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2019: What's NEW in Italy

There's a saying that comes to mind when we think of Italy: "Everything old is new again." Italy may be known for ancient ruins but it's also a country of innovation and rediscovery. So indeed, there's always something new in Italy, even if it is built upon a foundation of thousands of years.

Here are our picks for new or innovative experiences in 2019:

Matera: Cultural Capital

"In 2019, all eyes will be on *Matera*," says *Alberto Bonisoli*, Italy's Minister of Cultural Heritage. The magical city in the region of *Basilicata* is a European



Matera

Capital of Culture for the coming year. This initiative aims to bring awareness, and hopefully economic and social gains, to the southern Italian region, raising it up onto a global stage.

If you're a reader and viewer of *Dream of Italy*, you already know that Matera is one of the oldest inhabited cities in the world and home to the *sassi*, the ancient caves that provide not only a stunning backdrop but also brought political controversy and change to southern Italy. We profiled the city in-depth most recently in the September 2017 issue. Plus, Francis Ford Coppola spoke about the city and his beloved

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Lesson at Latteria

COOKING AT ROME'S LATTERIA STUDIO

The best part about exploring Roman cuisine is it is intensely seasonal. An artichoke tastes infinitely better when you wait until spring to try one. Clementines are so much sweeter when you wait nine months for winter to arrive to taste them. A Roman table is often a rainbow of eats and preparing everything with your own two hands makes it even more special.

I meet *Alice Adams* at a café in the hilly *Monteverde* neighborhood. She is chatting with a group of *Market to Table* participants before we head to *Latteria Studio*. I am quickly invited into the warm group of English-speakers, most who either live in Rome or are on a repeat visit to the city.

Alice herself is a teacher, food stylist, and expat who left Australia for Rome in 2003, where she lives with her husband and their children. Another core member of the *Latteria Studio* team is *Rachel Roddy*, a celebrated cookbook author, writer and British expat living in *Testaccio*.

Rachel was not at this session, but we used some of her recipes from

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The population of *Matera* is 60,000.

In a territory that was once called a "national shame" by politician Palmiro Togliatti and that was once written about in gory detail in Carlo Levi's Christ Stopped at Eboli, 2019 will prove that the region is now anything but a shameful mark on Italy's beautiful South.



ancestral region in the Basilicata episode of our PBS series saying, "No one ever heard of Basilicata, no one ever heard of Matera. Now this region is beginning to emerge and people realize that they haven't been compromised by a thousand years of tourism."

An opening ceremony will be held on January 19th, when 2,000 musicians from local bands from the 131 municipalities of Basilicata will perform in the streets of Matera,



Church of Santa Maria Idris, Matera

representing the splendor of southern Italian traditional music. The feel of the opening ceremony, which organizers hope will resonate throughout the year, is one of a village feast — intimate and traditional, but openly accessible to the larger public.

Matera's European Capital of Culture program aims to develop a brighter future for the area by creating initiatives based on five key themes: Roots and Routes, Continuity and Disruptions, Ancient Futures, Utopias and Dystopias, and Reflections and Connections.

The naming of Matera as a European Capital of Culture for 2019 is an opportunity to bring visitors far into the land of the *mezzogiorno*. By creating interactive and deeply specific cultural experiences and artistic exhibits, visitors will understand Basilicata in a deeper way, learning from local people

and even at times following in the locals' footsteps.

Shows such as *Quantum Danza* will combine theatre, dance and electronic music to tell the story of 20th-century cultural

revolutions performed in the ancient setting of Matera. The *Cava del Sole* is a space made up of various caves of *tuffo*. In 2019, the space will be home to *Circus+*, which will hold events dedicated to circus arts. The unique setting will be a treat for locals and visitors alike, as the space has been transformed to accommodate this new exhibit.

Another of the committee's wonderful ideas was to set up *Matera Alberga*. This is a project in which contemporary art is installed in different hotels all

around the sassi. It is supposed to give off a friendly, close-knit neighborhood vibe to visitors and recall the old feeling of those who lived in the sassi in the past. The contemporary art will be site-specific and will highlight the beauty of the interesting twists and turns of Matera's tiny streets.

In a territory that was once called a "national shame" by politician *Palmiro Togliatti* and that was once written about in gory detail in Carlo Levi's *Christ Stopped at Eboli*, 2019 will prove that the region is now anything but a shameful mark on Italy's beautiful South. It is a vibrant, ancient culture that thrives, and the projects in store for 2019 will prove just that. For more information, visit www.matera-basilicata2019.it

Venice Art Biennale

The 58th International Art Exhibition at the *Biennale di Venezia* will take place from May 11 to November 24, 2019, at the Central Pavillion (called *Giardini*) and the *Arsenale*, as well as other venues around Venice. The title of the 2019 exhibition is "May You Live in Interesting Times."

