



Katherine Wilson and her mother-in-law

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Ferraris in an Italian square

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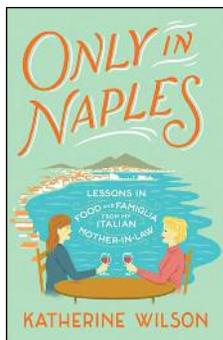
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March 2016

Expatriate Life in Italy: Three Mini-Memoirs

Those of us who have had the *buona fortuna* to travel to Italy multiple times—who among us has not once (or twice) had a dream of Italy involving relocation?

We all know the Frances Mayes story in *Under the Tuscan Sun*, but sometimes the dream becomes more of a reality, involving child-rearing, hard work, and even embarrassing miscommunications. The three writers in this piece have each published a book about an aspect of expat life in Italy, and each was gracious enough to pen something new for *Dream of Italy*.



Soccer Grandma by Katherine Wilson

"*Vieni, vieni,*" the Roman grandmother calls me over. Come over here. She's found the last ray of sunshine on this spring afternoon, and is turning her wrinkled face toward it like a sunflower. Like many wise Italians, she moves with the sun so that she can feel its warmth on her face. I join her, and turn my face toward the sun too. It feels good.

We're on the sidelines at Rome's *Romulea* soccer club, where my son Anthony plays on the 2005 team with this *nonna's* grandson, *Alessio*. Romulea
continued on page 2

BORN TO DRIVE:

ITALY'S LUXURY CAR EXPERIENCES

You can hire a chauffeur to squire you around *Lake Como* in a *Maserati*; you can even rent a *Ferrari* for your week in *Tuscany* if you're so inclined. But perhaps, due to itinerary or budget, all you want is a taste of the luxury-car lifestyle for an afternoon or a day. *Che cosa fà?* Easy answer: Sign up for a test drive, either with an automobile manufacturer, or with an outside company.

These courses allow you to drive high-performance cars with the guidance and skill of professional drivers, on courses designed to be safe, sporty and fun. The programs are terrific for aspiring and existing exotic-car owners—but they're also a great opportunity for race-car Walter Mittys to have a few hours or a few days with a dream car. All of the ones we mention are available in English.

If you're traveling with your spouse, family or friends, never fear: most of these places have on-site museums, cafés and area attractions that will keep them occupied while you've got your hands on the wheel.

continued on page 6

50,000 American citizens live in Italy.



Young soccer players



Katherine Wilson and family

is located behind the majestic St. John Lateran Church, and the white statues of the apostles on top of the *basilica* oversee the matches, each in a different position, gesticulating. *Did that foul really merit a penalty kick?*

The grandmother is telling me that Alessio can't get enough of legumes. Pasta with lentils, chickpeas, beans. None of her other grandchildren loved lentils! Go figure. So today she made *ceci* with fresh rosemary sprigs, and Alessio asked for thirds.

"Good try, Anthony!" I yell, temporarily distracted by Anthony's hit of the post after an impressive dribbling maneuver. The *nonna* looks at me like I have Tourette's Syndrome.

My son is the only kid on the team with an American mother, and the

only one who doesn't go to the neighborhood public school. I moved to Italy 20 years ago, and fell in love with an Italian man (and with his family). By the time our son was born 10 years later, I'd embraced all that was right about the way Italians raised their children: the divine food, the closeknit families, the relaxed play. I decided that a neighborhood school in Rome would be just fine for our firstborn. It would be a welcome change from my own East Coast, achievement-oriented upbringing.

But after a few meetings with the nuns at Anthony's kindergarten in which they told me that he had trouble sitting still at his wooden desk (for four straight hours? At the age of three?), I fled to the progressive, international school on the other side of town. It had fields and children's drawings on the

walls. I knew I'd pick up a kid that was sweaty and happy.

Now that he's in 5th grade, though, I see the difference that choice has made. My son has been taught to think globally, uses a digital tablet at school, and makes slide presentations about racism. His lunch is a sandwich and carrot sticks.

