



# THE CRIER

OF FLORENCE  
MONTHLY CULTURAL NEWSPAPER  
1966-1968

SPECIAL EDITION

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## U.S.A. STREET FAIR INSPIRES COMMUNITY SPIRIT

On September 15, 2007, the U.S. Consulate General of Florence hosted the first-ever U.S.A. Street Fair held on the Consulate grounds. The event was designed to provide vital information to both permanent and short-term English-speaking residents of Florence and of the province. Consul General Nora B. Dempsey and City Councillor for Immigration and Integration Lucia De Siervo officially opened the fair before hundreds of English speaking families and Italian citizens. During the four-hour event visitors enjoyed to an array of helpful information, thanks to the presence of over 65 exhibitors, and representatives of local government offices, community institutions, volunteer organizations, and social network groups who offer service and activities to the English-speaker community.

These included national and local city government institutions, service organizations boasting volunteer opportunities, religious organization and useful publications, schools, cultural institutions, entertainment, sport, medical and health facilities, commercial services and more.

Free seminars given by experts in the field were offered throughout the afternoon on a variety of essential "survival" topics, such as safety, permesso di soggiorno regulations, public transportation, voting and volunteerism. Activities for all age groups boosted the energy of the fair and entertained participants and casual passer-by. The Dindi Combo jazz and swing duo wowed the crowd with golden oldies, while the Children's Corner kept kids amused with face painting of storytelling.

The fair attracted an estimated 1,000 English-speaking members of the Florentine community. Especially exceptional was the range of exhibitors present who worked side by side, as the mosque, the synagogue, Democrats Abroad, Republicans Abroad, peace activists, the Gay Network, and many more. The event inspired significant community spirit, the lasting effects of which we expect to see for some time to come.



The US Consulate General of Florence speaks to people gathered along Piazza Garibaldi



Palazzo Canevaro as seen from Piazza Garibaldi



Visitors asking for information at the Stand of the Questura

*The USA Street Fair was a novelty that neither the English-speaking residents and tourists wanted to miss.*

*But this was also true of the Florentines and other visiting Italians. The people flocked Lung' Arno Vespucci from Piazza Garibaldi to Ponte alla Vittoria.*

*Its purpose to create a meeting between foreigners and Italians was a great success.*

*Many of the visitors expressed the hope that it would be repeated. And why not?*

- The Crier of Florence -



The city bus line creates curiosity



The British Stand at the Street Fair

**U.S.A. STREET FAIR  
INSPIRES COMMUNITY SPIRIT**
**THE EDITORIAL**

The U.S. Consulate General of Florence organized unprecedented "Street Fair" in the month of September last which has provoked our journalistic interest.

Despite the many obstacles that had to be overcome, we have been able to publish this 2 "Special of THE CRIER OF FLORENCE."

Many English speaking people were not able to attend the Fair personally. With this issue we hope that they will be able to breathe the atmosphere desired by Consul General Nora B. Dempsey. It was her fabulous idea.

The purpose was to bring different cultures together. Here we have tried to further that aim. Many of the articles found herewith are testimonials of the ties that can be found between Italian and foreigners.

It is necessary to learn each other's mode of thinking. Dialogue is most important between different cultures.

The SPECIAL ISSUE of THE CRIER OF FLORENCE for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the November 1966 flood had a great success. We were not able to satisfy all the requests. We are certain this Second Special will have the same popularity.....

In closing, we must thank the Mayor of SORANO **Pierandrea Vanni** for his support. Without his encouragement this SPECIAL would have had many more difficulties.

*Nicolò Mattina*, editor

[Nimatt@alice.it](mailto:Nimatt@alice.it)



Dancers from Florence dance center -- ole'

**A FEW NOTES OF THE CONSUL  
GENERAL OF USA  
NORA B. DEMPSEY**


Consul General Nora B Dempsey (right) with City Councillor for Immigration and Integration Lucia De Siervo (left)



Nora B. Dempsey assumed duties as Consul General of the United States in Florence and Special Representative of the United States to the Republic of San Marino (until 2007) in September 2005.

After graduating from Carnegie-Mellon University, Ms. Dempsey joined the diplomatic corps of the U.S. Department of State in 1987, specializing in peace negotiations, particularly in the Middle East and Africa.

