowned artist, Raffaello, took his first steps inside the great walls of Urbino. His former home, located on the street that now bears his name, has since been turned into a museum. Visitors can take a leap back in time as they step into this classical Renaissance home, as well as catch a glimpse of one of Raffaello's frescos and see the piece, *Annunciation*, which was painted by his father Giovanni Santi.

La Rampa Elicoidale

Inside the giant, circular tower leading to the Palazzo Ducale sits a spiral ramp, the brainchild of Sienese architect Francesco di Giorgio Martini. The main purpose of the ramp, built in "snail scale," was to allow the Duke to ride his horse from the lower piazza up to his palace. The ramp was also used as a defensive structure, decorated with artillery and connected directly to the stables. After a restoration by Giancarlo De Carlo, this architectural feat is now included in the city tour and used for various cultural activities.

Il Duomo

After undergoing several renovations over the years, the Duomo has since lost its Renaissance design and now retains a neo-classical appearance. Visitors can catch a glimpse of the beautiful *Last Supper* by Federico Barroci, along with a collection of religious works in the adjoining Museo Diocesano Albani.

Fortezza Alborno

Created in the 14th century, this fortress served as an ideal defensive point for the high city walls. It has since been turned into a library and a park. In addition, the top of the tower offers a breathtaking view of Urbino below.

L'Orto Botanico

Urbino's own botanical garden is home to luscious plants, serene ponds and a maze of pathways providing a relaxing visit. Admission to the garden is free.

L'Oratorio di San Giuseppe

This 16th century church on Via Barocci features a crib made of *scagliola* (a marble-like material) set in a magnificent nativity scene. The panorama was created in stucco by Italian sculptor and artist, Federico Brandani. Nearby is the Oratorio di San Giovanni Battista with magnificent 15th century frescoes.

Urbino City Map

1 Palazzo Ducale

Currently home to the Galleria Nazionale delle Marche. Features 14th to 17th century works of art by Piero della Francesca, Raffaello and Federico Barocci.

2 Obelisco Egiziano

Donated by Cardinal Albani in 1737. Sits on a pedestal of stone from Egypt and features a bronze cross said to incorporate a piece of the cross of Christ.

3 Chiesa di San Domenico

Across from the Palazzo Ducale. Doorway constructed by Italian architect and sculptor Maso di Bartolomeo.

4 Oratorio di San Gaetano

The first church of the Dominican community. Showcases a magnificent fresco by Ottaviano Nelli.

5 Oratorio della Morte

Features Crucifixion with mourners and *Magdalene* by Federico Barocci. Originally in charge of the "Christian burial" of the deceased.

6 Museo Diocesano "Albani"

Houses a vast collection of religious artifacts, including jewelry, porcelain and illuminated manuscripts.

7 Cattedrale

Rebuilt by Giuseppe Valadier after an earthquake in 1789. Home of Barocci's Last Supper.



'Urbino possesses some of the greatest monuments of the Renaissance in a compact city space. In this cradle of culture, great artists such as Raffaello and Bramante took their first steps.'

‘Those who come to Urbino without knowing its history and its importance find themselves before an extraordinary surprise, or, indeed, a miracle.’ – Carlo Bo



8 Chiesa di San Francesco

Constructed in Romanesque-Gothic style, in the second half of the 14th century. Contains the remains of Raffaello's parents, Federico Barocci and Bernardino Baldi.

9 Casa Natale di Raffaello

Birthplace of the world-renowned artist Raffaello.

10 Oratorio di San Giovanni

Located in a small church, these frescoes of the Life of Christ by the Salimbeni brothers are outstanding examples of International Gothic style.

11 Oratorio di San Giuseppe

A medieval church known for its nativity scene.

12 Monumento a Raffaello

Created by Luigi Belli Turin in the late 1800s.

13 Fortezza Albornoz

Provides a spectacular view of the city, as well as a public park.

14 Chiesa dei Cappuccini

Formed by the Capuchins in the 17th. Is now owned by the University of Urbino.

15 Chiesa di San Bernardino

Located just outside the city. Protects the tombs of the Dukes of Urbino.

Urbino's civil and religious buildings are the living testimony of the history of this city. The Church of San Bernardino (item 15 on the map), where the tombs of the Dukes of Urbino are kept, is a marvelous example of Renaissance architecture.



Where to Eat

A Fuocco Lento

Via S.P. delle Cesane 25, 347-2318986

Taverna La Fornarina

Via Mazzini 14, 0722-320007

Closed Tuesdays

Il Giardino della Galla

Via Bernini 6, 0722-2455

Closed Wednesdays

Il Portico Hostaria

Via Mazzini 7, 0722-4329

La Balestra Antica Hostaria

Via Valerio 16, 0722-2942

Closed Tuesdays

Le Tre Piante

Via V. d. Vecchia 1, 0722-4863

Closed Mondays

Morgana

Via Nuova 3, 0722-2528

Closed Mondays

Ragno d'Oro

Pizzale Roma, 0722-327705

Taverna degli Artisti

Via Bramante 52, 0722-2676

Closed Tuesdays

Summer Always Open

Zi Mari (in Montesoffio)

Via Nazionale 73 bis, 0722-57105



The Palazzo Ducale recently hosted a major exhibition of the work of Raffaello and his father Giovanni Santi.



Hotels

Bonconte

Via delle Mura 28, 0722-2463

San Domenico

Piazza Rinascimento 3, 0722-2626

Italia

Corso Garibaldi 32, 0722-2701

Tortorina

Via Tortorina 4, 0722-327715

Piero della Francesca

Viale Comandino 53, 0722-328427

La Corte della Miniera

Via delle Miniera 10, 0722-345322

Country House



Agriturismo

Bellavista di Sant'Egidio

Loc. Torre, Via S. Egidio, 25
tel. 0722.340172

Ca' Adreana

Via Gadana, 119
tel. e fax 0722.327845

Il Grillotto

Via Gadana, 74
tel. 0722.327955

Pietra Rosa

Loc. Monte Polo, 10 (fraz. Canavaccio)
tel. e fax 0722.53537

Villa Teresa

Via Mazzaferro, 25
tel. 0722.329803

Annual Events

December

Le Vie dei Presepi

Numerous Nativity scenes on display all over town by both public and private organizations.

April

Pasqua con Noi (Easter)

An Eastertime festival with seasonal gastronomic specialties and handmade items sold at various stands in the historic center of Urbino.

July

Early Music Festival

A festival dedicated to Medieval and Renaissance music, including courses, concerts and exhibitions.

August

Festa del Duca

Festival dedicated to Duke Federico involving the re-enactment of episodes at court.

September

Festa dell'Aquilone

A kite-flying competition and a must for kite-lovers from around the world.

October

Giornata Nazionale del Trekking Urbano

A guided walk through Urbino, including historical buildings that are not typically open to the public.



Photo by Laurens Burgess



Where to Walk

Orto Botanico

Via Bramante

Camminamento Panoramico

Via Bramante near Porta Santa Lucia

Monumento a Raffaello

Piazzale Roma

Fortezza Alborno

Viale Buozzi



Photo by Amy Popplewell

Say 'Formaggio!'

by Kayla Smith and Arielle Emmett

Walking through the narrow doorway of Luciano and Cinzia Bussu's *Casa del Formaggio*, on Via Mazzini's street, buyers are pressed against the cheese counter. There's hardly any space to move, just one aisle going through the tiny store with the local cheeses in the cooler on the left, green grapes and nectarines on the right, and shelves above filled with canned olives, wine, and random items such as laundry detergent.

Luciano and Cinzia Bussu stock most of the great cheeses of Urbino. They're passionate about cheese – mostly “sheep's cheese,” as Cinzia says in excellent English she learned in school. “Twenty one years ago, my husband opened this shop with his mother because the family produced their own cheeses in Urbino. They bought a farm here in 1965 and made their cheeses at home and sold them here and other shops around the province. Their cheeses were very popular,” Cinzia said.

The two are a good looking married couple – Cinzia, the mother of two little girls, 3 and 8, slices samples of a sweet and savory *Casciotta d'Urbino* for customers while maintaining two simultaneous conversations with her husband and a journalist. Luciano Bussu, a tall balding man dressed in an apron and shorts, is the storeowner. He smiles frequently and exudes a muscular charm, talking and gesturing excitedly about his family's vocation while slicing up prosciutto and other large wheels of cheese. “I'm not an employee,” Cinzia adds. “He's the owner. I'm the wife.” Cinzia is small in stature and has brown hair and lively eyes. She announces several times that she is not an employee and only works Saturdays to help him out.

The main business of the day, though, is cheese. The most popular cheeses in Urbino include *Casciotta d'Urbino* – “It's a mixed cheese from sheep and cow milk, sweeter than the cheeses just from sheep milk,” Luciano says with Cinzia translating. To the taste, the cheese is sweeter and milder even than a standard pecorino, another local cheese from sheep milk. Ricotta, on the other hand, requires a complex, time consuming process which includes saving the whey (*siero*) from a cheese pot, filtering out as many curd particles out as possible, and allowing the whey first to sit at room temperature to develop acidity. After 12 or more hours, the whey is then boiled into a white foam, removed from heat, and the curds eventually strained to form the ricotta. “It's a work that requires a lot of passions,” Luciano says through Cinzia.

After his parents moved out of Urbino to another part of Italy a few years back, Luciano stopped making cheese and now he just buys his products from local producers. Aside from pecorino, ricotta, and *caciotta d'Urbino*, Le Marche produces a *Formaggio di Fossa* from such towns as Sogliano al Rubicone (nearly Rimini) and Talamello. The cheese is biting, hard in texture, and yellow-green/gray in color. It also smells ripe and mildewy. “During World War II people dug special holes in the ground to hide their food,” Cinzia explained. “They discovered that if they put cheese together with *paglia* (beds of straw) they get a cheese that tastes particularly savory.” People in Le Marche eat *Formaggio di Fossa* with marmalade and honey, a combination producing bitter-sweet sensations and savory ripeness in the mouth. The cheese goes well with dessert and hearty red wines,



Luciano and Cinzia Bussu
photo by Kayla Smith

Learn Italian Here!

Questions to ask when shopping for cheese:

'Vorrei comprare questo formaggio.'

(I would like to buy this cheese)

'Qual è il tuo tipo di formaggio preferito?'

(Which type of cheese do you prefer?)

'Quale vino rosso o bianco posso abbinare con questi formaggi?'

(Which red or white wines go with these cheeses?)

'Quanto costa?'
(How much?)

'Buonissimo!'
(“Yum”)

especially the local Sangiovese red grapes, Cinzia said, pointing to the many bottles on her shelves.

We tried both *Casciotta d'Urbino* and *Formaggio di Fossa* on our visit to the Casa del Formaggio. The latter cheese is definitely an acquired taste for a ‘mature’ (over 30) palette, but it goes wonderfully with strong red wines. Another popular cheese is *Formaggio al Tartuffe*, made with black truffles, mostly “because the white truffles are more expensive,” Luciano Bussu explains. Even local cheeses are pricy, though, running about 14.50 euros for a kilo of sheep cheese; 28 euros for a kilo of truffle cheese. Ironically, foreigners like the truffle cheese, which is sweet and savory. The more economically minded locals populations prefer to keep truffles out of their cheeses. “Truffles are for tourists,” Cinzia said. “People here like the sharp cheeses that are more affordable.”

A Local Favorite: *Casciotta d'Urbino*

By Aimee Alarcon

It nourished a young Raffaello and seduced Michelangelo. Supple and creamy, it is light enough to melt in your mouth and has a taste that leaves you satisfied only while you enjoy it, and yearning for more when it is gone. Raffaello ate it daily in his birthplace of Urbino and Michelangelo desired it so much that he purchased farmland in the Marche region to provide him with a constant supply of this delicacy. It is *Casciotta d'Urbino*, a semi-soft cheese.

Casciotta D'Urbino (pronounced *cash-o-ta*) is to Urbino what champagne is to Champagne, France: the eponymous product of the region. Promoted by the European Union, the production of *caciotta* is also regulated by the Protected Designation of Origin standards (PDO) to ensure that the cheese you eat today is as indigenous and high quality as that which Raffaello and Michelangelo enjoyed.

Locals know an authentic *caciotta* by the *paglierino*, or hay-colored, round moulds.

