

THE FLORENTINE

YEAR XXII
FEBRUARY 2026
ISSUE 330



**MUSEUMS
UNITED**

As Evening Falls, We Set the Table.

Our dinners are shaped by the land, the time, and the season: carefully crafted dishes paired with the fine wines produced on the estate, served in an atmosphere that invites conversation, lingering, and return.

Discover the calendar of events, featuring seafood menus and culinary gatherings.

BOOK YOUR TABLE



**LA FATTORIA
DI VIGNAMAGGIO**

Via Montagliari, 29 | Greve in Chianti (FI) | www.vignamaggio.com



Helen Farrell
editor-in-chief

h.farrell@theflorentine.net

Strength in numbers

Michelangelo's *David* will never stop pulling in peeping eyes, which can only be a win-win situation for the Bargello. As of January 14, it was announced that the Galleria dell'Accademia and Museo Nazionale del Bargello would be merging management, making for a combined super museum to rival the likes of the Uffizi. In 2025, the **Accademia and Bargello Museums**, which already also runs the Medici Chapels Museum, Palazzo Davanzati, Orsanmichele and Casa Martelli, welcomed over three million visitors, with the Accademia making up the lion's share at just over two million. New director Andreina Contessa (formerly director of all museums in Friuli Venezia Giulia and Miramare Castle) will have a full roster as she undoubtedly attempts to redirect *David* lovers from Michelangelo moments in piazza San Marco to the draw of Donatello and other such sculptural masterpieces in the former police headquarters and prison, as well as the lesser-known delights housed in the group of museums. We wish her the very best in her new role and look forward to sitting down with the director in the coming months. In the meantime, read all about the museum "merger" on page 5.

While winter brings fewer visitor numbers to Florence, hibernation is very much not happening on the city streets. It's full speed ahead again on the **tram works** after a forced hiatus in piazza Beccaria during the holiday season as excavation for a water pipe unearthed a section of the medieval city walls (no surprise there) and the superintendency re-examined the situation before giving the green light. Let's hope no more hold-ups occur, given that work must be completed by the end of the year to ensure funding through Italy's post-Covid Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR). See page 6. Meanwhile, the Comune's efforts to reshape **outdoor seating areas at bars and restaurants** has been met with disdain by a number of business owners in piazza della Repubblica (page 7) and the city's **rowing club** (Canottieri Comunali di Firenze, the one along lungarno Ferrucci, not the Società Canottieri Florence, beneath the Ponte Vecchio), faces an uncertain future given legal and fiscal complexities (page 4). In other news, **student housing** is the watchword with Camplus opening for study abroaders in the ex-regional post office near Santa Croce, a vast complex that occupies an entire city block and is still undergoing renovation, and the regeneration of Villa Monna Tessa for medical students training at Florence's main Careggi hospital (page 8).

There's plenty going on out and about, including the fun-filled **carnival season** (yes, the sweet rice *frittelle* are already being fried in abundance) and **Lunar New Year** (see the Chinese community take to the streets of Prato for lion dances and more on February 22). Exhibitions and conversations comprise the month-long **Black History Month Florence**, now in its eleventh year, at Murate Art District, Museo Novecento and The Recovery Plan (page 19). On the community front, **Chiara Almeida** talks about creativity in events planning ahead of her Love at First Bite speed dating at Tosco Tacos for Valentine's Day (page 20) and British-Florentine creative couple **Peter Dulborough and Alessandra Parrini** chat about their lives (page 16).

We dedicate this issue of *The Florentine* to the memory of **Rocco Commisso**, owner of Fiorentina football club and the founder, chairman and chief executive officer of Mediacom, who died on January 16.

Meet us here!

Come along to the first Editorial Evening in our magazine offices.

Meet the team, share your ideas, have a glass of Ruffino wine and bite to eat by Rosalia Salad Catering, support our magazine and speak your mind!

February 26, 6.30-8pm
via dei Banchi 4

25 euro | theflr.net/shop

THE FLORENTINE

the English news magazine in Florence

YEAR XXII
FEBRUARY 2026
ISSUE 330

This month's cover is our creative take on the cover story of the Accademia and Bargello merger showing Michelangelo's marble *David* and Donatello's bronze *David*.

editorial office + advertising
via dei Banchi 4, 50123 Firenze
T 055 7093760
theflorentine.net

direttore responsabile Silvia Bini
editore B'Gruppo srl
viale della Repubblica 36
59100 Prato
partita iva 01715830970
iscritta al registro
degli operatori di comunicazione
(ROC) al n. 14773 del 17/11/2006
Reg. Trib. di Prato n.4 del 12/09/2006

design + identity **flod** flod.it

EDITORIAL TEAM

editor-in-chief Helen Farrell
deputy editor Jane Farrell
photo editor Marco Badiani
editorial assistant Falcone Geddes

MANAGEMENT

director Marco Badiani
deputy director Giovanni Giusti
layout & art design Leo Cardini
advertising Giacomo Badiani
digital design + video Federico Lupo
accounting Deborah Bettazzi
founding editor Nita Tucker

CONTACT US

redazione@theflorentine.net
events
events@theflorentine.net
advertising
pubblicita@theflorentine.net
classifieds
annunci@theflorentine.net

SOCIAL CONTENT

facebook.com/tfnews
instagram.com/theflorentine
youtube.com/theflorentinenews
linkedin.com/company/the-florentine
tiktok.com/@theflorentine

Chiuso in stampa lunedì 26 gennaio

Subscribe Now

1-Year PDF subscription **33 €**
1-Year PAPER* Italy **55 €**
Available for 3 + 6 months sub (see online)
International delivery
Rest of Europe **+70 €**
America, Africa, Asia **+110 €**
Australia **+135 €**
*Paper Subs include PDF

How to pay

Paypal (credit card) email to info@bgruppo.com
Cash c/o our head office
Bank transfer to B'Gruppo srl
IBAN IT67 E030 3221 5000 1000 0005 642

theflr.net/subscribe

Solutions to the puzzle on page 29: Ponte Vecchio, via Tornabuoni, piazza Santo Spirito, via de Calzaiuoli, piazzale Michelangiolo, piazza della Signoria, piazza Santa Croce, Giardino di Boboli, piazza del Duomo.

City rowing club caught in legal and financial crossfire

NEWS / Helen Farrell + ph. Marco Badiani

The Canottieri Comunali di Firenze continues to be caught between financial pressure and legal uncertainty.

On the one hand, the city's rowing club faces a bill of more than 300,000 euro owed to Italy's state property agency. On the other, after decades of bureaucratic proceedings, it is waiting for the City of Florence to rule on the legality of its headquarters along **lungarno Ferrucci**. As a result, the future of the respected sporting institution founded over 90 years ago hangs in the balance.

The financial blow arrived at the end of 2025, following a ruling by the superior court of public waters, which ordered the club to pay 300,000 euro in rent to the state property agency, in addition to legal costs. "As a sports club, we are normally entitled to a 90 per cent reduced lease,"

the club's president Giancarlo Fianchisti explained to *Corriere Fiorentino* during Epiphany celebrations, when he issued an appeal to save the rowing club. "However, our regional permit was not renewed for more than ten years because river safety checks were required to determine whether we could remain where we are. In practice, we were considered unauthorized occupants and were charged the full rate, even though the delays were not our fault."

While the regional permit has been reinstated following approval of river safety conditions, a crucial authorization from the city administration is still missing. At stake is the legality of the club's historic

building, believed to have been constructed in the 1960s. Proof that would allow the structure to be regularized under current planning regulations cannot be found in the municipal archives and may have been destroyed during the 1966 Florence flood. More recent documentation may not be sufficient to prevent the building from being declared an illegal structure.

"The Canottieri Comunali has serious problems with the City of Florence, which owns the properties we occupy, because the urban planning legitimacy of these buildings is being questioned," Fianchisti commented. "After 20 years, the municipality must finally decide what to do with our headquarters,

which has been located here for 90 years. We do not understand how it is possible to relocate, or effectively shut down, a club like ours when there are no alternative solutions along the banks of the Arno."

Mayor of Florence Sara Funaro has acknowledged the importance of the club and went on record saying that the council was "working to resolve the matter".

Since its founding in 1934, athletes training at the Canottieri Comunali Firenze have won 66 Italian canoeing titles and many have competed for Italy at the Olympic Games, European and World Championships.



Accademia and Bargello announce synergy across 7 museums

Spanning 18,000-plus square metres of exhibition space and home to the world's greatest concentration of works by Michelangelo Buonarroti, the newly combined museum system of the Accademia Gallery and the Bargello Museums has announced a shared cultural vision and coordinated management that make it of unique significance.

The museum network, under the direction of Andreina Contessa, is made up of the **Accademia Gallery, Bargello National Museum, Medici Chapel, Palazzo Davanzati, Orsanmichele, Casa Martelli** and, once the work is completed, the former Romanesque **church of San Procolo** in via de' Giraldi, which will be used to host temporary exhibitions. Together, the seven museums total over 50,000 artifacts, encompassing sculptures, paintings, tapestries, ivories, jewellery, majolica, medals, coins, textiles, musical instruments, furniture and weapons.

A map of the seven sites sees connections between masterpieces of various different artistic languages, eras and modes of expression, detailing the city's cultural wealth in a unified museum system. Network innovations include the creation of themed itineraries, combined tickets and opening hours, with planned initiatives to entice locals and families to frequent the museums, as well as to encourage a more conscious and less voracious tourism.

Starting March 15, 2026, two cumulative tickets will be introduced, allowing visitors to enjoy all the museums in the group with a single ticket valid for 72 hours at a cost of 38 euro. The duration is intended to foster a slow, meaningful engagement with the museums and their works. Alternatively, the Accademia Gallery and the Bargello National Museum can be accessed within 48 hours for 26

euro. A family ticket at a convenient price is also being considered. At the moment, entry to the Casa Martelli Museum remains free on the two opening days, Tuesday afternoon and Saturday morning, but a paid ticket will be introduced in the future. Reduced-price tickets and free admission as required by law remain unchanged.

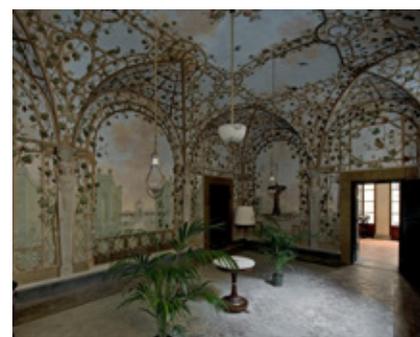
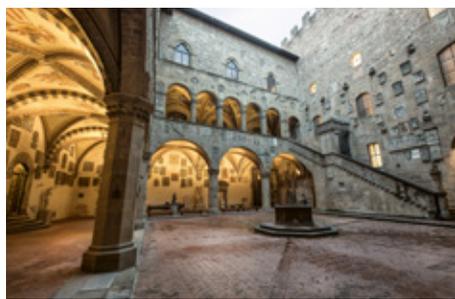
All tickets can be purchased through the reservations centre at +39 055 294883 and the B-Ticket online ticket office on the official Accademia Gallery and Bargello Museums websites. Starting March 15, from Tuesday to Sunday, all museums will be open from 8.15am to 6.50pm, with the exception of Casa Martelli, whose opening hours depend on the renovation. Individual museums will see an average increase of two euro in ticket cost, with the exception of the Accademia, which will rise to 20 euro.

That's not all. This year, the Bargello will undergo major works to refurbish the entrance, ticket office, courtyard and the adjoining Michelangelo Room, while the reconfiguration of the visitor entrance is planned at the Medici Chapels Museum as well as the dusting of the polychrome marbles of the Chapel of the Princes (scheduled to begin in early March 2026).



"I believe that this union between two great institutions represents a challenge and an opportunity for both. Visitors will be able to enjoy a unique museum, architecture and artistic itinerary spread across different buildings in the city, journeying through Florence's diverse historical eras and guises. This union, through tools such as integrated ticketing and standardized opening hours, will lead to a rebalancing of visitor flows and economic resources. The cultural strategy consists of enhancing the unique features of the individual museums by connecting them... We want to return these immensely popular places to Florentines, developing initiatives and special openings for locals and emphasizing the role of museums in serving the community. At the same time, we must consider implementing a comprehensive campaign to raise visitors' awareness of sustainable practices in the context of cultural heritage and conservation issues. I know from experience that mergers can represent great opportunities, but they are never simple. The union of the Accademia Gallery and the Bargello Museums will entail a complex change in management and administration. This is why I began my Florentine assignment by meeting with the staff: listening is essential to understanding their needs and perspectives. Their daily experience of the museum brings a profound sense of a cultural community capable of innovating, growing and speaking to the world."

Andreina Contessa



Tram works to resume in piazza Beccaria

Tramline construction in piazza Beccaria is set to resume in the next few days, ending a month-long halt caused by encountering medieval city walls during excavation works for a new water pipe. An agreement between municipal technicians and heritage authorities has cleared the way for the partial removal of the archaeological remains, allowing works to move forward on the new tramline linking piazza della Libertà to Bagno a Ripoli.

The go-ahead came from the Regional Commission for Cultural Heritage, which met on January 21 and approved the City of Florence's request. The decision follows weeks of stalemate marked by political pressure and public debate.

“The commission accepted the municipality’s proposal in order to allow the execution of the planned aqueduct works,” explained Superintendent Antonella Ranaldi. “This will take place under specific prescriptions to ensure the structure is fully documented and that the remaining portion is preserved, limiting dismantling strictly to what is necessary for the passage of the pipelines and the related trench... All operations will be carried out under archaeological supervision.”

Palazzo Vecchio estimates the work will take only a couple of days, making it compatible with the restart of tram construction in mid-February.



Ranaldi also announced the creation of a working group of scholars and experts so that the discovery can contribute to a broader understanding of Florence’s historic fortification system. She addressed concerns over another nearby find—the skeleton of a Roman child dating back some 2,000 years—stating that it was considered “uninfluential” with respect to the tram works.

The decision has been welcomed by the city administration. City councillor for mobility, Andrea Giorgio, remarked, “I thank the Superintendency for the attention and cooperation shown over these months, during which we have already managed to address and resolve several critical issues together...The tramway is an important project to improve the daily lives of Florentines. We will now ask contractors to make every effort to recoup delays and complete the work on schedule.”

The medieval walls uncovered beneath piazza Beccaria were not an unexpected find: their presence had already been addressed in the final tramway project approved in 2018, as reported by local newspaper *Corriere Fiorentino*. Project documents noted that the tram track would partly overlap the route of the ancient walls and that excavation would encounter remains at a depth of about one metre, along with the paving of an ancient road. Procedures for documentation, conservation and archaeological assessment were clearly outlined. This prior knowledge has raised questions about why the rediscovery led to a work stoppage.

The tramline must be completed within 2026 as it is funded through Italy’s National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR).

Carraia gardens to undergo major revamp

An investment of half a million euro has been announced by the City of Florence for the redevelopment of the Carraia gardens on via dell’Erta Canina.

The project is part of the PN Metro Plus plan, a European funding programme aimed at supporting urban initiatives that improve quality of life in cities, with a focus on air quality and the creation of spaces for social interaction.