I pick Anthony up at 4:30 p.m. and hand him a baggie of trailmix. I feel personally invested in his performance at soccer practice. I worry when the coach screams things like, *Have a goddamned cappuccino if you can't wake up!* to a stationary midfielder. I couldn't give a flying fig whether my kid likes chickpeas or not.

Meanwhile, the kids at the Italian school go home for lunch around 1:30 p.m., after which they have a three-course-lunch prepared by a mother or grandmother, rest, do homework (which usually consists of rote memorization) and are brought to 5:30 practice.

Alessio's *nonna* has never considered her grandson's self-esteem. She is personally invested in his consumption of legumes, and in keeping him warm and dry. She enjoys chatting by the side of the field about recipes, as she feels the hot Roman sun on her face.

A whistle is blown, practice ends, and the boys are fighting, laughing, colliding. Alessio finds his *nonna* and throws his sweaty body in her arms, planting a kiss on her warm face. Anthony runs over and asks me what I thought of his header in the second half. As I start to tell him, *great job sweetheart, you've really improved technically*, I hear Alessio asking his grandmother what's for dinner. She answers, and smiles, and so does he.

FROM "ONLY IN NAPLES" BY KATHERINE WILSON

"Fidarsi è bene, non fidarsi è meglio," Raffaella reminded me on the phone when I called from Washington. Again the trust thing: to trust is good, not to trust is better."

Raffaella was using the expression not in reference to a person, however, but in reference to hamburgers. I had

said that I was missing Italy, but enjoying American hamburgers. "Better not to trust hamburgers?" I asked.

"When you eat at restaurants, you don't know what they put in the food." She worried about me like a daughter and doubted my judgment.

Most expats use Italian healthcare,

I still have so much to learn here. I need Italian grandmothers to remind me daily: Enjoy the sun on your face, and the pasta with lentils. Enjoy the feel of that kiss on your wrinkled face, a sweaty hug. Hold on to what matters, and let go of those fears and expectations about the future. *Insomma*, let the kids play—and join me over here in the sun.

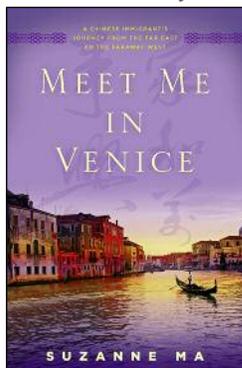
Katherine Wilson's memoir *Only in Naples: Lessons in Food and Famiglia from My Italian Mother-in-Law* will be available from Random House on April 19, 2016. Katherine was born and raised in Washington, D.C. She graduated Magna Cum Laude and Phi Beta Kappa from Princeton University, where she studied with Toni Morrison and Peter Sellars.

Wilson has lived in Italy for the past 19 years, working in television, film and theater. Most recently, she acted in Giuseppe Tornatore's *The Best Offer*, with Geoffrey Rush and Donald Sutherland. She lives in Rome with her husband and two children. Find out more at www.katherinewilsonwriter.com

Italy Through Chinese Eyes by Suzanne Ma

The last few times I traveled to Italy, I ate very little pasta, spoke very little Italian and saw very few Italian people.

I spent most of my time with Chinese immigrants, with Chinese shopkeepers in Prato, with Chinese students in *Bologna*, and with Chinese families in *Riccione*. My purpose was to understand what it was like for a modern-day migrant to forge a new life in the *bel paese*.



Italy was stumbling through two major upheavals: recession and globalization. What was it like to be a newcomer in this beautiful but volatile land?

The Italy we know as tourists and the Italy we have come to read about in books like *Under the Tuscan Sun* and *Eat Pray Love* is not the Italy Chinese immigrants see. For many of the immigrants I spent time with, life was far from a holiday. They worked grueling hours in shops, bars, restaurants and factories, eking out a living and sending their earnings back to their families in China. Many spoke of loneliness and longed to return home.