“It has the scent of fresh milk, a sweet tendency and an acid tendency,” says Otello Renzi, a local sommelier and gastronomic adviser, “so it should always be paired with white wines.”

However, one can only take an educated guess as to how today's *caciotta* compares to the cheese Raffaello and Michelangelo enjoyed. *Caciotta*, like Urbino, peaked with the Renaissance and ceased to be produced for hundreds of years. In an effort to recreate a food unique the region, three local cheese producers consorted in the 1970's to resurrect this cheese by turning to various documents about its original production.

One of these producers is *Caseificio Val d'Apsa*, located just outside the city walls. The business is run by Bartolomeo Casula and his wife, Maria Grazia Mattei. Although the business was founded just 30 years ago, the traditions of cheese making have been handed down from father to son through several generations. The family has a state-of-the-art factory; however, they do much of the labor by hand—from separating the curds and whey to breaking the cheese out of the plastic moulds.

On this day, they are making ricotta and Bartolomeo does not feel that his employee is pouring the curds into the plastic baskets with enough care. He takes matters into his own hands, literally, taking the strainer and demonstrating how to properly fill each mould. There is a vibrato of words exchanged that are almost incomprehensible over the hum of the milk tanks before Bartolomeo hands the strainer back over. Standards are paramount; however, the secret is to start with fresh, natural ingredients, especially milk, which Bartolomeo and Maria Grazia purchase from local, family owned farms.

Caciotta is a daily cheese best served with pears and figs and used for typical dishes such as *passatelli con fonduta di Casciotta D'Urbino e funghi porcini* (an egg pasta served with fresh mushrooms in a light cream sauce). Patrons of Renzi's restaurant, Serra Alta, can enjoy head chef Andrea Mei's fresh lobster with a *caciotta* cream sauce. Rich and creamy, it is a delicacy, an example of Le Marche's unparalleled culinary art.

Crescia Delight

Urbinate live on Crescia. It's not just flaky flatbread.

by Lauresa Burgess

It is a lazy Sunday in Urbino, Italy, but for Roberto Borfecchia this day means an outing with his father to get *crescia*, a dense but thin and flaky flatbread that is a hallmark of this city's cuisine.

When Borfecchia was a child, the father-son a trek for *crescia* was a special treat. "Now *crescia* reminds me of summer because that is when I usually eat it," says Borfecchia.

Now an item in most Urbino restaurants, *crescia* originally was considered the poor man's bread because farmers were able to take it out to the fields with them. The food is rich and easy to preserve, making it the perfect meal for laborers.

The bread consists of flour, water, lard, eggs and pepper. The lard gives the bread its flaky and crunchy exterior while keeping it soft and chewy on the inside. The food was normally eaten by itself, but now it is common to find the bread served with prosciutto and cheese or other combinations to make it a more bountiful meal.

For Antonio Fabi, *crescia* brings back memories of high school. After a festival, the *crescia* would be sold for lire £50 instead of £100. Fabi and his high school friends would run over after school and enjoy the afternoon snack. "I just love the ingredients!" said Fabi.

One of the first restaurants in Urbino to sell *cresce* was Ragno d'Oro. The cafe was established in 1946 after World War II. Using only the finest ingredients found in Italy, the *crescia* at this quaint cafe is made fresh before your eyes. What makes this *crescia* special is the tender care used to make the discs of dough. Each piece is rolled by well experienced hands and the knowledge of a 100-year tradition. The oil added to the recipe gives the dough more flavor.

Fresh *cresce* filled with cheese and prosciutto, a type of Italian ham, sells for 4 euro. Barbara Serafini, a young woman with short dark hair, works behind the counter at Ragno d'Oro. When asked if she likes *cresce*, her eyes light up with excitement as she exclaimed "Molto!"

"My grandmother would make it when I was a child. She would give me small amounts of dough so I could make mini *crescia*," said Serafini.

Kitchen to Factory

The idea of mass producing *cresce* did not evolve until the 21st century. Paolo Gerardi and his fiancée at the time met a man working in the supermarket business. They teamed up and established Il Panaro, the first factory to mass-produce *cresce* in April, 2001. Today Il Panaro produces 4,000 to 6,000 pieces of *crescia* per day.

The factory delivers the bread to supermarkets, cafes, and the University of Urbino. Although the factory distributes *crescia* all over Italy, especially northern Italy, the bread is still consid-



Photos by Jessica German



Above: Maria Guglielmi has made fresh *cresce* at Cafe Ragno d'Oro for 13 years.

Left: Many different types of *cresce*, including this typical type filled with stracchino cheese and spinach, can be purchased at various cafes throughout Urbino.

ered a trademark of Urbino cuisine.

"We have 15 employees here at the factory," says Gerardi. "Only the women make *cresce* because they are more skilled with their hands and have less hair on their arms. However, we do have a boy that delivers the *cresce*."

Not only has the factory created jobs in this classic Renaissance town, but it has also brought *cresce* to the masses.

When made fresh the *cresce* melts in your mouth. The crunchy exterior and the soft interior filled with ham and cheese make this a tasty and popular meal in Urbino. It is also an easy

meal for those Sundays that you just don't feel like cooking. This typical food can be found at local supermarkets in Urbino, as well as most cafes in the city.



"View from Tre Piante" by Shari Gab

Wine Seller Pours Cheer

By Kayla Smith

At Magia, an enoteca (specialty wine shop) on Via Raffaello in Urbino, up the hill from the main piazza, bottles of wine are stacked on the shelves top to bottom. The place smells like hay and stone, and the gray-haired Italian men with their thin figures and wrinkled skin stand with wine glasses in hand, chuckling at the miniature bar the size of a four-person table.

Shop owner Lidiano Balducci laughs with the old men who take sips of his red wine. He also offers them slices of *crescia*, a flaky local flatbread, cut up on a plate. It is 11 a.m. He's standing inside his shop, which is the size of a small dorm room, with hundreds of bottles of white and red wines stacked on shelves taller than a doorway and placed on tables on the left as you walk into the shop. The shop is dark, in a building that is probably four hundred years old, located on a street that climbs up a steep 70-degree angle leading to the town's statue of Raffaello.

Despite drinking at an early hour, Balducci is a gentlemen. He owned a restaurant in Urbino until 1995 when he opened up his wine store which, he says, is more profitable. He sells wines from all over Europe, including Italy, France and Spain. The most popular from Le Marche are Rosso Conero (red) and Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi (white). Each run about 12 euro a bottle, although he has cheaper bottles from 3 to 5 euro. Because economic times are tough, discount wines are popular these days. Through an interpreter he said, "I have felt the economic crisis because sales are down." He looked distressed as he explained the situation. As I began to thank him, I shook his hand and I asked if I could come back again. He said, "whenever you want to Bella." Lidiano Balducci is the type of shop keeper that keeps you smiling as you walk out the door. He's an example of the friendliness of Urbino.

Rescuing a Sweet Tradition

A beekeeping family perpetuates a beloved tradition despite hard times and hive die-offs.

by Nicole Ely

Reaching into the one of the square wood containers lined up on the hillside of their farm, Fabrizio Gabannini pulled out a thin frame of honeycomb. He gently pressed his index finger on the hexagonal pattern and a golden glob of “miele,” or honey, oozed out. Without wasting a moment, he sucked the syrupy liquid from his digit and smiled.

“The relationship between bees and man hasn’t changed,” Fabrizio said through an interpreter. “It’s man and nature. It will never change.”

“*Apicoltura*,” or beekeeping, has been the Gabannini family business for four generations, making them the oldest beekeepers in the Marche region in Central Italy. Throughout the years, the family has upheld a tradition of producing quality products while still respecting the natural environment of their work. Their business has survived turbulent times, from the Nazi occupation of the past to the hive die off of the present.

Although not as common today, bee farms were customary in every rural household in the early 20th century. It was not until 1913 that Marino Gabannini decided to barter his product in addition to producing it. And so, *Apicoltura Gabannini* was born.

Now, the family harvests honey on 25 bee farms in and around Urbino, and tends 600 families of bees. They produce 10 different varieties of honey and sell their goods at local markets, fairs, shows and their shop.

The Gabannini’s shop is sandwiched between their beehives and their house in the Urbino hills, just outside the town. The dark wood shelves and tables display a wide array of product—from jars of orange-flavored honey to beeswax candles and soap. All these items are produced on the Gabannini farm and in their laboratory behind their house.

On one wall of the shop hangs a framed black and white photograph of a group of four men and three young boys standing among the beehives. One of the boys is Gualtiero Gabannini when he was four-years-old. The picture dates to 1931.

Gualtiero spent his summers as a child in the hills of Urbino’s countryside. When it was hot, he slept near the hives. “Grandparents would tell their grandchildren to be careful around bees,” he said through an interpreter, “so the children were al-

ways afraid. But I never was.”

Gualtiero was in his early teens when Germans were stationed near Urbino in WWII. During this time, honey became a precious commodity and many Germans killed bee colonies to steal the goods. However, things played out differently for his family, according to Gualtiero.

“The Germans were so close to us and we began to know each other,” he said. “It became a forced good relationship.” Gualtiero remembered hiding the honey, not from the Germans, but from their Italian neighbors instead.

Despite the hard history, Gualtiero still loves

the honeybee crest.

The honeybee soon became a reminder of authority and influence in Italy that few could match. Italian scientist Francesco Stelluti, best known for his work with microscopes, published two works on the anatomy of the honeybee to please Urban VIII. With his microscope, he was able to gaze upon the bee’s most unobserved features—including the tongue and the stinger.

Instead of worrying about the bee’s stinger, the Gabanninis focus on the natural and healing powers of bees. Gualtiero’s wife, Iri Gina, works in the house instead of on the bee farm. Between regular household chores, Gina spends her time making honey hand cream and propolis.

Propolis is an old healing remedy. Ancient Greeks used it for abscesses, Egyptians used it in mummification and Assyrians used it for tumors and sores, according to MedlinePlus online herbal dictionary. Gina began making propolis when she married Gualtiero in the mid-1950s. She dries the propolis in the sun, and then mixes the brittle leaves with alcohol. The result: a natural cure for sore throats and cuts.

While the Gabanninis have sustained their business through the century, they are constantly facing old and new problems. Rainy days, an age-old problem for beekeepers, slows their work often and can damage their stored products. However, worldwide beehive die off is something very new that many are trying to fight.

Floriana Ferri is a secretary and technical supervisor for Provincial Consortium Apistica, an association of beekeepers in the region. “Italy is like a big garden,” Ferri said through an interpreter. “The honey we produce is some of the best in the country.”

Provincial Consortium Apistica helps train and inform beekeepers in the Marche region. Dying hives have been a recent issue the association tries to combat. The causes could be anything from parasites and disease to pesticides, but no one knows for certain.

“Beekeeping is a loved tradition in Italy,” Ferri said. “But it is getting harder for beekeepers. Now it is like a real job, not a hobby.”

In a family business that spans generations, a threat like hive die off could be disheartening. Last year, *Apicoltura Gabannini* lost 40 percent of production because of the problem, Fabrizio said.

Despite the drawbacks, Fabrizio loves his profession and hopes that his children will carry on in his footsteps. “I love being in close contact with nature,” he said. “I love the bees. They are beautiful and complicated, just like humans.”



Photo by Giovanna Borgna

Fabrizio Gabannini has his hands full. “Bees are beautiful,” he says.

everything about being a beekeeper. Even at 82, with a head of crisp white hair and a thin physique, he’ll walk among the sheets of honeycomb, puffing white smoke at the hives with a bee smoker (a device that looks like a water can).

Cherished History

This is not the first time the honeybee appears in Italian history. According to many online resources, three honeybees adorn the crest of one of the oldest and noblest families in Italy—the Barberinis. The honeybee symbol gained more power when Maffeo Cardinal Barberini became Pope Urban VIII in 1623 and added the papal symbol to

For More on Urbino’s Food Traditions, go to www.inurbino.net



Adriatic Catch (above left)
Photo by Giovanna Borgna
Gionata Cecconi (left) and
Romina Cecconi (above)
Photos by Shari Gab

From Mare to Market

by Shari Gab

The sardines are glistening, small, glassy, oil slicks, each lying in unison as he reaches down, tearing the head and shucking the spine from each one with graceful expediency.