From 1991 to 1993, Ms. Dempsey served in the Office of the Secretary of State, where she prepared the visits of U.S. Secretaries of State Baker, Eagleburger and Christopher to more than 22 foreign countries. She was then assigned to the Special Middle East Coordinator's Office where she served as part of the U.S. negotiating team through 1995.

Ms. Dempsey also worked in the Political Section of the American Embassy in Rome, frequently taking part in Secretary of State Albright's peace negotiation missions to the Middle East and in the missions to Africa in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks there.

She went on to become Director for African Affairs in the National Security Council, a position she left after one year, in order to specialize in Arabic language, which she now speaks fluently, as well as Italian and French.

Over the past two years, Ms. Dempsey has played an active role in the social, political and cultural life of Tuscany and Emilia Romagna. Thanks to her specific expertise in Middle East issues and conflict resolution, she has focused on immigration concerns and raised awareness of the benefits of multiculturalism. The Consulate sponsored performances by Kantara--an Arab-American fusion band--in cooperation with the city authorities and Islamic communities of Florence, Colle Val D'Elsa, Modena, Bologna, and Reggio Emilia..

Ms. Dempsey has contemporaneously sought to establish optimal relations between the city of Florence and the Consulate by encouraging positive integration of the 10,000 American students who study here each year. The Consulate has also encouraged Italian students to study in the United States; more than 1,000 Italian students attended the first-ever "Study USA Fair", held outdoors on the Consulate grounds in May 2007.



Visitors using umbrellas to shade themselves from the hot sun



The Stars and Stripes waves over the many who attended

# Philadelphia, Pa. Is Firenze's Twin City



Philadelphia in Pennsylvania, is located in the southeast part of the state at the junction of the Schuylkill and Delaware River. It is coextensive with Philadelphia County

Philadelphia, the City of Brotherly love, was settled in 1681 by Capt. William Markham, who, with a small band of colonists, had been sent out by his cousin, William Penn. Penn arrived the following year with the intention of creating a refuge for the Quakers.

In the period before the American Revolution, the city outstripped all others in the colonies in education, arts, science, industry, and commerce. In 1774-1776, the First and Second Continental Congresses met in Philadelphia, and, from 1781-1783, the city was the capital of the United States under the Articles of Confederation. In 1790, it became the nation's capital under the Constitution and remained so until the seat of the federal government moved to Washington D.C. in 1800.

Within a half-century of the founding of the nation at Independence Hall, Philadelphia had emerged as a leader in America's industrial Revolution. Today the steam locomotive and hat factories of the 19<sup>th</sup> century have been replaced by diverse manufacturing specialties such as chemicals (including pharmaceutical), medical devices, transportation equipment, and printing and publishing. In the services sector, Philadelphia leads in subsectors such as health services, insurance carrier, legal service, and

architecture and engineering services.

Philadelphia is also home to branches of the U.S. Mint, the Federal Reserve System, and the Internal Revenue Service.

The city's harbor, one of the largest freshwater ports in the world, is the centerpiece of the AmeriPort facility in south Philadelphia, a major shipping center with rail links to Midwest and Canada.

The city abounds in landmarks of early American history, including Independence Hall, where the Declaration of Independence was signed, and the Liberty Bell.