Ralph Rugoff, the curator of the 2019



Leonardo da Vinci was

exhibition, says “*May You Live in Interesting Times*” will aim to welcome its public to an expansive experience of the deep involvement, absorption and creative learning that art makes possible,” and calls the interactions between visitors and exhibits around the city “playful.”

Venice is a destination unto itself no matter what the year is but it is most magical during a Biennale unlike any other city in the world and feels magical even on the most ordinary of days. You can only imagine, then, how special the mood is when Venice houses art shows in multiple locations dotted around the city. The Giardini and the Arsenale are both magnificent spaces in which to reflect on the exhibits.

The 58th edition of the Biennale will have work from about 50 participants from different countries. The *Padiglione Italia*, one of the exhibition spaces, will highlight Italian artists *Enrico David*, *Chiara Fumai* and *Liliana Moro*. This exhibit will emphasize themes such as daily life, survival, tradition and narration through the eyes of these three Italian artists.

Other events of the Biennale are yet to be announced, but it is sure to be a thought-provoking experience for visitors to Venice and Venetians alike, as all the previous years have been. The Biennale of Venezia is set apart by the fact that visitors interact with the spaces and the city in a way visitors to

a closed museum space do not. Admission (can be used on multiple days) is 25€ For more information, visit www.labiennale.org

Da Vinci in Milan

To commemorate the 500th anniversary of the death of one of the greatest minds of all time, the city of Milan is hosting year-long celebrations of the life and work of *Leonardo da Vinci*.

The 15th-century *Castello Sforzesco* is the heart of the “*Milano e Leonardo*” exhibition. Da Vinci spent time at the castle when he worked for Duke Ludovico Sforza and spent most of his

time in the *Sala delle Asse*, or the tower room, where he decorated the ceiling and the walls of the room with nature motifs. Since 2013, this special room has been closed for restoration, but for the anniversary of da

Vinci’s death, the space will open for a special visit from May 2, 2019. A multimedia installation will enhance the visitor experience by explaining the space in a virtual way and making sense of the ornate details DaVinci hid in every design.

Also at the Castello Sforzesco, In the *Sala delle Armi* from May 2 to January 2, a multimedia display will show how the city of Milan looked during Leonardo’s times. From May 16 to August 18 in the *Cappella Ducale*, another exhibition will take place focused on Leonardo’s contributions to nature, art and science and will include original drawings done by the master himself and his team members.



Views above the Arsenale

Another hotspot to celebrate Leonardo’s anniversary is the *Palazzo Reale*. From March 4 to June 23, the museum will hold “*The Marvellous World of Nature Before and After Leonardo*.” Fossils, minerals and embalmed animals belonging to the museum will tell the story of DaVinci’s discoveries.

Fans of science and engineering should visit the *Veneranda Biblioteca Ambrosiana* which is set to host four exhibitions dedicated to Leonardo during the year. One of the most exciting will be on display from March when the focus will be on the *Codex Atlanticus*. The museum will display 23 pages of the book containing designs and studies done by the hand of the master.

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born in Tuscany in 1452.

*A visit to Sannio is a gift to the palate of course, but also a feast for the eyes. Its history is so far reaching, that Italy's first dinosaur was even discovered in the territory in the 1980s and nicknamed **Ciro**.*



For cinema fans, Sky network is set to create a film in 2019 under the working title *Inside Leonardo*. The film will be set in Florence, Milan, Rome and France and will paint a picture of Leonardo as a scientist, inventor, artist and overall Renaissance man of talent. After opening in Italian cinemas and premiering on Italian television, it will be distributed world.

For more information as it becomes available, visit www.leonardodavincicelebration.org

European Wine City 2019

The *Sannio Falenghina* territory in Campania, including the towns of *Guardia Sanframondi, Castelvenere, Sant'Agata de' Goti, Torrecuso and Solopaca* has been given the prestigious title of European Wine City 2019 by RECEVIN, the European Network of Wine Cities. These municipalities, all in the province of Benevento, are home to the *Sannio Falenghina* wine which is a dry, fresh, somewhat fruity wine produced in Campania since the start of the 19th century.

The Sannio Falenghina area falls into the wider *Valle del Calore* where about 40% of all the wine in Campania is produced. The land in the valley, named for the *Calore* river which runs

through it, is extremely fertile and has contributed to the fruitful agriculture of the surrounding areas for centuries. The landscapes are breath-taking with hilly valleys running for miles until they are abruptly interrupted by a magnificent mountain range decorated with cultivated land, sheep, cows and other agricultural wonders.