45th ORCHESTRA DELLA TOSCANA

CARNIVAL RELOADED

THE ART OF MASQUERADE IN MUSIC

ROBERTO MOLINELLI
conductor

music by Molinelli, Paganini, Piazzolla, Verdi, Vivaldi

2026 FEBRUARY 17
TUESDAY h 9:00 PM

orchestradellatoscana.it

TICKETS ON SALE

TRJ VERDI
FIRENZE VIA GHIBELLINA 99



New rules for outdoor seating

Florence has approved revised regulations governing the occupation of public space for **outdoor seating areas used by bars, cafés and restaurants**. Compared with the previous bylaw, a ten per cent reduction in the maximum surface area is being introduced, making it impossible to exceed the total square metres granted as of November 15 last year.

General criteria include a maximum outdoor surface area equal to 50 per cent of a venue's indoor dining space (which may not be smaller than 20 square metres), mandatory acoustic impact assessments for outdoor areas open after 10pm, anti-mafia certification and proof of social security compliance (DURC) for businesses applying for permits.

Among the main innovations are a ban on the use of plastic and advertising, along with an obligation for businesses to display floor plans and the maximum number of seats allowed in their outdoor areas. The rules specify that public space may be occupied only directly in front of one's own premises, with minimum distances from driveways, street furniture, trees and monuments. A clear pedestrian passage of at least 1.5 metres must always be guaranteed on sidewalks as well as a minimum 3.5 metre-wide lane for emergency vehicles, even in pedestrian areas.

Following an agreement between the Municipality and the Superintendency, the regulation also lists 60 streets where outdoor dining is completely prohibited, 20 streets where existing surfaces cannot be expanded and identifies five types of outdoor seating areas that may be authorized. In addition, 73 streets are subject to restrictions allowing only specific types of installations.

Business owners have until April 30 to submit applications for public space concessions. This requirement also applies to establishments that already have outdoor seating: existing concessions will remain valid only until a new authorization is granted or denied.

Four business owners on the Giubbe Rosse side of piazza della Repubblica have decided to form a committee and take legal action against the council. They claim that the new bylaws show a "disparity of treatment" compared to venues on the other side of the square.

Planned upgrades include the creation of community vegetable gardens and orchards, made possible by reclaiming a section of parkland that is currently unused. The project also calls for the installation of water points and composting areas, a new fitness zone accessible to all age groups and the restoration of a five-a-side football pitch. New paths and street furniture are also in the works, with compacted-earth trails and additional benches for visitors.

From a safety perspective, the redevelopment will involve the stabilization of embankments using biodegradable bio-mats made from natural fibres. The project will conclude with a clean-up of the area and the planting of new trees, shrubs and climbing plants on the existing pergola.

Construction work is expected to last around 200 days, although the council has not yet announced a start date.

Wherever you go,
we'll take your bags.



Why reduce your luggage when you can ship it?

With MBE, you'll receive your luggage directly at your destination. We'll take care of everything: home collection, packing and shipping, offering peace of mind.



Scan the QR code to unlock
a 10% discount voucher.

Valid only at our store!

- International & national door to door shipping
- Professional packing services
- Moving supplies & packaging materials
- We ship wine all over the world
- And so much more!

MBE
Packaging
Luggage
Shipping



Mail Boxes Etc. 345
Corso dei Tintori 39/r
50122 Florence
Tel. +39.055.2466660
mbe345@mbe.it



© 2020 MBE Worldwide | MBE Centers are managed by independent entrepreneur affiliates who operate under the MBE brand through a franchising agreement. Not all services and products offered by Mail Boxes Etc. are available at each MBE point of sale. The service is subject to terms and conditions.

Sorting office to student housing



Formerly owned by the city administration and Italy's state employee welfare association, the history of the building reflects Florence's complex relationship with urban renewal. Much maligned by locals, Michelucci's efforts here fall short of the ebb and flow of his slightly earlier celebrated Church of the Autostrada (1960-63), which is worth a stop when driving north along the A1 highway. Conceived as part of a broader plan to regenerate the neighbourhood, the building rejected monumentality in favour of a dialogue with the surroundings through shifting façades, sliding planes and staggered volumes centred around an inner courtyard, which glimpses through the dusty, still graffitied windows reveal to be intact and as yet undeveloped.

While the lights are on and people can be seen moving around through the signature horizontal double windows on the upper four floors, all re-clad in materials sensitive to the original edifice, work is still ongoing, especially on the ground floor. Partnerships with study abroad programs mean that students will soon be relocated to the renovated lodgings in the former post office. In the coming months, Camplus will announce room rates and open reservations to individual students. For now, occupancy will be limited to students brought in through private agreements with American universities. A public bar is also planned for the ground floor.

Occupying an entire block between via Pietrapiana, via Verdi, via dei Pepi and via dell'Ulivo, the former regional post office headquarters designed by Giovanni Michelucci in the mid-Sixties is embarking on a new life as a student residence. The just inaugurated **Camplus Firenze Pietrapiana**, the second to open in Florence after its counterpart in via del Romito near the Fortezza da Basso, offers 200 or so single and double rooms with private bathrooms, shared lounges, fitness areas and study spaces.



The conversion has been met with concern among residents. Camplus has stated that all the rooms will be filled with students and the structure will not apply for a temporary tourist use permit in the summer, a practice allowed by local regulations for other residences when students are absent.

Camplus started out as a cooperative that acted as a go-between with homeowners and tenants as CEO and founder Maurizio Carvelli spotted a gap in the market during his student days in Bologna. Now, Camplus boasts 10,000 beds or so throughout major cities in Italy and Spain.

Villa Monna Tessa: the remake

A first brick was laid symbolically on January 19 for the new university student residence at Villa Monna Tessa near Florence's main Careggi hospital.

The project is promoted by the iGeneration fund, Italy's largest platform dedicated to affordable student housing, managed by Investire SGR (Banca Finnat Group) and supported by institutional investors including the FNAS fund of CDP Real Asset SGR (CDP Group) and the European Investment Fund (EIF, part of the EIB Group) as anchor investors. Other partners include Fondazione CR Firenze, the University of Florence and Careggi University Hospital.

The scheme will convert former hospital buildings, unused since 2018, into a modern student residence, which is scheduled to open for the 2027/28 academic year. The redevelopment will provide 480 beds at subsidized rates, with half-allocated according to Ministry of University and Research criteria and the other half in agreement with the City of Florence. Additionally, 33 beds will be reserved for families of patients at nearby healthcare facilities. The total investment for the project is approximately 40 million euro.

Historically part of the Careggi university hospital system, the building has long served a dual medical and academic purpose. The new design by Rossiprodi Associati features four floors of student rooms and a basement level with shared facilities, including dining areas, fitness and gym spaces, study and recreational rooms, a library, as well as offices, storage and technical rooms serving residents and building operations.

The ceremonial event included city councilors Cristina Manetti (culture) and Dario Danti (universities and research), Daniela Matarrese (director general, Careggi University Hospital), Alessandra Petrucci (president, University of Florence), Bernabò Bocca (president, Fondazione CR Firenze), Antonino Turicchi (CEO, CDP Real Asset SGR), John McIlwaine (EIF representative in Italy) and Domenico Bilotta (director general, Investire SGR).



Reimagining the future

From unsold bread turned into beer to fabrics that become intelligent sensors, innovation is once again reshaping the meaning of *Made in Italy*. The latest edition of **Italian Lifestyle**, the open innovation and acceleration program promoted by Intesa Sanpaolo Innovation Center and Fondazione CR Firenze, spotlights **six startups** at the intersection of technology, manufacturing and creativity.

The program, which ran in collaboration with Nana Bianca and the Foundation for Research and Innovation of the University of Florence, supports the growth of Italian companies and enhances the global competitiveness of Made in Italy, particularly in strategic sectors such as tourism, fashion, luxury and food. Over the years, Italian Lifestyle has demonstrated how innovation can become a concrete lever for competitiveness.

By placing startups in direct dialogue with major industrial groups and international brands, the initiative has helped translate cutting-edge research into real-world applications. In its first three editions alone, the program has supported 18 startups, which collectively raised more than seven million euro, launched over 230 corporate collaborations, and created more than 140 highly skilled jobs.

The 6 startups

Aloe (Milan, founded in 2023) transforms how hotels sell experiences. The white-label web app integrates seamlessly with hotel systems, allowing guests to book activities in real time and turn their stay into a personalized experience. In just a few months, Aloe has activated more than 1,200 experiences across five cities.

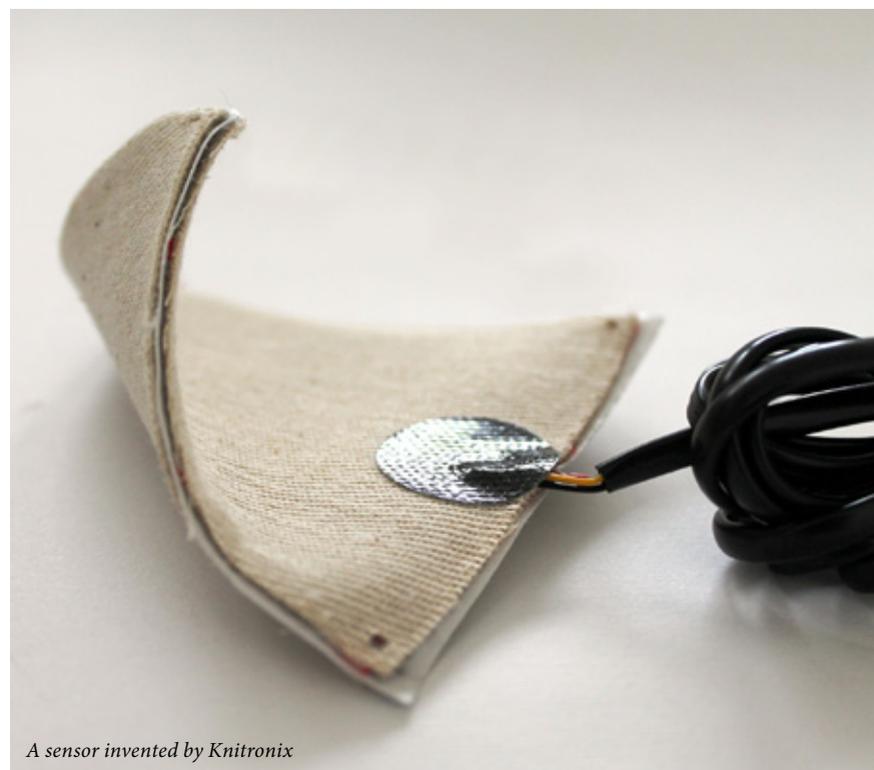
Knitronix (Florence, 2016) turns textiles into next-generation sensors through a patented technology that embeds distributed sensors directly into materials. Applications range from monitoring leaks in buildings and pipelines to advanced robotics.

Why Only White (Florence, 2023) has developed the first visor-free, phygital augmented reality platform for product development. The system dramatically reduces time, costs and emissions associated with traditional physical prototyping, and can be applied across fashion, furniture, packaging and industrial design.

Biotitan (Bergamo, 2018) creates nanotechnology-based formulations for material cleaning and maintenance, reducing costs, time and environmental impact. The patented water-based solutions allow companies to cut harmful chemical use by up to 70 per cent, while achieving significant savings in resources and labour.

Biova (Turin, 2019) tackles food waste by transforming surplus and by-products into new food and beverage products, following the principles of upcycling and circular economy. Its portfolio includes beer, snacks, soft drinks and baked goods made from unsold bread, broken pasta or brewing by-products. Clients include IKEA, Eataly, Coop, Carrefour, NH Hotels and Frecciarossa.

Elementag (Padua, 2019) has developed an “inorganic DNA” technology that invisibly and permanently embeds coded nanoparticles into materials and products. The solution ensures traceability, authenticity and proof of origin, even under extreme conditions, and is applicable across sectors ranging from luxury and fashion to automotive, aerospace and art.



A sensor invented by Knitronix

A key role in the 2025 edition was played by the program's corporate partners, including Alpitour World, Gucci, Colorobbia, Cisco, Sanpellegrino and Starhotels, joined this year by new partners Bauli, Terna and Iren. The companies contributed expertise, industrial know-how and strategic vision, fostering

the development of joint services and new product solutions.

The six selected startups, **Aloe, Biotitan, Biova, Elementag, Knitronix** and **Why Only White**, took part in a 12-week acceleration program and received a 20,000 euro grant from Fondazione CR Firenze.

An advertisement for The Social Hub Lavagnini coworking space. The image shows a desk with a laptop, a coffee cup, and a desk lamp. A QR code is visible in the bottom right corner. Text overlay includes: "THE SOCIAL HUB", "Discover the Coworking at The Social Hub Firenze Lavagnini", "Scan the QR Code for more information on Coworking", "Don't miss all the news, follow us on Instagram: @thesocialhub.firenze", and "The Social Hub Lavagnini - Viale Spartaco Lavagnini 70-72, Florence".



Il suffering: Rocco Commisso and the tragedies that shaped Fiorentina

It's not easy being a Fiorentina supporter. One of the club's most popular fan pages on Instagram, *sufferingfiorentina*, turns this truth into a running joke. The humour comes from taking a perverse pleasure in the pain brought about by the constant cycle of high expectations collapsing into spectacular failure. It's almost as if Fiorentina fans have been conditioned to crave *il suffering*. But behind the memes, a genuine sense of tragedy seems to loom over the club. In January, Fiorentina president Rocco Commisso passed away at the age of 76. The cause of death was not yet confirmed at the time of writing, though rumours about his health had circulated for some time. The fiery, passionate owner had been unusually quiet in recent months. On its 100th birthday, Fiorentina finds itself near the bottom of the table, with an open construction site for a stadium, a deceased owner and an uncertain future.

SOCCER / Falcone Geddes

Reports indicate that the Commisso family intends to retain ownership of the club, with Rocco's wife, Catherine, and son, Giuseppe, taking the reins. Sporting director Fabio Paratici's arrival bodes well for the club's future. His experience at Juventus and Tottenham Hotspur is seen as a step up from the outgoing Daniele Pradè and a sign that Fiorentina intends to pursue ambition with a more coherent strategy.

Yet recent history has shown that tragedy and misfortune are not foreign to Fiorentina fans. After a poor start to last season, the team surged under new manager Raffaele Palladino. Moise Kean began firing on all cylinders, Dodô and Robin Gosens dominated on the wings, and the midfield trio of Yacine Adli, Danilo Cataldi and Edoardo Bove kept things orderly while providing attacking thrust. On December 1, 2024, after 15 match days and an eight-game winning streak (including emphatic victories over Roma and AC Milan) Fiorentina sat atop the table, tied with Atalanta, and preparing to face Inter Milan at the San Siro.

After just 14 minutes, Edoardo Bove collapsed for no apparent reason. Panic spread across the pitch as teammates surrounded him, shielding him from cameras, while doctors rushed him to the hospital. The 22-year-old had suffered a cardiac arrest. Though he survived, Italian football regulations prevent a player from competing with a defibrillator, ending his Serie A career just as he was emerging as a standout talent. The team never truly regained its momentum, losing immediately to Bologna and finishing the season in sixth place.