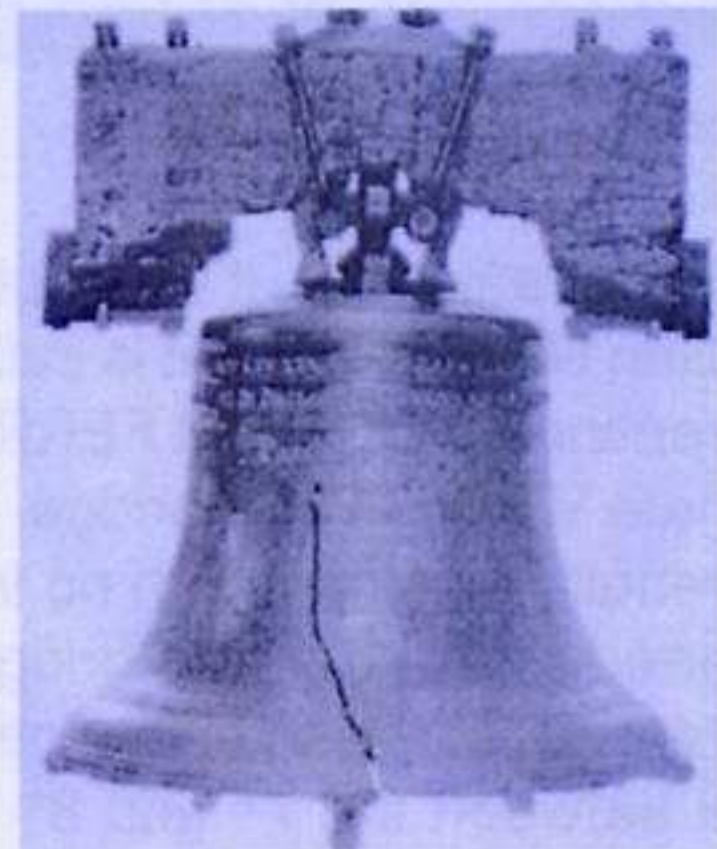
Other significant tourist attractions are the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Franklin Institute Science Museum, and the Philadelphia Zoological Gardens.



Independence hall



Fountain  
at the  
Philadelphia  
Museum of Art



The liberty bell

# THE ARNO AND ITS BRIDGES

By Elie Lattes

Coming from the Eastern States and having crossed the Delaware and the Susquehanna, when I saw the Arno I thought it ridiculous that it should be called a river. With time I learned to love it and to FEAR it. I was one of its victims during the 1966 November flood!

The river Arno which flows through the middle of Florence can be considered the pulse of the city.



Ponte Santa Trinità - August 1944  
(foto Archivio Torrini)

In the summer it is where many of the older citizens are drawn in the evening to capture some stray breeze from the water. During the day of this period the younger ones hope to be refreshed in its summer shallow waters with one eye on the unexpected arrival of some prohibiting "vigile". In the winter it is where people gather, both young and old, to make the most of the warm sun shining on the river and its banks.



Ponte Vecchio - Nov. 4<sup>th</sup> 1966 (foto Archivio Torrini)



Ponte Vecchio restored

The Florentines have a strong affection for their river and consequently for the bridges that span it. They felt worse seeing them blown up during WWII than about their own devastated homes. Each bridge has its story. When the Germans withdrew to the right bank during that August night in 1944, blowing up each one to delay the advancing Allies on other side, their history was increased of still another event.

Only Ponte Vecchio was left intact. the "old bridge" defied their mines. However it was thought too



Ponte alla Carraia - Today

weak to support military traffic. But it was not. Starting with Ponte San Niccolò or as it is called by the authentic Florentines, PONTE DI FERRO. It was a typically ornate Victorian iron bridge. Although it has been rebuilt in cement with no iron visible, it is still referred to as "the iron bridge". It becomes important together with the other bridges on the night between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of September when extravagantly dubbed boats go up and down the river for the traditional "fes-



Ponte Santa Trinita



Spring's statue Ponte Santa Trinita

ta della Rificolona". Then it is crammed by children carrying their precious Japanese lanterns (the rificolone) together with their parents to see fluvial mummies 'parade.

The next bridge following the current is Ponte alle Grazie. The corner stone was placed for it in 1237 by the Podestà of Florence, Rubaconte da Mantella,. The construction was supervised by the architect Lapo. For quite some time it was called "ponte Rubaconte" in memory of the Podestà. The name "Le Grazie" comes from a small chapel dedicated to Santa Maria delle Grazie built by the Alberti family on the first pylon. Not too long ago there were "cells " or chapels on each pylon inhabited by pious ladies. After WWII it was rebuilt by Architect Michelucci. It is probably the most elegant bridge that adorns the river.