Lucia Foschini

Vineyards of Guardia San Framondi

With its prestigious title for the year ahead, Sannio will hold meetings, conferences and food and wine events to highlight the specialties of the region. By winning this title, the region has been cast onto the world's stage of winemakers and it is about time! Sannio is rarely put on the tourist radar, but the residents are hoping to change that with the European Wine City title. More than 120 initiatives will take place in the coming year to present the richness of the land, the hospitality of the people and the particularities of the centuries-old wine traditions to the world.

A visit to Sannio is a gift to the palate of course, but also a feast for the eyes. Its history is so far-reaching, that Italy's first dinosaur was even discovered in the territory in the 1980s and nicknamed *Ciro*. For those interested in more recent history, a walk through any of the cities in



Historic street

Sannio can lead you to ancient walls, Roman arches, Byzantine churches and Norman constructions. For a week in August, usually from the 4th to the 10th, Sannio holds its weeklong wine festival.

Visitors interested in seeing the grape harvest should visit the region in September and October. In December, Sannio is transformed into a winter wonderland with Christmas markets, concerts and nativity scenes.

The particularity of this region is that, much like the rest of Campania, it has been continuously inhabited for thousands of years by diverse tribes and people. The richness of the cuisine and the skills of the wine-makers have been centuries in the making. The people of this territory are deeply

Founded in 1926, *Ducati* is

connected to the land and in 2019, visitors are invited to learn from the locals and appreciate the loveliness of Sannio and the province of Benevento like centuries of visitors have done before. For more information, visit www.recevin.eu

Escher A Napoli

The Escher exhibit has been travelling for the past few years and has attracted a record number of visitors at most of its stops. Naples' *Palazzo delle Arti Napoli (PAN)* is currently serving as the exhibit's temporary home, and about 200 works are on display there until April 22, 2019.

Mauritz Cornelis Escher was born in the Netherlands at the end of the 19th century and combined mathematic operations with visual art. The romantic scenes of the sea, sky and mountains in *Campania* clearly cast a spell on Escher, and the pieces in the Naples exhibition are largely from the spring of 1923, when he was traveling up the Amalfi Coast to *Ravello*. This time of his life influenced him deeply, and it was in the region of Campania that he met and fell in love with his Swiss wife, *Jetta Umiker*.

While living in Switzerland and other places in Europe, Escher continued his fanatical obsession with interlocking, repetitive and at times complex patterns. Give yourself plenty



Hand with Reflecting Sphere



PAN Gallery

of time to experience this exhibit as you'll want to spend time on each and every piece to study the intricacies and hidden shapes in Escher's genius designs. It is highly recommended to take a free audioguide when visiting the exhibit so you do not miss any detail. The guide proficiently describes the complex three-dimensionality of some of Escher's work and helps visitors grasp this man's genius. Admission is 13€ For more information, please visit www.arthemisia.it/it/escher_napoli

Ducati Theme Park

Motorsport fans, rejoice! In 2019, *Ducati World* will open as an eight-acre themed addition to the *Mirabilandia Amusement Park* in *Savio, Ravenna*, in the *Emilia-Romagna* region. Mirabilandia is already a destination for fun-seeking families and kids of all ages, and Ducati World will attract those with a true need for speed.

One key attraction of the Ducati park will be a rollercoaster that simulates riding on a *Panigale V4* bike. Passengers will feel like real motorcycle riders, having control over accelerating, braking and racing against competitors on simulated parallel tracks.

The park will also have an area called "Ducati Experience" where other state-of-the-art ride simulators will thrill visitors. A showroom will hold iconic Ducati motorcycles from the past. Three Ducati-themed refreshment areas will be in the park, in addition to a Ducati shop, which will sell apparel and accessories.



Michele Testini

Ducati

The choice to open Ducati World at Mirabilandia in the heart of Emilia-Romagna is not an accident by any means. Ducati World will have home-track advantage, given that Mirabilandia is in the heart of Italy's Motor Valley and very close to the Ducati factories in Bologna.

Visiting Mirabilandia and Ducati World will be a treat for racing fans, but also for food enthusiasts, given that Emilia-Romagna is considered one of the food capitals of Italy. The whole of Mirabilandia will take a full day or even more to visit, but guests can venture out into the surrounding territories for *tortellini in brodo* and delicious *prosciutto*.