Earlier, on March 17, while Fiorentina was on a team retreat ahead of a game with Atalanta, CEO Joe Barone, Commisso's right-hand man,

suffered a cardiac arrest and was rushed to San Raffaele Hospital in Milan. He passed away two days later, at age 58. Barone had been the operational bridge between ownership and the team, deeply involved in strategy, transfers and club development. He was also a controversial figure, often positioned as a scapegoat for the club's struggles. Like Commisso, he could be stubborn and at times polarizing, but no one could deny the passion and humanity in his work, a quality that Fiorentina supporters above all appreciated in a world increasingly dominated by faceless investors.

Perhaps the most searing tragedy for Fiorentina fans came on March 14, 2018. During a team retreat in Udine, ahead of a match against Udinese, captain Davide Astori was found dead in his hotel room from a cardiac arrest. He was only 31 years old. A solid defender with 14 caps for the Italian national team, Astori was not a star in the modern sense, but he was universally respected by teammates, opponents and supporters. Appointed captain months earlier, he embodied stability at a club often lacking it.

Astori's death sent shockwaves through Italian football. All professional league matches were postponed that day, while tributes poured in from every corner of the sport. Fiorentina retired his number 13, as did Cagliari, the club where he spent the bulk of his career. For years, his initials and number were stitched into the captain's armband, which must have been a heavy burden to carry for his teammate Germán Pezzella. Even after league regulations forced the return to a standardized armband, Astori's presence lingers in the 13th-minute applause from fans.

All this without even getting into the purely sporting misfortunes: the lack of silverware since 2001; three lost finals in two years; the



massive investments in strikers Giuseppe Rossi and Mario Gómez that came to nothing when injuries struck both; the disastrous refereeing decisions against Bayern Munich that cost Fiorentina a Champions League quarter-final; Calciopoli (alright, that one was self-inflicted); Batistuta's injury in 1998 when Fiorentina was first in the standings, only for his substitute Edmundo to flee to Rio for Carnival; the riots over Roberto Baggio's move to Juventus; and all the way back to the controversial penalty that cost us the league title in 1982. It's been a hell of a ride.

But it all pales in front of real human tragedy. Fiorentina, a club that already lives on the edge of romantic suffering, has been repeatedly reminded that football does not exist in a vacuum, and that no amount of planning can fully insulate it from life's cruellest turns. But still, supporters remain, with their irony and gallows humour coexisting with fierce loyalty. Supporting Fiorentina has never been about silverware, as much as the fans may crave it. It has always been about a sense of belonging. *Il suffering*, yes. But also the stubborn refusal to look away, even when it hurts.



THE LEGENDARY **DARIO** **CECCHINI** EXPERIENCE IN THE HEART OF FLORENCE

VIA PALAZZUOLO 9A FLORENCE
MON - SUN | 12PM - 10.30PM

E.M. Forster + Santa Croce

The first time I experienced Florence was through fiction. James Ivory's film, *A Room with a View* and, eventually, the E.M. Forster novel the movie was based on served as my blueprint for Italy, a place where social convention went out the window, where passion ruled and where art, beauty and love triumphed, transforming all who travelled there. Having now lived here and seen the stratospheric rise of tourism, I'm more skeptical of that romanticization. As I climb the steps to Santa Croce to follow in the footsteps of Lucy Honeychurch, I've started to suspect *A Room with a View* could be part of the problem of fetishizing Italy.



The high chapel of Santa Croce. Ph. @santacroceopera

In the novel, Honeychurch continues the tradition of the English upper classes who travelled to Europe, especially Italy, on the Grand Tour, a post-education trip (dare I say gap year?) intended to round out their classical and artistic learning. Accompanied by a chaperone, Miss Charlotte Bartlett, who is determined to keep her young charge in check, and equipped with her *Baedeker*, the essential guidebook of the time, she seems poised to follow the societally acceptable journey abroad.



Helena Bonham Carter as Lucy Honeychurch in *A Room with a View*

The eccentric Emersons, who offer their rooms with a view to the ladies, are steadfastly contrary to her stiff Edwardian upbringing. Like Italy, they embrace emotion, feeling and love. After meeting them, Lucy is loosened from her imitative and sometimes stuck up behavior enough to let herself get swept up in the moment. The second half of the novel is set in England, where it becomes clear Italy has changed young Lucy forever.

A similar tale is told in *Roman Holiday*, *Under the Tuscan Sun*, *Stealing Beauty* and, of course, *Eat Pray Love*, as an array of foreign women learn how to love and live after spending time in Italy. Now it's echoed on the screens of our phones in reels and TikTok videos telling us what to eat, what to look out and, most perniciously, how to feel when we're in Italy: nothing less than fevered, ecstatic bliss.

As Lucy enters Santa Croce, she is peeved to be alone and guideless. As I stand on the threshold, I can't blame her. It is an overwhelming place. The church is packed with altars, statues, fragments of frescoes, tombs without plaques, plaques without tombs, art with no signs. Lucy "walked about disdainfully, unwilling to be enthusiastic over monuments of uncertain authorship" and laments that "there was no one even to tell her which, of all the sepulchral slabs... was the one that was really beautiful." Far from being over-sentimental, Forster almost constantly undermines the stereotype of the besotted tourist.

The worshippers in Santa Croce genuflect to the tomb of Machiavelli, mistaking it for that of a saint. Lucy thinks the church looks a bit like a barn. Miss Eleanor Lavish, the wonderfully over-the-top bohemian writer, instructs Lucy to throw away her guidebook before telling her all the right ways to experience Florence. At one point, the same Miss Lavish talks about her novel, seemingly describing the very one Forster himself is writing. There's a self-awareness of the tropes and clichés in *A Room with a View* that subverts a straight "Italy saved her" story and suggests that even the model for later such stories is not entirely what it seems. So much of what we see in a place has been taught or suggested to us that I wonder if it's possible to experience it at all without performing someone else's version of it.

As a guide, I tend to walk in the same loops in this church. One must see Michelangelo and Galileo, after all. But today, here on my own, flipping through *A Room with a View* to see what Lucy saw, I come across a line that stops me: "Then the pernicious charm of Italy worked on her, and, instead of acquiring information she began to be happy." Replace information with photo ops, ticking boxes, videos for reels or, in my case, Lucy Honeychurch herself.

I close the book, take a few photos, and then put my phone away. At the entrance I had picked up a map in an attempt to add a few more details to my next tour. This I fold and put in my bag. I start wandering around, looking at things. *How the feet on a tomb are perfect little half-moons. Gold leaf on gray stone like glints of sunlight on water. Symbols cover the ground: moons, lions, roosters, wheels. How many marble faces weeping, thinking, remembering. The way visitors enter the church, their voices raised against the clamor of the outside world that suddenly drop to a hush in this space that asks for quiet.*

For a while, I just walk, experiencing the familiarity of Santa Croce in a way that yields very little to post, talk or write about. I head for the exit thinking about the parallel stories in Forster's novel, one the romantic love story and one a satirical tale encouraging us not to blindly follow any guide, even the author's own. As I emerge into the sunlight in front of the church, I feel like I actually saw and felt something, not just the blueprint of what others told me to see and feel.

Lauren Mouat is the author of the short story collection *Intermezzo* and is a tour guide in Florence. She is the founder of the *Open Doors Review* literary magazine and a co-founder of the Florence Literary Society.



Walking the middle way

Something happens when you walk between worlds. You learn to hold contradictions: two languages in your mouth at once, two homes in your heart, two incongruent truths. You become comfortable, even fluent, in the in-between, discovering that the most interesting questions don't have simple answers, and that wisdom lives in the spaces that many people avoid. That's where *Via Media Review* was born.

Founded in 2025, the journal takes its name from the Latin for “the middle way”, a concept deeply rooted in Anglican and Episcopal tradition that resonates beyond faith. The *via media* holds a path for travelers and seekers, for expatriates and immigrants who dwell among languages, cultures and identities. For the black sheep, the grey sheep and the loner. For the questioner and the healer, the monastic and the community organizer, the modern thinker and the cross-current poet. For peacemakers swimming upstream in a chaotic world.

The middle way resounds particularly for many members of Florence's international community. Our city has stood for centuries at a cultural crossroads where artists, philosophers, writers and activists have gathered to wrestle with the great questions. From the Renaissance humanists who balanced classical learning with Christian faith to the Brownings who made Casa Guidi a salon for progressive politics and poetry, Florence

has always welcomed those who refuse to choose between opposing worlds. We live within a tradition that honors complexity, nuance and the courage to dwell in ambiguity.

The founding editors of *Via Media Review* came together around a shared conviction that writers who refuse easy answers deserve a welcoming literary home. This international team includes Monica Sharp, a poet and writer in Florence; Shelley Ruelle, a journalist in Rome; Conner Drennen, a linguist and translator, also in Rome; Rev. Richard Easterling, an Episcopal priest in Florence at St. James Episcopal Church, and a poet-theologian; and Megan Preston Meyer, a writer, publisher and activist investor based in Schwyz, Switzerland. Together, they envisioned a publication celebrating “both/and” in a world that increasingly demands “either/or”.

Via Media Review publishes fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry and hybrid

work, including visual art that engages with the tensions and possibilities of the *via media*. The newborn publication is interested in writing that engages with contradiction, allows for complication and resists the pressure to provide a neat resolution. This is not a journal of lukewarm compromise. The *via media* is an active, radical path: a refusal to abandon complexity in favor of false certainty.

The inaugural issue, *Both/And*, launched in winter 2025. Featuring work by the founding editors alongside contributors, the issue explored themes of honor and sacrifice, exile and belonging, the sacred embedded in ordinary life and the courage required to resist simplistic narratives.

Coming issues will continue to develop these commitments. The Summer 2026 issue, *Ordinary Time*, invites submissions that reflect on the long green season of the liturgical calendar, the daily work of growth and transforma-

tion that unfolds between moments of drama and declaration. The theme serves as a metaphor for the journal's broader project: attending to the quiet, often overlooked spaces where meaning, change and attention take root.

Via Media Review is particularly interested in “spiritually adjacent” work that engages with spiritual seeking across traditions and beyond; the complications of home, migration and layered belonging; bodies and embodiment in an increasingly virtual world; intergenerational dialogue and inherited stories; the intersection of personal narrative and wider cultural forces; and art and writing as practices of attention, resistance and care

The journal publishes twice yearly and accepts submissions on a rolling basis. While grounded in Episcopal sensibilities, that quintessentially *both/and* tradition, *Via Media Review* warmly welcomes writers of all faiths and no faith. What matters is a willingness to sit with questions, to honor the paradox and to write from a place of authentic inquiry.

Via Media Review posts and publishes on Substack, where there's a growing community of readers and writers dedicated to the challenging, hopeful work of walking the middle way. Subscribe for free and join the conversation. And if you write from the perspective of the middle way, if you are drawn to complexity over simplicity, questions over answers and integration over division, consider submitting your work.

viamediareview.substack.com

Your chance to be onstage

Florence is set to host a new cultural initiative aimed at encouraging artistic talent across Tuscany. A region-wide arts competition will be open to all legal residents, designed to bring the public closer to the performing arts through a voting system that encourages direct dialogue between audiences and artists.

Participation in the competition is limited to residents of Tuscany, who may register only once using a single email address. Public voting will also be open exclusively to regional residents and will take place via email stating with name, address, *codice fiscale* and choice to teatronnicolini@firenzeonstage.com from March 1 to 10, allowing participants to support their favourite artists.

The initiative offers prizes for both artists and the public. The artist or group receiving the highest number of votes will be awarded

a 15,000 euro cash prize and will be invited to perform at an official sponsored event at Florence's Teatro Niccolini as part of a dedicated artistic programme. Members of the public will also have a chance to win prizes: the first five voters, determined by the date and time their emails are received, will each receive €1,000. Tickets for the special event celebrating the winner will be offered at an accessible price, capped at €15.

The competition will span a number of disciplines, including music (classical, modern, rock, jazz and



contemporary), theater (musical theatre, acting and performance art), as well as comedy and dance for small ensembles. Each category may include up to five artists or groups, selected from **applicants who have performed at least once on a professional stage in Italy within the past three years.**

Organizers describe the project as an innovative model of cultural participation, with the ambition of becoming an annual event. The long-term goal is to establish a tradition in which audiences play an active role in artistic life, support-

ing local creativity and strengthening the bond between communities and the cultural scene.

“We believe that art should be a dialogue, not an isolated act,” says **Hershey Felder**, artistic director of Teatro Niccolini. “This competition was set up to give space to talent, but above all to give a voice to the public, allowing them to feel like protagonists in a creative process that directly involves them. Teatro Niccolini is proud to support an initiative that celebrates participation, quality and the diversity of artistic expression in our region.”

Celestial order

CULTURE / Jane Farrell

Daniele Davitti is behind the *Astra Codex* exhibition on show at **Istituto de' Bardi** (via de' Michelozzi 2) until June 14, a 12-panel collection curated by Lavinia Pini that connects zodiac signs to works of art and architectural details found in Florence, transformed into anthropomorphic figures using textiles and exceptionally detailed embroidery. Handcrafted with white and gold threads on vintage fabrics dyed antique pink by artisans Valentina and Laura Fiorini of the Ratafià workshop, the pieces are enriched by freshwater pearls, micro glass beads and crystals, upcycling the secondhand materials into elevated works of art. We spoke with Daniele Davitti to find out more.



The title of the exhibition is *Astra Codex*. How did that come about?

Working with the curator Lavinia Pini, we discussed the title a lot. Originally, we were going to call it *Zodiaco Fiorentino*, but then we thought that that was too on the nose, so we started to think about something else. *Astra Codex* is the fusion of two Latin words that together don't really mean anything; it's not a correct Latin expression. It is, however, an expression that can be understood by anyone, even if they have not studied Latin. *Astra* is the idea of the stars and *Codex* is the code, so the code of the stars. The idea was to make this communication quite clear, a kind of a thread between the worlds of the cosmos and us human beings, and a way of decoding the stars. During the exhibition at the Istituto de' Bardi, they will all be shown separately, allowing the audience to engage with each one. Once the exhibition finishes in June, the intention is to join all of them together because the zodiac is always intended as a whole. They belong to the same skies.

What has been a highlight of your career so far?

I was born and raised in Florence in a super Italian family. My father

is from Florence and my mother is from Rome. I studied fashion design at Polimoda and I had the chance to finish my studies at the Bunka Fashion College in Osaka, Japan. At 23 years old, it altered my perception so much: the two cultures were so different. That really kickstarted my desire to see and explore the world. After the time spent in Japan, I went to New York City and I had an art show there, living in Manhattan. I was 27, so it was the best moment to be in New York. Then, in 2015, I moved to Melbourne, Australia. I had the chance to teach at a fashion school there, where I worked for two years. However, I always came back to Italy, and in 2018 I returned to work and live here.

What does it mean for you to dedicate your life to handcrafting beauty?

It's a calling. My mom and dad were both academics. I got the chance to teach very young here at Polimoda, right after Japan. Teaching is also super important for me because I am a strong believer in education. We talk a lot about handmade things, crafts, mass-produced goods and whatever. We all know these things, but if you don't educate people how to recognize quality, how to understand the different

methodologies, the impact that a product has on the environment or on human life, then people will never know. They will just see things and not have their eyes open or have an awareness of what things are. That has always been very important for me, and also the idea of beauty and art, broadening your horizons and those of students because I was lucky enough that I had people who did that with me.

