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Tutto Italiano

Benvenuto a *Tutto Italiano*

In the ancient times of the Roman Empire, the small town of [Marostica](#) (region of Veneto), with its strategic location overlooking the Venetian Plain and sitting on the edge of the foothills that lead to the Alps, was a military stronghold. By the fourteenth century, Marostica had become a Venetian city with two castles built to protect it. On a hill overlooking the town, the upper castle – [Castello Superiore](#) – afforded views extending for miles south, east, and west. It's connected by a wall winding down both sides of the hill to the lower castle – [Castello Inferiore](#) – guarding the main entrance to the town.

The castles and the wall, with 24 towers, were built by [Can Francesco della Scala](#), known as Cangrande, who ruled Verona and surrounding cities from 1311 until his death in 1329. Cangrande was an admired leader, and also a patron of the arts. Along with others of the early Renaissance, [Dante Alighieri](#) was a frequent guest at his estate.

The della Scala family dates back to the eleventh century in Verona, but became active in politics during the mid-thirteenth century when Cangrande's uncle, Mastino I della Scala, became chief magistrate of Verona. Their rule lasted until the end of the fourteenth century.

Every September in even-numbered years, the courtyard behind Castello Inferiore is the setting for a chess game where human characters are the chess pieces. A giant chessboard forms the floor of Piazza Castello and brings to life a story of two noblemen in love with Lionora, the daughter of the local Lord. Rather than oversee a duel for her hand in marriage, the Lord decreed they play chess, and the winner of the game would win Lionora's hand. The loser wins the hand of the Lord's younger sister.

The story may be part of Marostica's factual history, its cultural history, or a combination of both. Playing chess was a popular pastime in the Piazza, and several sources refer to the actual event occurring in 1454 and being revived as a performance in 1923. Other sources note that the story was written in 1954 by Italian-born architect, set designer, and writer Maro Mirko Vucetich who created the performance to publicize the town.

During the three-day event, hundreds of townspeople dress in period costumes as clowns, fire eaters, jugglers, and other characters; dancers and flag throwers perform; parades of knights, soldiers, uniformed guards, and musicians march across the chess board; and a regal procession of noblemen and noblewomen enter to take their seats. After the chess match, the weddings are performed and the pageantry ends with a spectacular fireworks display first shooting straight up into the air from the top of Castello Inferiore and then cascading down the back of the castle.

The living chess game is a well-known tourist attraction, but the town is also known for the [Marostica Cherry](#). The cherries have the [European IGP](#) (Protected Geographical Indication) designation, stipulating the product must be grown in a specific region using traditional agricultural methods. A cherry festival is held every year, in late May to early July, depending on when the cherries are ready to harvest.

[Historical Figure: Can Francesco della Scala](#)

[Picture: Walled City of Marostica](#) (Scroll Down)

[Marostica](#) (Life in Italy, May 31, 2012)

[Marostica](#) (Italy Heaven)

[Marostica](#) (YouTube Video, In Italian, beautiful scenery)

[Magical Marostica](#) (Blog, great review)

[The Chess Game of Marostica](#) (Official Website)

[La Partita in Marostica](#) (In English)

[The Marostica living chess match – 2016 Edition](#) (YouTube Video)

[Marostica Cherry Festival](#) (In Italian)

From the Italian American Press

The Italian American Press offers a great selection of books – childrens, memoirs, art, history, food, the supernatural, the natural beauty of Italy, and more – for every interest. Help preserve Italian American heritage and history. Support authors of Italian heritage who write about Italian American and Italian culture and let them know you found their books on the Italian American Press.

New website for *Con Amore*

Interested in the history of Italy and Italian food? Looking for a contemporary romance novel with a little suspense? Need some delicious new recipes to add to your collection? *Con Amore* has all and more. [Visit the website](#) for photographs and step-by-step directions for Manicotti Torta and Chocolate and Almond Stuffed Pears. Read an excerpt or purchase the ebook at <https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/88866>.

Read "[Meet the Author: Janice Therese Mancuso](#)" on *La Gazzetta Italiana* and find a special offer for my book, *Herbed Wine Cuisine*.