His hands move expertly without the assistance of his eyes as he pulls the innards from one pile of intact catch and lays the meaty goodness with their split bellies on a crisp square of white packing paper. He carries on in familiar conversation with a stunning elderly woman adorned with pearls and thick, nude stockings, who has placed her order for one kilo at the price of six euro, “per favore.” The folded and taped package then slides across the glass case into her well-preserved hands and the remaining spines, wriggling through the Adriatic Sea less than 24 hours ago, get dumped into the trash.

Cleaning the fish is a service here in this Pescheria, a 182-cobblestone jaunt from historic Urbino’s Piazza della Repubblica.

Gionata Cecconi and his brother-in-law, Raffaele Maiorano, exit the arches of the town between 3:30 and 4:30 a.m. six days out of the week and fly through winding back roads to catch the sunrise on the Marche coast to hand-select their product. After a quick stop for warm pastries and cappuccino, their small refrigerated truck nuzzles the 15 foot wide Via Cesare Battisti back in Urbino town to unload at 8:30 am. Before the two men can put on gloves and get the crates from the truck to the glass case, patrons are placing orders and embracing the stink of the sea.

Granchi per 5.00 euro al kilogram.

Code Di Rospo per 16.50 euro al kilogram.

Seppie per 2.50 euro al kilogram. Nisto per 7.00 euro al kilogram.

Why would they go to the trouble when the fish could be delivered? Why rise at 3 a.m. and work until the supply is gone? The answer is surprisingly simple. “We love to have the people here eat healthy and well,” says Gionata. “That’s why we go every morning to get fresh fish because we really care.”

La Pescheria is a fourth-generation success run by Gionata and his wife, Romina, who works at their other shop in the city’s outskirts. And Saturday, Raffaele tends their stand at the weekly farmer’s market. The Piazza is difficult to get to for all Urbinate, so these outposts were opened as a matter of convenience, another symbol of their dedication.

Romina is sun-kissed, her face vibrant with the health and wealth that only comes from loving what one does. She inherited the shop from her father, who ran the Piazza location. “In the beginning,” she leans on the counter, “they used to go by horse to get the fish.”

But, what is most distinctive is the freshness. “The demand is clear,” says Gionata. “People want fresh fish. People come from afar to get their fish here a lot,” he adds.

And in this provincial community the supply and demand work in almost perfect unison. “The clients know what they want and what fish is in season,” says Gionata. And working for so long, the Cecconis have devised an erudite knowledge of how much fish supply they will need one day to the next.

“Right now, the best is sardines,” he says. “In this period, they are very sweet and tasty.”

“Though the seasons have changed,” he adds, “and are not very distinct as a result of the climate change.” La Pescheria sees a more unstable fish selection than it used to. He admits that clients do ask for unavailable specifics as a result of the new uncertainty of season, but he just hopes that they could find whatever was asked of them.

Most of the fish lay still and glazed over, the squid saturated in its own wet grey matter, but one solitarily confined lobster thrashes at the edges of his white bin on a terminal bed of crushed ice. Gionata gives him a poke and says, “He’s moody. *Aragosta arrabbiata*.”

He holds the lobster up, exposing its lighter underside as it pumps its claws in the air like Donadoni when Italy took the World Cup in 2008.

The temperamental crustacean is one of their few select imports, this one from Canada. The demand is high for lobster and the supply is low, so this lobster dinner will come at a cost.

While most successful markets hunger for expansion, La Pescheria is satisfied. As emphasized by the President of the province of Pesaro and Urbino, Matteo Ricci, most businesses function with fewer than fifteen people. “Anything that falls under the shade of the bell tower, people care for,” Ricci says. Similarly, La Pescheria serves to accommodate the community.

Gionata and Romina both greet customers easily, with gracious, warm smiles reflecting from their plastic, disposable white aprons. “It is precious,” says Romina, “It is the experience that keeps us going. This is not a chain, it is a family.” There was no obligation to take over the family business. She began working at the shop “almost as joke” and just stayed.

“My husband,” she says, “quit a different job to do this. He used to be so tired at the end of the day. And now, with the same hours, sometimes even more, he is not tired because he loves what he does.”

Nautical blue, plastic chain link curtains hang at the door of each shop. The curtain sweeps against the wall and door with the stream of customers in and out all day long resembling the sound of a Native Indian Rain Stick. It crackles as two more women enter to peruse the pesce.

It is not so much about the fish. Romina says, “To deal with people, it is a beautiful thing.”

Birth Pangs of a New Economy

by Erin Banco

The 5 p.m. *Adriabus* stalls in front of the Caffè Degli Angeli in Urbino, casting a shadow over the final pack of gelato-smearing faces and fanny-packed hips.

"Basta!"

Swinging into the overcrowded bus, an American mother, sporting Birkenstock sandals and swishy hiking pants, shouts at her bambina to stop tugging on the dangling Nikon strap.

"The tourists come [to Urbino] to pass the day if the weather is bad on the beach," said Giuseppina Ranocchia, a local shopkeeper. "They usually go to local bars and pizza places because they do not have much money to spend."

Although Urbino, a town of 16,000 residents, sees thousands of tourists each summer, regional officials said they are experiencing the effects of the global economic crisis. Two major local industries—construction and machinery—have suffered during the recent economic downturn.

According to a report issued in June by the Italian National Statistics Institute, Italy's unemployment rate for the first quarter of 2009 reached 8 percent; nearly 2 million Italians are jobless.

The nation's unemployment rate overall, though at an all-time high, is lower than other countries like the United States and France. The United States officially reports at 8.1 percent unemployment rate and France at 8.9 percent, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, although the actual unemployment rate is in double digits in some areas.

Matteo Ricci, the young president of the province of Pesaro and Urbino, said the unemployment rate in Urbino used to sit at 3 percent, one of the lowest in Italy, but has since risen to nearly 6 percent. "We are very worried now about the working people," Ricci said. "All sectors have been affected. The crisis is putting a lot of pressure on the [unemployment benefits] system here."

In Urbino, though, "there are not many people losing their jobs," said Sperinado Fraternale, an employee for the University of Urbino-Carlo Bo, a state-run facility. "A lot of the jobs [here] are labor intensive... some people complain about that."

The town suffers from a lack of revenue from small businesses, which comprise approximately 98 percent of all companies in the area, according to Camilla Fabbri, director of the National Federation of Handcrafts.

"Many people who work in the public employment recognize that they are lucky because they have the guarantee of work," said Tiziano Mancini, secretary of the Italian Federation of Trades' Unions-Urbino. "Even though the payment is not as high as with private employment, they have the security of work."

Although a state job provides security, Gabriele Cavalera, spokesperson for Urbino Mayor Franco Corbucci, said many employees do not have the freedom to change professions. He said leaving a state job is a risk because finding a new one is "almost impossible." The economy has changed over the last few years because older state employees who are retiring are not replaced.

Provincial president Matteo Ricci signals Urbino's role in Italy's green economy. Clean energy and tourism will grow.



Photo by Michiko Theurer

Matteo Ricci, president of the province of Pesaro and Urbino (center), greets students and faculty at the University of Urbino "Carlo Bo." At right is Giancarlo Sacchi, president of E.R.S.U. at University of Urbino "Carlo Bo."

According to Mancini, his union facilitates the signing of *precari*, job contracts, to help jump-start careers. However, the job contracts only allow people to earn money for a limited amount of time.

"Many young people have contracts," Ricci said. "But you can't raise a family and get a mortgage when you don't know what your income is going to be." Ricci said that many young Italians are driven by "the myth of a steady job" when many are surviving on contract work.

According to national statistics, approximately 67 percent of those who are employed in Italy work in the service sector. Cavalera said the same is true for Urbino. Tourism currently comprises 6 percent of the town's economy, but officials are beginning to home in on its benefits.

"For us, Urbino is the main way to communicate to the entire province," he said. "The challenge for Urbino will be to use our policies to develop more tourism."

Traditionally, Urbino has been a day trip for most tourists. Now city officials are trying to give them reasons to stay longer with more attractions, concerts, and cultural and sporting events.

"Anything you see going on in town ... is always strongly supported financially by the local administration, so it is always a constant effort to have events in town," Mayor Corbucci said.

The town recently opened a Raffaello art exhibit in the Palazzo Ducale. The show, which cost more than €2.5 million to put together, brought in approximately 140,000 tourists in the span of seven weeks.

"There is a new world of marketing we should do that has never been done before," Ricci

said. "We hope to make a network that will put Urbino in touch with different activities to [attract tourists]."

With the presence of two historical institutions—the Palazzo Ducale and the University of Urbino-Carlo Bo—the town sees more than 1 million tourists a year, according to Cavalera. The Palazzo Ducale, for example, brings nearly €200,000 into the city each year.

Rocco Greco, a university employee and alumna, said the tourism sector of the town did not expand until the early 1970s, during the reign of the school's president, Carlo Bo.

"In [the 1950s] people did not have a lot of money and the transportation was limited," Greco said. "There was not a lot of tourism because people did not know how to reach Urbino. There were no trains and only a few people had a car."

While tourists only inhabit the city for one day at a time, the students of the University of Urbino, approximately 17,000 people, spend Thursday nights enjoying the local pubs and restaurants.

"Everything [in Urbino] gravitates totally downtown," Cavalera said. "All the restaurants and shops are for the students."

According to Mancini, the university population decreased significantly over the past eight years. He said students began gravitating toward studying at universities that were closer to home and cost less.

Continued on page 35

All Happy Families are Alike

Even if they're different

by Jessica German

Claudia Corsini, 46, a mother of two, always pictured herself as having a house full of children.

"Since I was a little girl I always dreamed of having a big family," Corsini said as one of her two children, 9-year-old son Paolo, climbed on a play structure at a playground located in the Piazzelle Roma in Urbino. "I wanted to have more children. I would like to, but I can't."

Once known for its sprawling Catholic families, Italy has for the past decade had one of the lowest total fertility rates in the Western world 1.31 children per woman, according to the CIA World Factbook. (By comparison, the United States has a birth rate of 2.05.) Once expected to marry young and have lots of *bambini*, many Italian women now pursue careers and marry later in life. In addition, most couples believe they cannot financially support more than one child.

"Unless you have very strong social services it's impossible to have two, three kids in the family," said Gabriele Cavallera, spokesman for Urbino Mayor Franco Corbucci.

Between 2004 and 2006, the Italian government was so concerned about the country's low birth rate that it began paying women a bonus of 1,000-euro to have a second child.

"It was mostly a slogan because one or two thousand euro is not going to make much of a difference," Corbucci said. In his view, having only one or two children has "become a kind of lifestyle, a way of life" for the Italian family.

Interviews with several families suggest that this national trend persists in Urbino, a small university town in the Marche region.

"Young people go to college and do not become independent for a long time," Corbucci said. "Here it is more evident because the university is here."

In Italy, it's not uncommon for adult children to live with their parents well into adulthood. Many women don't marry and start having children until their thirties, leaving them little time to have multiple pregnancies. Many women want to get their careers under way before starting a family.

"By the time you get out of the university you are a little bit older," said Cavallera "It takes time to establish yourself."

Giovanna Turriani, 40, a teacher at the Asilo Valerio pre-school in Urbino, said the largest family she could recall in her years of teaching at the school was a family with four children.

Corsini said that one of the reasons people do not have a lot of children is because it is "an economic matter." She explained that "before it took less money," and "now there's a lot of money needed" to support a family.

According to national statistics, in 2007 the average monthly expenditure for a couple in Italy with one child was 2,957 euro (the equivalent of



"Urbino Wedding"
Photo by Scott Burry

Growing Green Industries



Officials of the Marche region are generating support for greener practices during the global economic crisis.

Michele Ambrosini, president of Banca Marche (pictured above), said his bank is now supporting the trade marking of smaller companies' green products.

"The small companies do not have a culture of trademark or brand concept, but they have very high creativity," he said..

Several companies in the Marche region work with the movement of the sea to produce energy. Ambrosini said the use of sea energy is "already at the very advanced stage."

about \$4,100 in the U.S.); for two children the average was 3,188 euro (\$4500 in the U.S).

The change in family size and the great emphasis on careers have changed the family life style in Italy.