The personal elements are woven into your works, also literally by using materials handwoven by your grandmother.

My grandma came from a humble background in the countryside near Florence. Working the land and using fabrics to make clothes was the custom back then. So she wove fabrics for her dowry and we have a lot of these pieces handwoven by her in our family home. That's how I started to work with embroidery, using these fabrics. In the exhibition, part of the works are made using these pieces and the other half are secondhand fabrics that I got in Prato.

What's the significance of being shown in this location?

As a Florentine, Florence, like so many cities in the world, is famous for certain things: the Ponte Vec-

chio, food and wine, etc. The hope that I have for these artworks is that people would see them and use them as access points to other components of the city, feeling encouraged to seek out artisans, getting into the atelier and also learning more about the astrological links in the city. As part of the show, a brochure will feature a map that will have the zodiac signs that can be found around the city, like a miniature treasure hunt to explore Firenze in a different way.

What would you like to have viewers' eyes opened to through these works?

I started to work with embroidery and textile art quite recently. During the lockdown I really started to learn from scratch. For me, the hope that I have with this show is that people are fascinated by the craft because that is what made me get closer to embroidery. With the zodiac-inspired pieces that I have made, each sign is more or less connected with the city of Firenze, with the story of the city or some symbol of the city, to give viewers another perspective of Florence through the lens of astrology.

AZZEDINE ..
ALAIÀ
CRISTÓBAL
and BALENCIAGA
Sculptors of shape

October 25th, 2025
May 3th, 2026

**MUSEO
DEL
TESSUTO
PRATO**



 **Museo
delTessuto**

Cultural connections

Reading-born Peter Dulborough and Florentine Alessandra Parrini are an England-meets-Italy love story, bound by their creative careers that combine words and music in myriad ways. Both language teachers, of English and Italian respectively, the ways in which their cultures, national and artistic, have blossomed into projects including a musical, books and albums form the basis of our conversation conducted in *TF*'s headquarters one chilly January morning.

First things first: how did you meet?

Peter: We met at a very traditional language school in Oxford. I didn't have a large CV at the time, but I wrote down cricket, and that was enough to get me in the door. It was my first time teaching English. Alessandra was in Oxford taking a course at the same time, and so we met and discussed things like *A Room with a View* and *The Little Prince*, which ended up becoming the subject of the musical called *The Music of the Stars* that we worked on together.

Your creative, professional and personal lives cross over so much. How do you find the balance and how does being an intercultural couple play into it all?

Alessandra: At the beginning, his life was the creative one; mine kicked off later. I started

writing poetry more seriously in summer 2016, but I had already written short stories for children, greatly influenced by Rodari. (He even inspired my ambassador and alter ego, a greedy mouse!)

Peter: I think the essence of being a creative couple and mixed nationality couple is the opportunity to express ourselves in a unique way. We have the mirror of another culture and person that encourages us to ask questions about ourselves and discover parts of ourselves we would never find otherwise.

Alessandra: We fuel our common human trait, creativity, both with coffee and tea brunches. When we first met, Peter was given the Italian menu and I was given the English. Now when we go out, we feel more British in Italy and Italian in England. A question of voice volume essentially.

What groups or events in Florence provide support in building your creative networks?

Alessandra: I regularly attend events held at St Mark's English Church or organized by the Florence Literary Society. The recent publishing day they held at The British Institute of Florence was a particularly successful occasion.

Peter: As an English-speaking musician and resident in Florence, a key skill in developing musical projects has been collaboration with Florentines. You need a creative hub and to mix with local musicians, sharing your music and showing interest in theirs. One way has been getting involved with Open Mic sessions. The Social Hub Lavagnini on the first Tuesday of each month (this month, however, on February 10) is run by my friend Patti DeRosa, called Global Village Open Mic Firenze. Another open mic called 'Open Mice' is famous for showcasing original music and poetry, and is co-run by my good friend and collaborator Martina Magionami at the Birreria Fiorentina near Ponte al Pino. She has also recorded a lot with me and helped me so much in finding new musical friends and contacts.

What are some of the challenges and opportunities in working and writing in both English and Italian?

Peter: We are on a journey inwards to understand our past, culture, selves and relationships from the perspective of being, thinking and writing in another language and country. The longest and most ambitious musical project I have worked on is my musical based on Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince*, called *The Music of the Stars*. It's written

in English in Italy about a French story that centres on a journey through planets and words that are very different from each other. It also has the central theme of friendship and taming from understanding others in a gradual way. It has all the elements of touching humanity. This also lies at the heart of my two Eps, *Touch* and *William*. They explore themes of loss, humanity and finding peace. For music and writing to sound genuine and honest we need to be vulnerable and open to our emotions. We find openness to others in an intercultural relationship and being open to the changes we find in our world and ourselves, which puts us in touch with our own humanity. And it's where we find a way to connect.

Alessandra: Most of my collection, *Starfish and other poems*, came to me in English while I was visiting Greece. I think it comes down to my love of reading in English and also my childhood. I was quite shy in middle school, but became more confident whenever I spoke in English because it was something I was good at. It was almost like I developed a different personality, one in which I found it easier to express myself. Regarding translation, it's a double-edged sword. I'm stuck between all the richness of meaning and exactness of references to each single lexical choice—to include or not to include—an operation that often leads to discovering unsuspected added meaning or unspecified elements that leave you quizzical and lead to more self-exploration. Ultimately, you have to let the song take its flight and create its own ripples in meaning, resonating with others.

www.peterdulborough.com
www.alessandraparrini.com



School sign-ups

Enrollment for the 2026/2027 school year is officially open for schools from early childhood education to upper secondary schools. With a deadline of 8pm on February 14, 2026, the Comune di Firenze website outlines the various procedures in detail. The scuola dell'infanzia (nursery schools, ages 3-6), scuole primarie and secondarie (primary and secondary schools, ages 6-16) are detailed through digital presentations. Parents and guardians must use the Piattaforma Unica available on the Ministry of Education's official portal, which can be accessed using one of the following digital credentials: SPID (Public Digital Identity System), CIE (Electronic Identity Card), CNS (National Services Card) and eIDAS (electronic Identification, Authentication and Signature)

www.educazione.comune.fi.it



CULTURE / A new app with a free audio guide steers you through your visit of the **Opera del Duomo Museum**, with similar plans for the rest of the complex.
www.duomo.firenze.it

ART/ The **BUNKER Gallery** on via San Gallo shows works by **Rudolph Goldschmidt** from January 28, using materials like mud, stone and shadows in an intriguing interconnected series.
[IG@bunkergalleriafirenze](https://www.instagram.com/bunkergalleriafirenze)

HERITAGE/ The **Electress Palatine**, Anna Maria Luisa de' Medici, is celebrated on February 18, with free entry to certain museums usually offered to mark the occasion.
www.comune.firenze.it

STAY UP-TO-DATE

BEST EVENTS this February

by Jane Farrell

events@theflorentine.net

EXHIBITIONS

Icons of Power and Beauty

National Archaeology Museum of Florence

The exhibition brings together 20 artifacts, including gilded bronze heads of Roman emperors and the goddess Venus, displayed alongside gems, jewellery, medallions, and coins from the Medici collections, to explore how images were used to express and legitimize power in the Roman imperial world of the 3rd century AD. Developed through a collaboration between the National Archaeological Museum of Florence and the Brescia Museums Foundation, the project is linked to a parallel exhibition in Brescia, Victoria Mater. *The Idol and the Icon*, running until April 12, 2026.

Until April 9

www.maf.cultura.gov.it

Nel Bagaglio di Mario

- **Gli scartafacci del Gabinetto Vieusseux**

Archivio Contemporaneo Bonsanti

The diaries of the noted poet, Mario Luzi, are curated by Simone Magherini, Riccardo Sturaro and Stefano Verdino and go on display in the Bonsanti Archive. Visitors will be able to explore pages of his notebooks that prove a profound connection between his writing, life and civic engagement.

Until February 27; free entry, book via email

archivio@vieuxseux.it

www.vieuxseux.it

Nanni Balestrini

- **La rivolta illustrata**

Frittelli Arte Contemporanea

The various periods of the artist's career are explored in this exhibition curated by Marco Scotini, bringing together over 100 works spanning multiple media, from his well-known paper collages to acrylics and plastic materials. The title is based on his book *La violenza illustrata*, published in 1976, and drawing on the genre of magazines.

Until April 17

www.frittelliarte.it

Carnival in Tuscany

As winter gives way to the vibrant season of Carnevale, Tuscany becomes a stage for colour, creativity and centuries-old traditions. From grand parades in historic cities to local folklore and seaside celebrations, the region's Carnival calendar offers something for every traveller, from family-friendly events to aristocratic masked balls.



CARNEVALE DI FIRENZE

A refined take on carnival, blending Renaissance flair with modern festivity. Expect a central parade through the historic centre, family events and elegant masked balls inside landmark palazzi.

January 31 + February 1

CARNEVALE DI VIAREGGIO

Tuscany's most famous carnival, known for colossal papier-mâché floats and sharp political satire. Parades line the seafront throughout February, turning the city into an open-air spectacle.

February 1, 7, 12, 15, 17 + 21

CARNEVALE DI FOIANO

Often cited as Italy's oldest carnival, dating back to the 1500s. Rival districts compete with towering floats over several Sundays, ending with the symbolic burning of Re Giocondo.

February 1, 8, 15, 22 + March 1

CARNEVALE DI FOLLONICA

The Maremma's seaside carnival brings colourful floats, music and community rivalry to the promenade. A lively, family-friendly celebration where sea air meets confetti.

February 1, 8, 15 + 21

CARNEVALE MUGELLANO

A deeply local carnival rooted in tradition, with handcrafted floats, village pride and parades across multiple Sundays. Smaller in scale, but rich in atmosphere.

January 25, February 1, 8, 14, 15, 17 + 18

CARNEVALE STORICO DI BIBBIENA RIEVOCAZIONE DELLA MEA

The historical carnival of Bibbiena revives medieval legend through costumes, flag-wavers and street performances, transforming the Casentino town into a living pageant.

February 14, 15 + 17

Armando Testa – Cucù-Tetè

Palazzo delle Papesse, Siena

The historic palazzo hosts a major retrospective on Armando Testa (1917–1992), the Piedmontese creative who revolutionized the language of advertising and became a central figure in Italy's cultural landscape. The exhibition presents a comprehensive portrait of Testa through his iconic posters and characters of the 1950s and 1960s—such as Carmencita and Caballero, the Papalla planet, and Pippo the Blue Hippopotamus—alongside lesser-known works revealing him as a painter, experimental filmmaker, and multidisciplinary artist.

Until May 3

www.palazzodellepapesse.it

Uganda – La conoscenza è salute e libertà

Palazzo Blu, Pisa

The works explore the places and people of a rural area in southwest Uganda, the Kyamuhunga region, where missionaries and lay volunteers have spent considerable time. The images by Fabio Muzzi, a photojournalist from Siena, cover an intimate yet collective journey, intertwining personal memory and visual testimony.

Until March 15; free admission

www.palazzoblu.it

FESTIVALS

Testo

Stazione Leopolda

Italy's publishing scene is at the centre of the fest that features writers, editors, publishers, and more across a series of stands, talks and workshops. A reading and presentation of winning entries to the contest sponsored by *The Florentine* and Florence Literary Society will form part of the (ticketed) event.

February 27-March 1; 10am-8pm

www.testo.pittimmagine.com

Danzainfiera

Fortezza da Basso

The dance-focused fest is an opportunity to grow your community and showcase your skills, as all aspects of the field find their moment, including training, performances, and displays from leading brands and experts in the industry. Whether it's your passion or profession, the three-day event covers choreography and competitions, with lessons, masterclasses and even auditions, under this year's theme titled 'Believe – Dance to Become.'

February 20-22; 9am-7pm

www.danzainfiera.pittimmagine.com

Chianti Classico Collection

Stazione Leopolda

Meet over 200 Chianti Classico producers, with guided tours and in-depth discussions also available for enthusiasts.

February 17; open to the public, 30 euro admission, 15 euro reduced

www.chianticlassico.com

Taste

Fortezza da Basso

The 19th edition of the food fair that forms part of Pitti Immagine focuses on Made in Italy products, bringing them to an increasingly international audience of buyers. Featuring over 750 companies, of which more than 100 are presenting for the first time in Florence.

February 7-8; open to the public from 2.30-6.30pm - www.pittimmagine.com

CONCERTS

Harry's Magic Symphony by Lords of the Sound

Teatro Cartiere Carrara

A 50-piece orchestra takes to the stage for a journey through the saga's soundtracks. The music that accompanied the world of Hogwarts in the famed films is accompanied by a spectacular sequence of images projected onto an LED screen, reinventing the familiar repertoire.

February 7

www.teatrocartierecarrara.it

Pagliacci/Cavalleria Rusticana

Teatro Maggio Musicale Fiorentino

Expect intense portrayals of jealousy, passion and tragedy in the tales that form the bedrock of Italian opera. *Pagliacci* (1892) inspired by a true crime, tells the story of Canio, the leader of a trav-



Photo by Marco Borrelli

ORT takes carnival concerts across Tuscany

Conductor **Roberto Molinelli** leads the **Orchestra della Toscana** (www.orchestraddellatoscana.it) in performances that celebrate the festive Carnival-feel of February. Commencing in **Cascina** (PI) on February 12 before moving to **Volterra** (PI) on February 13, **Empoli** (FI) on February 14, and **Poggibonsi** (SI) on February 16, the concert series has its finale in **Florence** on February 17 in their home theatre, Teatro Verdi.

Verdi, Paganini, Molinelli, Vivaldi and Piazzolla form the programme, with 'The Art of Disguise' and a 'Carnival Reloaded' theme behind the intriguing selection of pieces that covers everything from Argentine tango to Italian melodrama. Brazilian colours and a distinctly festive vibe also add to the atmosphere. Conductor Roberto Molinelli, known for his work across classical music, jazz, singer-songwriter music and popular music, guides the talented musicians in renditions of Bernstein's *Mamba*, an ironic version of Paganini with a samba salsa twist, and even reworked masterpieces by Molinelli himself, creating an eclectic spectacle that spreads joy across the region. ORT's programming in Florence doesn't end there, however. This month also sees Beethoven and Schubert in dialogue on February 5, conducted by Umberto Clerici, and ORT's principal conductor, Diego Ceretta, is at the podium on February 24 for Mendelssohn, Schumann, Carl Maria von Weber and Schubert.

elling theatre troupe, brought to music by Ruggero Leoncavallo. Giovanni Verga's short story about love, betrayal and vengeance in a Sicilian village was interpreted by Pietro Mascagni.

February 22-March 3

www.maggioflorentino.com

Disconnect <Code>

Sala Vanni

Five events dedicated to the avant-garde and research span diverse geographies and sonic cultures. The 8th edition showcases some of the prominent names in experimental electronic music, with the international lineup including Tujiko Noriko (February 12), Vanessa Bedoret (March 6), Loraine James (March 27), Bitchin Bajas (April 10), and FRANKIE & Kelman Duran (May 8).