What tourist has come to Florence and has not crossed Ponte Vecchio? Silly question. They may not have time to line up to see the Uffizzi

Gallery, but they will not miss Ponte Vecchio . Here the unique shops offer all sorts alluring goods. Above all jewelry. It is the most photographed of the bridges. Built in 1345 by the architect Neri di Fioravanti, it cost 70,00 fiorini. It was populated with 48 shops. The characteristic projecting "shacks" are the back rooms of the stores. These were added in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Vasari constructed the passage over the bridge connecting Palazzo Vecchio with Palazzo Pitti so that the Grand Duke of Tuscany could go from his residence to "work" without stepping into the streets. The Germans, retreating, blasted all the buildings on both sides of the bridge so the debris would stall further the Allies who were already in San Frediano. Obvious the passage way crumbled together with the homes. It took many years before it was rebuilt as it was. During the November 1966 flood the bridge suffered disastrous damages. Again it was to be rebuilt as we see it today.

From Ponte Vecchio it is but a minute's walk



Ponte Santa Trinita

to Ponte Santa Trinita. Art critics were amazed that the heavy and ponderous Ammanati could have designed the beautiful rhythmic Ponte Santa Trinita. Only during its reconstruction between 1955 and 1956 was it established from written records that Michelangelo had designed it but it had been constructed by Ammanati. A big difference. It had been built in 1566, finished in 1569 under Cosimo I. It replaced a bridge built by Taddeo Gaddi in 1333 which had been damaged in the great flood of that year. After the WWII the Florentines wanted their bridge back again

Continued from page 5

## THE ARNO AND ITS BRIDGES

“dove era e come era”. The task was not an easy one. In this day of modern and easy construction methods the architect in charge had to make a special study of XVI<sup>th</sup> century building system and direct the work accordingly.

This bridge's story is not finished. During WWII four statues representing the seasons were blown up together with the bridge. Three were



Ponte Amerigo Vespucci

pieced together completely: Winter by Taddeo Landini, Giovanni Caccini's Summer and Autumn. But the graceful girl representing Spring lovingly modelled by Francavilla was put into its corner on the bridge without its head. It was rumored that some souvenir happy American was seen picking it up out of the rubble. If this were true, maybe some ex-soldier in Arkansas, for instance, had the head and did not know how important it was to the Florentines—how could he be advised? Giuseppe Fantacci, the Italian Parker Pen agent, suggested pasting a poster in towns throughout the world offering 3000 dollars to whoever could give a clue to the whereabouts of the head. Years passed, nothing came of it. The 3000 dollars were given to community of Florence to be used for charity. On October 6<sup>th</sup>, 1961, a laborer, Signor Lucaroni, saw a bit of white marble gleaming the dirt stones as he was dragging sand out of the river bed to be used on the ever growing Autostrada del Sole. Could it be it? It was!! “La testa della Primavera” he exulted. After seventeen years Francavilla's “Primavera” was pieced together again.

In contrast with this masterpiece, the next bridge is the feudal like Ponte alla Carraia. It was built in wood at first on stone foundations in 1218. Financed by the “Umiliati” monks, it was rebuilt after a flood in 1264 by the Dominican architects Fra Sisto and Fra Ristoro. In 1304 on May Day, legend has it, the painter Buffalmacco and some friends represented a scene from hell on boats on the Arno under the bridge. The weight of the spectators who had come to see the “pittore matto” was so that the bridge collapsed together with the audience. Further records show that Fra Giovanni da Campi, still a Dominican monk, was responsible for its reconstruction in 1333 after another disastrous flood. In 1557 the Arno became furious again and this time the bridge was restored completely by Ammanati. In 1887 it was widened because traffic had increased! The bridge in this manner had lost its original aspect. When the Allies finally crossed the river they had to build a Bailey Bridge in 1944 and which was in use 'way into a decade later. Rebuilt until the 1966 flood took it away with its rushing waters. It together with the others have been at peace with the Arno for last 41 years.

A new and modern bridge has been added to the gama. Designed by the collaboration of Florence's architects Giuseppe and Enzo Gori and Ernesto Nelli. Everyone was leery as to its effect in Renaissance Florence, but actually it did fit in beautifully: a straight white line during the day, an even streak of lights during the night. It is dedicated to a famous navigator, especially dear to AMERICA, Amerigo Vespucci. He was born in that part of the city.

The last bridge at the edge of the city, just before the natural park “Le Cascine” is Ponte della Vittoria. It was dedicated to WWI. After the Second World War it was the first bridge to be rebuilt because it is the main artery connecting the highways from Florence to Leghorn and Pisa.