Featured Author Francesca V. Mignosa: *My Sicily: Life in the cusp of the Mediterranean Sea*

Francesca was born in Augusta, Sicily, and in 1997 moved to Cleveland (with her family) to attend Ohio University. Each year, they would travel to Sicily, and in 2016 moved back to their beautiful island. Several years earlier, Francesca wrote *My Sicily* as "a pure project of love ... deepening the layers of Sicilian culture and lifestyle, Sicilians, Sicilian history and architecture, Sicilian cuisine and wine, Sicilian devotion and spiritual and pilgrimage sites – the essence of Sicilian language and philosophy of life. I just wanted to share with others the beauty and magic of the island where I was born, a place that holds a very special place in my heart."

My Sicily: Life in the cusp of the Mediterranean Sea is a journey through Francesca's Sicily; but the journey doesn't end with her book. Around the same time her book was published – and with her years of travel experience – Francesca started offering tours of Sicily. Since then, she has expanded her network and now offers "personalized journeys" of Sicily and Italy through her new enterprise, That's Amore Boutique Travels.

Author Interview (Excerpt)

What inspired you to write your book? I wrote *My Sicily* in six months to encapsulate the memories and travels around my native Sicily during my childhood and also as way to cope with the deep nostalgia I was feeling.

What is the most important attribute of your book?

That it's a genuine gathering of memoirs of a Sicilian-American young woman reliving and attempting to bring to life the senses, colors, energy, and often mystical stories of her childhood and family travels throughout all of Sicily

Why should someone read it?

Anyone planning to travel to Sicily and wanting a more biographical approach to travel may enjoy it ...

What made you decide to offer tours and start your new travel boutique?

Well, travel is in my DNA ... I have now professionally done this for eight years focusing only on Sicily and Italy – before that it was on an international level with 16 years of professional experience. Italy is a kaleidoscopic country ...

Can you describe some of the changes you mentioned earlier? Especially those in Sicily.

The Sicily I describe and remember in my book was the Sicily of my childhood – although many of the places I recall still resemble those of my childhood. On many levels, Sicily has also moved forward especially in tourism and its internationalization ...

In all the places mention in *My Sicily*, and with the exception of your home town of Augusta, what are some of your favorites and why? As you can imagine, I get asked this question many times and it's always very difficult for me to answer because Sicily is naturally a very beautiful island and each destination has something unique to offer and explore. I will mention four of the places ...

[Read the full interview on the Italian American Press](#) to learn about changes to Sicily, see Francesca's favorite places, and where to contact her for your next tour of Italy.

Italian American Heritage Project

The initial idea for the Italian American Heritage Project (IAHP) was to provide “educational resources about Italian American history, heritage, and culture with a straightforward view on the roles of Italians in American history and culture.” Lately, though, the focus has been on the much maligned Christopher Columbus and the day designated in his honor.

Early last month an article appeared in a national newspaper with this headline, [Columbus brought measles to the New World. It was a disaster for Native Americans.](#) It wasn't the Europeans or the Spaniards, only Columbus. Read my article on [La Gazzetta Italiana](#) to find out why this headline is false.

A few days later the town board of [Glen Rock, New Jersey voted to keep Columbus Day](#). The meeting had a good turnout of Italian Americans, who – most likely – influenced the Board's decision. That's one for Italian Americans and four for Indigenous People and Native Americans as the states of Maine, New Mexico, South Dakota, and Vermont replaced Columbus Day.

A few weeks ago, I spoke with an Italian American woman who attended a town meeting about changing Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples Day. The local cultural organization that claims it celebrates diversity represented the Native Americans who cried as they blamed Columbus (and subsequently white men) for taking their land, stripping their resources, and causing high rates of drug and alcohol abuse. (These reasons have been used before.) The Italian Americans who attended in Columbus's defense were completely unaware of these tactics and caught off guard. Some were cursed at after they left the building.

The woman told me the presentation by the Native Americans was very professional and they also brought in teachers to support their claims. Of course the teachers would back them up – they are fostering misinterpreted views about Columbus.

The groups opposing Columbus Day have an organized agenda to eliminate it from