From February 12

www.musicusconcentus.com

Amici della Musica

Teatro Niccolini + Teatro della Pergola

Miriam Prandi opens the month's programming with a cello and piano performance on February 1, featuring pieces by Bach and Scarlatti. The programme also sees 'Va, va, va van Beethoven' on February 22, an event for all ages performed by actor Pasquale Buonarota and pianist Diego Mingolla. Jan Liksieki finishes off the month with music by Chopin, Brahms, Piazzolla and more on February 28.

Various dates

www.amicimusicafirenze.it

Careggi in Musica

Aula Magna of the Careggi Hospital

The musicians of A.Gi.Mus. Firenze offer concerts at 10.30am on certain Sundays, as they have been doing since 1999. The first of the three concerts this month features the Laboratorio Corale Careggi conducted by Giovanni Del Vecchio with solo clarinetist Gregorio Del Vecchio and narrators Patrizia Rendo and Pier Giorgio Rogasi who present protagonists of 20th century literature.

February 1-May 24 - www.agimusfirenze.it

CHARITY

Runforlove

Various locations

Choose your partner and *get ready, set, go* for charity. Your goal is to total 9 km, 4.5 km each, in a run or walk wherever you fancy. 100% of funds raised support the Play Therapy project for children at the Meyer Hospital.

February 13-15 - www.runformeyer.it

Lunar New Year

February 17

Celebrated by Chinese communities across the world, 2026 marks the year of the Fire Horse, believed to bring action, freedom, speed and breakthrough. With traditional festivities and original events on offer, see our online guide for how you can celebrate Chinese New Year in Florence and Tuscany.



Changing pace

For the past decade, Florence has collectively advanced a program dedicated to Black History orchestrated by **Black History Month Florence** and their research center **The Recovery Plan**.

The initiative has served to underscore the immense breadth of Black being anchored within the plurimillennial history of the Italian territory. Calling upon over 20 partners and collaborators across the city, the program annually offers an opportunity to rethink the Florentine environment in relation to histories and cultures too often marginalized.

Since 2019 thematic frameworks have sought to provide inspiration and food for thought grounded within the language of musical notation. The themes are intended as invitations and critiques: invitations to join in the work and vision of celebrating Black history and a critique of the systems that continue to obscure the contributions of people of African descent to Italian history and society.

After *Adagio* (2019), *Obbligato* (2020), *Ostinato* (2021), *Fuga* (2022), *Sforzando* (2023), *Whole Rest* (2024) and *Tempo Rubato* (2025), the theme for the 11th edition of Black History Month Florence is **Common Time**. This edition intends to reflect upon the imperfections of common uses and perceptions of time and history. *Common Time* represents time measured in four beats per measure with a quarter note representing one beat. It derives from the broken circle that represented “imperfect” duple meter in 14th-century mensural time signatures.

In musical notation, common time is also known as imperfect, a rupture of a circular time. The edition is an invitation to break from the circles, patterns and cycles that continue to obscure Black history in the Italian socio-psychological environment. It is a critique of the mystification of perfection and progress as well as an invitation to immerse ourselves in the commons and to recognize the collective power of the undercommons of Italian Black cultural archives.

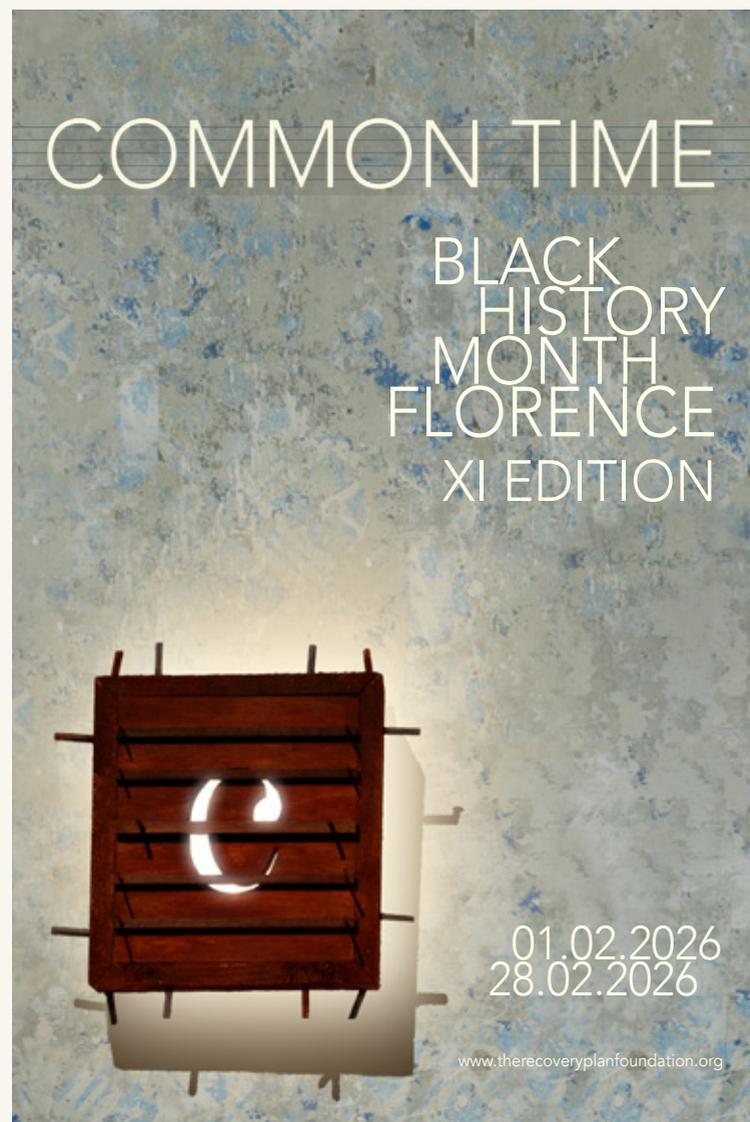
Highlights from this year’s **Black History Month Florence** program running from **February 1 to 28** include three exhibitions at Murate Art District, in collaboration with the American Academy in Rome celebrating two current Rome Prize Fellows and the ongoing work of Black Archive Alliance, with a permanent residency at Murate Art District. *Black Body*, Ancient City by **T.J. Dedeaux-Norris**, *Triplet Consciousness* by **Heather Hart** and *The Angel in the Death Cell*:

A theatre piece by **William Demby** all open on February 12. The **YGBI Research Residency** dedicated to young Italian artists of African descent returns for Volume VII featuring **Wissal Houbabi**, **Luc Ndikubwimana**, **Ivna LaMart** and **Elaine Adorno**, guided by **Tristany Mundu**, performer, mentor and community organizer from Lisbon, whose practice is anchored in collectivity, creativity and social imagination. The group will hold a roundtable

conversation at Museo Novecento on February 4. Additional exhibitions include *Donald D presents Rock the House Y'all: My Hip-Hop History through Pictures and Flyers 1979-1987* at The Recovery Plan opening February 6 and *Veglia* by **Victor Fotso Nyie** at the SRISA Gallery of Contemporary Art opening February 11.

IG @[TheRecoveryPlan](#)

FB @[BlackHistoryMonthFlorence](#)



Creating community



What brought you to Florence and what did you do before?

I'm from Paris. I was working there as a content creator and social media manager, and I also had my own candle brand that I created from scratch. However, at some point I felt like I needed a total change. I came to Florence for a vacation in 2022 and I fell in love with the city. Six months later, I basically flipped my life upside down to move here.

What prompted you to create events for the community?

It felt like the universe was pushing me to leave Paris, but then I had to start from scratch here. I had my boyfriend here, which was hugely important, also in terms of settling in. I started working in tours and classes and then decided to branch out myself. I love to create and I just wanted to have people meeting together and



create community. I got lucky in that I met the right people at the right time and worked on forging connections to create the kind of event that I want to concentrate on: truly memorable events that have a spectacular view, food, candles, etc.—something really beautiful and unique. It was also a great way for me to make my own community, and so many friends have become involved in helping out.

INTERVIEW / Jane Farrell

From clothes swaps and cooking classes to candle painting and now speed dating, **Chiara Almeida** is constantly concocting new and interesting ways for people to meet.

You're also a photographer?

Photography is my main work and passion, and to have work in this and also events means I'm the happiest girl in the world. It really helped me also to create my own community here. I've always loved taking pictures and wanted to turn it into my living, but imposter syndrome always got in the way. Then, a friend asked if I would shoot her friend's wedding, and I thought, *No way, it's a wedding!* But she told me that she believed in me and that really kickstarted things.

Tell us about the clothes swaps. What have the reactions been like?

The project grew out of my lifelong love for events and my tendency to want to do many things at once. I always knew I wanted to become an event planner, even if I didn't yet know how or where to begin. The clothes swap came about through a conversation with my friend Nike Brannstrom about how we consume fashion. I haven't bought fast fashion in nearly two years, choosing instead to thrift at markets or on Vinted. While selling my own clothes one day, I thought about how much bigger this idea could be. What started as a plan to invite ten girls to swap clothes at home quickly grew—because we don't really know how to do things small—into hosting the event at The Hoxton, a place that immediately came to mind because I had worked with them before. We created a full presentation, contacted the PR team and, when they said yes, everything became real. The first month was nerve-racking because the

concept was new, but we loved the idea of creating a dream-like market experience, including a DJ set by Nika Delmonte, where people drop off clothes, receive a ticket, and essentially “shop” with what feels like free money. The first event sold out and went smoothly, the second was just as successful, and with each one we learn more, like potentially staggering entry times in the future. Our next event is on February 8 at The Hoxton and all leftover clothes are donated. The response has been overwhelmingly positive, with Instagram and flyers helping spread the word. While the crowd has been varied, we've mostly seen women in their twenties to forties so far, and we'd love to welcome more men in the future.

And now there's speed dating! How did that come about?

I fell in love with Tosco Tacos on via Santa Verdiana because I'm half Mexican, and when I saw that a real Mexican taqueria was opening in Florence, I was so excited. Honestly, it didn't disappoint. The owner, Tommaso, asked me what I thought about organizing speed dating, and I immediately said yes! To attend, you'll need a ticket that will include food and a drink, and then you'll be part of a one-hour slot of six couples. My friend Marina (@marina_di_california) will be the host, and no doubt it's going to be a lot of fun! It will be on Valentine's Day, and it's called Love at First Bite; you'll get to meet new people, and if you find love, even better!

Links to the various events can be found at IG @chiaraalmeida_



ART/ Fondazione CR Firenze organizes free workshops for little ones and not only, bringing visitors to learn about the extensive art collection on via Maurizio Bufalini 6. www.fondazionecrfirenze.it

EDUCATION/ Biblioteca Mario Luzi organizes monthly chess sessions for 8 years and up, with the next session set to take place on February 21. www.cultura.comune.fi.it

KIDS/ Villa Caruso in Lastra a Signa hosts a Carnival themed day of fun on February 7 with frittelle, cenci, masks and all! www.museoenricocaruso.it

This month's **Community Events** calendar keeps us connected as we get creative in Florence this February.

The British Institute of Florence (lungarno Guicciardini 9) serves afternoon tea from 4-5.15pm on February 4, followed by the first of this month's Wednesday Lectures at 6pm, led by Jeremy Boudreau who will discuss piazza Beccaria. The next in the series is a talk by Alan Pascuzzi on 'Age and artists in the Renaissance' on February 11, followed by Eleanor Walker on February 18, diving into 'Damsels not in distress: heroines in the home of the Medici,' while Alexandra Lawrence looks at 'Women of the Renaissance' on February 25. A Meet the Author event takes place at 6.30pm on February 9, with Marco del Panta and John Hooper discussing 'The Italians: How the Italians perceive themselves...and are understood by others.' A Tuesday seminar series with Lisa Kaborycha takes place weekly on Tuesdays at 6pm, from February 10-March 3, exploring the lives and legends of 'Saints and Sinners' in Renaissance Italy. Jazz al British takes place at 6pm on February 12, with pianist Stefano Maurizi performing a concert titled 'Middle East Poems.' The next installment will be pianist Kasparas Mikužis on February 26, who will perform pieces by Beethoven, Ravel and Godowsky. *The Florentine's* Helen Farrell will conduct The Conversation with award-winning barista Francesco Sanapo at 6.30pm on February 23, a chat set to cover his co-founding of Ditta Artigianale, the speciality coffee roasters established in Florence in 2013. www.britishinstitute.it

Sotto al British (lungarno Guicciardini 15) hosts a hands-on workshop to create an illuminated letter with Alison Salmon on February 21, with weekly life drawing led by Tom J. Byrne on Mondays from 7-9pm. A bridge course for intermediates is held on Tuesdays at 3pm, with brainstorming for writers guided by Lori Hetherington at 7pm on February 17. www.britishinstitute.it

Cib'aria hosts its cooking class and dinner themed around the spices, poetry and sacredness of Burma. Featuring Chef Goo Goo (Phyu Cyn), the dinner will be accompanied by a tea tasting curated by Rocco Iacopini, founder of the literary teahouse of the same name in Florence, the Mago Merlino Tea House. Readings will be selected in collaboration with the Friendship Italia Burma cultural association, founded in 2011 to support the democratic process, self-determination and freedom of the Burmese people. Cooking class 6.30pm, dinner 8.30pm, at the Beast Gallery on February 28. [IG @cibaria_firenze](https://www.instagram.com/cibaria_firenze)

A **Clothes Swap Party** from 5-9pm on February 8 at The Hoxton Florence provides the perfect chance to swap the bits and pieces lurking at the back of your wardrobe, exchanging them for new (to you) items at a swap shop. Your 12-euro entry includes a free drink and access to the market that includes a DJ set by Nika Delmonte. Clothes drop-offs are from February 1-7. [IG @clotheswapflorence](https://www.instagram.com/clotheswapflorence)

The **Women's International Network** hosts their 12th annual member's fair and charity raffle on February 11, an apericena and networking event at via della Scala 68. www.womensinternationalnetworkflorence.it

The Social Hub Lavagnini hosts a free **Global Village Open Mic** night run by Patti DeRosa and Giulio Tonini. The next session takes place from 8.30-11pm on February 10. [FB @globalvillageopenmicfirenze](https://www.facebook.com/globalvillageopenmicfirenze)

Love at First Bite, a **Valentine's Day speed dating** event taking place on February 14 at Tosco Tacos, via di Santa Verdiana 6R, is an opportunity to meet people the old-fashioned way and eat a few Mexican tacos. The 30-euro ticket includes food, drinks and participation in a one-hour round with lots of interesting people. www.toscotacos.it

The **European University Institute** holds the fourth installment of EUI Conversations on February 2 at the Refectory, Badia Fiesolana, from 5-6.30pm, with French diplomat and statesman Dominique de Villepin. Moderated by EUI Professor Nicolas Guilhot, the conversation will explore de Villepin's most recent book, *Le Pouvoir de dire non* (The Power to Say No), which calls for a political and cultural awakening in France and beyond. The event will also be livestreamed on YouTube. www.eui.eu

A **Texan-Taiwanese Taco Pop-Up** takes place at Tosco Tacos, via Santa Verdiana 6, on Friday 20, with a fusion representing chef Sara Cagle's Texan roots and Lilian Huang's Taiwanese origins. [IG @toscotacos](https://www.instagram.com/toscotacos)

The **MangiaSano Biomarket** at piazza Buondelmonti in Impruneta returns on February 8, open from 9am to 5pm. With fresh produce like breads, cakes, wine, olive oil, honey, cheese, meat, and agrumi from Calabria, there are also top-quality crafts, from leather, pottery and paper to fabric works. Experts will even be on site to repair your old chairs using traditional weaving techniques. In the morning, 'The Magic of Hazelnuts' workshop explores how the famous hazelnut paste is made, open to all, from 10-11am, finishing with a tasting. In the afternoon, Sven Rho presents his book on the trees and products he makes from chestnuts, from 3-4pm. Both workshops are free entry. [FB @Biomercatinomangiasano](https://www.facebook.com/Biomercatinomangiasano)

St Mark's English Church (via Maggio 16) holds a free Valentine's workshop titled 'Palette of Emotions' from 4-6pm on February 4+11. RSVP info@raymondart.org. A Valentine's Day quiz takes place on the day itself, RSVP administrator@stmarksitaly.com. www.stmarksitaly.com



the British Institute
of Florence dal 1913

February at

The British Institute

Florence's international cultural and social hub

Dive deep into the history, art and life of Florence

Attend great events

Meet interesting people

Learn Italian

All welcome!