In any season, at any hour, under each bridge, along each parapet, there will always be a fisherman. He will have five or six people waiting to see what he will catch. Another constant scene along the banks are young couples strolling tightly clasped becoming silhouettes against the yellow light of the wrought iron lamp posts sentinels on the wall that closes in the river.

***The Arno and its bridges are a vital part of Florence and its people.***



## EDINBURGH: A City of Contrasts

The British week was held in Florence from October 8<sup>th</sup> to October 16<sup>th</sup>. During this event the city of Edinburgh renewed the existing ties with its twin sister City of Florence.

It has been said that Edinburgh is a city of contrasts: it is the capital of Scotland, the headquar-

Extract from  
**THE CRIER** of Florence  
October 1966



By L.A. Herbert



Edinburgh castle

ters of the Scottish Church and the Government, but regardless of the austere atmosphere created by its historical vicissitudes it is a cheerful and welcoming city.

The history of Edinburgh is full of events most of which have taken place in the Castle "Dunedin! Which means "the fortress with the sloping crest. It was the old name given to the city. The ruins of the Castel date back before the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Four centuries later on these ruins King Malcolm III rebuilt the Castle and made it his residence.

Malcolm is not only an historical figure but also a Shakesperean personage. He was Duncan's son, who was murdered by Macbeth in 1039. Malcom's wife built the still existing Chapel, which is one the oldest building in Edinburgh.

Edinburgh's museums remember great names of the past as well as historical events. Among the many men of letters there is the national poet of Scotland, Robert Burns and writers such as Walter Scott and Robert Louis Stevenson, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the originator of Sherlock Holmes was born in Edinburgh, as well as the inventor of the telephone Alexander Graham Bell.

The city has now two universities the old historical one – and the newly erected The Napier college, after Edinburgh's great mathematician, John Napier.

## A LETTER FROM FIRENZE'S SISTER CITY FLORENCE, ALABAMA

The town of Florence, Alabama, was established in 1818 through two land auctions (one in March and one in July) overseen by the owners of the 5,500 acres of undeveloped property, the Cypress Land Company.

This company of stockholders hired a 23-year-old surveyor/engineer from Tuscany by the name of Ferdinand Sannoner to work with General John Coffee to design the layout of our beautiful city on the banks of the Tennessee River - as Firenze lies next to the Arno. (Between 1818 and 1852, Signor Sannoner's original map of Florence became so frayed that the city leaders paid him 25 US dollars to draft a new one. The 1852 map that he drew is still in existence, but the 1818 map is not.

You will see evidence of his European background such as: one entire city block designated a "Public Walk" (today's Wilson Park); a street named "Market" extending outside the city to accommodate farmers bringing their produce into town; a thoroughfare on the perimeter labeled "Circular Road" designed to keep down traffic congestion in the heard of the city.

Signor Sannoner's home was located on the southeast coner of Market and Tuscaloosa Streets, across the street from "Public Walk". Today a handsome library for our town, built in 2002 at a cost of 7,000,000 US dollars sits on his home site. Inside is the library, there is a marble medallion in the floor, ten feet in diameter. Its design an acknowledgement city kinship with Firenze. On its border are the words "Ex libris Florentinis", inside the circle are three giglios, Firenze's official symbol. The marble for these giglios is from Tuscany and has flecks of gold in it.

There is not a museum in Florence dedicated to Signor Sannoner, however, an original oil portrait of him hangs in Pope's Tavem, one of our museums whose building dates to 1840. Although there is not an annual parade to commemorate the founding of our city, there is an authentic Renaissance Feast held on the evening of the third Saturday each October, with seating limited to 200 fortunate diners. The next weekend, the fourth Saturday and Sunday in October, the official Alabama Renaissance Faire is held in Wilson Park in downtown Florence. Admission



Ferdinand Sannoner, survey / engineer from Tuscany

is free and thousands of people attend to enjoy entertainment, food and crafts reminiscent of the historical Renaissance. A large percentage of those is attendance wear elaborate costumes of the era as well. It's great weekend be in Florence, Alabama.

In conjunction with the Feast and the Faire, we have lectures, as well as musical and dramatic events throughout October (which we refer to as Renaissance Month). In fact, our city now refers to its self in its promotional publications as the "Renaissance City."