Opening dates have not yet been released, but predictions are for some time in 2019. Ticket prices will be announced in the coming months, but general entrance to the Mirabilandia park costs at least 20€, depending on the day of the week and the seasonal demand. For more information, visit www.ducatiworld.mirabilandia.it

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now owned by *Lamborghini.*

Free Admission to State Museums

After four years of offering monthly free admission to the public, the Italian Ministry of Culture and Italian state-sponsored museums are introducing a new program in 2019 that will increase the number of free-admission days from 12 to 20. As in previous years, the new initiative will apply to all 486 state-owned museums, historical and archaeological sites, gardens and monuments.

In previous years, museums offered free admission on the first Sunday of every month — an immensely popular program that increased museum access, but also led to long lines and large crowds on those days, creating logistical headaches and frustration for visitors. Now, the free-admission days will be spread out throughout the year, hopefully leading to better crowd management and more breathing room so that visitors can fully enjoy their museum experience.

While some days will be free at museums nationwide — including



Maurizio Zanetti

Turin's Egyptian Museum



Colosseum

March 5 to 10, 2019 — others may vary among museums and will be decided by each institution's director depending on seasonal and regional visitor patterns. At more popular sites such as the Colosseum or the Uffizi Gallery, which are already crowded on weekends, free-admission days may be on weekdays or in the off season.

All state-owned museums will have 20 free-admission days, and sites can choose to offer additional free or reduced admission days at any time, such as on holidays. For example, in past years, the Egyptian Museum in Turin has offered discounts to Arabic speakers, as well as on Valentine's Day.

Visitors ages 18 to 25 will receive 2€ admission at all state-sponsored museums on any day of the year starting in 2019, a move intended to open doors to art for young people of all socioeconomic backgrounds. For more information, visit www.beniculturali.it

Reviving Solomeo

Like many small, rural towns in Italy, Solomeo's population has dwindled to just 436 because of urbanization. Soon, though, visitors may outnumber residents thanks to *Brunello Cucinelli*, who has invested in this Umbrian town so thoroughly that the town is experiencing a rebirth.

Cucinelli, a native of nearby *Castel Rigone*, is a billionaire designer known for the eponymous fashion brand he started 40 years ago. He is also a philosopher, and subscribes to "humanistic capitalism," in which companies invest in their communities.

Over the past 25 years, Cucinelli has put this philosophy into practice by investing millions of euros in restoring



Cucinelli's monument to the Dignity of Man



Vineyards of Brunello Cucinelli

the medieval Umbrian town's natural and historical beauty. Now, following the recent unveiling of the restoration project, the town is officially ready for visitors.

He began by renovating Solomeo's castle in 1982 as his company's headquarters, and then set out to revitalize the town's other landmarks, including the *Piazza della Pace* and the Church of St. Bartholomew's nave, frescoes, and organ. Once the company headquarters were expanded and moved to the outskirts of town, the castle was repurposed again and now houses the School of Arts and Crafts, which aims to preserve the town's handicraft traditions such as tailoring, masonry, and landscaping.

Cucinelli also built some new additions that can be enjoyed in 2019: A new theater screens movies and puts on plays, while a "Tribute to Human Dignity," an 80-foot travertine marble monument, features five arches symbolizing the Americas, Europe, Asia, Africa, and Oceania. To entice visitors, Solomeo hosts cultural activities such as festivals and concerts. The Villa Solomei Festival is dedicated

The Colosseum is the most-



The kiosk will assign visitors an entry time for the same day - sometimes one to two hours later, depending on crowd levels - and, tickets in hand, guests return at their assigned time.



to music, while the Solomeo Renaissance Festival, held annually at the end of July, pays tribute to the era's artisans, cuisine, and games.

To beautify the outskirts of town, he planted sunflowers, wheat, and an orchard with apricot, plum, and peach trees. He also added grapevines and a winery, whose first wine, a red blend of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, that will be on sale in 2019.

And he's not done yet - Cucinelli intends the revitalization project to be ongoing and last for millennia, and would someday like to restore the church's 12th-century façade. For more information, visit www.brunellocucinelli.com

New System at Uffizi

The *Uffizi Gallery* in Florence is infamous for its long lines that stretch from two to four hours in peak season. That's about to change, as the museum has completely revamped its ticketing system, virtually eliminating queues for its 2.2 million visitors per year.

Instead of waiting in line to purchase a ticket at the counter — and wasting precious time that could be spent sightseeing — visitors can walk right

up to one of seven ticket kiosks and buy tickets. The kiosk will assign visitors an entry time for the same day — sometimes one to two hours later, depending on crowd levels — and, tickets in hand, guests return at their assigned time. In the meantime, they can explore the surrounding area, pop into another attraction, or grab a bite to eat.