Quattrocento Florence: Early Renaissance

2 - 28 FEB Art History course featuring Brunelleschi, Donatello, Masaccio, Fra Angelico, Verrocchio, Ghirlandaio, Leonardo and Botticelli

Italian Lessons

2 - 27 FEB Group and Individual Classes with the best teachers in town!

Saints and Sinners

10 FEB - 3 MAR Tuesday Seminar Series with Lisa Kaborycha

Wednesday Lectures

4 FEB Jeremy Boudreau: *Piazza Beccaria*
11 FEB Alan Pascuzzi: *Renaissance Artists and Ageing*
18 FEB Eleanor Walker: *Ginevra and Eleonora*
25 FEB Alexandra Lawrence: *Women in the Renaissance*

Music al British

12 FEB Jazz Concert by Stefano Maurizi (piano): Middle East Poems
26 FEB Kasparas Mikužis plays Beethoven and Ravel

Special Events

21 FEB Illuminating the Past - Hands-on Workshop with Alison Salmon
23 FEB The Conversation - Francesco Sanapo with Helen Farrell

Life Drawing

Every Monday

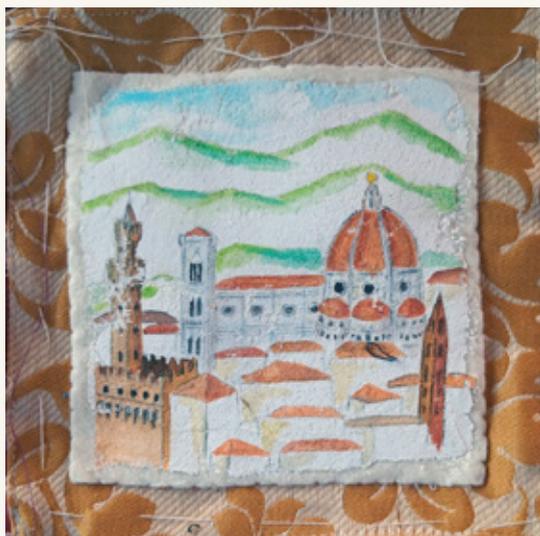
It's all happening at The British Institute!

More Information: www.britishinstitute.it
Or scan the QR code above (top left)!

The meaning of the mantle

HERITAGE / Bridget Ryan

The first **Brigid in Europe intercultural festival** took place in 2024 to celebrate the 1500th anniversary of the death of St. Brigid of Kildare, Ireland. The festival focuses on celebrating Brigid's legacy in Europe because, according to Italian medieval historian Dr Fabio Mantegazza, she was the most significant saint in Europe for more than 1,000 years during the Middle Ages. There are churches, shrines, schools and sacred wells named after her in Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Portugal and Switzerland, and here in Tuscany, the village of **Santa Brigida** bears her name. It's understood that the cult of Brigid in Italy spread mainly through the writings of San Donato, the ninth-century Irish bishop of Fiesole, who founded a church in her name in Piacenza. His *Vita Brigidae* is preserved in the Laurentian Library in Florence, and it is said that on reading it, Ireland's Nobel Laureate Seamus Heaney was inspired to write two poems in her honour.



Brigid's feast day is February 1. This links her with the festival of Imbolc, the beginning of spring in the Celtic year. To celebrate the saint today, we have Brigid's Crosses made from rushes and used for protection, and Brigid's cloak, a cloth that gathers dew on the eve of her feastday, used for healing. What Brigid represents (her hospitality, compassion, and her desire for peace and justice) are qualities we wish to nurture through artistic expression in this festival.

With Brigid as our *anamchara*, our soul-friend, she can be for many a light in the darkness. She is the patron saint of poets and craftworkers, animal lovers and dairy farmers. These are all ways in which we can bring the work of creativity and imagination, of love for animals and nature, to bear on the crises of our time. The festival is held under the patronage of the Irish Embassy in Rome and with the support of Brigid 1500 Kildare, Mayo County Council, Ireland, and the Comune of Pontassieve.

Saint Brigid is closely associated with a cloak, and inspired by the many stories of its majesty and miracles, a group of women in Tipperary created the Sliabh na mBan (Mountain of the Women) cloak with 600 handmade patches in 2023. This cloak has been worn by a stilt walk artist, Dee Tierney, in many processions and festivals since 2023, and last February we brought it to the parish of Santa Brigida.

The response was extremely warm and enthusiastic. On **February 22**, we will bring the cloak back to Italy, and in the footsteps of Brigid herself, we will do so in a spirit of expansion. Under the guidance of designer Micaela Naldini, we have created an extension with 100 patches for the cloak, all made by Italian women and children. This mantle will be worn in the centre of Florence to connect with, celebrate and honour the Florentine Madonna of Mercy, the protectress of the city. People are invited to join a procession at 3pm along the ancient pilgrimage route of **via dei Servi** to the heart of the Sacred Feminine in Florence, the **Basilica di Santissima Annunziata**.

Irish-Italian artist **Vittoria Colonna** acts as lightbearer, announcing the arrival of the cloak on the streets of Florence with the words, 'Spread your mantle of blessings upon us as true pilgrims as we walk on life's journey.' The procession will be followed by a ceremony in the cloister of the Basilica and a concert at 4pm in the church with Irish and Italian musicians and poets. The event will be held in Italian and English for a truly intercultural experience. With the Irish harp, violin, flute and uilleann pipes, we are also honoured to have composer and choir director Edoardo Materassi and the Animae Voces choir. The cultural attaché, Mr Conor Fagan, will represent the Irish Embassy.

FB @BrigidinEuropeFestival

Man versus city

I felt my foot snap as my body crashed on the sidewalk. I knew something bad had happened. I breathed to relax and, in a strange way, a calm energy came over me. It was a calm that had rarely visited me since we moved to Florence six months prior. I got up and started limping towards my house along the Arno. The buildings and lights twinkled on the other side of the river. Florence was also serene, and it felt like we were making peace for a short time.

Why did I hate Florence? First of all, it didn't make me happy. I was waiting to be served a chunk of contentment the size of the Duomo, all while I was sitting down and doing nothing. Second, Florence can be ruthless. Somewhere between the flocks of tourists and the Florentines who always keep you at arm's length, amid the bureaucracy, incompetence, delayed buses and retrofitted schools, the city tests your resilience and sanity in thousands of small ways. If we're talking about over-tourism, for example, Florence's own beauty can make her borderline ugly at times. Third, Florence was holding up a mirror, where I could see all the unhappiness, victimhood and entitlement that had always been there within me. I didn't like it one bit.

We had planned to make a move for a while. I wanted New York, my wife pushed for Florence, and so we decided to go for her dream first, but then life happened and it became a brutal shift, just a month and a half after my father passed away. Like many couples with a small kid, things were tense between us and moving to Florence also meant being forced to overcome the financial fears that had plagued me my entire life. I was burned out and working hard to find a piece of *dolce far niente*.

When the first winter came, I found solace in empty movie theaters, connecting in silence with other souls, watching Italian films and not understanding a word. Another decision I had made was not to learn the language, partly because I was overwhelmed and partly out of spite. At my lowest, I found myself strolling around piazza Santa Croce, stopping in front of Dante's statue and asking him for life advice. What should I do? "Move forward," he responded. What about my writing? "Just write." It was enough fuel to go another day.

Two years later, I still held on to Florence, even when my wife was starting to give in. It became personal; I refused to lose this man-versus-city battle. At the same time, I could finally see through my excuses and

it wasn't a pretty sight. Florence wasn't as bad as I was petrified. I was scared of the unknown and harbouring a liquifying anxiety about moving abroad over 40. Little by little, I admitted my fears and challenged them. It was painful, but I was maturing. Breaking my foot helped expedite the process.

Big change came in the form of joining The Social Hub, connecting with fellow writers at the Florence Literary Society, going for Saturday community runs in Mensola park and to church on Sundays. The city continued to test and humble me. I found my way, lost it, found it and lost it again until I stripped away the non-essentials and focused on what mattered to me: my family, the book I'm writing, connecting with people and helping them through coaching.

Indeed, people were the one constant, always there when I wasn't scared of them, judging, labeling or finding excuses not to bond. Florence can be giving and nurturing, showing generosity through soulful events and diverse stories. Yet I experienced a city that requires constant effort to live a good life.

I even ran my first marathon here and the 100-kilometre Il Passatore ultramarathon until I found the courage to do the really hard things: apply for residency, learn Italian and stop complaining to my wife about Florence. How else could we find out if this place is truly for us if we don't give it everything we have? And how could I show my daughter all this city has to offer?

I suffered more than I can say in this city, experienced wins and losses, reveled in the beauty, hurt in the loneliness and rejoiced in connection. In a way, I came here as a boy and became a man. Thank you, Florence.

Ciprian Gavrilu is a storyteller working on his first book, *Hope in Darkness*. He also coaches people to reach their dreams and goals through belief, action and resilience. www.cipriangav.com



In airplane mode:

Florence through the five senses

TASTE

If you're used to photographing your plate before eating, try something else.

For the first bite, close your eyes.

Notice texture, warmth, surprise, the way flavors unfold on your palate.

That first mouthful will stay with you far longer than any picture ever will.

This micro-article is part of a five-part Digital Detox series by **Sandrine Kom**, slow life strategist. Since 2023, she practices a weekly 32-hour digital detox ritual and now shares one simple offline invitation each month to help readers rediscover Florence with fresh attention.

www.quietluxury.it

A tale of Florentine trash

Maia, the kind woman who does my cleaning and ironing, went to dispose of our rubbish in a bin along the road. She carried the trash in her left hand, balanced by an elegant shoulder bag on the right.

She trod on the pedal, the bin opened its metal mouth and swallowed her waste, dropping it into a mysterious stomach beneath the street. Unfortunately, her shoulder bag slipped down her arm, fell into the mouth and disappeared down the same throat. The bin was labelled as undifferentiated, correct for the trash and also for her bag and its contents. Ecologically she had been a good citizen, a small consolation as her life was ruined, no passport, no telephone, no keys, no hard-won permission to stay, no identity card, no *tessera sanitaria*. She had become stateless and illegal, a non-person.

DOING THE ROUNDS / Duncan Geddes
+ illustration by Leo Cardini



about in order to resuscitate Maia and her lost life.

I called Alia Servizi Ambientali and, after a very long wait with many transfers, was eventually surprised by the kindness of a human. A Tuscan voice sympathised, told me that Maia was not the first to have this problem and that there was not much that he could do about it. He thought that searching the day's trash collection would be very unpleasant, expensive and almost certainly unsuccessful. What, he wanted to know, had Maia lost? He concluded that time and money might be better spent getting another bag. I reported this to Maia. She agreed and then started crying into a kitchen towel.

I had the bit between my teeth and decided to go the following day to the Ecostazione di Firenze, just north of the Parco San Donato. It is deep underground, next to the Florence Courthouse, where criminals are sentenced and whose dark, spiky and forbidding architecture was clearly designed to deter them from re-offending. As you walk out of the *Tribunale*, you see a road taking you down into the subterranean misery of garbage inferno. I was surprised to find that there was no sign at the entrance, expecting, at the least, some Dante telling me

to abandon all hope. Instead I had to press a bell, an electronic eye inspected me and a deep, sad voice informed me that, as a pedestrian, I had pressed the wrong bell. I must press another one on the opposite side of the road. Another bell, another eye to inspect me. I smiled nervously, heard a buzz, a gate opened, and down I walked into a dark cavern, following a yellow stick man painted on the road. A hi-vis jacket approached me. He asked me what I thought I was doing, coming down here empty-handed. Without trash, you have no status, an intruder.

I decided that it would be best to impress first rather than starting with Maia's crisis. I proudly told him that I was writing an article for *The Florentine* and was sure he would want to help me. Imagine my disappointment when he claimed never to have heard of it. I quickly understood that the magazine is not widely discussed among the garbage community. It had been a mistake to mention it, but too late to retract.

"So, you're a journalist? I have no authority to speak to journalists. Will you, please, leave?"

I remembered the English writer Dorothy Sayers suggesting that if Dante were

I had to help, but how? First, understand the system. I reached for the booklet that had been sitting for years, unloved and unread, in a kitchen drawer. It was titled *Guida alla Raccolta Differenziata*, the author was ALIA and there was an introduction from Mahatma Gandhi. "*Sin dalla nostra prima infanzia dovremmo avere impressa nelle nostre menti l'idea che siamo tutti spazzini*" (from our infancy, we should remember that we are all street cleaners). It went on to describe the colour coding of trash bins: brown for organic, yellow for paper, blue for plastic and metal, grey for non-recyclables, and green for glass. Then came an astonishing alphabetical list of 419 items and where to put them, starting with *abiti* (clothes sorted into used and unusable) and finishing with *zerbino* (doormat). Wires and dental floss are treated much the same, but be careful, don't mix your floss with your toothpicks or your expired medicines with ones in blister packs. Did you study chemistry

(acetone or TCE) or metallurgy (iron or aluminium)? Is your *bicchiere* glass or crystal? I sympathise with the committee that compiled the list, agonising over what to include: pills yes, condoms never mentioned.

All of this was very useful, but there were no details of what happens after you put your trash in a street skip. Nothing about the noisy trucks that empty them. We have all seen them. Some are filled from behind and crush the trash into solid blocks, a convenient invention, but one that recently killed a man who chose to sleep in a bin. Some are designed for narrow streets and use a hydraulic lift, swing the container round and electronically opening the bottom so the trash tumbles through the roof of the truck. (Wouldn't it be wonderful to use similar technology for potty training?) The vehicles then deposit the waste at an *ecocentre* for recycling, incineration or burying. This is what I needed to know more



writing the *Inferno* today, he would place fraudulent journalists in bolgia nine of the eighth Circle of Hell, reserved for the Sowers of Discord.

“Well, I’m not actually a journalist. Just a foreigner wanting to write an article to help tourists with their trash.”

“Well, why did you say you were a journalist?”

Remembering that in Italy you should never say what you want straight away and always make friends first, I decided to chat. I explained that I would value his friendship as I was here in his underground kingdom to help a stateless lost soul. I added that I lived in Italy and would like to know the system for bringing trash to the *ecocentro*.