Our oral tradition is that Signor Ferdinand Sannoner was allowed by General John Coffee and other stockholders of the Cypress Land Company to name our town as a reward for his excellent work. He chose Florence since, also according to our tradition, FIRENZE was his favorite town in Tuscany.



Florence, Alabama - Frank Lloyd Wright Rosenbaum House



# POETRY

GIORGIO MICHELINI's VARIATIONS ON A THEME



As Giorgio would recite it in his own language:

## I TUOI OCCHI

Il dio della notte  
È arrabbiato:  
gli mancano  
due stelle.

Chiudi gli occhi,  
amore,  
che il dio non veda  
le sue stelle  
perdute.

As MIGUEL BOSE' would SING it:

## TUS OJPS

*El diòs de la noche  
Està enfadado:  
le faltan  
dos estrellas.*

*Apaga tus ojos,  
querida,  
que el dios no vea  
sus estrellas  
perdidas.*

As LOUIS ARMSTRONG would sing it:

## STAR EYES BLUES

God o' night got angry,  
fo'e's lack two o' iis stars.  
Oh, Yeah, pos' v'ly God o' night got angry  
fo' e's lack two o' 'is stars.

Shut yo' eyes, honey,  
doan' let that God see 'is lost stars.  
Luhve, oh luhve,  
switch off yo' eyes, luhve,  
doan' let dat Good see 'is lost strars.

## THE BRITISH INSTITUTE AND ITS 90 YEARS IN FLORENCE

When the France Institute was opened in Florence by the University of Grenoble in 1908, a group of English residents wished to create a similar center for English education.

The project was interrupted by the First World War and was not taken into consideration again until 1917. This time the group was formed by both English and Italians: Guido Ferrando, G.S. Gargano, Angelo Orvieto, Carlo Placci, Gaetano Salvemini, Aldo Sorani, Guido Bigli, Arthur Acton, Edward Hutton, Herbert Trench, and others.

The Spring of 1918 saw the actual beginning of the of the British Institute of Florence under the direction of Dr. Arthur Francis Spencer.

Success was rapid: with the first 150 students enrolled in the English language course, while cultural course lectures reaped a considerable audience as well. At the same time a library of 1,500 volumes was opened to scholars interested in English history and literature. Failures and frustrations were soon apparent: economic difficulties put the Institute face to face with severe problems. An English resident in Turin, Sir Walter Becker, answered an appeal for help and assured the necessary financial help for three years. From the first site in the Loggia Rucellai on Via della Vigna Nuova, the Institute was moved to Via dei Conti where began its activity. But soon even this locality was not sufficient and in 1923 the new Director, Mr. Harold Goad brought the Institute into the Renaissance palace of Antinori family. During this period the Institute was granted a "Royal Charter" upon Sir Rennell Rodd's and so was

given a definite status.

In 1939, during the period the Palace was being restored, the regular courses and conferences were transferred to an apartment in Borgo SS Apostoli: it was in this private apartment that the declaration of war in 1939 found the "British Institute". But notwithstanding this unhappy period, it was still possible to complete the scholastic term 1939-1940. The school returned to the newly restored Palazzo Antinori and conferences were held by Mr. Harold Goad. John Dover Wilson and Harold Acton.

The Institute did not open its doors again until 1946. From this year to date a great progress is evident regarding the interest in English courses and cultural conferences offered.

From 1966 under the enthusiastic care of Mr Ian Greenless, the British Institute can boast of a full and enriched cultural incentive. Over 36,000 volumes can be founded in its library. Cycles of conferences have been given by illustrious names, dedicated to various aspects of English life. Documentary films have been shown describing life in England. Exhibition of books on art and literature have reached their enthusiasts. The Library had been at its new address in Lungarno Guicciardini - but for only 10 months when the Arno raged over its bank on Nov. 1966. Today the director of British Institute of Florence is Vanessa Hall-Smith, she continues the tradition which marks 90 years in spreading knowledge of English culture in Florence and in Italy.

