



## **"L'Italia siete Voi". Celebrating 64 Years of Republic in New York**

Marina Melchionda (June 10, 2010)



June 2. Consul General Talò and other institutional representatives joined over 1000 guests at Cipriani Wall Street driving a "Montante", a 100% Italian bicycle. "Bike to the future", this year's moto for the Italian National Day, was dedicated to ecologically sustainable transportation and to the new generation of Italian immigrants, graduates and highly specialized young men and women who form a bridge between the US and Italy and contribute to the growth of both countries. Read more about these memorable celebrations on the eve of the 150th Anniversary of the Unification of Italy

On June 2010 at 6 pm over 1,000 people got together in the largest and fanciest Italian restaurant in New York, [Cipriani Wall Street](#) [2]. Italian National Day was confirmed as the holiday that the Italian and the Italian-American community most wait for throughout the year.

It's indeed an occasion to remember their ancestry, the millenary culture they represent, the great contribution they have given as Italians to the growth of their new country, the United States, and the strong bond they keep with the old country on the 64th anniversary of the foundation of the Republic and almost 150 years from its Unification.



This year's gala, the third that's been hosted in this elegant ballroom which was the venue desired by Consul General Francesco Maria Talò, featured moments that will make it very hard to forget.

It's motto "Bike to the future" represented the main theme of the event extremely well: Consul Talò, actress Gianna Palminteri, hostess of the gala and wife of actor Chazz Palminteri, some of the highest Italian institutional representatives, and a number of officers from the NY Police and Fire Departments, joined us at the entrance riding elegant, sparkling [Montante](#) [3] bicycles conceived, designed and produced in Asti, Piedmont, by the firm bearing the same name.

The message was sound and clear: the Italian government in New York promotes ecological, financially accessible means of transportation to help keep the city clean, unpolluted, and green, as Consul Talò immediately pointed out upon his arrival.

Decorated with huge bouquets of flowers, the bikes found their place at the base of the stage located in the middle of the ballroom and were surrounded by the stands of the major sponsors of the Gala, firms that Americans have learned to know and appreciate for their quality and that have become part of their everyday life. Among them, there were stands representing the Vintage-style Vespa motorcycles by Piaggio, Pirelli tires, and Alitalia, that offers direct flights from New York to the main Italian cultural and business centers, including Rome and Milan, at advantageous prices.

Sardinia, the region that sponsored this year's Italian National Day, was the absolute protagonist of our evening. The Press Conference organized at the upper level right before the gala introduced us to the numerous initiatives that the regional government is organizing to make its territory more bike-friendly, fully espousing the "Bike to the future" moto. Today, the Region and its beauties are enjoyable from coast to coast thanks to long and articulated cycle paths giving the visitor the opportunity to share with the locals their laid-back and simple life and visit unknown natural and historical sites before reaching the region's well-known attractions and tourist centers.

The cultural beauties of Sardinia also characterized the colorful and rich buffet offered during the evening. From the appetizers to the main course, we enjoyed a touch of its culinary tradition whenever we approached the half-dozen buffet bars dislocated in the hall. Its famous porchetta (roasted suckling pig), the rich malloreddus (local pasta) with sausage sauce and chunks of pecorino cheese, accompanied more classical national dishes such as seafood and meat salads, risotto milanese, prosciutto, meatballs, and roasted lamb. The dishes were all paired with Italian wines and cocktails, among which the famous Bellini, a mixture of peach juice and prosecco invented by Cipriani itself.

One can easily imagine what a joyous atmosphere the Consul General found around him when stepping onto the stage to welcome the attendees together with the three main governmental institutions located in the city of New York: Riccardo Viale, director of the [Italian Cultural Institute in New York](#) [4]; Aniello Musella, director of the [Italian Trade Commission in North America](#) [5]; and Riccardo Strano, [Director of the Italian Government Tourism Board in North America](#) [6]. They were virtually joined by the President of the Italian Republic Giorgio Napolitano, New York Governor David Paterson, NY Mayor Bloomberg, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and by the Ambassador of Italy to the United States Giulio Terzi di Sant'Agata, who all sent a personal greeting messages.

The Consul General declared himself to be deeply satisfied with the outcome of the evening which gathered together old and new generations of Italian and Italian-Americans. "375 years after the arrival of Pietro Alberti, the Venetian sailor who we consider to be the first Italian immigrant in the US, I see before my eyes one nation made up of people with the most varied backgrounds.

There are the old generations and the descendents of those who came here for the most part hungry and poor to find in the US a better future for themselves and their families; there are academics, scholars, researchers, entrepreneurs who have been here for just a few years; and finally I also see very young just graduated young people who ve just arrived with their unique skills and education and who are already distinguishing themselves in their work fields. (...) All of you, Italians in New York, contribute and have contributed in your own way to the growth of this country. I encourage you to follow this path but also to never forget to look back and remember where you



came from. You are Italy", said Consul Talò during a speech preceded by the intonation of the the American, Italian, and European anthems by the students of the [Scuola d'Italia Guglielmo Marconi](#) [7].

Concluding, he seized the opportunity to present the newly-conceived logo for the 150th Anniversary of the Unification of Italy for the first time in the USA. It is his sincere hope, he told us, to see all of the Regions of Italy collaborate and contribute to make next year's celebrations as sumptuous and memorable as this important milestone requires them to be.

i-Italy and [Italics](#) [8] broadcasted the full event live ([click here](#) [9] to watch a raw cut of the show) and interviewed some of the most eminent attendees. Among them: Andrea Barbaria, Consul General of Italy in New Jersey; Riccardo Viale, Director of the Italian Cultural Institute in New York, Riccardo Strano, director of the Italian Government Tourism Board; Claudio Bozzo, President of the [Italy-America Chamber of Commerce](#) [10]; Silvana Mangione, Secretary General of [CGIE](#) [11](Consiglio Generale degli Italiani all'Estero-General Council for Italians Abroad); Vincenzo Marra, President of [ILICA](#) [12](Italian Language Inter-Cultural Alliance); Judge Dominic Massaro; Stefano Albertini, Director of [Casa Italiana Zerilli Marimò at NYU](#) [13]; Natalia Indrimi, Director of the [Primo Levi Center](#) [14]; Alfio Russo, Director of the Education Office at the Consulate General of Italy in New York; journalist Enzo Capua, organizer of the NY Edition of the [Umbria Jazz Festival](#) [15]; Mico Licastro, [CONI](#) [16] Delegate in the US; Economic Advisor [Gianluca Galletto](#) [17]; PR Sally Fisher; Artist Andrea Mastrovito, Winner of the 2008 edition of the "Premio New York", sponsored by the Italian Cultural Institute; and many many more...

Stay tuned, the video of the gala is also coming up!

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- [1] <http://iitaly.org/files/tamburrijpeg>
- [2] <http://www.cipriani.com>
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