Claudio Giambartolomei, 64, helps one of his four daughters by taking turns with his wife caring for his first grandson, 2-year-old Riccardo Mechelli. He described having a child in Italy as an *"evento stupendo."*

"It's the most beautiful thing in the world, the first thing in the world," Giambartolomei said. "When you receive a grandson it's like you are young

However, newer industries like solar panel manufacturing are just beginning to launch, according to Matteo Ricci, president of the Pesaro-Urbino province.

El Mac, a company based out of Tabulia, produces solar panels for greenhouses that can be recycled when dismantled. Ambrosini said the company is beginning to collaborate with organic energy machineries.

"They are reusing carbonium and potassium recycled locally as fertilizer," he said.

While smaller companies innovate new energy-saving material, larger companies are struggling to make revenue from their industrialized products.

"Now we have this big debate nationally," Ambrosini said.

"Should we support those who have new ideas or should we support the products ... the more material parts of the economy?"

Banca Marche provides companies producing manufactured goods like furniture and yachts with solidarity funds. The companies are not required to start paying back the funds for 72 months. -- Erin Banco

again."

And while Corsini originally imagined herself with many children, she is content with her two children, 15-year-old daughter Anna and 9-year-old son Paolo.

With a wide-spread smile, Corsini said, "I look at this as a dream of a big family coming true."

ar-old daughter Anna and 9-year-old son Paolo.

With a wide-spread smile, Corsini said, "I look at this as a dream of a big family coming true."

Healthcare: If you have to get sick....

(Psst...it pays to be in Italy!)



by Gino Troiani

When Pennsylvanian Timothy Bloom moved to Italy in 1993, one of the cultural adjustments he made was getting used to state-provided health care. Sixteen years later, as his relatives back home debate proposals for a 'public option' in health care in the United States, Bloom has an opinion based on first-hand experience: Italian health care is *good*.

"Most people get pretty decent care, and no one is completely abandoned," said Bloom, 43, a professor of English at the University of Urbino. "I think overall it works."

Bloom isn't alone. Interviews with ex-patriots and native Italians in Urbino with experience in both systems provided insight into what such a change could mean. In general they praised the ability of the nation to provide quick and competent care to all of its citizens, regardless of income, and considered the extra cost in higher taxes – and the longer waits for some forms of care – a good exchange.

Italians consider health care a national right, not a luxury, the interviewees said. News reports that 45 million Americans had no health care last year, or that families can go bankrupt paying for critical

health care, were unacceptable to those interviewed.

The concern for quality health care may be one reason the current Italian system, *Servizio Sanitario Nazionale*, or SSN, was ranked No. 2 in the world by the World Health Organization in 2000, the last year such a study was completed. The United States was ranked 37.

SSN is based on a traditional universal model, where the state is responsible for providing accessible healthcare to all of its citizens. Primary care physicians work at local clinics where they treat common problems and screen for more serious illnesses. There is no private sector option for primary care. If a patient needs a specialist, he is referred to one in the Italian system, and that is where waiting times increase. There are private sector specialists, but their costs are not covered.

Generic prescription medication is also covered by the state.

Although citizens pay nothing when treated, costs are collected on an on-going basis through higher taxes. The Italian system is financed by general tax revenue combined with an additional healthcare tax. On average, Italians are taxed around 45 percent of their salaries.

Bloom, 43, thinks the price is worth the benefits. For the last six years his daughter has been battling an on-going health problem and is no stranger to the hospital. "I would say we've had excellent care," he said. "It's probably as good, if not better, than what she might get in the states."

Andrea Luminati agreed with Bloom. An Urbino native who moved to Los Angeles when he was 18 to pursue a degree in advertising at Pepperdine University, Luminati, 44, stayed in the States for the next 20 years before returning to Italy in 2004.

Luminati first worked for large U.S. companies that provided healthcare benefits, but later started his own business and provided his own health insurance costing \$300 per month. At the age of 38, just one month after getting his own plan, Luminati was diagnosed with kidney stones and hospitalized for three days. He said the final bill totaled more than

\$20,000.

"If I hadn't purchased that insurance in the States, it would have been a huge (financial) blow," he said.

Once back in Italy, Luminati had another serious health problem. He said the public system operated in Urbino gave him prompt and excellent care, from diagnosing the problem to running specific medical tests and then providing the proper medication. He paid no money out of pocket.

But Luminati added that state-provided care does have some problems that get worse as the size of the town grows.

"You have to look at the Italian healthcare system almost in a city by city basis," he said. "In Italy, in a smaller town the healthcare system works very well because it's smaller, there's less people. (But) in Milan or Rome it's a whole different ballgame." He said bigger cities have longer lines for routine care and longer waits for surgery.

Bloom agreed, adding that many Italians are unsatisfied with the system, most particularly with waiting times.

He added many Italians believe the recent wave of immigration – much of it illegal – is prolonging wait times.

"A lot of (illegal) immigrants use the hospital for basic care because they often don't have a regular doctor," said Bloom. "People are worried that it is putting pressure on the system."

According to Luminati, many Italians often seek private care to avoid long waits.

"You've got a choice, you're not stuck with socialized medicine, if you've got the money you can go privately," said Luminati. It is estimated that roughly 35 percent of Italians have some sort of private care.

Elvita Redavid, 27, of Urbino, recalled her last experience with the healthcare system.

After suffering multiple hip and knee injuries, Redavid traveled north to seek private treatment. "I just felt more comfortable and safe with a private specialist," said Redavid.

Galileo Plays 'Jeopardy'

by Francisco Flores-Cordero

Imagine you're a contestant on the quiz show Jeopardy and can win the game by answering this question:

"When was the first overhead projector developed?"

Would you choose...?

A: 1700s

B: 1900s

C: 1800s

To learn the answer we have to follow a story that begins 25 years ago in the famed Italian Renaissance city of Urbino, where Professor Flavio Vetrano, of the University of Urbino, was seeking additional space for his expanding science department. In one room where "dust and spider webs" were everywhere he found a massive collection of more than 1000 scientific artifacts, recalled Professor Flavio Vetrano.

Closer examination eventually indicated Vetrano had stumbled upon evidence that the flowering of the Renaissance in Urbino encompassed more than the great works of artists such as Raffaello. The collection includes what appears to be the first-ever overhead projector, a generator for producing electric current, a battery for storing energy and correspondence from Galileo seeking help on his own projects – all indications Urbino's men of science may have been well ahead of their more famed colleagues cross Europe.



The collection, now housed in the museum Il Gabinetto di Fisica dell'Università di Urbino (The Physics Room of The University of Urbino) was surprising because historical evidence previously indicated scientists during the 1400s devoted their talents to more practical purposes, Vetrano said, such as machines for war and construction tools (<http://www.uniurb.it/PhysLab/Museum.html>).

Yet the artifacts clearly show Urbino's scientists were hard at work on theoretical questions of the time.

Professor Roberto Mantovani, now the curator of the collection, said correspondence between Galileo and Urbino scientists prove that point.

"It is very interesting that Galileo had contact with mathematicians in Urbino and later (June, 1618) went to visit the Duke of Montefeltro," he said. And one of Galileo's most significant inventions, a military compass, "has many similarities" with analogous instruments developed in Urbino.

Because the instruments are in such fragile condition, researchers have tested their efficacy by building scale models. They work.

The generator spins a large crystal about three feet in circumference to create static electricity that is captured on two copper pickup points. Cables lead from the instrument for the apparent purposes of conducting electricity to other objects.

The battery is a crystal cylinder about one foot tall and three inches in diameter containing metal plates and an acid solution.

The projector, composed of a wooden box about one foot square, uses crystals as lenses to direct sunlight into an object. The resulting images are then refracted through other crystal lenses onto a panel inside the box.

This object apparently was designed and built in the 1700s. A tough question for Jeopardy.

'All Hail the Conquering Graduates!'

Laurel leaves, fountain dunkings, crazy posters: It's the local university graduates' rite of passage

By Jack Turner

Three times a year the air of the walled Renaissance town of Urbino, Italy, is pierced with raucous laughter and song. Young students are seen marching into somber chambers before robed judges and striding across the piazza triumphantly crowned with laurel like a conquering Caesar. Some are even thrown bodily in the town's fountain.

Graduation day around this ancient college town is an unusual mixture of grave seriousness and joyous revelry. One moment students are being grilled by a panel of professors, the next friends are hanging strange "Wanted" posters about the town with photos of students at their worst. Chic sunglasses reflect the light and stiletto heels tap staccato rhythms as modern students continue traditions going back centuries.

"It was a very strange and funny and crazy day," said Monica Ruggeri, 23, who graduated with a degree in languages in February.

While graduating students in the U.S. undergo a round of exams and a short ritual en masse, these laurel-clad grads must first spend weeks preparing a carefully researched thesis paper and then defend their work alone in a discussion before a panel of their professors. This is called a *"discussione di laurea."*

Ruggeri's trial day began unusually. She rose to find the streets of Urbino, her home town, blanketed in more than 50c.m. (19 in) of snow.

"I thought 'oh no' because my friends were coming from far away and they were coming by car," she said.

This half-meter of powder had fallen in the three hours between 3a.m. and 6a.m.

"Monica was very very nervous, as anyone should be," said Professora Flora Sisti who happens to also be Ruggeri's mother.

Despite a successful effort by Ruggeri's father to get their car out and drive Ruggeri to her discussion, Sisti said, "When we got there, Monica had to get changed because obviously she had to wear snow boots [instead of the heels she had bought]."

Sisti, who teaches English and Linguistics at the university of Urbino, stayed in her office while her daughter underwent her discussion. "Obviously, I couldn't sit in that very court," she said.



Photo by Michiko Theurer

Urbino graduate Lorenzo Menghini

Snow Delays in Urbino?

To her fright, Ruggeri learned that her "relatore" was delayed due to the snow. A student's "relatore" is the professor who supervised the research and writing of their thesis and helps them during the discussion. Sisti explained that there is also a "contrarelatore," a professor who asks aggressive questions to test the student.

After a delay of a few hours, Ruggeri's "relatore" arrives. She enters the chamber and her testing begins.

Ruggeri steps from her trial room. By tradition, she must leave the chamber for three or five minutes while the panel of professors reach a verdict on her presentation.

"I felt better than [at] the beginning," Ruggeri said, "because everything was finished and it was done. Even if I didn't know the final mark, I felt okay. I thought 'everything is finished, okay, and done.'"

After a long few minutes, Ruggeri reentered the chamber to find her judges standing and applauding. This indicates the highest score possible, her mother, Professora Sisti, said.

When the students finally reemerge from the hearing room, they are greeted by a crowd of loved ones and crowned in honor of their accomplishment.

After emerging from her trial room, Ruggeri's father, misty-eyed, placed her crown of laurel on her head and other family gave her flowers, she said.

"The tradition goes back to Roman times of course," Professor Ivo Klaver, who teaches English Literature at the university, said. "They might have had it here in the past, but when I came here 20 years ago it was very rare. Now it's almost every student getting a degree must get a crown of laurel."

The crowns are a tradition found only in La Marche region, according to Rosa Maria Galeotti, the only florist in Urbino's city center and a creator of the crowns for the last 50 years. Galeotti said she makes some 300 crowns annually, selling at about 15 euro each.

"I work in the shop from 8[a.m.] to 8[p.m.],"

Galeotti said through a translator, "and after dinner I work until midnight making the crowns." She said she is the only employee at the shop and makes the crowns at night. Each crown takes roughly half an hour to make.

"After the crowning, you cry probably," Mangani said, "probably from the stress."

In the crowd of friends and family at Ruggeri's trial and celebration was a friend who was also a recent graduate.

"It [the graduation process] is quite a complex period of student life," said Valentina Mangani, 22, with a laugh. Mangani graduated last January with a degree in languages and spent 20 days in Seville, Spain, working with an expert on a 60-page paper on the local dialect and its daily use.

Mangani said she was not worried about her score once she reached the trial.

"It's something that can be stressing," Mangani said of the trials, "But actually, from my experience, it was not such a desperate moment of my life because I had a lot of other things to think about in that period." The defense of the thesis a matter of achieving a higher mark.

A practice specific to Urbino graduates is the dunking of the student in the fountain by friends after the trial. Mangani said her friends spared her of this humiliation. Ruggeri was also spared. "Since it was February and quite cold, my friends did not do that," she said.