## A GOOD WILL TOUR

During the year 1966 PIERO BARGELLINI was the mayor of Florence . That year in the night between the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the 4<sup>th</sup> of November the river Arno raged through the city leaving an apocalyptic scene after it. Luck would have it that the Florentines had him for mayor. He not only was near to all the people damaged by the flood, by he also took a "GOOD WILL TOUR" of the United States to raise funds from all the Florence lovers. He with wife LELIA and daughter ANTONINA, went from the Eastern coast to the Far West to convince the Americans that Florence would soon be itself again with their help. And in no time its ancient gates would open again all tourists.

**Antonina describes her tripe in American with her parents:**

"In 1966 Florence was inundated by its river Arno. It was a real catastrophe for the city. When the waters withdrew we found that 500,000 cubic meters of mud invaded a good part of the city.

The Florentines started working immediately to clean up as much as possible . They were helped by many plus many young people arriving from every corner of the world. ( The "mud angels"). Among these many were Americans.

It was pure chance, but we lived in building once owned by GIOVANNI DA VERRAZZANO, the first European navigator to land in the bay which today is NEW YORK!

From America, and also other countries, arrived the much needed economic help. So much so that my father felt it his duty to thank the nations which had been most generous personally. First among these was the United States of America.

In March 1967 (five months after) my father, accompanied by my mother and me (I was 22 then) landed in America. Not by sea as our Giovanni da Verrazano did, but by air: the Kennedy Airport.

It was my father's intention to thank the Americans, but also to tell them that Florence had been resurrected and was ready to welcome, as before, all tourists from that side of the Atlantic.

The trip was a constant succession of meetings in splendid cities in delightful places with people of all types. There no town which did not offer my father the keys to their city and made him its honorary citizen.



Mayor Piero Bargellini with wife Lelia and youngest daughter Antonina at their arrival at Kennedy Airport of New York City

I remember that he was enraptured. He wandered around each city, admiring all, with the curiosity and enthusiasm of a child.

He even found New York pleasant and cheerful, where in the mornings he could happily hear the pigeons cooing on the window sill".



Florence - 1966 - Ted Kennedy with Antonina, daughter of the Mayor Piero Bargellini.



Sorano - The Aldobrandeschi fortress



Sovana: another view of the majestic Ildibranda Etruscan tomb which at time was the Church dedicated to San Mamiliano

## The Etruscan Triangle

Americans, Europeans, Chinese, Japanese and even expatriate Italians, you have come to Italy, You have certainly seen Venice, Florence, Rome, and probably even Naples and Capri.

But have you had the fortune to visit the Etruscan triangle? The triangle is formed by Sorano, Sovana, and Pitigliano. It is situated in the southern part of Tuscany. The three towns are steeped in history, art and artifacts, archeology, plus an exquisite local cuisine.

Here you can relax and enjoy them all. But not for just a day or two. There is too much to be seen and too much to do in each one.

The best place to forget your worries and assimilate the peace which emanates from this territory is Sorano spa Thermal spring water pours out from the volcanic rock offers many healing qualities.

SORANO is a city situated on volcanic rock—or as it is called: "tufo". It dominates the surrounding land and SOVANA. Built on an isthmus it overlooks deep canyons and valley thickly covered with vegetation. This position renders its streets (more like alleys) lead to the old quarter which hugs the small church dedicated to the Madonna. The homes which are actually towers climb up to the Piazza Vanni al Poio. The homes cortilone is perched on a cliff on the outer side of cluster of houses.

From here the descent reaches the gate called "dei Merli". Up again towards the arch skirting the old ghetto where for centuries the Jewish community lived in harmony with the rest of the inhabitants.

We reach the Rock called Masso Leopoldino, a particular cliff of tufo levigated by the hands of unknown "scavini", emerges over the center on the town with its Torre dell'Orologio or Clock Tower.

A breath taking panorama presents itself not only from this point but also from the Fortezza whose huge built, a severe mass, is softened by delicate artistic Renaissance crests of the ruling family the Orsini. Anonymous artisans, masons, scappellini, and scavini levigated the tufo to their own will and created the "uniqueness" which is SORANO. No architect has been able to reproduce what they have left for us to see today.

The Soranesi have always been proud to live in their special town. So much so, that they forced the "Granduca", after the collapse of Masso in the 1800's, to renounce to the reconstruction of a new zone outside the Castle: Instead they wanted him to reconstruct the house that had crumbled a Cotone and Merli. And so he did.