“Do you have a *carta sanitaria*?” This gives you *ecocentro* access rights.

“Yes, I’m a resident. Can I ask your help as a friend?”

“*Certo*. What do you want to know?”

We talked about the electronic key that residents need to open the trash bin in the street and agreed that it was impossible to get one at very short notice and that for tourists staying only a week it would not be a good use of their time queuing at the Alia office near Scandicci.

We agreed that most people, on taking their trash to a bin and finding it locked, would just leave it in the street and walk away, and that this was a scandal and against all the rules of ecology. Together we regretted the piles of trash that block the sidewalk by Ponte Santa Trinita.

By now, we were friends. He loaned me an orange hi-vis gilet, checked that I didn’t have open shoes (flip flops strictly forbidden) and showed me his collection of vast green and white metal containers. Everything was meticulously labelled with well-sorted trash. I congratulated him on how clean and tidy everything was.

The time had come to explain Maia’s problem. He listened kindly, but when I reached the point about her statelessness, he began to shake his head. He pointed at the mammoth metal cube labelled *residuo non differenziabili*. “Only a foreign idiot would search for a needle in that revolting haystack.”

World-weary Tuscans have been struggling for thousands of years with the problems of civilization. He told me that Maia’s crisis was relatively small compared with his own and began to give me details of his family and the impossibility of keeping secrets from his wife. Maia had only to confront bureaucracy and, in time, all would be back to normal. Hers was a practical problem with a practical solution. His problem, in contrast, was a problem of illicit love, and problems of the heart are far more difficult to solve.

A sadder and a wiser man, I agreed, returned my hi-vis gilet and walked out into the sunlight without looking back.

It took Maia nearly six months to recover. She now has a much better phone, a shining new *carta di soggiorno*, a passport with a beaming smile, and takes the trash to the bin with the lighter step of victory. I wonder whether my eco-friend has had the same success with the problems of his heart.

Duncan Geddes is an emeritus Professor of Medicine from Imperial College who was an NHS physician in London hospitals before moving to Florence. He has written a number of very serious books and articles about medicine, but now prefers to be less serious.

2005 — 2025

PLUS

CLICK

THE FLORENTINE

* SUBSCRIBE TO THE FLORENTINE

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF TF WITH A SPECIAL 2 + 3-YEAR SUBSCRIPTION OFFER

Paper + PDF



1Y 55€
2Y ~~110€~~ 100€
3Y ~~165€~~ 145€

PDF



1Y 33€
2Y ~~66€~~ 55€
3Y ~~99€~~ 80€

DID YOU KNOW?

SUBSCRIBERS TO THE FLORENTINE WILL RECEIVE 4 COMPLIMENTARY COPIES OF THE CURATORS’ QUADERNO IN 2026.



“Love the *Quaderno* each time, always fascinating stories of women in art, film and photography!”

— a TF subscriber



theflr.net/subscribe

TRENDS / Nicole Karlis

Defining wellness in Florence

Since I've moved here, I've been surprised to see that the city has a thriving wellness scene. In a city deeply rooted in art, culture and good food, I've also been perplexed by its popularity. In California, wellness was the dominant lifestyle, from daily green juices to yoga classes and IV vitamin drips. While Florence is not at the same level as the California wellness craze, the city does offer a range of options to partake in. But what's been gnawing at me is **what is driving the wellness boom in a city in a country that has one of the highest life expectancy rates in the world.** In fact, Italy leads the European Union in life expectancy. More people are living to 100. In a time when scientists are turning to Italy to understand human health and longevity, why are curated California-centric wellness experiences becoming so popular?

"It's the fashionable thing," **Lenka Drtilová Peruzzi**, the founder of **Moodra Yoga Studio**, told me. "I don't think people really need it."

Due to Italy's culture, access to healthy food, and focus on community and family, Italians have long understood *benessere*, which literally translates to "to be well". Local interest in wellness hasn't been a result of poor health or a lack of access to healthy food and experiences, which is one reason why the wellness boom arrived a little later in Italy. As Covid-19 shut down the world and pushed much of the wellness world online, Drtilová Peruzzi said she saw an increase in interest in wellness emerge after the pandemic. It's likely not a coincidence that people were online more and coming across more American wellness content on social media, paving the way for wellness businesses to open in Florence. But once people's lives returned to some sense of normalcy, Drtilová Peruzzi noticed a dip in customers at her studio, suggesting that people didn't need a curated wellness experience to feel good and be healthy. In 2025, the Global Wellness Institute, which researches the economy in question, announced that the wellness market was "on fire" and had grown 35 per cent since 2019. But in Italy, between 2021 and 2022, there was a bit of a dip. However, since 2022, it's grown steadily.

"Now there are two groups of people: those who are sporty and interested in well-being, both mental and physical—they are the ones who practice yoga and Pilates," Drtilová Peruzzi explained. "And then there are others who come because it's fashionable. A lot of Italians really follow trends."

Aparna Thadani, co-founder of **The22**, a members' wellness club in central Florence, said yoga isn't new to Florence post-pandemic, but before it was more "niche". However, with the significant increase in immigration over the past few years, there has been a corresponding rise in interest in fitness studios that offer yoga, Pilates and more.

"Wellness has become so mainstream, especially after Covid, it's like a home away from home," Thadani remarked. "McDonald's used to be a place of comfort for Americans who used to travel, like 40 years ago, whereas today I think the equivalent is avocado toast." Thadani said that a wellness studio provides travelers with "that

The top of my head points toward the floor as I push my hips to the sky, catching a glimpse of the sunlight peeking through the window. For a minute, my brain is just as disoriented as my physical body, and I find myself wondering: am I in Florence or California?



same comfort", adding that wellness has also become part of "travel culture".

In every industry, trends change. Last year, the wellness segment saw more international interest in sauna culture and the use of technology to optimize one's health. In Florence, Thadani said Pilates was very popular at The22. This year, she's seeing an increased interest in strength training. According to Condé Nast Traveler, 2026 is a year when "wellness seekers" are looking to be social, not necessarily discover the coolest new kind of fitness class. As a decades-long Harvard study in human health and longevity found, social connections and positive relationships help us live longer, something Italians have long known. Perhaps that's why wellness studios in Florence are already ahead of that trend, centering community in their offerings.

For example, this year at The22 the latest promotion is that every member can bring one guest for free to any class until the end of March. "The

idea of bringing a friend is to expand the community, but also this is a social activity," Thadani said. "This is something we can all do together."

In the future, Thadani said she sees wellness being "a much more integrated approach to fitness". "It's fitness of the body, but also fitness of the mind," she said. "Italian culture really influenced me and my yoga practice. Yoga is not just what you do on the mat; it's what you do in life."

Maybe when it comes to wellness in Florence, it's not just about following the trends, but setting them—and not just locally, but eventually globally.

Nicole Karlis is a health and science journalist and author of *Your Brain on Altruism: The Power of Connection and Community during Times of Crisis*, which is available at the Paperback Exchange in Florence as well as from www.ucpress.edu.



The seventh Ditta

With the opening of the café at via Solferino 15-17, the specialty roastery adds a bold new chapter to its story as a pioneer of quality coffee culture.

Founded by **Francesco Sanapo**, **Ditta Artigianale** now pushes its philosophy further in a departure from the historic atmosphere of its previous locations in Florence. The new coffee shop showcases a contemporary identity: bold colours, industrial materials and a metropolitan aesthetic designed for a new generation of coffee lovers.

“This seventh location is a declaration of intent,” says Francesco Sanapo. “We want to continue pushing Florence toward a modern, international and courageous vision of hospitality. Our strength lies in our Italian and Florentine identity, but our outlook is global. We innovate tradition without ever betraying it. We dared in design and, above all in coffee, selecting unique micro-lots from the best producers because we believe the city deserves new experiences, genuine quality and inspiring places. This is how Ditta Artigianale gives back to Florence what Florence gives us every day.”

According to co-founder Patrick Hoffer, the opening represents a challenge and an opportunity. “This is a high-end residential area that, over the past 20 years, has gradually lost its commercial vitality. By being here, we want to switch the light back on—yellow like our brand colour—not only for residents, but for the city as a whole. It’s an opportunity to boost economic development, social interaction and urban innovation.”



The Conversation

Francesco Sanapo, award-winning barista, founder and CEO of **Ditta Artigianale**, the speciality coffee roasters established in Florence in 2013, talks with Helen Farrell about innovating the coffee business one bean at a time.



23 February 2026

6.30pm

The British Institute of Florence
lungarno Guicciardini 9



Coming soon

A fine dining restaurant is in the works around the corner from the new Ditta Artigianale, on the other side of what’s now been called the “black cube”. Naples-based J Contemporary Japanese Restaurant is expected to open in the spring. Based on the group’s restaurants in Portici, Naples and Sorrento, minimalist design, soft lighting and exquisitely presented sushi and sashimi will be on the menu.

j.japaneserestaurant.com



“Signature lounge experience” Claris is about to open where Harry’s Bar Firenze once stood since 1953 along lungarno Vespucci before being ousted in 2023. Open for lunch, aperitivo and dinner, the stylish locale strives to serve seasonal fare, plus the long veined marble bar counter lined with niche bottlings looks promising on the cocktails front.

clarisfirenze.com

Just off arguably the busiest roundabout in Florence by Ponte alla Vittoria, Desto is a sleek contemporary addition to the city’s dining scene. Tempting seafood options are served alongside a selection of Spritzes or Italian aperitivo drinks, while the restaurant menu also has a strong maritime focus with straightforward offerings such as spaghetti with clams and rosemary prawns.

destofirenze.com



EVERY DAY BRUNCH

RISTORANTE ACCADEMIA INTERNATIONAL BRUNCH



DAILY FROM 10 AM

FOR INFORMATION & BOOKINGS: (+39) 055 217 343
PIAZZA SAN MARCO 7R - FLORENCE



How to get a *carta d'identità elettronica*

The *carta d'identità elettronica* is vital for living in Italy. This ID card is a passepartout, required in almost every situation, such as a document check when collecting parcels, setting up a bank account and if stopped by police (it happens from time to time). So, how do you go about getting one in Florence?

Applications can be made for an electronic identity card (*Carta d'Identità Elettronica* - CIE) at your local municipality in cases of first issuance, renewal, damage, loss or theft. Appointments can be booked directly through the national ministerial scheduling system, which is also in English. To request the CIE in Florence, an appointment is required at one of the decentralized registry offices (*Punti Anagrafici Decentrati* - PAD) operating throughout the area. For all PAD locations, appointments may also be arranged in the following ways: independently through the Municipality of Florence's online appointment calendar or by contacting the municipal call center at 055 055.

The identity card is issued only in the presence of the applicant, whether an adult or a minor. Applications by proxy or power of attorney are not permitted under any circumstances. Those who are physically unable to travel due to health conditions may request assistance by contacting, or having someone contact on their behalf, the municipal service *Anagrafe a casa - Interventi domiciliari*, which provides identity services at home.

Remember to take the following documents with you to the appointment: your old identity card, whether expired or nearing its expiration date, another valid form of identification and one recent colour passport-style photograph taken within the last six months. Expired or soon-to-expire identity cards must be returned to the registry office counter at the time of application for a new document. In cases of theft, loss or severe damage to

the previous identity card, an official police report is necessary. You will also be required to provide your Italian tax code (*codice fiscale*) and digital fingerprints. The new electronic identity card includes the option for adults to state their wishes regarding the donation of organs and tissues after death. At the time of application, citizens may express their consent, formally refuse or choose not to make any declaration.

The identity card has a different period of validity depending on the holder's age. For children under three, the card is valid for three years, while for minors aged between three and 18, the validity is five years. For adults over 18, the identity card is valid for up to ten years. If you are a parent/guardian applying for your child's CIE and your child does not have Italian citizenship, only one parent/guardian and the child is required to attend the appointment to apply for a *carta di identità elettronica non valida per l'espatrio*. If your child is an Italian citizen and you are applying for a *carta di identità elettronica valida per l'espatrio*, both parents/guardians must attend the appointment with the child, or if one of the parents/guardian cannot be there, you must present the *carta di identità per minorenni: assenso all'espatrio* document available on the Comune di Firenze's website.

The cost of issuing a new CIE is set at 22 euro. In cases of replacement due to loss, the cost rises to €27. For citizens over 60 requesting a replacement CIE following theft, the total cost is reduced to €17. Delivery of the CIE is handled by the Ministry of the Interior and

takes place within six working days, starting from the day after the application date stated on the receipt. The card is sent to the address provided at the time of application.

Remember that an identity card remains valid even if you change address, therefore no replacement is required solely for that reason.

If you don't have Italian citizenship, you can't travel internationally with your Italian ID card. That's a privilege for locals only.

USEFUL WEBLINKS

National ministerial website: www.cartaidentita.interno.gov.it

City of Florence's online scheduling system: www.comune.firenze.it/servizi/prenotazione-appointamenti/new?officeId=EZP2D

City of Florence call centre: [+39 055 055](tel:+39055055)



Paper-based identity cards will no longer be valid in Italy starting August 4, 2026, regardless of the expiration date printed on the document.

Holders are encouraged to apply in advance for the electronic identity card (*carta d'identità elettronica* - CIE), which serves as an official identity document and, for Italian citizens, as a valid travel document within all European Union countries. Applications to replace the paper card with the electronic version can already be scheduled at the decentralized registry offices (*Punti Anagrafici Decentrati* - PAD) of the City of Florence. Appointments may be booked through several channels. For the Parterre PAD (Cubo 1, piazza della Libertà 12) and Villa Arrivabene PAD (piazza

Alberti), reservations can be made directly via the national ministerial online portal. For all PAD locations, including Parterre Cubo 1, Villa Arrivabene (piazza Alberti), Villa Vogel (via delle Torri), Bini (via Bini), Villa Pallini (via Baracca), Sorgane, and Santa Croce, appointments can also be booked through the Municipality of Florence's online scheduling system or by contacting the municipal call centre. Make sure you book an appointment well in advance to ensure a smooth transition ahead of the deadline.

Classifieds

Seeking but not finding? If English is your first language and Florence is where you live, you might find what you're looking for in our classifieds. Need something? Submit a classified online.

www.theflorentine.net/submit-classifieds

CLASSES

Earn a TEFL Certificate

Train to teach English as a foreign language. New courses monthly - 4 weeks, 120 hr, 10 hr teaching practice. Graduate credits offered towards a master in TESOL. Via Lingua Florence 055 283161 www.ctefflorence.com florence@vialingua.org



Student Talks + Workshops

Visit our offices and speak with a member of our editorial team to bring to light the behind-the-scenes of magazine making. Whether it's writing, communications, marketing, advertising, or social media, our editors can respond to your group's queries and detail the myriad aspects that go into making The Florentine. Groups of up to 15 people. Get in touch at redazione@theflorentine.net for more info.