My background couldn't be more different from the Chinese immigrants I met in Italy, many of whom hailed from a county in Eastern China, where the culture, food and dialect differed greatly from my family's. I'm a Chinese-Canadian journalist, whose parents came to Canada from Hong Kong and Taiwan to study as university graduates. I was born and raised in Toronto.

My connection to the Chinese in Italy came through marriage. My husband's parents migrated from Eastern China to the Netherlands and their family spread out across Europe. I was curious to learn about this Chinese diaspora; when I visited my in-laws' hometown in China, I discovered everyone was talking about *Yee-da-li*.



Ye Pei



Suzanne Ma

Most of them had never stepped foot outside of China, but everyone had an idea of what Italy would be like.

"Everyone wears beautiful leather shoes!" one hopeful migrant told me.

"I look forward to trying *yee-da-li mian*," another said, using the Chinese words for "Italian noodles."

A very special young girl *continued on page 4*

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FROM "MEET ME IN VENICE" BY SUZANNE MA:

"If the orders were simple enough, sometimes Pei could mix drinks and serve coffee. But she was never allowed to make cappuccinos. [Her Chinese] boss insisted the cappuccino was a perfect science, one that a foolish young girl

like Pei couldn't even begin to understand. After all, the country's "national breakfast," drunk on an empty stomach before 11 a.m., was an art form, a ritual so ingrained in Italian culture that it would be a sin to get it wrong."

spoke in detail about reuniting with her mother in Venice.

The first time I met Ye Pei she was 16 years old and still in high school. She had a pale and round doll's face, with gleeful eyes shaped like sunflower seeds and chubby cheeks framed by a black, boyish bob, her innocence in contrast with her hipster's garb of white T-shirt and black vest.

Her mother had already been in Italy for five years. Soon, Pei said, she would be joining her. "I'm not sure exactly where Mama lives," Pei said. "But when she first went to Italy, she told me she was in Venice." She pressed the palm of her hand into her pink cheek and spoke of bridges shaped like crescent moons and a beautiful city of stone, floating atop a glittering lagoon.

In Chinese, she referred to Venice as *shui cheng*, "the water city." "When you open the door, there's water everywhere. The water comes right up to your doorstep," she explained in rapid-fire Chinese. "I read about the *shui cheng* in a book once. In my mind, Venice is Italy and Italy is Venice."

I told Pei to stay in touch. Three months later, she left China for Italy. But when I traveled to meet her, she was not in Venice and she was not

with her mother.

When Ye Pei arrived in Italy, she learned her mother worked on a farm far from the city of Venice. Her only connection, a mean-spirited Chinese auntie, put her to work in a small-town café. Rather than giving up and returning to China, Pei resolved to save enough money to provide her family with a better future.

Over the course of three years, I visited Pei as often as I could. Each time I saw her, Pei was in a different city working a different job. And in every situation, she faced many challenges that threatened her optimism and determination. Still, she always pushed on. Her strength and resolve to make a better life for herself and her family compelled me to return to Italy, again and again, to document her migrant story.

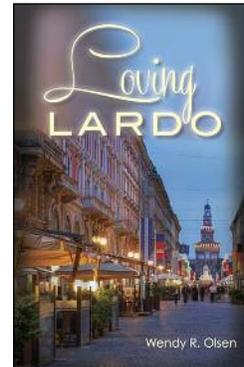
The work of award-winning journalist Suzanne Ma has appeared in numerous publications including The Wall Street Journal, Bloomberg Businessweek and Salon, among others. A graduate of Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism, Suzanne was awarded the Pulitzer Traveling Fellowship, which helped fund her fieldwork in China for her first book, Meet Me in Venice: A Chinese Immigrant's Journey from the

Far East to the Faraway West.