The new, innovative system relies on an algorithm developed by computer scientists at the *University of L'Aquila* in *Abruzzo*. To determine the best time to



g. u., flickr.com

Crowds from around the corner of Uffizi



Thilo Hilberer, flickr.com

Cramming to get a look

assign people to visit, the algorithm factors in the time of day, time of year, weather and number of large tour groups attending that day.

The system assesses crowd levels and patterns, considering that groups of 15 or more tend to slow down visitors who follow them. According to the museum's director, Eike Schmidt, when the weather is bad — rainy or too hot — people spend up to 45 minutes longer than average in the museum. The algorithm also has the potential to adjust to increasing numbers of tourists — as 200,000 more people visited the Uffizi in 2017 than in 2016, the number of annual visitors is likely to keep increasing.

The Uffizi tested the new system on a recent free-admission Sunday, a once-a-month event when the museum is more crowded than usual, with good results. The testing phase continues for now to ensure any glitches are resolved, but the new system is expected to debut in 2019. For more information, visit www.uffizi.it

—Danielle Abbazia, Elaine Murphy, Kathy McCabe

visited “museum” in Italy.



her book *Five Quarters*. Latteria Studio is in a class of its own because you learn about Roman cooking from women who have made it their life missions to absorb everything there is to learn from their adopted city. They passionately share tips on everything from recipes to the perfect place to buy pottery and conversations with the teachers are memorable, meaningful and above all fun.

Before we head to the market on *via Niccolini*, Alice takes out a pad and pencil and we make a grocery list. She asks us our preferences and we decide on pumpkin pasta, baked fish and a plum galette.

We pick up three-quarters of a *Mantovana* pumpkin, a *broccolo romanesco*, which is the more beautiful cousin of typical American supermarket broccoli, *puntarelle* (Catalonia chicory) for a classic Roman salad, zucchini and zucchini flowers, plums, *mozzarella*, and clementines to eat while we walk down the hill to the cooking studio.

The *Latteria Studio* is the former home of a creamery, hence the name. It's used for the Market to Table classes and also for

photoshoots for food blogs and cooking books. It's flooded by Roman sunshine on two sides and has a giant work table in the center of the room.

Here we meet a native Roman on the Latteria Studio squad. A chef and cultivator of an enviable garden, *Carla Tomasi* returned to her homeland after

running a restaurant for many years in the UK. She preps three *focacce* for the oven,

and then hand-whips cream for *maritozzi*,

a Roman specialty, eaten only in the morning. Maritozzi are small buns filled with dense whipped cream.

Alice and Carla give us all aprons and set us out to work. My first task is to cut

the Mantovana pumpkin for the filling in our *cappellacci* pasta. Carla's hands expertly chop, knead and dice the rainbow of food on the work table. I'm decidedly slower than Carla, but try my best to keep the shapes of the vegetables uniform while keeping all of my fingers.

The others in the group are slicing

puntarelle into strips with a specialized wooden tool with a mesh center found in every Roman kitchen. After, the strips go into ice cold water where

they will curl, then they're drained and dressed with a mixture of olive oil, garlic and anchovies. Some of the people in the group are turned off by the idea of a garlic and anchovy dressing, but they're quickly converted once they taste the mixture.

"Pasta doesn't break, come on!" Carla

tells us when she notices we are all treating the pasta dough a little too delicately. Her sure hands crank out perfect *cappellacci* shapes, and the rest of the group keeps up

under her guidance. With the dough left over after we cut the circles for the *cappellacci*, Carla rolls the scraps into two squares, coats one in the filling, and covers it with the second square. She cuts the three layers into squares with crinkled edges and tells us, "This is what they call *pasta lorda*, dirty pasta," with a chuckle.

Next, I am assigned to get started on the fruit galette. I slice and arrange ripe plums on a pie crust and Alice shows us how to close the galette into the perfect shape while reminding us rough edges have a certain charm to them.

The Market to Table class at Latteria Studio runs a few times a month and the

schedule is actively updated on their website. By talking to Carla, Alice or Rachel, courses can be arranged for guests of all ages. The team tries to never exceed six people, so the experience is truly hands on and active for all involved. Most courses start at the Testaccio Market, which is a favorite of Rachel's and a stronghold of traditional Roman cuisine, but the market choice may vary from class to class.

—Danielle Abbazia

The Details

Market to Table at Latteria Studio

(39) 8352 9990

www.latteriastudio.com

Price: 140€ per person



Whipping cream for maritozzi



Making cappellacci



Fruit galette



Our market purchases