

Piemonte, Being More than Food & Wine

Natasha Lardera (May 19, 2014)



A little over a year before the official opening of the Expo 2015 in Milan (Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life), the neighboring region of Piemonte is preparing to offer the international public an extraordinary number of events and tourism initiatives. Such programs have recently been introduced to American tour operators at the offices of the Italian Tourist Board

“Go to [Piemonte](#) [2]. It's not just a question of wine. It's not just a question of food... it's about the landscapes, the people, the air...” [Eugenio Magnani](#) [3], the director of the [Italian Tourist Board](#) [4] told the audience before introducing Angelo Feltrin, executive manager of the [Sviluppo Piemonte Agency](#) [5].

Who goes to Piemonte now? According to Feltrin, interviewed by i-Italy after the event, “the American tourist who goes to Piemonte is someone in his forties and up. We do not have a market for younger generations, except for Torino itself that has a lot to offer for everybody.

The American tourist is particularly interested in the Langhe region and the lakes. This is the most sought after area because of its variety. It offers the best of oenogastronomy – this is where you find white truffles, for example. Back in the 20s nobody wanted truffles, because they smell, and they were fed to pigs. But a local man, Mr. Morra turned it into a worldwide sensation. And Americans



come for it.”

A favorite destination? “Lake Maggiore,” Feltrin continued, “on Lake Maggiore sport and open air lovers feel like kings. For those who love two wheels, the area boasts 170 km of cycling paths both on paved and unpaved roads.

Piemonte is a land of cycling, since forever. It's the place that legendary champions like [Fausto Coppi](#) [6] and [Costante Girardengo](#) [7] called home. There are more than three hundred routes through mountains, plains, lakes and hills. Since forever Piemonte has been a stop in the most important international cycling events – from Tour de France to Giro d'Italia.

This year, the latter will welcome exciting stages: the brand new Wine Stopwatch Barbaresco-Braulo (May 22), the Fossano-Rivarolo Canavese (May 23), the Aglie-Oropa (May 24) with the finish line dedicated to the great cyclist Marco Pantani on the tenth anniversary of his death, and finally the start for the 15th stage from Valdengo (May 25).”

Every year Piemonte hosts the Fausto Coppi le Alpi del Mare International Cycling Marathon, which takes place in Cuneo (this year it will be on July 13).

So in order to have more Americans know about it and all the other events taking place in the region, the Piemonte has decided to partner up with the Granfondo New York.

“The Gran Fondo New York was founded in 2010 by avid competitive cyclists with a mission to bring Italian cycling culture to the New York and New Jersey region and to raise the profile of competitive cycling in the United States.

On Sunday May 18, almost 5,000 professional and amateur cyclists from 70 countries and 48 states participated in this exciting cycling event.

Cyclists started on the iconic George Washington Bridge and cycled the 100-mile course that took them through New York State and New Jersey up to Bear Mountain State Park and back down to the finish line at Ross Dock Picnic Area, the riverfront area in Palisades Interstate Park in Fort Lee, NJ. NYC's mayor, Bill deBlasio called it “a celebration of Italian heritage, of cycling, and of New York City.”

The Gran Fondo was preceded by the NYC Bike Expo, the most-attended consumer bike expo in the nation and Piemonte was there too.

In collaboration with the [Italy America Chamber of Commerce](#) [8], the region presented, in a booth inside the historical Lexington Armory, all its numerous touristic opportunities in connection to cycling.

“Piemonte features hotels that have been built just for cyclists,” Feltrin added “if anybody has problems with their bike's chain, or gets a flat tire they can stop at these special hotels where trained personnel can fix it all.

This is of great importance as cyclists know they can find assistance anywhere. As of now the biggest cycling tourism we have is from Germany, and we want to expand.”

But there is more than cycling in Piemonte: there are challenging hikes, rock climbing, bouldering, cross-country and downhill skiing. “

Let's not forget that Piemonte hosted the 2006 Winter Olympics, that despite the great cost, of which we are still paying a price, have put the region and its peaks on the map of all dedicated skiers,” Feltrin concluded.

Not that we do not care about sports, but we want to know something more about the upcoming [Expo 2015](#) [9], how does Torino fit in the picture? “Milan is basically already overbooked,” Feltrin explained, “They only have a certain amount of hotels and places to stay. Torino is only 30 minutes



away by train and there is plenty of room for everybody – those going to the expo everyday and those who want to explore the rest of Piemonte as well.

Torino is not only close to Milan, but in 30 minutes you can go up to the mountains to ski, or in 1 hour you are on a beach in Liguria and in 80 minutes you can buy a baguette in France. It's a small city but it is at the center of everything.”

And thanks to the promotional activities of the Sviluppo Piemonte Agency, the Italian Tourist Board, the Italy America Chamber of Commerce and the local tour operators that are collaborating with them, Piemonte is becoming the region it deserves to be.

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