Born and raised in Toronto by immigrant parents who insisted she attend Chinese school every Saturday morning, Ma continued those lessons in Beijing, where she met her husband. His family's hometown is also Ye Pei's, and the town's history inspired her book. Suzanne and her husband live in Vancouver, Canada. Find out more at www.suzannema.com

The Three Fs of Italy
by Wendy Olsen

I awoke a few months after arriving in Milan, finally in my own *appartamento*. The muggy morning heat was smothering. I was relishing my 10 minutes lying in bed, encapsulated in my 700-count cotton thread, *Missoni* sheets. My future mother-in-law had ironed my sheets as a courtesy to me. "What a waste of time," I thought to myself. Secretly I felt quite spoiled.



It was time to enjoy breaking the fast. *Franco* would be over in an hour. I had only lived in Milan 90 days, had yet to forsake a breakfast, lunch or dinner. Still, I had slimmed down from a healthy Wisconsin 160 pounds (I'm very tall) to 60 kilos, or 130 pounds. I maintain this weight even now, and my appetite is voracious. Three cheers for the Mediterranean diet!

I crammed a few slices of rich yet light (how do they do that?) *panettone* into my mouth, but not before dunking the slices in my *caffè latte*. What a marvelous invention by *Signor Bialletti* is the *Moka* coffee machine. To this day, there is no better method of brewing

Five of the top 10 luxury br

the perfect *espresso*. I was not surprised to learn, when Signor Bialetti recently passed away, that he ordered his ashes to be placed in an oversized version of his signature stovetop metal pot.

Fame, Famiglia, Fede: Hunger, Family, Faith. Italians live their lives by these “3 Fs,” and as a soon-to-be Italian’s wife, I would even sooner learn that their importance is ranked in that order. It cannot be overstated: Italy is ruled by food. Not by religion, not by amore, by *fame*, hunger, pronounced “fah’may.”

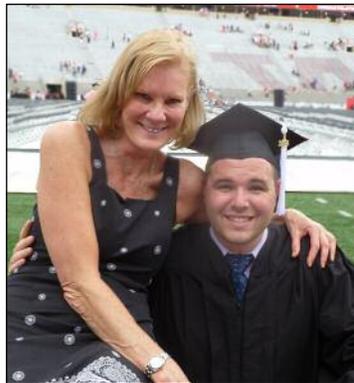
One does not just eat in Italy. One enjoys dining as a moment for social gatherings, discussions and health. Small wonder that it is while dining I learned the vast majority of my Italian.

Dining is also where many of my gaffes occurred, but you only learn from your mistakes! Who would have thought that leaving your arms in your lap would cause so many eyebrows to rise, or that pouring a bottle of wine the wrong way would cause whispers of “*Mafioso*” to circumnavigate any Italian restaurant. (Hint: Your wrist should turn inwards, towards your body.)

I gathered post facto that, while dining, Italians keep both forearms on the table. If you hide your arms under the table, you might as well be holding onto a knife or gun that you could suddenly wield should an argument occur. Or, as my future father-in-law Ferruccio suspiciously concluded, “*Wendy, che cazzo stai facendo sotto il tavolo con le tue mani?!!*” What is it that you’re doing under the table with your hands?!!”

Eventually I’d realize that this custom dates from well back in the Dark Ages, when people really might have had a weapon handy, but for my Italian family and friends, it was an unbreakable rule of decorum.

One night, some friends visiting from Alabama joined Franco and me for a pre-Christmas dinner on the river *Adda*, made famous in The



Wendy and her son



Wendy's Italian in-laws

Betrothed / Promessi Sposi. The typical Northern Italian holiday dish is eel. Disgusting, squirming, gelid. We were thrilled that we wouldn’t have to partake, and quickly chose the menu’s swordfish.

No sooner had the dish arrived than my friend Jan, ready to portion it for us all, decapitated the fish and placed its head in the center of our table. Our waiter choked, fell back to an adjacent table, the table overturned and the

entire trattoria’s entourage of guests fell into deafening silence.

Unbeknownst to us Americans, this kind of fish filleting simply was not done unless you were a member of the Mafia. It might as well have been Don Corleone’s severed horsehead left as a message for the server’s death sentence.

Franco shrieked, “*Mamma Mia, che cazzo stai facendo, Jan? What the hell are you doing? Andiamo, let’s scam!*”

My friends and I didn’t need more of an invitation—we andiamo’ed as fast as we could.

