

Editorial: Viva la lingua italiana in America!

Letizia Airos (October 07, 2016)



The Fall issue of i-ItalyNY magazine is hitting New York. Find out about its contents... ..

Buon Autunno

They may belong to a sociolinguist, rather than to a poet as I normally prefer for this opening piece, but the words above sure sound like poetry! Talk about truth!

My intention in quoting them is to encourage everyone to consider learning Italian, especially people's children and grandchildren. In our latest issue we address the importance of learning the language of Dante. Obviously Italians no longer speak like the Florentine poet, yet the language still retains the history of an extraordinary culture. It's the key to understanding the country.



To prove our point, we asked various people to comment on their relationship to the language, like Jhumpa Lahiri, the Indian-American author who wrote her latest book in Italian; Lucio Noto, an accomplished businessman of Italian extraction whose career owes a debt to his knowledge of Italian; and Dacia Maraini, a true ambassador of Italian culture worldwide. Their special stories provide food for thought.

As I write, an important event is under preparation in Italy. The States General of the Italian Language in the World is going to be held in Florence in October to kick off the XVI installment of the Italian Language Week. This year's theme is "Italian and Creativity: Brands and Customs; Fashion and Design." I-Italy had the honor of collaborating with the Italian Cultural Institute of New York on a promotional video that takes you on a journey through the streets of New York in search of Italian design, as seen through the eyes of a group of curious, spellbound kids. Stay tuned!

We also pay a visit to Washington to get to know [Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito](#) [2] a little better. Our exclusive interview is part of an ambitious

new video project co-produced with [NIAF](#) [3] entitled "Italian Leadership in America." We'll be telling you more about that project in the future.

Ditto the television series we're particularly proud of, "Grandparents and Grandchildren in Italian America." Following our first conversation between Matilda Cuomo and her granddaughter Amanda Cole, next up is a conversation between New York State Poet Laureate Emeritus [Joseph Tusiani](#) [4] and Paula Tusiani. Theirs is a story of emigration, reunion, poetry and culture.

October in New York is "Italian month," which centers around the famous [Columbus Day Parade](#) [5] on 5th Avenue organized by the [Columbus Citizens Foundation](#) [6]. (We'll be there in our tricolor FIAT 500 designed by [Massimo Vignelli](#) [7]!) This year i-Italy has consolidated its special partnership with the Columbus Citizens Foundation to produce an exclusive insert in our Events section featuring articles and interviews with President Angelo Vivolo, Grand Marshal Robert LaPenta and this year's two honorees, Federica Marchionni and Mario Batali.

This year also marks the 40th anniversary of the [Italian Heritage and Culture Committee](#) [8] of New York, which traditionally puts on many Italian events in the fall. Its president, [Joseph Sciamè](#) [9], tells us all about them.

As always, after Columbus Day i-Italy will head to Washington to participate in the annual NIAF convention. Thanks to our interview with president John M. Viola, you can come along for the ride.

These are tricky times in the US, politically speaking, what with the election in full swing. So we decided to present the two candidates "our way," entrusting the task to a pair of American columnists with Italian roots. Founder and President Emerita of [NOIAW Aileen Riotto Sirey](#) [10] covers Hillary Clinton while Chairman of the Suffolk County Republican Committee John Jay LaValle gives us his take on Donald Trump.

Of course we couldn't do without our political commentator Jerry Krase's analysis of how Italian Americans have voted in presidential elections over the last two decades. Read on. There are tons of stories on tons of topics. In particular I'd like to thank my friend Fred Gardaphe for collaborating on our reviews section and his original take on the controversial Italian television series Gomorrah upon its release in the US. I'd also like to thank all of our collaborators for providing us with a cross section of the Italian presence in New York. This time their ranks include 4 new interns chosen from dozens of applications for the NIAF/i-Italy joint internship program in "Journalism and Italian-American Affairs." We warmly welcome them all. We're looking forward to a splendid year together!

Last but not least, in our final pages we journey to an extraordinary land and one-of-a-kind city, Matera, recently nominated the [European Capital of Culture](#) [11]. What are you waiting for? We know you'll be planning a visit in no time!

In conclusion, let me thank all our followers on the web, on TV, and in print. We now have almost



200,000 friends on Facebook alone! You'll also find i-ItalyNY on Instagram. We are building our audience! Americans love Italy. It stands to reason they'd love i-Italy, too.

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Links

- [1] <http://iitaly.org/files/letiziaairsoferrarifalliiitalyissuedesignspeaksitalianjpg-0>
- [2] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel_Alito
- [3] <http://www.niaf.org>
- [4] <http://siba3.unile.it/ctle/tusiani/biography.htm>
- [5] http://www.columbuscitizensfd.org/columbus-celebration/columbus_parade.html
- [6] <http://www.columbuscitizensfd.org>
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- [8] <http://www.italyculturemonth.org>
- [9] <http://www.stjohns.edu/about/leadership/university-administration/joseph-sciame>
- [10] <http://www.noiaaw.org/board/>
- [11] <http://discoverbasilicata.com/blog/2014/10/23/italian-city-matera-basilicata-awarded-european-capital-culture-2019/>