Italian language immersion in Tuscany April 12-25, 2026

Wander_ability travel agency and Parla Italiano con Barbara Italian language school offer you an immersive Italian course in Maremma, one of the most authentic areas of Tuscany. One or two weeks courses in Spring 2026. +393281915042 www.tuscany-events.it

Private Music Lessons

LI teach vocals, guitar, piano, bass, ukulele and songwriting! In my studio, at your home, or online. Conservatory-trained (Siena Jazz, Berklee, NYU), 10+ years of experience. Suitable for all ages. Fun, personalized, song-based approach. Contact me now to reserve a lesson time! giovannimancinimusic@gmail.com

HAPPENING NOW

The essence of Ruffino

Ruffino offers a multitude of exquisite opportunities to immerse yourself in our refined wine experiences. Tours and tastings are available throughout the week, by appointment, offering a journey through our historic cellars and a tasting selection spanning the breadth of Ruffino wines. Guided tours are available in Italian and English. Tel. 0556499750 WA +393425487378 hospitality@ruffino.it



Perfume Experience with Ephèmera Firenze. Discover Ephèmera Firenze through Perfume Experiences and Olfactory Team Building. In the Golden View Suite on Ponte Vecchio, fragrance becomes a shared story of creativity, identity and memory. Book your Perfume Experience and let scent transform moments into emotions. Tel. +39 055 5340274 info@ephemerafirenze.it ephemerafirenze.it



Enjoy Florence and Italy with Artviva Live 'La Dolce Vita' with Artviva. Enjoy exclusive access to iconic sites, private estates, and top experts. Savor gourmet experiences, luxury stays, and bespoke events—expertly crafted across Italy. Discover the art of extraordinary travel with Artviva. 393296132730 - rose@artviva.com <https://www.artviva.com>



Create Your Own Perfume in Florence!

Join renowned perfumer Silvia Madari for a one-of-a-kind perfume-making experience in the heart of Florence! Discover the art of fragrance as Silvia guides you through the world of scents, helping you craft a bespoke perfume that's uniquely yours. The experience is a small-group workshop lasting approximately 1.5 hours. NEW! Kids' Perfume Workshop (Ages 6-13). Tel.: 3313582060 (WhatsApp) madari.sisa@gmail.com www.feeltoscana.com



The International School of Florence, a complete International Baccalaureate continuum school, from Early Years to High School, preparing students for leading universities worldwide, including Italy. Join us at our Open Day on Saturday, 7 February: Upper School 10:00-11:30 am, Junior School 2:30-4:00 pm" + il link di Sign Up. Apply online: www.isfitaly.org

TF pathfinder:

Locations on the Monopoly Firenze board game

Starting from the red shaded box, move up and down or sideways (but NOT diagonally) to find a pathway through nine locations found on the Monopoly Firenze board game and finish on the blue shaded box. All letters must be used.

P	Z	A	S	A	N	T	A	S	I	G	N
O	Z	R	I	P	S	O	L	A	I	R	O
N	A	I	E	M	P	I	L	P	I	A	Z
T	I	T	L	I	O	A	E	A	S	A	Z
E	P	O	A	C	L	Z	D	N	T	A	C
V	I	V	Z	H	O	Z	A	E	C	O	R
E	N	I	Z	E	I	G	I	G	O	L	I
C	O	A	A	L	A	N	A	O	B	I	P
C	U	D	I	P	I	L	R	B	Z	A	O
H	B	E	C	A	L	O	D	I	Z	O	M
I	A	N	R	O	Z	U	I	D	A	U	D
O	V	I	A	T	A	I	N	O	D	E	L

Solutions can be found on page 3.

Classifieds

JOBS

Student Apartment Assistance Coordinator. We are a real estate agency specializing in renting apartments to International University Students and we are looking for a Coordinator to manage maintenance, assistance and cleaning services. Good knowledge of the English language, Availability to work flexible hours. Tel. +39 055 487004
www.florenceandabroad.com
info@florenceandabroad.com

WORK AT TOUR OPERATOR

Kiss From Italy, boutique tour operator specialized in luxury travel solutions, is looking for a bilingual (En/It) professional for a dual Sales & Logistics role. Requires travel industry experience and permanent residency in Florence. Flexible part-time/full-time options. Hybrid office/remote setup. Please send CV to hr@kissfromitaly.com. Visit kissfromitaly.com to know more about us.

Looking for sales people

Looking for English speaking, outgoing and enthusiastic sales people to join our team. If you have a passion for jewelry and a willingness to learn the trade, this opportunity is for you. Send your CV: info@goldcorner.it

SERVICES



Gardener in Florence and Tuscany
Master gardener Tiziano Codiferro can help you with: design + maintenance of green spaces for personal + professional settings, green walls + furnishings, outdoor + terrace garden design, hanging garden installation, plant displays for fairs, events + holidays, consultations on irrigation systems, creation + maintenance of parks + gardens. Tel. +393477633625
info@codiferro.it www.codiferro.it



Rosalia Salad Gourmet catering

Rosalia Salad Gourmet is the ideal catering service for your events. We combine attention to detail, taste, and freshness. Our service is tailor-made, carefully crafted, and based exclusively on local, seasonal ingredients. We guarantee wholesome, sustainable dishes full of flavor. Contact us for your personalized gourmet experience. Tel. +39 320 706 9331 rosaliasalad.it

Bespoke furniture, crafted in Tuscany

Fred&Juul is where masterful craftsmanship meets contemporary design. Explore the customizable furniture and lighting collection, designed with an architectural eye and handcrafted by Tuscan artisans from noble materials into enduring heirlooms that carry stories, elevate spaces, and bring refined elegance to the home. Contact us to inquire, commission your bespoke pieces, or to schedule an appointment to meet in person at our studio in Fiesole. 393487046607
www.fredandjuul.com



Bespoke Curtains & Soft Furnishings

From initial consultation to final installation, Five Atelier offers a calm, personal approach to window treatments and textile finishes for private homes. Each project is developed with attention to materials, proportion and execution. Florence-based. English spoken. By appointment only. 055 0602637 www.fiveatelier.it/en
jennifer@fiveatelier.it

Love Florence? Support The Florentine!

theflr.net/support

HEALTH + WELLNESS



Motivational Coach and Counselor

Want to get unstuck? Book your free introductory session. I coach individuals and businesses on enhancing wellbeing and improving personal and professional performance. I work with all age groups in English and Italian, in person and on line. 393347660118 | annalisaferrari.com
aferrariocoach@gmail.com

English Speaking Doctor in Florence

English- and Italian-speaking doctor offering compassionate private medical care in Florence. Consultations in person or online, plus women's and children's health, travel medicine, chronic conditions, headache & migraine care, wellness support and neurodivergence coaching. Tel. +39 375 649 9271 | drrodolico.com
lisarodolico@rodolicohealth.com

Natural Cosmetics & Phytotherapy

Munstermann Cosmetics & Phytotherapy products. The "farmacia" has continued, for almost a century, an old-fashioned tradition of pro-

ducing medicinal preparatives and natural cosmetics. Open Tue-Sat 10am-1pm / 2-7pm. Piazza Goldoni 2r. Tel. 055210660 www.munstermann.it
munstermann@gmail.com



American Psychologist in Florence

Dr. Mary Ann Bellini is available for individual and couples therapy in person and online. Dr. Bellini is well known in the international community for her experience in counseling with study-abroad students and cross-cultural couples. In addition to therapy for depression, anxiety, panic disorder, and disordered eating, she is also an expert in hypnosis for trauma, and chronic pain. Your mental wellness is an important priority, during this time of post Covid when we still may have fear and anxiety about our health and future. Dr. Bellini also teaches self-hypnosis and relaxation techniques to help with certain psychological problems that have become more pronounced during the years of the pandemic, such as insomnia and frequent mood shifts. Dr. Bellini is a provider for the global insurances GeoBlue, CISI, and AXA and she is available in her Florentine office at Lungarno Cellini 25, as well as online. Tel. +39 339 5705988. Email: msmaryasan24@gmail.com

GRADUATE CREDITS OFFERED
TOWARDS A MASTERS IN TESOL



Via Lingua
FLORENCE

STUDY PROGRAMS IN TEACHING
ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

VIA LINGUA FLORENCE
AMERICAN LANGUAGE CENTER

EARN A TEFL CERTIFICATE

- 4 weeks, 130 hours
- 10 hours teaching practice
- Experienced trainers
- Expert career counseling
- Global Employment
- Accommodation + Social Program

www.cteflflorence.com

MÜNSTERMANN FLORENCE
Since 1897

COSMETICAL & PHYTOTHERAPY PRODUCTS

For The Care And Beauty Of Your Body Home-Made, According To Age-Old MÜNSTERMANN RECIPES

Open Tue-Sat 10am-1pm / 2-7pm
Piazza Goldoni 2r - Firenze
Tel./Fax 055.210660
www.munstermann.it

HOME DELIVERY SERVICE

RUTH'S
KOSHER VEGETARIAN FOOD

Kashrut under the supervision of the Chief Rabbi of the Jewish Community of Florence
Rav Gadi Piperno

Shabbath & Holidays meals
Open every day - Free Wi-Fi

Via L.C. Farini 2/a | 50121 Florence | Italy
Tel./Fax 055 248.08.88

www.kosheruth.com - info@kosheruth.com



ITALIAN SKETCHES

Deirdre Pirro

Author of *Italian Sketches: The Faces of Modern Italy, Famous Expats in Italy and Royals in Florence*, published by The Florentine Press, is an international lawyer who lives and works in Florence. Her writing focuses on modern Italy, its people, history and customs. Follow her on Twitter @dp_in_florence or contact her at ddpirro@gmail.com.

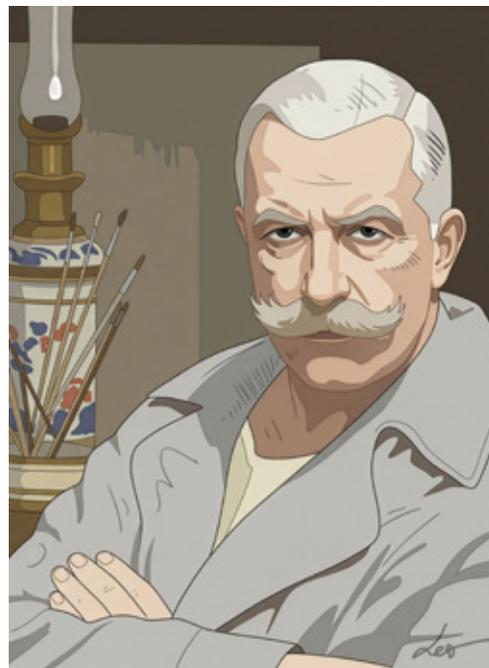
Vittorio Matteo Corcos

Although his self-portrait hangs in the Uffizi Gallery and his paintings can be found in prestigious art galleries and private collections in Italy and internationally, the name of Vittorio Matteo Corcos may not be that familiar to many. And yet he is considered a protagonist of Italian figurative art of the late 1800s and early 1900s.

While he covered a number of subjects like landscapes, rural and religious themes, he is best known for his interpretations of the Belle Époque. The Paris correspondent of *The Times*, Henri de Blowitz, even named him “the painter of beautiful women” for his ability to depict them, exalting their femininity. The most famous example of this is *Sogni* (Dreams), painted in 1896 and first displayed at the Festa dell’Arte e dei Fiori, an international exhibition in Florence. Now housed at the Galleria Nazionale d’Arte Moderna e Contemporanea in Rome, the painting portrays Elena, the daughter of the maritime writer Augusto Vecchi, known as Jack La Bolina, a friend of the artist. She is seated on a bench with her legs crossed, something thought to be audacious at the time, with a straw hat, an umbrella and three books by her side. Back in the day, her uninhibited pose caused a “devilish din” and heated debate about the way it showed female emancipation, while today it is considered iconic for the time.

The exhibition on display at Pisa’s Palazzo Blu until April 7 affords insight into the allure of the Belle Époque, featuring works by Italian artists Giovanni Boldini, Giuseppe De Nittis and Vittorio Corcos, who all chose Paris as their adopted home for a period. The vibrant artistic climate in the French capital at the time influenced Corcos’ work for the rest of his life.

Vittorio Matteo Corcos was born to the Jewish couple Isach Corcos and Giuditta Baquis in Livorno on October 4, 1859. Initially he took private painting lessons with the artist Giuseppe Baldini before moving to Florence, where he enrolled in a drawing class at the Accademia di Belle Arti in 1875. In 1878, he moved to Naples to continue his studies and remained for three years. On the advice of Domenico Morelli, his teacher there, he moved to Paris, where he became a close friend of Giuseppe De Nittis and



met other important artists such as Edgar Degas and Édouard Manet. He was also introduced to the writer Émile Zola.

In 1884, he travelled to Great Britain before returning to Livorno to do his military service in 1886. That same year, he met and married Emma Ciabatti, a young widow with three small children. During their marriage, the couple would also have three children of their own, Maria Luisa, Emma and Massimiliano, who died in his early twenties during World War I. Corcos struggled to recover from the loss, which brought a touch of melancholy to his art. After the family moved permanently to Florence to a house at via Marsilio Ficino 8, Emma became an acclaimed hostess of a literary salon, frequented by writers like Gabriele D’Annunzio, Luigi Pirandello and many others. She introduced her husband to the periodical *Il Marzocco* in 1900, which published ‘Lora di Barga’, the poem that Giovanni Pascoli dedicated to Emma and which was later included in the *Canti di Castelvecchio* collection

presented in 1903. Pascoli described Emma, with whom he exchanged letters, as being “of so much wit, of such finesse, of such depth, of such culture”. That same year, Pascoli also dedicated the poem *Prolusione al Paradiso* to her, which was published in the booklet *In or San Michele*. Emma confessed that she even tried her hand at writing poetry, but only had time for it at night when the others were in bed and the house was quiet.

The couple also had a summer house built for them on the promontory above Punta Righini in Castiglioncello, which Corcos loved, while continuing to take occasional trips to Paris, London and Edinburgh.

Vittorio Matteo Corcos died at his home in via Gino Capponi in Florence on November 8, 1933, only to be followed to the grave a little over two weeks later by his wife. Both are buried near their son’s tomb at the monumental Porte Sante cemetery at San Miniato al Monte.

The catalogue of the famous people whose portraits Corcos painted include General Giuseppe Garibaldi (1882), composer Pietro Mascagni (1891), writer and poet Giosuè Carducci (1892), opera singer Lina Cavalieri (1903), the last King and Queen Consort of Portugal, Carlos I and Amélie of Orléans (1904), the last German Emperor and King of Prussia, Wilhelm II, and his wife Auguste Viktoria (1904), and the Italian queens, Margherita (1922) and Maria José (1931). Many elegant European socialites also featured in his paintings wearing sumptuous and elegant clothing, while surrounded by wealth and luxury. In describing his approach to his work, Corcos said, “What counts in a portrait are the eyes; if they come out the way I want, with the right expression, the rest follows naturally.”

AN INSTANT CONNECTION RISERVA DUCALE ORO



There are moments you wish would never end, shiny and precious like Gold, where every connection is powerful and intense. Ruffino Riserva Ducale Oro Gran Selezione is our most exquisite wine that celebrates Italian excellence. Made for your golden moments.



Casa Ruffino - Poggio Casciano
a short distance from Florence,
where fine wines meet design

 [ruffino_1877](#)
 [ruffino1877](#)

 WINEinMODERATION
CHOOSE | SHARE | CARE

PLEASE ENJOY OUR
WINES RESPONSIBLY

RUFFINO 1877