Loving Lardo is the debut book by Wendy Rachel Olsen, who was born in Orléans, France. She has lived in seven different countries and speaks four languages. From 1987 to 1999, she lived in Milan, where most of the action in her novel takes place.

Olsen frequently speaks to groups on a variety of topics related to Italy. She is the founder and owner of S.A.L.A, the Slinger Academy of Language and Arts in Slinger, Wisconsin, where adults and children can learn Italian, Spanish and French. Find out more at www.lovinglardo.com

FROM “LOVING LARDO” BY WENDY OLSEN:

Six months into living in Italy, I had chucked my white shoes, white tights, White Rain hairspray and white purses. Not one more time would I embarrass myself on Via Montenapoleone, hearing whispers of “*Lei e sicuramente*

Americana, garde quelle calze bianche.” “She is surely American, wearing those white tights.” Never again would I commit the crime of ordering a cappuccino after dinner.

“A breakfast beverage only, my dear La Wendy,” Wilma told me.

hands worldwide are Italian.

The Need for Speed: Experiencing Ferrari

Mention “exotic cars” to aficionados and the name *Ferrari* may be the first one off their lips. Italy’s most immediately recognizable car brand symbolizes speed and customization for legions of fans around the world. Its list of famous racing drivers is long, but includes the biggest names: *Andretti, Prost, Schumacher, Vettel*.

The *Cavallino Rampante*, or dancing horse on every Ferrari automobile, has a wonderful story behind it, too: In 1923, *Enzo Ferrari*, the company’s founder, won a race and at the track met an Italian noblewoman whose son, *Count Francesco Baracca*, had been an Italian Air Force flying ace in World War I. *Countess Paolini* told Ferrari that her son used to paint a horse on the side of his planes, and suggested that using a horse on his cars might bring him luck.

Nearly half a million people make a special pilgrimage each year to the town of *Maranello* in *Emilia-Romagna* to breathe the rarefied air of Ferrari. There they can view the famed *Fiorano* test track, take a shuttle-bus tour of the Ferrari factory and visit the brand’s museum. Unfortunately, they cannot take a test drive from Ferrari.

There are other places where you can, but before listing those, let’s talk about what the Ferrari brand experience does offer. Two museums, one in Modena and one in Maranello, are just

12 miles apart—the perfect chance for you to drive a rented car on Italian roads, even if you are driving something less glamorous than a Ferrari. If you arrive any other way, there’s a shuttle that operates between the two locations.



The *Modena Museo Enzo Ferrari* is less a museum than an experience itself, including a 7,500 square foot, pillar-free exhibit hall full of Ferrari vehicles and a ceiling-display video that uses 19 projectors to tell the story of Enzo Ferrari and how



his lifetime illustrates some of his country and region’s history, too. The adjacent and smaller *Museo dei Motori Ferrari* is a recreation of Enzo’s father’s workshop, a kind

of visual explanation of the Ferrari obsession with precision engineering.

The *Museo Ferrari Maranello* is the place to go for less history and more immersion in the racing side of Ferrari autos. There’s a permanent exhibit on Formula 1 and World Championship racing that includes a “pit stop wall” where visitors can learn about telemetry and how it helps drivers, before they move on to Formula 1 simulators and the chance to try changing a Ferrari tire. While there, few skip the factory and test track tour that includes shuttle-bus access to areas where non-ticketed visitors cannot go inside the actual motor works.

Now, about those other places where

you can drive a Ferrari that have no connection whatsoever with Ferrari S.p.A.: We’ll provide two options below that have high ratings from travelers, one based right in Maranello, the other in Emilia. *PushStart Maranello* is a rental company offering test drives of several Ferraris, as well as at least one Lamborghini and a Ferrari racing simulator. *My Motorland* has Ferraris, a couple of Lamborghinis and the simulator.