The tradition of dunking graduates is dying off, however, as the local police have started ticketing students for it.

Other common celebrations in Urbino are the hanging of "Wanted" posters, inspired by the Sergio Leone "spaghetti westerns," with embarrassing pictures of the recent grad, and the singing of a rather lewd song in the local dialect.

The short tune goes as such, "Dottore! Dottore! Dottore del buco del c*! vaffan**!, vaffan**!" and is repeated over and over again by the graduates friends. The lyrics of this tune will not be translated directly for our readers as they are of an adult nature but the song is essentially taunting the student who now has the formal title of "Dottore" regardless of the degree.

The ceremony is the same at both the B.A. and M.A. level, according to Professor Klaver.

After the crowning, the crowd then moves into the streets to celebrate. In Ruggeri's case, this meant putting her snow boots back on.

At this point, the festivities become a little more familiar to U.S. students. The graduate will almost always hit the local restaurants and bars to celebrate with friends. A dinner with family usually follows a few days later.

The examinations and celebrations continue for weeks, as each college must schedule individual trials.

As the holding of trials wind down the parading festivities become fewer and fewer. The Renaissance town returns to its population of 16,000 as the roughly 18,000 students begin to head home.

Small cars piled high with boxes zip down the twisting country lanes back to hometowns and airports across the boot-shaped nation. In Urbino, the cobblestones now echo with the sound of children playing and cars motoring by. The formal shoes, suits, and dresses are replaced with more casual garments (but the flashy sunglasses are still everywhere). With this slow departure, the town returns to normal again, at least for a few months, until the next batch of graduates come tumbling along.

The 'Write' to Crime

Is graffiti art or vandalism?



by Amy Popplewell

Winding through the streets of Urbino, I admire the medieval architecture. As an American journalism student, I feel overwhelmed and enthusiastic about the fact that this walled city built as a fortress, resembling a kingdom out of a children's book, is the drawing board for my next month's worth of reporting. My head turns to the right, my romantic mood passes as I see a disappointing sight and I think, "typical." There's scribbling on the walls, neither legible nor artistic. Unfortunately, there's often vandalism mixed in with true graffiti.

In Urbino, a war is waging between free expression and architectural preservation. One side supports the presence of graffiti and the other wants it out. The latest battle was initiated by a proposed national law to increase the penalties against graffiti artists. According to the current penal code, those who destroy public or historical buildings are subject to up to one year in prison or a fine of up to 300 euro (426 USD). The code states that "the penalty can be suspended if the damage

would be repaired." The law change will increase the penalty one to six months more in jail or a fine of up to 1,000 euro (1,421 USD). People who sell non-biodegradable spray paint to underage children could be fined up to 1,000 euro.

Some say that more laws lead to more street art, while others would say it's a step in the right direction toward preventing the crime. What's clear is there is not enough money to follow these artists around with a mop and bucket. Officer Sandro Garbugli of the Polizia Municipale says, "It's an economic problem." He explains that if the police cannot find the graffiti artist, they have to clean it, and there is not enough money.

Is there a solution? Would it be wise to create a designated space for writing on the walls? Or will these skillful criminals (let's say artists until caught) use whichever preferred canvas they set their sights on?

One stipulation for supporting graffiti is that it be worth the wall space. Fair enough? I'm intrigued by various street art, but honestly could go without the sloppy tags. I understand there's a rush in not getting caught, putting a mark on as many spots as possible, but there's something to admire about a well-placed, intricate mural, when the artists obviously planned every move to fulfill their vision.

If there is well-crafted and well-placed graffiti, Urbino should respect this vision in the same way it has supported Raffaello. Graffiti is just an unconventional, contemporary art form. But just like any art form, it may be that graffiti needs to be disliked by some in order to maintain its rebellious appeal. For many inhabitants of Urbino, "it depends where the graffiti is," explains Officer Garbugli. "For example, at the train station, if it's a modern structure and it's beautiful and artistic graffiti, it would be interesting and a particular form of art. But in the city center, near the Ducale Palace on historical walls, it is only vandalism." A lot of the vandalism in town is defamatory against the church, as Ivano Penserini, the painter who cleans the graffiti in town, explained to me. He said it's so imperative to clean that kind of vandalism immediately that removal is usually carried out within a day of noticing it.

As an advocate for respecting culture, both historic and current, I would hope in a perfect world that there could be a relationship between

street art and historic preservation. Idealistically, both the original architects and graffiti artists of Urbino could be seen as equal opportunity artists and the latter would cooperate and respect some sort of designated graffiti areas, zoning if you will. Cheryl Ferguson, an American who has lived in Urbino for five years and dislikes graffiti says, "some people would go [to a designated graffiti zone] but for the most part people would still go around town to find an open space." In my opinion, laws are not going to stop graffiti, if anything they're a catalyst. The real problem is the presence of vandalism interspersed within the art.

Between Law and Free Expression

Back to my tour of Urbino, I continue my walk up the cobblestone and around the corner past the Piazza Della Repubblica, I maneuver through foot traffic between two stacked buildings and on one wall to the left I read, "Don't believe the lies before your eyes." Ok, at least that means something, but the style is reminiscent of the handwriting of an 8-year-old boy. A few steps further and on the right, higher up on the wall, appears an impressive stencil of Maradona, the world-famous Argentinean soccer player. "It's only a picture of the best football player in the world," says Silvestri Giovanni, a young owner of Ghirotto, as well as a graffiti aficionado and football fan.

Three young locals, Giovanni Corbucci, Tommaso Papi, and Davide Zazzaroni, one being the Mayor's son, explain they prefer graffiti with more complexity. This graffiti is the perfect example. It's a stencil, a perfect solution to the time constraint involved in not getting caught. It really is an attempt to preserve a legend in his time, creating a space for contemporary culture.

Clearly controversial, graffiti is a legitimate art form for some. For others, graffiti is an expensive crime because of the cost of clean-up and the importance of historical preservation.

As the art form thrives, though -- at least in part from its illegal nature -- the desire for a working relationship between laws and street artists appears lofty. The opinion that lawmakers can silence this art form is unrealistic. The dream that vandalism can be weeded out from true street art is mine.

The Right to Safety

by Alyson Blimmel

It was a typical evening at the Piazza Della Repubblica, Urbino's central gathering place, and the crowds were spilling out of the cafes and bars talking and laughing, sipping drinks, and licking gelato. In the midst of the revelry, a uniformed police officer walked about the square, chatting with citizens and chastising one group of teenagers for drinking out of glass bottles. No one seemed to mind being approached by the police. The teenagers threw their bottles away, without complaint.

Unlike America, where the sight of the police sends a ripple of apprehension through most crowds, in Urbino the polizia (the local police), blend in as members of the family. "There is a special philosophy [of Italian law enforcement], that is, to be close to people," said Vice Questore Aguinto Sguanci through an interpreter.

With degrees in law enforcement and psychology, Vice Questore Sguanci has worked in law enforcement since 1988. He has been with

the Commissariato di Pubblica Sicurezza di Urbino, and with the police department, for the past five years. Sguanci began as an agent, serving many years in the investigation bureau for the department, covering cities such as Rome, Pesaro and Ancona.

Sguanci believes that the duty of the police is to build trust with citizens. He painted a picture of Urbino as a pleasant university community, where police officers spend most of their time settling occasional quarrels between residents and checking into reports of vandalism. The first homicide in five years occurred last winter in an argument between an employee and his boss and the last major burglary occurred over two years ago at a local bank.

With such a law-abiding populace, the local



police are more like counselors, not the action-heroes of American TV cop dramas. "They spend their time truly listening to citizens, whether they are reporting a crime or need help with a problem in their neighborhood," Sguanci said. "They [want] people they protect to feel that they are friends, not enemies."

In fact, that role is mandated by law. The first article of the law states that a public safety authority must act as a medium between conflicting parties to keep the peace, Sguanci explained. For town residents of the town, this means that they can come to the police even if no crime has been committed.

Building trust means reaching out to residents at an early age. Every year the police present a program at each grade level of the local middle school. Sguanci speaks to the students in their first year about bullies and standing up for what they know is right. "I tell them about a positive life model-Giovanni Palatucci," Sguanci said. As a soldier who was required to help the Nazis during World War II, Palatucci instead helped Jews escape. Sguanci hopes that Palatucci's courage will help motivate students to stand up for themselves. "There is a good environment here in Urbino; people feel that they can come to us with anything".



PHOTOS BY ROSEMARY DORSETT

Leather craftsman Donato Colombo at his Ars Nova boutique: "My mark is the quality," he said.



Where Shoes Have No Brand Name

by Rosemary Dorsett

There are no visible signs advertising Ars Nova on the corner of Via Raffaello and Via Santa Margherita, just a line of multi-colored leather sandals leading up the stairs from the cobblestone street.

Owner Donato Colombo's advertising philosophy mirrors the inspiration behind his original leather designs. "My products haven't got a mark (brand); my mark is the quality. People should buy my products because a friend has told them about the quality, not because they know the mark," Colombo said. "I prefer to be precise in fabrication of production, instead of spending time in engraving or decorating."

Upon entering the store, shoppers are invited to witness the manufacturing process. Behind the large counter, a large stitching machine whirrs under Colombo's hands as he attaches the leather soles of a sandal. Colombo makes leather goods of all sorts -- bracelets, belts, bags, wallets, CD cases and notebooks. However, his favorite and most

people in my shop and the fact I make a unique product. People can choose the product, we can work together and collaborate, and in the end it is unique."

Colombo has been making leather goods for 55 years and relocated to Urbino from Milan eight years ago. The rural aesthetic suits his environmentally friendly work practices, something Milan could not offer the artisan.

"Urbino is a wonderful place from both an architectural and natural point of view," Colombo said, "I like the contact with nature, the fact people look for quality in local products."

The tiny shop can fit no more than three people at a time, ensuring Colombo provides each of his clients with personal service rarely found in large departments stores or stuffy boutiques. As customers enter the store, Colombo greets them with a pleasant "Ciao" no matter how busy he is sanding away the soles of new shoes. He immediately recognizes three customers who walk in and provides them with their orders -- if there is any trouble with a repair or new product, Colombo takes the time to explain why a metal reinforcement was needed or how he can make the shoe fit more precisely.

The townspeople of Urbino also greatly appreciate the quality and craftsmanship of Colombo's leather goods. Although his sandals and bags lack a specific mark, they are distinctive. Spend a few weeks in Urbino and you'll notice many inhabitants have similar looking sandals.

Stefania Paolucci, a volunteer worker in Co-

lombo's shop, swears by her leather sandals after being questioned about their durability.

"My first pair is seven years old and I still have them, these will last you much, much more than a year," she said.

Colombo not only handcrafts his goods, he selects the leather with utmost care and environmental consciousness. Colombo travels to Pera Azurra, in between Florence and Pisa, to buy leath-



Colombo contemplates new leather designs at his shop.



popular things to make are sandals.

"Sometimes we have people who have problems with their feet. I like to solve their problems because I can make special shoes just for the person," Colombo said, "I like the contact with

er treated with vegetable oils instead of chrome, which is responsible for polluting the Arno River.

Colombo's shoes cost 43 to 49 euros and are available in 11 different colors and 20 models. A trip to Urbino will be necessary to acquire an original pair. Colombo points to a pair of sandals going back to Ireland with a visiting couple and takes pride in the fact his shoes will travel the world through this simple act of discovery.

Notes from Underground

by Giovanna Borgna

An Urbino ska band finds its own sound despite overwhelming American music influences.

Empty beer bottles and old bent beer caps litter the floor of a small music hall reminiscent of a barn, on the outskirts of Urbino. The creaky wooden doors open outward and a stale smell of cigarettes wafts out of Club Do 7.

Fabio Barrone enters through the doors with his saxophone case and the rest of his band mates follow with their instruments. The echoey club has poor acoustics but the group, B.D.P.C. practices at Club Do 7 because it's cheap and they can rehearse at almost any time.

B.D.P.C., an Italian ska band from Urbino, has been playing together since December 2003. No outsider knows what B.D.P.C. stands for, says Federico Del Bianco, the band's lead singer and guitarist. "The name is a secret – it's untranslatable." He puffs on his cigarette and laughs, getting lost in his own thoughts. The band's name can be translated but the band likes to keep it a mystery for personal amusement.



