

The Essence of Parma: Music, Taste and Elegance

Benedetta Grasso (April 15, 2010)



On April 8 2010 Parma Incoming and the Italian Government Tourist Board came to New York to promote the treasures of the city of Parma and the upcoming Verdi Festival in October.

Right in the middle of the Via Aemilia, a central crossroad since the Roman Empire, connecting the Po river with the Adriatic sea, Parma is in a perfect geographical location in Emilia Romagna and in Italy, situated halfway between Milan and Florence.

For those fond of literature this city might already be familiar. Towards the end of the book [The Charterhouse of Parma](#) [2] by Stendhal the young protagonist Fabrizio Del Dongo ends up prisoner in the Farnese tower in Parma. Still shaken and emotionally vulnerable after having met the love of his life, Fabrizio looks out of his cell from a small window and is ecstatic: the landscape in front of him is



majestic and filled with beauty. He can see the Alps and the Monviso in the distance; he doesn't feel in prison because from there he can still be immersed in the pleasures of the "Italian life", something that fascinated and charmed "Romantic" travelers such as Stendhal as much as tourists nowadays.

For those who have a better time with food than with books, Parma will still ring a bell. You don't have to be an etymologist to figure out that the famous Parmigiano cheese is produced mainly in the Parma region along with the delicious Prosciutto and Culatello.

Eno-gastronomic tours, guided tastings and cooking courses are a must when visiting this city and region. Not only can the tourists drink wine while eating a delicious slice of ham and at the same time look at the castles and valleys in the countryside, but they can also take a look at how the main products of the region are made. For example there are several dairy farms where the cheese is prepared and aged with very fascinating and complex techniques.

[The Italian Government Tourist Board](#) [3] (ENIT) and the tour operator [Parma Incoming](#) [4] know that when presenting Parma to New York City and the United States in order to attract more tourists, the emphasis must be placed in what Parma symbolizes abroad: taste, emotion, elegance and the Art of living.

At the ENIT headquarters in NYC, on April 8, 2010 a delegation from Parma came to promote this enchanting city.

The Parma Cathedral (Duomo) is a 12th-century Romanesque cathedral filled with Renaissance art. Its ceiling fresco by Correggio is considered an enthralling masterpiece.

Parma is the birthplace of great artists such as [Correggio](#) [5], [Parmigianino](#) [6] and the famous engraver [Paolo Toschi](#) [7], as well as filmmaker [Bernardo Bertolucci](#) [8]. Also one cannot forget [Giuseppe Verdi](#) [9] and [Arturo Toscanini](#) [10] in the musical world.

Giancarlo Liuzzi, responsible of Communications for the Teatro Regio in Parma presented an upcoming intellectually stimulating and stunning Verdi festival, "the longest birthday party ever organized" as Liuzzi described it. Giuseppe Verdi was born in Parma either on October 9 or 10, 1813. For the entire month of October, singers, directors, artists, conductors, opera aficionados and tourists will flow into the city of Parma for a festival that has something planned everyday. "The whole town will embrace the festival. Even children who might not understand opera yet will certainly appreciate puppet shows inspired by Verdi's main works," said Mr. Liuzzi.

For 28 days there will be the possibility to experience Verdi at 360 degrees. Every day one of his works will be performed in the main theaters of the region (Teatro Regio, Teatro Valli, Teatro Verdi, Teatro Magnani) or performed in concerts, through images and exhibits, panels and other relevant presentations all over Parma. Nabucco, Aida, La Forza del Destino, Don Carlos, La Traviata, Rigoletto, Il Trovatore and Attila are just some of the many exciting operas by the Maestro.

As Liuzzi said, Verdi is an "International brand" and that is why it's important to promote it in the US even before Italy, in order to have people from all over the world.

The main operas will be performed at the [Teatro Regio in Parma](#) [11], a beautiful 19th century opera house, built by the Duchess of Parma.

At the event, inside the Rockefeller Center, Enzo Malanca, President of Parma Incoming and Nicoletta Petrosino, also working for Parma Incoming, showed a video displaying the various strengths of the city and the beauties of the land.

The tour operators, journalists, representatives of various Italian and American tourist organizations filled the room and enjoyed the lavish buffet that followed. Focaccia, parmigiano, culatello and scrumptious cakes were served accompanied by great red and white wine demonstrating once and for all the high quality of Parma's gourmet food.

This was a great way for New Yorkers in search of new tastes and new Italian itineraries to explore a



culturally rich city and make plans for future travels.

Parma echoes the notes of incredibly famous arias, evokes ancient crafts, promotes new technologies and recalls the words of the great writer Proust: "It was the name Parma - one of the cities that I wanted to visit the most since I read *The Charterhouse* -that appeared to me compact, smooth, "mauve" and sweet; if anyone spoke to me about any house in Parma in which I could be introduced I felt pleasure in thinking that I would have lived in a smooth, compact, "mauve" and sweet house, free from any bind to any other houses in other Italian cities, since I could only imagine it with the help of that short sweet syllable "Parme", where air doesn't circulate, which embodied everything of the Stendhalian sweetness and of the reflection of violets" (*In Search of Lost Time*, Proust)

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