Modena Museo Enzo Ferrari

Via Paolo Ferrari, 85
Modena
(39) 059 4397979
www.museomodena.ferrari.com
Tickets: 15€, 13€ for seniors and students, 5€ for children. Combined tickets for both museums are available for 26€, 22€ and 10€ for same categories.

Museo Ferrari Maranello

Via Dino Ferrari 43
Maranello
(39) 536 949713
www.museomaranello.ferrari.com
Tickets: 15€, 13€ for seniors and students and 9€ under for children.
Tickets for the factory and track tour are only available for those who have already purchased museum tickets. Visit this link when you have: www.bit.ly/1RdAdlq

PushStart Maranello

Via Dino Ferrari, 41
Maranello
(39) 346 3705035
www.pushstart.it
Prices vary greatly, depending on chosen vehicle and program, ranging from 120€ to over 1,250€

My Motorland

Via G. Marconi, 45
San Pietro in Casale
(39) 051 6661553
www.mymotorland.net
Prices range from 120€ to 900€ for a half-day

1€ = \$1.11 at press time

During the 1950s, *Maserati* m

Cool Confidence: Lamborghini Accademia

Feruccio Lamborghini, born in 1916, was a Taurus, and so identified is he with his deluxe brand that its logo sports a bull. He started out building tractors, turning to the sportscar market in the 1960s and quickly ascending to its pinnacle. Because he was already very wealthy and successful, Lamborghini sidestepped early struggles and produced the 350 GT in 1964, moving on fast to the *Spyder*, *Miura* and *Diablo*—all of which combine contemporary design with

Automobili Lamborghini S.p.A. is now owned by Volkswagen's Audi Group—but devotees of these sleek roadsters know that there's nothing but Italian design inside and out. If you'd like to get behind the wheel of a Huaracan or *Spyder*, *Lamborghini Esperienza and Accademia 2016*, part of its *Squadra Corse*, will offer experiences on track and even ice on four different continents in 2016. The excitement started late in February in Livigno, Italy, and will continue from Italy's Imola circuit to the *Blancpain Super Trofeo*. Lamborghini Accademia will offer courses for qualified drivers at the intensive and advanced levels.

However, many travelers may be more interested in the Lamborghini Esperienza, the introduction to the "Raging Bull" brand. The full-day Imola Esperienza includes a visit to the

Lamborghini factory and museum in *Sant'Agata Bolognese*, as well as the track driving. The demanding course program involves multiple training sessions during which drivers undertake exercises including slaloms, acceleration, braking and oversteering.

Each track day is open to a maximum of 24 participants, each of whom gets about half an hour of driving time, on the intensive course, and 20 (same driving time) on the advanced course. Drivers are divided into small groups to make the experience highly exclusive and personalized.



If you want to see a Lamborghini Miura S, the one with the "eyelashes," step out of your driver's seat and head over to the museum. The

Espada, the *Jarama* and the Countach, the P-147—they're all on exhibit, and visitors can get up close to see details in the light-filled halls of the modern building.

Lamborghini Accademia

Via Modena, 12
Sant'Agata Bolognese
(39) 051 6817613
www.squadracorse.lamborghini.com
Programs are mostly 2 and 3 days, with prices ranging from about 2,000€ to 10,000€

Lamborghini Museum

(same location)
(39) 051 6817611
www.lamborghini.com
Tickets: 15€, 10€ for seniors and students and 5€ for children.

Laps of Luxury: Maserati's Master Driving Courses

If Ferrari is all about racing and Lamborghini is all about style (gross generalizations, both!), then *Maserati* is all about luxury and drive-ability. A Maserati is, in a word, *deluxe*: Some of the sedans even come equipped with sets of luggage dyed to match the interiors and specially fitted to the capacious trunks.

Who could resist slipping into the driver's seat of a *Ghibli* or *Gran Turismo*? Maserati has 15 different vehicles available for its sponsored courses, including also Quattroportes and GranCabrios. Except where noted, these courses are held at the *Autodromo Varano de' Melegari*, approximately 12 miles from *Parma* and taught by a team headed by Formula 1 star *Andrea de Adamich*.