B.D.P.C may never reach superstardom but the group's musicians seem to be comfortable with their underground status. The six-man-band continues to practice at Cub Do 7 surrounded by blinking fluorescent lights. Lining the wall are tattered posters of American music icons like Elvis Presley and Jimi Hendrix mixed with unknown Italian artists.

The band warms up and plays throughout the hour a mix of their own songs like "Linda," a romantic ballad about an imaginary perfect woman, and covers of Green Day and other American bands. "Though he barely speaks English, Del Bianco belts out the lyrics of American songs with ease.

Del Bianco continues to look ahead optimistically to the band's future. "I continue to do this [music] because I like it.... Never say never, always hang on."

PHOTOS BY GIOVANNA BORGNA

Federico Del Bianco (left) is the lead singer for B.D.P.C., an Italian Ska band based in Urbino. Fabio Barone (below left) is the band's saxophonist.



"I love music and I'll play until I can't play any longer," says Del Bianco, waving his cigarette in the air. Unfortunately for Del Bianco and the rest of the band, Italian musicians can rarely make a living at music. Even the most successful rarely come close to reaching the fame and fortune of their counterparts in the United States.

Italian musicians have been overshadowed by American music. Italy has its share of famous recording artists, like Grammy award-winning pop stars Laura Pausini and Eros Ramazzotti. But they've won fame as much for singing in Spanish as Italian. In the local boutiques, restaurants and pubs in Urbino, the music blasting from the corner speakers is usually from The Game, Black Eyed Peas, Eminem and a long list of American hip-hop, rap and pop artists.

The Italian girls working the boutiques unconsciously sing along to "My Life" by The Game featuring Lil Wayne. "People, I'm just wondering why you haven't taken my life," the clerks sing as they fold jeans. They raise their braceleted wrists and pulse their hands up and down to the sound of the music. Do they even know what they're singing.

At the 2008 World Music Awards held in Monte Carlo, Monaco there were nine categories ranging from World's Best Female Artist to World's Best DJ. Of the 36 world nominees, 10 were European, one artist (Rihanna) was from Barbados and the rest were American. The awards show just how dominant American music is throughout the world, including Italy.

'Never say never,' Del Bianco says.

'Always hang on.'

Del Bianco admits that his music influences are American punk and rock. He lists off his favorites like The Clash, Foo Fighters, Green Day and the Ramones. However Del Bianco says the music scene here in Italy "es una merda," musicians here struggle and it is a losing battle. Italian artists do not have the marketing power to make it big.

Del Bianco knows that his struggle to be a musician is a labor of love but it is not a sustainable profession. He wisely has pursued degrees in communications and event promotions, yet his work always brings him back to music.

Earlier in the school year Del Bianco joined a program to teach elementary schoolchildren how to play musical instruments. "I like to teach and I like to entertain, says Del Bianco, 27.

Despite the daunting reality that faces up-and-coming Italian musicians like B.D.P.C., the band members continue to practice, hustle for gigs and promote themselves. They do not have the marketing or capital to promote their concerts, but they do utilize MySpace to reach out to fans and promote upcoming concerts. The band has no shame in sending out what they call their "groupies" (really their friends) to advertise their new album "Eccitazione Poi Un Brivido," (Excitement and Then the Chills.)

Carla Pacini, a "groupie"/friend of the band for three years now, takes every opportunity to help B.D.P.C. She says that she has been spreading the word about the band's next upcoming concert on August 10, in San Lorenzo. Even though they have played big venues (like opening for a recent concert at the Piazza della Repubblica that at night's end had about 1,000 attendants), Del Bianco says, "Without our friends as our fans we would not have any support."

Dance! Dance!

At the International Early Music festival in July, dancers take to the streets to find joy

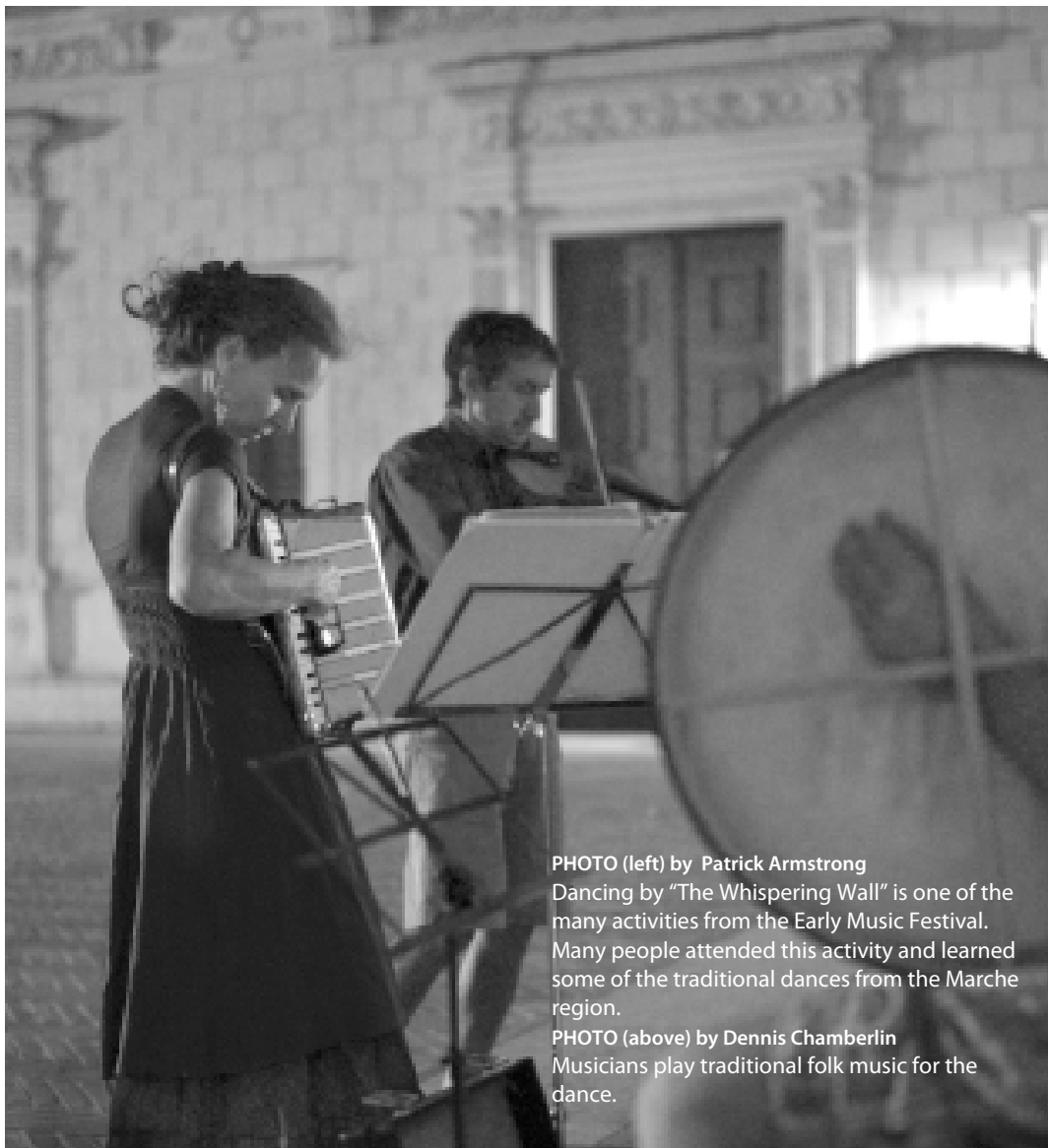


PHOTO (left) by Patrick Armstrong
Dancing by "The Whispering Wall" is one of the many activities from the Early Music Festival. Many people attended this activity and learned some of the traditional dances from the Marche region.
PHOTO (above) by Dennis Chamberlin
Musicians play traditional folk music for the dance.

By Nancy Ponder

Each summer Urbino hosts the Festival Internazionale di Musica Antica (International Early Music Festival). During the 10-day celebration the narrow streets and the piazzas of this Italian hill town fill with music and dancing from Renaissance, medieval and baroque periods.

On this Tuesday night about 50 people crowd next to the Palazzo Ducale to meet one another and enjoy a night of dance. This session attracts anyone interested in making new acquaintances with a similar interest in the ancient arts. Every other night at 10:30 any person is welcome to join in on a lesson in different styles of dance.

"There's a community of souls," says Mariella Rizzi, a local writer and dancer. This year marks her first time at the festival.

This community stretches across national boundaries, religions and races. Participants are connected by a love of the arts. In the dim light outside the *palazzo* the people leave behind their inhibitions.

"I guess they all want to go back to their childhoods and forget their troubles and they can go into this dreamlike state in this city," Rizzi says.

This small town in the Marche region of cen-

tral Italy, steeped in Renaissance traditions, is a favorite destination for anyone seeking culture.

"People come from all over the world," says Hans Haas, a Renaissance dancer at the festival. "It's a very famous festival."

Like most of the people in front of the palace, he came to form connections. "It's a way for people to meet each other," he says.

During the event he held up his digital camera and captured the moments, immortalizing the night.

It's easy to meet people since most of the dances require participants to switch partners so often that at times it seems that every person in attendance has danced with everyone else. Between steps new

partners introduce themselves to one another.

Haas says that most of the people dancing at the moment are either musicians or dancers following the festival. The dancing session provides a more intimate setting for those looking for kindred spirits.

"It's a rare passion to have," Rizzi says about their interest in ancient music and art.

She was encouraged to attend by friends who have been coming to the festival for 20 years. "My friends told me I should come out, because I was heartbroken," she says about a romantic break

up. The dance must have worked because at the moment she seemed carefree.

"Here I feel a community," Rizzi says.

This community, of course, has a leader. Paula della Camera stands at the front of the crowd. Her gray hair is pulled back in a low ponytail. Her glasses hang on a chain around her neck. Throughout the night she pulls them up to her face to see the buttons on the CD player, which is set on full volume.

For the last 20 years she has been teaching dance.

"Most of all, I really enjoy seeing people meet each other--they feel good together, they enjoy together, they laugh together," della Camera says.

One student in particular is impressed with della Camera's ability to share her knowledge with others.

"She can teach large masses of people," Haas says. "It's amazing. It must be very difficult."

Her task is all the more difficult when traffic control is added to her list of responsibilities. "*Macchina! Macchina!* (Car! Car!)," she bellows a few times during the night to warn people of oncoming cars.

As cars slowly creep through the crowded street, passengers sometimes shoot inquisitive looks at the dancers who move precariously close to their vehicles.

"This is the best place that we have found so far," Haas says about their location in the street.

As dancers whirl by, they count their steps aloud. "*Sei, sette, otto. Sei, sette, otto.* (Six, seven, eight. Six, seven, eight.)" Some glide in and out of their steps without trouble; others struggle not to trip over their own feet.

The evening closes with a promenade set to a medley of American tunes, the first of which is "Yankee Doodle Dandy". People hurry under bridges formed by arms. They all travel around in an intricate pattern that could make anyone dizzy. Haas leads the crowd along with della Camera.

People stumble and collide but this is not about perfection. Everyone is clearly here to have fun and that's exactly what they're doing.

'Birth Pangs of New Economy' continued from page 27

Even with the decrease in students, Urbino has one of the most educated populations in Italy, according to Cavallera. Nearly 65 percent of residents hold a college degree and work for the state.

Although there are plans to develop Urbino and to increase tourism revenue within the town, there are larger economic issues taking place outside of the city. The investment climate is not favorable and the Berlusconi government appears to be at odds with the province's need for additional investment.

According to city officials, Urbino is faring well against the economic crisis in comparison to cities located just 36 km away. Cities like Pesaro depend on large textile industries to generate revenue, but the sector is experiencing harsh times during the crisis. Urbino officials said they hope to continue strengthening the town's economy by using the city as a promotional site.

"I am optimistic about the economic future of Urbino," Mancini said. "Urbino is being born again."