This habitant is exceptionally suited to stimulate fantasies. Those who have passed their childhood playing here know this only too well. This atmosphere gave birth a popular prophet CIOFRO and the poet MANFREDO VANNI. The latter, the grandfather of today's Mayor of Sorano, Pierandrea Vanni. The vineyards date back to unknown ages. Cultivated on the terraces of tufo, they offer not only the special white wine, but also a red wine of such excellent quality that they can stand on their own against the Chianti wines.

Therefore, Sorano presents a spectacular panorama, closes within itself a treasure in art, artisans, architecture, and history. There are so many aspects to this town that it must be visited with out being in a hurry and even in each of the seasons to fully appreciate its particularity.



Sovana: the "City Hall" a crest on the wall represents the "Pretore" who was then authority of the town.



Sovana: Details of remains of the columns which guarded the Ildebranda Etruscan tomb

## The Residence Village of "Terme di Sorano"



On a surface of about 6700 square meters of which about 3000 square meters are green natural woods around the thousand-year-old Pieve di S. Maria dell'Aquila. The village is composed of 30 apartments four of which constitute the historical side and 10 villas. Harmonically integrated in the surrounding panorama of wood, grazing lands, and cultivated fields. A few kilometres away the beautiful little towns of Sorano, Pitigliano, Saturnia, Scansano and Sovana. Considered jewels of the Maremma Grossetana

## SOVANA

Sovana is a Paradise for Etruscan buffs. Wherever you dig you can find tombs left by an extraordinary civilization of peaceful people.

The ones that be seen now are situated along a path cut deeply into the ground. It is thought that this gully could have been simply a way to reach the spectacular tombs; or simply a drainage for rainfalls; or still a lane for processions and sacred rites. The Etruscans have kept their secrets jealously to this very day. A mystery of thousands of years B.C.

Entering the path which the state road San Martino sul Fiora, which is at the gates of Sovana, crossing the stream Fologia where it forms a modest waterfall, one arrives at the tomb of the Sirena. It dates back to III-II B.C. It represents a sirene who wraps her tail around a young couple. This adorns the frontispiece.

Continuing on the same track, as a Gulliver in the land of giants, the sensation is that one is shrinking between walls of earth that are over 25 meters high. Between ferns and musk and exposed roots on a cliff there is a chapel of paleochristian times.

Another interesting gorge is the "Cavone". Looking upwards at the top of there are Etruscan tombs cut into wall of earth. Further down there are medieval niches.

On one of the walls an Etruscan inscription can still be seen, but not understood, together with a swastika. This symbol to them meant life; today, for us, it has another meaning.

Nearby, in the necropolis of Poggio Felceto can be found the most famous tomb of the area: the Ildebranda tomb dating back to III-II B.C. It's been named after the Pope Gregory VII, born Ildebrando in Sovana, in the year 1020 A.D., became pope in 1073 A.D. Twelve columns upheld a frieze with flora, fauna, and human figures in relief. The monument is completely cut into tufo and made of several sepulchral rooms. Tufo is friable, therefore such of the architectural elements have gone lost. But fragments have been found in the digs which were underway. In this way. A faithful reconstruction of the tombs was possible.

Leaving Sovana from gate Rocca, on the opposite side of the valley, there are other tombs. Of these the most important is called the Tomb of Sileno. This tomb has 2 peculiarities: it is the only one in the zone to be circular in form, and it was found completely intact. It is the last to discovered, in the year 1963. All the funeral accessories were there where the family of the bereaved one had placed them. High on the cliffs there cells cut into the tufo called "colombari". Probably these were used to store the ashes in urns of their dead.

A civilization, that of the Etruscans, which is greatly admired, yet so little is revealed of their life after centuries of studies and discoveries of many many scholars.



SORANO - SOVANA and *The Sorano Spa*

From the **North**: A1 - exit Chiusi - Chianciano Terme

Or A12 until Aurelia road - exit Manciano/Pitigliano

From the **South**: A1 exit Orvieto

From Aurelia road - exit Albinia /Manciano

**Information:** tel. 0564-63.30.99 - Sorano or

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