If you'd like to sign on, you will need a valid driver's license, though you needn't obtain a special European version. Maserati provides insurance for each participant (worth about 500€), and each driver will receive at least 20 minutes of driving time (maximum 30 minutes).

Drivers also receive a "Maserati Toolkit" that includes a USB stick of course photos, a diploma and gadgets including polo shirts, caps and more (according to chosen course). Even your spouse or friend will receive a gift, as well as access to a hospitality lounge stocked with drinks, snacks and relaxing entertainment choices like music and magazines.

You might choose the *Master Warm Up* for beginners; no experience with a Maserati or any other type of sports car

continued on page 8

ade gender-specific scooters.

is required. The *Master Premium* and *Master High Performance* courses can only be taken after a Warm Up or a *Master GT1 Day*. Cars that you might be placed in include all of the new models: *GranTurismo Sport*, *GranTurismo MC Stradale*, *GranCabrio Sport*, *GranCabrio MC*, *Quattroporte*, *Ghibli* and *Levante*.

If your companion is eager to go out for a spin too, try the *Master Italian Lifestyle Experience*, expressly designed for couples on vacation. After the driving enthusiast takes a few turns around the Maserati racetrack, the

couple will hop in a luxurious vehicle and be driven around Florence and Parma for sightseeing and a few activities, like wine tastings.

—Bethanne Patrick

Maserati Master Courses

Viale Ciro Menotti, 322
Modena

www.maserati.it/MasterMaserati
(39) 059 590549

Prices vary greatly, depending on course selected, ranging from 2,200€ to 4,950€ for up to a three-day program.

1€ = \$1.11 at press time



Born to Ride: Ducati Motorcycle Test Drives

Motorcycle enthusiasts needn't feel left out of the test-driving fun during travels in Italy. The *Ducati Riding Experience (DRE)* allows bike lovers the chance to try out vehicles considered among the best in the world due to their sleek design and technical innovations.



The *Bologna*-based Ducati will celebrate its 90th anniversary in 2016. Back in 1926, the three Ducati brothers (*Adriano*, *Bruno* and *Marcello*) and their father *Antonio* began manufacturing sophisticated electric condensers under the trade name *Manens*. These condensers were used in everything from radios to cameras. By 1935, the company had grown to such a size that they opened *Borgo Panigale* (named after a Bologna neighborhood), the factory that remains Ducati's home base and offers a museum.

After World War II, Ducati began making a scooter called the *Cucciolo* that quickly became its most popular product. From 1954 to today, the company has continually innovated. Its desmodromic system with its cam, rather than spring-loaded engine valve is still essential to racing bikes, and its 1980s four-valve water-cooled engine was a game-changer, too.

The motorcycles available to you in the DRE courses at the Mugello Race Circuit include these features, of course. You might ride a sporty *Monster 821* in the *Intro Course*, an all-new *Monster 1200R* in the *Precision Course* or sit atop a mighty *Panigale 959*, which has a course all its own.

The 10-student-maximum courses are led by expert instructors who provide

group and individual instruction. For example, the *Intro Course* involves fundamentals like what position to take on the bike, how to deal with curves, how to brake and what to do when there's an unexpected obstacle in your path.

Course participants must wear full leathers, a full-face helmet, leather gloves and boots. If you don't have those, you can rent them on buying a DRE online; the gear may not be available on site. Participants, who must be at least 18 years of age, must also have a Class A motorcycle license.

Ducati Riding Experience (DRE)

Mugello Race Circuit
www.dre.ducati.it
(39) 039 2050315

Prices vary depending on vehicle and circuit, ranging from 350€ to 1,490€ for a half- or full-day program.

Ducati Museum

Via Cavaliere Ducata, 3
Bologna (Borgo Panigale)
www.ducati.com

(39) 051 6413343

Tickets: 10€, 8€ for seniors and students and 5€ for students.

A Ducati is featured in the movie The Matrix.