A Father's Gift

After a long struggle, art historians have reaffirmed the importance of Raffaello's father, Giovanni Santi, as Urbino brings home a native son.

by Alyssa Coltrain

When Gabriele Cavalera went to the National Gallery in Washington, D.C., what he found was an unpleasant surprise. The caption to a Raphael work asserted that the famous Renaissance painter came from Umbria.

He smiled wryly and added. "We complained."

Cavalera has reason for complaint. A tall man with the resonant voice of an Italian movie star, he is the press secretary for the Mayor of Urbino, Italy—Raphael's slighted birthplace. Until recently, Urbino was regarded as just the painter's birthplace and little more; art historians believed that Raffaello's formation as a painter occurred under the tutelage of Perugino, another Renaissance artist [in which city?]. However, an exhibit at Urbino's Palazzo Ducale, from April 4–July 12, 2009, titled "Raffaello e Urbino" has challenged that interpretation, instead suggesting that not only Urbino, but also Raffaello's father, court painter Giovanni Santi, had a key role to play in his son's artistic development.

Santi, in fact, had become a celebrated painter and goldsmith in Urbino not long after Federico da Montefeltro ascended to the rank of duke. While Federico began transforming Urbino from a tiny Le Marche village into a center of arts and learning, Santi built his reputation as a painter, poet, and artisan. From 1468–1476, Santi was registered as a master gilder. In addition to his own commissions, he established a studio and invited such artists as Sandro Botticelli, Piero della Francesca (a former teacher) and Paolo Uccello to paint with him. Santi's reputation as a court painter to Federico allowed him to make a grand tour of the palaces and studios of Florence and Venice. He also wrote and produced theatrical pieces and poetry for Federico and his son Guidobaldo (who replaced his father as Duke on Federico's death in 1482). By the time of son Raffaello's birth in 1483, Santi had established himself as a painter of exquisite lyricism and precision. His *Annunciation*, *Portrait of Christ Supported by Angels*, and *Tobias and the Angel* (pictured above, right) among other works, prefigured the lyrical radiance of facial expression for which his son (not Santi) became famous. As Raffaello's reputation grew, his father's name diminished.

For centuries, though, art historians actively downplayed Santi's influence on Raffaello. This insult to Urbino's pride began with *Lives of the Artists*, a Renaissance-era biography of famous artists, including Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, and, of course, Raffaello. Its author, Giorgio Vasari, described Giovanni Santi as "a painter, but not a very excellent one," and claimed that Raffaello was sent to Perugia to study under another artist, Perugino. Art historians since then have continued to perpetuate his story of Raffaello's growth.

"Vasari made a mistake," said Lorenza Mochi Onori, superintendent of the historical, artistic and anthropological heritage of the Marche region. A middle-aged woman with thick white-blond hair and a round face, she explained that the committee to develop the exhibit went through Urbino's National Archives, which had not been studied since 1829. "There are a lot of things to find," she said. "A lot of things demonstrate that Raphael was here, that there was a workshop, a house. He was here personally, and he was a *magister illustris*, (illustrious master of the craft) when he was only 17 years old."

Other documents talked about Santi's role in Urbino, which was one of the most important cultural places in the *Rinascimento*, or Italian Renaissance. Urbino was a haven for artists and the place where Baldesar Castiglione wrote *Il Cortegiano*, his



In his painting *Tobias and the Angel*, (above), Giovanni Santi set the stage for son Raffaello's remarkable artistic achievements. The young artist (below), painting his own self-portrait, inherited his father's studio at age 11, when Santi died.

famous book on courtly etiquette. Santi was closely involved with this artistic and cultured court, creating a rhymed narrative of Federico da Montefeltro's life, as well as painting a series entitled "Apollo and the Muses" to decorate the Palazzo Ducale. These eight paintings, newly restored for the exhibition, are a marked demonstration of Santi's talents and connections in the Urbino court. He also organized theater performances and hosted any great artist or writer who came to visit the court. Raffaello, as Santi's son, would thus have been exposed to their talents and advice.

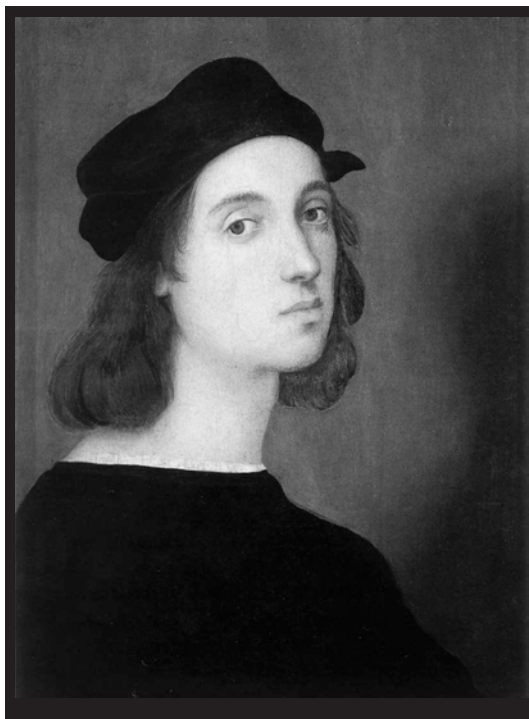
Urbino's 2009 exhibit placed works by Santi and other artists side by side with Raffaello's, showing the impact of their work on his. Additionally, the exhibit included works by Raffaello that correspond directly to Giovanni Santi's frescoes in Cagli, a nearby town, reasserting the impact of father upon son. Works by Santi's bottega, or studio, which clearly show Raffaello's hand, were also included. This studio, located in Raffaello's birth house on Via Raf-

fello, continued to play a role in the painter's life even after his father's death. The studio was large enough that Raffaello would not have needed to travel to Perugia, as Vasari has claimed, in order to continue his studies, but instead could remain in Urbino. Additionally, Raffaello maintained the workshop in Urbino until his death in 1520.

"The culture of Urbino is the root of the culture of Raffaello," Mochi Onori said.

Proving that relationship required not only years of research but also diplomatic finesse. Of the 123 pieces in the exhibit, 25 were borrowed from outside Italy. Pieces came from Austria, Germany, Hungary, the United Kingdom, France, Portugal, Spain and the United States of America. Of the pieces, Mochi Onori commented on the difficulty of obtaining pieces from the Royal Collection in London. "They prefer to say no," she explained. "But they give us because we have the other painting from the Getty [Museum in Los Angeles] and Budapest."

The exhibit ultimately cost \$2.5 million to produce and took four years to research and put together.



Paintings for the exhibition were loaded into climate-controlled cases and transported either by truck or plane to Urbino. Despite the precautions, the Italian government had to guarantee to pay for any damages, although none were reported.. Art exchanges rely on reciprocal acceptance of this costly promise, which could cost as much as \$142 million per piece.

There was one piece that Mochi Onori wanted the exhibit to display, but couldn't borrow: *The Resurrection of Christ* from the Sao Paolo Museum of

"Vasari made a mistake," said Lorenza Mochi Onori, a superintendent of historical and artistic heritage. In fact, Raffaello's father Giovanni Santi was an excellent painter, and Raffaello's early work reflected Santi's teaching.

Art in Sao Paolo, Brazil. "They said yes, and then they said no," Mochi Onori said. "I think the problem in that moment was something diplomatic because there was a problem about Cesare Battisti."

Cesare Battisti, according to a July 9 story in the newspaper *Il Tempo*, is an Italian citizen who was found guilty for murders committed during robberies meant to finance a terrorist organization. He had received two life sentences, but fled to Brazil, where he received political refugee status. Mochi Onori hypothesized that Italian pressure on Brazil to extradite Battisti resulted in the refusal. "I don't know exactly. It's an idea. It's strange that they said 'no' after they said 'yes.'"

Despite these struggles, the exhibit drew an average of 1,391 visitors for each of its 96 days. And for those 133,541 people, there was no doubt that Urbino was more than Raffaello's birthplace, but the key to his art.

"The Greatest Small Painting in the World"

Raffaello is not the only well-known painter who worked in Urbino for a time, and indeed, his works are not the only reason to go to the National Gallery of the Marche, housed in the Ducal Palace. In fact, *The Flagellation of Christ* by Piero della Francesca, called "the greatest small painting in the world" by art historian Kenneth Clark, also resides there.

Piero della Francesca, a Renaissance painter best known for his architectural style and use of perspective, painted *The Flagellation* sometime in between 1444 and 1472, according to Italian journalist Luigi Luminati from *Il Resto del Carlino*. The origins of the painting are a mystery—no one knows who commissioned the painting, where it was painted, or indeed where it was for almost three hundred years. The Flagellation was discovered hidden behind the altar of the Duomo in Urbino in 1750.

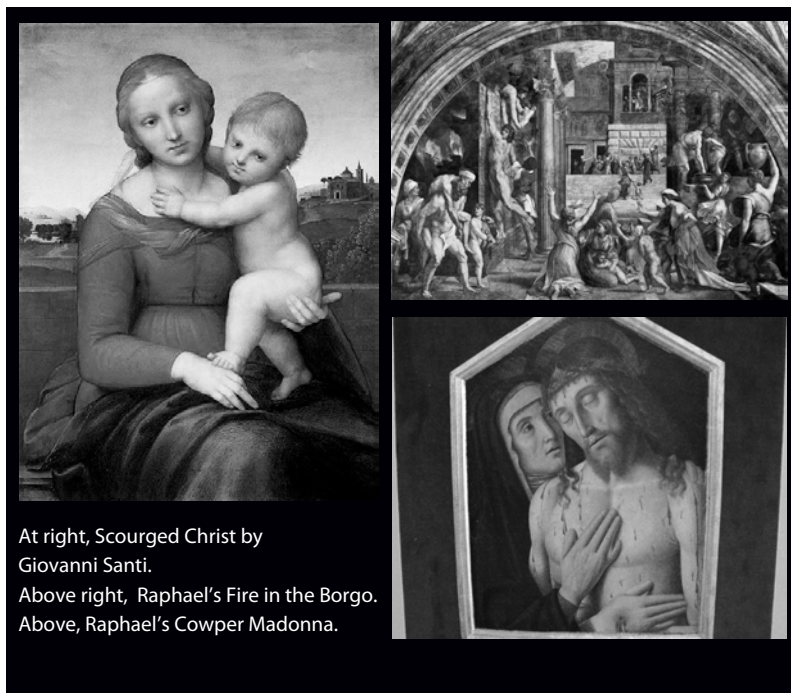
"There's an architectural factor that is very ahead," Luminati said through a translator. However, he acknowledged that the real draw of the painting was in the mystery of its composition. Art historians have proposed at least thirty different interpretations of the piece, often concerned with identifying the three figures in the left foreground.

One theory connects the piece to the murder of Oddantonio da Montefeltro, one time Duke of Urbino, who was killed in a riot when he was 17. Luminati contends that Federico da Montefeltro, his 22 year-old half brother, was waiting with horses and troops outside the Urbino palace gates when angry crowds threw Oddantonio out a window to his death. Federico was then invited to assume Oddantonio's role as Duke.

In the Della Francesca picture, Oddantonio stands in the center of the three figures, with his two advisors flanking him. These two men, said to be close to Malatesta family, the rulers of Rimini and The painting then reads as a plea for the two churches to unite in order to save Constantinople from the enemies of Urbino, may have been one of the reasons behind the mob's behavior. It is also possible that Federico da Montefeltro, the half-brother of Oddantonio, had arranged for the death so that he could succeed him to the throne.

Another theory sees the painting as a political manifesto. In this, the man in the center, wearing red, is the heir to the Byzantine throne, flanked by Borso d'Este, the Duke of Ferrara and Basilios Bessarion, a Cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church and a Patriarch of the Orthodox Church. D'Este had attempted to organize a crusade to save Constantinople, which was threatened by a Muslim army at the time, Bessarion was trying to merge the two churches into one. The painting then reads as a plea for the two churches to unite in order to save Constantinople.

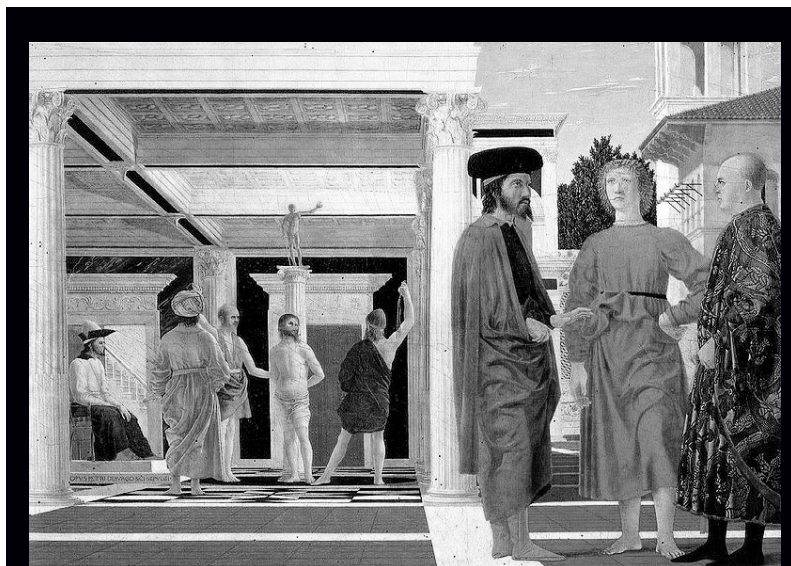
"Nothing is very proved," said Luminati, which only deepens the mystery.



At right, Scourged Christ by Giovanni Santi.
Above right, Raphael's Fire in the Borgo.
Above, Raphael's Cowper Madonna.

"The only way of finding out would be to find the commissioner."

Until that point, *The Flagellation* continues to inspire academic debate, including two books published recently: *Piero della Francesca and the Assassin* by Bernd Roeck and *The Enigma of Piero* by Carlo Ginzburg, which present arguments for the Urbinate and Byzantine arguments respectively. --A.C.



Despite its depiction of the sufferings of Christ, *The Flagellation*, by Piero Della Francesca, may also suggest the imminent assassination of Oddantonio da Montefeltro, the figure pictured at center on the right. The young Oddantonio was Federico da Montefeltro's half brother.



by Anthony Dorunda

Few words had been spoken between the international students as they made the long, physical trek to the soccer field beyond the walls of the ancient university town of Urbino. If they spoke at all it was to their countrymen in languages they understood.

But after the opening kick, that all changed. They were still speaking different languages, but no translators were necessary.

"Difendilo lui!" (defend him) and "sono aperto" (I'm open) from some, "pass it here" from others. There were frantic arm waves to signal a player breaking free from the defense as well as facial and body expressions used to alert teammates of openings. The checkered ball was weaving its way in and out of the reds and blacks of one team, and the fluorescent yellow pennies of the other. Players sprinted tirelessly up and down the field, all aiming for the same end result: to crush the ball past the goalie into the back of the net.

Many of the students were meeting each other for the first time, most speaking different languages. But cultural and language barriers quickly fell once the game began. Sports serve as an international tongue, a physical language where spoken words are unnecessary for understanding how to interact.

Julian Locke, a London native now living in Urbino, said that especially in Italy, sports act as a means of introduction.

"When I meet new Italians, almost the first thing they always speak about is soccer," said Locke. "I don't like sports, and I don't understand them, but [being from England] they always ask me about the team in London when I first meet them; it sort of breaks the ice in a sense."

Urbino is home to the renowned language school at Università Degli Studi Di Urbino. Students from across the globe migrate to the ancient Renaissance town of about 16,000 to study at the distinguished University, usually doubling its population. Language barriers are among the more difficult obstacles for the diverse student body, especially when they are living in a new culture.

Sports is one way to bridge that barrier, and soccer is usually the choice. In Italy it is not just the world's most popular game; it is characterized as the state "religion."

Dr. Peter Cullen, professor of Language and Culture of Business at the University of Urbino "Carlo Bo," believes that sports, specifically soccer, are universal.

The Language of Sports

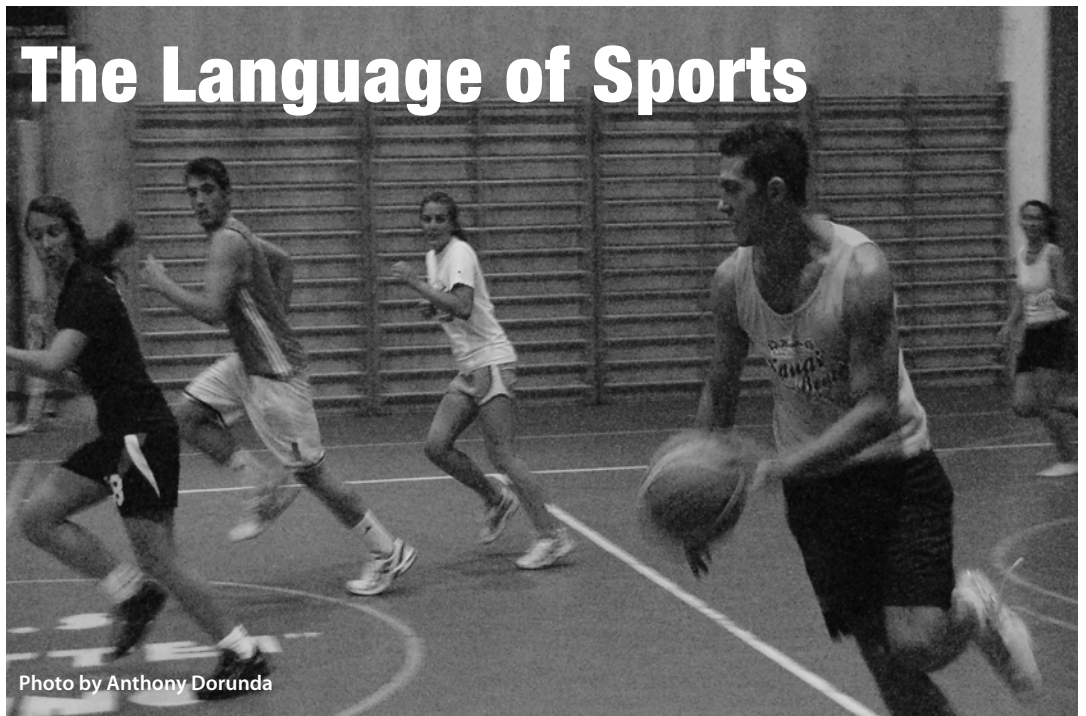


Photo by Anthony Dorunda

"Soccer is a point in common with everyone around the world; everyone plays it and everybody can understand it," said Cullen. "Everyone knows what they're talking about when they get on the field, no matter what language they speak. They all know the rules and how the game works."

Unlike in America, where collegiate spectacles such as March Madness and the College World Series exhibit the passion students demonstrate for their schools, the only form of college athletics in Italy are pick-up games. There are no intercollegiate athletics in the country, so Italians channel all the excitement seen at the college level in America into the professional soccer leagues.

The closest Urbino comes to university sports is an annual inter-faculty soccer tournament held at the end of the year. The event, which lasts for three weeks, pits the different departments from the university against one another to showcase their skills on the field, as well as interact with each other outside of the classroom atmosphere. The competition allows the students to unwind from the rigors of the classroom and exert their energy on the field. Cullen said it is the university's way of creating another type of student culture aside from going out to the bars at night.

This year Cullen served as the coach for the team that represented the languages department. The languages team consisted of students from all over Italy as well as three students from Albania and one from Morocco. Managing the game while speaking only English, Cullen was able to teach the language and judge how well the students understood what he was saying through their actions.

"I'm on the sidelines not knowing how to shout at them in Italian, and after a while I just gave it to them in English," exclaimed Cullen, a Canadian who has lived in Italy for many years. "They didn't need to understand what I was saying, they just needed to know that it was happening at the right place and they could tell what I meant. It [the soccer game] reminded me of the value of teamwork; of being prepared to break yourself for something you believe in."

Cullen is not the only teacher who sees the value in integration through sports. Simona Londei, a high school English teacher in Urbino, said sports are a way to "get to know people and foster communication."

Londei, who is serving as the Italian professor for the students studying abroad in Urbino from the Villanova University in Pennsylvania, or-

ganizes "sport evenings" for the students. It is a way for the students to get outside of their group of friends and interact with the locals.

"If you don't help the students a bit, every year they end up staying just within the group, and don't really integrate with locals or Italian people," said Londei. "So I thought that it would have been nice to try to organize sport evenings, with volleyball and basketball matches, to encourage contacts among Italian young people and the Villanova kids."

Her idea seems to be working. According to Londei, the first sport evening attracted a mere eleven participants. But then the word spread like wildfire and week two saw a total of 35 students, Italian and American alike, join in on the festivities, forcing Londei to split the students up into more than two teams.

"By week two there were 32 Villanova students getting off a stuffed *pollicino* (the small orange bus) all willing to play volleyball with my Italian friends," exclaimed Londei. "There were too many of them; we had to organize three teams and many substitutes..."

One of those Villanova students, Lauren Cremmoni, enjoyed the sports evening, saying it gave them a chance to meet one another through something they had in common while also playing a game they enjoy.

"It (the sports evening) gave us a topic of conversation that we're both interested in," said Cremmoni. "As long as you know the rules and know what's going on, you can play with anybody. We met people we may have never encountered otherwise."

It was the same for those soccer players. Complete strangers an hour before, they used sports to help them step outside their comfort zones and onto the field. The students walked back in one collective group, laughing, smiling, and learning as much as they could about each other in broken English and Italian. Times were set for pizza and drinks later that night, and invitations to parties then followed.

Windows of opportunity flew open after one game together on a field. With every corner kick and every pass down-field, language barriers were broken down between these new teammates--and friends.

Student Gallery 2009

Photos by Jesse Garnier



Aimee Alarcon



Patrick Armstrong



Erin Banco



Leah Bigelow



Alyson Blimmel



Giovanna Borgna



Lauresa Burgess



Scott Burry



Alyssa Coltrain



Silvia Di Francesco



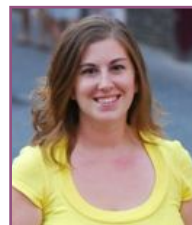
Rosemary Dorsett



Anthony Dorunda



Nicole Ely



Natalie Flemming



Francisco
Flores-Cordero



Shari Gab



Jessica German



Delaney Gover



Nancy Ponder



Amy Popplewell



Kayla Smith



Pauline Joy Talens



Michiko Theurer



Gino Troiani



Jack Turner



Bianca Walker

Both ieiMedia and San Francisco State University will be co-sponsoring a summer 2010 "encore" Urbino multimedia journalism experience. Other ieiMedia/SF State programs will take place in France and Ecuador. For further information, go to www.ieimedia.com.

Sponsor's Corner

E.R.S.U., a local program that makes Higher Education Possible

Written by Lorenzo Ciaffoncin
translated by Giuliana Sparaventi

In a University city such as Urbino, whose local inhabitants are almost equal in number to students, the Regional Institution for the Right to Higher Education (Ente Regionale per il diritto allo Studio Universitario, or E.R.S.U.) makes higher learning possible for thousands. E.R.S.U. serves all students enrolled at the University of Urbino "Carlo Bo," the local Academy of Fine Arts, Higher Institute for Artistic Industries (ISIA), and the "G. Rossini" Music Conservatory in the nearby city of Pesaro.

In the past several years, ERSU has also guaranteed services for needy and deserving students. The program provides scholarships, special grants, and student housing for almost 1,500 guests, along with cafeteria services in the city centre and in the university residences. E.R.S.U. services also include health care and psychological counseling, multimedia libraries with internet access, books and periodic loans, access to transportation, as well as cultural and recreational services such as video libraries and play area along with art and music competitions.

According to E.R.S.U. President Giancarlo Sacchi and Director Massimo Fortini, E.R.S.U. has added activities to motivate more young people to stay in Urbino to study. E.R.S.U. is promoting a reorganization of university residences, including a restructuring and re-launching of the Colle's sleeping facilities (www.collegiocolle.it); new management for the catering outlets (breakfast cafeteria, coffee shops); and a number of entertainment and music initiatives at the dormitories.

"Also remarkable is the commitment to increasing the number of accommodations, with the restructuring of the central Student House, now being finalized," noted Dr. Sacchi and Dr. Fortini. E.R.S.U. is also launching the new university residence in Pesaro. "These should be considered an overall enhancement of higher education throughout our province."



Dorm Life and dining at the University of Urbino "Carlo Bo"

FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT

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